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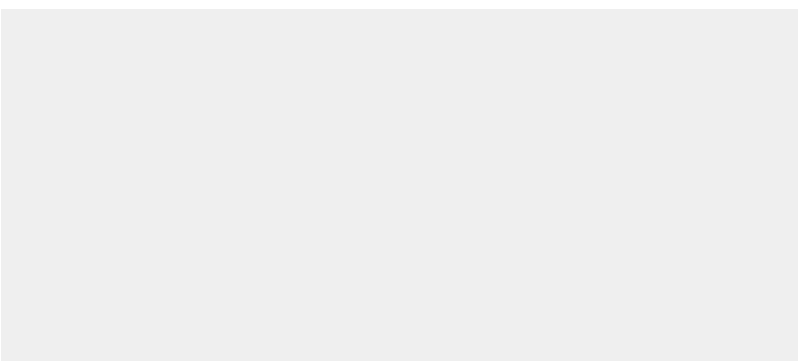
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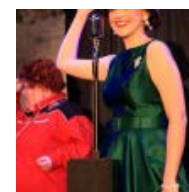
Kingston navigates new territory in Opera San Jose's 'Cosi fan tutte'

BY DAVID JOHN CHÁVEZ SEPTEMBER 8, 2017 [AMANDA KINGSTON](#) [CALIFORNIA THEATRE](#) [COSI FAN TUTTE](#) [OPERA SAN JOSE](#)

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PHOTOS





In her first role as a resident of Opera San Jose, soprano Amanda Kingston will sing Fiordiligi in "Cosi Fan Tutte" at the California Theatre. (Opera San Jose photo)

When she was first presented with the opportunity, Amanda Kingston had her reservations about singing the role of Fiordiligi in the Opera San Jose production of opera buffa "*Cosi fan tutte*."

It wasn't that she disliked the music. After all, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart premiered the opera in 1790, only a year before his death at 35, and his genius at such a young age is



on full display in the piece.

So what exactly was it?

Let's start with the title, which by today's standards can be considered a bit on the misogynistic side. The show translates in English loosely to "Women are like that." With a story that is consumed with the male characters trying to prove how unfaithful women are in the hands of anything remotely resembling a man, the show might not be something that appeals to today's societal sensibilities. The male characters go to great lengths, even changing their cultural identities, to prove their point. But as Kingston explored the show further, she realized that there is so much more to the show than what's in a name.

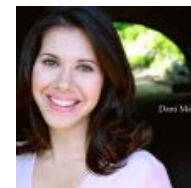
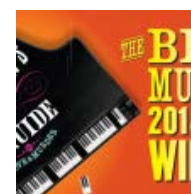
"When I was first approached about the show, I was a little put off," said the soprano Kingston, 33, who began her year-long residency with Opera San Jose at the end of this past July. "It's a show about love but it's really about the challenges of love and relationships.

"As you get more into it, you learn the show is about love not being perfect, and people learn to grow together or they don't."

Kingston is embracing this latest challenge, singing a Mozart opera, which is stylistically very different than anything she's sung before – certainly different than a Puccini or Giuseppe Verdi opera. While those composers offer more wiggle room in terms of freedom, Mozart is much more specific.

"Brilliant thought embeds Mozart's music," she said. "He is very purposeful and nothing is there by mistake. I always want to add a personal spin to my roles, but in Mozart, it's much more specific and important to stick to what's on the page."

Taking on massive, iconic roles in the opera world is something that Kingston is getting used to. A native of Houston, Texas, she grew up with a family that was doing more athletic ventures than musical ones, yet she took voice lessons and sang in choirs growing up. It was fun, but there was no next-level passion for it just yet. But by the time



she reached high school and delved into musical theatre, the door began to open – she just wasn't ready to walk in fully.

A certain cast recording changed all that.

"I got a cd of (Giacomo Puccini's) *'La Boheme,'* listened to it and was just transfixed," said Kingston. "I was sobbing by the end of the first act."

She craved more. Even though she knew nothing of what was being said, her hunger for opera grew exponentially. And getting the opportunity to see a live production in Madison, Wisconsin of "Die Fledermaus" by Johann Strauss only solidified her new musical path.

After going on to obtain a degree from the University of Michigan in vocal performance and music education, finishing her formal schooling with a Master's degree in voice and opera from the University of Houston, she was ready to work and grind. And all her training finally paid off in 2014, where she received what she calls one of the "biggest highlights of my career" – the title role in "Lucia di Lammermoor" by Gaetano Donizetti. A major role with a major company, Opera in the Heights in Houston, validated Kingston in a huge way.

"I walked into this show and had two arias and all this music, and I felt like I had something to say," said Kingston. "I really had something I wanted to put out there and felt I deserved to be there."

The confirmation of her talents from those with highly trained ears, even landing this residency for a year, has helped her arrive on the scene. And getting extended employment in the transient world of opera singing is precious.

"It's one thing to have your mom and best friend tell you you're a good singer, but that doesn't get you a job. It's nice to hear it from those who are in the business, because they know what they are looking for and what makes a successful singer."

Online – www.amandakingston.com



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Opera San Jose presents **“Cosi fan tutte”**

By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Directed by Brad Dalton

The California Theatre

345 S. First Street, San Jose, CA

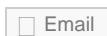
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