**On the Beat**

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.