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OPERA
LOCOS
YLLANA
MAX AWARD 2019 BEST MUSICAL SHOW
COMIC OPERA Show
With the best Opera HITS of all time
RAMI ELDAR
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PERFORMIG ARTS & MUSIC MANAGEMENT

AN EVENING FULL OF OPERA AND HUMOR

A comic opera show for all ages
An egos battle full of opera and humor

Sinopsis

An unusual *troupe* of five eccentric opera singers are about to perform a repertoire of the greatest composers of their genre. Throughout the show they each reveal to us their hidden passions and desires that will bring unpredictable and hilarious consequences. It will be a night to remember!

The Show

The Opera Locos is a comic opera show where five exceptional lyrical singers perform some of the most well-known opera hits sometimes combined in a clever and original way with rock and pop classics.

The Opera Locos wants to push opera closer to a general audience in a new, fresh and original way with high standards in technique and overall artistic discipline. The show integrates a variety of opera numbers with Yllana's physical comedy style to create a truly spectacular experience for audiences of all ages.

Singers: María Rey-Joly, Mayca Teba, Antonio Comas, Enrique Sánchez-Ramos, Jesús García Gallera, Irene Palazón, María Maciá, Jesús Álvarez, Jorge Tello and Alberto Frías · **Original idea:** YLLANA and Rami Eldar · **Created and directed by:** YLLANA · **Artistic Direction:** David Ottone and Joe O'Curneen · **Musical Direction:** Marc Álvarez y Manuel Coves · **Choreography:** Carlos Chamorro · **Set design:** Tatiana De Sarabia, David Ottone and Yeray González · **Light design:** Pedro Pablo Melendo · **Sound design:** Luis López de Segovia · **Costume design:** Tatiana de Sarabia · **Makeup design:** Tatiana de Sarabia, Sara Álvarez and ARTMAKERS · **Musical direction assistant:** Javier Carmena · **Costume assistant:** Yeray González · **Music recorded by** Orquesta Sinfónica VERUM / Manuel Coves · **Tailor:** Maribel Rodríguez RH · **Costume setting:** Davina Fillol · **Hats:** Diana García · **Set construction:** SCNIK MÓVIL, S.A. · **Sound technician on tour:** Carlos Calvo · **Stage technician on tour:** Antonio de la Torre · **Photos/Video:** Lighuen De Santos · **Press and Media**: Rosa Arroyo, María Crespo

Teaser

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Yllana was founded in 1991 as a theatre company that found its voice through visual comedy and non-verbal humour. Over time, its creative universe has expanded, exploring new ways of storytelling and connecting with audiences through the performing arts and audiovisual media.

Creative, versatile and innovative, Yllana is dedicated, on the one hand, to the creation, production and distribution of stage productions, events and audiovisual formats and, on the other, to the management of theatre venues and the development of a wide range of cultural projects, including teaching and artistic training. Yllana's members are Juan Francisco Ramos, MZooarcos Ottone, David Ottone, Joseph O'Curneen and Fidel Fernández.

Over the past 35 years, Yllana has produced 42 theatre shows: These productions have been performed more than 16,000 times in 48 countries and seen by nearly 6 million spectators.

Internationally, Yllana has enjoyed theatrical runs in New York, Montreal, Mexico City, Rome, London and Paris, and has taken part in prestigious international festivals such as the New York Fringe Festival (USA), where 666 received the Outstanding Unique Theatrical Event Award in 2009; the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (UK), where Flamenc Oh!! received the Seoul Arts Award for Best Global Performance in 2026, and PaGAGnini was awarded Best Show of the Fringe by the editors of Three Weeks in 2008; the Just for Laughs Festival in Montreal (Canada); the Moers Comedy Arts Festival (Germany), where the company received the Moerser Comedy Preis; and the Printemps des Courges Festival in Toulouse (France), where it was recognised with the Spectacle Étranger award, among others.

In Argentina, The Opera Locos received three Hugo Musical Theatre Awards in 2026 (Best Music Hall, Café Concert and/or Musical Variety Show, Best Male Performance, and Best Female Performance), as well as an ACE Award for Best Music Hall / Café Concert Show.

In Spain, Yllana performs regularly in all major cities and has been awarded, a host of prizes, worth highlighting here are: the Max Award for Best Children's Production, awarded to Zoo in 2010; and the Max Award for Best Musical Theatre Production, awarded to The Opera Locos in 2019.

Yllana is a dynamic and cutting-edge creative powerhouse, recognised nationally and internationally within the cultural sector. Its commitment to innovation and artistic excellence has established it as a benchmark in stage production and cultural management.

More information at www.yllana.com.

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LA STAMPA
torinosette
PRESS

The OPERA LOCOS

JOE O'CURNEEN DEGLI YLLANA al Colosseo mercoledì 31 dicembre

"Cantiamo Puccini, Bizet e Celine Dion il nostro tenore fa il prof con il pubblico"

IL DIRETTORE DEL GRUPPO SPAGNOLO CHE CHIUDE IL 2025 CON "OPERA LOCOS": "È TEATRO FISICO E LIRICA"

LUCA MORINO

Si festeggia il **31 dicembre** al Colosseo con lo spettacolo "Opera Locos" della compagnia spagnola Yllana. Inizio alle 22 ma a partire dalle 21 il pubblico sarà accolto con un rinfresco dopocena e un brindisi collettivo prima di assistere all'originale comic opera show, vincitore del premio Max 2019 come Miglior Spettacolo Musicale in Spagna. Opera Locos è un'esplosione di gioiosa energia dove famose arie della lirica, teatro fisico e comicità surreale vengono messi in scena da cinque cantanti lirici dallo spiccato talento attoriale: ognuno di loro rappresenta un personaggio molto ben connotato, grazie anche a un meraviglioso lavoro sui costumi. L'immaginario dell'opera si apre così a contaminazioni burlesque, a volte addirittura fumettistiche, che ne rivelano tutta la vitalità contemporanea. Impossibile non pensare all'estetica stravagante e ultra pop di certi film di Tim Burton, come Alice nel paese delle meraviglie o La fabbrica di cioccolato. Assieme a Yllana arriva anche Joe O'Curneen, direttore artistico della compagnia.

Come è nata l'idea di questo spettacolo?

«La compagnia Yllana è sempre andata nella direzione del teatro gestuale, con un taglio comico e senza l'uso delle parole, pescando un po' dall'eredità di Jacques Lecoq, Marcel Marceau ma anche Charlie Chaplin e Buster Keaton. L'obiettivo di Opera Locos era cercare di far rendere al meglio il gesto con una delle massime espressioni musicali occidentali. È stato un percorso molto interessante».

Qual è la trama narrativa?

«La storia è abbastanza leggera perché deve essere facilmente compresa e il tema principale è l'amore per la musica lirica: i cantanti giocano con la rottura e la ricostruzione della cosiddetta "quarta parete" (l'immaginaria barriera che si crea tra attori e pubblico, nda) per creare un continuo coinvolgimento degli spettatori. Ogni personaggio ha una sua passione segreta che rivela durante la rappresentazione».

Ci sono anche riferimenti al rock e pop?

«Sì, uno dei personaggi, il controtenore, ha uno spirito più moderno, più libertino, che combatte contro la tendenza più conservatrice del tenore, secondo cui la vera musica è solo quella lirica: a un certo punto quindi si citano anche artiste pop come Whitney Houston oe Celine Dion e la gente apprezza molto».

Vi capita che il pubblico si metta a cantare le arie con i cantanti?

«Sì, è un'esperienza quasi circense: a un certo punto il baritono, che rappresenta un po' il professore della troupe, propone una sorta di masterclass in diretta con gli spettatori per valutarne il livello culturale in fatto di opera».

Secondo lei cosa potrebbero pensare Puccini o Bizet nel sentire questo trattamento delle loro opere?

«Ci abbiamo pensato parecchio e credo che l'obiettivo di tutti gli artisti sia entrare in connessione con lo spettatore: probabilmente Puccini, nel vedere reazioni così divertite del pubblico, non potrebbe provare altro che soddisfazione. D'altra parte l'obiettivo dello spettacolo è proprio quello di far conoscere a una platea più ampia i capolavori immortali dell'opera».

Lo spettacolo offre qualche momento di pausa, dove il pubblico possa comodamente annoiarsi?

«Purtroppo credo che non sia possibile (ride). Quando si realizza un live del genere il tempo è elemento fondamentale e bisogna escludere qualsiasi calo di attenzione. Un lavoro non lo consideriamo veramente terminato fino a quando non viene eliminata anche la minima possibilità di generare noia. Per noi sarebbe un peccato mortale». —

LA LOCANDIERA al Gioiello

La Mirandolina di Torino Spettacoli

Un grande classico del teatro italiano accompagna il pubblico nell'ultima sera del 2025 al Teatro Gioiello, in via Cristoforo Colombo 31. "La Locandiera" di Carlo Goldoni, nell'edizione della Compagnia Torino Spettacoli, va in scena mercoledì 31 alle 21,30, in una speciale recita di fine anno. L'allestimento, diretto da Enrico Fasella, vede protagonista Miriam Mesturino nel ruolo principale, affiancata da Luciano Caratto. La trama è governata dalla figura di Mirandolina, donna acuta e indipendente che gestisce la sua locanda e il gioco sottile delle relazioni che la attraversano. Il costo del biglietto è di 70 euro. Informazioni su teatrogioiello.it. A. INC. —

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EL INDEPENDIENTE

'The Opera Locos': yo no sé cantar. Alberto Morate

Debería escribir esta crónica cantando, y cantando ópera para ser más concretos, pero me temo que ni sé cantar, ni escribir música, ni darle el tono apropiado a este magnífico espectáculo que, a través del humor, pero también de buenísimas voces, acercan las óperas más reconocidas y, al mismo tiempo, populares, donde, además, nos hacen partícipes al público.

Incluso este cronista, que no canta ni en la ducha, ha coreado las pautas que nos daban desde el escenario, porque es tan divertido, y tan emocionalmente lírico, que cualquiera quiere subirse y entonar arias, canciones, gorgoritos, romanzas, florituras vocales, solos, o como se llamen las diferentes partes de las múltiples óperas mundialmente reconocidas.

En ***The Opera Locos***, de **Producciones Yllana**, nos lo pasamos tan bien que se nos olvida el tiempo que hace fuera y estamos más pendientes del tempo interno. Pero es que, por si fuera poco, le dan cierto argumento al montaje. No es solamente una sucesión de breves muestras de las mejoras óperas, sino que crean una pequeña trama que seguimos con simpatía, viendo las diferentes parejas, el amor, que se forman entre los ejecutantes líricos.

Esta producción fue **Premio Max al Mejor Espectáculo Musical del año 2019** y, sin duda, fue y es altamente merecido. Además, el gusto que da ver un teatro con el aforo absolutamente lleno como es el **Gran Teatro Caixabank Príncipe Pío**, en un jueves de un calurosísimo agosto indica que la elección para venir a verlo ha sido la adecuada.

Espíritu lírico

Precisamente porque no sé cantar admiro profundamente ese poderío de la voz, esa disciplina que exige el Bel canto que, aún sin entender los textos, donde la propia voz, cual poesía sonora, es capaz de emocionar, de producir la tan exigente catarsis, donde el efecto purificador y liberador hace que el cielo se abra, aunque solo sea en nuestra imaginación desbordada.

Quisiera escribir cantando, hasta tal punto me ha embargado, no por el precio de las entradas, sino en la segunda acepción de su significado, es decir, epatado, abrumado, encandilado que, contagiado por la emoción de los pulmones y las cuerdas vocales, siento el latido del corazón en el pecho, siento el hálito de la luz, aprecio la claridad de la casi luna llena que hay esta noche, y levito en el espacio que me lleva del metro a mi casa, y no puedo leer en el trayecto, solo recuerdo, no siento el calor, estoy escarchado, y ahora, el recuerdo de aquello me dicta estas palabras.

Porque no solo es el espíritu lírico, sino también el humor, y por ello, pretendo, aunque sea inútil transmitirles esa sensación alegórica y musical de la interpretación vocal, de la composición y las partituras, de la diversidad de géneros, el doremifasolsí del pecho… pero es inútil por mi torpeza, porque no sé escribir cantando ni sé cantar, aunque sea escribiendo. Para ello, mejor que mejor ***The Opera Locos*** y todo queda dicho.

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The Opera Locos: humor, amor y desamor en clave de ópera gamberra

Alberto Sanz Blanco
19 de agosto de 2025
Fotografía: Compañía

La ópera se despoja de solemnidad para abrazar el humor, el pop y la teatralidad en un espectáculo musical brillante, ingenioso y memorable de la mano de Yllana.

Este mes de agosto, el Gran Teatro CaixaBank Príncipe Pío se convierte en el escenario de una fiesta lírica muy poco convencional: "The Opera Locos". El espectáculo de Yllana, ganador del Premio Max a Mejor Espectáculo Musical (2019), regresa a Madrid con su particular cóctel de ópera, humor físico y virtuosismo vocal, dispuesto a conquistar a públicos que van del melómano convencido al espectador curioso en búsqueda de una velada diferente.

La dramaturgia parte de un planteamiento tan simple como fértil: un recital lírico que debería transcurrir con la solemnidad habitual, pero que rápidamente se descarrila víctima de los egos, los celos y las pasiones cruzadas de sus cinco protagonistas. La idea original, firmada por **Yllana y Rami Eldar**, demuestra una vez más la inagotable capacidad de la compañía para reinventarse: un caudal de propuestas que nunca se agota ni pasa de moda y vuelve a situarse en la categoría de sobresaliente. Sobre esa premisa, el montaje construye una comedia de enredos donde cada personaje responde a un arquetipo reconocible —el tenor venido a menos, el barítono arrogante, el contratenor aniñado, la soprano soñadora y la mezzo felina—. La acción avanza a base de viñetas cortas que conjugan grandes arias con gags visuales, siempre impulsadas por la psicología de los intérpretes y no por un simple encadenado de chistes. Esa claridad en las líneas internas permite al espectador seguir con facilidad el juego de rivalidades y enamoramientos, mientras la música se convierte en el hilo conductor dramático y no en mera exhibición vocal.

La trama se sostiene sobre tres líneas argumentales. En primer lugar, el romance entre un tenor veterano venido a menos que arrastra la nostalgia de sus días de esplendor y la soprano que suspira por él con devoción: **Antonio Comas** y **María Rey-Joly** conforman un tándem entrañable, de ternura cómica pero sustentada en voces sólidas. En paralelo, surge la pareja inesperada formada por el severo barítono, con aires de profesor de canto, y el contratenor, un alma libre con su propia metodología: **Jorge Tello** y **Jesús García Gallera** se entregan a un juego de opuestos que funciona como motor humorístico. La tercera línea la encarna la mezzo, **Mayca Teba**, mujer felina y arrolladora quien por sus propios medios conseguirá conquistar a quien menos se lo espere.

La dirección lleva la firma de **David Ottone y Joe O'Curneen**, dos nombres habituales en la columna vertebral creativa de Yllana. Su sello es reconocible desde el primer minuto: un humor físico milimétrico, construido sobre el gesto, la mirada y el timing escénico. Cada movimiento, pausa y caída están coreografiados con precisión de relojero, hasta el punto de que la partitura visual funciona como una segunda orquesta paralela a la musical. Este acierto recae en primera persona en el trabajo coreográfico de **Carlos Chamorro**. La apuesta es clara: convertir el virtuosismo vocal en combustible cómico sin perder calidad técnica. Aquí reside gran parte del mérito del montaje: lograr atraer tanto a los espectadores familiarizados con el género como a quienes nunca se han acercado a la ópera. Esa capacidad de traducir códigos complejos en humor accesible es, de nuevo, una de las razones por las que Yllana sigue siendo única.

La dirección musical de **Marc Álvarez** y **Manuel Coves** se apoya en un repertorio cuidadosamente escogido en torno a una idea universal: el amor y el desamor. No se trata de un simple desfile de "grandes éxitos", sino de un conjunto de piezas que dialogan con los personajes y sus enredos. Entre ellas asoman la melancolía de "Vesti la giubba", la sensualidad de la "Habanera", la delicadeza de la "Barcarolle" o la apoteosis de "Nessun dorma", títulos fácilmente reconocibles y que aquí cobran una nueva dimensión cómica sin perder intensidad lírica. Además de la ópera, el espectáculo integra clásicos pop que van de Whitney Houston y Mika a Sinatra o Elton John. Lejos de "colarse" por pura complicidad generacional, estos guiños lubrican transiciones, disparan gags musicales y portan frescura y ligereza a un género que a menudo puede percibirse como sobrio y encorsetado.

Imagen promocional del espectáculo

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El acompañamiento de la Orquesta Sinfónica Verum, en pista grabada, asegura precisión y favorece el timing escénico necesario para la comedia. El mayor temor —que la voz no se acoplara con naturalidad a esa base— se desvanece pronto: todo fluye con sorprendente armonía y permite al lucimiento vocal brillar en primer plano. **Antonio Comas** (tenor) da vuelo a los pasajes más líricos, **María Rey-Joly** (soprano) enfrenta con solvencia las coloraturas, **Mayca Teba** (mezzo) aporta carácter y sensualidad, **Jesús García Gallera** (contratenor) brilla en su registro agudo con comicidad y **Jorge Tello** (barítono) redondea el quinteto con solidez y autoridad.

La construcción escenográfica, diseñada por **Tatiana de Sarabia, David Ottone y Yeray González**, introduce al espectador en un universo a medio camino entre lo circense y lo cabaretero. La gran boca de entrada recuerda a las ferias clásicas, mientras que el resto del espacio alterna la estética de una sala de fiestas decadente con un **camerino minimalista** para contraste y cierta intimidad. Esa mezcla de estilos genera un aire onírico, casi irreal, que refuerza la sensación de estar asistiendo a un delirio musical más que a un recital convencional.

El **vestuario de Tatiana de Sarabia** continúa esa línea: exagerado, colorista y con toques de sátira con reminiscencias tanto al clasicismo operístico como al desenfado del pop. Cada traje perfila con ironía la arquitectura del personaje y convierte al elenco en figuras que parecen sacadas de una farsa soñada. La iluminación de **Pedro Pablo Melendo** contribuye a esa atmósfera cambiante: luces que pasan de la solemnidad operística a la explosión cómica en cuestión de segundos, delineando el tono híbrido de la propuesta. Por último, el diseño de sonido **de Luis López de Segovia** garantiza la limpieza necesaria en un espectáculo donde se entrelazan voces en directo, orquesta grabada y gags musicales, evitando que la comicidad o el efecto paródico resten claridad a la interpretación. En definitiva, el resultado escénico es un espacio vivo, flexible y simbólico, capaz de sostener tanto la grandilocuencia de un aria como el desenfado de una parodia pop sin romper la coherencia del universo planteado.

Alianza Hispanica

The OPERA LOCOS

Eduardo Jáudenes de Salazar (CEO de ESCENADEI)

Una peculiar troupe de ópera, compuesta por cinco excéntricos cantantes, se dispone a realizar un recital con un repertorio de los más grandes compositores del género. A lo largo de la representación se irán desvelando las pasiones ocultas y los anhelos de cada uno de ellos, que traerán consecuencias disparatadas e impredecibles. ¡Será una noche para recordar!

Cinco cantantes líricos son los protagonistas de The Opera Locos, un espectáculo cómico operístico en el que los grandes éxitos de la ópera se fusionan con otros estilos musicales de la forma más original. Con una singular puesta en escena, cuidada estética y el sentido de la comedia de Yllana, The Opera Locos consigue crear una experiencia nueva y diferente a la hora de experimentar la ópera y, sobre todo, acercarla a todos los públicos de una manera fresca, inusual y divertida.

"The Opera Locos" se ha representado ya en muchos países, como Francia, Brasil, Estados Unidos, Corea, Noruega, Turquía, República Checa, Portugal y México y ha sido galardonado con el Premio Max de las Artes escénicas como Mejor Espectáculo Musical en 2019, Premios Estruch 2019 como Mejor Espectáculo, Premio del público de Nit de les Guineuetes 2022.

The Opera Locos es una obra de asistencia obligada para todos los amantes de los espectáculos de calidad.

Todos los elementos de la obra The Opera Locos permiten dejarnos llevar por la imaginación del autor, haciendo funcionar las neuronas espejo y creándose una comunicación entre la obra y los espectadores. Ese punto mágico de absorción del oyente que sólo las grandes interpretaciones consiguen, donde los espectadores se convierten en energía.

Cuando vemos The Opera Locos y vivimos la borrachera de los sentidos, que nos enseña a vivir, comprobamos la diferencia entre espectáculo, arte y arte fascinante: el espectáculo se convierte en arte cuando absorbe los sentidos del espectador y el arte en fascinante, cuando además de los sentidos absorbe su alma y consigue abrir los corazones a la emoción, parece que la técnica lo abarca todo pero de nada sirve si no está al servicio del arte, ese pequeña línea, pero importantísima, que separa el mero espectáculo del arte fascinante, eso solo se logra cuando se interpreta con amor, buscando la perfección, la belleza y el buen hacer, se da plenamente en este espectáculo, donde prevaleció en todo momento la estética, la pasión, la buena música, la belleza, la poesía, el virtuosismo y la emoción.

Todos los artistas están magistrales en sus respectivos personajes.

Mereció la pena, sin lugar a dudas, montar y ver esta función.

Una obra que no te puedes perder bajo ningún concepto.

En The Opera Locos prevalece en todo momento la estética y el buen teatro lírico, la belleza, la poesía, el virtuosismo y la emoción.

No dejen de ir al GRAN TEATRO CAIXA BANK PRINCIPE PIO, me lo agradecerán.

RAMI ELDAR

YLLANA

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The Opera Locos
Rating: ★★★★ ½

Venue: Peacock Theatre, LondonCast: Enrique Sánchez-Ramos, Jesús Álvarez, María Rey-Joly, Mayca Teba and Michaël Koné.

Following a successful run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in summer 2023, award-winning Spanish theatre company Yllana brings The Opera Locos to the West End. The Opera Locos is a comic opera show where five lyrical singers combine well-known opera classics including La Traviata and Madama Butterfly with rock and pop hits from Whitney Houston to Mika. The show integrates these musical genres with Yllana's physical comedy style to create a show for audiences of all ages.

The Opera Locos is created and co-directed by Joseph O'Curneen and David Ottone with musical direction by Marc Alvarez & Manuel Coves, costumes and set design by Tatiana de Sarabia and lighting design by Pedro Pablo Melendo. From its success at Edinburgh Fringe, this comedy opera is taking audiences around Europe by storm and has finally hit London's West End for its premiere.

The Opera Locos will ensure you leave the theatre with a smile on your face. Whether solo or with friends, the production makes for a fun night out, as there's something for everyone.

By the title of the show, you may think it leans towards classical opera and for some that would turn them away. However what O'Curneen and Ottone have created is a modern comedy opera filled with the classic operatic arias, with well-known current songs in the mix. The way this is done is truly clever and something I haven't seen on stage.

The staging is simple and gives focus to the performers, as the music is the leading force of the show. This goes hand in hand with the incredible lighting design. What Melendo does with the lighting ensures that it flows effortlessly with both the acting and music and enhances the storytelling well. The orchestra is utterly extraordinary and the vocal talent of this cast is jaw dropping; they make singing opera look so effortless.

From the lighting, to the music, to the five phenomenal actors, the show flowed beautifully. Something I am very passionate about is the pacing of a show and it was done expertly; the cast kept the audience's attention for the entire show.

The standout for me was the opera masterclass portion. This included house lights on and audience participation - something I definitely did not expect! But thought it was a hilarious addition, and a fresh take on theatregoing. As a trained vocalist, I was transported back to various vocal lessons with silly yet effective warm-ups.

As a whole, The Opera Locos is a feel good show for anyone - whether you're a die-hard fan of opera, or you feel indifferent to the genre. It's clearly meant as an escape from reality for an hour and a half and it certainly does that. That being said, I do wish it was slightly longer - I was having too much fun!

You can catch The Opera Locos at the Peacock Theatre until 11 May

RAMI ELDAR

PLAYS TO SEE
International Theatre Reviews

The Opera Locos Tim Hochstrasser 12/05/2024

4****

This brief, charming residency at the Peacock Theatre offers a light-touch introduction to opera to those new to the genre and wary of negotiating its conventions. It also rewards afficianados with knowing and affectionate tributes to opera tropes and droll delivery of famous numbers showcased in gently comic scenarios.

The evening is quite short, running to little over 90 minutes including an interval; but each of the many scenes packs a real musical and comic punch, so that it certainly seems like a full programme. What we have here are five skilled Spanish opera singers with an excellent grasp of core repertory willing to engage playfully with opera stereotypes. So we have Alfredo, a portly tenor past his best, wheezing to a halt in 'Nessun dorma.' Obsessed with him is Maria, a naive soprano determined to live out romantic dreams. Alongside them is Carmen, a feisty mezzo, determined to go her own way like her own operatic namesake. Finally there is another unlikely pair – Franelli, a gauche and goofy counter-tenor, and Enrique, the swaggering baritone, who learns to find the tenderness within the toreador.

The set is minimalist, just a couple of dressing tables for backstage scenes, and a curtained back-drop for concealment and reveal. But the costumes and wigs are appropriately lavish, both period and punk in their appeal. There is a recorded soundtrack, alternating orchestral and piano accompaniments, which wittily frame the strong vocal contributions of the cast. The numbers are not purely operatic – the singers segue into popular songs too when the emotional mood or moment suits them – so Whitney and Sinatra and others rub shoulders charmingly with Puccini, Verdi, Mozart and Handel. The extracts are just long enough to do justice to the compositions, while not overstaying their welcome in a packed running order.

A short review can only mention a few highlights, but it would be churlish not to cheer a superb pin-point account of the Queen of the Night's notoriously difficult first aria from María Rey-Joly, and to acknowledge that when we finally did get a full delivery of Nessun dorma' from Jesús Álvarez it was well worth waiting for.

An important element of the evening's success is the ability of the cast to engage with the audience, whether through physical humour and slapstick or through singalongs. Both halves end with audience participation led by Enrique Sánchez-Ramos. who has a real gift in getting the most out of an audience in no rehearsal time at all. Not only was this all great fun, but it really served to demystify opera for many and remind us all that opera was not always a remote canon, but in many cases the popular music of its own original day.

So although the tone and content of the show is always light-touch, there is a serious message there that promoters of opera would do well to heed. We could all do with a dose of Opera Locos at regular intervals.

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YLLANA
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THE RECS

The OPERA LOCOS

Opera Locos ★★★★

By The Recs LA 5 days ago

Opera Locos offer a timeless love story filled with colourful characters complete with the greatest hits of opera, all in one night

International opera group Yllana, founded in 1991, have produced over the last 33 years and graced stages across the world, performing in New York, London, Mexico, Rome, Milan and Tokyo. They now bring their opera comedy show for all the ages to The Peacock Theatre.

An eccentric troupe of opera singers are rehearsing backstage for a repertoire of the greatest well-known composers. Throughout the performance, each character's inner desires, turmoil and passions are revealed through song. Situated in this sort of limbo for a bunch of egocentric opera singers, expect colourful clowning chaos as these five exceptionally-talented singers perform some well-known opera hits with a sprinkling of pop classics.

Featuring music from Mozart, Puccini, Bizet and Rossini with a few misplaced references to Michael Jackson, a-ha and Mika, it certainly is a unique night at the Opera.

As the magenta wearing, pop-loving, boyishly charming, Counter Tenor Frinelli (Michaël Koné) breaks into certain pop hits you are reminded of certain similarities between Figaro's aria in Rossini's Largo al Factotum and Mikka's Grace Kelly, this choice seems to succeed in relaxing the opera novices but whether it was actually needed or whether it cheapened the experience overall for cheap laughs, is up for debate.

Expect 'pantoesque' audience participation from Enrique (Enrique Sánchez-Ramos), the persistent Baritone maestro, and finally to find a use for somehow knowing the tunes to Mozart and Beethoven. Being allowed to sing along is always good fun, and during an opera it feels like breaking the rules.

The tragic love story of tenor Alberto (Jesús Álvarez), plagued by his inner turmoil of past fame and no longer being able to hit the notes of Nessun Dorma, and the naïve and sweet lovesick soprano, Maria (María Rey-Joly) is woven through the performance and is a simplistically-beautiful portrayal of unwavering love and adoration.

The rambunctious, passionate, mezzo soprano, Carmen (Mayca Teba), whose infatuation with an audience member leads to a performance of Whitney Houston's I Will Always Love You, brings chaos and humour in abundance.

There are times throughout the show where the audience is watching three different stories: Alfredo and Maria's love story, Enrique desperately trying to prevent Frinelli from bursting to a-ha and a Michael Jackson hee-hee and Carmen providing a one-woman show, in which she just wants to be loved, and hearing her rendition of I Will Always Love You sung in a classical style coupled with her flirtatious clowning is an experience in itself.

The audience is often left clutching for a narrative for the comfort of the story, which appears at times with each character's journey, but does tend to get lost from plot to plot. Opera Locos offer a funny, albeit confusing, two hours of clowning and opera with a sprinkling of pop, far from a genteel evening at the opera but a lot of fun.

Colourful clowning and chaos in this fun-for-all-the-family opera – ★★★★ 4 stars

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LondonTheatre1

The Opera Locos – Peacock Theatre |

Review By John Groves / May 10, 2024

The word “Locos” in the title has, unfortunately, nothing to do with steam trains (the reason I wanted to see it!), but stands for “crazy”, which at times it is! Five singers, soprano Maria Rey-Joly, mezzo Mayca Teba, tenor Jesus Alvarez, baritone Enrique Sanchez-Ramos and counter tenor Michael Kone, sing a medley of well known operatic arias, plus songs such as ‘Granada’, ‘Funiculi-Funicula’, ‘Plaisir d’Amor’ and ‘O Sole Mio’ to an accompaniment of a backing track consisting of either full orchestra, or, more frequently, piano and drums/keyboard. The show, conceived and directed by Yllana (David Ottone and Joe O’Curneen) was first seen in 2018, and played on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe last year.

In ninety-five minutes, the company whisk zanily through a vague plot that involves Alfredo, a worn-out tenor with a glorious past (Alvarez), Enrique (Sanchez-Ramos), the baritone precise in his macho swagger, Franelli (Kone) quirky and pop-loving, Maria (Rey-Joly) dreamy and naive and Carmen (Teba) who is “wild”. To be honest, as there is no dialogue, all the music is sung in its original language and because the cast’s mime skills are not that explicit, it is almost impossible to follow the plot! In fact during the interval many in the audience could be heard asking the front-of-house staff if they could buy a programme: it was a great shame that there weren’t any!!!! BUT for those used to opera the plot is usually unimportant anyway: just listen to the singing!

The well-known music includes arias, duets and short scenes from The Magic Flute, La Traviata (the Brindisi, which we were all invited to sing!), La Boheme (the finale to Act Two!), Madama Butterfly (One Fine Day of course!), The Barber of Seville (Figaro….) plus the above mentioned Neapolitan songs, and numbers by Bob Marley and Celine Dion as well as Frank Sinatra’s ‘My Way’! Perhaps the best sequence was when the audience was encouraged to individually “explore” ‘La Donna e Mobile’ from Rigoletto, some of us sitting in the stalls being “invited” to contribute one note, mine being the highest!

The show ends with a sort of English language Pop Megamix which, although enjoyed by the audience, seems out of place and “tacked on”, as if to “fill out” the otherwise rather brief evening. The imaginative, seemingly ever-changing costume designs were by Tatiana de Sarabia and the effective lighting by Enrique Toro. It was a shame that he could not encourage the singers to stand in his spotlights!

If I have a criticism it is that whenever the show seemed in danger of flagging, the audience was encouraged to “clap along” even when, after a few attempts, it was obvious that they did not want to!! Only a few ever joined in, for a few seconds!

A mildly amusing and entertaining show from a very hard-working cast, perhaps especially recommended to those who have always steered clear of opera!

Review by John Groves

In the show, a troupe of eccentric opera singers embark on a performance of repertoire from the greatest operatic composers, throughout the show they each reveal their hidden passions that will bring unpredictable and comedic consequences. The group is made up of five colourful characters including Alfredo, a worn-out tenor with a glorious past, wild mezzo soprano Carmen, Enrique, the macho baritone, pop-loving counter-tenor Franelli and Maria, a naive soprano.

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The Opera Locos - Review - Peacock Theatre

The show opens following a successful run at the EdFringe

09 May 2024

Spanish theatre troupe Yllana is enchanting London's theatre scene this week with their debut of "The Opera Locos" at the Peacock Theatre, Sadler's Well's venue in Holborn. Catching the wave of their celebrated showcase at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe last summer, this comedic opera sensation is an evening of sheer delight and entertainment.

You might think you don't know your Puccini, Mozart or Verdi but this company have sprinkled a few favourites throughout alongside the more easily identifiable rhythms of rock and pop hits spanning from Whitney Houston to Mika. You might not be able to name Bizet's signature musical line, but these classics have been in adverts and jingles since forever, and this sense of familiarity keeps everyone hooked. The result is an experience that transcends the experience of opera, appealing to audiences who see everything at Covent Garden and those who know Verdi's Rigoletto from the Dr. Oetker pizza advert.

Featuring a medley of opera masterpieces by Mozart, Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, and Bizet, intertwined with iconic pop and rock anthems such as Mika's "Grace Kelly" and Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You," "The Opera Locos" doesn't differentiate between art forms. In this world where the British class system is meaningless and singers jump between Celine Dion and Puccini, there is no 'high' art (opera, ballet, Turner paintings) and 'low art' (pantomime, leather corsets, pop music, tight purple trousers), it is all just 'Art' - brave beautiful creativity that needs each other like any other symbiotic relationship.

With its blend of passion, humour, and musical virtuosity, "The Opera Locos" stands as a testament to the enduring allure of opera, with a refreshingly modern take complete with audience participation and a sense of fun more often seen in a Christmas panto. Get carried away on a theatrical journey like no other, as Yllana invites audiences to experience the magic of "The Opera Locos" up close and personal. Loved it.

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THEATRE WEEKLY

The OPERA LOCOS

Yllana The Opera Locos en el Peacock Theatre

por **Elizaveta Kolesnikova**

8 de mayo de 2024

★★★★☆

The Opera Locos at The Peacock Theatre offers a unique mix of classic opera with comedy and even clownery. Created by the Spanish theatre company Yllada, this show sees the five classic opera voices as five misfits, performing a series of funny scenes together.

The plot of the show is quite simple and follows a few romantic interests of characters in one another. Enacted through pantomime, the scenes are connected with big musical numbers, centred around the big opera hits, including Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, Verdi's La Traviata, Puccini's La Boèhme and Madama Butterfly, Rossini's Il Barbiere di Siviglia and Bizet's Carmen. There are elements of modern pop songs by the likes of Mika, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Priestly, Elton John and U2 too, but the opera is the main musical component of the show.

The numbers by the male characters – a macho baritone Enrique (Enrique Sánchez-Ramos), a worn-out tenor with a glorious past Alfredo (Jesús Álvarez), and a pop-loving counter-tenor Franelli (Michaël Koné) – feel stronger and more convincing than the female acts. The gentlemen get the chance to focus on the pieces they perform and manage to separate comic parts from the singing. The ladies always are in characters, which leads to their solos being more pitchy and abrupt.

The Opera Locos has its ups and downs with some scenes feeling too comic and distorted with singing turning into mockery of the opera. However, the main goal here is to make classic opera more accessible and relatable for regular audience members, who may feel intimidated by lengthy classics. They get to enjoy all the most popular opera arias and duos in one show, performed masterfully. While we may not have world-leading opera singers on stage here, the cast has well-trained, experienced singers. They manage to perform complex parts while dancing or enacting funny scenes.

Audience participation is a large part of the show. From the block in the first act titled «Opera Masterclass» by Enrique Sánchez-Ramos, where the audience members are invited to sing along with him to wild Carmen's (Mayca Teba) search for the date among the front row guests are brilliant comedy pieces.

The staging is simple yet efficient, with smoke and lights playing a big part in setting the mood for each scene. The costumes and make-up are eccentric, as typical for physical comedy, with each character's archetype communicated through their appearance.

The Opera Locos at The Peacock Theatre is a funny and light-hearted show that mixes opera with physical comedy and adds a dash of pop hits and audience participation to keep it lively. Running at 1.5 hours including an interval, it's a short show that could be a perfect alternative to a cabaret. Beware if you adore classic opera or hate clowns, but go for it if you looking for something new.

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THE REVIEWS HUB
THEATRE • FILM • LEISURE

The Opera Locos – Peacock Theatre, London

Reviewer: Maryam Philpott

May 9, 2024

The Reviews Hub Score ★★★★☆

Creators and Directors:YLLANA

Often perceived as austere and imposing, practitioners have spent years trying to make opera accessible through ticket price schemes, cinema screenings and pub opera proximity. Now Spanish company YLLANA make that connection between vocal storytelling and broad audience appeal look easy in their new show The Opera Locos, spending a few days at the Peacock Theatre. Blending the form with vaudeville, commedia dell'arte and mime, this 95-minute opera sketch show mines comedic opportunities while still celebrating the powerful and emotional impact of opera as a medium.

It adopts a comedy show format, cutting between segments and arias taken from lots of different operas and using them to tell new stories. Some of these recur throughout the performance including a tale set backstage with a washed-up performer named Alfredo coughing his way through Nessun Dorma and taking to drink before meeting an eager fan, Maria, who adores the star from his glory days. Borrowing from Madam Butterfly and La Traviata, Maria's rom-com forms the emotional spine of the show, a clever mime that creates emotional engagement and a rousing finale, although there is a content warning on suicide themes to note here.

Other stories told in the same chapter-style throughout the show are more humorous in tone including a singing lesson for a male countertenor, Franelli, being taught a lower, and apparently more masculine, vocal range by puffed-up baritone Enrique. This initially extends to a singalong with the audience as Enrique descends into the audience with microphones calling out individuals at close range before encouraging the whole room to join in. But this too develops into a love story, a theme that eventually draws the various skits and sections together.

To create that broader engagement with opera, YLLANA pays close attention to the physical presentation of The Opera Locos, adopting a Victorian steampunk stage and costume design by Tatiana De Sarabia, David Ottone and Yeray González that suggests an amplified reality so typical of opera settings with de Sarabia, Sara Álvarez and ARTMAKERS extending the heightened style into the stylised make-up choices to complete the vision. With a great deal of gesture and slapstick, there is considerable attention to detail and polish in the presentation of The Opera Locos that adds to its appeal.

While the synopsis insists the show is also for those 'who don't know their Aida's from their arias' there is little teaching here. There is plenty of recognisable music but for those new to opera you'll have no better understanding of the meaning of each song or the longer stories they are borrowed from at the end of The Opera Locos, nor will you necessarily know their origins. Some songs blend nicely into more recognisable pop hits from Whitney Houston and Frank Sinatra to Celine Dion, Bob Marley and The Lion King, so you don't need to know much about opera to enjoy the show but you also won't learn anything new either.

How far the premise of The Opera Locos can stretch to future shows without reusing the same music may affect YLLANA's appeal to novice attendees but vocally impressive performers María Rey-Joly, Mayca Teba, Jesús Álvarez, Enrique Sánchez-Ramos and Michaël Koné seem to be having a lot of fun delivering this show

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the OPERA LOCOS

THEATRE TRAVELS
REVIEWS

6 days ago · 2 min read

Review: A Comedy of Operas at Pleasance EICC – Ed Fringe

Review by Olivia Ruggiero

From the outset of this show you can tell it's going to be fabulous – a grand spectacle. The set is huge, the audience is packed, and stage is enormous. The opening number to A Comedy of Operas is a farcical fanfare of Operatic hits sung with great aplomb. A fabulous medley with some Mozart, Verdi and Bizet for all the opera fans out there – the outlandish white, clown like makeup of the cast is clearly a mockery of "old" opera.

This cast of 5 operatic singers are versatile and very funny! The "rock opera" star, the lovelorn soprano, the suicidal tenor, the hoity baritone, and the dramatic (full pun-intended) soprano, all of whom play their parts brilliantly and sing flawlessly.
This show is for the opera devotee, with no surtitles, it's not for the faint-hearted, so you better know your operatic arias if you're coming along and be ready to laugh as the cast take the mickey out of them. By the second number, they have the audience eating out of the palm of their hands, clapping along, and laughing up roaringly. There is even some audience participation and boy was it a whole lot of fun!

Questioning, how seriously do opera singers take themselves seems to be a theme of the show, as the cast often makes fun of the stereotypical opera singer, who is prim and proper – but underneath, a complete and utter mess. They do this exceptionally well, with great comedic timing and physical acts of comedy.
"Un bel di vedremo" has never been so aptly sung, a complete mockery of this aria, and it's probably the best version I have ever heard, along with the famous "Queen of the Night" aria which is sung with stunning accuracy and phenomenal display of coloratura control. I loved every song in this show, and the mashups with Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Sinatra and other classic pop/rock singers that were interspersed into the arias – giving it wider mass appeal and showing off just how talented these singers truly are.

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There are fabulous little story arcs that happen throughout the show, like that of the very gay singer pursuing his maestro, the soprano who seems to be unable to find love (until she stumbles upon a lucky audience member who is dragged onto the stage and into the comedy), and the star-crossed lovers (a tenor and soprano of course!). These storylines, give the show thematic threads, that link it all together and make it work so beautifully.

The rendition of Time to Say Goodbye and the medley that followed was sheer brilliance and a fabulous way to end this spectacular show. I do love it when opera singers sing pop songs and embrace the weirdness that comes along with that – although these opera singers are so excellent, I believe they could give any pop singer a run for their money.

If you haven't already rushed to buy a ticket for this show – you better do so quick. A lollipop opera show for all ages. Bravi tutti. I would be happy to watch it again!

Image Supplied

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Daily Record

19/08/2023

Edinburgh Festival Fringe brings fun and frolics to the capital

Edinburgh has enjoyed the hustle and bustle of the Fringe, we take a look at the best of the photos so far.

NEWS By Victoria Stewart
09:16, 19 AUG 2023

Bookmark Comments 6

This year's Edinburgh Festival is well underway and the best of the worlds performers have flocked to Edinburgh City to entertain, amaze and delight it's audience. Operas, tutus, pigeons, and 'Magic For Animals' - there is something for all.

With more bounce than a kangaroo on a trampoline, Matt Hale's high-octane 'TOP FUN! 80s Hypnosis Spectacular' is bringing a party vibe to the city. Born and raised in the UK but now based in Australia, the show has a lot of audience participation – for those who want to join in.

Revel Puck Circus delighted with their show 'The Wing Scuffle' at the Circus Hub in The Meadows and the cast of 'A Comedy of Operas' were in character for their Edinburgh Festival Fringe show at the Pleasance. Take a look at some of the best images and descriptions to inspire your visit to the capital this August.

Don't miss the latest news from around Scotland and beyond - Sign up to our daily newsletter here.

The cast of A Comedy of Operas get into character ahead of their Edinburgh Festival Fringe show at the Pleasance at EICC. (Image: Jane Barlow/PA Wire)

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15/08/2023

Review
Aug 15, 2023 - Written By Rachel Louise Martin

Fringe review: A COMEDY OF OPERAS, Yllana - Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Photo credit: Michal Mendak

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15/08/2023

Photo credit: Michal Mendak

Five exceptional opera singers bring us their comedic style with a spectacular love story, fusing pop hits with world famous arias, you'll be surprised at how many you already know!

Language is no barrier for these guys as they use their signature style of comedy to tell their tale. Hilarious characters combine the traditional with the modern to create a new sound that even the most unknowing opera fans can't help but sing along and clap their hands to.

The costumes are incredible. Bright colours, which shine under the lighting design, have a feel of part-circus, part-steam punk to them and add an appeal to the production that we weren't expecting.

It's a brilliant show to introduce anyone to opera. Whether they are a bit scared of the genre itself or haven't had an opportunity to experience it live before, this is the one to try.

Suitable for the whole family to enjoy, its a beautifully funny way to spend time together.

A colourful cadenza!

***** Five sars

Reviewed by: Rachel Louise Martin

A Comedy of Operas plays in the Pentland Theatre at Pleasance at EICC at 5.30pm/6pm until 27 August.

A Comedy of Operas - Edinburgh Fringe

RAMI ELDAR

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The OPERA LOCOS

14/08/2023

broadway WORLD SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH 2023: Review: A COMEDY OF OPERAS, Pleasance At EICC

'While I wanted to love A Comedy of Operas, it failed to appeal to me.'

By: Kot Makrynski Aug. 14, 2023

As someone who worked in an opera house in New York and volunteers with an opera house in London, I have had quite a bit of experience with the genre and several different shows. I decided to go to see *A Comedy of Operas* to see how they were able to combine opera, rock, and pop into a fun love story.

★★☆☆☆

RAMI ELDAR

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The OPERA LOCOS

14/08/2023

broadway WORLD SCOTLAND

★★☆☆☆

As someone who worked in an opera house in New York and volunteers with an opera house in London, I have had quite a bit of experience with the genre and several different shows. I decided to go to see *A Comedy of Operas* to see how they were able to combine opera, rock, and pop into a fun love story.

When the show began, I was starting to get into it. The costumes and makeup are fun and do a fantastic job of blending opera and rock, with the performers looking like people who were going to a KISS concert after attending a fancy gala. I was in awe of the talented performers and how expressive they were through their physicality and song. Unfortunately, once we started getting into the show, I found myself disappointed in the show.

A Comedy of Operas has no dialogue, excluding moments in which some characters said a few words in French, Italian, or straight gibberish, the latter of which grew annoying very quickly. The plot follows two love stories, one of an older alcoholic man and a young soprano and another of a flamboyant man and a masculine man. I thought that the queer love story was sweet and well done, but the other relationship story fell flat.

Another disappointing thing about the show was that even though it promised to merge opera, rock, and pop, only a few pop songs were thrown in, and maybe one or two rock songs. One of the male singers tries expressing himself through rock and roll and is the one to sing the most bits from modern songs. I enjoyed how famous operatic arias were transformed into pop songs, but this was only done in one song, leaving the rest to be mostly arias with one of two pop songs. One of the female singers also sang a love song directly into an audience member's face, which was a bit strange.

One of the aspects of *A Comedy of Operas* that I liked the least was its suicidal jokes. There is an entire bit in which the alcoholic character is singing "My Way" as he prepares to kill himself in a range of ways. It wasn't just a character "operatically" considering taking their own life as stated in the show's description. It was a man with suicidal tendencies attempting to kill himself. Another joke (if it can even be called that) involves one of the characters miming slitting his wrist and blood spraying out, which made me incredibly uncomfortable, especially as it was not needed. Suicide jokes can be used for comedy, but they have to be earned through a character's journey or through connecting with the audience.

Ultimately, while I wanted to love *A Comedy of Operas*, it failed to appeal to me. The cast members are incredibly talented and have gorgeous voices, but the show itself had a very confusing tone and left me wondering exactly what the point of it was.

With just a little bit more cohesion, the removal of some bits of miming suicide, and a choice to either lean into or remove the pop songs, *A Comedy of Operas* could become a great show.

A Comedy of Operas runs at Pleasance at EICC, the Pentland Theatre at a range of times (14:30, 16:00, 17:30, or 18:00) from 2 to 27 August.

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the OPERA LOCOS

Brit-built satellite 'crashes'

IN FINAL PART OF OUR FRINGE SERIES...

SATIRIST TAKES US INSIDE No10

Scots politics is best bit of show but we miss Nic Spitting abuse at English

SAYS MATT FORDE

HIDING? GUILTY AS CHARGED

IT'S OPERA BUT DONE MY WAY

IT'S OPERA BUT DONE MY WAY

By MATT BENDORIS

SPANISH sensations A Comedy of Operas will make their Fringe debut next month – after wowing 48 countries.

The troupe mixes operatic classics with pop hits including Mika's Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra's My Way and a dash of Elvis.

It's the sort of show that will appeal to opera buffs and those who don't know their Aidas from their arias.

I saw them perform, *right*, their show in front of a sell-out 900-seater audience at the converted train station Gran Teatro in Madrid.

And it didn't take long before the five-strong outfit had the crowd howling as the sopranos, tenors and baritones took us through the action. With just mime and music there's also no language barrier either, with the plot easy to follow right to the finale.

This is a whirlwind of laugh-out-loud comedy and incredible voices.

It is set to be one of the hottest acts at the Fringe – so get a ticket.

●A Comedy of Operas is on at the Pleasance Edinburgh International Conference Centre from August 2 to 27. See eicc.co.uk/whats-on/a-comedy-of-operas.

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The OPERA LOCOS

BroadwayBaby.com

By Johanna Makelainen | 9th Aug 2023 | ★★★★

09/08/2023

If you think that opera is performed by a bunch of clowns, this is the show for you. A troupe of five eccentric opera singers with dazzling voices perform some of the world's best arias mixed with pop classics, clownery and physical theatre. Verdi, Bizet, Handel, Puccini, Mozart – they do it all, as the virtuosos push their vocal cords to the limit without even breaking a sweat.

> Performers are masters of audience participation

Created and directed by the Spanish troupe Yllana, *A Comedy of Operas* makes a refreshing return to the origins of comedy, all the way to the Italian commedia dell'arte and its sad clown figure Pierrot. There are plenty of references to the world of circus, burlesque and rococo with colourful costumes, wigs and painted faces. The stories are told by mirning, gestures and singing, and the themes vary from the battle of egos between the singers to different variations of love and desire.

The characters of the story are well recognisable from the opera world: the vamp, the romantic, the old maestro, the young eccentric, and the egoist. While the female roles are a bit one sided and outdated, one of the male characters has a refreshingly queer disposition. Romantic entanglements ensue between the characters, giving room to focus on their emotions. The chaotic choreography with intentional clashes and constant ego battles keep the audience well entertained.

The virtuosity of the vocalists is evident in their precise execution of some of the best-known arias like *Toreador, Queen of the Night and Nessun dorma*. Tenors Toni Comas and Alberto Frías, baritone Enrique Sánchez Gómez, soprano María Rey-Joly and mezzosoprano Mayca Teba are the rare breed of opera talent who can call themselves entertainers. They succeed in bringing together the seemingly irreconcilable elements of the absurdity of the clowns and the solemnity of lyrical music in a combination that creates magic on stage.

RAMI ELDAR

YLLANA

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BroadwayBaby.com

By Johanna Makelainen | 9th Aug 2023 | ★★★★

09/08/2023

Yllana's performers are masters of audience participation. My favourite part was Enrique Sánchez Gómez's audience masterclass from Rigoletto's loved aria *La donna è mobile*, made famous by Luciano Pavarotti. Following eagerly the maestro note by note, the audience revealed the depth of its operatic knowledge. In that rare moment we all felt part of this crazy production. One lucky audience member also got to experience first-hand how it feels when an opera diva falls madly in love with him.

The comedy of opera achieves to break down some of the intimidation imposed by opera and push opera closer to the general audience. The immaculate Pentland Theatre at the EICC offers a majestic backdrop for the show. Everything from the auditorium to lighting and set design is world-class. As for extending opera to everyone, the audience seemed to consist of rather established opera fans who probably had more trouble recognising the pop songs than the arias.

The problem with perfection is that it lacks the element of surprise. When everything is timed and planned perfectly, there is no room for spontaneity. That is the only element missing of the wonderful show. The troupe possess undeniable talent, a tone of strength and accuracy that would have any creative director weeping with joy. Making virtuosity seem easy is the hardest part, and for that they deserve a standing ovation.

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the OPERA LOCOS

08/08/2023

THE LIST

8th Aug 2023

Author: Kelly Foster

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JOE O'CURNEEN ON A COMEDY OF OPERAS: 'THE MOMENT THE PERFORMERS START SINGING, PEOPLE INSTANTLY RECOGNISE THE TUNE'

We get a sneak peek at the smash-hot show A Comedy Of Operas and talk to co-director Joe O'Curneen about getting that tricky balance between laughs and emotional impact just right

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JOE O'CURNEEN ON A COMEDY OF OPERAS: 'THE MOMENT THE PERFORMERS START SINGING, PEOPLE INSTANTLY RECOGNISE THE TUNE'

We get a sneak peek at the smash-hot show A Comedy Of Operas and talk to co-director Joe O'Curneen about getting that tricky balance between laughs and emotional impact just right

A few seconds ago, the Gran Teatro La Estación in Madrid rocked with laughter. Packed to capacity with locals and tourists looking for a good time, the 900-seater venue was playing host to *A Comedy Of Operas*, a show that stays true to both its nouns. But all of a sudden there is a quiet hush. Not from the stage (that's still ablaze with volume courtesy of one of the incredible operatic voices populating this show) but from the audience. Laughter has been replaced with tears and you can feel the crowd's collective heart swell. Such is the power of opera, or more specifically, a well-chosen, well-placed aria designed to grab you by the feels.

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It's five years since directors Joe O'Cumeen and David Ottone first unleashed this hugely popular show on the world. Since then, it's played to opera buffs and aria virgins alike, both of whom have been unanimous in their praise. Based around the central conceit of an operatic troupe down on its heels but still aiming to please, the show fuses music, song and physical comedy. Three love stories emerge as the five performers work their way through one well-loved song after another.

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Designed to please all-comers, its humour is quick and accessible without ever diminishing the beauty and power of those arias. What is perhaps most unexpected, however, is just how many of them sound familiar. 'We obviously had an extensive repertoire to choose from,' explains O'Curneen. 'So it was like going to a tree of operas and picking the best fruit. They had to be the ones that are most well-known for a general audience, so we explored all of the famous operas and started to select those that would fit our story. It was like a puzzle; we started with about 40 or 50 arias and reduced that down to 20.'

Whether it's been used in an advert, a film, a television programme (or, of course, the opera itself), all of the songs here have infiltrated our psyche. 'Nessun dorma' from Puccini's ***Turandot***, the 'Flower Duet' from Delibes' ***Lakmé***, and other equally famous arias from Bizet's ***Carmen***, Mozart's ***The Magic Flute***, Offenbach's ***The Tales Of Hoffmann***, and Verdi's ***Rigoletto*** and ***La Traviata*** all feature. During one particularly amusing scene, the macho baritone holds an 'opera masterclass', asking the audience to finish each phrase he starts: and everyone does. 'When you know a tune, the scene is more effective and you engage with it emotionally,' says O'Curneen. 'And when you don't know the tune, it doesn't transmit as well. And our experience with ***AComedy Of Operas*** is that the moment the performers start singing, people instantly recognise the tune.'

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This is especially true during a scene where the fun-loving counter-tenor keeps deviating into the world of pop music, surprising us all with similarities between those two genres. Meanwhile, the tenor is trying to recapture his former glory, the soprano is trying to encourage him to give up the booze, and the mezzo-soprano is convinced the right man is out there somewhere (in the audience). Each comes to the show with an impeccable operatic pedigree; but that's not all the directors were looking for, because none of the between-aria action is portrayed through words.

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'It took a while to find the right cast,' says O'Curneen. 'First of all, the voice quality was very important; it had to be superb. And then we were looking for an ability to express themselves through gestures and physicality. But it's not just about the laughs, we wanted to create emotional moments too, because how can you laugh with 'Nessun dorma' in your ears? You can't. So we make sure that we respect the music. When it's Puccini's moment, it's Puccini's moment; and when it's our moment, it's our moment. That balance is important. So one minute you'll be laughing and enjoying yourself, and then you might find yourself shedding a tear. And I think people really love that combination.'

A Comedy Of Operas, Pleasance At EICC, 2–27 August, times vary.

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one4review

07/08/2023

A Comedy of Operas 5***** - One4Review

one4review | On 07, Aug 2023

Sublimely funny! If you love opera, set your opera glasses down for a bit and go along to the EICC and see this strikingly hilarious love story. I promise that for days after this show, you'll be humming your old favourites again.

If opera isn't your cup of tea, I urge you to book your very first ever ticket to your very first ever opera! You may even surprise yourself by recognising almost all the tunes packed into this vivacious performance, and guess what? No surtitles and comfortable seats.

This multi award-winning comedy performance consists of five exceptional singers portraying the most vibrant and loveable characters, who'll belt out what can only be described as opera's greatest hits with a slap of the old stick of pop & rock.

Nothing could stop the charismatic and passionate macho-man hoodwink me and my fellow audience into to singing "la, la, la" and before I knew it, we were singing famous opera pieces. I was impressed that some knew the words…I kept to my best "la, la" for special measure.

I appreciated very much being dragged through all the normal opera emotions: delight, yearning for one's love, heart wrenching rejection and in this case eye watering laughter. Like a true opera there is so much drama, themes such and alcoholism and suicidal thoughts.

The best was cringing as I witnessed a chap in the audience being intensely serenaded with "I will always love you" which added to the already two intwining love stories on the stage.

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The best was cringing as I witnessed a chap in the audience being intensely serenaded with "I will always love you" which added to the already two intwining love stories on the stage.

Even macho-man finds himself fall head over heals in love for a younger man who has a tremendous voice and talents in sabotaging traditional opera piece with his peppy pop songs.

And finally, a brilliantly delightful soprano wins the heart of Alfredo, a mature opera tenor whose voice begins to fail him and who mourns his spritelier days.

The hair, the make-up and the intensity of their performative eccentric characters will make the hour go by so fast you'll be begging for wan' more tune!

This week I'll be treating the whole family to a bit of A Comedy of Operas!

*5******

Reviewed by Jen

Venue 150 Pleasance at EICC – Pentland Theatre

Times vary.

August 7-8, 10-15, 17-20, 22-23, 25-27 (1hour)

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YLLANA
RAMI ELDAR
CARLA JULIANO performingartsmanagement@clece.es +34 91 308 99 71 / +34 368 050 699
MARCOS OTTONE infoyllana@yllana.com +34 971 71 94 46 / +34 609 604 923