

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

March 2023

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

SPRING FLING BRUNCH
MARCH 15, 2023 10 A.M.
PALM AIRE COUNTRY CLUB

Menu

House Cured & Smoked Ham, Applewood
Smoked Bacon &
Sausage, Corned Beef Hash, Homemade
Sausage Gravy & Freshly Baked Biscuits,
Cheddar Grits, Eggs Benedict, Scrambled
Eggs, Baked Blueberry French Toast, Fresh
Fruit, Greek Yogurt & Granola Parfaits,
Smoked Salmon Lox with Crostinis, Chilled
Asparagus in Dijonnaise Dressing, Mozzarella
Caprese, Freshly Baked Scones & Cinnamon
Rolls, Raisin Brioche Bread Pudding with
Caramel Sauce, Orange Juice, Coffee, Tea,
Sodas

Reservation for the Spring Fling Brunch
Due Friday March 10

Name(s): _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Reservations: _____

Number of Regular Reservations @
\$40.00 _____

Number of Patron Reservations @
\$50.00 _____

Mail Check(made out to MOG) and
Reservation Form to:

Cathy Knobel
787 Benjamin Franklin Drive
Sarasota, FL 34236

or contact Cathy at 941-706-2490 or
knobelwd@aol.com

President's Message

Thank to Syble and the entire Fashion Show Committee for another fabulous fashion extravaganza. The dining room was jam-packed with chic ladies and a few intrepid gentlemen. We also extend our sincere thanks to Maria Cora Gaffar for sponsoring the event in memory of her beloved husband Abdul Gaffar.

Kudos to Richard DeGennaro and Maryanne Hazen and the rest of our MOG workers for producing the *Stars of Tomorrow Concert*. What an exciting afternoon of great singing. My friends and acquaintances here at Westminster were "over the moon" about the quality of the singers. I hope you all were as well. One told me that she realized in the middle of the concert "They are not using microphones!" That's a big difference between a musical and an opera. We get to hear their pure voices, so beautiful!

It's exciting to be coming up on the Spring Fling luncheon when we honor an outstanding Studio Artist with a \$3,000 award for the furtherence of their career in opera. These young artists live on a shoestring, and past gifts have allowed recipients to do such things as continuing their vocal studies, buying instruments and hiring an agent. The award is named after Helen Jepson Deller to honor of one of the founders of MOG. We also will be presenting the Deane Allyn Award to the Sarasota Youth Opera. More about these women appears later in this issue.

Thanks to Elizabeth Aversa for her thoughtful and delightful introduction to Massenet's *Thérèse*. With very little information to go on, Elizabeth whet the appetite of all the attendees to go see this little-known opera.

It's been a great year for the Manatee Opera Guild. We have had a series of successful events, and will be able to donate even more to Sarasota Opera and Youth Opera for their productions. We still have two events scheduled for April — the Costume Shop Tour, and our April meeting when we celebrate our newest members.

Thank you all for being a faithful part of all our endeavors. See you on March 15, *and* at the opera!

Talkin' About Revolution

Elizabeth Aversa



It was 55 years ago when the Beatles released their hit “Revolution.” I remember it well, and maybe you do, too. Listen here [Revolution by The Beatles](#)

Twenty years later, in 1988, it was Tracy Chapman who was “Talkin’ bout a revolution.” Hear it at [Tracy Chapman's Revolution](#) It seems that in difficult times, revolution comes front and center in our popular culture.

In 2023, we are looking forward to Jules Massenet’s *Thérèse*, an opera that is set in another revolution, the French Revolution of the 1790s. In anticipation of performances of *Thérèse* at the Sarasota Opera House this month we reflect on several operas involving the French Revolution.

Umberto Giordano’s *Andrea Chénier*

This four-act verismo opera premiered at La Scala in Milan in 1896. It is loosely based on the life of a French poet named Andrea Chénier who was executed during the French Revolution. Here is Madeleine’s “La mamma morta” from Act III. [La mamma morta](#)

The ending of this opera is not happy, though the finale is beautiful. Here is the final scene, featuring Jonas Kaufmann and Eva Maria Westbroek as the poet and Madeleine. [Vicino a te -- Final Duet](#)

Francis Poulenc’s *Dialogues of the Carmelites*

This favorite, enjoyed in Sarasota in the 2017 season, is a three-act opera that premiered at La Scala in 1957. It tells of a group of Carmelite nuns who died by guillotine in the Reign of Terror because they would not obey authorities and renounce their religious vocation. Here is Jessye Norman’s “Ave Maria” as Madame Lidoine in Act II of a Met production. [Ave Maria](#) Listen next to the tragic Act III finale and “Salve Regina” [Salve Regina](#)

John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*

Ghosts is a two act opera, in English, set in the afterlife of the Court of Louis XVI. It was commissioned for and premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 1991. It tells of an effort by the ghost of playwright Beaumarchais’ who pens an opera-in-an-opera to save Marie Antoinette from the

guillotine. Here is the Marie Antoinette aria, “They are Always with Me.” [They are Always with Me](#)

Umberto Giordano’s *Madame San-Gène*

From the composer who brought us *Fedora* in 1882 and *Andrea Chénier* in 1896 (see above), this opera premiered in 1915 at the Met with Arturo Toscanini conducting. The story begins in 1792 and ends in 1811; it is about a duke and duchess who were once an army sergeant and free spirited laundress. In their early days they hid a wanted officer who, years later, is accused of having a relationship with Napoleon’s wife. All ends well, surprisingly! Here is Mirella Freni singing the Act II aria of Caterina. [Se ce n’è](#)

Jules Massenet’s *Thérèse*

To avoid being the spoiler, we’ll just say that is opera is short (just over an hour run time), easily understood (a simple plot and only three main characters), and the music is very sweet. *Thérèse* was one of Massenet’s last operas – it premiered in Monte Carlo in 1907, only five years before the composer’s death. The story addresses questions of love and honor, loyalty and duty, and the title character is forced to decide if she will stay with her Girondist husband or follow her old love, a marquis. Here is a link to the entire opera featuring Agnes Baltsa [Thérèse](#) Be sure to come to the opera. If you miss *Thérèse*, you might never know which path she takes!

See you at the opera house!

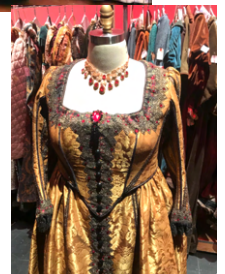
TRIBUTES

Condolences to **Maria Cora Gaffar** on the passing of her beloved husband **Abdul Gaffar**. From the Guild

Sympathy to **Maria Cora Gaffar** from Richard DeGennaro



Some of the exquisite costumes that you’ll see on the Costume Warehouse Tour.



FEBRUARY MEETING



Miles Herr, Julia Wolcott, Chelsea Laggan, Sweetheart Angela Korsmo, Eric Viñas, pianist Arthur Bosarge

Angela Korsmo chose the numbers sung at February's meeting, and her choices were delightful! Below is the program, with links to the artist's websites so that you can hear more of their artistry.

"Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix" (*Samson et Dalila*, Saint-Saëns) – [Chelsea Laggan](#), mezzo soprano

"Pace, pace mio Dio" (Verdi, *La forza del destino*) –

[Julia Wolcott](#), soprano

"De' miei bollenti spiriti" (Verdi, *La traviata*) – [Miles Herr](#), tenor

"Sacra la scelta" (Verdi, *Luisa Miller*) – [Eric Viñas](#), baritone

Pearl Fishers Duet (Bizet) – Miles Herr/Eric Viñas

Flower Duet from *Lakmé* (Delibes) – Julia Wolcott/Chelsea Laggan

COSTUME WAREHOUSE TOUR

Come join Manatee Opera Guild's Tour of Sarasota Opera's Costume Warehouse at 8161 25th Ct E, Sarasota, FL 34243. Enjoy a continental breakfast in a large outside tent along with staggered guided tours of the warehouse. Each tour will be limited to 10 to 15 people to allow one-on-one Q&As with the Resident Costume Designer and staff. Sarasota Opera's Costume Studio offers full-company costuming for over 125 operas. (Guest Tickets are \$50, Patron Tickets are \$75) Reservations can be made with Maryanne Hazen at mhazen@tampabay.rr.com

Sarasota Opera took advantage of a wonderful opportunity to preserve the largest collection of costumes available for rent in North America! Toronto-based Malabar, Ltd, one of the leading providers of costumes to opera companies throughout North America, enabled Sarasota Opera to purchase their historic collection (currently comprising over 50,000 costumes and 135 separate productions).

By purchasing the entire Malabar Ltd. stock of costumes Sarasota Opera:

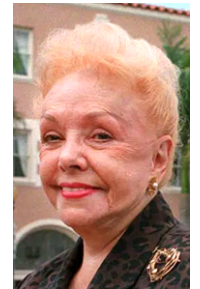
- Preserved a historic collection of costumes, used by many opera companies in North America. Among the great artists who have worn these costumes:



Helen Jepson was a soprano at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in the 1930s. She was a beautiful blond soprano whose voice and looks were showcased in a Hollywood movie, *The Goldwyn Follies of 1938*. She also sang in the first recording of *Porgy and Bess*, directed by George Gershwin himself. Hear her sing "[Summertime](#)."

But most importantly to us, she was a founding member of our own Manatee Opera Guild. She died here in Bradenton in 1997. It is in her honor that our guild rewards an outstanding Studio Artist each year with a fellowship award of \$3,000. Maestro DeRenzi, along with the performance staff recommend the person with the greatest potential for a successful career in opera, including excellence in voice, stage presence, and devotion to learning. The money for the award comes from an endowment at the Opera given by a former MOG member, Mildred Vlcek, upon her death.

Deane Allyn was a member of the MOG and also the Executive Director of Sarasota Opera for fourteen years, ending in 1999. Under her guidance, Sarasota Opera purchased the Edwards Theater, restored it, and renamed it the Sarasota Opera House. "The opera is what it is today in large part through what she did," said Richard Russell, executive director. "She was certainly one of the motivating forces in acquiring the opera house."



Sarasota Opera is one of maybe 11 companies nationwide that own their own buildings.

Also, it was she who began the Sarasota Youth Opera. She left an endowment to our guild to be used to encourage a Manatee County Youth Opera participant in a music career. In her honor, each year, we give the Deane Allyn Award to a youthful singer or to the Youth Opera to cover the tuition of a Manatee County youth enrolled in Youth Opera.

(continued from left column)

- Luciano Pavarotti, Beverly Sills, Marilyn Horne, Norman Treigle, Stephanie Sundine;
- Saved as much as \$100K annually in costume costs;
- Generated revenue to help support Sarasota Opera's operating costs;
- Became the leading costume provider to opera companies in North America

Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/sarasotaoperacostumes/>

SARASOTA OPERA EVENTS IN MARCH

Salute to the Stars Luncheon

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
Sarasota Yacht Club

\$75 per person
\$40 tax deductible

\$125 Patron Ticket (with preferred seating)
\$90 tax deductible

Welcome and Wine Reception | 11:30am
Luncheon | 12:15pm
Awards and Performances | 1:00pm

Sarasota Opera Gala Celebrating the 2022-23 Season

Saturday, April 1, 2023
Grand Reception 5:30pm | Celebration Concert 6:30pm |
Gala Dinner 8:00pm
Grand Tent on Pineapple Avenue | Sarasota Opera House

Celebrate the end of the season at one of Sarasota's premier events! The festivities begin with a Grand Reception where the Sarasota Opera Community comes together to toast another fabulous season. You'll then enter the William E. Schmidt Opera Theatre for a Celebration Concert featuring some of your favorite Sarasota Opera artists. Following the concert is a lavish Gala Dinner under the tent on Pineapple Avenue.

Tickets are available for the dates listed by each level. **To purchase these all-inclusive tickets** or if you have questions, please contact Director of Development Scott Guinn at (941) 366-8450, ext. 416 or email soaevents@sarasotaopera.org.

- \$12,500 Maestro's Circle Sponsor Table (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 3) \$1,250 Maestro's Circle Sponsor Ticket (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 3)
- \$7,500 Verdi Circle Table (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 10)
- \$750 Verdi Circle Ticket (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 10)
- \$3,500 Puccini Circle Table (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 10)
- \$350 Puccini Circle Ticket (Avail. Sept. 19 - March 10)
- \$150 Grand Reception and Celebration Concert Ticket (March 17) Call box office.
- \$25 Celebration Concert Ticket (April 1) Call box office or order online.

Opera Talks

March 1, 2023 5:30PM
Kamlet Library, \$15 (call box office)

Caruso – The voice of the (20th) Century, Enrico Caruso was opera's greatest tenor. We'll look at his legendary career, illustrated with some artifacts of his extraordinary life.

Presented by Richard Russell, General Director.

March 22, 2023 5:30PM
Kamlet Library, \$15 (call box office or order online)

Viva la Révolution!

As in this year's *Thérèse*, opera composers have long been inspired by the drama and upheaval that ties into any revolution.

Presented by Director of Education, Martha Collins.

Concerts

One Hour Apprentice Concerts

Noon in the Peterson Great Room in the Deane Allyn Pavilion \$10 (Call box office or order online)

March 17

March 24

Enjoy these hour-long concerts featuring Sarasota Opera's Apprentice artists singing arias and ensembles.

Covers at Noon in the Peterson Great Room

\$10 (Call box office or order online)

March 23

Studio Artists who are understudying principal roles on the main stage will sing excerpts from the season's operas.

Tours

Opera House Tours are given each Monday in March

10:30 a.m.

\$12 (Call box office or reserve online)

Join us on Mondays during opera season for a tour of the historic Sarasota Opera House, complete with backstage tour. You'll hear some great stories, and discover why the Sarasota Opera house is at the very center of Sarasota's cultural life.