

# **Neatikariga Rita Avize (The Independent Riga)**

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**Operation : Orfeo does not obey rational analysis - it is rather a metaphysical adventure, a journey in spiritual world**

On the first week of September, while The White House (Latvian National Opera) was preparing for its upcoming season, Danish theater Hotel Pro Forma and Latvian Radio Choir performed their cooperation project – Danish director's Kristen Dehlholm picture opera Operation : Orfeo. This is one of examples that demonstrate the metamorphosis of opera in the 21st century in its most positive way.

Composition of visual opera aims to preoccupy all perceptive senses - singers are moving pictures that are shifting together with the musical dramaturgy while creating two separate worlds that meet (only) in one's imagination.

Uncustomary two-dimensional design of the stage, namely – frame with ladder that would change its shape becoming flat, spatial and surprising with its finality. Still the frame is not static – it breathes, pulses and irradiates direct emotions that are created by full arsenal of artistic means of expression.

This version of Orpheus is different from the ones seen before. It does not retell the plot of the myth but rather creates universal abstraction where everyone out of the 15 actors performing can be both Orpheus and Eurydice. This condition makes the performance a unique experience. The stylistic spectrum of musical material is multifarious – from American minimalist John Cage's vocal scores with Danish composer's Bo Holten arrangement and finally – extended quotation from Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera Orpheus and Eurydice famous aria Che faro senza Euridice in unaccustomed, impetuous, even a bit nervous tempos. In this instrumentation radio choir group imbues functions of both orchestra and choir transforming the performance into manifesto of the most powerful music instrument – the human voice. Professionalism and the explicit sound of the Radio Choir in the performance is to be envied, because it is full of individual colors as well as excellent joint sonority. It seems that every individual is functioning for him/herself and giving the right emphasis where it is needed. The excellent timbre of soloist Baiba Bekere transverses form underworld in the beginning of the show till the green laser wave in the final. This is not her first contact with contemporary vocal music: she has taken part in contemporary music festival Arena , Andris Dzenitis Woodpecker Project as well as other projects and it seems that she has found her ampoule.

Danish dancer Lisbeth Sonne Andersen whose presence in the show seems surreal sculpts her fluent motions just like water flowing from first to the last step of the ladder. Operation : Orfeo does not obey rational analysis it is rather a journey in spiritual world that includes tangible and intangible space and time with visual art, performance, vocal art, choreography and multimedia being entirety that is the past and the future at the same time. As from another world after a pause that symbolizes the loss of Eurydice, when Orpheus looks back in the Aida world Gluck's Orpheus aria in a capella transcription chimes out with almost

inappropriate buzzing backing vocal comp that contrasts with the usual baroque orchestra instrumentation at the same time awearing that myth interpretation continuity in contemporary culture. Composition of Operation : Orfeo is shaped from silence to culmination that expresses itself as illusory wave of smoke and laser light. It creates the effect of washing ocean waves that bit by bit covers the stage and audience letting everything to be "covered with water" for a while. That is a considered director's trick that ads a "topping" to the performance: granting fulfillment and relaxation at the same time. Operation : Orfeo is a world class show that addresses the audience on a 'cell level' and does not predict one solution or message possibility. Good luck with the rest of this year[seasons] shows in France, Portugal and Denmark.

*Laima Mellena*