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## THE LAST ROMANCE

### EXCELLENT IN EVERY SENSE

By IRIDE APARICIO  
Pictures by KEVIN BERNE



*(L to R) Carol, (KITTY WINN) and Ralph (WILL MARCHETTI)*

**SAN JOSÉ, California** – The regional premiere of the **THE LAST ROMANCE**, the second work in the SAN JOSE REP 2011-2012 Series, which opened to the press on October 19th, asks an interesting question from the audience: *Am I too old to find Love?*

To help us find the answer, the play tells us a story represented by one male Opera singer and three speaking characters. Yet using nothing but everyday dialogue in the conversations between an elderly man (83) and a 75-year-old woman talking casually with each other while sitting on a park bench, Tony-award® winner playwright JOE DiPIETRO managed to make us laugh, and cry and ponder for hours with a beautiful love story that moves us to the core because it pulls at the strings of our hearts.

Like everything in this story, the set (MICHAEL GENIO) is simple. A wooden park bench in the Hoboken dog park of New Jersey standing in front of a gray fence. If the setting does not look romantic, we should add that GENIO, the

scenic designer, converted it into "a very romantic place" by draping the fence with a lush interwoven combination of green leaves and pink flowers cascading down. The place looks now poetic.

Simple are also the characters: JOSHUA JEREMIAH, who plays the part of "The Young Man," (a non-speaking part in the drama which represents young Ralph as an opera singer) JEREMIAH spices the action singing opera's arias at key moments of the play, in a full mellow tone and in perfectly pronounced Italian.

Rose (SHARON LOCKWOOD) who represents the prototype of the old-fashioned Italian women and her duties. Rose takes care of her house and her brother Ralph, who fainted on the street once and apparently, is not well. Being a good Catholic, Rose is unable to accept divorce as the dissolution of her marriage. After 22 years she continues waiting for her ex-husband Tony, who left her for another woman, to return.

Her younger brother Ralph, (WILL MARCHETTI) is a widower, which is the reason why he lives with Rose. As described by his sister in two short words, Ralph is a "good man," an old-fashioned Italian, honest, romantic, and ethical in all respects.

Carol (KITTY WINN) 75, is a mystery. Since the beginning Rose suspects that she is hiding something, but she does not know what. Carol is beautiful, dresses well and apparently is wealthy because she lives alone, close to the dogs' park in a luxurious skyscraper's luxurious condo. Her only known companion is Peaches her dog.



Since the heart doesn't age and love may be found where one least expect it, Ralph, trying to change the boredom of his existence, where the same food is cooked by his sister on the same day every week, and both attend monthly a local opera production, one day decides to go to the dog park nearby. As he sits on a bench reminiscent the times when as a young man he wanted to become a singer of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, he sees Carol (WINN) who strikes him as the most beautiful woman he has ever seen, Carol has brought "Peaches," her dog, (a Chihuahua mix, whose physical looks are described as to those of a "rat,") to play at the park. It only takes a few minutes for Ralph, who wants to start a conversation with her, to lie by telling her that he too had a dog, as he points at one of dogs playing in the park. After managing to teach her how to make Peaches obey her, the truth is discovered when the real owner of Ralph's "invented dog" leaves the park taking the dog along.

Carol doesn't like Ralph's lie but she is intrigued by the handsome gentleman who is obviously infatuated with her. She decides to meet him at the park again the next day.

Because loneliness is painful and these two people are lonely. They continue meeting each other and fall in love.

The conflict is created when Carol, wanting to give Ralph a surprise, is surprised herself by his proposal of matrimony. Because of it, she needs to reveal her "secret" to him.

Carol is liberal, and she sees no conflict in adopting modern ways of living. The problem is that as his sister describes him, Ralph, is a good man. True to his upbringing, he makes an unexpected decision.

At the end of the play, Peaches who had been lost in the park, is found and Rosa prompted by his brother decides to give Tony a divorce. There is hope in the air for the romance of Ralph and Carol but at this moment Ralph is at home and JEREMIAH representing a singer from the Opera in Milan, is describing his tragedy in song in the lyrics of an aria from the opera Pagliacci (Clowns)

LAIRD WILLIAMSON, who directed the play managed to get such realistic acting from the players that the audience gets the feeling of watching an incident that is really happening. Every one of his actors was in character.

As the Italian opera singer, JEREMIAH deserved his title. His intonation, breath control and tone were perfect that night and his diction of the Italian language excellent.

In her voice and manners, Rose (LOCKWOOD) acted like our Italian woman prototype. She spoke loud and fast and had all the manners. She also tried to protect her brother from all harm by making him realize that maybe Carol was not the woman he needed as a wife.

As Carol, WINN represented well her rainbow of emotions: she acted cold towards Ralph at the beginning. She acted curious. She was flirtatious next and at the end ready to embark on an adventure.

Ralph (MARCHETTI) acted infatuated at first and then, like a young kid in love from the moment she first talked with the beautiful stranger. Being a gentleman he even managed to forgive ROSE when she revealed to him "The family secret" that destroyed his dream. But at the end, Ralph did not change. He started and ended the play as an old fashion Italian man, loving and romantic but whose strict morals reigned over his heart.

**THE LAST ROMANCE will be shown until November 6**  
**For tickets or info please call 408 367 7255 VOICE**