

Two Remarkable Operas, One Unforgettable Evening of Emotional Depth and Comedy

WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S... OR THE OPERA?
OPERA IDAHO PRESENTS ANGELICA AND
SCHICCHI: A PUCCINI DOUBLE BILL AT THE
EGYPTIAN

BOISE, ID, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Not unlike the 1989 film, *Weekend at Bernie's*, [Opera Idaho's](#) opening weekend at the Egyptian Theatre will be filled with riotous comedy, family feuds, love, greed, deception, a little bit of partying, and of course a death or two... of the operatic kind.

On October 4 at 7:30pm and 6 at 2:30pm, Opera Idaho presents [Suor Angelica](#) and [Gianni Schicchi](#): A Puccini Double Bill—two one-act operas on one unforgettable evening celebrating the genius of Puccini, opera's most famous composer who died 100 years ago this year.



Puccini's not the only dead guy being celebrated. In Puccini's only comedy, *Gianni Schicchi*, a rich dead guy, Buoso Donati, takes center stage. As his "loving" family mourns his death, they immediately search for Donati's last will and testament. But when they discover he's left his entire fortune to the local monastery, only one man can help them cheat their way out of poverty—the infamous Gianni Schicchi!

“

The profound tragic emotions of *Suor Angelica* and the sitcom style comedy of *Gianni Schicchi* ... brings the audience the best of both worlds with this double bill.”

Frances Rabalais

A company premiere, *Suor Angelica* follows the heart-wrenching story of Sister Angelica, a woman who was orphaned and sent to a convent as a teenager by her family. After seven years, her aunt comes to visit with news

that shatters Angelica's world and throws her into a fit of delirium. Will she recover or lose herself and her salvation?

Stage Director Frances Rabalais and Twin Falls native, Scenic / Costume Designer James Haycock are bringing this production to life with a 1920s vibe in the historic Egyptian Theatre and the home of Opera Idaho. "I am often asked if I prefer directing tragedy or comedy, and I'm delighted to make my Opera Idaho debut without needing to choose! The profound tragic emotions of Suor Angelica and the sitcom style comedy of Gianni Schicci let me explore everything wonderful that opera has to offer. Puccini's writing brings the audience the best of both worlds with this double bill." – Frances

It's also a weekend of opera debuts for the cast of both productions. Soprano Vanessa Isiguen returns to Opera Idaho (Cio Cio San – Madama Butterfly 2018, Opera in the Park 2023) making her title role debut as Angelica and reprising the love-stuck Lauretta who sings the most famous opera aria ever written, "O mio babbino caro." She's joined by Boise favorites and husband-wife duo, baritone Jason Detwiler (Mercutio – Roméo et Juliette 2024, Belcore – Elixir of Love 2017, Albert – Werther 2017), as Gianni Schicchi, and mezzo soprano Michele Detwiler (Gertrude - Roméo et Juliette 2024, Suzuki – Madama Butterfly 2018) who makes two role debuts singing the iconic contralto role of the Principessa and Zita, the comedic matriarch of the Donati family.

Making Opera Idaho as well as role debuts are tenor Orson Van Gay II as the charming Rinuccio and soprano Sarah Stembel singing the cheerful Suor Genovieffa and the sassy Nella. Other notable role debuts include soprano Katia Hayati (Roméo et Juliette 2024) as La Zelatrice and Ciesca, bass baritone Jeffrey Seppala (Roméo et Juliette 2024, The Marriage of Figaro 2023, Macbeth 2023, All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1814 2021/22) as Simone, tenor Andrew Peck as Gherardo, bass baritone Gregory Watts (Roméo et Juliette 2024) as Beto, and baritone Brayden Olson (Roméo et Juliette 2024) as Marco.

Newly hired Executive Director of the Boise Phil, Brandon VanWaeyenberghe, will also make his operatic debut in a guest cameo appearance that is to die for.

The all-star cast is accompanied by the Opera Idaho Orchestra under the direction of Principal Conductor, Maestro Andy Anderson. "Even though I have conducted these scores several times, it is refreshing to come back to them with 'new eyes and ears' and relish in the discovery process all over again. Our casts for this production are almost entirely new to their roles, so it's an honor



Gianni Schicchi cast members.

to be able to pace them through the musical shaping of their parts. Of course, this being the 100th anniversary of the passing of the great composer, it's extra special to be able to conduct this show right now and work diligently to present the music to honor Puccini's legacy." – Andy

Grab a ticket at www.operaidaho.org/tickets or by calling our box office at 208-345-3531, ext. 2. Then grab a popcorn and a drink at the Egyptian Theatre on October 4 or 6, 2024 to experience the drama and magic of live opera theater with Opera Idaho. Visit our website, Instagram, or Facebook page for updates, special ticket promotions, and information about all our performances and programs.

About Opera Idaho

Opera Idaho has been producing opera for over 50 years. It is one of the premier performing arts organizations in the Treasure Valley and one of the broadest-reaching arts organizations in the state bringing the performing arts to communities in the Boise metro area, Pocatello, Ketchum, McCall, Burley, and other cities. With generous support from individual donors, corporate sponsors, charitable foundations such as the J.R. Simplot Foundation and the Idaho Community Foundation, and grants from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Opera Idaho reaches over 30,000 people of all ages each season through main stage operas, free concerts, children's choruses, artistic professional development, and educational and community engagement programming. Join the Opera Idaho family of giving to ensure opera remains on our stages and in our hearts for many years to come.

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