

Press Release: November 11, 2007

**A top-notch 'Lucia' from a top-notch opera company.  
Granite State delivers again. OperaOnline.us**

Poor Lucia, in love with Edgardo, not only betrothed by her brother, Enrico, to the elderly, but wealthy and influential, Arturo; but betrayed by her chaplain, Raimondo and everyone else into believing that Edgardo has left her, abandoning her to her brother's cruel whim. What's a poor girl to do? In this case, being opera, why not just finish off Arturo on his wedding night, then complete the mission by finishing off oneself and parading in front of her late husband's court - blood-splattered and distraught and, well, dying in front of everyone as a final protest? But then, what if, Edgardo didn't leave her after all, but returns and discovers she is now dead? What's a man to do, but join her.

Ah, opera! It's fun to talk about; but then, when done right, it's something to rave about, too, and Sunday afternoon's performance of this Donizetti favorite, "Lucia di Lammermoor," performed by Granite State Opera was another production worthy of high praise in all respects - from an outstanding cast of talented performers, to a solid performance from a top-notch orchestra, under the able leadership of Maestro Philip Lauriat, that always manages to sound decidedly like more than 31 musicians, to some pretty magnificent scenery. The audience wasn't disappointed - and neither was this reviewer.

In Lucia, there are some pretty fantastic melodic duets, quartets and sextets, as in the intriguing "Chi me frena in tal momento" which occurs at the end of the second Act. Bravisimo! Phil Lauriat, artistic director, says it's one of the "Oh my God moments," and he is right, it was!

Where to begin? Let's work our way up to the performers, by first commenting on the sets, courtesy of Stivanello Costumes Co., Inc, designed by Sormani of Milano. the inside of a Scottish Castle never looked so real of imposing; the interior scenes were breathtakingly beautiful and lit magnificently by the very astute, Quentin Stockwell, who also gave us some pretty impressive lightening through the windows. It is embellishments such as these that make good opera even better. Indeed, when the audience applauds when the curtains part, you know you're going to be in for a thrilling visual ride, as this was.

The Capitol Theater for the Arts was filled to near capacity for this performance and the feeling of satisfaction was contagious thanks in no small part to some pretty solid performances from this remarkable cast, most notably from coloratura soprano Barbara Kilduff for giving us a vocally textured and technically flawless performance as Lucia, and for blending all this perfectly with some solid stage acting, too. Brava!

Tenor Eric Fennell, singing the role of Edgardo, Lucia's lover; Bass Mark Cleveland, singing the role of Raimondo, the chaplain; tenor Steven Carpenter, singing the role of the wealthy Arturo; and baritone Jimi James, singing the role of Enrico, Lucia's brother, all demonstrated not only strong vocal talents throughout but, with the exception of Mr. Fennell, whose voice seemed to get lost when singing against others, gave a robust accounting of themselves in their ability to act. Indeed, this ensemble had no difficulty in drawing the audience into the story and into those special moments, as Maestro Lauriat described them, of which there were many in this production.

Granite State Opera is scoring high with some pretty impressive performances, and this "Lucia," has to be ranked as one of its best for its authentic look, its moody feel, and a very talented ensemble cast. Opera fans, take note: Granite State Opera is worthy of a second and third look, and a very appreciative look at that. Job well done, again!