

associations with the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Chicago Opera Theater. Celebrated bel canto interpreters flocked to Gossett, the rare scholar who was also a superb coach—one whose brilliance in creating stylistically apposite ornamentation became legendary.

A sought-after lecturer and frequent contributor of programme notes for recordings, Gossett was the author of two books: a definitive study of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (1985) and *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera* (2006). The first musicologist to receive the Mellon Distinguished Achievement Award, Gossett also held the Cavaliere di Gran Croce, the Italian government's highest civilian honour.

For nearly five decades Gossett was based at the University of Chicago, where he directed the Center for Italian Opera Studies. He made a significant impact not only as a professor but also as chair of the Department of Music (1978-84, 1989) and dean of the Humanities Division (1989-99). In 2010 he was designated Robert W. Reneker Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus Professor of Music. From 2003 to 2011, he shared his position in Chicago with a faculty appointment in the Facoltà de Lettere at Rome's Università La Sapienza.

ROGER PINES

### Jeffrey Tate

British conductor, in Bergamo, on June 2, aged 74. It is inevitable that Jeffrey Tate's durable international career was usually viewed through the prism of his courage in overcoming lifelong physical disability. Born in Salisbury on 28 April 1943 with severe curvature of the spine, Tate initially read medicine at Cambridge and trained as an eye specialist at St Thomas's Hospital, London. His musical calling proved stronger than his debt to the medical profession, and study at the London Opera Centre (1970-1) was followed by a répétiteur's job at Covent Garden, where he worked closely with Solti and Downes. He went on to assist Karajan at Salzburg, but it was his incisive preparation of the



■ *Jeffrey Tate at Covent Garden* singers for Boulez and Chéreau's centennial *Ring* at Bayreuth (1976) that alerted the wider operatic world to his potential. When—after success conducting *Carmen* at Gothenburg in 1978—he took over from an ailing James Levine for the Met's first production of Berg's *Lulu*, his career was assured.

From 1985 Tate was principal guest conductor of the English Chamber Orchestra, with whom he made many records for EMI, and later on he held major orchestral posts in Rotterdam and Hamburg. Yet despite an admission that he sometimes 'loathed' opera, he came to spend more time in the theatre than the concert hall: his CV included most of the world's leading houses, Vienna and La Scala among them. *The Ring*, following important new cycles at the Paris Châtelet in 1994 and in Adelaide four years later, became his speciality. A brilliant ROH debut (*La clemenza di Tito*, 1982) eventually led to him becoming its first-ever principal conductor, a post he sustained for six seasons from 1986. As recently as 2011, he took the helm for the Royal Opera's *Der fliegende Holländer*.

The later focus of this committed European's work elsewhere—especially in Germany and Italy, where he was music director of the San Carlo in Naples from 2005 to 2010—was largely a matter of personal preference. His recordings, notably of *Lulu*, *Hänsel und Gretel* and *Elektra*, demonstrate his emotive power and continual care that the singing should never be drowned by the pit. Appointed CBE in 1990, Tate was knighted earlier this year.

CHRISTOPHER WEBBER

## Argentina

### Buenos Aires

The 2017 season at the TEATRO COLÓN opened with Anibal Lápiz's production of *Adriana Lecouvreur* (March 14). Lápiz himself designed the graceful costumes, with Christian Prego responsible for the staging's elegant visual frame. Mario Perusso, one of our best conductors for this repertoire, led stylishly, and the supporting cast included Leonardo Caimi as a polished-sounding Maurizio, the veteran Alessandro Corbelli as a model Michonnet, Nadia Krasteva, who brought an opulent mezzo and a wide vibrato to the Princesse de Bouillon, and Fernando Radó, sounding solid and powerful as the Prince. Following the small scandal of Angela Gheorghiu pulling out of singing *Adriana* (and blaming the theatre management) when rehearsals were already under way, the title role was sung by Virginia Tola. She was at her best in the monologues; her singing was generally weak and undramatic.

There seemed little justification for the inclusion of the next opera in the theatre's season: *Das Liebesverbot* may be by Wagner, but it is a youthful effort—really a *pasticcio* of Donizetti, Rossini, Auber and others—and of little importance. Kasper Holten's production, first seen in Madrid in February 2016, was full of fantasy, dynamic, well lit (by Bruno Poet) and with fine costumes and sets (designed by Steffen Aarfang). But in this slender musical context it was next to impossible to weigh up the conducting of Oliver von Dohnányi. Lise Davidsen (Isabella) stood out for her directness of delivery, her legato and her sense of line. The sopranos María Hinojosa (a very good actress, as Dorella) and Marisú Pavón (as Mariana) sang well, as did the tenors Peter Lodahl (Luzio) and Carlos Ullán (Claudio). Christian Hübner (Brighella) was efficient if unrefined, and Hernán Iturralde (Friedrich) supplied enjoyable comedy and good projection.

CARLOS ERNESTO URE

## Australia

### Perth

LOST AND FOUND OPERA brought *Trouble in Tahiti* close to home—literally—in their production for Perth audiences. Bernstein's 1951 exploration of a

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dysfunctional marriage was set in an affluent home in a Perth suburb. In order to reach our seats we had to walk past Dinah preparing breakfast in the kitchen. Our seating, cinema-style, was on the patio, with double doors providing a screen through which we viewed the family.

Lost and Found (established by Thomas de Mallet Burgess and Christopher van Tuinen in 2014) has built its reputation on producing operas in unusual venues, bringing new resonance to the works. Outstanding casting and a mix of naturalistic and psychologically probing direction from Burgess has so far resulted in opera with an uncomfortably personal impact, and on May 10 *Trouble in Tahiti* did not disappoint.

Sam and Dinah appeared young, successful and glamorous, but signs of their loveless marriage abounded in Tyler Hill's set: wilted roses in a vase, Junior shrinking behind headphones and a screen, packing boxes of unused possessions filling up empty spaces, and Devon Lovelady's stark, cold lighting.

The boxed possessions were a powerful metaphor for the uncertainty of the relationship. They also provided an inspired role for the chorus; Bernstein's 'Greek chorus born of the radio commercial' were a trio of removal men and women. Kieran Lynch, Curtis Novacek and Rachel Singer crooned close harmonies, jazz rhythms and sugar-coated lyrics with velveteen smoothness while ticking off the items required to live the American dream: 'Sheridan sofa, Chippendale chair, bone chinaware'.

Van Tuinen accompanied from a piano in the adjoining lounge room, his clean technique and tender phrasing creating subtle background atmosphere. Sam was sung by Christopher Tonkin, whose creamy baritone and sweet falsetto were a treat to listen to in close proximity while his chiselled features gave extra arrogance to 'There's a law', sung

after winning the handball tournament and while leaning against the patio door dressed in nothing but stars-and-stripes swimmers. The mezzo-soprano Helen Sherman delivered a strong Dinah with fast vibrato and crisp diction melting into moments of tearful fragility. Her 'Island Magic' was sensational, sung cabaret-style complete with a bubbling volcano (courtesy of a champagne bottle and some aspirin), around which she sashayed with riotous extravagance.



■ Up close and personal: Christopher Tonkin and Helen Sherman as Sam and Dinah in *Lost and Found* Opera's *Trouble in Tahiti* in Perth

The lure of possessions and 'silver screens' is just as potent as it was in 1951, and the silver-screen substitution for intimacy in Scene 7 couldn't have been clearer to the audience, who watched with voyeuristic fascination from the patio. *Lost and Found* produces a thrilling operatic package. With a recent tour to the state of Victoria and a season in Paris planned for 2018, the secret is getting out.

WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA opened the stage year with *Tosca*, and from the first explosive orchestral chords it was clear this was going to be a good night. The impact of Wade Kernot's harried Angelotti skittering through Jan Ubels's impressive Sant' Andrea della Valle set was given cohesive punch by Brad Cohen and the WA Symphony Orchestra, establishing a momentum that lasted the entire night.

The New Zealand director Stuart Maunder updated *Tosca* to 20th-century Italy with Scarpia as head of the Mafia and Cavaradossi linked to the Communist party. But politics were secondary to the emotional rawness of the central characters who dominated Ubel's elegant but sparsely furnished scenes. The unadorned, spacious set design allowed room for the orchestra and singers to paint the picture (literally, in Cavaradossi's case).


The vocally sturdy principal singers were up to the challenge. On March 28 Paul O'Neill as Cavaradossi sang with clarion brightness. Antoinette Halloran's warm, multi-hued Tosca had prism-like flashes of coquettish jealousy, teariness and wild defiance. Her duets with O'Neill were amorous and erotic, although his focused tenor didn't always fit well with her robust vibrato. Teddy Tahu Rhodes has grown into the role of Scarpia, eschewing swagger for a darker, more malignant sound. Kernot was a troubled and articulate Angelotti, and Andrew Foote brought a wonderful kind of timid comedy to the Sacristan.

The WA Opera Chorus was in top form for a tremendous *Te Deum*. Jason Morphett's moody use of side lighting and imposing shadows added dramatic intensity, and Elizabeth Whiting's 1950s costumes were elegant. The linchpin was Cohen and his assured direction of a well-knit WASO. Brave silences and whisper-soft phrase endings sat alongside explosive violence as Cohen articulated the dramatic tension of Puccini's score.

ROSALIND APPLEBY

Opera, August 2017

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Opera, August 2017