

# Opera San José's Lucia

September 12, 2016



## \* Notes \*

Opera San José's latest season started with a solid production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* last weekend. The cast, especially Lucia (Sylvia Lee as Lucia pictured left; photograph by Pat Kirk), was very strong and the orchestra sounded fine.

Ms. Lee has just started in Opera San José's resident company, and based on her performance Sunday afternoon, she is a welcome addition. Her voice isn't huge, but is bright enough to cut through the orchestra, and is consistent throughout her range. Her mad scene was completely convincing and it was remarkable how frightening she was, even though she is a tiny woman.

Resident tenor Kirk Dougherty sounded perfectly nice as Edgardo, though it does always look like he is putting in a lot of

effort. His final aria was good, and it really was terrible that someone's cellular phone rang during a quiet part of the piece. Baritone Matthew Hanscom likewise performed well, and is suited to the big brother role of Enrico, it seemed more natural to him than some of the others he's had in recent memory.

In the smaller parts, tenor Michael Mendelsohn (Arturo) stood out as a scene stealer in Act II Scene 2. He was very funny, which isn't the usual way the character is handled but it worked anyway. Bass Colin Ramsey was a reedy Raimondo, while Anna Yelizarova (Alisa) and Yungbae Yang (Normanno) rounded out the cast with sympathetic ease.

Ming Luke kept the orchestra together, his tempi were appropriate and the woodwinds sounded especially pretty. The chorus also was fairly synchronized and cohesive.

There was very little surprising about Benjamin Spierman's production besides the comic Arturo and the fact that it was difficult to keep sharp objects away from Lucia. She kept grabbing knives and swords, menacing men much larger than herself.

### **Tattling \***

There was a hearing aid that was quite noisy during the whole performance.