



A Night at La Scala

By Devon Pettengill / CASA

ON A SUNNY SUMMER EVENING THIS MONTH the Four Seasons Biltmore was transformed into one of the world's most famous opera houses. This transformation was the work of Opera Santa Barbara, which hosted *A Night at La Scala* to benefit the continued enjoyment of opera in Santa Barbara.

Event Committee member Sandy Urquhart shared that the support of the community "keeps opera and the arts alive and well in Santa Barbara. Their support is very meaningful to us, especially as we move into the Granada Theatre."

Guests were greeted by characters from some of the most well known operas. Rigoletto from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Figaro from Rossini's *Le Barbier de Séville*, Tosca from Puccini's *Tosca*, and Madame Butterfly from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* could all be found wandering the Biltmore courtyard and posing for photographs.

"This year we wanted to do something different," shared Carolina Montgomery, member of the Event Committee. "The theme honored *Teatro alla Scala*, the following year we will honor a different opera house....as if we could travel around the world."

The entertainment for the evening consisted of arias performed by soprano Inna Dukach and tenor Eduardo Villa. Dukach, a Russian American, recently sang Mimi in New York City Opera's *La Bohème* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Orlando Opera. Villa is a Santa Barbara native known for his unusually broad repertoire. He is a regular guest with the Metropolitan Opera, where he has performed the title role in *Don Carlo*, Radames in *Aida*, and Don Jose in *Carmen*.

"I had a wonderful time," shared Dolly Granatelli, Event Committee member. "My husband (Andy Granatelli) was a brilliant auctioneer, the singing was great, and the food was exceptional."

The evening featured a live auction with auctioneers Andy Granatelli and Tom Snow offering guests items such as a four-carat ruby ring, a cruise on the Santa Barbara Channel, and the opportunity to conduct the Opera Santa Barbara Orchestra.

For Montgomery the results are the most rewarding part of being a member of the Event Committee. "It was the best event yet," she shared. "We raised \$280,000, and we had more community participation, which is always a plus."

The Event Committee for the evening included Dolly Granatelli, Carolina Montgomery, Fred Sidon, and Sandy Urquhart.

"The input from Steven Sharpe was very important in putting together this event," Urquhart shared. "He is very talented in many arenas, and we are grateful to have him as our General Director."

Opera Santa Barbara's upcoming 2009 season will take place at the newly renovated Granada Theatre, and will include performances of *Carmen* and *The Merry Widow*.

For more information about Opera Santa Barbara, visit www.operasb.com.



Eduardo Villa and Inna Dukach sing an aria from Puccini's *La Bohème*.



Dolly Granatelli, Tom Snow, and Kate Paulsen as Tosca.



First Row: Miller James as Rigoletto and Diane Sidon. Second Row: Sandy Urquhart, Carolina Montgomery and Valéry Ryvkin. Third Row: Board President Peter Bertling, Parker Montgomery, Deborah Bertling, and Bob Urquhart.



Sarah Chrisman, Jinyan Liu as Madame Butterfly, and Bruce Rickborn.



Brendan Fleming as Figaro, Event Committee members Dolly Granatelli, Carolina Montgomery, Sandy Urquhart, and Fred Sidon.



Duncan Mellichamp with Madame Butterfly Jinyan Liu.



Jo Berkus, Jinyan Liu as Madame Butterfly, and Barry Berkus.

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