

San José State Vocal Competition



Chloe Smart, soprano



Vivana S. Millán, mezzo-soprano

by Peggy Heiman and Susan English

On April 18th San José State University vocal students competed for the San José Opera Guild Award and the San José Woman's Club Vocal Scholarship. This public event dazzled the audience with the quality and talent of the participants. The competition was held at the San José Women's Club.

Both competitions had separate judges and separate winners. The judges for the SJOG were Khori Dastoor, Steve Guggenheim and Julie Kierstine, all former Opera San José Residents. Joseph Frank, Director of the School of Music and Dance at SJSU, was the Master of Ceremonies. Simona Snitkovskaya was the pianist.

All singers were asked to prepare three arias and two art songs. Judges heard three pieces from each singer. At the end of the competition, the judges deliberated as separate organizations. Joe Frank announced the winners.

Winners for the San José Opera Guild were Chloe Smart (Soprano) in first place and Vivana S. Millán (Mezzo-Soprano) in second place. Winners for the SJ Woman's Club were Katherine Trimble (Mezzo-Soprano) in first place and Ms. Millán in second place.

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Opera Travelers

Intense, insightful, inspiring. That was Opera at Oakhurst

by Mort Levine

earlier this month in the shadow of Yosemite's glories

It all started with picking up a simple brochure at one of the San José Opera Guild lectures last fall. By coincidence, the speaker that day was Prof. Simon Williams of UC Santa Barbara. This was the same speaker who bears the mantle of conducting the annual gathering of opera buffs in the serenity and simplicity of an Episcopal conference and retreat center near the southern gateway to the national park. The center is called ECCO for Evergreen Conference Center Oakhurst.

Although the four day event has been going for 19 years, information about it is unnecessarily sparse. The concept, with the rich content provided by Dr. Williams, is a superb advanced course in opera. He is now in his third year as its major domo having taken over for Dr. James Koelker, now retired. Koelker had been a strong proponent of opera and a facilitator of knowing more about opera through publishing the *Opera Companion*, treating in depth every San Francisco opera production as well as boosting regional companies like Opera San José.

The 2014 version of Opera at Oakhurst started Friday, April 11 and ran through Monday April 14 with the only time off being Sunday morning. Otherwise it was a set of fascinating lectures by Dr. Williams augmented by a half-dozen large screen opera films and innumerable excerpts of CDs.

Titled *Carmen and the Consequences*, Dr. Williams put forth the thesis that everything about opera changed after *Carmen* was presented in 1875. Accompanied by vast changes in literature (think Zola, Balzac et al.) and theater (think Ibsen and Strindberg) and post-Victorian society (think Freud and Nietzsche), opera was casting off its musty past of historical dramas of royalty. Real people were now the subject of gritty, meaningful

works that late 19th century people could identify with. It was an arc across half a century, and by the post WWI years the most popular works of verismo (think Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo) ruled the roost.

Dr. Williams matched a galaxy of operas to literary and theatrical endeavors. This cross-cultural journey showed the 30 participants how disciplines like painting and orchestral music also fit their times.

Oakhurst's next operatic flight will be in May, 2015, but dates have not yet been firmed up. The subject is perfect for Dr. Williams, who has a vast knowledge of contemporary opera as well as those in the past. His theme will ask the question many opera-goers have posed: "Why did they do it that way?"

The subject will be stage production and how directors choose to find inventive ways to refresh the original work. For some, this kind of tinkering, like changing the time frame or the location, is a shocking violation. For others, it offers a new way to look at a piece from a different perspective. So, the Opera at Oakhurst weekend in 2015 will look at both radical and traditional approaches as well as surveying the work of the most important stage directors of our day.

Although there will still be lectures, the weekend promises a lot more time for interaction with the participants and sharing of opinions. It should be stimulating and fulfilling. Which is what opera should be all about.

More information can be obtained from www.eccoyosemite.org. ###

Champagne Brunch at La Rinconada

Saturday, May 31, 2014

No Host Cocktails, 11:30 am

Join the Board of Directors of the San José Opera Guild for a sumptuous champagne brunch and an afternoon of delightful music.

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*La Rinconada Country Club 14595 Clearview Drive*

*Los Gatos, CA*

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Performance by

Artists of Opera San José

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*Silent Auction and Raffle*

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Reservations for the brunch are \$60 for Opera Guild Members and \$70 for non-members.

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*RSVP by May 24, 2014*



This memorable event is at Los Gatos' ***La Rinconada Country Club***, nestled in one of the most beautiful settings in the Santa Clara Valley, with panoramic views from the foothills to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The **menu** has been created especially for this event by ***La Rinconada's Executive Chef***. Delicacies include: seasonal fruits and berries; freshly baked pastries; crisp spring greens salad; smoked salmon; eggs scrambled and Benedict style; French Toast with strawberries, bananas, walnuts and maple syrup; skillet potatoes; bacon; ham; link sausages; coffee; tea and orange juice.

Performing after brunch, for your entertainment, will be ***Opera San José*** Artists Lisa Chavez (mezzo-soprano) and Evan Brummel (baritone). They will be accompanied by Veronika Agranov-Dafoe (pianist).

***We look forward to seeing you there!***

More information and reservation form on the reverse side.

## ***Silent Auction and Raffle ~ Champagne Brunch***

**Silent Auction** items include: Dinner with Wine for 12 at Il Fornaio; Plumed Horse Tasting Menu for 2; Hakone Gardens Tour for 8; Sail SF Bay on a 41ft Swan (for up to 6); 2 Nights at Club Donatello, SF; Hand Decorated Italian Vase; Hand Made Quilt; Original Art Piece by Joyce Steinfeld; SF Asian Art Museum Tour for 5; Original Painting by John Herman; Pilates Lessons (duo) by Midge Firenze; Haircut and Color by Simone – and more!!!

**Raffle** offerings include: Premium California Wines; 2 Antiqued Gioia Italian Wine Glasses; Hand-crafted Jewelry; 2 Tickets to West Bay Opera; 2 Tickets to Opera San José; Original Oil Painting; Hand Quilted Table Runner; Framed Photographic Print; Dining at California Café; Pilates Lessons (single) by Midge; Manicure by Rebecca; Gift Certificates for: Summerwinds Nursery, Nordstrom's, Tassels, In The Olde Manner, Los Gatos Coffee Roasting Co.; OSJ 2014-15 Season Themed Gift Baskets – and more!!!

**Raffle Tickets:** \$5 each or five for \$20. Cash, checks, and credit cards (\$20 minimum) will be accepted. ~ ~ ~

The San José Opera Guild, an independent guild, promotes the operatic arts and provides both volunteer and financial support to opera in the Bay Area, with an emphasis on education and a passion for young singers. During the opera season, we support San Francisco Opera's Opera a la Carte and Merola Opera Program, and Opera San José's Outreach Program, as well as the Music Program at San José State University. We also sponsor San Francisco Opera Guild Lectures, plus West Bay Opera and Opera San José previews.

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## **Reservation for Brunch at *La Rinconada***

**Name of Attendee(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Credit Card Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa or MC # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Number of Brunch Reservations:**

Guild members \_\_\_\_\_ x \$60 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 of each reservation is tax-deductible.

Non-members \_\_\_\_\_ x \$70 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$35 of each reservation is tax-deductible.

I cannot attend but wish to make a donation  
of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Checks, payable to SJOG**

RSVP by May 24, 2014

For more information call 408-243-2404 or 408-354-2771

Please mail payment information to: SJOG, PO Box 33025, Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025

*Visit our website at: [www.sjoperaguild.org](http://www.sjoperaguild.org)*

*Find us on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/sjoperaguild](http://www.facebook.com/sjoperaguild)*

# Spring Opera Lectures

by Steve Zilles

## **Opera San José Season Preview, 10AM, 23 May**

The San Jose Opera Guild in co-operation with the Addison Penzak Jewish Community Center will present an overview of the 2014-15 Season of Opera San Jose on Friday, 23 May. The program will begin at 10AM with a description of and background on the season's operas which include Verdi's dazzling *Rigoletto*, Rossini's hilarious *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, the world premiere of Mark Weiser's *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, and Mozart's bewitching *The Magic Flute*. This overview, which will last until 11:00, will be given by Larry Hancock, the General Manager of Opera San José. Following a 15 minute break for coffee and tea, there will a presentation of selected arias from these operas by resident artists from the company. Then, at 12:00 there will be the Friday Shabbat lunch. People may choose to attend any or all of these 3 parts of the program. The cost of the presentation is \$10 and is free to members of the San José Opera Guild and the JCC, and the cost of the lunch is \$5 for JCC and \$7.50 for SJOG members and \$7.50 for others if reservations are made prior to 12 May and \$10 and \$15 if made after that date.

**Showboat lecture, 10AM on 27 May** It might not occur to you, but *Showboat*, the musical by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, was conceived as a "grand opera." This is the way that it will be produced this summer at San Francisco Opera. It is a tale of life on the Mississippi from the 1880s to the 1920s and it is poignant love story. This is the musical that brought us such familiar classics as, "Ol' Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "Make Believe" and "You Are Love." To provide us background on this well loved musical we will have a lecture by Dr. Oliver Prezant. Dr. Prezant is on the faculty of Santa Fe University of Art and Design and has been a lecturer for The Santa Fe Opera since 1997. He

MAY 2014

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## Lectures, continued

is now in his fifteenth season as the Music Director and Conductor of the award-winning Santa Fe Community Orchestra. As a violist he has performed with The Santa Fe Opera, the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, Opera Pacific, and the California Chamber Virtuosi. Come to the Saratoga Foothill Club and be introduced (or reminded of) one of the great works in American Musical Theater. ###

# Career Updates

Tenor **Bryan Hymel's** (Merola 2001) return to the Metropolitan Opera as B.F. Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* has proven to be as auspicious as his surprise debut with the company in 2012's *Les Troyens*. As Puccini's antihero, Bryan "brought an astonishing sound to the role of the American sailor Pinkerton," according to the *New York Classical Review*. "Bright, clear, huge, this is a high-octane voice capable of taking on some of the most demanding roles in the Italian rep. He nailed every single one of his high notes without a blemish on Thursday, with power to spare." The *New York Times* added, "Bryan Hymel was vocally assured as the thoughtlessly callous Pinkerton, singing with a robust tenor and ringing top notes."

Four Merolini were winners at the 2014 Metropolitan Competition. They are **Ao Li** (2010), **Yi Li** (2012), **Julie Adams** and **Amanda Woodbury** (2014).

On May 10th Opera San José will present the 8th Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition at the California Theater in San Jose. There will be a special panel of judges who will select the top three winners. They are OSJ's first three resident artists: **Elaina Lappalainen** (soprano 1988-1992), **Dan Montez** (tenor 1989-1993), and **Douglas Nagel** (baritone 1988-1992). Following the competition, the company will present a farewell tribute dinner for retiring General Director **Irene Dalis**

**Dan Montez** has been an opera singer and noted stage director for twenty-five years. He has performed principal roles in or directed more than one hundred productions and has appeared in numerous houses, including San Francisco Opera, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. For over fifteen years, he has been General Director of Taconic Opera (taconicopera.org) in New York. In addition, Mr. Montez is a concert pianist, conductor, composer, linguist, and lecturer.

**Ellana Lappalainen** was born in Finland. Her wide repertoire includes Elsa in *Lohengrin* (Wagner), Agathe in *Der Freischütz* (Weber), the title role in *Lulu* (Berg), *Arabella* (R. Strauss), *Jenufa* (Janacek), *Tosca* (Puccini), *La traviata* (Verdi), Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (Mozart), Abigaille in *Nabucco* (Verdi), Nedda in *Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo), Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni) and many other roles including the title role in *Salome* (R. Strauss) which she has performed in Seattle, New York, Nashville, Kentucky, Warsaw, Trieste, Mannheim, Tokyo, Kyoto, Kagoshima, Morioka, Nagoya, Kanazawa, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Toyama, Katowice, Ottawa, Montreal, Wintertur, Detroit, Bergen, Vilnius and The Peralada Festival. She performs regularly in the opera houses of Hamburg, Prague, San Francisco, Berlin, Helsinki, Mexico City, Portland, Ottawa, Palermo, Warsaw, Montreal and many other opera houses. At the Israeli Opera she performed Marie in *Wozzeck* (Berg).

**Douglas Nagel**, during the 2011-12 season, served as stage director for Rimrock Opera's production of *The Crucible* in April 2012, and produced that company's production of *Rigoletto* in Oct. 2011. Previously, he appeared as Scarpia (*Tosca*) and also directed that production in April 2011.

Mr. Nagel received rave reviews for his performance in the title role of *The Flying Dutchman* for West Bay Opera's May 2008 production. He repeated the role at Mobile Opera in 2010. As General Director of Rimrock Opera, Mr. Nagel directed performances of *The Barber of Seville* and *La bohème* for their 2009 – 2010 season.

During the 2006 – 2007 season, Mr. Nagel left his Artistic Directing position at Opera Idaho and returned to OSJ to serve as Director of Education, bringing a tour of *The Night Harry Stopped Smoking*, an anti-smoking musical the-

# Calendar

MAY 2, 4, Opera San José presents *Don Giovanni* by Mozart. California Theater, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm. Introduction to Opera meets one and a half hours before the opera. Tickets: 408-437-4450 or [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org).

MAY 10, Irene Dalis Vocal Competition, California Theater, 3pm to 6pm, \$50.00 - \$150.00, Irene Dalis Farewell Tribute Dinner, Sainte Claire Hotel, 6pm to 9pm, \$300.00 (\$100.00 tax deductible), Tickets [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org)

MAY 10 9:55 am, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, *La Cenerentola* by Rossini with Joyce DiDonato and Juan Diego Flore, live at CineArts Oakridge 20, 225-7340; Santana Row 6, 554-7010; and Cupertino 16, 871-2262. Cost \$24.00 for adults, \$22.00 for seniors. Encore: Wednesday, May 14, 6:30 pm. Encores cost \$22.00 for adults and \$20.00 for seniors. (Prices may vary for the various HD operas.)

BY POPULAR DEMAND!! AN EARLY LECTURE ON THE OPERA SAN JOSÉ SEASON

MAY 23, San José Opera Guild Lecture and Musical Program, Larry Hancock and resident artists will present an introduction to Opera San José's Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 season at the JCC of Silicon Valley, 14855 Oka Road (cross street Lark Avenue), Los Gatos. Friday, 10 am to Noon. SJOG and JCC Members free. Non-members \$10. A Shabbat lunch will be served at noon. Lunch reservations must be made before May 12th, \$5.00 for JCC members, \$7.50 for SJOG members, \$7.50 for non-members, \$10 and \$15 after May 12. Send check to Cherie Ravel, Suite 201, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos California 95032.

MAY 23, 25, 31 and June 1,, West Bay Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) by Mozart, 8pm except Sunday at 2pm, tickets 650-424-9999 or order online [www.wbopera.org](http://www.wbopera.org). Student, senior, and group discounts.

MAY 27, San José Opera Guild and the Saratoga

Foothill Club co-sponsor a lecture on San Francisco Opera's production of *Show Boat* by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II with Oliver Prezant, 10 am, Saratoga Foothill Club, Admission \$10 at the door.

SAVE THE DATE !!

MAY 31, Annual San José Opera Guild CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH at La Rinconada in Los Gatos. Check our website [sjoperaguild.org](http://sjoperaguild.org), and pages 3 & 4 for our wonderful menu and a listing of raffle/silent auction items. Resident Opera San José artists **Lisa Chavez**, **Evan Brummel**, and **Veronika Agranov-Defoe** will be performing after the brunch. \$60.00 for Guild members, \$70.00 for non-members. For more information call 1-408-243-2404.

Summer Merola Events. Except for the free concert in Yerba Buena Gardens all performances take place at Everett Middle School, 450 Church Street, San Francisco 94114. Tickets available at S.F. Opera Box Office 415 864-3330 or at [www.sfopera.com](http://www.sfopera.com)

JULY 10 at 7:30 pm and July 12 at 2pm, *A Streetcar Named Desire* \$40.00/\$60.00

JULY 17, 7:30 pm, Schwabacher Summer Concert \$25.00/\$40.00

JULY 19, 2pm, FREE Schwabacher Summer Concert, Outdoors at Yerba Buena Gardens. No tickets required.

JULY 31 at 7:30 pm and AUGUST 2 at 2pm, *Don*

## Career Updates

**continued from P 6**  
atre production, to more than 30 schools within Santa Clara County. The performances, which were made possible by grants from Kaiser, Good Samaritan and O'Connor Hospitals, were praised by the schools and health educators for its innovative and engaging approach to teaching children about the dangers of smoking. ###

San José Opera Guild  
c/o Argo Gherardi  
P.O. Box 33025  
Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025

## An Invitation to Join

Established in 1947, the San José Opera Guild was formed to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of the operatic arts and to provide both volunteer and financial support to opera.

The Guild incorporated in September 1958 as a non-profit corporation under the laws of California. The original purpose of the Guild has not changed over the years since it's founding. Financial support of promising young artists in the community is a high priority for the Guild, which helps sponsor singers each year at Opera San José, and the Merola Opera Program, as well as other opera groups.

Throughout the year, the Guild sponsors lectures and previews at three different venues to coincide with the San Francisco Opera and Opera San José's seasons.

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