

Belisario at the Teatro Colon May 1981 with
Bruson, Zampieri, Toczyska, Terranova cond. Masini.

This new production of Belisario was mounted to highlight the talent of Renato Bruson who made such an impression here two seasons ago as Foscari - he is currently singing in Otello with Domingo and next season returns to sing in Caterina Cornaro with Gulin.

The sets and costumes by Tita Tegano were poor, to say the least, and the costumes save a few exceptions (notably Belisario's) ridiculous. Giustiniano seemed to have stepped out from Verdi's Alzira or some other Incaic play.

Partnering Bruson were Mara Zampieri as Antonina and Vittorio Terranova as Alamiro plus the Irene of Stefania Toczyska which was a revelation.

Zampieri is really a dramatic voice in the Caniglia or Cigna tradition but she possesses the refinements that are to be found in the truly international singers of the day. A very good performance on the whole but no 'drammatico d'agilita'. She often took liberties with the embellishments written by Donizetti. Terranova has on the other hand all the required technique but with a smallish voice more apt to an Almaviva or a Ramiro than the warrior Alamira.

The stars of the evening were Bruson and Toczyska and this was fortunate as Irene is certainly no secondary character; the duet with Belisario in Act 2 was pure magic, leaving everyone deeply moved. Bruson needs no introduction from me but once again the nobility of his phrasing, the impeccable legato and the sheer beauty of the voice completely conquered the audience. Toczyska's too is a wonderful instrument and also commands the bel canto technique while at the same time projecting the character's pathos movingly. All in all, a very good performance of Belisario, the conductor -Gianfranco Masini- although merely routine, at least did not drown the singers and provided accompaniment.