

THE DAILY GAZETTE

The Independent Voice of the Capital Region

July 9, 2008

'Kiss Me, Kate' brings sparkle of Broadway to Glimmerglass

BY GERALDINE FREEDMAN
For The Daily Gazette

COOPERSTOWN — Broadway came to Glimmerglass Opera on Monday afternoon with the second performance of Cole Porter's 1948 smash hit, "Kiss Me, Kate." It was a

THEATER REVIEW

sparkling theatrical experience for the capacity crowd. Because of its clever interlacing of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" with the show's plots and subplots, it was a natural for the company's themed season.

Besides hearing some of the most famous songs in cabaret literature, such as "I Hate Men," "Why Can't You Behave" and the divine "So In Love," the audience was treated to excellent acting, some exceptional singing and a bit of gentle choreography.

Most of the cast has had extensive musical theater experience. Having to execute a buck and wing, and deliver substantial lines a la Broadway style, let alone sing without an operatic timbre, might have been a stretch for someone with only opera experience.

All to the good. The large cast worked well as an ensemble, probably because of director Diane Paulus' excellent blocking. Baritone Brad Little as the lead in the musical and "Shrew" and soprano Lisa Vroman, who was his love in-

'Kiss Me, Kate'

WHERE: Glimmerglass Opera, Alice Busch Theater, Route 80, Cooperstown

WHEN: Performances on July 13, 24, 27, 31, Aug. 2, 4, 8, 11, 16, 19 and 23

HOW MUCH: \$126 to \$51

MORE INFO: (607) 547-2255

terest in both, were well-matched. There was good chemistry and a lively sense of possibility between them.

SPELLBINDING VOICE

Vroman has a delicious voice that on occasion showed some operatic coloratura agility. She was spellbinding in "So In Love," which had marvelous pace and luscious phrasing.

Courtney Romano as Lois Lane and Bianca was cuteness itself as she flirted and teased as a bit of a dumb brunette. The two gangsters, Michael Mott and Bradley Nacht, gleefully snarled out a few threats before they became awestruck and joined the "Shrew" in drag. They had some of the funniest bits. But Porter allowed them a long number all dressed to the nines in "Brush Up Your Shakespeare," in which they danced, sang and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. So did we.

Anka Lupes designed rehearsal clothes, some elegant street clothes and evening attire. The red form-fitting gown that Vroman wore in the finale was smashing. The sense of New York City theater was excellent, inspired by specific props that were added to John Conklin's Globe Theater set along with the company's more familiar huge, oversize abstract shapes. Jane Cox's lighting was colorful and brilliant.

Just as the audience was sometimes used as part of the show, conductor David Charles Abell had lines but never missed a beat. The orchestra caught the flavor of Broadway style pretty well.