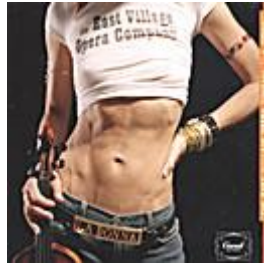


Mp3 The East Village Opera Company - La Donna



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The pomposity of opera meets the majesty of rock... and vice versa - bold re-interpretations of classic Italian arias. 11 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, POP: with Live-band Production Details: The East Village Opera Company is an exciting new project founded by singer Tyley Ross and Multi-instrumentalist Peter Kiesewalter. La Donna is an album of Italian opera arias and Neapolitan folk songs in unorthodox musical settings, including unabashed 70's arena rock, sultry bossa nova, four-on-the-floor disco, celtic and bluegrass-tinged ambience- sometimes all in the same song. Ross and Kiesewalter, are joined by over 20 musicians on this disc including guitarist Vernon Reid (Living Colour), banjo master Tony Trishka, Blue Man Group music director Byron Estep, and a string ensemble from the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada. For more information and to hear their new Decca Records release, please visit: eastvillageoperacompany.com Reviews: Village Voice: December 5th 2004: Musicians Peter Kiesewalter and Tyley Ross take classic opera tunes and back them with rock instrumentation, resulting in a giddy evening resembling a long version of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody". They don't call 'em rock operas for nothing. Opera makes its way downtown Trendcentral July 14th Opera has been trying to be cool for the past few years. In 2001, we saw Charlotte and Carrie, in an episode of Sex and the City, attend the Metropolitan Opera decked out in satin gowns and opera glasses. That same year MTV aired the less traditional Carmen: A Hip-Hopera, starring Beyonce Knowles and Mos Def. Currently, the East Village Opera Company may just have what it takes to bring opera to the masses. The 11-piece rock band plays traditional opera pieces, such as 'La Danza' and 'Vesta La Giubba', and then breaks into either a funky disco beat or heavy metal guitars. Weve heard it described as 'Trans-Siberian Orchestra meets Baz Luhrmann meets De La Guarda'. With theatrical, ironic rock bands such as The Darkness being a hit with trendsetters, we think the East Village Opera Company may attract a crowd looking for a

dose of culture with their downtown cool. Aria experienced The East Village Opera Company electrifies the classics for a new generation Time Out New York July 2004 By Steve Smith My folks would drag me to operas as a kid," Peter Kieseewalter explains of his earliest encounters with the exalted artform. An Ottawa, Canada-born multi-instrumentalist, Kieseewalter even made the pilgrimage to Bayreuth, Wagner's fabled German bastion of musical mythmaking, for a performance of Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg. "Mind you, I was six - and I fell asleep!" Kieseewalter recalls with a laugh. "The benches were hard, and (the opera) was long." Still, the seating wasn't the only thing that left a mark on the young Kieseewalter: "Especially with some of the Mozart operas, the arias really stuck in my head." Nowadays, Kieseewalter, 37, is creating his own impression with the East Village Opera Company, an ensemble he cofounded in 2001 with vocalist and fellow Canadian Tyley Ross. In a city with no shortage of fine operatic institutions, Kieseewalter and Ross stand apart from the crowd: Their "company" is in actuality a rock band augmented with a string section, its repertoire a mix of arias and songs performed with pop-music amplification and theatrical flair. And while the company lacks a house of its own, it has established a local base at tony downtown nightclub Joe's Pub, where its performance on Wednesday 30 will be the third since its New York debut here in March. Given their eclectic tastes and solid training, Kieseewalter and Ross's groundbreaking project seems almost predestined. "My formative musical years were the 80's, which, reflecting back, was the worst decade for popular music," Kieseewalter says, laughing. At the University of Ottawa, he immersed himself in the classical clarinet repertoire, paying the bills by playing keyboards in local groups that included a swing band and an Afro-Celtic ensemble. Meanwhile, Ross applied his own classical training to a burgeoning career in musical theater, starring in a Canadian production of Tommy before moving on to Miss Saigon on Broadway. While both Kieseewalter and Ross established themselves as recording artists in Canada, their paths had yet to intersect. During a 1996 run of shows with Canadian songstress Jane Siberry at the now defunct Bottom Line, Kieseewalter was offered the reins of The Downtown Messiah, New York's seasonal presentation that recasts Handel's oratorio as a setting for pop-music performers. Relocating to the city the following year, Kieseewalter found employment as a composer at ABC-TV, for which he would craft hundreds of cues in every imaginable style in his tiny home studio. In 2001, he was approached by director Derek Diorio to create contemporary settings of traditional arias on The Kiss of Debt, a film that featured Ross as an aspiring opera singer. Striking a common chord immediately, Kieseewalter and Ross soon envisioned a life beyond the film for their

collaboration. Supported by a band that included some of New York's top soloists (including rock guitarist Vernon Reid and bluegrass banjoist Tony Trishka), the pair completed 11 tracks for the East Village Opera Company's debut CD, *La Donna*, which was released earlier this year. The disc treats arias and songs such as "Vesti la giubba," "La Donna e mobile," and "Ave Maria" with disco beats, blazing guitars and defiantly cheesy '80's-style synthesizer flourishes. Unapologetically grandiose, the East Village Opera Company flies where countless other classical-crossover efforts have plummeted because Kieseewalter, Ross and their bandmates approach their pop-music leanings with the same respect and experience that they apply to their classical source material. Their success hasn't gone unnoticed by recording-industry representatives, who have hovered at each performance. As yet, Kieseewalter and Ross have only been able to pursue their project as time allows; still, the duo continues to foster more elaborate designs. New vocalist Anne Marie Milazzo will make her debut on Wednesday, vastly expanding the group's repertoire. Kieseewalter imagines the company sharing bills with more flamboyant rock bands, while also teaming up with orchestras for pops concerts - which it plans to do later this year in Canada. "That's something that excites me," Kieseewalter says, "to walk out with charts for an orchestra, rehearse once or twice and blow the roof off the opera house." Reviews: Opera makes its way downtown

Trendcentral July 14th Opera has been trying to be cool for the past few years. In 2001, we saw Charlotte and Carrie, in an episode of *Sex and the City*, attend the Metropolitan Opera decked out in satin gowns and opera glasses. That same year MTV aired the less traditional *Carmen: A Hip-Hopera*, starring Beyonce Knowles and Mos Def. Currently, the East Village Opera Company may just have what it takes to bring opera to the masses. The 11-piece rock band plays traditional opera pieces, such as 'La Danza' and 'Vesta La Giubba', and then breaks into either a funky disco beat or heavy metal guitars. Weve heard it described as 'Trans-Siberian Orchestra meets Baz Luhrmann meets De La Guarda'. With theatrical, ironic rock bands such as The Darkness being a hit with trendsetters, we think the East Village Opera Company may attract a crowd looking for a dose of culture with their downtown cool. Time Out New York-

March 4-11 Live review A recent live performance in (Joe's Pub) confirmed what debut album *La Donna* promised: the East Village Opera Company's Tyley Ross and Peter Kieseewalter understand that the key to successfully dressing opera arias in rock roll regalia is to respect the music's emotional core. When "Vesti la giubba" broke into a giddy disco beat, onlookers leapt up and danced; likewise, Rossini's jaunty "La danza" prodded by heavy-metal guitars, threatened to become a spontaneous singalong. Still, there's

no mistaking the Broadway-bred Ross's genuine love and affection for his material. Live, the group's charisma is inescapable and infectious. Bring ear plugs, but see the band now while you can still get close. The Ottawa Citizen -February 28 2004 La Donna -3 and a half stars The East Village Opera Company is a musical project that was conceived in New York by two musicians from Ottawa: Peter Kiesewalter, best known as the force behind such Ottawa bands as the Angstones, Fat Man Waving and Six Mile Bridge; and Tyley Ross, a graduate of Canterbury High and Canada's original Tommy (he played the lead in the Toronto run of Pete Townshend's musical). Even for those not overly familiar with opera arias, there are plenty of rewards, they include the fluid intimacy of Ross' singing and the diversity of Kiesewalter's arrangements, particularly on the title track and an incredible version of Ave Maria. As the classical strings (courtesy of NACO players) give way to bombastic rock, it will remind you of Queen or Metallica, until something happens to divert the songs into bluegrass, Celtic or even disco territory. The sense of rock theatrics gives it an edge that's not too serious, and guests like Living Color guitarist Vernon Reid and banjo virtuoso Tony Trishka deliver inspired performances. The New Yorker February 16th 2004 The retro obsessed local music scene has given short shrift to the prog-rock of the seventies. No more, now that the East Village Opera Company is open for business. This international outfit goes straight to the source, with rock, disco, and otherwise amplified interpretations of Verdi, Rossini, and so forth. Time out New York Steve Smith- February 19th 2004 The East Village Opera Company, an 11-piece rock band, remains truer to opera's flamboyant spirit by taking far greater liberties with its sacred texts. Broadway-bred vocalist Tyley Ross lends his plaintive tenor and ardent falsetto to familiar selections radically reshaped by Peter Kiesewalter. "Vesti la giubba" breaks into a disco beat punctuated with Tuvan throat-singing samples; "Una furtive lagrima" is all Latinated sway and breathy sighs; and metallic guitar vies with Celtic flute in "La danza." Ironically, however campy their arrangements, Kiesewalter and Ross strike far closer to the heart of their material than does Amici Forever's cloying confectionery. X-Press Magazine Steve Baylin -February 19th 2004 **** Four stars! "The pomposity of opera lends itself well to the majesty of rock," reckons Peter Kiesewalter, one half of the East Village Opera Company. "Or is it the other way around?" Kiesewalter and vocalist Tyley Ross throw caution to the wind on La Donna, a collection of rearranged opera classics polished to modern day perfection. Ave Maria with staccato jabs of crunching distortion? A sparkling rustic banjo coursing through Panis Angelicus? The sweaty dance beat of Vesti la giubba? Purists may cringe, but the inspired Kiesewalter

and Ross (alongside supporting musicians including John Geggie, Tony Trishka, Fred Guignon and Vernon Reid to name a few) display such affection for the material that it's hard not to enjoy the ride. Everything Queen's Night at the Opera should have been. The Ottawa Citizen Lynn Saxberg- Live review February 24th 2004 The East Village Opera Company at the National Arts Centre While mop-top superstar Josh Groban was channelling the operatic power of his voice into a concert of pseudo-classical pop songs in the National Arts Centre's Southam Hall on Sunday, a couple of artsy types from Ottawa were on another stage in the same building having their way with some authentic opera arias. "If you're here for the Josh Groban concert, you're in the wrong place," joked singer Tyley Ross near the start of the East Village Opera Company's first public performance. "Josh is down the hall." The creative team behind the East Village Opera Company was joined by a full band and a couple hundred muscially open-minded souls to celebrate their new disc, La Donna. It was an exhilarating evening as Handel got a groove, Verdi got a drum jam, Leoncavallo got a disco beat and some other composer got an Eminem-style rap. OK, not all of it worked, but it was bold, adventurous and loads of fun.

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