

OPERA REVIEW

ISRAELI OPERA
Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*
TAPAC
February 16

Although Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, one of the 20th century's first modernist operas, features no catchy melodies, its impact is inescapably forceful.

Perhaps what made the strongest impression, in the Israel Opera's joint performance with the Hessische Staatstheater Wiesbaden, were Manfred Beilharz and Bernd Holzapfel's innovative direction and set. The inventive use of stage space was a veritable stroke of genius: a succession of moving frames, containing segments of action in a manner that gradually and continually augmented the increasing tension and emotional power until the final inevitable catastrophe.

The leading roles of *Wozzeck* and his girlfriend, Marie, were created altogether credibly, replete with human passion and frailties, by the compelling stage presence of bass-baritone Andreas Scheibner and soprano Eilana Lappalainen.

The mercilessly satirical figures of the moralizing captain, the overbearing doctor and the boastful drum major were depicted hilariously by tenor Michael Howard, bass-baritone Vladimir Braun and tenor Michael Myers respectively.

The Symphony Orchestra Rishon Lezion, conducted by Asher Fisch, evoked the intricate score's subtle suggestiveness, lush tone colors, abundant sound effects, and emotional intensity. Orchestra-happy as the conductor was, he occasionally became inconsiderate of the singers, whom he tended to overshadow in the opera's first part.

The Israeli Opera will find it a challenge to follow-up the high level of this superb performance. • *Ury Eppstein*

Volume LXXII, Number 22040

FOUNDED IN 1932

NIS 8.00 (ELAT NIS 6.85)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2005 ■ 11 ADAR 1 5765

THE JERUSALEM POST

WWW.JPOST.COM