




LANDMARK OPERA PRESENTS



GIANNI
SCHICCHI

MARCH 9, 10, 17, & 23

LANDMARKOPERA.ORG





MARCH 9TH 7PM
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
4427 OVERLAND AVE
CULVER CITY, CA 90230



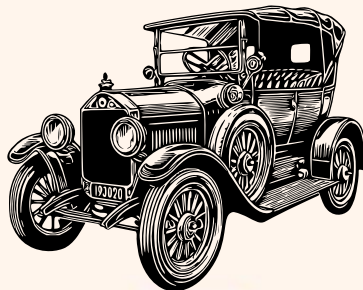
MARCH 10TH 3PM
SANTA CLARITA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
26640 BOUQUET CANYON RD
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91350



MARCH 17TH 2PM
VALLEY BETH ISRAEL
13060 ROSCOE BLVD
SUN VALLEY, CA 91352



MARCH 23TH 7PM
ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
1920 W GLENOAKS BLVD
GLENDALE, CA 91201





Gianni Schicchi..... Josh Wentz (3/9 & 3/10)
Mark Goodman (3/17 & 3/23)

Lauretta..... Chandler E. Cummings (3/9 & 3/17)
Lily Berthold (3/10 & 3/23)

Rinuccio..... Jacob Stucki

Zita..... Daisy Santos

Simone..... Lewis Johnson

La Ciesca..... Carol Winston (3/9 & 3/10)
Carol Lande (3/17 & 3/23)

Gherardo..... Shawn Taylor

Gherardino..... Jeremy Taylor

Nella..... Rana Ebrahami (3/9 & 3/17)
Jessie Massoudi (3/10 & 3/23)

Betto..... Alexei Helmblock

Doctor & Lawyer..... Dominic Lim (3/9 & 3/10)
Bedjou Jean (3/17 & 3/23)

Guccio..... David Frank

Plot Synopsis

The wealthy Buoso Donati has just died at home in Florence and his relatives are somewhat exaggerating in their mourning of his passing away; in reality they all expect to be amply consoled by their inheritance. Betto, the poorest of them all, has heard rumors that Buoso may have left a large amount of money to the church.

Suspicious and worried, the relatives start looking for the will; when they finally uncover it, they find their worst fears have come true: Buoso Donati has left his entire inheritance to the catholic church. The inauthentic grief for the loss of their dear one turns into an authentic lament for the loss of their inheritance. The young Rinuccio is upset, for whom the money would have meant permission to marry the sweet Lauretta (daughter of the commoner Gianni Schicchi) who possesses no dowry.

In vain, Buoso's relatives turn to the wise Simone for advice. Rinuccio calls upon Gianni Schicchi, well known for his shrewdness, to come help the family with their predicament. The other family members do not initially want to accept Schicchi's help, as the Donati family sees themselves as above dealing with commoners, but by now Gianni and his daughter Lauretta have already arrived. Chaos ensues as the proud Zita announces her refusal of Rinuccio and Lauretta's marriage, this refusal offends Schicchi and he attempts to storm out. Lauretta, stopping her father, sings the well-known aria "Oh Mio Babbino Caro"; she attempts to persuade him for his help so she can marry her beloved Rinuccio. Moved by his daughter's lament, Schicchi agrees to help.

Gianni quickly devises a plan, he hides in the bed of the deceased and imitates his voice to interact with the doctor who comes to check on Buoso. He claims that he feels better and sends the doctor away. Schicchi's plan is now put into practice: dressed as Buoso, he lies on his bed and summons the public notary and witness, in front of whom he dictates a new will. He distributes the cash and properties fairly among the relatives, but the most valuable assets (the mansion in Florence, the mills in Signa, and the car) he keeps for himself. The relatives can't do anything about this "robbery" without revealing their fraud, for which the penalty is the cutting-off of a hand and exile from Florence. Once the notary and witness have left, Gianni chases the enraged relatives out of the house as they plunder the home that is now Schicchi's property. Rinuccio and Lauretta return, happily embracing as they look towards their future.

Translation of Lauretta's Aria

"O mio babbino caro"



Oh my dear father, I love Rinuccio.

I want to go to Porta Rossa to buy my wedding ring!

Yes, I will go there; and if his love is false I will throw myself from the Ponte Vecchio bridge into the Arno river.

I am tormented by this pain, oh God I would rather die!

Father, please, have pity.

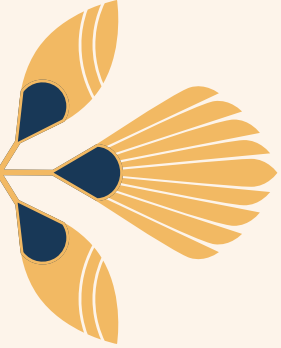


Director's Note

I hope you all enjoy the comedy in this opera as much as I have. Each actor was open to trying different methods to find the funny in Puccini's story. I admired how they all worked together so quickly and each was eager to develop a character deeper than what was written. I always have believed comedy in theatre can be such a treat if there is quick thinking and improvisation, and this production has that! I hope you enjoy our version of Gianni Schicchi as much as I had in the creation. I look forward to more productions with Landmark Opera.

Cheers,
Lisa Poleshek





Bios



Yoko Mizuno (Music Director & Pianist), an accomplished pianist with a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Musashino Academia Musicae, moved to the United States to pursue her passion for collaborative music. While attending the North Carolina School of the Arts, she worked as a staff accompanist and developed a keen interest in collaborative works, which ultimately led her to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Collaborative Keyboard from the California Institute of the Arts. Yoko now serves as a distinguished staff accompanist at UCLA, Cal State University Northridge, Colburn, and AMDA. Her dedication to teaching has led her students to success in various competitions, while her collaborative spirit shines in her role as a seasoned accompanist, currently in her second season with Landmark Opera.

In addition to directing Gianni Schicchi, **Lisa Poleshek (Stage Director)** has directed three prior operas with Landmark Opera. She started with Carmen in Spring of 2022, then Pirates of Penzance in Winter of 2023 and The Magic Flute in Summer of 2023. Lisa's creativity reaches also to the set design, prop master, costume design, stage management and social media manager with Landmark Opera. She is also a board member with Landmark Opera. With Mission Opera, she was the wig and makeup artist for Madame Butterfly this past February. In Spring of 2022, she wrote and directed Medusa, Medea and Me with CSUN's Theatre Guild. Then, graduated with a Bachelor's in Theatre Arts from CSUN Spring 2022. She currently is In the Masters in Humanities Program at CSUN with a future of teaching in Community Colleges.





Born and raised in historic Manassas, Virginia, **Lily Berthold (Lauretta)** is a soprano currently based out of the Los Angeles area. She has sung with many notable companies in California, such as: Opera San Luis Obispo, Pacific Lyric Association, Moorpark Symphony Orchestra, Opera Italia, Guild Opera, and The Verdi Chorus. Selected opera performance credits: Die Zauberflöte (Pamina), Suor Angelica (Suor Genoviefte), Gianni Schicchi (Lauretta), La Traviata (Annina), Rigoletto (Gilda u.s., The Page). Lily is in the final semester of her Bachelor of Arts in Music from California State University Northridge, and she holds an Associate Degree in Sociology from Moorpark College. Upcoming: Frasquita (Carmen) with Guild Opera, Summer '24.

lilyberthold.com

LA-based soprano **Chandler E. Cummings (she/her) (Lauretta)** grew up in northern Michigan and received her BA in music & psychology from Wellesley College. A passionate student of opera, Chandler has studied and performed in Europe, Asia, and across North America. She has been featured as the soprano soloist in Fauré's Requiem and won the Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra Concerto Competition, performing Samuel Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915 with the acclaimed orchestra. Some of Chandler's favorite previous roles include the title role in Gilbert & Sullivan's Patience, Baker's Wife in Into the Woods, and Cosette in Les Misérables. Chandler is interested in all things art, nature, and sustainability, and is a passionate animal rights advocate. chandlerecumings.com



Soprano **Rana Ebrahimi (Nella)** has a Bachelor's degree in Instrumental Music (flute), that's where she discovered her passion for singing and decided to pursue her dream in that direction. She got her Masters of Music in Vocal Performances from California State University, Northridge. She has been singing with Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Pacific American Master Chorale and University of Southern California's Early Music department. She currently sings with her band (The Woo People) where they play rock/metal music around Los Angeles.



David Frank (Guccio) has been singing for many years. David has sung at Valley Collage choir for 25 years. Has sung in La Boheme as Alcindoro. David is extremely honored and pleased to sing with Landmark Opera.

Mark Goodman (Gianni Schicchi) is the Executive Director of Landmark Opera and one of the founders of the company along with Carol Lande. He sings principal Baritone for the company.

His previous roles have included Leporello in Don Giovanni, Scarpia in Tosca, Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus, Germont in La Traviata, Marcello in La Boheme, and most recently Escamillo in Carmen and the Pirate King in the Pirates of Penzance. Mark is the rabbi and cantor of Valley Beth Israel synagogue in Sun Valley and a private vocal instructor. He earned his Master's Degree in Music from Cal State LA in 2007.



Alexei Helmbock (Betto) has been a mainstay of several choral groups in the Los Angeles area, singing in various genres both sacred and secular. Born and raised in Boston, Alexei has been a lifelong musician who has shown repeated flexibility in the roles he has undertaken, including both tenor and bass section leader.

Alexei has enjoyed singing music as varied as oratorio and bluegrass.



Bedjou Jean (Doctor/Lawyer) "discovered" opera in 2018 and loved it so much he went to Valley College just to study voice for two years. He has been taking voice lessons ever since and is honored to have the chance to be part of this Landmark Opera production.

Bass-baritone **Lewis Johnson (Simone)** studied vocal music at the Yale School of Music, while pursuing a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence, and also at the Music Academy of the West. He performs a range of baritone and bass roles, including Olin Blitch in Carlyle Floyd's Susannah and both Papageno & Sarastro in The Magic Flute. During 2022 & 2023 he was Interim Music Director at St. Augustine By-the-Sea Church in Santa Monica. Having success as Sarastro in Magic Flute, he has been asked to return with Landmark as Simone for this current production of Gianni Schicchi, and looks forward to future productions with Landmark Opera. His beautiful golden retriever, Haka, is the official show dog for Landmark Opera. Due to his friendly demeanor, Landmark always has stress free rehearsals and love Haka so much for that. At St. A's he recently sang the baritone solo in Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs, and also arranged/conducted the work for a small orchestral ensemble.



As one of the founders of Landmark Opera, **Carol Lande (La Ciesca)** is an experienced soprano with a very kind and generous heart. She graduated from Cal State University of Los Angeles with a major in Music and was very active in the Opera Department. Her most memorable roles were: Mimi in La Bohème in the Czech Republic and Violetta in La Traviata. She has performed as the soprano lead in many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. In the latest production with Landmark Opera, she sang First Lady in The Magic Flute. She was a Middle School music teacher, and she continues to share her kind spirit and energy with all.



Dominic Lim (Doctor/Lawyer) graduated from the University of Seoul, Republic of Korea. He has performed numerous recitals, operas, and concerts in Korea. Mr. Lim is currently studying for a Master of Music at CSUN. In the 2022-2023 season of CSUN Opera, he played "Lucas" in W. Gluck's *L'ivrogne Corrige*, "Coline" in G. Puccini's *La Boheme*, and "Papageno" in *Die Zauberflöte* by W.A. Mozart in the 2023-2024 season of CSUN Opera. Mr. Lim also performed as a bass soloist in W.A. Mozart's *Requiem*, G. Faure's *Requiem* and Handel's "Messiah" as a bass soloist with Northridge singers. Mr. Lim performed "Frere Laurent" in *Romeo et Julliette* by C. Gounod, and "Commissario" and "Yamadori" in *Madama Butterfly* by Puccini with Mission Opera.

Persian-American soprano **Jessie Massoudi (Nella)** is a native of Southern California best known for her quirky and fearless personality on stage. In 2019, Jessie created the role of Janine in the world premier of *Gunfight* at the Not-So-OK Saloon, an award winning Hollywood Fringe Festival operetta, and was pleased to revisit the role in summer of 2023. Some of her notable operatic roles include Musetta (*La Bohème*, Desert Theatre League "Best Supporting Actress" award nominee), Miss Silverpeal (*The Impresario*), Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*), & Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*). In summer of 2021, Ms. Massoudi returned to live theater with Mission Opera in the West Coast premiere of Offenbach's rarely performed *Le 66* as Grittly. Ms. Massoudi holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Redlands, where she sang in the award winning Chapel Singers chamber ensemble.



www.jessiemaassoudi.com facebook.com/MassoudiMusic



Daisy Santos (Zita), who was born and raised in West LA, has been an elementary music educator for almost 6 years for the Anaheim Elementary School District. In the summer of 2015 and 2018, she performed in a series of opera scenes from *Idomeneo* as Idomeneo, *La Clemenza di Tito* as Sesto, *The Mikado* as Pitti-Sing, and *Die Zauberflöte* as the second spirit. Daisy has performed in choirs such as Cal Phil Chorale, and the GSPO choir. She received her Bachelor's of Arts in Music Education in Spring 2016 and her Single Subject Teaching Credential in Music in Fall 2017 from Cal State Dominguez Hills. She has covered the role of Armeline in Viardot's *Cendrillon* at the Santa Monica College's opera program. Daisy has performed the roles of Ines in *The Gondoliers*, Mercedes in *Carmen*, and the 3rd Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Landmark Opera Company.



Jacob Stucki (Rinuccio) is a tenor who has enjoyed a range of performances during his career. Upcoming is his debut of The Prince in CSUN's production of Marta Lambertini's *Cenicienta*. Also a die-hard Mozart fan, a few of his favorite roles include Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro*. He is also an accomplished choral singer, and his dad says he is "the best one in his row." He is currently pursuing his Master's in Music at CSUN under the tutelage of Hugo Vera. In his rare free time, he enjoys hiking and relaxing on the beach, often in that order.

Jeremy Taylor (Gherardino) is a friend of many opera companies in SoCal. He is the son of Shawn and Laura Taylor (Shawn is in this production) He appeared in Mission Opera's "Thirteen Clocks." His vibrant personality has given him the opportunity to make many friends when he attends rehearsals. Jeremy, born 1992, was in a tragic wreck in 2010, just weeks after high school graduation, which left him with Traumatic Brain Injury. His career goal was to race motorcycles then eventually become a mechanic for off road vehicles and motorcycles. We continue to pray this dream will be fulfilled one day. Until then, enjoy his bright personality in this production.



Shawn Taylor (Gherardo) – has an MM from CSU Long Beach. He has performed roles with Long Beach Opera, Mission Opera, Landmark Opera, Repertory Opera Theatre, Pacific Lyric Association, Riverside Lyric Opera, Celestial Opera, Capitol Opera and LA Met l'Opera. He has performed in many musicals and Gilbert and Sullivan Shows and is a board member for Mission Opera. Shawn sings in several churches throughout So Cal, and is a staff singer and soloist for the Santa Clarita Master Chorale, Cal Phil and GSPO. Shawn has been a Choral Teacher since 1986 in Elementary, Junior High, High School and was a Vocal Instructor at Cal Baptist University. He also taught theatre and was the vocal coach for the All American Boys Choir.

Baritone **Dr. Joshua R. Wentz (Gianni Schicchi)** has had the privilege of singing for two decades throughout the United States and abroad in over a dozen countries. He has worked with Cleveland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Carolina, Dayton Opera (Ohio), Harrower Opera, Festival Internaccional d'Opera Americas, Rome Festival Opera, Darmstadt Festspiel, and various other venues. Recent engagements include Lindorf/Crespel in Tales of Hoffmann and Baron Zeta in The Merry Widow, both in São Paulo, Brazil with the Festival Internacional de Opera Americas. In 2013, he debuted the role of Sam in the world premiere of Bambino by Richard Maltz. He performed Count Almaviva in Le Nozze di Figaro and Pistola in Falstaff with the Rome Festival Orchestra in Rome, Italy, and Papageno in Die Zauberflöte in Darmstadt, Germany. Favorite roles include Giovanni, Figaro, Top in Copland's The Tender Land, and Pangloss in Bernstein's Candide.



Soprano **Carol Winston (La Ciesca)** is a familiar face to southland audiences, she sang "First Lady" in Die Zauberflöte with Landmark Opera and "Mrs. Hayes" in Mission Opera's production of Susannah in summer 2023. Other recent roles include "Miss Pinkerton" in The Old Maid and the Thief with Mission Opera and with Opera a la Mode. Pre-pandemic, she performed "Violetta" in La Traviata, "Adele" in Die Fledermaus, "Diana" in Orpheus in the Underworld, "Susanna" in Le Nozze di Figaro, "Frasquita" in Carmen, and "Zerlina" in Don Giovanni. A fan of Zarzuela, Carol sang "Duchess Carolina" in Luisa Fernanda and "Marte" in Duron's Salir el Amor del Mundo at the Broad Stage and performed in Zarzuelas with the Jarvis Conservatory in Napa. Carol toured nationally with Opera a la Carte as "Mabel" in The Pirates of Penzance, "Yum-Yum" in The Mikado, "Gianetta" in The Gondoliers, the title role in Patience, and "Laeticia" in The Zoo.



Enjoy