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Opera San José presents Puccini's contrasting Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi

SAN JOSE, CA – **Opera San José** continues its 29th season with ***Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi***, a double-bill of Giacomo Puccini operas with libretti by Giovacchino Forzano. A young nun struggles with despair in an effort to seek redemption in ***Suor Angelica***. In sharp contrast, ***Gianni Schicchi***, a farce based on a single mention in *Dante's Inferno*, is filled with greed, laughter, and family drama, and includes the beautiful aria "O mio babbino caro." ***Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi*** will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Eight performances are scheduled from April 13 through 28 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José box office, online at operasj.org or by phone at (408) 437-4450. The ***Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi*** production is made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Suor Angelica is a dramatic story of motherhood and is the second opera of Puccini's *Trittico*. The opera chronicles the transformation of its central character, Sister Angelica, who is sent to a convent because she had a child out of wedlock. In contrast, ***Gianni Schicchi*** is a hilarious opera that follows the title character who becomes instantly wealthy and finds a way for his daughter to marry the man of her dreams.

Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi premiered as part of *Il trittico*, which also includes *Il tabarro*, at the Metropolitan Opera on December 14, 1918. Although originally written to be presented together, it is common today to see only one or two of the three *trittico* operas performed in an evening.

Joseph Marcheso conducts ***Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi***. **Marcheso** returns after conducting Opera San José's productions of *Faust*, *La traviata*, *La bohème*, *Manon*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Elixir of*

Love and Lucia di Lammermoor. **Marcheso** has conducted over 30 operas in theaters around the country and recently made his debut with Opera Theater St. Louis. **Marcheso** is on the conducting staff of San Francisco Opera and is also a conductor and coach for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The **April 21 and 23** performances will be conducted by **Anthony Quartuccio**. **Quartuccio** has conducted more than 20 operas for Opera San José including the premiere of Mozart's *Idomeneo* last season and the 2010-11 production of *Tosca*. **Quartuccio** is the music director for the South Valley Symphony and the assistant conductor for the San Jose Chamber Orchestra.

Nicolas Aliaga makes his directorial debut and previously served as assistant director for Opera San José's recent productions of *The Barber of Seville*, *Pagliacci*, *La voix humaine*, and *La traviata*. **Aliaga** began his directing career with one-act operas for Pocket Opera in San Francisco. He also directed for the Forest Hills Musical Days Festival and worked as an assistant director for the San Francisco Opera Center.

Suor Angelica features members of Opera San José's resident ensemble in the principal roles. Alternating in the role of Suor Angelica (Sister Angelica) are resident sopranos **Melody King** and **Cecilia Violetta López**. They recently performed the role of Leonora in Opera San José's *Il trovatore*, *Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus)* and *Léila (The Pearl Fishers)*. Resident mezzo-soprano **Nicole Birkland** performs the role of the Principessa, Sister Angelica's aunt. **Birkland** recently appeared in the company's production of *Il trovatore* and *Die Fledermaus*. She shares the role with **Patrice Houston** who returns to Opera San José as a guest artist. Alternating in the role of Abbess, the mother superior, are mezzo-sopranos **Sophia Chew** and **Rebecca Krouner**. Appearing as Monitress are mezzo-sopranos **Tori Grayum** and **Tania Mandzy**. Mezzo-sopranos **Cathleen Candia** and **Michelle Rice** share the role of Mistress of the Novices. Sopranos **Jillian Boye** and **Elizabeth Russ** alternate in the role of Sister Genovieffa. Rounding out the cast are sopranos **Claire Myers** and **Katherine Gunnink** playing the role of Sister Osmina and sopranos **Heather Clemens** and **Antonia Tamer** in the role of Sister Dolcina.

Opera San José's production of *Gianni Schicchi* will feature baritones **Evan Brummel** and **Zachary Altman** alternating in the role of Gianni Schicchi. **Brummel** is in his second year as a member of the resident ensemble, while **Altman** made his resident company debut earlier this season in *The Pearl Fishers*. Resident sopranos **Melody King** and **Cecilia Violetta López** share the role of Schicchi's daughter, Lauretta. Resident mezzo-soprano **Nicole Birkland** and guest artist **Patrice Houston** rotate in the role of Zita, Buoso Donati's cousin. Appearing as Rinuccio, Zita's nephew, are resident tenors **James**

Callon and **Alexander Boyer**. **Callon** joined the company this season while **Boyer** is in his fifth year as a resident. Gherardo, Buoso's nephew, is played by tenors **James Stahlman** and **Robert Norman**. Sopranos **Jillian Boye** and **Elizabeth Russ** alternate in the role of Nella, Gherardo's wife. Baritones **Jo Vincent Parks** and **Rolf Daus** play the role of Buoso's brother-in-law, Betto di Signa. Appearing as Simone, Buoso's cousin, is resident bass **Silas Elash**. He shares the role with **Isaiah Musik-Ayala**. Alternating in the role of Simone's son Marco, are baritones **Peter Tuff** and **Krassen Karagiozov**. Mezzo-sopranos **Tori Grayum** and **Rebecca Krouner** perform the role of Marco's wife, La Ciesca.

Opera San José's production of *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi* includes set designs by **Charlie Smith**, *Suor Angelica* costumes by **Elizabeth Poindexter**, *Gianni Schicchi* costumes by **Malabar Limited Toronto**, lighting design by **Kent Dorsey**, and wig and makeup designs by **Jeanna Parham**.

About Opera San José

Opera San José, performing at the historic **California Theatre** in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of principal artists, Opera San José specializes in showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large, and offers *Preview* lectures and *Introduction to Opera* talks for all mainstage productions.

Suor Angelica

In Italian with English Supertitles

Cast:

April 13, 18, 21, 26

April 14, 20, 23, 28

Sister Angelica
Princess
Abbess
Monitress
Mistress of the Novices
Sister Genovieffa
Sister Osmina
Sister Dolcina

Melody King *
Nicole Birkland *
Sophia Chew
Tori Grayum †
Cathleen Candia
Jillian Boye
Claire Myers
Heather Clemens

Cecilia Violetta López *
Patrice Houston
Rebecca Krouner †
Tania Mandzy
Michelle Rice
Elizabeth Russ
Katherine Gunnink
Antonia Tamer

* Resident Company
† Affiliate Artist

Gianni Schicchi

In Italian with English Supertitles

<u>Cast:</u>	<u>April 13, 18, 21, 26</u>	<u>April 14, 20, 23, 28</u>
Gianni Schicchi	Evan Brummel *	Zachary Altman *
Lauretta	Melody King *	Cecilia Violetta López *
Zita	Nicole Birkland *	Patrice Houston
Rinuccio	James Callon *	Alexander Boyer *
Gherardo	James Stahlman	Robert Norman
Nella	Jillian Boye	Elizabeth Russ
Betto di Signa	Jo Vincent Parks	Rolf Daus
Simone	Silas Elash *	Isaiah Musik-Ayala
Marco	Peter Tuff	Krassen Karagiozov
La Ciesca	Tori Grayum †	Rebecca Krouner †

* Resident Company

† Affiliate Artist

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

What: Opera San José continues its 29th season with Giacomo Puccini's, double-bill *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi*. A nun struggles with despair and redemption in *Suor Angelica*. In sharp contrast, *Gianni Schicchi* is a farce filled with greed, laughter and family drama and includes the beautiful aria, "O mio babbino caro." *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi* will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Eight performances are scheduled from April 13 through 28 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, online at operasj.org or by phone at (408) 437-4450. *The Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi* production is made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Who: Composer: Giacomo Puccini
Librettist: Giovacchino Forzano
Conductor: Joseph Marcheso
Assistant Conductor: Anthony Quartuccio
Stage Director: Nicolas Aliaga
Set Designer: Charlie Smith
Costume Designer: Elizabeth Poindexter (Suor Angelica)
Costumes Supplied by Malabar Limited Toronto (Gianni Schicchi)
Lighting Designer: Kent Dorsey
Wigs/Makeup: Jeanna Parham

Dates: April 13, 14m, 18, 20, 21m, 23, 26, 28m; 2013

Time: "m" indicates matinee at 3pm; all other performances are at 8pm

Location: California Theatre, 345 South 1st Street between San Carlos and San Salvador, San José

Tickets: \$51–\$111 (includes city facility usage fee) from Opera San José Box Office, 2149 Paragon Dr., San José, CA 95131; operasj.org; 408-437-4450; 408-437-4455 fax
Available 90 minutes prior to curtain at the California Theatre box office only: Seniors (65 and older) 10% discount; Students 25 and younger (with current student ID) \$11 (cash only)

Photos: <http://operasj.org/news-events/press-room/press-photos/suor-angelica/advance-photos/>
<http://operasj.org/news-events/press-room/press-photos/gianni-schicchi/advance-photos/>

Press Room: <http://www.operasj.org/pressroom.html>

To learn more about *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi*, please visit operasj.org and consider these opportunities:

Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi Preview/Lecture: April 2, 12-1:00pm, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 E Fernando Street, 5th floor of the library in the Beethoven Center, downtown San José; Free vocal preview with members of the cast, followed by a lecture by General Manager Larry Hancock. For information, call 408-437-4450.

Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi Preview/Lecture: April 2, Bella Mia, 58 South First Street, downtown San José. Reception at 6:30pm; program 7-8:00pm. Wine and light refreshments will be served; Vocal preview from members of the cast, followed by a lecture by General Manager Larry Hancock. Tickets -\$30.00, call 408-437-4450.

Introduction to Opera: Before each performance (except opening night), General Manager Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk about the opera at the California Theatre, beginning at 6:30pm prior to evening performances (except opening night) and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.

Opening Night Gala Dinner: Saturday, April 13 at 5:00pm, a spectacular opening night event for *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi*. \$75.00 per person for a three-course dinner at the Sainte Claire Hotel in downtown San José, including vocal presentation and post-performance champagne reception with the artists at the Sainte Claire Hotel. For menu and reservations, call the Opera San José box office at 408-437-4450.

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