**Dicapo Opera Theatre : Puccini Project : Messa di Gloria & Le Villi**

Premiere : New York

*-Review*

Dr. Roberta E. Zlokower --- 1/12/2007

Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria*, found the chorus in notable depth and musicality, in the segments entitled: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. This deeply religious Mass included the themes of redemption, glory, resurrection, peace, and mercy. Dicapo's Opera Theatre Chorus gave a textured, resonant, and moving interpretation of this work. Tonight's soloists, the baritone, Oziel Garza-Ornelas, and the tenor, Drew Slatton, presented highly professional, solo arias, with confidence, clarity, and depth. Stephen Pier, the new work's choreographer, and his assistant, Miki Orihara (the Martha Graham Dance Company), had the Nilas Martins dance ensemble moving with up-stretched arms, all the while with feet firmly placed onstage (ballet slippers, but not en pointe, in a choreographic style evocative of Graham, herself).

The orchestra held its own and more, with contrasting tempo and tone. The dancers flowed with the chorus, in a structure that paired male dancers and male chorus, female dancers and female chorus, plus mixed gender performances, and, at times, the entire chorus or orchestra performed unaccompanied by dancers, for a constantly shifting focus in genre and aesthetic.

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*-Review*

ANNE MIDGETTE --- the New York Times ---1/15/2007...striking performances of choreography by Stephen Pier ('*Messa di Gloria*')the 'Messa di Gloria' showed that Dicapo is capable of achieving a higher standard. And Mr. Pier's choreography reflected the bright, busy (sometimes cheesy) music in interesting ways. When the low voices intoned, 'Qui tollis peccata mundi,' he sent the male dancers across the front of the stage in Graham-like poses that were later embellished with the female dancers on a repeat when the women's voices joined in.