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The Opera Novice gives five reasons to see La Traviata

By [Cynthia Corral](#)

February 24th, 2012 @ 3:46 PM [Downtown](#), [Eating Out](#), [Entertainment](#), [Music](#)

Five reasons not to miss [La Traviata](#) at [Opera San Jose](#) this weekend!



Cast A: Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste (Violetta) and Alexander Boyer (Alfredo) with the Opera San José chorus in Verdi's La Traviata. Photo by R. Shomler.

1. It's **La Traviata!** You have a famous consumptive courtesan who loves drinking, dancing, and parties! There are forbidden loves, celebrations and an extended death scene, AND it's based on a real Parisian courtesan. One of the best loved and most performed operas of all time, I think [Guiseppe Verdi](#)'s opera is the ultimately classic opera. This is the kind of show that I used to think of when I thought "opera". The last two years attending Opera San Jose's performances have shown that opera comes in all sorts of flavors: Comedy, Tragedy, Romance, familiar and unfamiliar, etc. But La Traviata is all about beautiful arias and a tragic love story. It's romantic, it's tragic, it will bring tears to your eyes at the end. But until that moment it will also be a luscious feast for your eyes *and* your ears.

2. **The music!** Played to perfection as always (how can you possibly review something that is *always* just... PERFECT?), you can just sit in the super comfortable California Theatre seats and doze to the beautiful sounds if you're so inclined. But the music of La Traviata is some of the most well known in opera, and don't be surprised if it is very familiar to you. Opera is so much more fun for the novice attendee when you watch the show and think, "Hey, I KNOW that song!" And La Traviata is filled with familiar music. This makes it easier to sit up and enjoy all that is going on around you. Come to the California Theatre and hear some of the best

musicians in the Bay Area!



Cast A: Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste as Violetta and Alexander Boyer as Alfredo in Opera San José's La Traviata. Photo courtesy of R. Shomler.

3. **Jouvanca Jean-Baptiste** (Violetta) and **Alexander Boyer** (Alfredo). I've seen Ms. Jean-Baptiste in several operas now and she is always a delight and a favorite. As the star of La Traviata, I'm not going to bypass her with the compliments, but my guest and I were actually quite taken with Boyer's voice in the show this time. However, it is Violetta who we cry for in the end, and so it is Ms. Jean-Baptiste who you won't want to miss. *[Referring to Cast A, who play Friday and Sunday. Cast 1 plays Saturday and is certainly just as awesome!]*

4. Face it, **you need some culture in your life**. Not only that, you get to tell your friends, "I simply cahn't go to your franks & beans party tonight, Gerald and I are going to the Opera!" Be sure to use your hoity-toity accent and swirl your martini around as you say it. Be the Jones's your neighbors want to keep up with, and have a great reason to enjoy yourselves at the same time. Try La Traviata and you will likely discover that you really ARE a hoity-toity, martini (or champagne) drinking, opera lover after all.

5. **That beautiful gown** in the back of your closet is just going to collect more dust if you don't take it out and wear it. I've said it once, no, I've said it a thousand times, going to the opera is a dress to the nines affair, and it is so much FUN to dress like movie stars and go out on the town. Get out your good jewelry, wear the prettiest, sparkle-iest dress you own (or your most manly, handsome suit!) and make reservations at a fancy restaurant downtown before the show. [Il Fornaio](#), [Original Joe's](#) and [Scott's Seafood](#) are all excellent places for a pre-opera meal, covering a variety of budgets.

As if there's any further reason for you to get out and enjoy the amazing delights that our downtown and Opera San Jose have to offer, I wish I could have shown you the face on a little girl of about 10 who I saw at each intermission on opening night. Dressed in a beautiful green velvet gown, she appeared to be attending with her father, and at each of the two intermissions I saw her in the lobby with the biggest smile on her face. She was enjoying every moment of her experience at La Traviata, and I wished I could have shown the performers and

musicians the joy and happiness they had brought to this child.

You don't need to know anything about opera to enjoy it, and you might just discover a wonderful new way to enjoy downtown. Opera San Jose is definitely one of those gifts we are able to enjoy by living here, so why let the chance go to waste? Go see La Traviata before it ends on Sunday.

And then prepare for [Charles Gounod's Faust](#), opening April 21! I have a feeling this is going to be the next opera that will be full of surprises for an opera novice!

[La Traviata](#)

Through Sunday, February 26

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