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[La Stampa: Successo del dittico "Medeamaterial" al Teatro Comunale di Bologna](#)

By Sandro Cappelletto

Medea revisited: After killing her two sons, after taking a terrible revenge for her betrayal by Jason, now she is a patient in a modern mental hospital. She remembers, she laments, she raves, watched by nurses ready to intervene. A masterpiece of contemporary opera, *Medeamaterial* by the French composer Pascal Dusapin, with a libretto based on a work with the same name by the German playwright Heiner Müller, was given its first Italian production at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. Written in 1983, the text found fame immediately for its expressive power which brought into the present day a myth most popular among artists, from the tragedy by Euripides to the opera of Luigi Cherubini and the film by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Present and past are confused in the mind and in the singing of the protagonist. She hates Jason, her man, the father of her children, who has deceived her like any wicked seducer. Now he wants to marry Glauce (Creusa), the daughter of King Creon of Corinth, hoping one day to become ruler himself. But she is Medea, daughter of the Sun-God, and a witch. She will deprive Jason of his progeny and use her powers to destroy Glauce by making the wedding-dress that she gives her burst into flames. A terrifying Medea!

Dusapin shows himself to be a theatrically sensitive composer: he does not see the use of technique as an end in itself, but uses it brilliantly to reach the human heart of his characters. The soprano Piia Komsis displays her virtuosity in bringing back the shattered mind of a woman who seems unable any more to speak complete phrases, but only fragments, scraps, flashes of memory, mingled with what psychiatrists call 'intrusive thoughts'. You cannot predict or control them, and when they come, they come to destroy you by presenting themselves to you as objective reality.

Marco Angius conducts the players and singers of the Teatro Comunale with profound attention to the relationship between sound and song. Pamela Hunter evokes the intense solitude and delirium of the protagonist by focussing - as a genuine director - on the credibility of an insane personality.

Dusapin's work was preceded by another *Medea* composed in the eighteenth century by Georg Benda. Within the aesthetic limits of his time, Benda too brings expressive tension to its highest pitch, as Mozart was able to appreciate when he saw a performance: 'This is an excellent drama, and the words spoken above the musical base have a splendid effect'.

The actress and singer Salome Kammer evokes the tragic depths of an unhappy, terrifying woman. This very successful evening inaugurated Bologna Modern, a festival of contemporary music organised by the Teatro Comunale together with Musica Insieme. It was a courageous act, among so many predictable and repetitive programmes.