

August 20, 2020 – Giuseppe Verdi's *Luisa Miller*

On this week's Thursday Night Opera House, we'll hear an encore broadcast of Giuseppe Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, hosted by the longtime host of the WCPE Opera House, **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007). Set to a libretto by Salvatore Cammarano and based on Friedrich Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (*Intrigue and Love*), it was first performed at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples on December 8, 1849. The work marks the transition between Verdi's early and middle periods, and has won a permanent place in the repertory.

In early seventeenth-century Tyrol, Luisa (soprano **Anna Moffo**), daughter of the old soldier Miller (baritone **Cornell MacNeil**), is in love with Rodolfo (tenor **Carlo Bergonzi**). She believes him to be a commoner but he is, in fact, the son of Count Walther (bass **Giorgio Tozzi**). The Count wants Rodolfo to marry Federica, Duchess of Ostheim (mezzo-soprano **Shirley Verrett**), and plots with his evil steward, Wurm (bass **Ezio Flagello**) to separate him from Luisa. Walther has Miller arrested and, to obtain his freedom, Luisa is forced by Wurm to write a letter saying that she never loved Rodolfo but is actually in love with him. Luisa and Miller plan to go into exile together, but Rodolfo arrives and he and Luisa drink poisoned wine. Realizing that she's dying, Luisa tells him the truth, and the dying Rodolfo kills Wurm.

Fausto Cleva conducts the RCA Italiana Orchestra and Chorus in this 1965 RCA/BMG recording.

Be sure to join me next Thursday, August 27th, for Georges Bizet's *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (*The Fair Maid of Perth*), with **June Anderson** as Catherine Glover and **Alfredo Kraus** as the armorer Henry Smith. Heard in other principal roles are **Margarita Zimmermann** as Queen Mab, **Gabriel Bacquier** as Simon Glover, **José van Dam** as Ralph, and **Gino Quilico** as the Duke of Rothsay. **Georges Prêtre** conducts this 1985 EMI recording.

The Thursday Night Opera House is heard every Thursday evening at 7 o'clock in the Eastern time zone on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We're also streamed online at <http://www.theclassicalstation.org>, and you can listen to us on the WCPE Android or iPhone apps.

Bob Chapman

W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Night Opera House