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## Padreivia

JULY 13, 2010 BY RICK WESTERKAMP ■ LEAVE A COMMENT

From the overture, we hear moments of melodic music that warm your soul, juxtaposed with moments of dissonance and foreboding. At its close, the Narrator (Chris Dwyer), dressed in tattered clothing, sets the scene, informing the audience, "This production is about love." *Padreivia*, presented by Opera Alterna, is about to transport you from a time where it seemed as if love did not exist, to a time when you cannot believe you lived without it.



*Padreivia*, a tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, asks us if one person can experience more than one kind of love. Gismonda (Daniele Lorio) lives her life only experiencing familial love from her father, the dictatorial King Tancred (Tad Czyzewski). When the new gardener, Guiscardo (Siddhartha Misra), enters the picture, Gismonda falls head over heels in love with him. This love is passionate and deeper than any emotion she has ever experienced. Can these two types of love live inside Gismonda, or will one ruin the other?

As the lights come up on King Tancred and his brooding daughter Gismonda in Castle Padreivia, the two actors' body language sets the scene before a lyric is even sung. Tancred urges his daughter to divulge what is causing her such emotional strife. She explains that she "feels imprisoned; like someone is choking her with her freedom." Her father justifies the strict confinement he has forced on her, saying that he wanted to protect her from the outside world. He says, "I have given you more than you could ever desire." to which Gismonda retorts, "But still I am alone."

The next scene is set in the gardens of the castle. A despondent Gismonda meets the new gardener, Guiscardo. She asks him if it is possible for poison and flowers to live together leading Guiscardo to divulge that there are indeed poisonous flowers in her garden. Disregarding Guiscardo's rather obvious interest in her, she directs the gardener to press said poisonous flowers into a poisonous drink. Gismonda recognizes Guiscardo's interest in her, much to the relief of the audience, and engages in some flirtation, resulting in the pair setting a date for later that same night. Madness ensues when King Tancred discovers his lovely daughter with the forbidden Guiscardo.

The emotional range of Ms. Daniele Lorio's performance was organic, and her despondency walked the fine line between too much and just enough. Best of all, you knew when she was in love even before her lyrics spelled it out for you. It was an honor to watch Gismonda's emotions of melancholia switch to those of love, both bodily and vocally. Mr. Siddhartha Misra captured the hearts of audience members with his layered performance as Guiscardo. His warm upper register filled me with thoughts of love and understanding. From the moment he opened his mouth to sing, I knew it was love at first sight for Guiscardo. Mr. Tad Czyzewski's portrayal of Tancred was perfection. He balanced the stern sound and stature of a King with the warmth and protection of a father. Chris Dwyer's performance as the Narrator and Guard served as the perfect vehicle to drive the plot forward. His scene introductions were ominous, and roped the audience into the story.

Thomas Pasatieri's score takes the audience on an emotional rollercoaster, from romance and harmony to deception and dissonance. There is not one moment in the production at which music, text, and vocals aren't all working towards the same goal. The collaboration is impeccable.

The only instrument used is a piano, played by Nicolas Catravas. Mr. Catravas played wonderfully, his performance mirroring every emotion portrayed by the characters onstage, his notes resonating with the audience, intertwining along with the plight of each character.

The collaborative direction of both Mr. Jeffrey Newberger and Mr. Jay D. Brock, Pasatieri's beautiful score and the outstanding performances make the audience fall in love with love.

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## Padrevia

By Thomas Pasatiere

Music Direction by Jeffrey Newberger

Stage Direction by Jay D. Brock


Produced by Opera Alterna







Reviewed by Rick Westerkamp


Running time: 50 minutes

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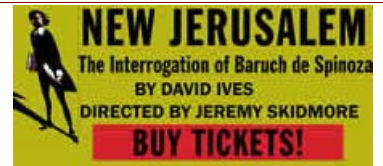
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