



Lyric art, export value

Why does Opera Lafayette from Washington come up with his new production in Montreal?

27 janvier 2017 | Christophe Huss | Musique

In the past two weeks, Opera Lafayette of Washington has set up a forgotten opera, *Léonore* by Pierre Gaveaux, in Montreal, which will be presented in February in Washington and New York. Everything has been concocted and prepared here, with our artists.

Lyrical art is an expanding export value. In Paris these days Michèle Losier, Philippe Sly and Frédéric Antoun tread the boards of the Opéra Garnier in *Così fan tutte*, while at the same time, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Karina Gauvin and Marie-Nicole Lemieux appears in Handel's *Rodelinda*. On February 10, Alpha will release a new version of the *La Clemenza of Tito* with Karina Gauvin in Vitellia and Julie Boulianne in Annius. It is this production that, in December 2014, triggered a "gauvinmania" among lovers of opera art of the French capital.

In the Salle Pierre-Mercure, Kimy Mc Laren was *Léonore*, Pascale Beaudin, Marcelline, Jean-Michel Richer, Florestan, and Tomislav Lavoie, Rocco. Not in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, but in an opera which precedes him on the same subject: *Léonore, ou L'Amour conjugal* (1798) by Pierre Gaveaux, on a libretto by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly.

Ryan Brown, the director of Opera Lafayette, a Washington opera company, came to prepare his show in Montreal. Dominique Côté, Keven Geddes and Alexandre Sylvestre complete the cast, Oriol Tomas staged and the entire production team is Quebec.

What praise

Ryan Brown became an enthusiast of local artists, as witnessed by 21 original productions based on the French music of the revolutionary age immortalized on CD by Naxos. In the case of *Léonore*, it will even be a video, shot in New York on February 22 and 23, which will fix the show.

Asked by *Le Devoir*, Ryan Brown is full of praise for our vocal pool: "It started with Nathalie Paulin, then Dominique Labelle. Our great project, *Lalla Roukh* of Félicien David, associated Marianne Fiset and Nathalie Paulin. Pascale Beaudin arrived when we associated in the same scenic setting *Così fan tutte* by Mozart and his mirror, *Les femmes vengées*, by Philidor. "

The meeting with Oriol Tomas for *Léonore* led to the distribution: "Because of the many dialogues, I wanted a group of Francophone singers who knew each other well. So we came to Montreal. I am very happy, especially as all have been impressed by a work that Beethoven has probably heard so much musical responses to a dramatic situation are often the same."

Will we ever see the fruits of this work in Montreal? "It's a matter of money and co-presenter. I had thought of showing *Léonore* in Montreal after New York, but that would not happen. Perhaps we will have more luck in 2020, when we juxtapose the *Léonore* of Gaveaux and Beethoven in the same scenography.