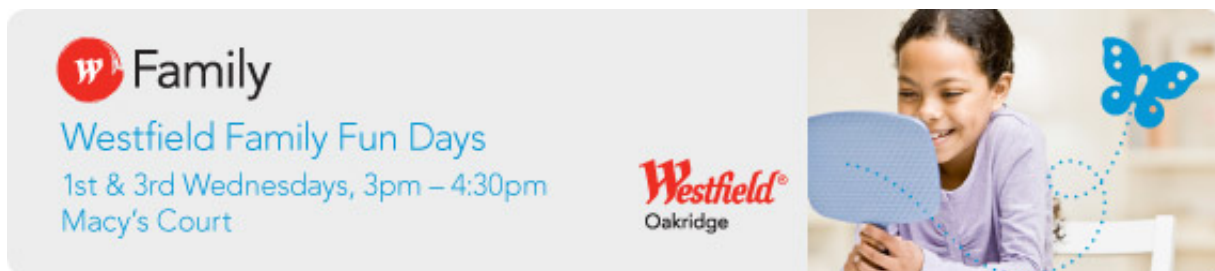


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Mozart's Idomeneo at Opera San Jose

by Paria Amini on September 13, 2011 in [Bay Area Moms](#), [Events](#), [Local](#), [Review](#) with [No comments](#)



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The theatre was packed for opening night of Opera San Jose's *Idomeneo, re di Creta*, Mozart's first dramatic masterpiece. *Idomeneo*, an Italian opera, tells the mythical story of Idomeneo, the king of Crete,

and the tragedy that befalls him following his victory at the Trojan War. To save his life from death at the hands of the sea, Idomeneo vows to Neptune to sacrifice the first person he sees on shore if spared. However, Idomeneo never imagines that the first person he comes across will be his own son, Idamante. The story continues to build as Idamante falls in love with Ilia, daughter of the king of Troy, even given the history between their people. As the opera comes to a close, we learn that in the end, love conquers all.

With a cast of 73, the musical direction of George Cleve and stage director of Brad Dalton, *Idomeneo, re di Creta*, was bound to be an excellent performance. The symphony, located below the stage, set the mood for the opera, as the curtain went up. While the opera is sung in Italian, the use of supertitles allows for the audience to follow along and understand the lyrics. The stunning use of visuals throughout the three acts of the opera helped make the set come alive. Historically reflective of the period, the usage of the architectural design and elaborate costumes were pivotal in the overall experience of the show. The multiple set changes and large cast really illustrated the immense amount of detail that went into the production of *Idomeneo*.

The first opera that I ever attended was Opera San Jose's *La Rondine*, where Christopher Bengochea was the lead male role. I was not sure how I would respond to the opera, but something about Bengochea's performance absolutely floored me that night, and his performance in *Idomeneo* was no different. Besides having an absolutely superb voice, there is a commanding presence that Bengochea possesses when he steps onto the stage. I much credit my love of the opera to Bengochea's performance in *La Rondine*. When Bengochea sings, he is not repeating a set of memorized lyrics, but rather becoming the character he is cast to play. Even though you know it is just a story, for that moment you feel as though what you are watching happening and what you are hearing being sung were real.

If you have yet to see *Idomeneo*, this classic opera is one that should not be missed. With a creative story line, the talented cast of singers and dancers, and excellent execution of this famous Mozart opera, Opera San Jose has done an exquisite job in bringing *Idomeneo* to the Bay Area. *Idomeneo* runs from now until September 25 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San Jose. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San Jose box office, by phone at [\(408\) 437-4450](tel:4084374450), or online at www.operasj.org.

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