

Barbera sounded very nearly like Pavarotti come back to life—the voice is not quite as majestic, but it has all the ringing power, suavity and intensity Pavarotti brought to the role. And, like Pavarotti, Barbera milked his high notes for all they were worth.

Myriam Leblanc convincingly played Gilda as a sweet young thing, in sharp contrast to Carolyn Sproule’s sex-kitten Maddalena. Vartan Gabrielian (Sparafucile) certainly looked and acted like a villain, but his voice lacked that edge of menace and evil one looks for in the role.

This new production, later to be shared with companies in San Diego and Seattle, is traditional and well conceived. The court scene set in Renaissance Mantua was handsomely decked out (in Robert Dahlstrom’s designs) with red velvet drapes, murals, and a stageful of sumptuously costumed courtiers and ladies. Anne-Catherine Simard-Deraspe’s lighting design contributed further to the overall effect, with much use of chiaroscuro in the court scenes and an aura of lurking danger in Act 3. Michael Cavanagh directed for the most part with finesse, credibility and intelligence, though a personal touch he brought to the opening scene—Monterone slays his own daughter in full view of the court as protest over the Duke’s wanton behaviour—puzzled more than one viewer.

The Orchestre Métropolitain was in top form for the conductor Carlo Montanaro, who brought exceptional elan, clarity and obvious love for the score to his interpretation. Tempos were often somewhat faster than normal, but the result was never forced or frantic. The chorus likewise sounded splendid: cleanly articulated, rhythmically precise and highly spirited.

ROBERT MARKOW

Chile

Santiago

Alban Berg’s *Lulu* had its first ever performance in Chile at the TEATRO MUNICIPAL ON August 22. Mariame Clément’s new production had sets and costumes by Julia Hansen and lighting by Ricardo Castro, and used the Cerha completion as first heard in Paris in 1979.

The action was moved to the 1930s, the time of the opera’s composition. At the start of the opera, the Animal Tamer invites the audience to contemplate the beasts in his circus menagerie.

Accordingly, the basic set of Clément’s production—which was always at the service of the story—was a platform like a circus ring, with a reproduction of the Opera House itself as the backdrop. Simple panels were enough to supply the setting for the individual scenes. Almost everyone except Lulu wore a mask or circus-style make-up. During the interludes you could always see clowns and

■ *The first Chilean production of ‘Lulu’*



Opera, December 2018

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