



Grimeborn 2013: Reviews

Cosi fan tutte

“Grimeborn 2013 Festival kicked off with Opera 24 performing a new English version of ‘Cosi Fan Tutte’. David’s translation is vibrant and funny teasing out much of the irony within the piece. ... Beautiful performances from the cast are supported by seven strong instrumentalists. Perched up on the compact gallery platform the musicians bring all the depth and beauty of Mozart’s opera to the fore. Conductor John Jansson is a flamboyant leader.” **N16Mag.com**

“An adaptation that mostly manages to strike a pleasing balance between eighteenth and twenty-first century versions of *Così*. A great evening’s entertainment.” **British Theatre Guide**

Exquisite Corpses

“The title Exquisite Corpses prepared me for a maudlin evening, so it was a pleasant surprise to find that much of the performance had a character of precise but unpredictable folly. ... The multimedia combination of projected graphics and readily observable performance choices brilliantly married avant-garde concepts with audience accessibility. The Vocal Constructivists are a serious enterprise with laudable artistic aims. I eagerly await their next venture.” **OneStopArts ★★★**

The Magic Flute

“A charmingly simple theatrical performance and a compelling musical accompaniment. Musical director Christopher Glynn leads a flawless arrangement from the Quintessence Wind Ensemble and Eka Quartet. The production is low key, family-friendly, musically excellent. Coloratura soprano Anna Rajah is a bewitchingly passionate Queen of the Night, and her performance of the notoriously difficult ‘The Vengeance Of Hell Boils In My Heart’ is commendably pitch-perfect. Ben Thapa (Tamino) and Helen Bailey (Pamina) make for consistently strong tenor and soprano leads.” **PlaysToSee ★★★**

Dido and Aeneas

“Formed last year, Eboracum Baroque is a group of early-music students or recent graduates. ... There is much that impresses - especially the enthusiastic, well-drilled chorus that relishes the

diverse roles of restrained courtiers, hissing witches and boozy sailors. Conductor Chris Parsons imparts assured musical integrity to cast and band (string quartet and harpsichord). A promising debut." **The Stage**

The Viagron/ Kettlehead

"The real highlight of Grimeborn is always going to be the opportunity to see new works by ambitious young composers performed by up and coming vocal talent. Site Zero Opera are at the heart of this creative push. The double bill on display at the Arcola is a potent and uncompromising look at the shapes and sounds of modernist chamber work. ... Gieshoff's score is superlative; a taut orchestral construction of pitches and yaws swirls around voices beautifully singing about the decay of man. It is haunting, evocative, and well constructed, managing to fit a vast swathe of material into an hour without ever failing to convey change and movement between sections." **PlaysToSee** ★ ★ ★

The Miller's Wife

"Soaring arias and such intense emotion. The opera was a broad, dramatic piece. The sheer power and talent of the vocal skills of the leads, coupled with the skilful score, left no doubt that this was a talented cast doing justice to an expertly written piece." **PlaysToSee.com** ★ ★ ★ ★

"The Miller's Wife is a fantastic triumph for Mike Christie. For a debut opera it's packed with plenty of great arias, strong melodies, fantastic performances and story that will keep you guessing (and get you talking after the show). The Miller's Wife is destined for great things." **Entertainment Focus** ★ ★ ★ ★

Pelléas et Mélisande

"Imaginative staging, brilliant acting, superb singing, horrifying finale: this fantastic production brings Maeterlinck's philosophical fairytale to glorious life, in a minimalist vision which allows the myriad images of Debussy's beautiful music to glow and shine. ... Arcola Theatre's coproduction with Bury Court Opera, directed by Aylin Bozok, is a masterclass in restrained intensity." **OneStopArts** ★ ★ ★ ★

Debussy's only finished opera is not a simple work but you won't see it done more persuasively than in Aylin Bozok's production. It's been a great August for Fringe Opera in London. But in terms of punching above its weight, the pick of it is Grimeborn's coherent and superbly sung take on Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande. Extremely good." **Evening Standard** ★ ★ ★ ★

"Debussy's symbolist masterpiece is the surprise hit of London's cheekiest summer opera festival: The idea of staging Debussy's elusive masterpiece in downtown Dalston is pretty wild. But Arcola Theatre's production of Pelléas et Mélisande is an impossible dream made flesh. ... The vocal calibre is consistently high. The Swiss-Turkish director Aylin Bozok understands Pelléas et Mélisande better than most directors who've tackled its mysteries. It's a production full of such simple, carefully-considered points of interpretation." **WhatsOnStage** ★ ★ ★ ★

Lament

“As Lament opens, the Arcola Theatre’s minimalistic set intimately encloses the audience around the stage area, creating an atmosphere charged with intensity and passion. The psychological symphony of sound hits the audience from the start as we find ourselves immersed in another’s suffering. ...Slater delivers a true and passionate performance. Her capabilities as an opera singer are impressive.” **PlaysToSee★★★★**

Handel Furioso

“What lifts this enjoyable evening above so many similar works is the combined skills of both performance and production, with Max Hoehn's simple but remarkably effective staging making exquisite use of the Arcola's intimate space.” **London Fringe - Outstanding Show**

“This performance was in the wonderfully appropriate spirit of baroque pasticcio, using arias and duets from Handel’s Italian operas and oratorios. ... The intimate space of the Arcola Theatre was an atmospheric setting for a chamber performance from Isle of Noise. First performed as a double bill at the Grimeborn Festival in 2012, Handel Furioso has now developed into a fully-fledged production of its own. And what a delightful performance this was.” **Opera Britannia★★★★**

In a continuation of the new and innovative operas presented during the Grimeborn Opera Festival Handel Furioso clocks in at around 80 minutes, more of a brief but delightful dream than a major event, and along with the unorthodox narrative and style this might be enough to put off those expecting something less peculiar. However, most will find themselves absorbed in the magnetic performances, the baroque music and the gentle atmosphere and will leave wanting more from this exciting new opera company. **PlaysToSee★★★★**

Strekoza i Muravej

“The eight-piece orchestra was the highlight of the evening. The music, composed by Brian Hosefros, was absolutely fantastic; a breath-taking blend of mainly strings and woodwind instruments, resulting in haunting melodies which were very tense at times. Conductor Matthew Waldren was captivating ... Madeline Holmes (Soprano) gave a stunning performance as Strekoza. Musically outstanding” **PlaysToSee★★★**

Eros and Psyche & Quays and Laila **PlaysToSee*****