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**Opera San José presents Donizetti's
*Lucia di Lammermoor***

SAN JOSE, CA (August 9, 2016) – Opera San José opens its 2016-17 season with Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Donizetti drew inspiration for this opera from Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The story revolves around a feud between two families, the Ashtons and the Ravenswoods. Lucia Ashton loves Edgar, master of Ravenswood, whose land her family has taken by force. When Lucia's brother, out of political necessity, forces her into an arranged marriage, there are dire consequences. Donizetti expertly combines the epic story of Lucia with some of the most wonderful melodies from his pen and the most affecting mad scene in theatre.

Lucia di Lammermoor will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Six performances are scheduled from September 10 – 25, 2016 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Performances are supported, in part, by a grant from the San José Office of Cultural Affairs.

Ming Luke returns to conduct *Lucia di Lammermoor* this season after conducting last season's final production, Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Mr. Luke has also served as conductor for the company premiere of Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, and shared conducting duties in Opera San José's recent productions of Verdi's *Falstaff*, Poulenc's *La voix humaine*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*.

Benjamin Spierman makes his Opera San José debut as stage director for *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Mr. Spierman began working as a Stage Manager and Assistant Director in the late 1990s for numerous opera houses including the Central City Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Light Opera Oklahoma, Mississippi Opera, and Opera Theater of Saint Louis. Most notably, Mr. Spierman assisted on Saint Louis's Lewis and Clark Bicentennial premiere production of Elkhana Pulitzer's *Dream of the Pacific* and on Central City Opera's American premiere production of Britten's *Gloriana* (where he also directed opera scenes and the company's annual production of Henry Mollicone's *The Face on the Barroom Floor*.)

Soprano **Sylvia Lee**, a new member of the resident company, will appear in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Ms. Lee possesses a range of more than three octaves and is an accomplished coloratura soprano. Recent engagements for Ms. Lee include joining the roster of the MET opera in the new production of Alban Berg's *Lulu*, Gilda (Verdi's *Rigoletto*) and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Musica Viva in Hong Kong and Korean National Opera. She has also appeared as Ilia (Mozart's *Idomeneo*), and Pamina (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*).

The role of Edgardo will be sung by resident company member, tenor **Kirk Dougherty**. Mr. Dougherty most recently appeared as Harold Mitchell in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* in which he was praised for playing a "gentle but susceptible Mitch, portrayed with appropriate awkwardness" by the Milpitas Post.

Mr. Dougherty also appeared last season as Don José (Bizet's *Carmen*) and Cavaradossi (Puccini's *Tosca*). He debuted with Opera San José during the 2014-15 season, where he was seen as the Duke (Verdi's *Rigoletto*), Tamino (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), and Philip in the world premiere of Mark Weiser's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

Resident baritone **Matthew Hanscom** will sing the role of Enrico. During Opera San José's final production last season as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Mr. Hanscom was commended by *The Metro* for playing the role as "cruel, crude and controlling with a bassy, commanding voice to match." Mr. Hanscom appeared in every production last season singing Escamillo (Bizet's *Carmen*), Count Almaviva (Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*), and Scarpia (Puccini's *Tosca*). He debuted with Opera San José during the 2014-15 season and was featured in the title role of Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

Colin Ramsey, Opera San José's newest bass-baritone and member of the resident company, will make his debut as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Mr. Ramsey has been recognized by *Opera News* for his "sumptuous voice" and "touching, effective" portrayal of Mr. Kofner in Menotti's *The Consul* at Seattle Opera; he later reprised the role in the same production with Opera Santa Barbara. Mr. Ramsey has performed with many companies including Seattle Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, and Sarasota Opera.

Yungbae Yang makes his Opera San José debut appearing as Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Recent engagements for Mr. Yang include Riccardo (Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*) and the title role in *Faust*. As a concert artist, he has performed Mozart's *Requiem* with Distinguished Concerts International New York at Carnegie Hall and Handel's *Messiah* at Lincoln Center.

Michael Mendelsohn returns to Opera San José to sing the role of Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Mr. Mendelsohn has performed several roles with the company, including Goro (Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*), Dr. Blind (Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*), Spinelloccio and Amantio di Nicolao (Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*), and Stiva Oblonsky (Carlson's *Anna Karenina*) to name just a few.

Opera San José's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* includes set designs by **Steven Kemp**, costumes by **B. Modern**, lighting design by **Sean A. Russell**, wig and makeup designs by **Jessica Carter** and fight choreography by **Kit Wilder**.

About Opera San José

Opera San José, performing at the beautiful 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.

Dates: September 10, 11m, 15, 18m, 23, 25m

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, CA

Tickets: Available by phone, online, and at the Opera San José Box Office, 2149 Paragon Dr., San José, CA 95131; \$56–\$176 (includes city facility usage fee). Students 25 and younger (with current student ID) \$10; 408-437-4450; 408-437-4455 fax; operasj.org.

Lucia di Lammermoor Special Preview: August 30, 2016, at 12 p.m., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 East Fernando Street, Beethoven Center, 5th floor, downtown San José; Free vocal preview with members of the cast. For information, call 408-437-4450.

Introduction to Opera: General Director Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk to ticket holders about the opera at the California Theatre before each performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The talk begins at 6:30pm prior to evening performances and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.

Press Room: www.operasj.org/news-events/press-room

To learn more about *Lucia di Lammermoor*, please visit operasj.org

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