



TRIPLE THREAT

Eugene Opera's year-end production offers unintended political responses

An opera company that produces a New Year's Eve show typically has two choices: It can present a full opera, often Richard Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* (*The Bat*), which culminates in a bubbly masked ball. Or you can do some version of Opera's Greatest Hits, featuring popular arias and (depending on

budget and whether the choristers have recovered from their *Messiahs*) choruses from the top 10 operas that still constitute the bulk of American operatic fare.

Or you could do what **Eugene Opera** is doing with its "Opera Trio" this New Year's Eve: Present one act from three very different operas, which provides a snappy, risk-averse sampler (chances of liking at least some of the music can only go up) for the newbies presumably more likely to show up for this party than a standard performance.

What EO couldn't have known when it planned this triple treat is how appropriate it would be for the coming year.

The show opens with Act I from Verdi's 1871 *Aida*,

which culminates in the installation of Egypt's new commander-in-chief — the warmongering Radamès, who's determined to make war upon the Nubians for threatening Egypt's way of life. Musically, you get some of the grandest music in all of opera — a stirring curtain-raiser for the evening, and given the rhetoric and military-dominated cabinet of America's new corrupter-in-chief, perhaps a herald of our own imminent martial misadventures.

The dark, dramatic second New Year's segment, the third act of Francis Poulenc's 1956 *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, contrasts sharply with *Aida*. Set during the French Revolution, it recounts the sacrifice of nuns condemned to death by the government for refusing to turn over their priory to the state.

I'll save a description of the chilling final scene, one of the most powerful in all of opera, to avoid spoiling it for newbies. It's fascinating to see how directors choose to stage it, but the music is always searing, and again, the story might have unexpected contemporary relevance: Given our incoming leader's regressive attitudes about justice, free speech and human rights, let's just say that we should all be worried that heads may roll.

The evening's upbeat third segment differs from both predecessors: the second act of that batty Strauss comedy *Die Fledermaus* and its champagne-soaked Viennese masked ball. It ends the evening — and this miserable year — on a note of needed inebriation and wry laughter. Dance, drink and be merry, for tomorrow, well ...

Assuming we make it to 7:30 pm Tuesday, Jan. 10, we can celebrate the happier side of American populism with a house concert of traditional Appalachian stringband music at 755 River Road (contact mmeyer@efn.org for more info). Clawhammer banjo mistress **Allison de Groot** and fiddler **Tatiana Hargreaves** are familiar to folk fans from their respective work with Bruce Molsky and Dave Rawlings. This show will doubtless speak more to homeland values than any cutthroat capitalist New York billionaire. — *Brett Campbell*

SAY GOODBYE TO 2016 (FINALLY)

A roundup of New Year's Eve live music and dance

However much we'd all like to tell 2016: "Go home, you're drunk," New Year's Eve in Eugene offers plenty of options to get (responsibly) rowdy and dance away the woes of the weird year-that-was.

The Hi-Fi Music Hall downtown hosts a crackerjack lineup of Eugene favorites: **Medium Troy** and **Bohemian Dub Orchestra**, **Sol Seed**, **Soul Vibrator** and **Pancho + The Factory**. Festivities kick off at 8 pm; \$20 adv, \$25 door, 21-plus.

Just up Willamette Street at McDonald Theatre, **Candy Apply Bleu**, the world's greatest wedding band, works out impeccably smooth yet danceable covers of yacht-rock classics. Think: Hall & Oats, Air Supply and many more.

Joining Candy Apple Bleu is Eugene's beloved Americana dance-folk outfit **The Sugar Beets**. The party starts 9 pm; \$17, all ages.

Also downtown, catch the horn-powered **Alvin Johnson Collective** 9 pm at Luckey's Cigar Club; \$5, 21-plus. Or head to Cozmic Productions' **Pep Love New Year's Eve Party** featuring the Oakland producer and emcee at 8 pm at Whirled Pies (formerly Cozmic Pizza); \$12-\$15, all ages.

The Wayward Lamb is going all out with a "Neon Jungle" dance party theme, featuring **DJ Sassy Mouff** and a performance by **Work Dance Company**, starting at 7 pm; \$6, 21-plus.

Over in the Whiteaker, Sam Bond's Garage welcomes the New Year with Eugene's terminally peppy alt-funk-rock act **Fortune's Folly**. Joining Fortune's Folly is **DJ Evergreen**. The show starts 9:30 pm; \$10, 21-plus.

Also in the Whit, travel back in time at Old Nick's with a Prohibition-themed dance party complete with jazzy tunes and snazzy duds. The party starts 9 pm Saturday; \$5, 21-plus.

And if your end-of-year tastes tend toward the finer things, consider **Eugene Opera's** New Year's Eve Party at the Hult Center (it's also a celebration of the opera's 40th-anniversary season). Ticket price covers tasty treats from Marché Provisions and a champagne toast. And just because you like opera doesn't mean you can't dance. Eugene Opera's event features the music of Marc Siegel and Le BopHot. Get to the Hult by 10:30 pm; \$25-\$27.50, all ages. — *William Kennedy*

