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***Opera San José presents powerful double-bill  
Pagliacci and La voix humaine***

SAN JOSÉ, CA— **Opera San José** continues its 28<sup>th</sup> season with a double-bill of two intensely dramatic one-act operas, Leoncavallo's emotional tour de force ***Pagliacci*** paired with Poulenc's French monodrama ***La voix humaine***. Eight performances are scheduled from November 12 through 27 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, by phone at (408) 437-4450 or online at [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org). ***Pagliacci*** and ***La voix humaine*** are made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Ruggiero Leoncavallo's Italian opera ***Pagliacci*** is a timeless tale of anguish and heartbreak. Canio, the leader of a traveling commedia dell'arte troupe is the clown who must laugh, and make others laugh, while masking his own grief after learning that his wife Nedda has betrayed him with another man. In the end, art meets tragedy in a rage of passion and jealousy. ***Pagliacci*** has one of the most famous arias in all opera, "Vesti la giubba," and has become known as the epitome of verismo. This powerful opera, shocking in its time, set the standard for dramatic realism and remains one of the most performed operas world wide.

***La voix humaine***, Francis Poulenc's French monodrama, follows a young woman's emotional phone conversation with her lover who is discarding her to marry another woman. The heroine, known simply as *elle* (she) is desperately trying to win back his love. Set in 1950's Paris, this one-act opera paints an emotional portrait of an abandoned woman teetering on the edge during an affecting and engaging monologue. Poulenc composed the opera for French soprano Denise Duval in 1959 from Jean Cocteau's 1932 play for Berthe Bovy, which was later made into a film for Anna Magnani, and it remains one of the few great solo pieces for women today.

Conducting *Pagliacci* and *La voix humaine* is **Bryan Nies**. **Nies** conducted last season's *The Barber of Seville* and served as assistant conductor for the West Coast premiere of Carlson's *Anna Karenina*, conducting two performances. Previously, he conducted Opera San José's *Eugene Onegin*, and shared conducting duties for the company's productions of *Manon*, *La rondine*, *Werther*, *The Barber of Seville* (2006), *The Crucible* and *A Masked Ball*. **Nies** is on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and San José State University where he is the director of opera and orchestra, as well as assistant conductor of the Oakland East Bay Symphony and the resident conductor of the Oakland Youth Orchestra.

**Cynthia Stokes** makes her company debut during the 2011 – 2012 season directing *Pagliacci*. Recent productions directed by **Stokes** include the world premiere of *Sextet*, a new opera by Nicolas Reveles at Diversionary Theatre in San Diego, *Italian Straw Hat* for Amarillo Opera, *Dooley* for Diversionary Theatre, and *Roméo et Juliette* for San Antonio Opera. Other directorial credits include Glimmerglass Opera, San Diego Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Cincinnati Opera, and Opera Carolina.

Former Opera San José resident artist **Layna Chianakas** makes her directorial debut with this production of *La voix humaine*. In addition to Opera San José, she has performed with such opera companies as Cleveland Opera, Nashville Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Sarasota Opera, Virginia Opera, Dayton Opera, Festival Opera, Nevada Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Madison Opera, Sacramento Opera, Intermountain Opera, and the Richard Wagner Bayreuth Festival. **Chianakas** is currently an assistant professor of voice at San José State University's School of Music and Dance.

*Pagliacci* features current members of Opera San José's resident company in principal roles. Resident tenor **Alexander Boyer** alternates in the role of Canio with guest artist **Travis Jones**. Boyer recently played the title role in Opera San José's company premiere of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. Jones returns to Opera San José having previously performed the role of Lensky in Opera San José's *Eugene Onegin*. Sopranos **Jasmina Halimic** and **Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste** share the role of Nedda, Canio's unfaithful wife. Halimic and Jean-Baptiste have previously shared the role of Mimi in *La bohème* and the title role in David Carlson's *Anna Karenina*. Baritone **Evan Brummel** makes his debut as a resident artist with Opera San José in the role of Tonio, sharing the role with former resident artist **Jason Detwiler**. Alternating in the role of Nedda's lover, Silvio, are baritone **Krassen Karagiozov** and bass-baritone **Isaiah Musik-Ayala**, both resident artists. Resident tenor **Michael Dailey** performs the role of Beppe.

The role of elle in Opera San José's *La voix humaine* will be shared by **Betany Coffland** and **Suzan Hanson**. **Betany Coffland** is in her fourth year as resident artist with Opera San José and recently played the role of Idamante in Opera San José's company premiere of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. Other roles with Opera San José include Dolly in the West Coast premiere of David Carlson's *Anna Karenina*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the title role in *Carmen*. **Suzan Hanson** returns to Opera San José after having been previously seen as Marie in the company's world premiere performance of Craig Bohmler's *Tale of the Nutcracker*. Recent engagements for **Hanson** include the title role in *Medea* for Long Beach Opera, Eurydice in *Orpheus X* for American Repertory Theater, Brunnhilde (*Siegfried* and *Twilight of the Gods*) and Freia (*Rheingold*) for Long Beach Opera and Pittsburgh Opera Theater, and the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Greensboro Opera.

Opera San José's production of *Pagliacci* and *La voix humaine* includes set designs by **J. B. Wilson**, costume designs by **Cathleen Edwards** (*Pagliacci*) and **Alyssa Oania** (*La voix humaine*), lighting design by **David Lee Cuthbert**, and wig and makeup designs by **Jeanna Parham**.

### About Opera San José

**Opera San José**, performing at the historic **California Theatre** in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of principal artists, Opera San José specializes in showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large, and offers *Preview* lectures and *Introduction to Opera* talks for all mainstage productions.

## *Pagliacci*

In Italian with English Supertitles

<u>Cast:</u>	<u>November 12, 17, 20, 25</u>	<u>November 13, 19, 22, 27</u>
Canio	Alexander Boyer•	Travis Jones
Nedda	Jasmina Halimic•	Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste•
Tonio	Evan Brummel•	Jason Detwiler
Silvio	Krassen Karagiozov•	Isaiah Musik-Ayala•
Beppe	Michael Dailey•	Michael Dailey•

## ***La Voix Humaine***

In French with English Supertitles

**Cast:** November 12, 17, 20, 25 November 13, 19, 22, 27

The Woman Betany Coffland Suzan Hanson

• Resident Company † Company Debut

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**What:** **Opera San José** continues its 28<sup>th</sup> season with a double-bill of two intensely dramatic one-act operas, Leoncavallo's emotional tour de force **Pagliacci** paired with Poulenc's French monodrama **La voix humaine**. Eight performances are scheduled from November 12 through 27 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, by phone at (408) 437-4450 or online at [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org). **Pagliacci** and **La voix humaine** are made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

<b>Who:</b>	<u><i>Pagliacci</i></u> Composer/Librettist: Ruggero Leoncavallo  Conductor: Bryan Nies Assistant Conductor: Andrew Whitfield Stage director: Cynthia Stokes Set designer: J.B. Wilson Costume designer: Cathleen Edwards Lighting designer: David Lee Cuthbert Wigs/Makeup: Jeanna Parham	<u><i>La voix humaine</i></u> Composer: Francis Poulenc Librettist: Jean Cocteau Conductor: Bryan Nies Assistant Conductor: Andrew Whitfield Stage director: Layna Chianakas Set designer: J.B. Wilson Costume designer: Alyssa Oania Lighting designer: David Lee Cuthbert Wigs/Makeup: Jeanna Parham
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**Dates:** November 12, 13m, 17, 19, 20m, 22, 25, 27m; 2011

**Time:** "m" indicates matinee at 3pm; all other performances are at 8pm

**Location:** California Theatre, 345 South First Street between San Carlos and San Salvador streets, downtown San José

**Tickets:** \$51–\$101 (includes city facility usage fee) from Opera San José Box Office, 2149 Paragon Dr., San José, CA 95131; 408-437-4450; 408-437-4455 fax; [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org)  
Available 90 minutes prior to curtain at the California Theatre box office only: Seniors (65 and older) 10% discount; Students 25 and younger (with current student ID) \$11

**Photos:** <http://operasj.org/news-events/press-room/press-photos/pagliacci-and-la-voix-humaine/>

**Press Room:** <http://operasj.org/news-events/press-room/>

To learn more about *Pagliacci* and *La voix humaine*, please visit [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org) and consider these opportunities:

*Pagliacci/La voix humaine* Preview/Panel Discussion: November 1, 12 noon, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 E Fernando Street, downtown San José. Free vocal preview with members of the cast, followed by a panel discussion with members of the creative team. For information, call 408-437-4450.

*Pagliacci/La voix humaine* Preview/Lecture: November 1, Eulipia Restaurant, 374 South First street, downtown San José. Doors open at 6:30pm; program 7-8pm. Wine and cheese will be served. Vocal preview with members of the cast, followed by a lecture by General Manager, Larry Hancock. Advance tickets - \$25 (\$30 at the door), call 408-437-4450.

Introduction to Opera: Before each performance (except opening night), General Manager Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk about the opera at the California Theatre, beginning at 6:30pm prior to evening performances (except opening night) and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.

*Pagliacci/La voix humaine* Opening Night Dinner: Saturday, November 12 at 5 pm. \$65 per person for a reception and three-course dinner at Eulipia Restaurant, 374 South First street, downtown San Jose. For menu and reservations, call the Opera San José Box Office at 408-437-4450.

Meet the Artists: Meet members of the cast, the stage director, and the conductor immediately following the opening Sunday matinee, November 13, at the California Theatre. Free for matinee attendees.

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