Conquests in Copenhagen, Caramoor with Buxton to come

The remarkable and hugely enterprising Danske Belcanto Selskab (Danish Belcanto Society) whose series of concerts and recitals have put nineteenth century opera back into the place it once enjoyed under royal patronage in Copenhagen now with a complete chamber version of *Maria di Rohan* for its *Sommerkoncert 2010.* Belcanto opera in that city owed its first flareup to the private productions that King Christian VIII put on with unquestioning fervour in his own theatre in the Royal Palace, initially following the lead and initiative of the tenor Giuseppe Siboni but later even attracting the presence of such a conductor as Angelo Mariani and the active involvement of Luigi and Federico Ricci. In the teeth of Leipzig-oriented disdain Italian opera found a happy home in that city for the whole of his reign with a repertoire not unworthy of the most adventurous Italian stage. Thanks to the Secretary of the Belcanto Selskab, Igor Tomaszewski, with his indomitable energy, the stakes have edged upwards in recent years. Most notably with sold-out performances of *Maria di Rohan* on 19 and 20 June, confided to a reduced orchestral version arranged and conducted by Simon Casali, first heard at the Gentofte Rådhussal and then at the KFUM's Festsal with some very remarkable artists: Cecilia Lindwall (Maria), David Różański (Chalais), Lars Fosser (Chevreuse) and Ingeborg Børch (Gondi) and with the Voci d'oro coro and Hafnia Chamber Orchestra, this has been truly a momentous event, beautifully prepared, memorably presented and ecstatically received. The opera attracted the maximum attention.

(opposite) The cast on its triumphal exit.

The Danske Belcanto Selskab can be contacted on + 39 64 70 11 and www.belcanto.dk

The Caramoor Festival too has seen its glories increased in recent years. Presided-over by Will Crutchfield its last triumphs have included a truly magnificent *Trovatore* with Eva Podlès. This year, as recounted by Dan Foley and one month after Copenhagen, there was a *Maria di Rohan* whose title-role was taken after only one rehearsal by Jennifer Rowley (a Caramoor Young Artist) replacing Takesha Meshe Kizart who had been taken ill. The result was a genuine *furore.* On 24 July, to endorse her quite magnificent voice there was a fine Luciano Botelho (Chalais), a resounding Scott Bearden (Chevreuse) and a rare musical Vanessa Cariddi (Gondi) with the Caramoor Festival Chorus, and Orchestra of St. Luke's conducted by the irreplaceable Will Crutchfield. It was a meticulously complete performance only blighted by an audience all too eager to applaud at every opportunity (fortunately they became exhausted before the end!)

To come, happily, is the *Maria di Rohan* scheduled for the Buxton Festival on 9 July 2011. This is not all there is in the pipeline…