

MEDEAS IN BOLOGNA By Magda Ruggeri Marchetti

Bologna. 11-X-2017. Teatro Comunale. Conductor: Marco Angius. Stage Direction: Pamela Hunter. Maestro del coro: Mario Benotto. Video & camera: Dalibor Pys. Sound System: Francesco Canavese & Giovanni Magaglio. Lighting: Daniele Naldi. Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna.

“Bologna Modern Festival for contemporary music” (11-31 October) began with an interesting diptych which placed two operas face to face with the same plot, the first composed in 1775 and the second in 1992. They were the subject of a new production by the Teatro Comunale di Bologna with Nimrod Opera Zurich. The story of *Medea*, a foreigner in an unknown land ignorant of different customs. It is very interesting how the same story written over a span of two centuries: *Medea*, abandoned by Jason, who renounced his country and his family, comes to kill her own children because of the treachery she found and her suffering for not having held onto anything but the memory of the man she previously loved.

The two compositions are of great interest: **Georg Anton Benda** begins in an operatic panorama of the period for the profound drama and its psychological introspection, in particular by the use of the *mélologue* which blends the music with the theatrical language. Mozart admired *Medea* and especially appreciated the great effect of the spoken recitation over the support of the music. **Salome Kammer**, an excellent actress, performed the role of *Medea* with great skill. Intense, magnificent, with expressions loaded with hatred, driven by suffering, almost always alone on the entire stage, struggling between her maternal affection and her thirst for vengeance. Very suggestive the reflections of the expressions in her face in the video, which succeeded in creating a constantly changing background. Her amazement, her fear, which she used as a principle between her status as a foreigner and fear in the unknown city which was projected by video. Her interpretation had the class of grand theatre.

Pascal Dusapin, without doubt one of the most important composers alive today, has created a language using in particular the timbres and sonorities of material in the human voice. His *Medeamaterial*, composed on the text by Heiner Müller which explores the psychological depths of the performer, is a real opera. **Piia Komsu**, a magnificent coloratura soprano, with a perfect voice and an enormous range, evokes laments, complains, crying and screaming with professional finesse. A contemporary *Medea*, with a pony tail, nervous, fragile, and in the first instance very depressed, plots her revenge in dialogue with *Salome Kammer* who appeared oversized in the video, without doubt a very strong idea. Accompanying the performer was a vocal quartet (two sopranos, **Gabriella Costa** and **Sabina Martin**, the mezzo **Katarzyna Otczyk**, and the counter-tenor **Konstantin Derri**) and a magnificent chorus prepared by their Maestro **Mario Benotto**.

Excellent interpretations by the actor **Paul Suter**, in the role of Jason in both operas, the governess **Ulduz Ashraf Gandomi**, and also **Federico Spitz** and **Anna Kehl**, as the sons of *Medea*, present only in the first opera. Unforgettable the conducting of Maestro **Marco Angius** who demonstrated his great affinity with the romantic score of Benda, skillfully accompanying the recitation of *Salome Kammer*,

and the delirious music from Dusapin. Entirely suitable costumes: the classical robe of the heroine in Benda and the black trousers and sweatshirt of the second. Perfect staging by **Pamela Hunter**, who wisely linked the two operas to obtain an optimum of effect. Repeated applause on the part of the audience much younger than usual, without doubt thanks to great compromises from the artistic director, **Nicola Sani**, who intends to open the theatre for the new generations.

Autor: Magda Ruggeri Marchetti / Teatro Comunale Medeamaterial **Bologna** Benda Medea Dusapin