

LUCIA di LAMMERMOOR

Opera Omnibus: 17-20 May 1995. Haslemere Hall

Director, Geoffrey Ford. Conductor, David Wright.

Lucia is rarely performed, and this production brought in packed houses from all over the South East. This was a splendid evening, with young and good looking principals who sang superbly.

The role of Lucia was taken by Zoe Turner, attractive vocally with a lovely range of tonal colour which she used most expressively. She sang the words — an excellent and understandable translation by Peter Clark — with total clarity while still managing all that coloratura securely, and developed the mood of easily-led Lucia into madness convincingly. I didn't feel she related the coloratura to madness fully, nor was it an expression of joy when needed, but a small winge in the face of such a well-crafted and masterly performance of a demanding role.

Andrew Morris was a handsome and ardent Edgardo with a super voice, but more subtle dynamics would have enhanced his very strong performance. Steven Faughey (Enrico) and Peter Barber (Raimondo) sang with strength and enjoyment, which made theirs a very positive contribution both in solos and (particularly) in ensembles, as did Lindsay Bramley

(Alisa), a supportive maid well above average. This vocal balance made a thrilling sound in the sextet.

The orchestration is also thrilling, consequently there is plenty of brass. Without a pit, balance was a problem at times. The chorus sang well but their ragged entries and word endings contrasted unfavourably with the soloists' diction, and they were not directed with a great deal of imagination. Costumes were excellent, and a simple set captured the atmosphere of a gloomy Scottish castle. The appearance of the whole production was slightly reminiscent of the famed Covent Garden version, even down to the red wig for Lucia!

This is a magnificent opera with one magical tune on top of another, and we got all of it, even the parts usually cut! This was quite an extraordinary opera experience, quite the best I have seen for some time. Opera Omnibus won a NODA Southern Area award for their last production, and are evidently maintaining their high standards.

Angela Goodall
