



A Night of Passion

By Devon Pettengill / CASA

THE EXCITEMENT OF LUST, THE HEARTBREAK OF BETRAYAL, AND THE DEVASTATION OF VIOLENT REVENGE were passionately portrayed at the opening night of Opera Santa Barbara's 14th season, which presented two operas, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, as part of the Italian Passions Festival.

Perhaps the most notable guest of the evening was Consul General of Italy Nicola Faganello and his wife Franzesca. "We both like opera and classical music very much," Consul Faganello shared. "My wife has studied musicology." The Consul also shared that he came to Santa Barbara to continue the previous Consul's tradition of supporting Opera Santa Barbara.

Saturday marked the first time that the two operas have been performed together in Santa Barbara, though the performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* as a double bill is relatively common in the opera world. Another first was Allan Glassman's taking on of back-to-back roles as the tenor lead in both short operas, as Turiddu in *Cavalleria* and Canio in *Pagliacci*.

"It was pretty exhausting but exciting," Glassman reflected following the show, saying that with rapid changes in costume and make-up, he barely had time to think about the transition between the two operas. Nevertheless, he is looking forward to a few days off following the past two weeks of intense rehearsal leading up to the opening.

The first performance of the night, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, opens with village girl Santuzza who has discovered her lover Turiddu has returned to the arms of his former lover Lola. Enraged at the betrayal, she reveals Lola's infidelity to her husband Alfio. Jealous and vengeful passions ensue, leading to a challenge to a duel between the two men and a famously beautiful aria in which Turiddu bids farewell to his mother Mamma Lucia.

More betrayal and revenge comes to the stage in *Pagliacci*, which centers on the drama between members of a troupe of *commedia dell'arte* clowns but is far from lighthearted. A play within a play climaxes with the troupe's leader Canio taking revenge upon his unfaithful wife Nedda in front of an audience of villagers.

The two short operas, after premiering

within two years of each other in the early 1890s, have traditionally been paired together in a double bill. They are so similar in theme, that many opera enthusiasts consider them be almost two acts of the same longer opera.

The opening of this season comes with exciting changes for Opera Santa Barbara. The company will soon claim the newly remodeled Granada Theatre as a venue. Also, an anonymous member of the Board of Directors has donated \$5 million as the first donation for the Bravo Society, a new program of planned giving for Opera Santa Barbara. "The initial gift came from a person with a passion for opera who wants to see it continue in Santa Barbara," shared Board President Peter Bertling.

The evening included an elegant Benefit Gala dinner in the tented Lobero Courtyard, where benefactors of Opera Santa Barbara and VIPs, attired in their black-tie best, indulged in an atmosphere of celebration and indulgence. Despite the three-course meal provided by the Four Seasons Biltmore and the variety of fine Palmina wines provided by Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp,

many snuck snacks from the table centerpieces of crimson roses and fresh pears, grapes, and, appropriate to the drama of the evening, blood oranges. Guests also enjoyed a private intermission and

an after party with the opportunity to celebrate and interact with the operas' cast and production team. As guests left they were handed miniature bottles of red Sanbitter aperitif soda, labeled as Elixir of Love, in promotion of the other opera in the festival, *L'Elisir D'Amore*, which opens Saturday, March 1st.



Malcom McKenzie (Cast Member), Sandra Urquhart (Board Member OSB), Allan Glassman (Cast Member)



Barbara Divis (Cast Member), Valery Ryvkin (Conductor and Artistic Director OSB), Layna Chianakis (Cast Member)



Kandy Budgor, Stephen Adams and Sue Birch (Board Member, OSB)



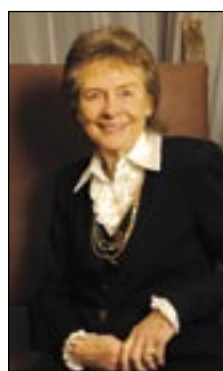
Jo Berkus, Parker Montgomery, Santa Asher, Brooks Firestone Back Row: Barry Berkus, Carolina Montgomery (Board Member, OSB), Robert Woodruff



Steven Sharpe (General Director OSB), Peter Bertling (Board President OSB), Franziska and Nicola Faganello (Consul General of Italy), Fred Sidon (Board Member OSB)



Front Row: Jayne Gilligan, Ted Gaylord, Jeri Noel; Back Row: Bill Gilligan, Tom Noel, Missy McFayden, Louise Gaylord (Board Member OSB), Bill McFayden



Mary Penny (Board member, OSB)



Front Row: Bruce Rickborn, Euzetta Williams, Donna Hone; Back Row: Ida Rickborn (Board Member OSB) Dan Hone, Simon Williams (Board Member OSB)



Denise Adams, Ed Birch (President, Mosher Foundation, Title Sponsor of Cavalleria Rusticana & Pagliacci)



Front Row: Peter Bertling (OSB Board President), Luci Janssen, Tom Snow, Back Row: Richard Janssen, Deborah Bertling



Maris and Pat Andersons (Co-Chair of Gala)



Dan and Romy Reicker (Dan: OSB Board Member)



Monika Ruppert-Luikart

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