UNLV Opera’s Successful Suor Angelica/Sancta Susanna

UNLV Opera Theater’s 2013-14 season started off in dramatic fashion in November in Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall. The double bill featured Puccini’s Suor Angelica, along with the Nevada premiere of Paul Hindemith’s expressionist opera Sancta Susanna. The audience reacted enthusiastically:

“What a treat it was to discover Sancta Susanna after only knowing of it for all these years. Very exciting. Such nice talent on stage. And what a great pianist!”

-Jim Sohre, Production Coordinator, Opera Las Vegas

“I can’t tell you how much I enjoyed the performances of Suor Angelica and Sancta Susanna. Congratulations on your stunning achievement in producing these two works, and back-to-back no less! I know how much hard work went into this for both you and the student singers, and of course for accompanist, Jae Ahn-Benton.

The singing and acting were wonderful. Jae’s tackling of Hindemith’s fierce piano score was quite a feat. Although only $10 a ticket, it would have been a bargain at a much higher price. Again, I can’t praise you enough, and I’ll be looking forward to your future presentations.”

-Frank Leone, President, Musicians’ Union of Las Vegas
April means Ariadne for UNLV Opera. The beautiful opera by Richard Strauss will be presented April 4-5 at 7:30 pm and April 6 at 2 pm in the Judy Bayley Theatre. Stage director Dr. Linda Lister, conductor Taras Krysa, and coach/pianist Kosta Popovic head the production staff. The cast features Lillian Roberts and Sheronda McKee in the title role of Ariadne, with William McCullough and Daniel Hunter as Bacchus. UNLV Opera’s production of Ariadne auf Naxos marks the theatrical debut of musicologist and Associate Professor of Music Anthony Barone in the speaking role of the Major Domo. The opera is an entertaining interplay of temperamental divo/diva singers (premiering an opera about the mythological figure of Ariadne) with performers from a commedia dell’arte troupe. The troupe includes Bonita Bunt as Harlekin, Jonathan Mancheni as Scaramuccio, Faustino Solis III as Brighella, and David Casey as Truffaldin. Jonathan Baltera plays the Music Master, Alfredo Martirena is the Dance Master, and Jordan Madagame is the Wigmaker, with Kyle Johnson as the Lackey, and Miguel Alasco as the Officer. Ariadne’s Nymphs are sung by Lindsay Cunningham, Cheyna Alexander, Stephanie Redman, Carolina Gamazo, Nicole Thomas, and Nicole Harris. Deutsche Oper Berlin singer Stephanie Weiss plays the key role of the Composer.

UNLV Opera presents Ariadne auf Naxos April 4-6

Clockwise:
Lillian Roberts, Ariadne
Daniel Hunter, Bacchus
Anthony Barone, Major Domo
**Divo in Training: Xavier Brown**

Baritone Xavier Brown discovered opera by accident. He says, “I was a football player at Centennial High School. My family moved my senior year, so I attended Legacy High School. It was too late for me to start the football season there, and I thought my world was crushed! I joined choir and theatre, mostly because I thought it’d be incredibly easy for my last year. But as time went on, I fell in love with the art of being onstage. Opera for me was something completely new and different and I felt I was really good at it, so I wanted to further my study.” And he did so at the encouragement of his choir director William McKoy.

Now a student of Dr. Tod Fitzpatrick, Xavier says, “After my first year at UNLV, I knew I found my passion.” He has become a prominent performer in UNLV Opera productions. Last year, he excelled as Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*, and this April he will play Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. His dream role is Verdi’s Macbeth.

**Opera Quiz**

I. Which of these operas is not by Richard Strauss?
   a. *Elektra*
   b. *Salome*
   c. *Die schweigsame Frau*
   d. *Die Fledermaus*

II. What is the name of the pants role in *Der Rosenkavalier*?
   a. Orlofsky
   b. Octavian
   c. Oscar
   d. Orpheus

**Answers:**

I. d
   II. b

**Have you bought your UNLV Opera Theater water bottle?**

Only $5, and BPA free! Support opera and the environment.

**UNLV Opera welcomes Kosta Popovic!**

Our new opera coach and pianist is a native of Serbia. He worked as an Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera for 11 seasons, including 6 in which he also served as Assistant Chorus Master.

**(S)He Wears the Pants: Opera Workshop Scenes Sequel**

Fall 2012 brought the premiere of Opera Workshop I’s *(S)He Wears the Pants* program. The tradition of women playing pants roles or playing boys dates back to Restoration comedies of the 17th century, and continued in the 20th century with Mary Martin as Peter Pan on Broadway. Our pants role opera scenes were so well received that we are presenting *Pants Part Deux* April 25 in Dr. Arturo Randogrilot Recital Hall at 7:30 pm. The final presentation of the 2013-14 season, it will spotlight scenes from famous operas such as Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* and Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Eurydice*. In addition, French opera from the Baroque (Lully’s *Armide*) and Romantic eras (Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*) as well as French operetta *(Offenbach’s* *Mesdames de la Halle)* will be highlighted on the program. In addition to women wearing pants, there may also be an example of a skirt role, or men playing women’s roles en travestie like Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* or Robin Williams in *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Don’t miss our April 25 performance! You can wear pants, or a skirt-your choice.
After UNLV Opera’s performance at Canarelli Middle School

Left to right:

Eliysheba Anderson, Lindsay Cunningham, Richelle Janushan,

Nicole Thomas, Cordelia Anderson, Daniel Hunter

Spring 2014 Performances

April 4-6  UNLV Opera Theater:
            "Ariadne auf Naxos"

April 25  UNLV Opera Workshop:
            "(S)He Wears the Pants, Part Deux"
            (Music by Mozart, Gluck, Handel)