

NOVI LIST, 29.04.2022

**Critical review of the ballet play "Romeo and Juliet": A shining example of the Rijeka theatre scene
by Igor Vlajnić**

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RIJEKA - Curtain at the Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc has risen for the third time in the last few months by announcing a play on the subject of a famous love affair a pair of Romeo and Juliet. But this time it was not about the operas of Gounod or Bellini, as we have had the opportunity to hear and see for the past few months, but about the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. In fact, it would be better to say that this is a dance show, and not a ballet, at least not in the classical form that some might expect and that the Rijeka theatre once had.

An interesting and very ingenious concept and dramaturgy of the play are signed by Jiri Bubeníček and Nadina Cojocar, and this concept tries to tell the story of unhappy Verona lovers in the synergy of movement, words and music. Starting from Shakespeare's text, the authors try to upgrade it and bring the whole play closer to the audience. The result is a dynamic, fast, well-coordinated and very interesting show, which can really be acceptable to a wide audience.

Two clans

Already during the entrance to the theatre, a large audience, which filled the audience very well, could meet dancers divided into two clans (Montecchi and Capuleti) running through the theatre hallways dressed in great costumes by costume designer Nadine Cojocar and in realistic scenes of conflict hint at the stage has to happen. At the same time, and before the official start of the show, it is possible to see video projections of Fanni Tutek Hajnal and recorded music, which also it draws viewers more and more into the show. The lights in the hall go out a little and imperceptibly, and the recorded music is replaced by the live orchestra of the Rijeka HNK, which performs the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" by Sergei Prokofiev under the direction of Valentin Egel.

It should be noted that in the ground floor of the auditorium there is a part of the stage in the shape of a cross on which the dancers perform choreographic elements of high complexity and equally high attractiveness. The next surprise at the beginning is brought by actors Ivna Bruck and Mario Jovev, who recite Shakespeare's verses, which is not typical of traditional ballet art. All of the above happens in just the first few minutes and immediately causes positive impressions and enthusiasm in the audience. Following the action textual and musical template are slowly followed by dance scenes divided into two parts, and the whole show ends after less than two hours in which there is one break, but by no means some delays in dynamics and intensity. Commenting on Jiří Bubeníček's choreography should be left to experts, but it can certainly be said that it was very inspiring, realistic and almost cinematic, and the attractiveness of some scenes was emphasised by fully performed performers using facial expressions, sighs, cries and all other elements. available. Some scenes, such as murder or death, are so clear and high quality that even the average viewer can enjoy seeing them. The use of all the possibilities of the theatre (coming down from the box, getting out of the orchestral hole, running around the auditorium, etc.) is fully present, and the scenography of Ana Aleksandra Buković and the light of Dalibor Fugošić add a new, somewhat fairytale dimension.

Interrupted applause

Given the exceptional engagement of the performers, it is good to say that the main roles were played by the young Maria Matarranz de las Heras as Julia and Nicola Prato as Romeo, and then Ali Tabbouch (Count Capuleti), Marta Voinea Čavrak (Countess Capuleti), Marta Kanazir (Nanny of Julia), Michele Pastorini (Tibaldo), Jody Bet (Paris), Tea Rušin (Countess Montecchi), Francesco Pio de Benedictis (Count Montecchi), Tommy Rous (Mercuzio), Leonardo de Santis (Benvoglio), Tilman Patzak (Father Lorenzo), Andrei Köteles (Prince Verona) and in other roles Soyoka Iwata, Milica Mucibašić, Ksenija Krutova and Anna Zardi. As the only objection to the stage part of the play can be added the fact that after the last chord of music following the lowering of the curtain after Julia's suicide, which is so delicate, clear and subtle, the upcoming final applause is interrupted by actors reciting the last verses of the text. Although the author of the play probably wanted to complete the whole and give the play an analogy of the beginning, the mentioned addition after the music may still be superfluous.

The orchestral hole, in addition to accommodating the orchestra, served during the performance as a kind of barrier in the relationship between Romeo and Juliet, but it is still a fact that the orchestra is a significant holder and participant in this performance. Namely, playing Prokofiev is never easy, even when it comes to such well-known musical numbers. Prokofiev bases his complexity on different approaches that intertwine a dense texture of narrow intervals, but mostly within an extended tonality, with very airy melodic parts. At the same time, the members of the orchestra have to play softly, singing and subtly, and a few bars later they have to be part of the powerful and penetrating harmony that, somewhat cinematic, tells a musical story of its own. Since the orchestral hole is not large enough for a decent arrangement of all the players, they resorted to elements of saving space in several ways, of which the striking placement of musical instruments in the lodges and reduced composition wherever possible. However, this results in certain shortcomings that are the result of such an approach, and it is about insufficient group music or inadequate tonal relationships and colours. There was also a lack of setting plans, which Prokofiev always has a few, that is, it is not always well set what is the melody and what is the accompaniment.

Nice gift

Finally, a significant number of "lyrical" numbers lacked the calmness and melodiousness of the phrase, especially in terms of tempo. One gets the impression that the music is performed correctly, firmly and energetically and very much in line with the choreography and concept of the play. For the Croatian framework, this is certainly very, very good and it should not be disputed by anyone. On the contrary, the orchestra should be congratulated on its endurance and concentration.

The very end of the show was a beautifully choreographed gift from the performers who really received an organic applause from the satisfied audience. And all would be well if that applause wasn't interrupted by turning on the lights in the audience, as if the audience didn't want to applaud anymore. Unlike some plays in which the performers bow several times, if it could not be said that the "applause" lasted so many minutes, in this play it would not be the case, because the audience was truly satisfied. And indeed, this play without restraint can be recommended as a shining example of the Rijeka dance and theater scene, but only if it stays like this, premiere form, without subsequently reducing things, and all under the same newly created brand.

Kritički osvrt na baletnu predstavu “Romeo i Julija”: Svijetli primjer riječke kazališne scene

RIJEKA – Zavjesa u Hrvatskom narodnom kazalištu Ivana pl. Zajca podigla se treći put u nekoliko posljednjih mjeseci najavivši predstavu na temu poznatog ljubavnog para Romea i Julije. No ovaj put nije se radilo o operama Gounoda ili Bellinija, kako smo to imali prilike čuti i vidjeti proteklih nekoliko mjeseci, već se radilo o baletnoj predstavi »Romeo i Julija« ruskog skladatelja Sergeja Prokofjeva. Zapravo, bilo bi bolje reći da se radi o plesnoj predstavi, a ne o baletu, barem ne u onom klasičnom obliku kakvog bi neki mogli očekivati i kakvog je riječko kazalište nekada imalo. Zanimljiv i vrlo domišljen koncept i dramaturgiju predstave potpisuju Jirí Bubeníček i Nadina Cojocar, a navedeni koncept pokušava ispričati priču o nesretnim veronskim ljubavnicima u sinergiji pokreta, riječi i glazbe. Polazeći od Shakespeareovog teksta autori ga pokušavaju nadograditi i cijelu predstavu u potpunosti približiti publici. Rezultat je dinamična, brza, uigrana i vrlo zanimljiva predstava, koja doista može biti prihvatljiva širokoj publici.

Dva klana

Već tijekom ulaska u kazalište mnogobrojna publika, koja je jako dobro ispunila gledalište, mogla se susresti s plesačima podijeljenima u dva klana (Montecchi i Capuleti) koji trče po kazališnim hodnicima odjeveni u odlične kostime kostimografkinje Nadine Cojocar i u realističnim scenama sukoba nagovještaju ono što se na pozornici ima dogoditi. Istovremeno, a prije službenog početka predstave, moguće je vidjeti i videoprojekcije Fanni Tutek Hajnal i snimljenu glazbu, koja također gledatelje sve više i dublje uvlači u predstavu. Pomalo i neprimjetno gase se svjetla u dvorani, a snimljenu glazbu zamjenjuje živi orkestar riječkog HNK-a, koji pod ravnanjem Valentina Egela izvodi balet »Romeo i Julija« Sergeja Prokofjeva.

Valja napomenuti da se i u parteru gledališta nalazi dio pozornice u obliku križa na kojem plesači izvode koreografske elemente visoke zahtjevnosti i jednako visoke atraktivnosti. Sljedeće iznenađenje odmah na početku donose i glumci Ivna Bruck i Mario Jovev, koji recitiraju Shakespeareove stihove, a što nije svojstveno tradicionalnoj baletnoj umjetnosti. Sve navedeno događa se u samo nekoliko prvih minuta i odmah u publici izaziva pozitivne dojmove i oduševljenje. Slijedeći radnju tekstualnog i glazbenog predloška nižu se polako plesni prizori podijeljeni u dva dijela, a cijela predstava završava nakon nepunih dva sata u kojima ima jedna stanka, ali nipošto nema nekih zastoja u dinamici i intenzitetu. Komentirati koreografiju Jiříja Bubeníčka trebalo bi prepustiti stručnjacima, ali zasigurno se može reći da je bila vrlo inspirativna, realistična i gotovo filmska, a atraktivnost pojedinih scena naglašavali su i potpuno uživljeni izvođači koristeći mimiku, uzdahe, plač i sve druge elemente koji su im bili na raspolaganju. Neke scene, poput ubojstva ili smrti, toliko su jasne i kvalitetne da ih je i prosječnom gledatelju užitak moći vidjeti. Korištenje svih mogućnosti kazališta (spuštanje iz lože, izlazak iz orkestralne rupe, trčanje po gledalištu i sl.) u potpunosti je prisutno, a scenografija Ane Aleksandre Buković i svjetlo Dalibora Fugošića dodaju novu, pomalo bajkovitu dimenziju.

Prekinut pljesak

S obzirom na navedeni izuzetni angažman izvođača, dobro je reći da su u glavnim ulogama nastupili mlada Maria Matarranz de las Heras kao Julija i Nicola Prato kao Romeo, a zatim i Ali Tabbouch (grof Capuleti), Marta Voinea Čavrak (grofica Capuleti), Marta Kanazir (Julijina dadilja), Michele Pastorini (Tibaldo), Jody Bet (Paris), Tea Rušin (grofica Montecchi), Francesco Pio de Benedictis (grof Montecchi), Tommy Rous (Mercuzio), Leonardo de Santis (Benvoglio), Tilman Patzak (pater Lorenzo), Andrei Köteles (princ Verone) te u ostalim ulogama Soyoka Iwata, Milica Mucibašić, Ksenija Krutova i Anna Zardi. Kao jedina zamjerka scenskom dijelu predstave može se dodati činjenica da nakon posljednjeg akorda glazbe koji prati spuštanje zavjese nakon Julijina samoubojstva, a koji je toliko delikatan, jasan i suptilan, nadolazeći završni pljesak prekidaju glumci recitiranjem posljednjih stihova teksta. Iako je autor predstave vjerojatno želio zaokružiti cjelinu i predstavi dati analogiju početka, navedeni dodatak nakon glazbe možda je ipak suvišan. Orkestralna rupa, osim za smještaj orkestra, služila je tijekom predstave i kao svojevrsna barijera u

odnosu Romea i Julije, ali je ipak činjenica da je orkestar značajni nositelj i sudionik u ovoj predstavi. Naime svirati Prokofjeva nikada nije lako, čak ni kada se radi o tako poznatim glazbenim brojevima. Svoju kompleksnost Prokofjev temelji na različitim pristupima koji isprepliću gustu fakturu uskih intervala, ali uglavnom unutar proširenog tonaliteta, s vrlo prozračnim melodioznim dijelovima. Istovremeno, članovi orkestra moraju svirati meko, pjevno i suptilno, a već koji takt kasnije moraju biti dio moćnih i prodornih suzvučja koji, pomalo filmski, pričaju neku svoju glazbenu priču. S obzirom na to da orkestralna rupa nije dovoljno velika za pristojan raspored svih svirača, pribjeglo se elementima štednje prostora na više načina, od kojih su upadljivi smještaj glazbala u lože i smanjeni sastav gdje god je to moguće. Navedeno ipak rezultira određenim manjkavostima koje su rezultat takvog pristupa, a radi se o nedovoljnom skupnom muziciranju ili neadekvatnim tonskim odnosima i bojama. Nedostajalo je i postavljanja planova, kojih kod Prokofjeva uvijek ima nekoliko, odnosno nije uvijek dobro postavljeno što je melodija, a što pratnja.

Lijep poklon

Konačno, u značajnom broju »lirskih« brojeva nedostajalo je mirnoće i ispjevanosti fraze, posebno u smislu tempa. Stječe se dojam da je glazba izvedena korektno, čvrsto i energično te vrlo u skladu s koreografijom i konceptom predstave. Za hrvatske okvire to je sigurno jako, jako dobro i to nikome ne treba biti sporno. Dapače, treba orkestru čestitati na izdržljivosti i koncentraciji. Sam kraj predstave bio je lijepo koreografirani poklon izvođača koji su doista dobili organski pljesak zadovoljne publike. I sve bi bilo dobro da taj pljesak nije prekinut paljenjem svjetala u publici, kao da se ne želi da publika plješće više. Za razliku od nekih predstava u kojima se izvođači preklanjavaju nekoliko puta, ne bi li se moglo reći da su »ovacije« trajale toliko i toliko minuta, u ovoj predstavi to ne bi bio slučaj, jer je publika bila istinski zadovoljna. I doista, ovu predstavu bez suzdržavanja može se preporučiti kao svijetli primjer riječke plesne i kazališne scene, ali samo ako ona ostane u ovakvom, premijernom obliku, bez da se naknadno stvari reduciraju, a sve pod istim novostvorenim brendom.