

August 2, 2013  
Michael Johnson

### **An intense experience indeed**

The dramatic tension of this attractive production simply never flags. The augmented Glimmerglass orchestra is fully up to the considerable task under John Keenan's baton. In addition, the festival's chorus has never sounded so good. The real test of a production of *Der fliegende Holländer* comes in the scene beginning with "Steuermann lass die Wacht" which contains a great deal of stage action (as in this production) and demanding cross-rhythms requiring close attention to the conductor. It comes off splendidly.

James Noone's expressionist set with its array of ropes serves the changing locales extremely well. Another scenic element used to good effect is Senta's bed; it is clear that her feelings for the Dutchman include physical desire. This erotic element is further supported in that the Dutchman is portrayed by a baritone who is youthful and trim. The Dutchman might have been roaming the seas for hundreds of years, but he is clearly frozen in time at the moment he uttered his blasphemy, surely the impetuous act of a young man. In his role debut Ryan McKinny displays an attractive, rock-solid voice with secure technique. Melody Moore (also in a role debut) is equally youthful and equally secure vocally in the demanding role of Senta.

The character Erik is often given short shrift in productions, yet a strong and ardent performance further highlights Senta's determination to pursue her obsession with the Dutchman. Jay Hunter Morris could have displayed a greater degree of vocal warmth in his first scene, but manages this very nicely in the final scene where he is shown to come very close to successfully wooing Senta (after all, they are both on her bed.)

Veteran Peter Volpe slips with apparent ease into the role of Daland, Senta's opportunistic father. Adam Bielamowicz, one of the 36 singers in this year's Young Artists Program, is well cast as the Steersman.

In deference to an audience unused to an opera running over two hours without a break Francesca Zambello has devised an interval - not at either of the spots where Wagner indicated a break could fall, but right at the moment, about 70 minutes into the work, when Senta and the Dutchman first see each other. This does no harm. (And there is nothing wrong with giving the audience a chance to experience a beautiful summer evening on the festival's serene grounds.)

This is Glimmerglass's second Wagner production, the first being the North American stage premiere of *Das Liebesverbot* in 2008. Each was rather a stretch for the festival and each was a success.

Albany The Alice Busch Theater, Cooperstown 07/06/2013 - & July 12, 14, 18, 27\*, August 4, 10, 12, 16, 20, 24, 2013 Richard Wagner: *Der fliegende Holländer* Ryan McKinny (Dutchman), Melody Moore (Senta), Jay Hunter Morris (Erik), Peter Volpe (Daland), Adam Bielamowicz (Steersman) The Glimmerglass Festival Chorus, David Moody (chorus master), The Glimmerglass Festival Orchestra, John Keenan (conductor) Francesca Zambello (director), James Noone (set designer), Erik Teague (costume designer), Mark McCullough (lighting designer), Eric Sean Fogel (choreographer)