

# Recensioni – Press release

washingtonpost.com

## 'Vespri Siciliani': Verdi's Very Magnum Opus

By Tim Page

...the Washington National Opera has endeavored to give "I Vespri Siciliani" a fresh chance, with a creative production, a solid cast and the influential advocacy of General Director Placido Domingo ...

.... the spectator receives a full evening in the theater for the cost of a ticket."

...The production, directed by Paolo Micciche, might be described as Handsome-on-a-Budget - a series of scrims and projections, the images ranging from the young Verdi to works of Renaissance art to nifty, floating travelogue shots that manage to give the impression that "I Vespri Siciliani" is set on an ocean liner...

The New York Times  
nytimes.com

## Verdi Onstage and Domingo on the Podium

By Bernard Holland

The Washington National Opera enters middle age looking as healthy as it ever has.....  
....."I Vespri Siciliani" is a very satisfying piece for audiences; for singers....

....Paolo Micciché's production depends on large picture frames and projections of paintings. The staging stays out of the opera's way. Not a bad thing. "

**The Washington Time**

## Opera's Verdia golden moment

By T.L. Ponick

The WNO's new production of "I Vespri" at the Kennedy Center's Opera House dusts off an innovation from the company's recently concluded Constitution Hall exile - projected sets - repackaging the concept with stunning effectiveness.....

Paolo Micciche, who created the company's inventive productions of "Aida" and "Norma" during this period, literally frames his characters and projected imagery in three gigantic gilt picture frames.....and Alberto Spiazzi's sumptuous costuming adds the right touch of pageantry.

With Placido Domingo ably conducting the opera's massive forces, this "I Vespri Siciliani" is a masterful production.....

## National Opera's lengthy, but effective, 'Vespri'

By Tim Smith

.....to open its 50th anniversary season, Washington National took the somewhat risky route of tackling its first Vespri. It put the company's superstar asset into the pit - general director Plácido Domingo - and brought back the team of director Paolo Micciche .....

Micciche transplants the opera's 13th-century setting to the 19th, without undue damage. In this fresh context, the core political issue in the opera - Italian resentment over foreign occupation - reminds us of Verdi's own preoccupation with the struggle for Italian independence.

The Washington production attempts to give these people, places and events enhanced focus via artwork (especially by Verdi contemporary Francesco Hayez) that is projected onto screens. Giant gilded frames come and go, in lieu of traditional props, to aid the visual business. It's all a little too contrived but it gives the opera a look.

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## One terrific night at the opera

By Joseph Giannino

In a word, this performance of Verdi's "I Vespri Siciliani" by the Washington National Opera was 'awesome'. The WNO's production of "Vespri" was one of the most enjoyable evenings that I have spent at the opera in a long time. It started when Maestro Plácido Domingo took the stand and conducted a spirited, beautiful and rich overture.....

The stage design, by Paolo Micciche and Antonio Mastromattei, was very interesting. Basically the entire work seemed to be performed within a piece of art. The stage had very large and moveable frames that would basically showcase where the performers were while the backdrop, scrims and individual hanging sheets, would project beautiful Italian art throughout the entire piece. I found the use of sets extremely effective. .... the audience stayed and cheered, recognizing a terrific night at the opera for what it was.



## National Opera Proves You Get Better With Age

By Eve Cary

Verdi's "I Vespri Siciliani" might seem like an odd choice to open the Washington National Opera's 50th season, but the opera, directed by Paolo Micciché, perfectly displays WNO General Director Plácido Domingo's unique vision for the company as well as his talents in selecting a strong cast and production staff.

The opera's sets consist of huge gilded frames that slide on and off the stage and also serve as podiums for the singers. They are complemented by gigantic projections of *Risorgimento* artwork and images of Sicily. The combination of frames, paintings and scenery brings a touch of beauty and contemporary creativity to the production.

"I Vespri Siciliani" kicks off what will undoubtedly be a golden 50th season for the Washington National Opera.



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## Vespri tutti italiani aprono la stagione a Washington

Domingo sul podio e tricolori in scena come sognava Verdi

di Cristiano Del Riccio

Un'opera italiana. Un regista italiano. Un tricolore bianco, rosso e verde a dominare il palco nel possente finale.

La Washington National Opera di Placido Domingo ha festeggiato ieri sera al Kennedy Center l'inizio della sua cinquantesima stagione con una spettacolare messa in scena de "I Vespri Siciliani" di Giuseppe Verdi.

L'orchestra è stata diretta dallo stesso Placido Domingo.

Ma è stata la regia di Paolo Micciché a dominare lo spettacolo con la sua tecnica innovativa di sostituzione delle tradizionali scenografie con la proiezione di enormi immagini. È una tecnica che consente istantanei cambiamenti di scena, con ritmi quasi cinematografici, imprimendo un ritmo insolito anche alle opere più statiche. Micciché ha spostato l'azione de "I Vespri" dal 1282 al Risorgimento: la rivolta della popolazione avviene così in chiave garibaldina e gli insorti trascinano sul palco, nel travolgente finale, i tricolori italiani.

Un'altra innovazione di Micciché è la presenza in scena di enormi cornici che inquadrano i cantanti, che diventano così dei quadri viventi, nei momenti più statici della trama. Un effetto accresciuto dalla proiezione contemporanea, sullo sfondo, di immagini derivate da quadri dell'epoca.

Il pubblico dell'Opera di Washington, tra i più conservatori del mondo della lirica, è ormai abituato alle innovazioni di Micciché che ha già presentato nella capitale americana, con grande successo, l'Aida nel febbraio 2003 e la Norma nell'ottobre dello stesso anno.

Grandi applausi al termine della prima per gli interpreti, per Domingo e Micciché, per i costumi di Alberto Spiazzi e le scenografie mobili di Antonio Mastromattei da parte di un pubblico ancora sotto l'effetto del grande colpo di scena finale quando la insurrezione de "I Vespri" si sposta in un istante dall'interno di una chiesa alle piazze siciliane in un tripudio di bandiere italiane.

Proprio come sarebbe piaciuto a Verdi, se lo avesse potuto fare.