Sometimes, somebody has to change the way things are done, and Rossini was just the guy to make some serious changes. With the skill, verve, and unmatched *joie de vivre* to win over any audience, Rossini streaked across the skies of Europe from Naples to London establishing new expectations for vocal prowess, dramatic content, musical form, and the visceral excitement of attending opera. He was more famous than Beethoven.

A titan can stand with equal ease in more than one world; Rossini, like Beethoven, straddled two eras, and like Mozart, held both serious and comic opera with equal aplomb. While today’s opera lovers prize Rossini’s comic operas (*The Turk in Italy, The Italian Girl in Algiers, La Cenerentola, Count Ory, and most of all The Barber of Seville*), Rossini’s contemporaries valued him even more for what he did for serious opera. Italian composers after him worked in his shadow until Verdi finally developed a style and reputation of his own, and Rossini had conveniently died.

In the years after Mozart, Italian opera had become moribund, clinging to much of the aesthetic that had been established in 1720’s Naples by Scarlatti. Though Italian composers like Cherubini and Spontini in Paris, and Cimarosa and Paisiello in Italy, were slowly expanding opera’s musical resources (longer choruses, double arias, recitative accompanied by strings rather than harpsichord, etc.), none of them synthesized a viable Italian style. The old bones of *opera seria* weren’t strong enough to support the dramatic demands of the nineteenth century.
The Italian composers who immediately preceded Rossini, and who had dominated the opera stages of Europe from St. Petersburg to Lisbon, were eclipsed by the sheer musical and rhythmic dynamism of Rossini's operas. More important, Rossini developed a flexible and sturdy musical foundation on which to stand more dramatically accomplished and larger forms that could encompass entire scenes, and in the case of Otello, an entire act.

After study at the prestigious conservatory in Bologna, Rossini, at age 18, received his first professional commission from the Teatro San Moisè in Venice. Within five years he had composed eleven operas; his first serious opera, Tancredi, launched his international fame when he was 22. At age 23 he was appointed to the equivalent position of artistic director and resident composer at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the largest and most influential opera company in Italy. In 1816, at age 24, Rossini became the most admired, influential, and soon to be imitated composer in the world when he premiered The Barber of Seville.

The San Carlo had the most accomplished singers in Italy on contract, an excellent orchestra, and a very large production budget, but more important, Barbaja, the impresario who owned the San Carlo, encouraged the young genius to develop the art form. For seven years Rossini, perhaps responding to the highly florid style (ornamented with very fast passages) mastered by the Neapolitan singers, continually created more sophisticated, expressive, and demanding vocal lines, requiring elaborate and stunningly fast ornaments, which he wrote out rather than allowing singers to improvise in performance, which had been the norm.

Rossini's rapid-fire passages, far from being merely ornamental, were often used to reveal and emphasize the meaning of the text and the mood or personality of the character. They range from coquettish, for Rosina in The Barber of Seville, to outraged, for the queen of Babylon in Semiramide. They were also used to stun the listener, which is the case for the final aria, “Non piu mesta,” in La Cenerentola. Unfortunately, it is this requirement of powerful yet lightening-fast singing that eventually caused all the Rossini’s operas except The Barber of Seville (which was just too popular to go away) to fall from the repertoire as Wagner’s heroic and unornamented style began to dominate opera houses and opera composition. The technique for very fast singing fell into decline, but nothing lasts forever.

Maria Callas, one of the most accomplished operatic artists of the 20th century, began the revival of Rossini’s early operas in mid century. Following her lead, Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne championed revivals of operas by Rossini in major opera companies around the world, and soon all the Rossini comic operas and at least some of the serious operas like Otello and William Tell returned to the stage. With the revival of dramatic-coloratura singing, recordings of even the more obscure Rossini operas have become readily available, many of them conducted and performed by the most prominent opera stars of the day.

The Barber of Seville was the opera that cemented Rossini’s position as the premiere composer in Italy, and it soon established his reputation as the most important composer in the world. It is charming, effervescent, clever, just a little sentimental, and has not fallen out of the repertoire since its 1816 Rome premiere. It was Beethoven who asked Rossini to “give us more Barbers,” but not even Rossini could top this accomplishment. Don't miss it!
**ENHANCE your EXPERIENCE!**

Complement your opening night at the opera with the

**Opera San José Barber of Seville Prix Fixe Menu**

at Eulipia Restaurant:

- **Salad**
  Mixed greens with Sliced Apple, Cranberries, Candied Walnuts, Maple Dressing, and Bleu Cheese

- **Choice of Entrée**
  Braised Pork Shoulder with Lingonberries, Apple, Potato Cheddar Gratin, and Seasonal Vegetables
  House Made Ricotta and Spinach Ravioli with Sage Brown Butter, Pine Nuts, and Parmigiano-Reggiano
  Grilled Boneless Trout butterflied with Yellow Rice, Sautééed Bok Choy and Soy Ginger Marinade

- **Dessert**
  Tiramisu

$60 ++ per person ($15 is tax-deductible)

**Our 2010-2011 Season Concludes...**

**La bohème**

APRIL 23 - MAY 8, 2011
Giacomo Puccini, composer
Giuseppe Giacosa & Luigi Illica, librettists

Conductor: David Rohrbaugh
Stage Director: Timothy Near

She’s a dreamer: simple, sweet, and shy. Mimi spends her days embroidering flowers and her nights longing for springtime; and she is very much alone. Literally in search of light – a match for her only candle – she instead finds happiness and friendship with a band of young Parisian bohemians. Briefly, Mimi and Rodolfo make a place of love and warmth for themselves – until illness and poverty prevail. This is Puccini at his most tender and sympathetic. For generations, *La bohème* has been considered to be the best First Opera, the best Date Opera, and for many the Best Opera.

Opening Night Dinner partner: Il Fornaio, call the OSJ Box Office at 408-437-4450 for reservations; details to follow.

**A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Isaiah Musik-Ayala and Betany Coffland joined the other Resident Artists in entertaining Miss Dalis and the audience with hilarious performances that turned the German Fach system on its ear.

Dear friends,

Thank you all for joining us at the San José IMPROV on October 10th, 2010, for “The Big Birthday Bash and Variety Show” – a benefit celebrating the 85th birthday of General Director, Irene Dalis!

The birthday tribute and roast was hosted by Master of Ceremonies Joe Pon, former OSJ board president, and featured performances by past and present artists from the resident company. Former residents Susan Gundunas and Christopher Bengochea entertained us with opera classics, and the current resident company treated the audience to a comedic send-up on the German Fach system. In addition to performances by the artists, the afternoon featured anecdotes and roasts shared by friends, family, and colleagues of Miss Dalis, followed by a live auction where OSJ Trustees Jerry Seelig and Marilyn Dorsa each won a walk-on role in *La bohème*.

The highlight of the afternoon came at the conclusion of the program, when Board President Laurie Warner unveiled the Irene Dalis bobblehead doll, and each guest was gifted with their very own Dalis doll! It was a fun-filled afternoon of laughter and memories celebrating Opera San José’s grand dame, and we hope that you enjoyed it as much as we did. Here’s to another wonderful year! BRTM

Members of the OSJ Circle volunteered their time to help the show run smoothly. L-R: Susan Fisher, Jan Parnell, Nancy Nielsen, Ann Marotta, Circle President Patti McBane; kneeling: Shannon McBane.
Announcing the Season of Legends!

Idomeneo
Sept 10-25, 2011
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Composer
Gianbattista Varesco, Librettist
George Cleve, Conductor
Brad Dalton, Stage Director

An epic work of music drama that changed the course of Mozart’s operas, *Idomeneo* is the mythical tale of king of Crete, returning home from the Trojan War. To gain a safe return to shore through a violent storm at sea, he vows a sacrifice to Neptune: the first person he sees on land. Unfortunately, it’s his son, Idamante, and so Idomeneo flees instead of greeting him. Idamante, meanwhile, has fallen in love with Ilia, the captured daughter of the king of Troy. Neptune, cheated out of his sacrifice, sends a sea monster to ravage Crete. Idamante vanquishes the monster, and presents himself to Neptune as his father’s sacrifice, but will the god be appeased?

Pagliacci & La voix humaine
November 12-27, 2011
Bryan Nies, Conductor
Stage Director: TBD

Leoncavallo’s Italian opera *Pagliacci* is the tale of Canio, the leader of a traveling commedia dell’arte troupe. He is the clown who must laugh, and make others laugh, while masking his own grief after learning that his wife Nedda has betrayed him with another man. In the end, art meets tragedy in a rage of passion and jealousy.

La traviata
February 11-26, 2012
Giuseppe Verdi, Composer
Francesco Maria Piave, Librettist
David Rohrbaugh, Conductor
José Maria Condemí, Stage Director

It is 19th-century Paris and the celebrated Violetta Valéry has thrown a lavish party, where she meets a young admirer, Alfredo Germont. He has long loved her, and she is so taken with his sincerity that she abandons her life of luxury and retreats to the country to be with him. But when met with the disapproving eye of Alfredo’s father, Violetta regrettably agrees to end the affair and go back to Paris. A jealous Alfredo denounces her, but when he learns of her sacrifice he returns to beg her forgiveness, only to discover she has but moments to live. Verdi’s romantic tragedy *La Traviata* has touched the hearts of both the opera novice and long-time opera lover for generations.

Faust
April 21-May 6, 2012
Charles Gounod, Composer
Jules Barbier & Michel Carré, Librettists
David Rohrbaugh, Conductor
Brad Dalton, Stage Director

Méphistophélès, the devil in the flesh, appears to an old scholar, Faust, promising him the elixir of youth in exchange for his soul. Faust is transformed into a young, handsome man and sets out with his devious companion to experience the pleasures of the world. Faust seduces the beautiful and innocent Marguerite, only to abandon her before she gives birth to his child. Her reputation destroyed, Marguerite calls upon the angels for salvation and redemption. Faust receives no such escape and is condemned to his devilish fate, in this spiritual conflict between Heaven and Hell. Inspired by Goethe's legendary story *Faust et Marguerite*, Gounod’s grand opera *Faust* premiered in Paris in 1859 and is one of the most performed operas of all time.

Excited for the new season? Come ‘Choose Your Seats’ at our theatre open house on Saturday, February 19th, 2011! See the Calendar of Events on page 8 for more information.
to be a good singer are a good vocal instrument, of course, and the ability to express what is in the music. In order to develop the instrument and acquire expertise in articulating the intent of the music, a good teacher and extensive training is essential. Proper instruction can open up the voice and enable the singer to acquire good vocal technique. One must “Sing to express, not to impress,” he says.

He came to the United States in 1996 to attend a music festival in Bar Harbor, Maine. “I got to play jazz there,” he says, and realized that he wanted to come to the United States to continue his studies after he completed his courses at the conservatory. He taught himself English and in 1999 moved to the United States to study voice at Southeastern Louisiana University. He spent two years earning a masters’ degree in piano, and sang opera in two productions. Then he studied at the A. J. Fletcher/North Carolina School of the Arts.

In 2002, he made his professional debut with Piedmont Opera as Marullo, in Rigoletto. “I would love one day to sing Rigoletto, as I love the show.” Karagiozov says whatever role he is singing at a given moment is the part he likes best. “My dream roles are the ones that best suit my voice.”

He has a number of favorite singers. At the top of his list is the late Ettore Bastianini, an Italian baritone who sang in several operas with Irene Dalis. He also admires the late Robert Merrill, also a baritone, and probably agrees with Merrill’s opinion of opera as the “toughest art.” Of the ladies, Krassen enjoys Natalie Dessay’s voice, as well as that of Anna Netrebko.

Originally satisfied with simply learning to sing better, Karagiozov is now focused on career growth. His goal is to work with the best musicians in opera, and he sees his career on an upward trajectory. He considers Opera San José “a great company, a professional company that works like a European state opera house. Opera San José allows its artists to focus, which means they can evolve and expand vocally.”

Krassen Karagiozov, who liked opera even when he was a child, has won many opera competitions and scholarships, and currently holds a McCann Fellowship with Opera San José – a gift to the company for his residency. He teaches and coaches singing and piano, and is an active outdoor sportsman who plays soccer, badminton, and other sports, not only to keep in shape, but because, “I find creative energy in nature and sports as well as in witnessing a great performance.”

Opera San José is a long way from opera in Bulgaria, but baritone Krassen Karagiozov, a third-year resident, came to us, indirectly, from that faraway country.

Krassen was born in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. His mother taught Bulgarian literature and language and his father is an artist and a self-taught violinist. The home environment encouraged Krassen’s musical inclinations – from fourth through eleventh grade, he attended a school for youngsters with musical talent. He majored in piano, but in tenth grade he began studying voice, originally training as a bass (although ultimately, he and his teachers would recognize that he was actually a baritone).

In 1992 he applied to the State Academy of Music in Sofia, where he was accepted as a piano student, and later expanded his studies to include a voice major. “Competition for the best training was always keen, and today it is much more intense than in the past. How you look is important now, too. That was not the case many years ago. All that mattered was how an opera singer sounded,” says Karagiozov. “Years ago, when Bulgaria was a socialist state, every major city had an opera house, but to be admitted to music training, an applicant not only needed artistic talent, he or she also had to pass a political test. Sometimes the results of that test determined whether a person was accepted to the program.”

Krassen believes that the primary qualities necessary to be a good singer are a good vocal instrument, of course, and the ability to express what is in the music. In order to develop the instrument and acquire expertise in articulating the intent of the music, a good teacher and extensive training is essential. Proper instruction can open up the voice and enable the singer to acquire good vocal technique. One must “Sing to express, not to impress,” he says.

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OSJ patron Carolle J. Carter is a professor emerita at Menlo College, and a retired lecturer in history, San José State University.
osj: The music (and action!) in The Barber of Seville moves so fast—how do you control the tempo from start to finish?

Nies: The music has such humor and joy throughout the work. Often there is just the correct tempo that makes the singer able to breathe and sing the dense text, while also keeping that humor and joy. To me, comic operas are much more difficult to conduct than the tragic ones!

osj: Music from Barber has been widely used throughout popular culture—what has been your favorite nod?

Nies: The best use of music from The Barber of Seville, and still one of the best introductions to opera, is What's Opera Doc, with Bugs Bunny. I watch it every time I see it!

osj: In a comic opera like The Barber of Seville, how do you find the right balance between wit and slapstick?

Condeemi: I am a big fan of Rossini’s operas, as I enjoy the unabashed sense of fun and creativity that he displays in both his musical writing, as well as in his character development and the situations he creates. Just when one thinks that a point has been made or a character has covered something, Rossini seems to say “but wait, there’s more!”

As a director, my task with an opera like Barber is to ensure that the comedy comes out of the situations that the characters are in, rather than from performers trying to be funny. True comedy does that—you laugh because the unexpected happens, or because somebody was trying to AVOID making a fool of themselves and ended up doing precisely that. Barber has many Commedia dell’arte roots and, therefore, some of the characters are “big” and drawn large but still, the comedy should be based on situation and on the basics of any good theater, be it drama or comedy: one character wants something; another wants the opposite. In that “friction” between the character’s opposing desires lives the comedy of the piece. The intimacy that the California Theatre affords the audience is wonderful for a piece like Barber...as a director, I know I can work on those [details] and be sure the audience will see them.

Join us for a free 45-minute talk, an Introduction to The Barber of Seville, before each performance (except opening night). For more details, refer to the Calendar of Events on page 8.

Are you in the Circle?

By Patti McBane, OSJ Circle President

The Opera San José Circle is a new volunteer group formed to support the company in a variety of ways: members donate their time, provide financial contributions, and/or help to expand the OSJ audience by inviting friends to performances and talking to others about the wonderful things happening at the opera!

Recent activities have included ushering for the evening previews at the San Jose Woman’s Club, and assisting with the “Big Birthday Bash & Variety Show,” by mailing invitations, helping with the auction, and manning reception tables. This fall, Circle officers enjoyed the company of David Carlson, the composer of Anna Karenina, at a dinner at Il Fornaio before one of the performances.

In addition to the many opportunities to support Opera San José at special events, we also have Circle members who help at the office on Paragon Drive. Whether working in the box office, lending their sewing skills to the costuming department, or assisting with the various mailings that occur throughout the year, these volunteers are an integral part of furthering the mission of Opera San José and staff members are very grateful for their help.

This is a great opportunity to share your time and talent in support of Opera San José, and meet new friends who love opera as much as you do! If you are interested in joining the Circle or attending our next meeting, contact Patti McBane at pattilovesopera@yahoo.com.

Get even more information and photos online at www.operasj.org

6 Opera San Jose Bravo
Miss Dalis and the 2010 Irene Dalis Vocal Competition Finalists

**IDVC 2011: THE BOLD & BEAUTIFUL**

On May 21, 2011, Opera San José will present the Fifth Annual Irene Dalis Vocal Competition. Ten finalists selected from the 2011 West Coast Auditions for Singers will vie for $50,000 in cash prizes at the California Theatre. Our distinguished judges will have the final word, but you can help pick our Audience Favorite! Reserve your seat today, by calling 408-437-4450.

**National Opera Week 2010**

This fall, Opera San José joined nearly 100 other opera organizations nationwide, in celebration of the 2nd Annual National Opera Week (October 29 – November 7), organized by OPERA America, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Opera San José presented two free public performances at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library in downtown San José: a preview of *Tosca*, and Opera San José’s one-act touring opera based on Engelbert Humperdinck’s classic opera *Hansel and Gretel*, performed by associate artists Jillian Boye (pictured), Tori Grayum, Alexandra Cowell, and Michael Mendelsohn.

**How will you celebrate National Opera Week in 2011?**

**San Jose Symphonic Choir**

Leroy Kromm, Music Director

**April 17, 2011**

The Passion according to Saint Matthew

Johann Sebastian Bach

sung in German with Baroque Orchestra

featuring Brian Thorsett, Rebecca Kenote, Nancy Wait Kromm, Sara Couden, Wendy Hillhouse, Paul Murray, Matthew Peterson

the Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church Choir, and Vivace Youth Chorus of San Jose, Peggy Spool, Director

**Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Saratoga**

**June 4, 2011**

Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi

with Nova Vista Symphony and Anthony Quartuccio, Conductor

**McAfee Performing Arts Center, Saratoga**

Tickets & Information: (408) 995-3318 or www.sanjosesymphonicchoir.org

SJSC is supported in part by a grant from the City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs.

Join the online conversation today:

find us on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube & Twitter!
**JANUARY**

14 Party Opera Bridge, 7pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395

28 Duplicate Opera Bridge 7pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395

31 Daytime Party Opera Bridge, 12:30pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395

**FEBRUARY**

1 Preview/Lecture, The Barber of Seville 2nd Floor, Room 225/229, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 4th and San Fernando Streets, San José. Noon. Free.

1 Preview, The Barber of Seville San Jose Woman’s Club, 75 South 11th St., San José. Wine and light hors d’ oeuvres, 6:30pm; lecture and singing, 7pm. $25. Reservations required: 408-437-4450

11 Party Opera Bridge, 7pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor at 408-269-2395

**FEBRUARY**

12 Prix Fixe Dinner, The Barber of Seville Eulipia Restaurant, 374 South First Street, San José. $60 pp. (Details, p. 3) Reservations are required: 408-437-4450

12, 13m, 15, 18, 20m, 24, 26, 27m (m=matinee) The Barber of Seville California Theatre, 8 pm; matinees, 3pm. Tickets: 408-437-4450 or www.operasj.org

13m, 15, 18, 20m, 24, 26, 27m (m=matinee) Introduction to The Barber of Seville Free 45-minute talk by General Manager Larry Hancock. California Theatre, evenings at 6:30pm, matinees at 1:30pm.

“Meet the Artists” After the matinee, stay for a Q&A with the conductor, director, and members of the cast.

19 “Choose Your Seats” Open house and opportunity to subscribe onsite for the 2011-12 season.

**MARCH**

4 Italian American Heritage Foundation Dinner and Concert benefitting Opera San José. 425 N. Fourth Street. Social hour, 6:30pm; dinner, 7:15pm; concert, 8pm. $30 (members), $35 (non-members), $20 (students). Tickets: 408-293-7122 or www.iahfsj.org

5 Season Preview/Lecture Milpitas Senior Center, 40N. Milpitas Blvd., Milpitas. 2pm. Free.

11 Season Preview Addison-Penzak Jewish Community Center Shabbat Lunch for Seniors, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos. Lunch, 12pm; preview, 1pm. $5 for JCC members, $7.50 for non-members. Contact Hope Yaghutiel at hope@svjcc.org or 408.357.7488

11 Party Opera Bridge, 7pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395

25 Duplicate Opera Bridge 7pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395

28 Daytime Party Opera Bridge, 12:30pm. $5. Call Alma Taylor, 408-269-2395