

COSI FAN TUTTE

Composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Librettist Lorenzo da Ponte

Virginia Opera

Harrison Opera House

Nov. 13,17,19 and 21

For tickets: 1-866-673-7282

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

In the Italian commedia dell'arte, a funny bit of stage action was called a lazzo, plural lazzi. I bring this up because there are lots of lozzi in this laugh-filled production directed by the ever brilliant Lillian Groag.

Groag feels Cosi is the funniest and most melancholy of all of Mozart's operas. You don't hit the melancholy until about half-way through the second act. For the fun part, she utilizes nearly every comedic genre that exists. The list includes farce, slapstick, burlesque, satire, and more. The score suggests these amusing lazzi in many places.

To her good fortune, she has a uniformly superior cast which has the skills to sing magnificently and carry off the comedic acting with ease and clarity. They perform in a splendid just right light and airy unit set designed by the richly talented Michael Yeargan with beautiful illumination by Kenneth Steadman.

Deserving special mention is lovely, both physically and vocally, soprano Jan Cornelius, as Fiordiligi.

Extraordinary tenor David Portillo as Ferrando and his cohort the excellent Timothy Kuhn, Guglielmo, work exceptionally well as a team. They could put a stand up comedy act together and take it on the road. In the mezzo role of Dorabella, Katherine Tier performs with classic restraint. Camille Zamora pulls out all the stops to our delight and pleasure as Despina. Todd Robinson is an efficient Don Alfonso.

I must also mention the exceptional comic contributions of the chorus and supers.

For that melancholy part of the opera Mozart makes an abrupt shift which is logical because fury, heartbreak and humiliation are at the core of the action. Musically impressive, it does seem to go on and on with much repetition until the opera ends with Groag's charming tableaux.

Conductor Joseph Walsh guides his players with an appropriately light and well balanced touch that enriches the merriment of the evening.

Quite often, attempts to do comic opera come across as anything but funny. Believe me, such is not the case here. Groag's Cosi is a frisky, frolic of fun that you don't want to miss seeing,

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.