

ZEMIRE ET AZOR

Composer: André Ernest Modeste Grétry
Libretto: Jean-François Marmontel
Stage director: Michel Fau

Category: Comédie-Ballet in four acts
Language: French

Running times: 1h20 (including intermission)
Premiered: Fontainebleau, 1771
New production: 23 June 2023, Opéra Comique

Set designer: Hubert Barrère and Citronnelle Dufay
Costume designer: Hubert Barrère
Lighting designer: Joel Fabing

Cast

Number of Principals: 6 + 1 actor
No choir
Extras: 2 dancers

Instrumentation

35
2.2.2.2 / 4.0.0.0 / 6.6.4.4.2. / 1 percussion

Volume of the production
Set and props 2 containers

Other info

Last performed : June 2023, Opéra Comique
Co-production : Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing
Revival in Tourcoing on February 2024

CONTACT

Director of Artistic Coordination, Production and Development :
Chrysoline Dupont
chrysoline.dupont@opera-comique.com / +33 1 70 23 00 92

In a few words

A lost Persian merchant finds refuge in a disturbing castle, both luxurious and deserted. No sooner has he picked a rose for his daughter Zemire than the lord of the manor appears, furious and frightening. The merchant will die if he does not deliver one of his children to Azor.

The tale of *Beauty and the Beast* transposed to the East of the *Thousand and One Nights*, by one of the most important composers of the Opéra Comique repertoire.

Concept

“The background of the story, with its psychoanalytical dimension, is fascinating. The work deals with the mystery of seduction - or how it is possible to be troubled by someone who is ugly. [...] It's a classic subject in literature: you can be seduced by people who are different, repulsive, who you should logically hate. Because Zémire is so young, and because Azor is monstrous, the disturbance here is terrible. And it is double-edged by the challenge the Fairy issues to the Prince before the play begins: "It is ugly and repulsive that you will have to seduce a woman." What lessons can be drawn from such a story!

[...]

It is a tale: we want to use the magic that is part of the dramaturgy, and combine refined elegance and fantasy with the slightest accessory mentioned in the libretto (situations are played out literally) and certain references that border on cliché. For example, clouds are very important: a whole scene takes place during a storm; the protagonists travel on a cloud... It is up to us to reinvent them with modern materials, without falling into the trap of painted canvases. In scenography as in lighting, this is what interests me, with Citronelle Dufay, one of my faithful collaborators, and today with Hubert Barrère: reinventing an 18th century dream and an oriental fantasy with today's means.”

Michel Fau, director

Press review

"The Opéra-Comique concludes its season in style with "Zémire et Azor", a French jewel by André Grétry (1741-1813) directed by Michel Fau. An enchantment! »

LePoint.fr | 28 juin 2023 | Olivier Bellamy

"The show presented by the Opéra-Comique shines above all with a musical performance that does justice to the distinction, clarity and comedy of the feeling of Grétry's work."

AvantScèneOpéra | 26 juin 2023 | Jules Cavalié

Conductor Louis Langrée and director Michel Fau resurrect Grétry's comedy-ballet, an orientalized version of "Beauty and the Beast". A magical entertainment, carried by a flamboyant orchestra and enchanted singers. »

LesEchos.fr | 26 juin 2023 | Philippe Chevilly

"A universe mixing gravity and humor that the director has decided to approach in a simple and naive way, sophisticated and delicate too, in a refined scenography by Hubert Barrère, where the lights (especially the shadows) by Joël Fabing and the very beautifully made costumes (by H. Barrère too) hold an essential place - with special mention for Zémire's dress which particularly illustrates the talent of the artistic director of the Maison Lesage. »

Concertclassic.com | 26 juin 2023 | Alain Cochard





