
Press contact:

Elizabeth Santana, 408.437.2229, santana@operasj.org

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***Opera San José presents Verdi's most beloved opera
La traviata***

SAN JOSÉ, CA— **Opera San José** continues its 28th season with the romantic tragedy ***La traviata***. An unequivocal masterpiece based on the short life of the most famous of all Parisian courtesans, this is Verdi's most popular opera. Opera San José founding music director, **David Rohrbaugh** conducts with stage direction by **José Maria Condemi**, whose international credits include most of the major companies in the U.S. and dozens of titles from *Orfeo* to *Tristan*. *La traviata* is sung in Italian with English supertitles. Eight performances are scheduled from February 11 through 26 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. ***La traviata*** is sponsored by the Applied Materials Foundation and made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Adapted from the 1852 stage play *La Dame aux camélias*, by Alexandre Dumas *fils*, with an Italian libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, Giuseppe Verdi's opera ***La traviata*** is the story of a famed courtesan, Violetta Valéry. Opera San José's production opens in the Paris of 1889, and the celebrated beauty is hosting a lavish party where she meets a young admirer, Alfredo Germont. For the past year, he has loved her without yet having met her. On this night, when they do meet, she is so taken with his sincerity that despite the impossibility of the situation, she abandons caution and her life of luxury, retreating to the country to be with him. But when met with the sharp disapproval of Alfredo's father, Violetta ends the affair and, broken hearted, returns to Paris. A jealous Alfredo humiliates her publicly, but when he learns of her sacrifice he returns to beg her forgiveness, only to discover that he has waited too long.

Verdi's timeless tragedy ***La traviata*** is one of the best-loved and most-performed operas of all time. His melodies, rich in passion and drama, made him the acknowledged Italian master of his time and this endearing work has touched the hearts of both the opera novice and long-time opera lover for

generations. The story of this glamorous and fragile courtesan has been popularized in the classic film *Camille*, starring Greta Garbo and Robert Taylor, and inspired the Baz Luhrman blockbuster movie-musical, *Moulin Rouge!*, starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor.

David Rohrbaugh, Opera San José's founding Music Director and Principal Conductor, will conduct *La traviata*. **Dr. Rohrbaugh** has conducted more than 60 productions and 600 performances, including company premieres of *La rondine*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Falstaff*, *Un ballo in maschera*, and *Werther*. He is a professor emeritus of voice and opera from San José State University, where he taught for 30 years and co-directed the Opera Workshop with Opera San José General Director, **Irene Dalis**. The February 19 and 21 performances will be conducted by **Joseph Marcheso**. Previous Opera San José productions for Marcheso include *La bohème*, *Manon*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Elixir of Love* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has conducted more than 30 operas with Amato Opera in his native NYC where he was appointed Music Director, and served as conductor and coach at both the Shaker Festival/Albany Symphony and at the Dartington Festival in Dartington, England.

José Maria Condemi, who recently staged Bizet's *Carmen* for San Francisco Opera, returns to Opera San José as stage director for *La traviata*. **Condemi** earned rave reviews for his stage direction of last season's *The Barber of Seville* and the company premiere of Puccini's *La rondine* in the 2009-10 season. Other directorial credits with Opera San José include *The Magic Flute* (2008), *Don Pasquale* (2003), and *L'elisir d'amore* (2000). **Condemi** is the artistic director for **Opera Santa Barbara**. His other directing venues include Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, Seattle Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Portland Opera, Minnesota Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Lake George Opera, Festival Opera, Western Opera Theater, Houston Grand Opera and Teatro Colón in his native Buenos Aires.

La traviata features current members of Opera San José's resident company in principal roles as well as returning and first-time guest artists. Resident sopranos **Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste** and **Jasmina Halimic** alternate in the role of the famed courtesan, Violetta. Jean-Baptiste and Halimic previously shared the role of Nedda in Opera San José's recent production of *Pagliacci* and both earned rave reviews in the title role of David Carlson's *Anna Karenina* in the 2010-11 season. Resident tenors **Alexander Boyer** and **Michael Dailey** share the role of Alfredo, Violetta's young lover. Earlier this season, Boyer played the title role in Opera San José's company premiere of Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Canio in *Pagliacci*. Dailey recently appeared as Beppe in *Pagliacci* and thrilled audiences last season in *The Barber of Seville*. Resident baritone **Evan Brummel** plays the role of Giorgio Germant, Alfredo's father. He shares the role with former resident artist **Torlef Borsting**. Rounding out the cast are mezzo-sopranos **Wendy Buzby**

and **Cathleen Candia** as Violetta's friend, Flora; resident bass-baritone **Isaiah Musik-Ayala** as Baron Douphol; resident bass **Silas Elash** as Dr. Grenville; and guest artists **Rebecca Krouner** and **Tori Grayum** alternating as Violetta's devoted maid, Annina. **Justin Marsh** and **Mete Tasin** make their company debut as Gastone and **Bradley Kynard** debuts as Marquis D'Obigny.

Opera San José's production of *La traviata* includes set designs by **Erik Flatmo**, costume designs by **Elizabeth Poindexter**, lighting design by **Chris Maravich**, and wig and makeup designs by **Jeanna Parham**. Scenery and costumes for this production of *La traviata* were co-produced by **Opera San José** and **Opera Santa Barbara**.

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.

La traviata

In Italian with English Supertitles

Cast:

February 11, 16, 19, 24

February 12, 18, 21, 26

Violetta Valéry
Alfredo Germont
Giorgio Germont
Flora Bervoix
Baron Douphol
Gastone
Marquis D'Obigny
Dr. Grenville
Annina

Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste•
Alexander Boyer•
Torlef Borsting
Cathleen Candia
Isaiah Musik-Ayala•
Justin Marsh†
Bradley Kynard†
Silas Elash•
Tori Grayum

Jasmina Halimic•
Michael Dailey•
Evan Brummel•
Wendy Buzby †
Isaiah Musik-Ayala•
Mete Tasin†
Bradley Kynard†
Silas Elash•
Rebecca Krouner †

• Resident Company † Company Debut

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

What: **Opera San José** continues its 28th season with the romantic tragedy *La traviata*, Verdi's heartbreaking tale of love and sacrifice, overflowing with some of the most unforgettable music in all of opera. Eight performances are scheduled February 11 through 26 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. *La traviata* is sponsored by the Applied Materials Foundation and made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Who: Composer: Giuseppe Verdi
Librettist: Francesco Maria Piave
Conductor: David Rohrbaugh
Assistant Conductor: Joseph Marcheso (February 19 and 21 performances)
Stage Director: José Maria Condemi
Set Designer: Erik Flatmo
Costume Designer: Elizabeth Poindexter
Lighting Designer: Chris Maravich
Wigs/Makeup: Jeanna Parham

Dates: February 11, 12m, 16, 18, 19m, 21, 24, 26m; 2012

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
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

Photo: <http://operasj.org/news-events/press-room/press-photos/la-traviata/advance-photos/>

Press Room: <http://www.operasj.org/pressroom.html>

To learn more about *La traviata* please visit www.operasj.org and consider these opportunities:

La traviata Preview/Panel Discussion: January 31, 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.

La traviata Preview/Lecture: January 31, 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.

La traviata Opening Night Dinner: Saturday, February 11 at 5 pm. \$65 per person for a reception and three-course dinner at Eulipia Restaurant, 374 South First street, downtown San José. 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, February 12, at the California Theatre. Free for matinee attendees.

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