

Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* by Kate Huxel, April 1, 2018

The Metropolitan Opera's HD version of *Così Fan Tutte* (shown in Fort Lewis College's Vallecito Room, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018) showed diversity to all colors and personalities, including what some unfairly consider comic circus freaks. The carnival setting shifted to a 1950s era displayed an unusual twist to Mozart's work. Although the 90s movie *Amadeus* about Mozart's life was intriguing, I don't really enjoy non-sop Mozart, especially when the tempo and harmonies seem similar from song to song. However, the mixture of two sopranos, tenor, and bass voices communicated harmonic conversation to carry the plot.

The set that individually rotated, exposing a new scene behind each panel revealing six different rooms, cleverly and humorously conveying the women pining for their men off to war interspersed with entrances of the disguised lovers testing their women's purity, worked. At first the women refused to submit to their fiancés as strangers met through Don Alonso. Despina, the maid at the Skyline hotel, is persuaded by Alonso to dupe the women into cheating on their testing fiancés who wagered a bet with Alonso that their women will not betray them. The well-planned set helped provide comic relief for the funny, sporadic entrances and exits of the characters.

The body language and choreography comedically added to each scene by accenting the smart music accompanying it and the solo, trio, and four-voice contributions sung in Italian. The appropriated theme projected in the "Fonzie" men characters (motorcycle leather jackets and exaggerated expressions) embellishing the plot, was successful. The multiple planned dancerly interruptions of the characters accented the style with comic grace.

The men feign sick from arsenic and are revived from a weird carnival smoked merry-go-round magnet ride but act like seizures are affecting them (not really funny unless you know they're faking it, or no tolerance for the mannerisms of the disabled, or reminiscent of the German experiment on Jews – making you cringe at the behavior of prisoners killed by the electric chair (not really funny unless you think Capital punishment is funny or the revived look like that). This seemed a revival of the outed word, "retarded," and to laugh at it was not quite appropriate. Are we really allowed to laugh at all these characters, including midgets, flame swallowers, snake charmers with a haircut, transgender, etc. ? I laughed and cried.

By the end, I was consumed by the constant switching of roles and partners, making me unsure of the opera's message or theme. Perhaps that was the message, which was that partners and all types of people are somewhat interchangeable and tolerated and this tolerance should be celebrated.