

# Bel Canto

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

March 2025

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

## Membership Meeting, **Friday, March 14** Spring Fling and Awards Luncheon

### Menu:

**Grilled Salmon Piccata** - with lemon, white wine, butter sauce, capers, scalloped sweet potatoes and roasted seasonal medley of vegetables

**Winter Salad** - Chopped Kale, Pecans, Pomegranate, Goat Cheese, over Shredded Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Roasted Butternut Squash with Red Wine Maple Syrup Dijon Mustard Dressing

Dessert - Tiramisu

**To make reservations for lunch, please call, write or email Cathy Knobel at:**

787 Ben Franklin Drive #8

Sarasota, FL 34236

[knobelwd@aol.com](mailto:knobelwd@aol.com)

941-706-2490 or 941-666-3253 (cell)

Luncheon is \$35 per person. Please indicate your choice of entrée when making your reservation.

**Reservations must be received by March 10**



Helen Jepson Deller, MOG founder and soprano with Metropolitan Opera, NY



Deane Allyn, former Executive Director, Sarasota Opera

March is an exciting time in the Guild Calendar, as we let Sarasota Opera take over almost all the programming. I hope that you are enjoying the season so far.

March is also the time for our chairpersons to rest a bit after a very successful season of fund-raising. Our main fund-raisers are over, and we are all very proud of what the Guild has accomplished this year. So, a huge thank you to chairs Syble DiGirolamo (On Stage Concert, Fashion Show), Richard DeGennaro (Stars of Tomorrow), Elizabeth Aversa (Preludes), and the Holiday Party (Maryanne Hazen). And an equally big thank you to all their helpers.

With so many of our members and members from the Sarasota Opera Guild present, we enjoyed a very heart-felt and happy celebration of Elizabeth Aversa at our February meeting. I think she had a wonderful time; we all did!

Helen Jepson gave up her very successful career in opera when her voice failed. Some years later, she moved to Bradenton, and with the encouragement of the Sarasota Opera staff, including Maestro DeRenzi, she and her friends established our Guild, originally the Bradenton Opera Guild. Each year, we take great pleasure in awarding a gift in her name to an outstanding Studio Artist, chosen by the opera staff for the quality of their voice and their work ethic. The money for this award comes from a very generous donation made years ago by the Vlcek sisters.

At the same meeting, we award a smaller, but still substantial gift to a member of the Youth Opera singer from Manatee County. This award, the Deane Allyn, was established by Mrs. Allyn herself, and in her lifetime, she took great pleasure in awarding it personally. She made arrangements in her will to continue this tradition, and we are proud to do it. If there is no Manatee County student available for the gift, the money goes to scholarships for the Youth Opera program for Manatee County young singers.

Hoping to see you on **Friday March 14.**

## THE ABCS AND EFGS OF MOG

Elizabeth Aversa

What organization raises awareness, benefits, and connections? What organization promotes education, fun, and generosity? Your Manatee Opera Guild!

As the Sarasota Opera Winter Opera Festival is fully underway, we realize that April is only a month away; it is the time to renew our memberships, pay our dues, and invite music loving friends to join our Guild. It's also a good time to review the benefits of membership in MOG.

**Awareness.** MOG spreads the word about opera. For example, the annual Stars of Tomorrow Concert, managed by Richard De Gennaro, offers the Manatee community a chance to hear awesome apprentice artists perform. MOG's educational programs that are open to the public reach out to turn the uninitiated into new opera fans. Here is a packed meeting room at the Lakewood Ranch branch of the Manatee County Library System where the audience learned the basics of opera from the Sarasota Opera's General Director Richard Russell.



**Benefits.** MOG gives its members social networking, educational opportunities, special events, and plenty of just plain fun working on programs and projects. As importantly, MOG gives Sarasota Opera the benefit of funds raised through the Guild's development efforts. Whenever participation involves purchasing a ticket or contributing a fee, all proceeds are gifted to Sarasota Opera.

**Connections.** MOG connects people. Members come from diverse communities all over our area. Folks from the River Wilderness area meet up with

residents of downtown Bradenton, Lakewood Ranch, Wild Oak, Legends Bay, and other places in between.

And MOG connects with Sarasota Opera's original guild, the Sarasota Opera Guild (SOG). Here are some River Wilderness folks who designed the invitations, table décor, and programs for the recent MOG Fashion Show. (L to R, Syble DiGirolamo, June Seaton, and June's Guest Kathy Meyer)



**Education.** MOG provides educational programs to enhance members' knowledge of opera and to

enhance their opera-going experiences. Preludes, a series of 5 lectures each year, introduces members and guests to the backstories, production aspects, and musical contributions of each opera on the year's schedule. Here is a link to a video enjoyed by attendees this year. You will hear the overture of *The Marriage of Figaro* in a modern setting – in the opening scene of the 1983 movie *Trading Places*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ9ULItwPCU>

**Fun.** The Guild makes supporting Sarasota Opera fun! Remember the stage parties each fall? These one-night only events, managed by Syble Di Girolamo, are fun-filled, fund and friend-raising occasions to dress up, enjoy food and beverages, and hear great music on the stage of the Sarasota Opera House. Engaging themes have included “Flutes & Bassoons, Tapas and Tunes,” among others. Watch for what we'll have in store for 2025!

Holiday parties, monthly meetings (with optional luncheon), and informal get-togethers complete MOG's social calendar each year. Of course, our monthly meetings include entertainment by singers from Sarasota Opera. Here is a link to an example of the quartet from *Rigoletto* that we heard in February 2025. It features Pavarotti and Sutherland. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6S\\_kx0gDzc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6S_kx0gDzc)

**Generosity.** MOG enables everyone to be generous in their own way. Of course, contributing financially is welcome, but it is not the only thing a member can do to support Sarasota Opera. Our members are diverse in their residence locations, their genders, their ages, their musical taste, and their financial means. But MOG offers everyone a chance to share their time and talent. Like to cook? We prepare meals for our singers at the annual concert and we fix appetizers for our on-stage parties. Like to plan events? We plan the on-stage parties, fashion shows, concerts, luncheons, and educational programs and everyone's help is welcome. Are you an excellent communicator? Come aboard to write social notes, newsletter articles, and press releases. Elected offices and appointed roles are filled with people who share their time, and we can use yours, too!. MOG appreciates all that our members do, from top leadership to one time tasks.

Please start by reviewing the opportunities that MOG has for you and then forward this information to friends and colleagues who don't know about MOG or who might be interested in joining!

**Don't forget to renew your own membership!**



Take a moment to listen to Helen Jepson on these un-remastered recordings, made in the 1930's.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK19ukG7Xq0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX9cZ8dKA0Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6H4Lcybu3Y>

### PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

#### **Michele Corbo and Rudolph Miller**

4718 Tortona Court  
Bradenton, FL 34211  
973-682-4534  
micheleccorbo@gmail.com

#### **Stephanie Fecik**

2502 Turtledove Lane  
Bradenton, FL  
319-504-8400  
Feciks@gmail.com

#### **Catherine Boccabella**

14654 Derna Terrace  
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34211  
908-591-7406  
CAinfant@aol.com

### TRIBUTES

In fond memory of our dear friend **Ray Hazen** from Peter and Syble DiGirolamo

In loving memory of **Ray Hazen** from Maryanne Hazen

In memory of **Ray Hazen** from Linda Buchhart and Jeanne Yeagle

To my fellow **Board Members** for their hard work and dedication – from Cathy Knobel, Syble DiGirolamo, Richard DeGennaro, Linda Buchhart, Angela Korsmo and Jeanne Yeagle

## Sarasota Opera

### Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci

March 7, 7:30PM, March 11, 7:30PM, March 19, 1:30PM, March 22, 7:30PM, March 29, 1:30PM

Two operas, two betrayed husbands, two tragic ends. In *Cavalleria rusticana* the calm of a Sicilian Easter morning is broken by a betrayed lover who sets off a chain of events ending in violent tragedy. In true theatrical tradition *Pagliacci's* clown tries to go on the show, but his real -life humiliation and despair lead to a grim climax. The violent passions and raw emotions of these two works changed the direction of Italian opera forever.

### Barbiere di Siviglia

March 2, 1:30PM, March 5, 7:30PM  
March 9, 1:30PM, March 14, 7:30PM, March 21, 7:30PM  
March 27, 1:30PM, March 29, 7:30PM

Determined to win the heart of the beautiful Rosina, Count Almaviva enlists the help of Figaro, the barber of Seville, to steal her away from her guardian, Dr. Bartolo. Hilarious complications ensue to some of opera's most delightful music. *The Barber of Seville* is one of the most beloved comedic works in the operatic repertory

### Marriage of Figaro

March 8, 7:00PM\*, March 13, 7:00PM, March 16, 1:30PM, March 19, 7:00PM, March 22, 1:30PM, March 25, 7:00PM, March 28, 7:00PM

Continuing the story of *The Barber of Seville*, Count Almaviva's eye has now wandered and his current objective is Susanna, Figaro's fiancée. The distressed couple, along with Rosina (now the Countess Almaviva) conspire to reveal the count's lechery, despite the many obstacles thrown in their way. Mozart's musical genius, along with Lorenzo DaPonte's witty libretto make *The Marriage of Figaro* one of opera's masterpiece.

### Stiffelio

March 15, 7:30PM\*, March 18, 7:30PM  
March 20, 7:30PM, March 23, 1:30PM  
March 26, 7:30PM, March 30, 1:30PM

A Protestant minister returns from a mission abroad to be confronted by his wife's infidelity. *Stiffelio* faces his wife's transgression, battling his all-too-human emotions with his religious faith. Written just before *Rigoletto*, this long-neglected, emotionally charged work is now recognized as an important work by Verdi.

\*Opening Night performances are preceded by an optional dinner.

### Special Events



#### *Salute to the Stars*

Be surrounded by the celebration and sounds of Sarasota Opera's most outstanding Apprentice and Studio Artists being honored. Enjoy a gourmet lunch with performances by the awardees. Awards are presented through the generosity of visionary individuals as well as the Sarasota and **Manatee Opera Guilds**.

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 11:30 AM  
Sarasota Yacht Club  
Per Person Levels \$85 and \$150 12 PM

Program and Performances by Award Winners  
12:30 PM, Luncheon



## Annual Membership Application

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member       Renewing Member

I (we) can help the Manatee Opera Guild in these ways (please check all appropriate boxes)

Literature design

Event planning

Fundraising

Greeting

Developing membership

Photography

Writing

Hosting parties

Hospitality

Publicity

Refreshments

Serving on the Board

Soliciting advertising and gifts

Telephoning

Editing (newsletters, brochures, letters)

Setting up/cleaning up

Modeling at fashion show

Other talent

Membership Level:

Single Regular Membership \$40

Single Sustaining Membership \$50

Couple Regular Membership \$60

Couple Sustaining Membership \$70

Send application and payment to:

Make checks payable to **Manatee Opera Guild  
or MOG**

Jeanne Yeagle

1700 3rd Avenue West, Apt 111

Bradenton, FL 34205