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And a rollicking good time was had by all...

By [Cynthia Corral](#)

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Cast 1: Soprano Cecilia Violetta López as Roselinde and tenor Michael Dailey as Alfred. Photo by Pat Kirk

I have now attended close to a dozen different shows at **Opera San Jose**, and I can honestly say that Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* was like no other I have ever seen. If you are looking to attend your first opera, or even if you would like to introduce opera to your teenager (that's right!) then this is the opera for you... and yet it is still perfect and worthy for the seasoned attendee.

Die Fledermaus is about one man seeking hilarious revenge for an embarrassing practical joke from the past, and in the process there are endless mistaken identities which will leave you in sidesplitting stitches. There is no love story in this opera, requited or otherwise; nothing particularly deep in the plot; neither is there a tragic death or a particularly happy ending. More than half the songs are about drinking, and the second act revolves around a party of debauchery which may (or may not) include beautiful dancers skinny-dipping in a pool.

The songs are in German, and as usual are translated on a screen over the stage. But there was something quite surprising in this show that I had never seen before: a good deal of the story was *spoken* in English! This was less like an opera and more like musical theater – and it was lovely.

I had been disappointed that I could not make it to opening night, however last night was an unexpected treat as I got to see Cast 1 who were absolutely delightful and just as talented as any Cast A I've seen. It was refreshing to see some new faces and there were no disappointments. Soprano **Elizabeth Russ** was delicious as the petulant chambermaid Adele; soprano **Cecilia Violetta Lopez** was virtually unrecognizable to me from her role as Leila in *The Pearl Fishers*, and I still adored her immensely. The familiar faces of tenor **Alexander Boyer** (Eisenstein) and tenor **Michael Dailey** (Alfred) were welcome and played their comedic roles beautifully. Special mention goes to bass-baritone **Isaiah Musik-Ayala** as Frank the prison warden – who I just LOVED, and also **Kelly Houston** who plays a hilarious Frosch. Some of these performers were newer to me than others, ALL of them I hope to see more often.



Cast 1: Soprano Elisabeth Russ as Adele, soprano Cecilia Violetta López as Roselinde, tenor Alexander Boyer as von Eisenstein. Photo by Pat Kirk.

Wait, did I forget to mention baritone **Jo Vincent Parks**, as Dr. Falk (*Die Fledermaus*)? He has a small part for the title character, however he too was perfect.



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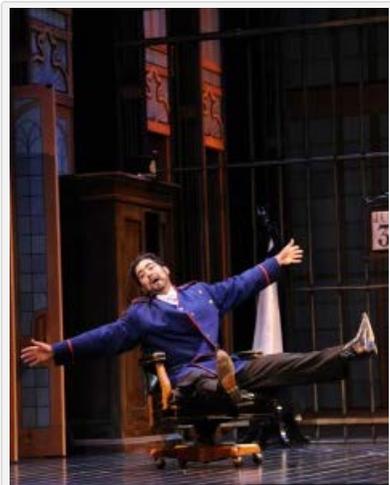
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Zero1 [e]merges

[Matt Bruensteiner](#) Thanks Wendy, you're right...

[Wendy](#) The ZERO1 Garage is at 439 South 1st Street — but not

Marc Jacobs makes his Opera San Jose debut as stage director, and this is a perfect show for his background in musical theater. I hope we see more from him at OSJ.



Cast 1: Baritone Isaiah Musik-Ayala as Frank.
Photo by Pat Kirk.

And as often happens at Opera San Jose, there was another star, and that was the set design. It does not surprise me to find out that **Charlie Smith** also designed the *Pearl Fisher's* sets, and I'm excited to see what he does for the upcoming double-bill of *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. It is too bad there are no available photos to show you the complete beauty of the designs. Acts one and two were set in a sweeping, gorgeous, art deco residence with subtle hints of the jail term awaiting Eisenstein... indeed, it transformed seamlessly into the jail itself in Act three. As well there was an amazing newspaper print curtain with "articles" pertaining to the characters in the story.

This was not the usual opera I attend at Opera San Jose. There were not so many ball gowns and sparkling jewelry in the audience that I usually see, perhaps because it was not opening night, perhaps because this show is just not as "stuffy" as some others (which I recommend no matter the stuffiness!). There was raucous laughter heard throughout the show, as if we were all drunk with the comedy we were watching. "That was the most fun I've had at the opera

ever!" stated my guest, Danielle Roberts. And indeed, she is quite right. This opera plays through November 25, and I can recommend without any reservation whatsoever that you should see it – and take your teenagers too.

Die Fledermaus
Opera San Jose
Through November 25
California Theatre
San Jose, CA

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Wendy The ZERO1 Biennial continues through December 8, 2012 — not October. www.zero1biennial.org

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Jim Lerman Great article! This movie definitely sounds like something important and necessary. Plus the director is...

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