



People, pets, and our place.
The lifestyle you want, in the neighborhood you know.
Webster House is Palo Alto's most appealing senior living community.

CLICK TO LEARN MORE



Webster House
Health Center



Recreational crab season postponed

Fry's OVER 500 FRESH DEALS WEEKLY SHOP NOW

Home →
San Jose Neighborhoods
Story

Los Gatos, Saratoga: No Bugs Bunny, but 'Marriage of Figaro' will still provide plenty of laughs for local audiences

By Leeta-Rose Ballester | lballester@community-newspapers.com

POSTED: 11/04/2015 06:06:20 PM PST

UPDATED: A DAY AGO

0 COMMENTS

There is a reason that Pierre Beaumarchais' "The Barber of Seville" and "The Marriage of Figaro" play out so well in Bugs Bunny cartoons--they are pure comedy. So when the latter hits Opera San José next week, audiences can expect some big laughs.

"The Marriage of Figaro" first tickled the ribs of opera audiences in 1786 when Mozart composed the now infamous opera, with an Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. Now, Opera San José will have its turn to delight the crowd Nov. 14-29 at the California Theatre.

The setup starts out simple enough: Figaro, the head of Count Almaviva's servant staff, is set to marry Susanna, the Countess's maid. But then things get complicated in "La Folle Journee," the story's alternate title that loosely translates as "The Crazy Day." Figaro's life is (temporarily) thrown into disarray.

The Count sets his eyes on the bride-to-be and tries to delay the nuptials.



Click photo to enlarge

Photo courtesy Eric Wolfinger/2015
The Marriage of Figaro comes to Opera San Jose for six...

50 WEST
23RD STREET
TWO TREES

IN THE HEART OF THE
FLATIRON DISTRICT

OFFICE SPACE LEASING NOW ▶

Figaro, Susanna and the Countess attempt to embarrass the Count and out him on his skirt-chasing ways. He, in turn, tries to get the head servant to marry a woman old enough to be his mother--and who ends up, in fact, being his mother.

The comedic roller coaster of an opera twists and turns until Count Almaviva's love for his wife is restored.

Those plot twists are moved along by physical comedy and gags throughout the story, said bass-baritone Ben Wager, who is making his company debut in the role of Figaro.

"The Count spends the whole opera one step behind" Figaro, he said. "And Figaro always finds some way to weasel away. But it's more about Susanna, who is trying to make it without driving [Figaro] crazy, getting him killed or driving herself crazy."

Advertisement



Making the switch from drama to comedy is no easy feat, either. Wager describes his character as "light, mercurial," which took some adjustment for him.

"You don't have a lot of opportunity for comedy in opera," he said, laughing. "And it's the hardest thing to get right. It's a fine tuning of the timing and details."

And, of course, it is all set to Mozart's

music, so there isn't much wiggle room with that timing.

"The amount of hours and calories that go into making sure all the jokes are right is tough," he said, "but it is so rewarding."

Director Lillian Groag, who returns after leading the cast in last year's acclaimed world premiere of "Where Angels Fear to Tread," echoed the performer's sentiments about the hours put into an opera buffa, or comic opera.

"It's like practicing scales," she said. "You have to do it a million times to get it just right. It requires hours of rehearsal."

Though the modern opera doesn't use a literal "slap stick" like the early Italian performers of commedia dell'arte, Groag said the company finds new ways to represent that and doesn't shy away from the physical comedy of "The Marriage of Figaro."

Primary care doctors from Palo Alto to San Jose.

NEW
Medicare health plans
 FROM STANFORD HEALTH CARE

[VIEW PLANS »](#)

MOST POPULAR

[POPULAR](#) [HOUR](#) [NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [BIZ](#) [A&E](#) [LIFE](#)

Bindi Irwin's 'Dancing With the Stars' deal rejected by judge

Did Lamar Odom kick Khloe Kardashian out of hospital?

Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani officially dating, reps say

'Survivor Cambodia' recap: Merge brings chaos

Review: 'Spectre' the best Daniel Craig Bond film since 'Casino Royale'

[» More most-popular entertainment stories](#)



Primary care doctors from Palo Alto to San Jose.

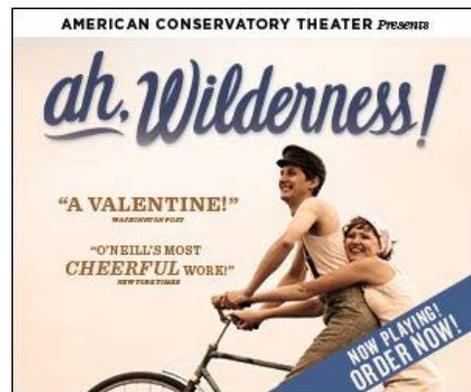
NEW
Medicare health plans
 FROM STANFORD HEALTH CARE

[VIEW PLANS »](#)



Through a playful slap or a staged slug, the nearly 230-year-old jokes and pranks are all there.

"The Marriage of Figaro," performed in Italian with English supertitles, runs Nov. 14-29 at the California Theatre, 345 S. First St. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, online at operasj.org and by phone at 408.437.4450.



FROM AROUND THE WEB

selected for you by a sponsor



Obama Giving Home Owners Solar Panels For Free

A Dollar Wiser



Kelley Blue Book's Top Picks for 2015 Cars

Kelley Blue Book



An amazing 6% cash back card has arrived

NextAdvisor



Celebs you didn't know passed away: #17 is Shocking

Your Daily Dish

Recommended by Outbrain

MORE FROM THE WEB

Kelley Blue Book Introduces Best Buy Truck Nominees *Kelley Blue Book*

Jim Cramer's Genius Tip on Paying Off Mortgage *Bills.com*

Silicon Valley Startup Is Disrupting The Traditional... *Yahoo! Finance*

Ever look yourself up? This site reveals all. It's... *Instant Checkmate*

38 Stars With Genius IQ's *Your Daily Dish*

50 Supermarket Tricks You Still Fall For *Reader's Digest*

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

Kawakami: Colin Kaepernick and the 49ers' whispers of...

Ask Amy: My husband is dead, and I want revenge on his...

San Francisco: Environmental report a boon for...

Ask Amy: Anxious dad peppers daughter for 'proof of...

Kawakami: Time is right for 49ers' York and Baalke to...

Ask Amy: Neighbors 'pay' me for repairs with beer and...

Recommended by Outbrain

- [Article commenting rules of the road](#)

Sorry, the browser you are using is not currently supported. Disqus actively supports the following browsers:

- [Firefox](#)
- [Chrome](#)
- [Internet Explorer 10+](#)
- [Safari](#)

comments powered by [Disqus](#)



Tesla opens at Stanford Shopping Center



Toyota invests \$1 billion in AI, robotics research in Silicon Valley



Innovative online schools attract dropouts



Can Warriors win 70 games this season?



Obama administration



Human-animal



San Jose police



Santa Clara County