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Luisa Castellani

Singing

Luciano Berio, in an interview at RAI3 (“Scatola sonora”, march 25th 1993), told Sandro Cappelletto who was asking him if, ten years after her death, Cathy Berberian had any successor: “...in Italy there is a singer who is totally different from Cathy, but of great genius and intelligence: Luisa Castellani”. The magazine “Specchio” of “La Stampa” (Turin) put her among the 7 best singers in the world in the 90’s, and she has had press reviews in 18 different languages.

Studies. Born in Milan, she began ballet dancing at the age of 4. She graduated with a degree in voice in 1982 and studied french and german literatures and languages at the University of Turin. She studied vocal technique and traditional repertory with Gina Cigna and developed the indispensable technical and interpretative instruments in order to face the contemporary repertory with Dorothy Dorow. She then broadened her Lieder repertory with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Anton Dermota and the baroque repertory with Paul Esswood. In 1991, she was awarded the Gino Tani opera prize.

Composers, directors and repertory. Many composers have written for her voice and, in particular, Luciano Berio chose her to interpret the new edition of his “Calmo”. Luisa Castellani performed in the main theatres and festivals of the world with the “Sequenza III” and “Folksongs”. Berio also created the rôle of Ada for her in the Opera “Outis”, performed at La Scala in 1996. Luisa Castellani has successfully performed and recorded numerous works, many of which were “premières”, by Ambrosini, Aperghis, Arcà, Baratello, Benjamin, Berio, Bortolotti, Bosco, Bussotti, Cage, Cardi, Castagnoli, Castiglioni, De Pablo, Di Bari, Donatoni, Ferneyhough, Francesconi, Gentilucci, Gervasoni, Gorli, Jeney, Holliger, Huber, Kurtag, Ligeti, Lombardi, Manzoni, Nieder, Pagliarani, Panni, Pennisi, Sbordoni, Scelsi, Sciarrino, Solbiati. She had the opportunity to work on the music with the composers themselves. Giorgio Gaslini has written for her voice and dedicated his “Liederbook”, inspired by jazz, to her. She has also performed works by the most important composers of the twentieth century, from Debussy and Ravel to Bartok and Schoenberg, from Dallapiccola and Hindemith to Stravinsky and Webern, under the direction of such conductors as Berio, Bernasconi, Boulez, Eotvos, Ferro, Gelmetti, Robertson, Sinopoli, Tamayo, Tate, Thielemann, Zedda.

Partners. She collaborates with the “Ensemble Intercontemporain” of Paris, with which she performed, among others, the French “première” of the “Lohengrin” by Sciarrino. She performed, among others, Boulez’s “Marteau sans maître” with the “Ensemble Modern” of Frankfurt and the “Ensemble Recherche” of Friburg. She has also collaborated with the “ASKO Ensemble” of Amsterdam, the “Klangforum” of Vienna, “Contrechamps” of Geneva, the “900 e oltre” and the “Divertimento Ensemble” of Milan, the “Quartetto di Torino”, the “Quintetto Bibiena”, the “Arditti Quartet”, on various works and has performed with other soloists such as Antonio Ballista, Bruno Canino, Roberto Cominati, Massimiliano Damerini, Andras Keller, Zoltan Kocsis, Andrea Lucchesini e Jeffrey Swann.

Concerts. Luisa Castellani has sung as a soloist with the “London Sinfonietta” and the “BBC orchestra”, with the orchestras of La Scala of Milan, of the Teatro Regio of Turin, the Fenice of Venice, Radio France, of the State of Israel, of the National Academy of S.Cecilia and of RAI, the OSER, the ORT. She has been a guest performer at the “Barbican Theatre”, “Queen Elisabeth Hall”, the “Purcell Room” and the “Royal Festival Hall” of London, at the “Opéra Bastille” of Paris, the “Teatro alla Scala”, the “Tokyo Opera City”, the “Philharmonie” of Berlin, Cologne and Rotterdam, the “Staatsoper Unter den Linden”, the “Concertgebouw” of Amsterdam and in the main Italian theaters and concert halls, among which the “Sala Verdi” in Milan, the Auditorium RAI and the “Teatro Regio” of Turin, the “Parco della Musica” of Rome, the Theatre “Rossini” di Pesaro, the “Teatro Regio” of Parma, the theatre “Piccinni” of Bari, the theatre “Verdi” of Trieste, the theatre “Carlo Felice” of Genova. She has toured the world and sung in New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Budapest, Prague, Helsinki. Also in Moscow, in Bogota, in São Paulo, in Tokio, Osaka, Kyoto, Yokohama and Beijing, in Uzbekistan, Athens, Tbilisi, Ankara and Istanbul. She inaugurated the “Wien Modern” in 1990 and was invited to perform in the “Biennali” of Helsinki, Berlin, Venice, by “Settembre Musica” of Turin and, among others, the “Holland Festival”, the “Festival d’Automne” and “Agora” of Paris and by “Ars Festival Music” of Brussels, by the “Festival Cervantino” in Mexico, by the “Warsaw Autumn” and the “Festival Archipel” of Geneva. In 2009 she participated in the Festival of “Campos do Jordão” in Brasil. In 2001, she was invited by M. Pollini to “Carnegie Hall” of New York and at the “Mozarteum” for the Salzburg Festival, where she sang with soloists of the Berliner Philharmoniker. In 2006, she was invited to sing at the “KKL” by Pierre Boulez, under whose direction she performed with the Orchestra of the “Lucerna Festival”.

Opera. In 1986, Luisa Castellani made her opera debut and inaugurated the “Maggio Musicale Fiorentino” in “La vera storia” by Luciano Berio. She has since then performed operas by main composers of the XXth century, from Britten to Donatoni, Pennisi and de Pablo, in

theatres like “La Scala” of Milan, “La Fenice” of Venice, the “Teatro Real” of Madrid, the “Théâtre du Châtelet” of Paris. In the 2007-2008 season she sang in “The turn of the screw” by B. Britten, directed by Jonathan Webb in the “Teatri di tradizione” in Lombardy.

Activity as performer. Her vocal flexibility, intellectual curiosity, distinctive skill as a performer and her interest in a deeper experience of music led her to go beyond the traditional concert to propose new and unusual solo vocal performances as well as stimulating modern collaborations, such as “Atopos” with A. Ballista. In 2006 Matteo D’Amico entrusted to her the premiere of his “The entertainment of the Senses”, “musical cabaret”, performed at S. Cecilia and in Bologna for “Musica Insieme” and chosen for the Prix Italia by RAI. She was invited in 2006, as a lecturer/performer, to the scientific meeting on “The sense of time” by the C.S.I. Piemonte of Turin.

Activity as a teacher, as an expert and a Jury member. As a lecturer and teacher, Luisa Castellani has been invited to hold master classes and conferences in many countries, like Bolivia (University of Bogota), Brasil (University of São Paulo), China (Conservatory of Beijing), Switzerland (Conservatories of Biel, Bern and Geneva), Hungary (Bartók Festival), U.S.A. (Cambridge University, in Boston) and in 2008, Estonia (University of Tallin). She was in charge of the Class of Contemporary Vocal Performance of the “Corsi di Formazione” of the CEE of Emilia Romagna and participated in 2003, in the activities of the AEC (European Association of the Conservatories), in order to define international standards in teaching (Convention of Bologna), looking for the promotion of exchanges between the main world-wide didactic traditions. In 2010 with the approval of AEC’s list of experts by the German Quality Assurance Agency ZEvA, she was a member, for the singing courses, of the University of Karlsruhe AEC International Accreditation Committee. In 2011 with the approval of AEC’s list of experts by the German Quality Assurance Agency EVALAG, she was a member, for the singing courses, of the University of Stuttgart AEC International Accreditation Committee. She has been invited as a guest-expert to the examinations in the conservatories of Bern, Geneva, Lausanne and, as a member of Jury, to the “2 Agosto” competition of Bologna with E. Morricone, to the “Nicati” prize of Bern and, in 2003 and 2009, to the Competition of the Musical Youth Switzerland. In 2010 she is a member of Jury in the “Premio nazionale delle arti” of the Italian conservatories. Since 2001 she has been the chairperson of the Master of Arts in Music Performance and of the Master in Advanced Studies in singing at the University School of Music CSI in Lugano and, since 2005, has regularly held courses about vocal technique and contemporary repertory in the conservatories of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel. Among the students who have studied with Luisa Castellani, many are now teachers, opera or concert singers. In particular, Barbara Zanichelli is a skilful singer in baroque and contemporary music and is now also a teacher and assistant-professor at the CSI

Recordings. Many of Luisa Castellani’s performances are archived in the “Archivio Nazionale Italiano della Musica” and in the video and audio archives of RAI and of broadcasts and televisions of many countries of the world. She has recorded more than 40 LPs and CDs for Deutsche Grammophon, Fonit Cetra, Harmonia Mundi, Hungaroton, RCA, Memories, Stradivarius, Teldec. Among others, she has recorded the “integrale” of Mozart Lieder, the monographic CD dedicated to Cantatas by Telemann, Gorecki’s “Symphony n.3”, “Pierrot Lunaire” by Schoenberg with the Staatskapelle of Dresden under the direction of Sinopoli, for Teldec and the “Sequenza III” by Berio, in the edition of all the Sequenzas recorded under the supervision of the composer, for Deutsche Grammophon.