Il trovatore: an opera that thrills like ‘Game of Thrones’

Millennial director brings fresh perspective to Verdi masterpiece

Jan. 12-26, 2019
McCaw Hall

SEATTLE—When Verdi sat down to compose Il trovatore, he had no idea that he was creating opera’s version of Game of Thrones. But this is how stage director Dan Wallace Miller describes this tale of revenge, which opens at McCaw Hall in January 2019. Similar to a certain TV show, Il trovatore is dark and brutal—the most merciless of all nineteenth-century operas. And yet, it’s also a crowd-pleaser, one known for lengthy applause during the middle of performances. Why? Miller says it’s all about the music.

“In this story, which takes place in a time of seemingly endless war, music is the only salvation. Glorious singing between the four principals, Leonora, Manrico, Azucena and Di Luna, is the sweetness which balances the horrors,” Miller said.

Miller ran his own experimental company, Vespertine Opera Theater, and it’s his fresh perspective that attracted the attention of Seattle Opera General Director Aidan Lang. Lang selected Miller to direct the immersive chamber opera The Combat, which earned praise from The Stranger as “a profound experience of
theater" created by a "visionary director." When writing about Miller’s creation, The Seattle Times concluded: "For those who think opera is an antique, elitist art form with no connection to our own time, here is a show to change your mind."

Miller has a knack for changing peoples’ minds about opera, particularly young folks. With his own company, he encouraged attendees to get a cheap ticket, bring a flask, and treat the evening like any other night out.

Despite his track record for creating acclaimed, edgy work, Miller’s traditional presentation of Il trovatore will include grand sets, elaborate period costumes, and 75 cast members, including voices with the chops to sing several of the most difficult roles in all of opera. Alternating as Leonora are rising superstar Leah Crocetto, most recently Aida at McCaw Hall, and Centralia, Wash., native Angela Meade, a frequent Metropolitan Opera performer hailed as “the most talked about soprano of her generation” (Opera News). Alternating as Manrico are Issachah Savage (winner of Seattle Opera’s 2014 International Wagner Competition) and Martin Muehle, a German tenor making his U.S. debut. Celebrated Maestro Carlo Montanaro, a frequent Verdi conductor at Seattle Opera, is at the podium.

Despite the fact that this opera is more than 150 years old, Il trovatore will still offer much food for thought in 2018. The character Azucena, for example, is an outsider—a Romani woman—who becomes a scapegoat for the dominant society.

"Why is it so easy to marginalize and exclude our fellow human beings?” Miller said. “Who do we choose to trust, or believe, and whose voices are easily dismissed, or considered irrelevant? Great operas of the past can teach us much about ourselves, if we let them.”

Il trovatore opens Saturday, Jan. 12 and runs through Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019. Tickets are available online at seattleopera.org, by calling 206.389.7676, or in person at the box office located at the Opera Center, 363 Mercer Street (beginning
in mid-December). Box office hours are Monday-Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Groups save at least 20 percent: 206.676.5588 or groups@seattleopera.org.

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**Il trovatore**
Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano
In Italian with English captions

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall
Performances: January 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23, 25, and 26, 2019

Approximate Running Time: 2 hours, 55 minutes with one intermission
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.
Premiere: Teatro Apollo, Rome, Italy; January 19, 1853

Cast:
Leonora
Leah Crocetto (Jan. 12, 16, 20, & 25)
Angela Meade* (Jan. 13, 19, 23, & 26)

Manrico
Issachah Savage (Jan. 12, 16, 20, & 25)
Martin Muehle* (Jan. 13, 19, 23, & 26)

Azucena
Elena Gabouri (Jan. 12, 16, 20, & 25)
Nora Sourouzian* (Jan. 13, 19, 23, & 26)

Di Luna
Lester Lynch (Jan. 12, 16, 20, & 25)
Michael Mayes* (Jan. 13, 19, 23, & 26)

Ferrando
Adam Lau

Inez
Nerys Jones*

Ruiz
John Marzano*

Conductor
Carlo Montanaro

Directed by
Dan Wallace Miller

Original Set & Costume Designer
John Conklin

Costume Designer
Candace Frank

Associate Set Designer
Christopher Mumaw

Chorusmaster
John Keene

* Company Debut

2018/19 Season Sponsor: Lenore M. Hanauer

Production Sponsors: Seattle Opera Foundation, Ann P. Wyckoff

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