

Newspaper

Titon et l'Aurore de Mondonville at the Opéra-Comique (Streaming) - Tasty Fantasy - Report



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Deprived of shows and culture as we are, we can only salute once again the courage of the Opéra-Comique and its teams who, despite the health crisis, continue their task and continue to play. A breeze of freshness and freedom is blowing over this new production, broadcast live on Medici TV and available for three months. In the pit, William Christie gives *the home* to *Titon and Aurora*, delicious heroic pastoral of Mondonville which he directs with the energy of a young lion and constant pleasure. In his expert hands, the score played head to foot by Les Arts Florissants - a perfectly oiled machine -, tasty in its many bucolic passages where the author likes to depict the thousand rustles of flora and fauna, and monstrously theatrical when Nature is raging, never ceasing to ignite, by turns funny, stylized and naughty.



Reinoud Van Mechelen (Titon) & Gwendoline Blondeel (L'Aurore) © Stefan Brion

The baroque specialist association, a young multidisciplinary creator, goes hand in hand here. Basil Twist signs with humor and sensitivity an aerial staging that takes the spectator into an enchanted world where sets, costumes, props and dance parties skillfully lit by Jean Kalman, form a simultaneously fanciful and outdated. The contribution of the puppets designed by Basil Twist (clay statues, fairies, sheep), wielded by sight, which dance or accompany the beautiful romance between the shepherd Titon and Aurora, can sometimes surprise or annoy, but also fully assumed, it ends up arousing adhesion, the spirit of the pastoral being respected to the letter.

Titon is therefore in love with Aurora, which makes him feel good, but now Palès and Aeole want to put them to the test: prematurely aged, Titon thinks that his beloved will turn away from him, wrongly, saving attitude and immediately greeted by Love in person who celebrates the virtues of the couple thus reconstituted. A few months after *Hippolyte and Aricie*, the high-counter Reinoud Van Mechelen lends his youthful features and his studied awkwardness to Titon whom he interprets with ease but in a voice always a little gray, with single-string accents. Gwendoline Blondeel is an ideal Aurora both for the clarity of her instrument and the delicacy of her expression, her diction and her playing.



Reinoud Van Mechelen (Titon), Emmanuelle de Negri (Palès), Virginie Thomas, Maud Gnidzaz, Juliette Perret (Nymphs) © Stefan Brion

The evil couple Palès / Eole is camped with great talent by the soprano Emmanuelle de Negri, chiseled declamation and volcanic emission, and by the baritone Marc Mauillon, a very involved actor but a singer a little overwhelmed by the vocal dimensions required by his role. Held with authority by the bass-baritone Renato Dolcini, Prométhée - which the interpreter of Eole sang at the premiere - occupies the entire prologue alongside the young soprano Julie Roset, chirping with joy her aria "Young mortals" dressed as a Chevalier à la Rose Straussien (a blooming bud raised, like most of this cast, in William Christie's greenhouse beautifully called "Le Jardin des Voix"), the Choirs of the Flourishing Arts and the three entrusted Nymphs to Virginie Thomas,

Francois Lesueur



Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville: *Titon et l'Aurore* - Live broadcast on January 19, 2021 on Medici TV; available in free replay until April 19, 2021 :
www.medici.tv/fr/operas/jean-joseph-cassanea-de-mondonvilles-titon-et-laurore/

Photo: Gwendoline Blondeel (L'Aurore), Marc Mauillon (Eole) © Stefan Brion