



bachtrack



## Uninspiring remix mars Operafront's *Traviata*

★★☆☆☆ ?

Von Nicolas Nguyen, 18 August 2016

*Traviata Remixed*, showing this week at the Amsterdam Grachtenfestival before a one-off performance at the pop festival Lowlands, is the latest production of Operafront. This young company has for mission: "to fight for the existence of opera in the 21st century, by telling the stories of the old masterpieces in a language that is understood by audience of today". Frontwoman and artistic director Lotte de Beer's concept certainly succeeds in making the theatrical experience fashionably contemporary, but musically, the arrangements by Moritz Eggert are a dumbed-down version of Verdi's score that misses the mark.



Alexandra Flood (Violetta)

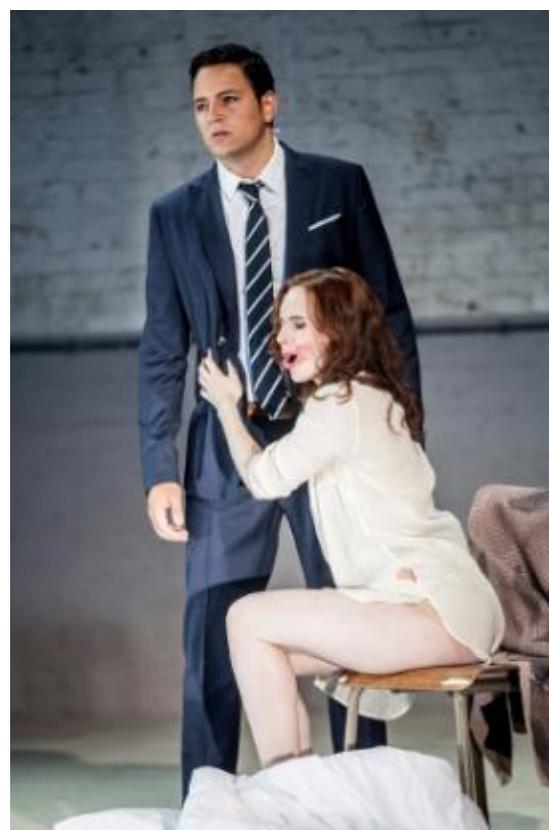
© Jeroen van Zijp

A prostitute meets the well-bred son of a wealthy and reputable family and they start a relationship. The father doesn't approve and forces her to break-up. Ruined, she dies alone from an incurable disease. At its core, the plot of Verdi's *La traviata* is timeless, and it has already been staged at just about every possible period in history. In her fast-paced staging, Ms de Beer does indeed use the language and visuals of our time. Violetta is that pretty party girl whose path you might have crossed in the Amsterdam nightlife. She snorts coke in the lavatory, dances on tables and sings karaoke. The public is invited to join Violetta's party in the Zuiveringshal West, a former 19th-century industrial complex now converted into a trendy events' venue. The audience is seated on beanbags and plank scaffolding around a stage without clear boundaries. Extras walk in and out, even encouraging the audience to join in and hum along during the *Brindisi* – admittedly with very limited success. There is an unapologetic use of laptops

and smartphones as props. Behind the stage, video screens relay, in a dynamic mosaic, Violetta's friends' tweets, their selfies of wild parties, or the clippings of tabloids reporting on Alfredo's scandalous relationship.

The experience of partying in the company of Violetta Valery could have been an enjoyable one if it wasn't for the musical arrangements composed by Moritz Eggert that left Verdi's score in tatters. I found this *remix* for a small amplified instrumental ensemble including an accordion, electric guitar and bass, with the addition of a DJ – as in: Violetta's dance party – thoroughly uninspiring. Whatever sound might have come from the musicians of the Youth Orchestra of the Netherlands was pretty much flattened down throughout by amplifier and electronic dance (off)beat. Thankfully, the singers, all miked, brought some respite in this rampage. As Violetta, the young Australian soprano Alexandra Flood stands out and impresses by a committed performance and some assured singing. Ernst Daniël Smid plays the least empathic of Giorgio Germonts, but then again, in 2016, an industry magnate member of the "1%" ought to be an unashamed bully. As Alfredo, Alessandro Scotto di Luzio has an appealing timbre though probably not heard at its best through amplification.

Some opera buffs will tell you one measures the success of a *Traviata* according to whether one cried at Act IV or started already from Act II. Of course, this is a joke: times when I get goosebumps or feel my eyes water at the opera are still rare moments. It does however illustrate the intrinsic power that Verdi's gutsy music can have on an audience. A power so primal that it can entrance any human being – one really does not have to be an experienced opera-lover to feel it. For all its sleek and upbeat staging, with the music stripped down to a shred and battered down by an electronic beat, this *Traviata* left me absolutely unmoved. I was entertained but left feeling short-changed. Hopefully, opera can find other ways to appeal to a 21st-century public.



Alessandro Scotto di Luzio (Alfredo) and Alexandra Flood (Violetta)

© Jeroen van Zijp

#### 0 KOMMENTARE

Bitte [Login or register](#), um einen Kommentar hinzuzufügen

“a dumbed-down version of Verdi's score that misses the mark”

 **VERANSTALTUNG ANZEIGEN**

**Rezensierte Veranstaltung: Zuiveringshal West, Amsterdam, am 16 August 2016**

#### PROGRAMM

Eggert, *Traviata Remixed*

#### DARSTELLER

Operafront

Steven Sloane, *Dirigent*

Lotte de Beer, *Regisseur*

Nationaal Jeugd Orkest

Alessandro Scotto di Luzio, *Tenor*

Alexandra Flood, *Sopran*

Ernst Daniël Smid, *Bariton*

Lore van den Broeck, *Sopran*

Alexander Jong, *Bass*



**Click here** to watch  
concert videos anytime,  
any place, anywhere

WAS IST GEBOTEN?

JETZT OPER SUCHEN

**OKTOBER 2017**

Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	So
25	26	27	28	29	30	01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	01	02	03	04	05

Abendvorstellung

Matinee

☆ Weitere Oper Kritiken

*Traviata*-Remix in Wien

*Katharina Hogrefe, 28th September*

Violetta der etwas anderen Art: Lotte de Beer und Moritz Eggert versetzen nicht nur die Geschichte der *Traviata* in das Hier und Heute, sondern verleihen auch der Musik von Giuseppe Verdi ein neues Kostüm.

★★★★☆☆

**MEHR**

*Perlenfischer - The Challenge*

*Snapdragon, 2nd December*

Oper? Reality Show? Lotte de Beer inszeniert Bizets *Perlenfischer* als herrliche Dschungelcamp-Satire. Diana Damrau, Dmitry Korchak und Nathan Gunn beeindrucken unter der Leitung von Jean-Christophe Spinosi.

★★★★★★

**MEHR**

A colourful and fast-paced revue in Amsterdam

*Nicolas Nguyen, 26th March*

Mohammed Fairouz's second opera, *The New Prince*, premiered in Amsterdam, is directed by Lotte de Beer as a colourful, dizzily fast-paced revue.