

## «Luisa Miller» at La Scala between Nature and tyrannical Law

Applause for the opera by Verdi conducted by Gianandrea Nosedà and directed by Mario Martone

By Enrico Girardi, Corriere della Sera June 8, 2012

It was a long time since a Verdi premiere at La Scala did not go so smoothly as for Luisa Miller last night. Except for the meagre dissent of a *loggionista*, the new production, conducted by Gianandrea Nosedà and directed by Mario Martone, was met by many an applause, not only at the end of its three acts but also its concertato duets and arias. This was the result of a harmonious work of the whole opera house, orchestra and chorus perfectly groomed by Nosedà and Bruno Casoni. The cast was well assembled and prompted to get the best out of performances. The staging contained no revolutionary ideas or mere appearance but it was simply set up to fit the drama, an umpteenth case of a thwarted love that finds fulfilment only in death.

The show plays on the contrast between nature, the larches of Tyrol and the city, high-backed chairs of a parliament or courtroom that symbolizes the distortions of a tyrannical law. The production is stripped-down, singers are in today's clothes and their acting is quite accurate. And talking about acting, where Martone's work falls short it is Nosedà who emerges. Here's a singer, endowed with a veristic emphasis such as Marcelo Álvarez (Rodolfo), trying the chiaroscuro and *mezzevoci*. Here's also Leo Nucci (Miller) «di rughe il volto ha solcato» ("one whose face is lined with wrinkles") who is still able to stir emotions with his calibrated dramatic accents and dramatic melancholy.

Here is also the virginal candour of Elena Mosuc whose performance, with her temperament and ideal voice to play Luisa, is nearly a general rehearsal for Violetta. There is then the haughty class of Daniela Barcellona, finally engaged in a female role - and what a female, the dark lady that is Federica. What an excellent performance also by a wicked Kwangchul Youn Wurm. And there's finally Vitaly Kovaljov, with a slightly woody voice but effective in the role of conte Walter, an evil villain. In short, an impeccable cast, superior in every respect not only to those of other Italian opera houses but also of well renowned European theatres. And what an excellent debut was that of Nosedà! He does not polish the "dirt" in this Verdi who is already Verdi but not yet in his prime. He therefore does not reduce it to the "neutral" colour we often listen to. Nor does he overdo the tones beyond a certain limit to become coarse.

Nosedà's interpretation is so mature that it allows rediscovering how beautiful and Verdi-like the sound of the orchestra of La Scala is. The only slight criticism, if one wants to be fastidious, is that the third act hasn't got the same dramatic tension of the previous ones. But the moral of the story is that of a Luisa Miller worthy of the absolute prestige, now an indisputable one, of the Milanese theatre.

*English translation by Gabriele Paleari*