

Estonian Tosca in Vilnius



By Henning Høholt on 9/24/11 • Categorized as Opera



Tosca, end of Act 1. Estonian National Opera, guesting in Vilnius. Foto: Harri Rospu

VILNIUS: The outstanding Estonian soprano **Heli Veskus** was presenting and singing a Tosca of international format at the guesting at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Friday 23th. September, her *Visi d'Arte* was good. She was well followed up by her Scarpia, **Rauno Elp**.

René Soom made a good figur out of his Sakristan role and sung nicely, **Mart Laur** as Cezare Angelotti too.

The great **Estonian National Opera Orchestra** followed well up, conducted by **Jüri Alpten**, who has the right feeling for **Giacomo Puccinis** wonderfull music, and was giving great tempis that I enoyed, specielly, slowing down the Te deum, and too helping the tenor to hide his not good high tunes som places. Unfortunatelu Tosca - **Heli Veskus**, and the audience had deserved a better tenor as Cavaradossi.



Tosca, from Act 2, with The Estonian National Opera. Foto: Harri Rospu

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Urmás Póldma is not a Puccini tenor, nor a Verdi tenor, at least not in this kind of very demanding head roles as Cavaradossi, where even the audience, which is not used to listen to opera, can hear that this is not functioning. Furthermore his two famous arias *Recondita armonia* and *E Lucevan le Stelle*, are so wellknown, so people want them as highlights, and after these presented Friday night at the Lithuanian Operahouse, there were no applause. During the way in his duets with Tosca it sounded well, he has a good voice in the middle part, with an interesting sound and character, but on the top it is missing, and some times being screaming, like in *Victoria* in 2nd act. It is my opinion, after have heard this singer only one time, that he should work in the Mozart repertoire for a periode.



Tosca, from Act 2, with The Estonian National Opera. Foto: Harri Rospu

The staging by **Raimundas Banionis**, functioned well with good details, also some new small details, which made it allived, such as letting Spoleta (?), **Aleksander Arder**, handing out the bullets and others. The staging of the Te Deum with the Bishop him self svinging the censer, didn't function, one of the priest should have done that job, and then letting the Bishop play his role. In addition I prefer the "*Te Deum*" sound more poverful with Scarpias voice more in the center of the sound.

The costumes by **Sergejus Bocullo** was ok, but nothing extraordinary. **Heli Veskus** as Tosca was looking great in her read outfits in act two and three. Scarpias black plastic coat in act 1 looked wrong, I understand it should look like black leather, but the costume designer should have choosen another kind of black leather look-a-like material, which is possible to find. The red fór was elegant. The stage design also by **Sergejus Bocullos** was a mistake. The few furnitures in act 2 was ok, but the port to the chapel for Angelotti and the entrance to Scarpias office was mistakes. Neither in the church Sant'Andrea della Valle, nor at Palazzo Farnese or at Castel Sant'Angelo it works well wih scaffold, still that it was

delicouse lightend up with good atmosphaeric light as well as the lighting up of the background when the morning sun is coming in the very start of 3rd Act,