

down stage to within just a few feet of the footlights so that everything became absurdly cramped. It might have been a bright idea for one of our regional companies, forced to work on a small scale by theatres and budgets, but on a stage the size of Teatr Wielki's it was inexplicable. *La Traviata* worked better on stage but took an eccentric view of the opera. Act 1 was clearly set in a brothel, all decked out in red, with only the male guests departing from Violetta's party, the women merely retiring upstairs, stage left, presumably to their bedrooms. The second act was set in a conservatory with a live horse seen grazing on the other side of the glass, the third, Flora's party, returned to the opening bordello, and the final act was set in the basement, cubicked ward of a paupers' hospital, with the carnival revellers' feet seen through a window at the top of the set. Perhaps we protest too much about the whims of directors and designers here in Britain in the light of what is offered to the opera-going public elsewhere.

Majewski's best work was to be found in the two Szymanowski works offered during the 'Days': the ballet *Harnasie*, and the opera *King Roger*, both powerful works, both allowed to speak for themselves in visual, as well as musical terms, and both strongly and clearly designed. Another attractively staged event in the main auditorium was the 13th century *Ludus Danielis*, taken from the Beauvais manuscript, and most beautifully performed to an audience sitting on the vast stage itself. The stunning tableau designs for this were by Marian Kolodziej who exhibited a grasp and flair that had eluded him in his anaemic settings for Moniuszko's equally anaemic opera, *The Countess*.

Some of the Teatr Wielki's most exciting and successful work clearly comes in the studio theatre. There I saw an impressively imaginative staging of Handel's opera *Amadigi*, given an admirably fantastic treatment in Laco Adamik's production by designer Barbara Kedzierska: her attendant masked furies were masterly. Clearly this team feel more at home on a smaller scale: their staging of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* in the main house had seemed sadly overstated, over-politicised, and clumsy. Two Polish one-act operas, written in the past decade, had stimulating productions in the studio, and together Zbigniew Rudzinski's *Mannequins* and Zygmunt Krauze's *The Star* would form an exciting double bill for our own Opera Factory/London Sinfonietta on the South Bank. In fact *Mannequins*, taken from the novel by Bruno Schulz, was given on a tiny Pagliacci-style stage, with the audience also on the studio theatre's stage, and the chamber ensemble to our right. It was a device that worked well, with Janusz Wisniewski's deliberately overcrowded set and Marek Grzesinski's busily claustrophobic production holding one gripped in the best tradition of Polish avant garde straight theatre. Krauze's *The Star*, the reminiscences of an ageing actress, was likewise given an admirably taut production by Wojciech Szulczynski, powerfully



*Puccini's Turandot* at the Teatr Wielki. Director Marek Grzesinski. Designer Andrzej Majewski. Photo: Zbigniew Feliksiak.



*La Traviata*. Designs by Weislaw Olko. Costumes by Irena Bieganska. Photo: Zbigniew Feliksiak.



*Ludus Danielis* staged in the main auditorium of the Teatr Wielki. Tableau design by Marian Kolodziej. Photo: Zbigniew Feliksiak.