



Aline Kutan
(Violetta) and Eric
Fennell (Alfredo)

Green Mountain Opera **La traviata**

Green Mountain Opera's production of Verdi's *La traviata*, which opened in the Barre Opera House Jun. 20, had an intimacy that put the story and music into the audience's lap. Montreal soprano Aline Kutan, in her debut as Violetta, delivered a brilliant and sensitive performance. Although she sang beautifully throughout, she seemed miscast in Act I—sounding too young and innocent. But her performance in Act II had real depth. The quiet moments were particularly powerful, tearing at the heartstrings when she finds she must leave her newfound love. That scene took on even more power with the intense and sensitive performance of baritone Theodore Baerg as Germont. With his deep, rich and pliable voice, he convinced as the man who arrives to condemn the woman, only to find he really cares for her. Though with a smaller top to his voice and less presence than the other principals, American tenor Eric Fennell delivered a well-sung Alfredo. In the supporting roles, soprano Erica Miller's Annina was notably strong.

Francis Graffeo led the able orchestra in a sensitive accompaniment. In Act I, the violins had some fuzzy intonation in the unison passages, and the entire production, directed by Ron Luchsinger, was a bit stiff. However, everything took off in Act II, and the finale was delivered in all its devastating beauty.

The chorus, directed by Tim Tavcar, was fine save for a few rough moments. Carla Cordero Wuthrich of the Vermont Ballet Theater School directed the choreography, including a delightful quartet of young local dancers. Physically, the production was most attractive, set post World War II. The minimal set implied all the appropriate elegance, with excellent costumes by L'Opéra de Montréal's Anne-Seguin Poirier and lighting by Julie Duro. —*Jim Lowe/Times Argus*