

FUN WITH THE "SENIOR" KIRKPATRICKS, Brian & Karen      Phyllis G. 11-1-18

Brian and Karen love opera so we scheduled a visit to Olivera Street on our way to the opera, Don Carlos. We left Long Beach on Sunday, October 14th at about eleven a.m. Parking was not too difficult near Olivera Street but there were certainly many more stands than when Melanie and I were last there. We wanted Brian and Karen to experience a little bit of Mexico and the hand crafts, art, food and ambiance of a open air Mexican/American market. They really enjoyed it. They purchased a few things for their children and grandchildren, strolled with the musicians, and ended up eating a small lunch of casadillas, tacos with salsa and chips. We then sauntered back to the parking lot and our car.

Using her cell phone, Melanie found the nearest parking facility for the Music Center so off we drove for that location, not very far from Olivera Street. Our afternoon tickets were for the second balcony and we worked our way to the elevators and escalators up to our section. Brian and Karen had seen this opera last year in Paris. They warned us it was quite "dark" in nature and was that an understatement ! The opening scene is located at the monastery of San Juste and the monks are praying at the tomb of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Prince Don Carlos has come to lament, and pray, for his lost love, Elisabeth, whom his father, King Philip II has just taken as his bride, and Queen. The stage is dimly lit, the clothing is of course, black and even the floor is dark. One is reminded that this is during the time of the Spanish Inquisition and more darkness is yet to come. Enter Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa who urges Don Carlos to join him in journeying to Flanders, to try to save some of the Protestants who are being heavily persecuted. Also present is Princess Eboli, who hopefully but mistakenly thinks Don Carlos loves her. Don Carlos asks the Queen for her help in convincing King Philip to bless him by letting him travel to Flanders. Of course, everyone who comes on stage is dressed in black, so you know that permission is not going to be granted. Even the lighting is dark.

What follows is the ground work laid of mistrust and confusion between Philip and Don Carlos, between Philip and Elisabeth, between Eboli and Don Carlos, etc., etc., etc. Add to that the threats of the Great Inquisitor to Don Carlos, and even to King Phillip. When Act II opens there are people begging for their lives as they are brought out of jail to be burned at the stake. (According to Brian and Karen, this Inquisitor was not mean enough or threatening enough, as had been the one in the Paris

presentation. I thought his snarling was quite enough.) One of the most beautiful soprano voices in this cast is heard next, coming from the ceiling behind us, an angel, begging for the souls of the prisoners as they are being burned at the stake. No one escaped that fate. And speaking of magnificent voices, Placido Domingo, as the ill fated friend, Rodrigo, outdoes himself as he is shot in the back, begins to slump down the pole he had been leaning against, crumples into a prostrate heap, but still singing with that powerful voice, dies.

I must share with you the one visually beautiful scene in the opera, when, while in a garden, a lovely green tree is pushed onto stage from the side. But, alas, it is too quickly removed to off stage again. Also, the orchestra, conductor and first chair cellist were outstanding. After this excellent presentation, we headed for a lovely dinner at the marina and topped it off watching a stunning sunset. What a day !!!

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