

Anti-Bullying Opera

Opera San José recently introduced its new, one-act touring opera, *Billy Goats Gruff* on November 1, 2012, at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in honor of National Opera Week. John Davies' *Billy Goats Gruff* tells the classic fairytale of the three billy goats with a contemporary twist, as it tackles the issue of bullying and promotes the power of kindness and tolerance. Perfect for K-6 grade students, this engaging 45-minute performance is set to recognizable melodies from some of opera's most beloved composers, including Mozart, Rossini and Donizetti.

Bullying can be verbal, physical or via the Internet. It can severely affect the victim's self-image, social interactions and school performance, often leading to insecurity, lack of self-esteem, and depression in adulthood. Likewise, studies have shown that children who have been identified as a bully by age eight are six times more likely to have a criminal conviction by age 24.

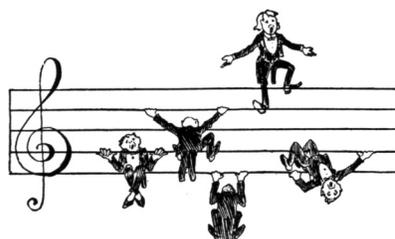
In 2011, an Advisory Council to eradicate bullying in county schools was formed by Santa Clara County Board of Education President, Joseph Di Salvo. "As a former elementary and middle school principal, this has been a subject that

has touched me in many divergent ways," stated Di Salvo. "The threat of being bullied is one of the number one reasons for students staying at home."

In response to Di Salvo's initiative, Opera San José is presenting *Billy Goats Gruff* as part of its K-12 educational programming for the 2012-2013 season. "*Billy Goats Gruff* not only provides children with a positive experience of an art form that may be new to them, but uses the power of artistic expression to address the on-going epidemic of bullying in schools and communities. We hope to do our part to educate young people about this serious matter..." says General Director Irene Dalis.

Opera San José is currently booking *Billy Goats Gruff* performances for the 2012-13 school year. Sung in English, *Billy Goats Gruff* costs \$500 for one performance or \$650 for two, back-to-back performances and includes a study guide. If you are interested in sponsoring a performance at a Santa Clara County public or private elementary school, contact Outreach Coordinator Lettie Smith (smith@operasj.org) at 408-437-4464.

###



Opera Preview

Bay Area premiere of *Passionate* 21st century
opera set for mid-February performance

By Mort Levine

Federico Garcia Lorca is arguably Spain's greatest poet and playwright. His tragic death by a Franco execution squad took place in Granada back in the late 30s near an ancient fountain. Its name is *Ainadamar*, Arabic for "The Fountain of Tears."

Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov, in 2003 created an opera which might also be labeled a passion play about a martyrdom for freedom of artistic expression. The powerful 90-minute work brings together music, dance and vocalism of Spain and recognizes that country's debt to Arabic, Hebraic and Gypsy musical roots.

Ainadamar makes its first appearance in northern California Friday and Saturday, February 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. and on Sunday, February 17 at 2 p.m. at the Lam Theatre in the Yerba Buena Center, 700 Howard St., San Francisco. Tickets can be obtained online at operaparallele.org/tix or by calling 415-978-2787.

Golijov's collaborators are playwright David Henry Huang (he wrote *M. Butterfly*, *Chinglish* and much else) for the libretto and Peter Sellers for the feisty, provocative director who made sure the political message of the Spanish civil war resonates for today's world. Bringing the work to the stage is a unique organization dedicated to performance and recording of obscure but seminal works of the late 20th and 21st centuries. It is called Opera Parallele, headquartered at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The group is the creation of multi-talented Nicole Paiement, a UCSC music prof, keyboard artist and conductor.

The current production will be directed by Brian Staufenbiel. It will star soprano Marnie Breckenridge who takes the role of Margarita Xirgu, a famed tragic actress who kept Lorca's plays alive for 30 years throughout South Amer-

ica. Lorca is portrayed in a pants role sung by mezzo Lisa Chavez. Baritone Jesus Montoya sings the role of Ruiz Alonzo, who hunts Lorca down and kills him. Soprano Maya Kherani sings the young student, Nuria.

This production will also benefit from the video mapping technology of video artist Austin Forbord. Matthew Antaky did the sets and lighting.

The opera takes the form of three long flashbacks. The first talks of an excitement and hope of 40 years earlier in 1929 when the Spanish Republic proclaimed political freedom, but Xirgu, playing the role of Mariana Pineda, recalls that the playwright Lorca told her then that his great hope was for artistic freedom of expression. Pineda was sentenced to death for sewing the Republican flag in an earlier revolution, 1831, and is immortalized by a statue in Granada. A second flashback to 1936 shows Xirgu failing to persuade Lorca to leave with her and go to Cuba to escape the Franco forces. He refuses to go. In the third flashback, a dying Xirgu tells her students to carry on the fight to keep alive the story of Spain's failed revolution.

In a stunning climax, the spirit of Lorca comes back to take Xirgu into a blazing sunset of visionary transformation. She passes the clarity and humanity to her student Nuria and the next generation saying "I am freedom, I am the source, the fountain from which you drink."

Much of the power and passion conveyed in the opera comes from a female chorus, often with piercing cries of tortured agony in a fatalistic Flamenco rhythm.

Ainadamar may not be the best opera written as yet in the 21st century but, if you get to see and hear it, it will be hard to forget.

###

Career Updates

Soprano **Elza van den Heever** (Merola 2004) sings the role of Queen Elizabeth I in the Met's new production of *Maria Stuarda* by Donizetti. Another Merola alumna in the cast is mezzo-soprano **Joyce Di Donato** (1997) as Mary Stuart.

Bass Baritone **John Relyea** (Merola 1995) will sing the title role in Seattle Opera's new production of *Attila*.

The San Francisco Examiner review of San Francisco Opera's production of *Tosca* stated that "**Patricia Racette** (Merola 1988) in the title role delivered all the goods expected of her" and that "**Mark Delavan** (Merola 1985) sang a much improved Scarpia against his counterpart in the other cast." According to the reviewer the novelty standout was **Brian Jagde** (Merola 2009) as Cavaradossi whom he describes as "Tall, handsome with a remarkable tenor voice. He hits high notes effortlessly. It is a lyrical, pretty voice, with plenty of power."

The American tenor **John Bellemer** (OSJ) has gained a reputation for his strong portrayals in a very wide repertoire. Possessed of a voice the New York Times calls "clarion-toned", he continues to appear in leading roles at opera houses across North America and Europe. His 2012-13 season engagements currently include singing Sali in Delius' *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, in a return to the Wexford Festival, and by making his debut in concerts with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in works by Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. He is also seen and heard in Spielberg's movie *Lincoln* in the role of *Faust* as the Lincolns attend a performance of Gounod's opera.

MEROLINI WHO WILL APPEAR IN SAN FRANCISCO'S 2013-14 SEASON

Dolora Zajick (1983), Mezzo Soprano, will sing the role of Dolores Claiborne in the opera of the same name by Tobias Picker.

Meredith Arwady (2003), Contralto, will sing the role of Mistress Quickly and **Renee Rapier**, (2011) mezzo soprano, will sing the role of Mistress Meg Page in *Falstaff*.

Lucas Meachem, (2003) baritone, will sing the role of Figaro in the *Barber of Seville*. In the same cast **Alessandro Corbelli**, (2007) bass baritone, will sing the role of Dr. Bartolo. **Catherine Cook**, (1990) Mezzo soprano, will sing the role of Berta.

In *La Traviata*, Soprano **Ailyn Perez** (2005) will sing the role of Violetta and baritone **Quinn Kelsey** (2002) will sing the role of Germont.

Soprano **Patricia Racette** (1988) will sing the role of Cio-Cio-San in *Madame Butterfly* and tenor **Brian Jagade** (2009) 'will sing the role of Pinkerton.

###

Published in Feb., May, Aug. & Nov.
by the San José Opera Guild
P. O. Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 95031-3025
President: Susan English
Editor: Argo Gherardi
Calendar: Connie Zilles
Career Updates: Nina Gherardi
Publicity: Jan Eurich 408-243-9793
www.sjoperaguild.org

Calendar

FEBRUARY 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24, Opera San José presents Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, California Theatre, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm. Tickets: 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org.

FEBRUARY 15, 17, 23 and 24, West Bay Opera presents Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Lucie Stern Theater, Palo Alto, \$70/65, Seniors \$58/52, Youth 45/40, Call 650 424-9999 or visit www.wbopera.org,

FEBRUARY 16, 9:55am, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, Verdi's *Rigoletto* -New Production, 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, March 6th, 6:30 pm. Encores cost \$22.00 for adults and \$20.00 for seniors. Prices may vary for the various HD operas.

MARCH 2, 9am, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, Wagner's *Parsifal* - New Production, Encore Wednesday, March 20th, at 6:30pm. See February 16th for more information.

MARCH 16, 9am, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*, Encore Wednesday, April 3rd, at 6:30pm. See February 16th for more information.

APRIL 27, 9am, Metropolitan Opera Simulcast in HD, Handel's *Giulio Cesare* - New Production, Encore Wednesday, May 15th, at 6:30pm. See February 16th for more information.

APRIL 2, 12-1pm, Preview of upcoming Opera San José operas by general director Larry Hancock with arias by members of the cast. Free at Martin Luther King Jr. Library, second floor.

APRIL 2, 6:30-8pm, Preview of upcoming Opera San José operas by general director, Larry Hancock with arias by members of the cast. Bella Mia Restaurant, San Jose, wine and light refreshments, \$30.00, call Opera San José box

office 437-4450 or online at tickets.operasj.org.

APRIL 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, and 28, Opera San José presents Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. California Theatre, 8pm except Sundays at 3pm. Tickets: 408-437-4450 or online at operasj.org

FUTURE EVENTS

MAY 4, Irene Dalis Vocal Competition, 8-10pm

MAY 28, SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD'S SUMMER LECTURE, Timothy Flynn discusses Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*.

JUNE 11, SAN JOSÉ OPERA GUILD'S SUMMER LECTURE, Lynne Morrow discusses Adamo's *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*.

Time: 10am, Saratoga Foothill Club, Saratoga, Admission \$10.

###

SAVE THE DATE

CHAMPAIGNE BRUNCH
SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2013

11:30 AM

LA RINCONADA COUNTRY CLUB

LOS GATOS

PERFORMANCES BY THE RESIDENT

ARTISTS OF OPERA SAN JOSE'



Opera Tours

Larry Hancock, General Manager of Opera San José will be hosting his 4th trip this year to Santa Fe Opera July 9 - 14th. He will give enlightening pre-performance talks on the operas included in the trip. The operas are: *Marriage of Figaro*, *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* with Joyce DiDonato in the title role, and *La Donna Del Lago* with Susan Graham.

A second trip to Santa Fe is scheduled for August 4 - 9th and includes 4 operas. Carol Price Rabin will host the tour. Both Santa Fe trips will include air transportation, first class hotel, orchestra seating, lectures, breakfasts, some dinners, sightseeing, and museum passes. The tour price is \$3,350.00.

A tour to Seattle to attend Wagner's *Ring Cycle* is scheduled for August 20- 26th. It will include air transportation, first class hotel, orchestra seating, lectures, dinners, and sightseeing. The price is \$3,995.00.

For further information, please contact: Carol Rabin, Creative Travel Arrangers, 36 Linaria Way, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Tel: (650) 854-4412. email: carolrabin@gmail.com; www.creativetravelarrangers.com

###

S.F.Opera's Rush Tix

Seniors, students, and active military now qualify to purchase rush tickets to the San Francisco Opera early enough in the day to plan to drive to the City. Once folks have completed an "Online Student, Military, Senior Rush Registration" (available on the Opera website), they may purchase available tickets for \$30 – for seniors (65 and over) and military, and \$25 – for full time students. Rush tickets go on sale at 11am on the day of the performance. In person sales end one hour prior to curtain, and online sales end three hours before the opera begins. Details are available on the Opera website at www.sfopera.com



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

San José Opera Guild
c/o Argo Gherardi
P.O. Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 85031-3025

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.

Name _____

Name of Family Member _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Memberships: Family \$60
 Single \$45
 Organization \$75
Donation \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Please send check payable to:
San José Opera Guild
c/o Membership
P.O.Box 33025
Los Gatos, CA 96031-3025

San José Opera Guild is a non-profit organization
Contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent provided by the law.
Does your company have a matching grant program?
Visit our website at www.sjoperaguild.org