



culturalworldbilingual.com

Cultural World

Bilingual

OSJ's "THE BARBER OF SEVILLE" Opened with a Standing Ovation By Iride Aparicio

Photos by: Pat Kirk



BRIAN JAMES MYER as Figaro

SAN JOSÉ, CA -- "Figaro, Figaro, Figaro" According to CESARE STERBINI's Libretto, written for GIACHINO ROSSINI's opera "IL BARBIERI DI SIVIGLIA," everybody calls Figaro in Seville, Spain during the seventeenth Century. Figaro was the town's witty barber, who aside from shaving men's beards, and fixing ladies' hair, fixed everything else, if paid for his help.

So, (in the libretto) when Count Almaviva (KIRK DOUGHERTY) disguised as Lindoro, a poor student, asks Figaro (BRIAN JAMES MYER) to help him enter the house of Don Bartolo (VALERIAN RUMINSKI) the guardian of Rosina (RENÉE RAPIER) the woman he loves, Figaro plans a way that when putting it into effect, keep the audience laughing, the singers acting different comic roles and composer Rossini the opportunity to display his marvelous Bel Canto arias interpreted by the singers.



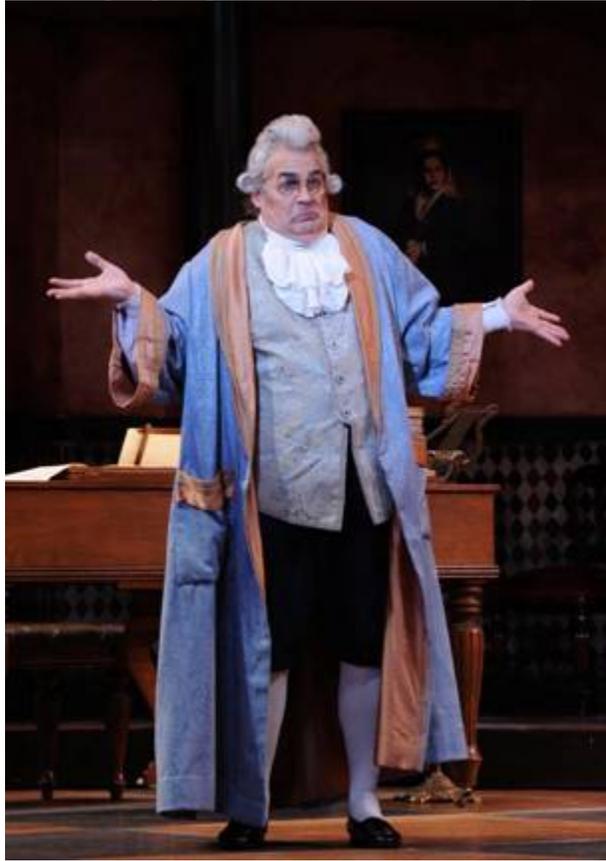
KIRK DOUGHERTY as Lindoro and RENÉE RAPIER as Rosina

And here we can add that on the opera's opening night, on November 12 at the California Theatre, the Opera San José's singers voices were top class.

On that night, the whole two acts of the work, moved smoothly. It was one of those rare nights in which all the elements go perfectly on the stage. The orchestra under the baton of ANDREW WHITFIELD, sounded rhythmically, and all the solos of the instruments were played in tune.

Stage Director, LAYNA CHIANAKAS, managed natural acting from the singers playing the comic roles. One of the most outstanding performances was given by Baritone BRIAN JAMES MYER in the role of Figaro. He acted his role with gusto and demonstrated his wit, without exaggeration. His tone of voice was exquisite. Another marvelous tone of voice was the tone to RAPIER. Vibrant, sonorous, and completely fluent when going up and down the scales in her melismas. Her acting as the bore "Rosina" was believable.

Another tone of voice with unique quality that night, was the tone of Fiorello, Baritone (BABATUNDE AKINBOBOYE), who in the role of the Count's servant, opened the opera directing a group of musicians serenading Rosina, beneath her balcony, singing the aria Ecco



Ridente in cielo (Smiling in the Eastern sky) And it is here, when waiting for Rosina to open her window, that the Count, disguised as Lindoro, meets Figaro (MYER) Witnessing his popularity with the ladies, who come to greet him, hearing his boasting as "A jack of all trades" in his aria "Largo al Factotum della citta" (Open space (for me) the handyman of the city) and learning that the Figaro is Don Bartolo's (RUMINSKI, pictured Left) barber, Lindoro asks for his help and pays him with a bag of gold coins.

And Figaro, the main character in this opera Buffa (comic) based on the episodes of French watchmaker, inventor, playwright, musician, diplomat. Spy, publisher, horticulturist, arms dealer, satirist, financier, and revolutionary PIERRE BEAUMARCHAIS Trilogy of Figaro. And it was because Figaro as a character was so "lively" to start with, that he was used by both ROSSINI and MOZART (in THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO) in their

operas to make their audience laugh.

And we did. We laughed with DOUGHERTY's impersonation of the drunk soldier, and second impersonation of Music Teacher, Don Basilio (COLIN RAMSEY) . We also also laughed with Berta (TERESSA FOSS) who sang her arias in a good tone of voice and played her role as the maid of Don Bartolo charmingly, using stuffed cats. The episode of Rosina singing and Lindoro kissing her on the piano bench after Don Bartolo, who was carefully "watching them" falls sleep in his chair, was really funny.



DOUGHERTY, RAMSEY, MYER and RAPIER as Lindoro, Don Basilio, Figaro, & Rosina

Yet, while Director CHIANAKAS funny details made the production delightful, not all made us laugh. The "carrot battle," went completely out of character, and the projected carrots, on the stage curtain, as a joke, to remind the audience that the Bugs Bunny, cartoon, *Rabbit of Seville*, (a Warner Bros. Looney Tunes theatrical cartoon short released in 1950) used the BARBER's music, did not go too well with the audience.

But it was a perfect night for sounds, and visually the opera was also marvelous. MATTHEW ANTAKY, sets, the front of Don Bartolo's house, with a balcony and fountain on the front is beautiful, and the red interior of the house elegant. The costumes (ALYSSA OANIA costume coordinator) are appropriate for the time.

With THE BARBER OF SEVILLE, General Director LARRY HANCOCK gave the audience on that night one of the best productions presented on OPERA SAN JOSE's stage.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE will play at the California Theatre until November 27. To order tickets call the box office at 404-437-4450 or order them online at <https://www.operasj.org/>

http://culturalworldbilingual.com/Reviews_Interviews/Opera19.php