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Opera San Jose: a new season kicks off with The Pearl Fishers

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Photo: Soprano Cecilia Violetta López as the mysterious priestess, Léïla, in Opera San José's The Pearl Fishers. Photo by P. Kirk

Wednesday, September 12, 2012 - Out and About San Francisco ~ San Jose by Sherrie Perkovich

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Sherrie Perkovich



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SAN FRANCISCO, September 12, 2012 – San Jose opera season kicked off with a beautiful rendition of Georges Bizet’s exotic romance, *The Pearl Fishers*.

Anthony Quartuccio conducted this opera, which is a story of forbidden love, jealousy, betrayal, and tragedy. Set on the ancient tropical island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), director Richard Harrell sets the stage well from the very beginning, from happy, dancing, drinking citizens to those filled with rage and fury over a traitorous act. The dichotomy is displayed

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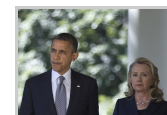
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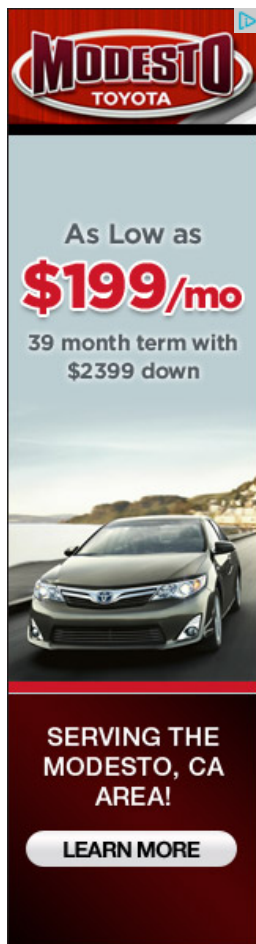


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perfectly and establishes the beauty of Bizet's work.



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San Jose Opera: Baritone Evan Brummel as Zurga and tenor Alexander Boyer as Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers*. Photo by P. Kirk

Female lead soprano Cecilia Violetta Lopez as Leila instantly captures your attention with her alluring vocals and incredible range. Leila's beauty is captured elegantly in the opening flashback by the two male lead characters of Nadir and Zurga. These life-long friends reminisce about Leila's sultry voice

and veiled face, teasing the audience with a potential glimpse under her veil. Her mysterious beauty caused a feud between the men and nearly cost them their friendship. They vow to never let a woman come between them again.

Then, as fate would have it, Leila appears veiled before them as a sacred virgin to help pray to the gods for good weather and safety for their pearl fishermen. Leila begins to sing to ward off the danger, hidden by her veil. The beauty in her voice is piercing and seductive, building the audience's desire to see the face behind this magnificent voice. Nadir instantly recognizes that haunting voice as Leila's and falls immediately back in love with her. Zurga is left unaware of the return of Leila and the undoubtedly looming betrayal that is about to take place. Friendship, love, betrayal and tragedy, *The Pearl Fishers* has it all.



Opera San Jose: Tenor Alexander Boyer as Nadir with the chorus in *The Pearl Fishers*. Photo by P. Kirk

Also noteworthy are the lead male performances of Nadir by tenor Alexander Boyer, and Zurga by baritone Evan Brummel, who give compelling and soulful performances full of rich vocals and staggering

emotion.

The cast is impeccable, and you just might find your face wet with tears and eager for the finale so you can stand up and cry out loud "bravo." Luckily, the season has just begun, so you can catch not only *The Pearl Fishers*, but also [Opera San Jose's](#) entire schedule.

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- Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*: September 8-23
- Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*: November 10-25
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Lopez, in her first season as part of the resident ensemble with Opera San Jose, comes to San Jose from recent engagements at Opera San Luis Obispo, UNLV Opera and the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Boyer, a returning resident of Opera San Jose, last season appeared in the title role of Mozart's Idomeneo, as Canio in Pagliacci and in the title role in Faust. Baritone Brummel returns for a second year as a member of the resident ensemble after portraying the roles of Tonio in Pagliacci, Giorgio in La Traviata and Valentin in Faust as part of last year's line up.

Location: the California Theatre is a brilliant home for Opera San Jose. Opened in 1927 as a motion picture house, the theater has vintage charm with marble pillars, boldly painted towering ceilings, cascading chandeliers, and lush red velvet curtains.



San Jose, California Theatre. Image: Opera San Jose

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Sherrie is a San Francisco local that fancies herself an extroverted fine dining, wine drinking, know-it-all. If it's happening in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sherrie is in on it. Follow her column, for the widest range of Out and About San Francisco treats.

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Slideshow of the band Get the Led Out

appearing at Wolf Trap's Filene Center on June 7, 2012.

(Photos by Jacquie Kubin)

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