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Opera San Jose Concludes Its 30th Anniversary Season with Don Giovanni!

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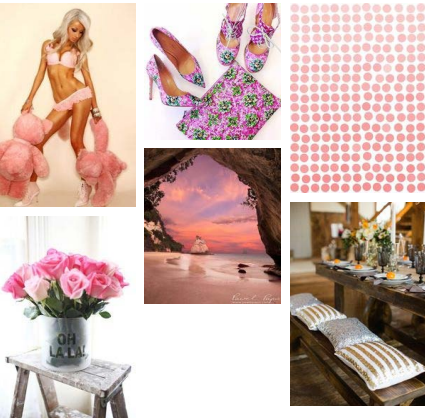
After a nice dinner and drinks at the newly opened First-to-Table Saturday night, my husband walked down the street to see Opera San Jose conclude its 30th season, with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Don Giovanni.

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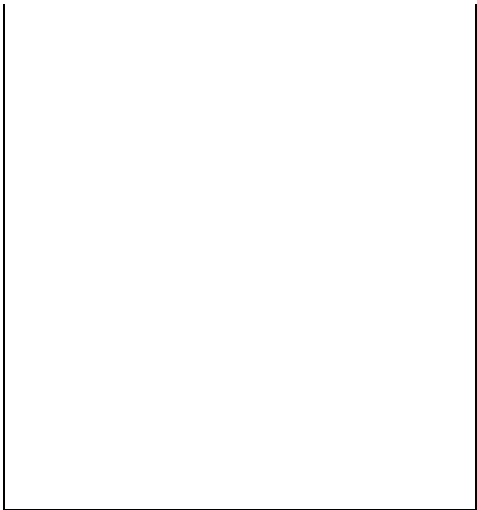




Don Giovanni is Mozart’s wonderful take on the legendary tale of the fictional Don Juan. The opera opens with Don Giovanni’s servant Leporello (played wonderfully this evening by baritone Eugene Brancoveanu) lamenting his station in life, having to do the dirty deeds for the sex crazed, hard partying, womanizer, Don Giovanni (baritone, Zachary Altman). As Leporello is keeping watch, Giovanni is seducing the Commendatore’s daughter, Donna Anna (soprano, Cecilia Violetta Lopez). When he tries to leave, she screams out causing her father to run into the room where he fights with the masked Don Giovanni. When Donna Anna returns to the room with her fiancé, Don Ottavio (tenor, James Callon), she finds her father dead. At that moment, the couple vow to avenge her father’s death.

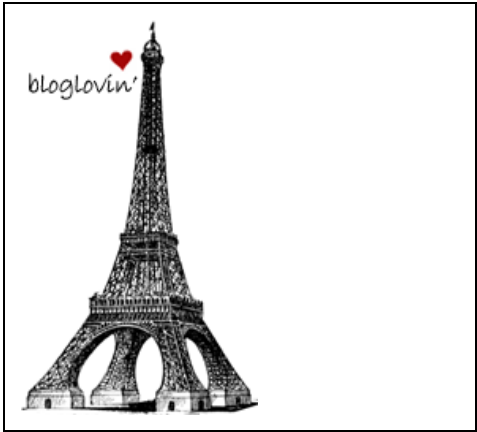
Don Giovanni, meanwhile, has fled the scene and has his sights on a new conquest, Donna Elvira (soprano Cecilia Violetta Lopez); only to find out she is a previously scorned lover. Leaving Leporello to once again clean up his affairs, Giovanni moves onto yet another woman, the newlywed Zerlina (mezzo-soprano Kindra Scharich) who enters the courtyard as a part of her wedding procession.

As Giovanni works to woo Zerlina and to keep her new husband Masetto’s (Daniel Scofield) jealousy at bay, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio and Donna Elvira plan to expose his womanizing ways and exact revenge upon him for the



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death of the Commendatore and their broken hearts.

By the end of the opera, Giovanni is left with one last chance to repent for his sins to a statue of the deceased Commendatore. Giovanni refuses and meets his ultimate demise at the hands of the statue.



Don Giovanni, as an opera is marvelous. There is a reason it is one of the most often performed operas in the world. Watching Opera San Jose's rendition was entertaining, but after reading about the story beforehand, I was expecting more visually than was provided Saturday night. The comedic moments, while eliciting a few chuckles, had the potential to be much funnier.

As Giovanni, Zachary Altman exuded sex appeal and swagger. With his long locks and unbuttoned shirt, he seduced the crowd and played the title character convincingly. Vocally though, he seemed shaky and was often times hard to hear from the back of the stage or over some of the larger voices in the cast. Equally, if not more, entertaining was Eugene Brancoveanu as Leporello, the sidekick/ companion/accomplice/assistant to Don Giovanni. He played his part very convincingly and showed great vocal range.



Most impressive was mezzo-soprano Kindra Scharich as Zerlina. She gracefully moved from singing as a doe eyed innocent girl seduced by Giovanni, to woman in control of her jealous husband. Not to be overlooked by the cast was the wonderful musical accompaniment of the orchestra led by George Cleve. While not a perfect production, Don Giovanni is certainly an entertaining way to end the season.

Don Giovanni is playing now through May 4th at the California Theatre. Tickets for Don Giovanni are on Sale at the Opera San Jose Box Office, online at operasj.org or by phone 408-437-4450.

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