

For Immediate Release

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Opera San José Presents Puccini's

La rondine

SAN JOSE, CA (October 5, 2017) – At a fashionable Parisian party, a poet speaks of the nature of love, and Magda realizes that her life as a courtesan has no love at all. Seeking to relive her poor but happy youth, she dresses as a shop girl and ventures to the nightspot she frequented as a teenager. There, she meets and falls in love with a young man, and leaves her rich protector. Of course, it goes the way of all flesh. Puccini, at the height of his Romantic style, revels in the gaiety of Paris and the sensual richness of love: pure soaring lushness, and a little heartbreak.

"We all wonder about the road not taken, the wish not granted or the destiny denied," said director, Candace Evans. "But what happens when long held dreams become reality? Puccini's exquisite opera *La rondine* poses this question, and I relish the opportunity to join Opera San Jose for the first time, to direct this beguiling piece."

La rondine will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Runtime is approximately 2.5 hours. Opera San José presents six performances of this opera, opening in San José's California Theatre on November 11, 2017, closing November 26, 2017. The California Theatre is at 345 S. First Street in downtown San José.

Christopher Larkin makes his Opera San José debut conducting Puccini's *La rondine*. Mr. Larkin's conducting credits include Washington National Opera's productions of Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* and Bellini's *I puritani*, New York City Opera's *Don Giovanni* (Mozart) and *La bohème* (Puccini), Verdi's *La traviata* with Santa Fe Opera, Puccini's *Tosca*, Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* for Houston Grand Opera, Donizetti's *La fille du regiment* for Cincinnati Opera, and Rossini's *Il viaggio à Reims*, and Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*.

Candace Evans will make her directorial debut with Opera San José, directing *La rondine*. Recent engagements for Ms. Evans include directing Richard Strauss' *Salome* for Opera San Antonio, an abridged version of Catalani's *La Wally* for Dallas Opera in tandem with the world premiere, *Everest, Three Decembers* for the Fort Worth Opera Festival, and her new production of Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* for Opera Southwest. Ms. Evans was recently honored by the legendary Teatro Colón, when her production of *La Viuda Alegre* was voted in the top three operas of the season by the Argentinian National Music Critics Association.

Soprano **Amanda Kingston**, a member of the resident company, will appear as Magda in *La rondine*. Ms. Kingston recently debuted with the company as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in which Tad Malone of the Metro wrote, "Amanda Kingston as Fiordiligi is equally gullible and prone to emotion, which she transmits through a delicate voice that seems to rise up from silence, wavering until it explodes in exuberant, animated crescendos."

Jason Slayden also makes his company debut, appearing as Ruggero. Recent performances for Mr. Slayden include his debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago as Tybalt and the cover of Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La bohème* for Virginia Opera, Alfredo in Verdi's *La traviata* with Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, Rinuccio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* for Opera Santa Barbara, and Don José in *The Tragedy of Carmen* with the Colorado Music Festival.

Trevor Neal, bass, also makes his Opera San José debut as a member of this season's resident company appearing as Rambaldo. Mr. Neal recently performed the roles of Killian in Weber's *Der Freischutz* with Virginia Opera, Sciarrone in Puccini's *Tosca* with Opera North, and the Bonze in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* with Ash Lawn Opera. He was a member of the Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist Program in the 2015-16 season where he covered Mars/Morpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the Dutchman in *The Flying Dutchman*.

Elena Galvan makes her company debut as Lisette. During the 2016-17 season, Ms. Galvan was a Young Artist at Florida Grand Opera where she performed the roles of Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen* and Oscar in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*. Other engagements include the world premiere performance of *A Cuban in Vermont* – the orchestrated song cycle by Jorge Martin, in her debut with Nu Deco Ensemble, and the role of Konstanze in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* with Opera Ithaca.

Mason Gates, tenor, returns as a member of the resident company, appearing as Prunier. Last season Mr. Gates performed the role of Jonathan Dale in Puts and Campbell's *Silent Night* in which Jim Sohre of *Opera Today* said, "Mr. Gates is a focused, involved actor, possessed of a secure, intense tenor that he is able to weight with a single-minded pain and purpose. He makes us understand the character's anguish, all the while he disturbs us with his potent hatred." Mr. Gates made his company debut as Don Curzio in the 2015-16 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Katharine Gunnink, soprano, who joined Opera San José this season as an associate member of the resident company, will appear as Bianca. Recent engagements for Ms. Gunnink include Santuzza and Nedda in Opera San Luis Obispo's double bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Other performances on Ms. Gunnink's schedule include Lady with a Cake Box for Argento's *Postcards from Morocco* with Sin City Opera in Las Vegas, and a series of concerts performing Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* across the U.S. in spring of 2018.

Opera San José's production of *La rondine* includes set designs by **Larry Hancock**, costumes designed by **Elizabeth Poindexter**, lighting design by Kent Dorsey, and wig and makeup designs by **Christina Martin**.

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: Performances: November 11, 12m, 16, 19m, 21, 26m

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

La rondine Preview: October 31, 2017 from 12 – 1 p.m., California Theatre, 345 S. First Street in downtown San José; Please use the Market Street entrance; Free vocal preview with members of the cast. For information, call 408-437-4450.



Opera San José

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 *La rondine*. 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 *La rondine*, please visit operasj.org

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