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CONDUCTOR

ABC BRISBANE

Lucia Di Lammermoor, Opera Queensland
- Nigel Munro-Wallis, Friday, 20 October 2006

Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* is, and remains, one of my personal favorites, as does Donizetti's magnificent opera based upon that text. Done well it is, to put it simply, a feast for the senses, guaranteed to capture the imagination of even the most jaded of opera lovers. It has everything: passion, star-crossed lovers, blood and more blood, suicide, the lot.

Obviously, then, *Lucia di Lammermoor* is not an opera to be approached lightly. What can go so right can also go so terribly wrong as well. It is pleasing, therefore, to report that the Opera Queensland production of this *Bel Canto* classic really is everything one could hope for. It has a simply superb cast including Elvira Fatyhova in the title role; Julian Gavin and Michael Lewis to name just some. **In addition the Queensland Orchestra under Richard Bonyngé is simply wonderful as is John Wregg's direction, Michael Stennett's sumptuous costumes and Henry Bardon's magnificent set.**

One can generally tell within the first five or ten minutes of the opening bars whether an operatic production is going to make the grade or not and certainly with this particular example one is completely swept away within that short time and taken on an unforgettable journey.

Elvira Fatykhova as Lucia is quite simply superb and brings such passion to this production that she leaves the audience quite literally almost breathless. The seeming ease with which she handles this challenging role is quite staggering and it is hoped that she will be offered future opportunities to sing this role all over the world in years to come. Her performance alone is worth the price of a ticket.

Michael Lewis as Enrico is quite captivating as well and Julian Gavin as Edgardo is simply stunning. In fact, as Opera Queensland's Artistic Director put it to me on opening night, they really have achieved the proverbial 'dream team' with this cast. For that Opera Queensland must be congratulated.

Put simply, in all my years of attending the opera I cannot honestly remember when I have enjoyed a production more or seen and heard such unparalleled quality.

As one patron put it to me: "if I never see another opera in my life I shall die a happy woman."

What more can one add?

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