

# Opera San Jose ends its season with two operas formidable

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*By Iride Aparicio, Cultural Criticism*

The General Director of Opera San José, Irene Dalis, showed that the end must be memorable when you selected the one-act operas *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, written by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) with librettos by Giovacchino Forzano, to complete his 2012-2013 season.

If the opening night, April 13 at the California Theatre both operas, dramatic and one comic, were applauded, the reason was logical. In proceedings, technical and voices of the singers, conductor of the choirs and orchestra, in sets, costumes, including visual effects, both operas were formidable.

*Suor Angelica*, sung in both casts (OSJ presents each of his operas with two different casts) by lyric soprano Mexico-American, Violetta Cecilia Lopez in the lead role, he managed not only delight them with the angelic voice timbre the soprano, but "touching the soul" with his performance.

*Suor Angelica's* action takes place in a convent in Siena, Italy, in the seventeenth century. The play begins with the ringing of bells in the monastery (designed by Charlie Smith), represented by a white building with a courtyard surrounded by three white pillared corridors. Excelling in the left side of the courtyard, we see a pile of gray with a statue, life size, the Virgin Mary carved in stone. When the curtain opened, we heard female voices of a female choir singing the "Hail Mary" prayer in which he implored the protection of the Virgin at the hour of death.

Dressed in white robes with black cloaks covering their heads (designed by Elizabeth Poindexter) a group of novices entering the yard and after a few arias with different themes, begins to reveal his "faults" of Novices Sister (Cathleen Candia) . The "sins" of two of them, are "longing for worldly things." Genovieffa Sister (Jillian Boye) who was raised on a farm, the sheep longs, Dolcina sister (Heather Clemens) the delicious food. Meanwhile, *Angelica* (Lopez) denies worldly desires, but the sisters know they are lying, because the novice, who is the daughter of an Italian princess, what you want and what Our Lady asks every day, is to know family. For seven years, since he was forced into the convent, her family ignores it, or write or visit him.

The drama of the work is created with the arrival of a royal carriage and the entrance to the convent, Princess (Nicole Birkland) sister of his mother, who coldly rejected when *Angelica* tries to hug. What the princess reveals *Suor Angelica* (Lopez) causes the tragedy that ends with a miracle in which the sun makes the water fountain golden look with the repentance of the nun, who not only manages to be forgiven of sin (which was the reason her family interned in the convent) but allows you to see a vision that night the lighting designer, Ken Dorsey made it wonderful. Moreover, the direction of Lorna Haywood as Director of

scene and the magnificent performance of Lopez made the moment unforgettable.

That evening, Cecilia Violetta Lopez, not only performed their arias in an exquisite tone, if not representing his role "with soul". Verla sobbing, lying in the yard, arias expressing pain in thinking about his mother's death, his sister is going to marry and the death of the infant, perhaps caused by lack of love and petting a mother is about to get us moving to tears, by the intensity with which he expresses he is experiencing pain when kneeling, kneeling at the feet of the Madonna apologizes. In his role of Suor Angelica Lopez gave a magnificent performance that night.

The second opera, "Gianni Schicchi" (pronounced Iani Siki) takes place in Florence, Italy in 1299. The play begins inside the elegant bedroom (Charlie Smith) of Buoso Donati (Tony Gilbert) a wealthy Florentine aristocrat, who, dressed in white gown and white cap, we see in her bed about to expire. The scene is laughable because to see their state when their relatives, dressed elegantly, begin to move around the room singing "Poor Buoso", but as you have heard earlier that Buoso has left heirs monks begin to turn it all the room for the will.

In their greed and no respect, throw the poor dying from one side to the other of the bed, trying to find the document on the mattress. When he finally found it and read it, they discover that most of the estate, including his house, his farm and a mule, considered very valuable, has been bequeathed to the monks. Trying to override the will, begin to plot, how to change it. The situation is critical for young Rinuccio (James Callon) without the inheritance money will be able to not marry Lauretta (Cecilia Violetta Lopez) so she decides to seek help from Gianni Schicchi (Evan Brummel), his future father. The machinations of all, they are fun, form the plot of the opera.

Again, the fit Haywood address, got the singers act gracefully, without losing their naturalness. Brummel baritone imperdonó a Schicchi, and very likeable scoundrel whose suggestions do not only inherit the house achieves the best mule and mill in Signa, Donati, but that the money go to those in need, in that Rinuccio (Callon ) and daughter (Cecilia Violetta Lopez). In their papers, each of relatives sang well and acted naturally. Even Dr. Spinelloccio (Michael Mendelsohn) and the lawyer could convince the audience that they were real people. The inventiveness of the plot of the comedy, keeps the audience laughing.

As a driver of the orchestra that night, Joseph Marcheso, he did brilliantly, controlling its volume to allow the voices of the singers could be heard. Moreover, the driver allowed, with your address, that musicians may declare in its instrument, the different emotions vividly represented in the melodies of Puccini.

**For those who want to become familiar with the opera, the evening provides a wonderful experience. Both operas (with different casts but with Lopez in the role of Angelica) will perform at the California Theatre on the following dates 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26 and 28. To book tickets you can call (408) 437-4450 or online at [boxoffice@operasj.org](mailto:boxoffice@operasj.org).**