

OPERA NEWS

North America, Online Exclusive

Fidelio

Opera Company of Middlebury
MIDDLEBURY, VT

A CONVERTED NEW ENGLAND TOWN HALL was convincingly converted into an appropriate facility for the Opera Company of Middlebury (VT) to manifest itself for its ongoing twentieth anniversary. Beethoven's *Fidelio* (seen June 2 and 10) was the anniversary season's ongoing solid anchor. The opera demands theatricality, vocally demanding voices, and a good pit orchestra to be sculpturally solidified. It worked, thanks to the evocative staging by artistic director, Douglas Anderson. With minimum props, lighting, and a limited space, it evoked references to Argentinian dictatorship.

Fidelio needs stentorian vocalism. Theatrical blocking created some perceptive, contrapuntal fabric, that included the lucid canonic "Mir ist Wonderbar."

Opera Company of Middlebury continues to bring fine younger singers to its productions. Rebecca Krynski Cox, as Leonore, sang with an ecstatic combination of characterization and lyric/dramatic vocal sound with great control in "Abscheulicher." James Flora as Florestan, was a solid and full sounding Heldentenor. Erik Kroncke sang the role of Rocco for the first two performances, with his full sounding voice. Isaiah Musik-Ayala completed the run. He possesses a smooth sound in the role's wide range.

Andrea Baker manifested a clear, bright coloratura soprano, as Marzeline. Lucas Levy, the Jaquino, has a voice we would enjoy again. John Paul Huckle, a fine singer, was a conniving, sinister Don Pizarro. Jesús Vincente Murillo sang Don Fernando with elegance.

The company's new musical director, Filippo Ciabatti, handled the vocalists, choirs and excellent orchestra with panache, control and support. The principal challenge was there was no actual pit. The orchestra was supportive to the voices, and the small house. The well-prepared chorus shone in "O Welche Lust." —*William Tortolano*