

Camden New Journal

[Home](#) [News](#) [Letters](#) [Gulliver](#) [Islington](#) [West End](#) [Arts & Entertainment](#) [Jobs](#) [Competitions](#) [Shop](#) [Area Guide](#) [Classifieds](#) [Search](#)
[Directions](#)

LETTERS

Your views and thoughts...



Classical and Jazz: Preview - La Traviata at Upstairs at the Gatehouse from February 8-March 3



Published: 2 February, 2012
 by SEBASTIAN TAYLOR

Burlesque opera comes to Highgate late next week when the Merry Opera Company's production of Verdi's La Traviata opens at fringe music theatre Upstairs at the Gatehouse before embarking on a national five-month tour.

Sopranos and mezzos will be variously attired in such delights as curvaceous [corsets](#) and camisoles, sexy suspenders and stilettos and boas and, believe it not, balloons.

Tenors, baritones and basses will get to wear boxers, bloomers, bowlers and boas as well as smart suits and shiny shoes.

Overall, there are going to be nearly 200 costumes made by Fi Russell, a set and costumer designer based in Ealing.

The most challenging thing has been to make burlesque costumes that are comfortable for singers to wear, she says.

The standard tight corset would constrain a singer's breathing so she's had to make corsets that look like corsets but don't have the boning.

Kit Hesketh-Harvey, director and leading light behind the production, said the main opera houses have the budgets to put on big Traviata productions evoking the atmosphere of the massive salons of [19th-century Paris](#).

"Rather than try to do something similar on a much smaller scale, we've updated the opera from 19th-century Paris to the north London of today, set amidst the atmosphere and excitement of night-life in the West End, Camden, Hoxton or wherever," he said during a break in rehearsals.

"We're putting on an intimate contemporary production that alternates between a burlesque club and Violetta's flat. Violetta is the club's star performer and, dressed to the nines, she catches the eye and the adoration of City banker Alfredo, with such tragic consequences.

"The inspiration for the burlesque party scenes has come from Café de Paris, Le Rêve, La Soirée, La Clique and the [myriad cabaret](#)/ burlesque clubs in town frequented by people in their twenties and thirties – and Traviata is about people precisely in that age group."



Expatriate In Malaysia?

£100k+ In UK Pensions? Download A Free Guide To QROPS & Expert Advice
[Your.QROPSchoices.com/FreeGuide](#)

Expat Advice In Malaysia

£50k-£1m Or £250+ Regular Savings? Get The Best Interest Rates Today!
[www.OffshoreInvestmentDesigner.com](#)

Catalonia Rigoletto

Book a luxury holiday at lower price
[hoteles-catalonia.com](#)

Visiting London in 2012?

Great shops, culture, events and nightlife - Love Camden this summer
[www.lovecamden.org/2012](#)

AdChoices ▶

Latest Feature Articles

- Feature: Euro 2012 - Lost in Translation?
- Feature: E-commerce Guide - Market Stall to...
- Feature: Radley - From Camden to Covent Garden
- Feature: Google and Others Sponsor Thousands of...
- Feature: Cloud Technology - The Future?



REVIEWS : Books

- OLD HAMPSTEAD: Nostalgic look back through artists' paintings and photographs retrieved from archives
- BOOKS: Hollywood Movie Stills. By Joel W Finler
- WAYNE HEMINGWAY: Former stall-holder insists Camden Lock 'hasn't been sanitised'
- BOOKS: What a piece of work is this man
- BOOKS: Nobel laureate who says there is an alternative

REVIEWS : Theatre

Navigation

- Classifieds



The 13-strong cast for the Merry Opera's production is drawn from performers well into their careers and, to catch some classy singers, each gets a shot at one of the solo roles.

Violetta, for instance, is being shared between two sopranos, Claire Egan from New Zealand and Anna Jeruc from Poland, both now living in London.

Claire comes from the same town as Dame Kiri Te Kanawa who sponsored her studies as one of the English National Opera Works artists.

Anna's first English singing engagement after arriving in London in 2007 was at a birthday party for George Michael.

Working as a waitress while learning English, she was asked to lead the Happy Birthday rendering – she got a standing ovation from the super-star and guests.

Now, while working with various opera companies in this country and Europe, she still finds time to run a Polish choir in Willesden Green.

Updating the opera has provided Hesketh-Harvey with an opportunity to come up with a new translation.

Older translations would sound creaky in the intimate setting Upstairs at the Gatehouse where the words are easier to hear than in the big opera houses.

The new translation should be good as Hesketh-Harvey has quite a track record in translating numerous operas for new productions at the Royal Opera House, ENO and elsewhere.

The main hurdle in downsizing such a magnificent opera at Traviata is not so much the translation, the setting or costumes or, indeed, the singing. Rather, it's task of getting the full thrill of Verdi's great orchestral composition from a small band.

The final scene of Violetta's death relies entirely on the orchestral music to build the emotional maelstrom before Alfredo's heart-rending cry when he realises she has taken her last breath.

For its Traviata – under musical director is Stephen Hose – the Merry Opera is using a five-strong band comprising a violin, cello, viola, woodwind and piano and accordion.

Much will depend on the ability of the string players to catch the feel of Verdi's music, to tingle spines, to bring tears to the eyes.

• La Traviata is Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village, N6 4BD, from **February 8-March 3**, tickets £12/cons £10 except Saturday/Sunday £16/cons £14, 020 83430 3488, www.upstairsatthegate.com

SHARE    

Tags: Camden New Journal Website Music Reviews

Comments

Post new comment

Subject:

Comment: *

Input format

Preview

Click here
TO RESERVE YOUR HOTEL



- THEATRE: Argument, through poetry, to song in...
- THEATRE: Utopia... it's not so perfect
- THEATRE: Finding tragedy in The Comedy Of Errors
- THEATRE: Taking note of the dialogue in Spinach
- THEATRE: Thank heaven for Druid Murphy

Cinema

- TAKING ON TARANTINO: Matthew McConaughey is no ordinary Killer Joe in the dirty suburbs of Dallas
- CINEMA: Mark Duplass, Emily Blunt and Rosemarie DeWit in Your Sister's Sister
- CINEMA: Chris O'Dowd in Friends With Kids
- CINEMA: Latest News > June 28
- CINEMA: Abraham Lincoln bites back as a vampire hunter out for revenge

Latest Blog

THE TALK: Home-grown Jake steps up
THE TALK: Arsenal find another 'New Vieira'
THE TALK: Historical Spurs victory built on former Arsenal rock
THE TALK: Robbie Keane's chance to shine
THE TALK: Reasons not to love Wem-ber-lee

User login

Username: *

Password: *

Log in

- Create new account
- Request new password

Twitter

NewJournal 'Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!' bit.ly/NK942X
3 days ago · reply · retweet · favorite

NewJournal EastEnders star Scott Maslen calls for more care services to be paid from our taxes bit.ly/OFUTAZ
3 days ago · reply · retweet · favorite

NewJournal Therapist thrown into canal by drug dealers bit.ly/OFUgHx
3 days ago · reply · retweet · favorite

NewJournal VIRGINIA WOOLF: Writer reveals the 'hot, not dead' marriage that her great aunt wanted bit.ly/LRyVpp
4 days ago · reply · retweet · favorite

NewJournal Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, the man who chronicled our architecture 'never

GET YOUR SMOKEY ON

ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES.

9 out of 10 wildfires are caused by humans.
9 out of 10 wildfires can be prevented.

▶ LEARN MORE



Syndicate

