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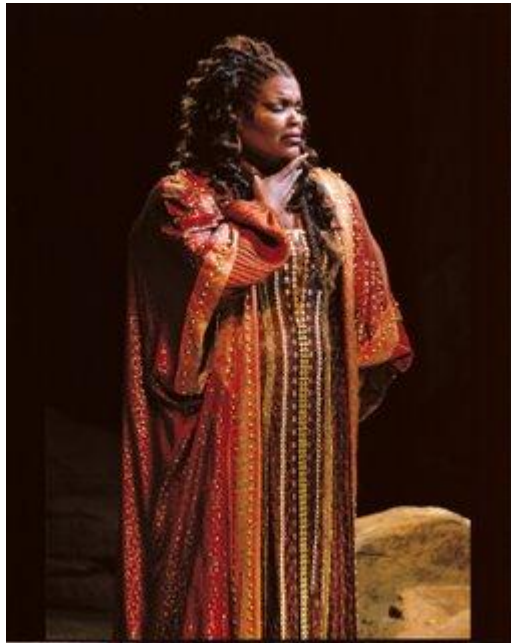
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Classical Music

Janelle Gelfand on the classical music scene

Friday, May 02, 2008

Metropolitan Opera Diva performs recital in Dayton



Yesterday, I was allowed to be a fly on the wall for the dress rehearsal of soprano Angela Brown, who performs tonight and Sunday afternoon at the Schuster Center for Dayton Opera's annual opera star gala. Part of the performance will be in collaboration with The Wilberforce University Choir.

This is one recital you don't want to miss. Brown's program is a winning combination of Verdi and Puccini opera arias, as well as numbers from "Margaret Garner" by Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison, for which she created the role of Cilla, and spirituals.

I was particularly taken with a cantata by John Carter based on a collection of spirituals -- "Peter go ring dem bells," "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child" --wonderfully arranged for voice and piano. Brown's voice, vivid, focused and shimmering, filled every corner of the Schuster. She has a knack for

communicating each word, so that the listener is instantly swept up in the power and emotion of these texts.

William Grant Still's "From the Hearts of Women" is a little-known cycle of four charming songs that should be heard more often. I loved what the soprano did with "Little Mother," a lullaby that soon becomes an anguished picture of pain -- revealing a subtext between the lines that Brown hints at magnificently.

But she is also an irresistible musician, who doesn't take herself so seriously she can't have fun. Pianist David Michael Wolff is excellent.

She's also performing "Ritorna vincitor" from Aida, her "signature" role, "Vissi d'arte" from "Tosca" and "Pace, pace mio dio" from "La Forza del Destino." She will make her role debut in "La Forza" to open the [Cincinnati May Festival](#) on May 16.

Dayton Opera presents its annual Star Gala featuring Metropolitan Opera soprano Angela Brown today (May 2) at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 4 at 3:00 p.m. [Click here for more info](#) and tickets.

posted by Janelle Gelfand at [10:23 AM](#)

Janelle's pen has taken her to Japan, China, Carnegie Hall, Europe (twice), East and West Coasts, and Florida. In fact, Janelle was the first Enquirer reporter to report from Europe via e-mail -- in 1995.

Janelle began writing for the Cincinnati Enquirer as a stringer in 1991 while writing a Ph.D. dissertation in musicology at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She joined the Enquirer staff in 1993.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she graduated from Stanford University, Janelle has lived in Cincinnati for more than 30 years. In her free time, this pianist plays chamber music with her circle of musical friends in Cincinnati.

She covers the Cincinnati Symphony, May Festival and Cincinnati Opera, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, chamber music ensembles, and as many recitals and events at CCM and NKU as possible.