

Selected Press Quotes

LSD: The Opera and its later incarnation *LSD: Huxley's Last Trip*

Review: There's Nothing Dry About Partch Ensemble

LeBaron, a professor at California Institute of the Arts and, like Partch, a composer with a long California legacy, writes with compelling lyricism, which effectively showcased the evening's talented singers. Soprano Nelle Anderson, who played Marilyn Monroe and Sex in *LSD* (one of the Love, Sex, Death trio), stunned with her buttery tone. Todd Strange (as Francis Crick and Timothy Leary) was triumphant and effortless across repeated high As and Bs. And Scott Graff's emotive, spoken tendencies as Aldous Huxley fit the character's informal role as narrator.

Lev Mamuya, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, June 25, 2024

Review: Work-in-progress 'LSD: The Opera' is powerful musical theater

Albert Hofmann's "Bicycle Day" and Harry Partch's Carnegie Hall debut a year later, when he demonstrated his fantastical instruments and microtonal scale to the mainstream New York musical community, are two historic moments in experimental mind-bending. All that makes Anne LeBaron's "LSD: The Opera," which uses Partch instruments and naturally opens with Bicycle Day, a match made in psychedelia.

Even this partial dose of "LSD" is already powerful music theater. The libretto by Gerd Stern, Ed Rosenfeld and LeBaron has a sense of vivid authenticity. The drug is, moreover, given an intriguing feminist spirit. A trio of female singers personify LSD and the experience it provides. Mary Meyer and Laura Huxley serve as the true guiding spirits to the needy, lecherous Leary and Aldous Huxley. The Partch instruments provide the perfect complement for a substance of mysterious political, psychic and social power.

Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 2015

Interview: Behold, the World's First Opera About LSD

The brain on psychedelics lies somewhere between Earth and the otherworldly, sensing what is actually there while also perceiving those things just beyond reality, and never really knowing which is which. Sometimes, while under the influence, there is a thought, a vision, a sound, that seems to turn the entire universe on its head. That is, in part, what it's like to listen to the work-in-progress that is *LSD: The Opera*. At times, the music is jarring; in other parts, it's melodic and ethereal. If you tune out the lyrics, it feels almost like a hallucination, full of unexpected noises and microtones that don't seem to exist in nature.

Arielle Pardes, *Vice* (interview), June 24, 2015

Review: Exploratory 'First Take' presents six operas in progress

Finally, there was Anne LeBaron's acid trip that many in the audience had been clearly waiting for. She had composed The Industry's first opera, "Crescent City." In "LSD: The Opera," she expands consciousness with an expanded orchestra, incorporating Harry Partch's gorgeously weird microtonal instruments into the orchestra in a way no one has thought of before.

Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 22, 2015