

## **EUGENE ONEGIN**

Composer Peter Ilitch Tchaikovsky

Todi Music Fest at Willett Hall

July 27 at 8:00 PM and July 29 at 2:00 PM

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Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large. When Tchaikovsky decided to compose an opera from Pushkin's narrative poem, he noted that the text was "deficient in theatrical opportunities". However, he felt there were many other dramatic values in "the humanity and the simplicity of the story". He decided to emphasize the romantic interest and to make Tatyana and not Eugene Onegin the main character. It becomes a tale of wasted love, love not fully realized or recognized until it is too late.

In the first act the pensive, bookish Tatyana meets world weary Eugene Onegin and is instantly transformed and smitten with love. She stays up all that night writing him a letter declaring her passion. He subsequently informs her that he can only love her like a brother. End of Act One. There is little physical activity but a great deal of inner action that the stage director Olga Kapanina does not cultivate in her performers in this very static, old-fashioned production. Oksana Krovytska is a radiant Tatyana with a lush, richly textured soprano voice. One feels she is emotionally locked up by Kapanina's arid direction.. Timothy Mix, as Onegin, suffers the same syndrome. Vocally he is a powerful baritone. He projects every note with clarity, but without feeling. He is a handsome chap but very aloof. Period.. The director did not help him find the many other facets of this jaded, charismatic but diffident, aristocrat whom women find irresistible. Hence, he is one dimensional.

In Act Two we meet Vladimir Lensky who is suitor to Olga, Tatyana's sister. He is superbly portrayed by Rodrick Dixon.. The stage glows with life and vitality when he's around. There is an emotional edge to his work, a subtextual understanding lacking in most of the other singers. Vocally he is a knockout, and sings a show stopping poignant aria "Faint echo of Youth " with great passion,.

Kitt Reuter-Foss makes Olga a pert and somewhat empty headed rich girl who enjoys life and we enjoy her. Sondra Gelb, with a most pleasing contralto, finds the warmth and wisdom of the family servant to Tatyana.

Conductor Walter Attanasi, working with an at times shaky orchestra, manages to present the dramatic beauty of the Tchaikovsky score. The large chorus is generally effective though often inaudible when singing off stage. Todd Rosenleib Dance, a rather unusual credit, is listed as choreographer. The attempt to capture the behavior of the people in the opulent Empire Period in which the action occurs, often has the cast posing and posturing rather stiffly. But then,

that's the style in which most of this opera is presented. This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opeing.