

Ilmondodisuk: Napoli Teatro Festival – Miss Julia. A Passionate Woman Searching for Love.

By Italo Pignatelli

Miss Julia, written in 1888 by August Strindberg, and adapted here by J. Ed Araiza was presented at *Teatro Galleria Toledo*, among the Teatro Festival Italia, directed by Lorenzo Montanini. On the stage Tina Mitchell, Jhon Alex Toro and Gina Jaimes portrait the ancient conflict between nobility and servants, this time set in Colombia. The story, rich with and abundant sensuality, documents the conflict between the old aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie.

The audience can easily imagine from the beginning the clash between the sexes and the two different social classes watching this *mise en scene*. The audience is split in two: some of us sit in the usual space and some others are put on the stage in two rows of chairs. The space in between becomes something like a boxing ring where we will watch the fight between men and women. Five people coming from four different countries: Italy, Australia, Colombia, USA. With the actors and the director Helen Yee is also part of the cast, musician and author of the musical score, protagonist on the stage as well, she doesn't play the *gong*, but instead her violin.

The dialogue is in their original tongue with simultaneous translation on some screens. The cook and the servant speak Spanish and Julia, the countess, speaks English. The women are very different, dressed by Adan Martinez. The cook voluptuous in her working gown, Julia is a mannequin, white dancing gown fluffy as cotton candy. The protagonist prop is a table on wheels that becomes each time something different: pedestal, chariot, bed thus making the action even more lively. A garland of colored light bulbs completes the set together with a big window.

The story sketches the conflict between the two classes. The servants don't have time to love, they don't pay much attention to any expression of love, they make love when they can, when they are not too tired to do it. The nobility knows well enough the poetic words of love and lives it with passion and desire, always willing to make love whenever they wish, every time in a more exotic way.

Julia's courtship is energetic, sophisticated and exciting and she is willing to use all the weapons she has to seduce Juan, who, since when they were kids, has secretly desired her. The passion between the two grows more and more and finally satiates its hunger during the night of the 15th of August. "How many gimmicks thought during the night appear empty and groundless with the light of the day" wrote Pirandello in his *Fu Mattia Pascal*. And here as well, at dawn, everything changes. Julia would want to run away with her lover but he doesn't want to turn down the spontaneous sensuality of the cook, he is vile and ruthless. Disappointment and abandonment make Julia go mad.

The show is electric, dynamic, eccentric and full of exciting moments. Julia is femininity: she is able to love with passion, she is elegant and sophisticated in her dance of love, sometimes a statue on top of the table, some others laying down in the arms of his lover begging for an embrace.

The sensual and voluptuous scenes are underscored by the sound of the violin: sometimes joyful, sometimes mournful the violin is the instrument more apt to deliver a romantic score of music.