

Rossini - Il Viaggio a Reims (2012)

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1. Part I 2. Part II Michele Pertusi (Sidney) Marianna Pizzolato (Melibea) Eva Mei (Cortese) Yijie Shi (Belfiore) Leah Partridge (Condesa) Complete cast: Corinna - Auxiliadora Toledano La Marchesa Melibea - Marianna Pizzolato La Contessa di Folleville - Leah Partridge Madama Cortese - Eva Mei Il Cavalier Belfiore - Yijie Shi Il Conte di Libenskof - Lawrence Brownlee Lord Sidney - Michele Pertusi Don Profondo - Marco Camastra Il Barone di Trombonok - Bruno Praticò. Don Alvaro - Vincenzo Taormina Don Prudenzio - Gabriele Ribis Teatro Musicale Fiorentino Orchestra and Choir Daniele Rustioni – conductor Florence, 18th January 2012

Rossini composed his scenic cantata “Il viaggio a Reims” for the crowning of Charles X, King of France, and it was performed for the first time in Paris in 19th June 1825. It was a great success, especially because on stage there were all the greatest opera singers of that time: Giuditta Pasta, Domenico Donzelli, Laure Cinti-Damoreau and many others.

The cantata had mixed fortunes and was later revised by Rossini himself and finally part of the score was used for “Le Comte Ory”. Given the character strictly ceremonial, that work never became a permanent part of a repertoire (except for occasional revivals), so much so that for long time it was even considered lost.

“Il viaggio a Reims” needs first quality opera singers with a great personality. In this performance in Florence the artists are of average quality, with some good exceptions, such as young China tenor Yijie Shi as Cavalier Belfiore. He has a small light voice, but well prepared technically.

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Michele Pertusi as Lord Sidney sang beautifully his difficult aria, and thanks to his stage presence he was very effective in his acting. Lawrence Brownlee was Conte di Libenskof: he is a well prepared singer, but his small voice shows sometimes too much vibrato.

Marco Camastra's Don Profondo was correct but his voice is maybe too clear for the part.

Vincenzo Taormina, as Don Alvaro, has no refined voice but effective. Veteran Bruno Praticò, as Trombonok, is now in poor vocal condition, but the energy he shows on stage wins over the audience. Among the female artists, Eva Mei (Madama Cortese), Auxiliadora Toledano (Corinna), and the Rossini-expert Marianna Pizzolato (Melibea) show class and experience. Whereas Leah Partridge who sang Contessa di Folleville showed some vocal problems. The remaining singers were all rather correct. --- Fabio Bardelli, kulturkompasset.com

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