



Press Excerpts

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The Boston Globe, Terry Byrne:

"OperaHub's stellar production of *Der Vampyr* stands out as one of the most rewarding theatrical events of the season. The company's heady brew of Heinrich Marschner's lush, Romantic score with an updated libretto with the insouciant humor of Boston playwright John J King...makes this rarely performed opera wonderfully accessible and enjoyable to opera lovers and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Twilight* fans alike.

...

Without sacrificing the melodic complexities of Marschner's 1828 score, OperaHub uses an orchestral reduction for just six instruments and a libretto that taps into contemporary conversations about women cast as victims while nodding to our fascination with vampires.

...

King's libretto is the crowning achievement of this *Der Vampyr*. Not only is his rhyming dexterously hilarious ('I'll seduce her, then I'll juice her'), but it always serves the story and the score. OperaHub's *Der Vampyr* is enjoyable on so many levels. The performance I saw included pre-teen audience members and an opera lover who said he was heading home to listen to his recording of the opera. Now *that's* accessible."

New York Arts, Lloyd Schwartz:

"The libretto brims over with clever and often anachronistic or off-color rhymes ... Amazing how, when push comes to shove, it's possible that imagination can triumph over a minimal budget."

Boston Arts Review, Beverly Creasey:

"If Heinrich Marschner's *Der Vampyr* is any indication of [OperaHub's] modus operandi, they make opera not only palatable but enjoyable.

...

King's clever allusions to television and film vampires and his abundant topical rhymes made me think of Gilbert and Sullivan: They threw all manner of barbs at politicians and entertainers in their operettas. The sumptuous music, too, is reminiscent of themes Sullivan "borrowed" from his contemporaries."

Boston Musical Intelligencer, Liane Curtis:

"In a rollicking new adaptation, *Der Vampyr* offers cultural parody, plenty of laughs and also dramatic intensity...it's clear that OperaHub has a hit on its hands.

...

In 're-vamping' the libretto, OperaHub has brought Marschner's beautiful melodies and exciting ensembles to life with a catchy new plot...this revision is fun and refreshing and Marschner's music, like most great music, can withstand such unforeseen uses.

I am one who steers clear of popular culture, so many of the references – to best-selling vampire books, movies, television shows, etc. – went by me, yet I could clearly see they were effective with the young audience.

...

Moshe Shulman's reduction for oboe, horn, violin, percussion, string bass, and piano was effective in retaining the varied timbres of an opera orchestra. Percussion and string bass gave real depth to the sound.

...

I'm very happy this work has been revived, and in a compelling new version. The vampire theme resonates with many recurring ideas of opera – the Faustian desire for eternal youth, Don Giovanni's use of his class status in manipulating women, and the ability of musical language to depict the supernatural."

Boston Musical Intelligencer, Steven Ledbetter:

"The Plaza Theatre was filled with happy operagoers, generally much younger than the patrons found at the Boston Lyric Opera and Odyssey Opera...but certainly not all of the members of the audience were new to opera: I ran into two old friends, longtime experienced singers, who were attending for the second time because they had enjoyed the show so much the first time around.

New England Theatre Geek, Kitty Drexel:

"*Der Vampyr* is a decadently feminist adaptation of Marschner's original. This new arrangement...tackles the difficult truths of male entitlement, victim blaming and rape culture that all women face on a daily basis... [it] is relatable, singable, and very entertaining.

...

We were laughing from the moment the cast stole the stage during the overture. Among the references are *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the god awful *Twilight* series, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Bela Lugosi, Frank Langella, and the vast treasury of paranormal-romance smut haunting bookshelves... King takes them all and weaves them into vocab-rich, comedic gold.

...

With the exception of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the vast majority of popular vampire media is about a dude blood sucker manipulating a human woman (into his bed). This flat female stock character is the saved by human men or 'good' vampires. By applying feminism to *Der Vampyr*, female characters get to participate in the actual plot development.

Boston Musical Intelligencer, Jason McCool:

"Harmony singing about the wonders of cognac and Guinness? This I can get behind."