

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

<https://manateecoperaguild.org>

October 2026

OCTOBER MEETING

Palm Aire Country Club
Thursday, October 29, 2026
10:00: coffee and conversation
10:30: meeting, followed by
Singers from Sarasota Opera
11:45: optional lunch

Menu:

Champagne Salmon -
Pan-Seared Atlantic Salmon with Champagne
Dill Beurre-Blanc Scalloped Sweet Potatoes -
Haricot Verts

Vegetarian: Winter Salad
Chopped Kale, Pecans, Pomegranate, Goat cheese
over shredded Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage,
Carrots, Roasted Butternut Squash with a Red
Wine Maple Syrup Dijon Mustard Dressing

Dessert:
Gluten-free Flourless Chocolate Torte

You are welcome to stay for lunch but you
must RSVP with Cathy Knobel, 787
Benjamin Franklin Drive, Sarasota,
FL 34236 or [email her](#).
Please do so by October 24, 2026.

Be sure to tell her your menu choice and how
you will be paying for your lunch. Checks
are to be made out to MOG for \$35.

Reservations are due on October 24

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, MOG members and friends,



American singer-songwriter and
2016 Nobel Prize recipient Bob
Dylan warned of a wave of cultural
change threatening to engulf us over
a half century ago. In his "The
Times They are A'Changin'" Dylan
said,

"you better start swimmin'

Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'"

And now, in our Manatee Opera Guild (MOG), the times
are, in some respects, "a'changin'."

Two upcoming events are a bit out of the ordinary: this
month's collaborative lecture sponsored by MOG and
SOG (Sarasota Opera Guild) and a "revised" Stars of
Tomorrow event scheduled for January 2027.

On Friday, October 23rd, we will enjoy a lecture at the
Opera House by Maestro Anthony Barrese who will
expand our knowledge of *Hansel and Gretel*, the fall opera
for this year. The out-of-the-ordinary aspect of this event
is that it is a combined MOG Prelude/SOG Prologue co-
sponsored by the two Opera Guilds. We will have a
chance to greet old friends and to meet new ones at the
brunch reception, featuring foods related to the opera and
the times, that will follow the lecture. Members and
guests are invited to attend this event that will begin at
10:30 a.m. Cost to MOG members is the usual Prelude
amount of \$5.00.

A second change for MOG will take place in January 2027
when, on the afternoon of Monday, January 25th, we attend
not only a concert by the apprentice singers, but also an

English afternoon tea. Apprentice artists will join our members and guests for the tea party. [Please note: this is an afternoon tea, not a “high tea,” so you won’t be served a hearty “supper;” rather we’ll be having small plates of savory, traditional scones, sweets, and tea.] You’ll be hearing more about this event, but for now, please mark your calendar for this new opportunity to hear our Stars of Tomorrow.

I’ll be happy to see you all at the October 23 and again at our monthly membership meeting on October 29th.

Elizabeth Aversa, MOG President

SIGN UP FOR A SPECIAL PRELUDE ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23RD

Maestro Anthony Barrese will provide insights and information on Engelbert Humperdinck’s not-just-for-children opera *Hansel and Gretel* at a lecture at 10:30 a.m., October 23rd, at the Opera House. The lecture, co-sponsored by



Manatee Opera Guild and Sarasota Opera Guild, brings the guilds together for this very special lecture by one who has enjoyed a storied career both in the US and in Italy.

Mo. Barrese is a composer and conductor of note, and he has served as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Opera Southwest. He will be at the podium at Sarasota Opera House for *Hansel and Gretel* which will be heard between October 30th and November 14th.

Due to street parking restrictions and the cost of off-street garage parking, you may find carpooling to be an excellent alternative for transportation to the lecture and brunch.

However you decide to travel, we hope you will attend this special program that will be

educational, social, and supportive of Sarasota Opera.



MY LONG ROAD FROM HATING OPERA TO LOVING IT

Looking back, it is a miracle that I came to love opera. I was exposed to classical music at an early age through Leonard Bernstein’s televised Young People’s Concerts, but not to opera. The first record I bought was Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and my first teen crush was on a boy I heard playing Für Elise on the piano in school. (He did go on to have a successful career as a pianist.)

My first exposure to opera was through The Three Stooges. Yes, you read that correctly. They featured the sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* several times in their sketches. I didn’t know it was from the opera, but thought it was the most exquisite music I’d ever heard.

In high school, the Italian Culture Club took us to see *Madame Butterfly* at the old Brooklyn Academy of Music. The audience consisted of teenagers brought in from New York City schools. Some of the teens were so disruptive that the poor tenor got confused, lost his place and stopped singing. When he attempted to carry a full-figured Butterfly over the wedding threshold, he had trouble lifting her and the audience went wild. This was not the best first live opera experience. I found the music unfamiliar, the opera interminably long, in a foreign language with no subtitles, and hijacked by out-of-control teens. I went to more operas, but I disliked them then as much as I love them now.

The “breakthrough” came at age 23 when I was invited to a performance of *La Traviata* in Boston....*still* not liking it, I noticed a woman in front of me who was moving her hair gracefully to the music and who appeared to be in a state of ecstasy. I realized then that I was the problem.

I bought a recording of Beverly Sills singing Violetta and listened to it three times along with reading the libretto and my “conversion” began. The music is more complicated than a pop tune, which we can whistle on the way out of the theater. By listening in advance, I was able to appreciate the beauty of the music. I’m convinced that even the most fanatic opera hater can learn to love it with a little patience and preparation. And speaking of Beverly Sills, I met her many years later and thanked her for opening the door to the world of opera for me.

In 1981, I moved back to my hometown of New York City and on the advice of an opera loving doorman, bought a small apartment 10 minutes walking distance from the Metropolitan Opera, where I became a season subscriber. By coincidence, my two next door neighbors at the apartment were zealous opera fans and had worked for several great singers of the past. They taught me so much about opera and I met some of my heroes because of them. (I didn’t meet all of them; I was too nervous to meet Pavarotti so I waited outside. I once read that when Richard Tucker came to Modena, a young Pavarotti was so anxious about meeting his idol that he had to approach Tucker three times before he was able to speak!)

In 2020, I relocated to Sarasota because of its vibrant arts culture and particularly because of the opera house. It’s been a pleasure to be a member of the Manatee Guild and to get to know fellow opera appassioniati.

Marilyn Carminio

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Norton, Natalie
6202 29th Ave W Bradenton, FL 34209
941-773-8818
Norton6202@gmail.com

Ray, Maria L
318 N. Washington Drive Sarasota, FL 34236
941-323-1341 (cell)
mariaray397@gmail.com

Membership meetings this year will generally be held on **Thursday**, with two exceptions: November 20 (Friday) and December 7 (Monday).

Meetings are held at 10:30 at Palm Aire Country Club, 5601 Country Club Way, Sarasota 34202. Coffee and conversation begin at 10. Meetings are followed by an optional lunch. Details are available in this publication at the beginning of the month, and on our website <https://manateeoperaguild.org>

- Thursday, September 24
- Thursday, October 29
- Friday, November 20
- Monday, December 7
- Thursday, January 21
- Thursday, February 18
- Thursday, March 18 (at Westminster Manor)
- Thursday, April 15

Preludes (Multimedia educational talks on the upcoming Sarasota Opera presentations)

Preludes are held on Friday mornings at 10 a.m. at Westminster Manor auditorium, 1700 21st Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34205. A continental breakfast is available at 9:30.

- ***Hansel and Gretel*** October 23 at Sarasota Opera House. Maestro Anthony Barrese, Conductor of the opera, will speak to the Manatee and Sarasota Guilds in a combined meeting.
- ***La traviata*** December 4
- ***H.M.S. Pinafore*** January 22
- ***Ariadne auf Naxos*** February 5
- ***Jenùfa*** February 26

Special Events

OnStage Concert

Wednesday, November 11, 5 – 8 p.m. at the Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236

MOG Holiday Party (for MOG members only and their spouses)

Sunday, December 20, 3 – 5 p.m. at the home of Maryanne Hazen, 3637 Wilderness Blvd. West, Parrish, FL. 34219

Opera Movie Special – La rondine

Friday, January 8, 2 p.m. at Westminster Manor auditorium, 1700 21st Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34205

Afternoon Tea and Concert

Monday, January 25, 2 – 4 p.m., at the Kiwanis Ballroom, Manatee Performing Arts Center, 502 3rd Avenue, Bradenton, FL 34205

Fashion Show and Luncheon

Wednesday, February 24 at 11:30 a.m.

Lakewood Ranch Country Club, 7650 Legacy Boulevard, Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202

GUILD OPERA BOOK CLUB

The book club is now fully subscribed so we are unable to accept additional members at this time. If you would like to be added to the waitlist, please let me know. Depending on interest, we may add an additional section in the future.

Marilyn Carminio
mollycarm@icloud.com





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**

Rich DeGennaro

4932 Mahogany Run

Sarasota, FL 34241

215-740-9017

richdege@me.com