

this role at the Met in 1994 and penetrating the heavy orchestra-

Glassman's incisive tenor might him a terrific Zinovy; here, he himself body and soul into the antics and nightmarish discovery of the rotting body. Other ear- ing brief portrayals included Bernstein's Sentry, Tyler Dun- illhand and Holli Harrison's . The chorus — working hard, da and *The Death of Klinghoffer* in repertory — performed dication and exciting sound. vich's thrilling opera found the eak form.

DAVID SHENGOLD

servatory students have one ge over mature, professional ars, and Juilliard Opera's latest on shrewdly exploits that differ- rector John Giampietro updated s comedy *Il Turco in Italia* to d — more to the point — set in a spa. In place of the origi- us of Gypsies, this staging (seen y fields a manic crew of medics, and trainers in bright red uni- The change opens up ample nities for physical action and y for flirtation, and some of the ls strip down to the briefest of s. Big opera companies usually this kind of naturalism to the ballet.

where Rossini's florid score is ed, the Juilliard cast showed off ype of agility. Even when they el canto beauty of timbre, the had the structure down pat. or Speranza Scappucci led a col- m yet flexible performance in every phrase had a beginning, and end — and sometimes an p. Most of Rossini's thousands for the singers were present and ed for; individual notes were also urther into meaningful, lilting

stellar role of Fiorilla, the flirta- roine, soprano Hyesang Park s special brilliance and flexibility the initial hardness of tone. A n the Juilliard Master of Music . Park has appeared on profes-

sional stages in Europe and Korea, and her experience shows. Her solid, refined fioritura delivery was matched by glam- our, temperament and, above all, an ability to put bel canto splendor to expressive use.



Special brilliance: Park as Fiorilla in Juilliard's *Turco in Italia*

In keeping with Giampietro's holds-barred approach, Park succeeded in embracing the character's opposing extremes of narcissism and vulnerability. The soprano rehabilitated the heroine just in time for a happy ending, thanks to her searing delivery of the soul-searching, repentant solo "Squallida veste, e bruna d'affanno e pentimento." Her final duet with reconciled husband Geronio, comparing herself to a delicate vine and him to a supporting elm (in Felice Romani's terse, poetic text), had convincing warmth.

The one non-student in the cast, bass-baritone Michael Sumuel, made a charming Selim, with his combination of swagger and innocence; he invested the Turk's arpeggios with communicative grace and punch, particularly in the delightfully varied duets opposite Fiorilla or Geronio. Daniel Miroslaw used his rich bass register to vibrant comic effect as the much-abused Geronio, and suave baritone Szymon Komasa shone in the role of the manipulative playwright Prodocimo, an avatar of Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* (one of the influences on Rossini's *Turco*). Mezzo Kara Sainz, as Zaida, competed feistily with Fiorilla for the Turk's affections, while tenors Joseph Dennis (Narciso) and Nathan Haller (Albazar) gave

pained, florid testimony to the heroine's maddening charms.

Sydney Maresca designed the modest costumes, and Derek Wright's lighting effects added atmosphere to Alexis Dis- tler's glossy white spa decor. The geo-

metric patterning of the set may have suggested the Middle East more than Naples, but it made an effective arena for antic behavior. DAVID J. BAKER

BOSTON

It takes a confident soul to decide that there is room in the world for another operatic take on the legend of Tristan and Isolde; one would assume that every square inch of real estate had already been occupied by Richard Wagner's landmark work. But in the 1930s, Swiss composer Frank Martin had the confidence and artistic precision to present the legend in a way that is both mesmerizing and distinct. Boston Lyric Opera presented *The Love Potion*, a new English translation of Martin's *Tristan* retelling, *Le Vin Herbé*, as part of the company's always stimulating Opera Annex series (seen Nov. 19). The evening bore many of the usual hallmarks of an Opera Annex production — excellent singers appearing in an unusual work, an unconventional performance space, and audience seating that was almost excruciatingly uncomfortable.

Based on *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut*, a novel by French medievalist Joseph Bédier that was first published in 1900, Martin's *Love Potion* differs in practically



The Love Potion in Boston, with Jurgens, David Cushing (Duke Hoël), Trainor and Basler

every way from Wagner's colossus without appearing in the least reactionary. Where Wagner is lush, Martin is nearly astringent; where Wagner employed enormous orchestral forces, Martin wrote for an eight-member chamber ensemble; and where Wagner's work pours forth in wave upon wave of heightened emotion, Martin's opera seems suspended at the heart of a quiet yet powerful mysticism. The performance venue selected on this occasion — the Temple Ohabei Shalom — was perfectly suited to Martin's vision, and the majesty of the sacred space was put to inspired use by set designer James Noone and lighting designer Robert Wierzel. One image at the beginning and end of the performance was particularly striking: a golden brazier filled with glowing crystal appeared at the center of the playing space, from which two rays of light shot upward into the haze of the temple dome — a poetic suggestion of the purity and eternal nature of the protagonists' love.

Given the performance space and the unique emotional tone of the piece, it was easy to understand why director David Schweizer decided to explore the work's ritualistic nature; but his staging ultimately tipped too far in this direction, giving little room to the passion at the core of the drama and seeming out of sync with the elegance of the music. Conductor David Angus led his chamber ensemble in a beautiful reading of the score, which captured Martin's sumptuous reserve, and he was perfectly in tune with a group of very fine young singers. Tenor Jon Jurgens as Tristan and soprano Chelsea Basler as Isolt the Fair

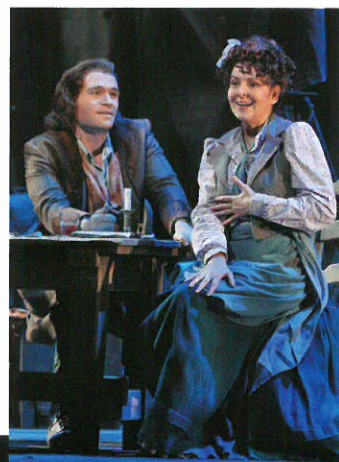
stood out from the ensemble, giving performances that were lovely, passionate and clear; and David McFerrin made a powerful impression as the betrayed King Mark. Soprano Michelle Trainor gave one of the most thorough and satisfying performances of the evening as Isolt's loyal servant Brangain. Trainor, an alumna of the company's Emerging Artist program, has clearly emerged. Musically, her voice is richer and more expressive than ever, and she in particular embodied the simultaneous passion and restraint of Martin's musical approach to the legend.

KALEN RATZLAFF

SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Opera fielded two strong casts for its November revival of *La Bohème*. In an elegant production designed by David Farley and directed by John Caird, the thirteen-performance run at the War Memorial Opera House opened on November 14 with Alexia Voulgaridou and Michael Fabiano in the leading roles. The big news in this *Bohème* was Fabiano, who made an ardent, affecting Rodolfo. His sensitive text readings, coupled with a muscular, effortlessly projected instrument

distinguished by thrilling top notes, filled the house with glorious, apparently inexhaustible sound. Voulgaridou, making her company debut, was an alluring Mimì. The Greek soprano's fresh timbre and expressive phrasing contributed to a sweet, touchingly sung portrayal of the consumptive seamstress. The following night, the second cast brought Leah Crocetto and Giorgio Berrugi to the artists' garret. Crocetto, who trained with SFO, is an impressively eloquent singer; her large, opulent soprano sounded vibrant in "Mi chiamo Mimì," and she shaped her performance to poignant effect throughout, delivering her Act III music with solid breath and beautiful line and her Act IV reminiscences with gripping emotional depth. Berrugi, in his company debut, was less precise, exhibiting moments of



San Francisco Opera's double-cast *La Bohème*, above, with Adams, Van Horn, Berrugi, Crocetto and Mulligan; Fabiano and Voulgaridou as Rodolfo and Mimì, inset