



Anzeige

[Fotos] Was ist mit Uschi Glas passiert?

web space

Feeds: [Posts](#) [Comments](#)

Haydn's Il Mondo della Luna, Theater Winterthur, 05.05.2022

May 5, 2022 by [rml](#)

Almost everybody says that the Decca/Culshaw Ring is the most important release of the golden age in which opera was recorded in studio. I beg to differ. Paramount as the Solti Ring was, no other project was so decisive for the diffusion of the works recorded as the Philips series of Haydn's Esterházy operas. First, these were recording premières. Second, although those were unknown works (and still are), they were extravagantly cast with some of the most legendary singers of the age: Norman, Cotrubas, Augér, Ameling (!), Prey, Bruson, Ramey et al. This is something nobody would be able to do today. It is like visiting Versailles and wondering why there are not buildings like that anymore. Third, they were all superbly conducted by Antal Doráti. And where? Here in Switzerland, with the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne. That is why I took the train to see this performance of Haydn's Il Mondo della Luna, involving singers from the Opernhaus Zürich's International Opera Studio plus the forces of the Musikkollegium Winterthur in the Theater Winterthur.

As it is, this is a performance involving young names – and comparisons with the formidable names in the Doráti recording are out of place. That said, some of these singers this evening acquitted themselves quite well, two of them even lived up to the competition. Even sabotaged by a director who made her fidget around and bounce and jump and God knows what during extremely difficult coloratura in her first aria, Chinese soprano Ziyi Dai, once recovered from an understandably bumpy account of the said number, offered singing of classical poise, tasteful phrasing, real trills and soaring, exquisite high notes. In the case of Mexican tenor Leonardo Sánchez, even if he couldn't help Donizetti-sizing his Haydn whenever he could include an extra high note, I would say I prefer him to Luigi Alva in the recording. His voice is more beautiful than Alva's, warm and round in the tradition of Francisco Araiza and Ramón Vargas, his phrasing is cleaner and he was the only person on stage who really used the Italian language in his favor. He has an exuberant personality – boosted by the director's fondness for overacting – and probably wouldn't like to hear that he could be a superlative Mozart tenor (we all know, this has become something of an offence these days). Venezuelan tenor Luís Magallanes deserves to be mentioned too – the role of Cecco is a bit tricky, the tessitura is high, and yet he sang it with unusual poise and cleanliness. It is a pity he had an accident before the performance and wasn't able to act. I have seen him in small roles in Zurich – and he can be a very efficient actor. I am not fully convinced that Chelsea Zurflüh is really a soprano, although she has all her high notes. Her low register is warm and round, but her incursions in sopranoland involve some constriction, just like a high mezzo à la Magdalena Kozená cast in soprano parts. She has here the

responsability of taking the role Swiss soprano Edith Mathis sang in the Doráti recording – and constriction apart – she has a natural instinct for classical style (as in Mozart and Haydn). She sculpts her phrases with instrumental poise – and raised to the challenge of the opera’s most beautiful number, the act 2 love duet with the tenor.

When Haydn wrote *Il Mondo della Luna*, he noticed that there is one single role that could be called “serious”, which is the role of Ernesto. That is why he composed it for the castrato voice. I mean, the 18th century public would immediately understand that the role for the castrato is the serious role. And that was also part of the fun of the story – Ernesto is supposed to be the non-funny guy having to take part in this comedy for a serious reason: he is in love and that is the only way of getting to marry his beloved Flaminia. Hence I find it difficult to accept the idea of hearing the part transposed to the tenor voice, what involves having a singer permanently in the less appealing part of his range and with serious difficulty of producing legato in some of the noble music Haydn wrote. As the stage direction seemed incapable of understanding any kind of nuance, Ernesto seemed rather like a buffoon in a serious sugar rush – and it was hard to understand why the “serious” sister (Flaminia) would have any interest in him.

Advertisements

REPORT THIS ADPRIVACY

I am trying not to write too much about the production, but its shortcomings had so many negative effects in the musical side of the performance that it’s been difficult to avoid the topic. I understand that the opera is very long and cuts had to be made, but – in order to accommodate the director’s restlessness – almost every number of a gentler nature (all of them exquisite) were deleted, while a great some unimportant chunks of recitative (rarely delivered in idiomatic Italian, one of the official languages of this country) were left untouched. I might sound here crankier than what I really felt these evening – that is why I must say that I like director Tomo Sugao’s concept. He didn’t try to make the story more politically correct than it is (it verges on the unacceptable), but showed it in a context (a home for elderly people) that makes we understand why Bonafede (the detestable father) behaves like he does, what is an undeniable plus. The fact that the whole “voyage to the moon” is fuelled on drugs is also an effective way of telling this story – and Michaela Barth’s costume are terrific in showing the shift to the “lunar” setting – but everything is so exaggerated, noisy, anti-musical, gratuitous that it all felt like high school theatre. I guess now that it’s out of my chest, I can praise Joseph Bastian’s stylish conducting, the ensembles – even amid that overacting-fest – were amazingly precise, the orchestra had the right touch of roughness, he was always there to help his singers, who also took some risks in fast tempi.

Advertisements

REPORT THIS ADPRIVACY

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a Comment](#)

[Comments RSS](#)

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#)

WPThemes.