

## MusicWeb International's Worldwide Concert and Opera Reviews

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## **Verdi, La Traviata:** Soloists, Orchestra and Chorus Teatro

Regio di Parma ,Conductor: Donato Renzetti 23.10.2007 (JMI)

Production from Deutsche Opera am Rhein and Théâtre de la Monnaie.

Director: Karl-Ernst and Ursel Hermann

Sets, Costumes and Lighting: Karl-Ernst Hermann

### **Cast**

Violetta Valery: Irina Lungu

Alfredo Germont: Massimo Giordano

Giorgio Germont: Vladimir Stoyanov

Flora Bervoix: Daniela Pini

Gastone: Gianluca Floris

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## Doctor Grenvil: Roberto Tagliavini



This *Traviata* concluded the highly successful Parma's Verdi Festival. The production was directed by Karl-Ernst and Ursel Hermann, while all of the physical elements were of Karl-

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Ernst's responsibility only. Aesthetically, this was a very classical staging with the exception of the second act. For the rest there was always a semicircular stage, showing rooms from the end of the 19th century with abundance of red velvet - something seen in this opera many times before. Violetta's house offers a big table in the middle of the stage, where the guests sat at ease; at Flora's reception there was a small stage at the back, where the choirs of Zingarelle and Matadors sang or were ridiculed - I not sure which to choose of the two). In the last act we came back to the beginning, changing the table for a bed.

The most attractive sets were in act II with a small room at the front of the stage and a big window behind it, showing a garden with leafless trees under the snow. There were attractive costumes in the first act, particularly Violetta's gown but there was less interest offered by the costumes at Flora's

dresses. The lighting was generally good.

Much hard work had been put into the direction, although some scenes worked better than other. Violetta's party was full of life and detail , and the characters moved well in Act II, but perhaps with somewhat too much physical aggression between them. Act III also worked well with some personal touches in the final scene, where Doctor Grenvil entered in Carnival disguise (doctors have right to enjoy, don't they?) and with great contrast between the outer celebration and the tragedy inside the house, shown by a simple opening of the window, filling the room with confetti and balloons. In summary, this was a traditional production, very demanding in stage movement for the principals, but with a final result that was not altogether convincing.



These *La Traviata* performances had been conducted by Yuri Temirkanov, while Donato Renzetti complemented him in others. Maestro Renzetti delivered once again a very convincing reading of the opera, showing his great facility with Verdi although the version chosen cut Papa Germon's cabaletta at the end of second act, which seemed strange at a Verdi Festival but understandable since its musical quality is not outstanding. Less acceptable was the cutting of the second verse of Alfredo's cabaletta - though perhaps also understandable given the tenor's singing of which more late.

For stage direction reasons in the relatively small theatre, the chorus of Matadors was sung only by Gastone, appearing as a music hall artist, which is clearly not what Verdi wrote. The Teatro Regio di Parma's orchestra was at its usual high level and the same can be said of chorus.

This particular performance was the only one featuring soprano Irina Lungu as Violetta, while the rest of the series had Svetla Vassilieva in the role. Lungu's Violetta was very much praised last June when making her debut at La Scala and she has very positive qualities indeed, which will doubtless lead her on to a good career. She's a young woman (27 years old), slim, very attractive and an outstanding actress. She also has an interesting voice, although perhaps a little light for the opera last act. Irina Lungu is one of those artists who seem to have everything that opera theatres demand nowadays, following Peter Gelb's model at the New York Metropolitan. She was

very good in Acts I and II, with no problems in the top notes of 'Sempre Libera', and was very convincing in her duets with the Germonts. In the third act, her 'Addio del passato' was not quite moving enough, but she was again really convincing in her death scene. A very interesting soprano, of whom we will surely hear much in the future but the question will also be how long will she last? It will depend on her decisions, it seems to me and Violetta would seem to be her limit at the moment. I'd have doubts about her forthcoming presence in Modena as Luisa Miller.

Mássimo Giordano was a surprising Alfredo, surprising because the vocal change of his tenor has been spectacular within a very few years. I remember him as a light tenor and today the centre of his voice has widened and is sadly not very good. Until his second act aria of the second act he was fine, but from then on he began to have difficulties, evident in the

not too lucky development, although I am sure he will continue to have the favour of theatres, since he is an attractive figure on stage.

Bulgarian baritone Vladimir Stoyanov was a very reliable Germont. He's a good singer, very expressive, but with his usual problem of projection in his upper register. Even so, he remains a a guarantee in of quality this repertoire and sang 'Di Provenza' with great taste.

Among the secondary roles, it is worth mentioning Roberto Tagliavini as Doctor Grenvil, whose voice means that ss we will hear more of him soon.. Daniela Pini was a good Flora, Antonella Trevisan was a note-perfect Annina, though Gianluca Floris was vocally lacking as Gastone. Armando Gabba and Filippo Polinelli, appeared as Douphol and D'Obigny.

The theater was again sold out with many cheers for Lungu

and Maestro Renzetti, while Giordano had loud bravos from the women in the audience, especially from the upper levels.

***José M. Irurzun***

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