

Jovanovich is this year's Tucker Prize winner; in Nashville, *Elmer Gantry* with music finally gets its chance; *Il Tabarro* barges into Brooklyn.

BY BRIAN KELLOW

My opera season got off to an exhilarating start on September 7, when Vertical Player Repertory, in collaboration with PortSide New York and the American Stevedoring Company, presented a site-specific *Il Tabarro* – staged in Red Hook, Brooklyn, on the *Mary A. Whalen*, a tanker built in 1938. The opera's setting was moved to the 1940s, and the show was directed with great period flavor and keen attention to detail by BETH GREENBERG. In the balmy late-summer air, with the sun setting in the harbor and the *Whalen* gently rocking back and forth, the audience was completely drawn into Puccini's melodrama. There were committed performances from Vertical Player Rep's artistic director JUDITH BARNES (Giorgetta) and from ZURAB NINUA (Michele) and CHRISTIAN ŠEBEK (Luigi). All in all, the evening was a welcome reminder that the city is full of rich musical offerings far from Fifty-seventh Street or the Lincoln Center campus – if only we take the trouble to seek them out.

With highly popular Aldridge has had Boston shopping the leadership change. "The beneficiary of opera that is estimated, the three of Garfein

Both Aldridge and Garfein spent a great deal of time sorting out the characterization of the flamboyant, womanizing Gantry. "Elmer Gantry is a scoundrel," says Aldridge, "much like Don Giovanni, but you've got to sort of fall in love with him. Otherwise you're not going to stay with him. We have Elmer Gantrys in our contemporary life. BILL CLINTON is

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## OPERA NEWS

America's Finest  
Thomas Hampson  
Returns to San Francisco  
BY DAVID J. BAKER

Classics Master: Stephen Wadsworth and the Met's new *Iphigénie en Tauride*  
Sure Hand: Conductor Anne Manson at NYCO  
Revolutionary Style: Paul Curran at Lyric Opera of Chicago  
Farewell to Luciano Pavarotti

Scaling the Heights: Top Tenor High Notes

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JAMES CONLON has been honored with the Anti-Defamation League's Crystal Globe Award for his work as a musical archaeologist, championing the works of composers who ran afoul of the Nazis, including Alexander Zemlinsky and Viktor Ullmann.... In early September, STEVE ROSS returned to the Algonquin Hotel's Oak Room with his act "Good Thing Going," a tribute to STEPHEN SONDHEIM. Ross didn't put a foot wrong during the entire evening (Sept. 6), reinventing some of Sondheim's greatest hits in an elegant, unself-conscious way, never destroying the illusion that he is making it up as he goes along. It was a masterly turn.... The 2008 bicentenary of the birth of Dublin-born composer MICHAEL W. BALFE (*The Bohemian Girl*) has been marked with the arrival of a new biography by BASIL WALSH, published by Irish Academic Press in association with the Arts Council of Ireland. RICHARD BONYNGE provided the book's Foreword.... JANE SCOVELL, whose writing credits include book collaborations with MARILYN HORNE, GINGER ROGERS and MAUREEN STAPLETON, will team up with SAMUEL RAMEY to write the bass's memoirs, to be published by Baskerville Press, at a date to be announced. □