Great Season Finale for Plotkin's " 2017 Adventures in Italian Opera"

Samantha Janazzo (May 02, 2017)

At New York University's Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, Fred Plotkin hosted nearly half a dozen live interviews with some of the biggest names in the world of Italian Opera. Now, his series "Adventures in Italian Opera" is nearing the end of the 2017 season. For its season finale, Director of Casa Italiana Stefano Alberini interviewed Plotkin to recount the findings of such a successful series.

To ring in the final installment of Fred Plotkin [2]'s wonderful opera based series Adventures in Italian Opera, NYU professor and Director of Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò [3] Stefano Albertini [4] sits down with Plotkin to peek into the expert's mind on all things Italian. For the past 5 sessions, Casa Italiana hosted and live streamed Plotkin's interviews with some of the finest in the world of Italian opera. During his session with Albertini, Plotkin revealed that he has already secured more than half of next year's season of Adventures in Italian Opera.

Before delving into the riveting conversation, let's look back on the five interviews that created a vivacious series that encompasses all the aspects of Italian opera. First, mezzo-soprano [5] Marianna Pizzolato [6] (who even sang a little!) visited Fred Plotkin at Casa Italiana for an exciting interview about her Metropolitan Opera [7] debut as the leading role in L'Italiana in Algeri [8]. Second, Francesca Zambello [9] discussed her role as artistic and general director of the Glimmerglass

Festival [10] and her work with the Washington National Opera [11]. Third, Cori Ellison [12] spoke about his work at The Juilliard School [13]. Fourth, Diana Damrau [14], a coloratura soprano, spoke about her role as Juliette at the Metropolitan Opera's production of Roméo [15] et Juliet [15]. Plotkin and Damarau extensively discussed her work with Mozart [16], Verdi [17], Rossini [18], and Bellini [19]. Fifth, Daniele Rustioni [20] charmed the audience; the young 34 year-old recently debuted as maestro at the Met.

Speaking with the utmost humility, Rustioni described his travels around the world and his experience conducting at some of the most prestigious venues. What better way to end this year's season than for Stefano Albertini to sit down with Fred Plotkin? Interestingly enough, the segment began with the opening clip from Federico Fellini [21]'s La Dolce Vita [22], because in Plotkin's opinion, "opera leads to cinema." Plotkin feels Fellini is the best director of all time because "he possesses the ability to communicate all aspects of humanity." The interviewer and interviewee delve deeply into a conversation about the idea of extracting messages from cinema and opera. The physical and metaphorical ideologies that a director captures change each time a viewer watches the same opera or film.

Plotkin reminisces about one of the first operas he saw during his adolescence–Puccini' [23]s Tosca [24]. He played a clip of Maria Callas [25] and Tito Gobbi [26] to demonstrate how acting and opera go together–bringing him back to the idea of cinema and film. He shows the passion and the emotion the singers put into the choreography. Of course, Plotkin uses the scene of Tosca stabbing Scarpia to present his case. In fact, during his time in Italy, Plotkin learned from Gobbi: "Gobbi awakened me to realizing that there are no shortcuts, he made me go to the music, the text, and the history to understand costumes, to [understand] gestures, and so on." It's clear to see the opera is not just about the singing: it's about the conducting of the orchestra, the costume and set designers, the lyrics of the songs, and the history/meaning behind the work. Fred Plotkin's mission is to highlight the lessons he learned from Tito Gobbi, Federico Fellini, and all the others that have touched his life. He lives to relay their messages through the sessions he hosts and Casa Italiana and his column on the website **>>>** [27].

Plotkin embraces and specializes in all things Italian. Though he is not Italian by blood, he fell in love with the country of Italy the moment he first visited. He felt connected to the culture, the language, and the food. He was able to study in Bologna and various other areas across the Boot, meeting and working with some of his greatest inspirations. Casa Italiana and the audeince members truly embrace Plotkin's series, and we look forward to finding out what's in store for the future.

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