

## Just Another Night at the Opera

(And you thought modern entertainment was scandalous)

By Henry Reed

Only in an opera house could someone utter the phrase “that’s the way all women behave” in 2017 and not cause a triggered media frenzy and subsequent protest march. Indeed, the dated notions of the past are safe within the confines of historical performance, and that’s one of the reasons it’s so fun to attend an opera: it’s literally a blast from the past, both the beautiful and the questionable.

Are you sick of turning on the TV and having to wade through all the garbage? Wish there was a more sophisticated and refined form of entertainment? Wanna be passive-aggressive towards your significant other through a morally conscientious plot? Boy, do I have a great night out for you.

After getting my ticket expertly torn and leading my girlfriend into the California Theatre on First Street in downtown San Jose, we were effectively free from the modern world and waited in anticipation for the opening night of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, a late 1700s take on a bunch of jocks hanging out and arguing over the faithfulness of their girlfriends. Mozart’s story has really stood the test of time, because over 200 years later people are still obsessing over the exact same topic. Essentially these two classical-era bros refuse to believe their fiancées would cheat on them, but this older dude who’s apparently been around the block is quick to inform them how wrong they are, claiming no woman can resist flirting even if she’s taken. A bet is made and it’s up to these overly defensive, insecure fencing aficionados to expose their girlfriends for the apparent fiends they truly are (according to Mozart).

Let’s talk about the performance: it was amazing. The singers were magnificent, the orchestra was bomb as always, and everything really came together for an awesome opening night. There were lots of funny moments, many times when you’ll turn to your date with a shocked expression on your face, and some truly dramatic and touching parts as well. You could really tell that everyone on and below the stage had decades of training to get to where they are, which is what makes events like this so awesome: everyone who’s entertaining you is a subject matter expert in an art form that predates practically everything that we know in this reality.

Now I know we’ve all been in a situation where you show up for class or work or whatever, and there’s someone there whom you’ve never seen before in your life with a mustache and a foreign hat, but then they take the mustache and hat off and suddenly you recognize them as your best friend. We’ve all been there. So it was no surprise that these two grown women of regular intelligence weren’t able to recognize the men they planned on marrying because of a fancy outfit and glued on facial hair. Who could blame them? In any case, these guys have their work cut out for them and must attempt to woo each other’s girlfriends who, I must say, were initially opposed to the idea of an affair. Oh, how the mighty fall.

Coming to see anything with live music is a trip, but an orchestra is one of the coolest experiences. There are so many different sounds, from the mesmerizing melodies of the woodwinds to the powerful

bellowing of the brass to the triumphant booms of the timpani. When you combine the beautiful sounds of the music with the elegant costumes and set design of the stage, you get a fantastic entertainment experience and an awesome night out with whoever you want.

As far as things to do in San Jose, it's actually pretty limited. You can see a movie, where you pay inflated prices for junk food so you can watch a mediocre romcom coming out of shot speakers while the people around you talk and text. You could try a club, where the music is so loud you can't even hear the person next to you and pay 15 bucks for a \$3 margarita. Or you could try to organize an outing with your friends which will involve waiting for everyone to show up, different folks wanting to do different things, plans constantly changing, people not answering their phones, and mostly you just standing around outside, cold. I wouldn't suggest a leisurely stroll after a certain hour in the downtown area, either.

Compare that to Opera San José, which only costs 10 bucks for students and is an entire evening of entertainment, plus you get a little culture in your system and have something that will actually be memorable in the future instead of a headache, an empty wallet or another sad night of Netflix.

In short, this opera was amazing and I loved every minute of it. Funny, emotional, against the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grain, and above all a mastery of the art. Though the plot may seem a bit... North of the Wall by today's standards, there are a lot of themes throughout that ring true for people today, and it's refreshing to know that folks back in the past dealt with a lot of the same problems, fears and questions that we do today. I highly recommend you check out [OSJ's site](#) and grab some tickets for this season, because, believe me, they're gonna sell out fast. Thanks for reading and I hope you enjoy the Opera!