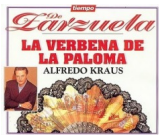


Tomás Bretón - La Verbena de la Paloma (1994)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 23 October 2010 16:45 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 July 2014 19:17

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1. *Preludio*
2. *Escena (El aceite de ricino)*
3. *Romanza de Julian* [play](#)
4. *Escena y Seguidillas*
5. *Coplas de Don Hilarion* [play](#)
6. *Solea*
7. *Escena (Buena esta la puli'tica)*
8. *Escena (Ya estas frente a la casa)*
9. *Quinteto*
10. *Escena y Habanera (Ya estan aqui)*
11. *Final*

Susana - Ángeles Chamorro
Julián - Alfredo Kraus
La Señal Rita - Inés Rivadeneira
Casta - Alicia Armentía
Don Hilarión - Antonio Campo
La Cantaora - Marisa Mora
La tía Antonia - Luisa (Luisita) de Córdoba
Chula/Mozo 1 - Adelardo Curros
Chula/Mozo 2 - Adolfo Robles
Don Sebastián - Eduardo Fuentes
El tabernero - Fernando Martínez
Portero - Antonio Ramallo

Orquesta Manuel de Falla
Cantores de Madrid
Enrique García Asensio, 1972

A verbena is a popular Madrid festival, with dancing and fair attractions, drinks and food. All the verbenas are related to a religious festival, so the title of this piece refers to that of the Paloma, an image of the Virgin of Solitude. But this is not a religious work, it is one of the best known zarzuelas by the Spanish composer Tomas Breton. Breton composed many other works (and other zarzuelas) but it is with this work that his name is most often associated.

'La Verbena de la Paloma' is a zarzuela of the type known as genero chico, a one act comedy which could contain as much or as little music as was necessary. Some of these one act comedies had virtually no music, or just one musical piece which could be omitted if the theatre had no orchestra. The more complicated ones are effectively short comic operas, and this is the case here where 'La Verbena de la Paloma' (one of the most complicated works in this genre) contains 12 substantial musical numbers. It is also full of the most curious characters. Where else do you get a typesetter hero and a randy, elderly chemist?

The action of the opera takes place on the night of the Virgin of the Paloma, August the 14th. Julian is a young typesetter who works in a printing house. He is in love with Susana, but very jealous which makes Susana suffer so she decides to get back at him. Susana lives with her sister Casta and their aunt, Antonia (an unpleasant woman). The nearby chemist, Don Hilarion is a randy old man who protects the two sisters (and flirts with them). Next to the chemists is the tavern whose owner is married to Rita, Julian's godmother who advises him to leave Susana. Julian is always complaining and he threatens to make a scene if his jealousy of Susana is found to be justified.

Breton makes a great virtue of this feature and there are very few real solos. All the action takes place in the context of the neighbourhood and solos develop into ensembles or have activity in the background. This gives the music a real ensemble feel and it needs a good ensemble cast to bring it off. Here, the opera is sung by a group of Spanish singers who sound as if they have been singing Zarzuela all their life, and they probably have. ---Robert Hugill, musicweb-international.com

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