

## **JACQUELINE SHODA IAWASAKI**

### **By Josephine Andò**

The young soprano Jacqueline Shoda Iawasaki believes that human voice and classical music create an absolutely perfect combination, a universal language with which it is impossible not to fall in love.

“The voice is an extension of your inner self; it is your instrument and your personal way to relate to the world,” she said. “I enjoy singing and when I do sing, I feel obligated to serve the music well for me and my audience.”

Jacqueline puts all of her heart and soul in what she does, both when she interprets opera roles and when she acts in front of young audiences on themed cruises.

“During Christmas I interpret Queen Melissa in a themed cruise that retells the story of the Cinnamon Bear,” Jacqueline said. “Kids love it, they sing along with me and I have a lot of fun being around them. They can feel that I enjoy what I do.”

She started studying singing when she was 16 years old. At that time, she did not know that she was going to pursue a career in music.

“My mom wanted me to study business, just to have a plan B. My dad always supported this dream of becoming an opera singer,” Jacqueline said. “Then, success after success, my mom understood that this was the right thing for me, and now both of my parents are my biggest fans.”

In 2007, she met Tito Capobianco, who was a guest speaker at her university in Oregon. He recommended V.O.I.C.Experience to her and helped her to get into the program.

“Capobianco’s help was fundamental. Thanks to him, I was accepted and came to Tampa this summer. Through V.O.I.C.Experience, I met new people, improved my dramatic presentation and learned ways of how singing impacted my body that I was not aware of.”

Jacqueline felt she was chosen to be an OTAP this year because she was “the right person at the right time.”

She feels that opera is still inaccessible for too many people and she hopes that the OTAP program will help change that. “I hope that through our outreaches and events we will raise awareness on this art form and help people fall in love with it,” she said.