

SCENARIO

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English Translation

“Miss Julia” by Strindberg at Teatro Galleria Toledo

[...]

The show offered by a recently formed company at Galleria Toledo, composed by elements that have a different geographical origin and led by a director we don't know much about (Lorenzo Montanini) was a very pleasant surprise. Here as well¹ the action is moved from Sweden to today's Latin America, but nothing denounced it too much apart from very few elements on stage - and the program! - in the framework of J. Ed Araiza's adaptation (Miss Julia) that was very smooth, much less characterised in its historical and geographical components, more focused and coherent to what we could call an *anthropological take* on the original play, towards a dramaturgy for the body, which didn't neglect, at the same time, to express the social antagonism of the characters, using the invention, for instance, of bilingualism (the servants speak Spanish while the countess - and often the servant when talking to her - spoke English) to underline the unbreakable diaphragm that divides them.

However, in this representation, it is the visual aspect to prevail, often dreamlike: on that bare stage (just a few chairs, a table and a pillow) it was the bodies of the actors that ran, moved, and connected in front of a small group of spectators - guests on the stage - while a *latere* violin (played by Helen Yee) and some, maybe pleonastic, musical intermission (played by the Ars Nova Napoli) made real, with their rhythm, the orchestration of what appeared more and more like a music score. And maybe that is what the playwright himself sought, judging by some of the stage directions he wrote (“in tempo prestissimo”, “rallenta”, “si placa”, “pausa”); but this is not what matters, as we said earlier. Rather what the director (and his three actors, all excellent: Jhon Alex Toro, Tina Mitchell, Gina Jaimes Abril) offered us is a score built on sustained phrasings, sometimes lightly dissonant, sometimes strongly, with standstills, changes in rhythm, dialogues that seemed monologues, even *arias*; everything in a magic realism atmosphere, always coated with a subtle eroticism, in a distillation of reality that was, at times, even expressionistic.

In many ways this show is a *dreamplay*, which might have been implicit in what Strindberg defined as a “naturalistic tragedy” (an unsettling or provoking definition that the author gave to his own work?!); for sure it was a *dance of death* (presenting Miss Julia wearing a long tutu for the whole show like a classic ballerina was a very beautiful idea) part of the eternal battle of the sexes, the seduction game that unveils its bitter/sweet deceits only when reason wakes up from the numbness of our senses.

¹ the critic is comparing the show with another version of the same play he saw the day before in a different theatre. (*Translator's note*)