

composition of Verdi's 1851 score. For the Donizetti work (in a concert performance at the VENETIAN THEATRE, July 12), many had come to cheer Angela Meade, who has shone as Semiramide, Norma and Hélène here; and cheer her they did. I found her performance generally impressive, but rarely moving or involving. For long stretches her Lucrezia seemed a collection of well-executed effects rather than a human being working within the expressive framework of bel canto phrasing. The words were clear but rarely invested and projected. Meade's considerable talent and accomplishment shone most brightly in fast, aggressive music, such as that at the endings of both acts: the duet with Gennaro and the final cabaletta, of which she boldly essayed two verses.

Michele Angelini (Gennaro) proved a very capable bel canto tenor, certainly showing the evening's best command of text and tapered dynamics; he created a real, tensely haunted figure, entering and exiting in character. Tamara Mumford's vocal beauty lies in the rich middle; she could manage contralto depths as Maffio Orsini, but was less impressive at the top. Christoforos Stamboglis's Alfonso boomed imposingly, but the aptly lugubrious tone didn't always 'tell' quite fast enough for the music. As the paired spies, Rustighello and Astolfo, the tenor Zachary Altman and the baritone Cameron Schutza made considerable impressions; most promising among Gennaro's gang was the tenor SungWook Kim's Jeppo. The Orchestra of St Luke's played well; the youthful-voiced chorus here always pleases. (At a second performance the following weekend, Meade sang the cabaletta to 'Com'è bello' and the composer's original duo ending. 'Era desso il figlio mio' was given as an encore.)

In *Rigoletto* (July 19), most of the textual variants came courtesy of John Osborn (as the Duke), who gamely introduced myriad fleet decorations while taking special pleasure in decrescendoing on high notes, all of which, right up to a whizzing high D, came easily to him. His virtuosity was welcome, even if sheer tonal and interpretative charm proved in shorter supply. Stephen Powell was straightforwardly moving in only his second run of performances as Rigoletto, singing gorgeously in legato episodes, ringingly on high and managing convincing expansiveness elsewhere. Georgia Jarman, largely delicate and lyrical rather than a tweety-bird, avoided the traditional high interpolations but offered a live-wire top-range edge that allowed her to ride the quartet and Storm Scene. Jeffrey Beruan brought more elegance to Sparafucile than he has to some previous roles here. Nicole Piccolomini's Maddalena entered in character looking combustible, yet sounded rather metallic. Yunnice Park (Giovanna) and Hsin-Mei Tracy Chang (Countess Ceprano) were pleasing in small roles. Again, Crutchfield's band played well; his chosen dynamics convinced more completely than the (granted, sometimes effective) tempo adjustments he argued for in his programme notes.

DAVID SHENGOLD

New York

CHELSEA OPERA drew a sold-out house on June 14 for its pleasing performance of Aaron Copland's 1954 *The Tender Land*. The Depression-era Kansas plains were a stretch to conjure up in the attractive setting of ST PETER'S CHURCH, but Michael Megliola's lighting and the apt work of the producer Lynne Hayden-Findlay (who also designed the costumes) and Andrea Calabrese and Rachel Estabrook (wigs and make-up) worked the necessary transformation. Given the tiny playing area, Hayden-Findlay's solutions for the community dance scene succeeded in both concept and execution.

Using Murry Sidlin's 1987 chamber reduction, Samuel McCoy conducted a commendable performance. In Joanie Brittingham, the company had a Laurie ideal in looks, manner and sound for this classic lyric soprano role. Hayden-Findlay and Brittingham wisely made it clear that for Laurie it's leaving that is most important—not her relationship with the itinerant Martin. Chad Kranak sang Martin pleasantly, with good control, but tended to smile imperturbably instead of acting. Peter Kendall Clark's Top proved suitably macho and vocally confident. Steven Fredericks lent Grandpa Moss the required vocal authority and stagecraft. Though she gave a moving performance, especially in Act 2's nicely-phrased 'Long time ago', Leonarda Priore brought perhaps too much vocal experience to Ma Moss. A woman with daughters of 18 and younger, Ma Moss is often sung by a mature mezzo, but the music and drama (including an element of jealousy) tell more strongly if she is younger, and Priore could not do justice to the opera's final pages. The ensemble stayed admirably tight and showcased some fine singers (including Heather Michele Meyer and Christine Reimer) in smaller roles. The largest cameo—the postman, Mr Splinters—was rendered lively by the veteran tenor David Kellett.

DAVID SHENGOLD

Santa Fe

SANTA FE OPERA's 2014 season showed that the varied repertoire mix established by John Crosby in the first 1957 season continues to characterize the company. There was a classic anchor piece, *Carmen*, and a comedy, *Don Pasquale*. In a nod to the company's strong Germanic tradition, *Fidelio* took the stage in its company debut. Then followed an unusual double bill of Mozart's *The Impresario* and Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, and

■ Ana María Martínez (centre) in the title role of Santa Fe Opera's 'Carmen', with Sarah Larsen, Dan Kempson, Amanda Opuszynski and Noah Baetge as the smugglers

