

Stabat Mater concludes our Glimmerglass 2013 series

AUGUST 1, 2013

SUSAN GALBRAITH



Soprano Nadine Sierra and countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo
Pergolesi's Stabat Mater (Photo: Karli Cadel/The Glimmerglass
Festival)

Elegance, idealism, imagination, suffering. These are the words I take away from **Glimmerglass Festival 2013**. It would be wrong of me not to mention one last show, which for me may have stood as the emotional heart of the outstanding season, and it drove home all these shared motifs.

Sharing a double-bill with the little match girl passion, the Stabat Mater by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi seemed initially an odd inclusion in the season. Pergolesi, writing a century before the height of the Romantic Era, did not conceive the work as a stage piece. It became, at the hands of conductor Speranza Scappucci and Director-Choreographer Jessica Lang, a true collaboration of music-dance theatre.

The music is hauntingly beautiful, and the staging, using eight of the Young Artists, became a constantly shifting meditation on the meaning of suffering. The choreography took its vocabulary from a combination of Martha Graham and other early modern dance styles as well as elements of symbolic arm gestures from liturgical dance. Lang used remarkable restraint in the simple yet powerful movement sequences, complemented and extended throughout by the beautiful passing and sharing of a stretch of fabric that went from being a grieving woman's robe, to shroud, to relic and crucifixion banner. The effect was stunning.

**Highly Recommended
Passions: Stabat Mater
and the little match girl
passion**

Closes August 22, 2013
Glimmerglass Festival 2013
7300 State Highway 80
Cooperstown, NY 13326
1 hour, 45 minutes with 1
intermission
Tickets: \$10 – \$117
[Details and Tickets](#)

While there were moments where movement folded into iconic poses of crucifixion and pietà, the work clearly reached for a more universal theme of suffering, loss, and grief. Marjorie Bradley Kellogg created a beautiful framing device with a huge A-cut curtain behind which two huge totemic wooden logs moved slowly in and out of cross-like configurations. This bringing in of nature so boldly made it a character in this dance-drama that spoke to the Romantic heralding of nature in performance and visual arts this season. I could not help think with today's consciousness of the battered earth and vanishing nature that the piece served in part as song bearing witness and grieving over its destruction. Our fallen Camelot indeed. The work was sung exquisitely by Nadine Sierra and counter tenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, whose voices blended beautifully,

and who also participated as dancers in the choreography, making the piece a seamless performance piece. They had me weeping by the end, myself lost in a yearning for the idealism and impressive imagination represented in the entire season.

Stabat Mater by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Directed and choreographed by Jessica Lang. Produced by Glimmerglass Festival.