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THE BLOG 05/20/2013 02:32 pm ET | Updated Jul 20, 2013

Placido Domingo Conducts World Premiere Opera



By Hoyt Hilsman



AP

Placido Domingo has long had an interest in new works on Latin American subjects. His collaboration with composer Lee Holdridge and librettist Richard Sparks dates back several decades and includes a number of commissioned operas for young audiences. The collaboration continues with the premiere of *Dulce Rosa*, which is based on Isabelle Allende's short story, "An Act of Vengeance."

Set in a fictional Latin American country sometime in the tumultuous past, the opera tells the story of Rosa (Maria Antunez), the daughter of a prominent politician (Greg Fedderly), who is captured by a group of guerillas and raped by their leader Tadeo (Alfredo Daza). When she finally escapes, Rosa vows revenge against Tadeo, who has ascended to power after a successful revolution.

A tale of tragedy and revenge set against the backdrop of violent political upheaval, *Dulce Rosa* has all the classical elements of opera. For the most part, Holdridge's music is up to the challenge of operatic tragedy, although it rarely strays from the traditional vein. Holdridge's dual background both as a film composer and as a composer of concert and operatic works informs the score, which straddles the operatic and cinematic tradition. The libretto by Richard Sparks is serviceable, although often pedestrian in its lyrics.

The cast is excellent, with standout performances by Daza and Fedderly. Daza finds a passionate power in the tormented guerilla leader Tadeo, and brings a sweeping truth both vocally and in his performance. Fedderly is dynamic and forceful in his role as Rosa's father, bringing a graceful theatricality to the stage. Antunez is solid as Rosa, strong of voice although somewhat wayward in her performance. Supporting performances by Peabody Southwell, Craig Colclough and Benjamin Bliss add to the strength of the production. Especially noteworthy are the set design and projections by Yael Pardess and



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new works for the opera stage.

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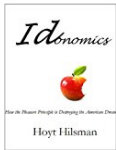
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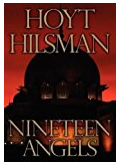
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