



MUSIC

Rockin' barge

For Judith Barnes, founder and artistic director of Vertical Player Repertory, which specializes in performing rarely-heard operatic works, presenting a piece by the composer of "La Boheme" and "Madama Butterfly" is a no-brainer.

"I think it's a great piece," Barnes says about "Il Tabarro," the one-act that Puccini originally penned as part of an operatic triptych, "Il Trittico." Vertical Player Rep will stage "Il Tabarro" beginning Jan. 27.

The tragic opera, which is a hard-hitting, dramatic portrait of a marriage irrevocably ruined by the death of a child, is, according to Barnes, "so compact. It describes the psychology of its characters vividly and realistically and describes this troubled marriage in very powerful, humanistic terms."

Although the libretto is better than most operatic fare, it's Puccini's music that, as usual, is the drawing card.

"The score is very hypnotic," explains Barnes, who sings the wounded wife Giorgetta in this production, opposite baritone Zurab Ninua, as the husband Michele. (The performers are pictured above.) "It's hypnotically powerful as it builds to its climax."

The relative obscurity of "Il Tabarro" puzzles the soprano.

"It may not be as sentimental as 'Boheme' to my ear," admits Barnes, "but it's accessible and there are great tunes galore!"

"Il Tabarro" takes place on a small Parisian barge, "which is good for us," Barnes admits. "Some works are suited to smaller spaces — and this helps to make it very confining and claustrophobic."

Even if you see "Il Tabarro" this month or next, Vertical Player Repertory hopes you see it again this summer, when the company plans to stage it on a real barge, outdoors.

Barge Opera, anyone?

Puccini's "Il Tabarro" is performed by Vertical Player Repertory at 219 Court St. between Warren and Wyckoff streets in Boerum Hill, Jan. 27 and Feb. 3 at 8 pm and Jan. 29 and Feb. 5 at 4 pm. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. For more information, call (212) 539-2696.

— Kevin Filipski



Before Elan