

SAVONA is a pleasant, civilized town on the Ligurian coast halfway between Genova and Ventimiglia, and it was here that the Teatro dell' Opera Comica Giocosa of Genova began its run of *Torquato Tasso* due (with 2 casts) to tour north of Italy over the next few months. It is a pleasure to record the excellent arrangements made by the management, whose guest I was, as I had been invited to contribute to a Tavola rotonda before the performance - and a well attended and informative occasion it proved to be.

The theatre at Savona was built in the 1850's and has been most beautifully maintained, being ideally suited to operas of medium scale. The houselights went down on the dot at 8.30, and the performance began with an overture of (to me) unknown provenance. Consequently it was after 9.30 before we heard a female voice, and the first interval came at 10.15. This serves to illustrate the weakness of the first act, which is too obviously sectionalized and slow off the mark, though the conductor, Massimo de Bernat, kept the music moving forward admirably.

Of the cast the women were the weakest. Luciana Serra as Eleonora spanned the whole range of dynamics from f to fff, perhaps her voice was too large for the theatre. Nicolette Ciliento made the most of an ungrateful part having all too few opportunities to display her voice to best advantage. Ernesto Palacio (Roberto) was inclined to force his voice too much but showed that he could on occasion sing with grace and musicianship. The conventions of opera-seria required a buffo, and it was greatly to Robert Coviello's credit that he made the part of Don Gherardo less tedious than it might have been.

Ambrogio Riva brought a warm, well-focussed bass and an imposing stage presence to the Duca, but the most expressive and enjoyable singing came from Simone Alaimo as *Torquato*. His was a performance of strength, and he carried the opera along to its conclusion. As might be expected, he was at his best in the 3rd act, but inevitably this high-lighted the stylistic disjunction which plagues the opera. Scenery and costumes were adequate, and the style of the production was one which I think Donizetti and Ferretti would have felt at home with - for instance for the quintet at the end of Act 1 the principals lined up equally spaced along the footlights, like starlings on a telegraph wire,

Duetto, ELEONORA, TASSO.

Duetto, TASSO, ROBERTO.



ROMANZO, TASSO.



they all sang straight out into the audience. Stagey gestures and obvious stage business were the order of the day.

In sum, an enjoyable if rather long evening, but I did find myself wishing that some of the music could have been sung with a little more grace and delicacy, and with a little less brute force. But thanks to Genova and Savona for a worthy revival of a work which though flawed is well worth a hearing. JNB



K. K. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärnthnerthore.
Dinstag den 10. Jänner 1857. (162^{te} Vorstellung im deutschen Abonnement.)
Zu ersten Male:
Torquato Tasso.
Oper in drei Acten. Nach dem Italienischen. Musik von Donizetti.
Sämmtliche Decorationen sind neu verfertigt; die erste, zweite und letzte von den Herren Briolchi und Vivali, die übrigen von den Herren Rügg und Schütz, F. I. Hoftheater-Directoren.

Alaimo als Tasso, Tenor	Dr. J. G. B. B. B.	Robert Coviello, Bass	Dr. W. B. B.
Serra, als Eleonora	Dr. B. B. B.	Don Gherardo, Tenor	Dr. B. B. B.
Ciliento, als Gherardo	Dr. B. B. B.	Roberto, Tenor	Dr. B. B. B.
Luciana Serra	Dr. B. B. B.	Alaimo als Tasso	Dr. B. B. B.

Ort der Handlung und Zeit: Im ersten Act, Ferrara im Jahre 1574; im zweiten Act, das Schloss bei Ferrara; im dritten Act, Ferrara, im Jahre 1576.

Freibillete und freyer Eintritt sind heute ungültig.
Herr Binder und die Dnrs. Colombon, Cerito und Hentel sind unspählich.
Der Anfang ist um 7 Uhr.

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