

Opera Santa Barbara

Don Giovanni Noir

ONLY A SOURPUSS WOULD FAULT the Dashiell Hammett conceit. Opera Santa Barbara's production last Friday night and Sunday afternoon of Kentucky Opera's film noir take on Mozart's towering masterpiece, *Don Giovanni*, would surely have enchanted both the composer and his fellow revolutionary Freemason, librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. Friday's sold out and glittering opening night crowd filled the Granada Theatre including all the box seats to its gunwales, generating an energy so electric it was hard not to be excited, especially after the first ominous chords of the *Overture*, one of the greatest moments in the history of classical music, announced the beginning of the journey. As conductor Douglas Kinney Frost pointed out in an earlier interview with CASA, there is not a single tune in *Don Giovanni* that is not recognizable to the general public, even if they have no idea why: genius in spades nearly 230 years after the opera's premiere in Prague.



DANIEL KEPL
MUSIC REVIEW

Jenkins-Evans' earth and grey-toned costume design - 1940's and 1950's era suits, hats, and petticoats - matched Mozart's glorious music and Da Ponte's razor-sharp texts without suffering the least cross-culture shock. Trevor Burk's brilliant lighting design made a stunning visual success of the opera's film noir homage. Harrowing human shadows and window frames were projected onto the stage floor and stretched as the Mozartean day progressed; a superb rendering of the 24 hours in which the opera's action takes place.



A simple but versatile stationary "street alley" scenic design by Eric Allgeier, including an effective steeply raked stage, framed the action nicely throughout the opera's two Acts. *Don Giovanni's* several scene changes, a dizzying re-shuffling of props choreographed with canny ease by Stage Director Kelly Robinson, kept the action motivated and vigorous. Holly

A uniformly capable singing and acting cast for this extremely difficult and virtuoso masterpiece included baritone Mark Walters (Don Giovanni), bass Daniel Mobbs (Leporello), bass Kevin Thompson (Il Commendatore), soprano Marcy Stonikas (Donna Anna), tenor Benjamin Brecher (Don Ottavio), soprano Rena Harms (Donna Elvira), bass Ryan Bradford (Masetto), and soprano Sara Duchovnay (Zerlina). Chorus Master John Ballerino's troops were in excellent voice Friday, and the orchestra, under Douglas Kinney Frost played beautifully.

Opera Santa Barbara's *Don Giovanni* was supported by Roger and Sarah Chrisman, the Elaine F. Stepanek Foundation, and the Mithun Family Foundation.

For info on upcoming productions visit www.operasb.org



1. **Mary T. Dorr** congratulates OSB General Dir. **Steven Sharpe**.
2. *Don Giovanni* Production Sponsors **Roger Chrisman** and **Sarah Schlinger-Chrisman**; OSB Bd. Choir **Sandra "Sandy" Urquhart**; with OSB Directors **Laurel Phillips**, **Joan Rutkowski**; and Dr. **Robert "Bob" Urquhart**.
3. Patrons **Robert Lief**,

Gretchen Lief, Lady **Leslie Ridley-Tree**, and **Brian King**. 4. **Susan Aberle** and **Richard Aberle**, Emeritus Board of Directors. 5. **Carla Hahn**; **Richard** and **Luci Janssen**; **Jon** and **Melody DuPrau**, with **Ed Birch** and **Sue Birch**.

6. **Ryan Bradford** (Masetto); **Molly Phelan**; **Kostis Protopopas**, OSB Artistic Director; **Marcy Stonikas** (Donna Anna); and **Sergey Khaliklov** (Cover Leporello and Masetto).

7. **Jumi Kim**; **Tony DeMartino**; **Sara Duchovnay** (Zerlina); **Jaqueline Taylor**; and **Naomi Merer**. 8. **Mark Walters** (Don Giovanni); **Sandy Urquhart**, OSB Chair; and **Kostis Protopopas**, OSB Artistic Director.

9. **Diana MacFarlane**, **Donna Brown**, **Dolly Granatelli**, **Ralph MacFarlane**; Host **A. C. Moore**; **Ron Gallo**, **Andrea Gallo**, and Sheriff **Bill Brown**.

10. **Carson Gilmore**, **Adrien Roberts**, **Daniel Mobbs**, (Leporello), **Zachary Mendez**, and **Rena Harms** (Donna Elvira).



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At The Magical Dinner staged prior to Don Giovanni

During an evening of theatrical sparkle and musical wonder, sponsors and supporters of Opera Santa Barbara gathered in the McCune Founders room to toast the greatness of Opera. Warmly greeted by Sandy Urquhart, Chair of the Board of Directors for Opera Santa Barbara, guests dined in sumptuous Giovanni style without the treacherous duplicitousness with which the opera is associated.

The food and wine were deserving and the ambiance was magnificently appointed with chandeliers and New Zealand peonies.

Participants enjoyed a sumptuous three-course gala dinner catered by Rincon Catering and Palmina wines. The Gala dinner was decorated by Joni Papay of Santa Barbara Style.

