

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

October 2023

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

OCTOBER 18 GENERAL MEETING PALM AIRE CC, 10:30 A.M.

Please send your luncheon reservations with a check (made out to MOG) to:

Cathy Knobel, 787 Benjamin Franklin Drive
Sarasota, FL 34236
Telephone: 941-666-3253 Cell

MENU

Chicken Milanese: Parmesan crusted chicken breast with sauce (olive oil, balsamic drizzle, baby arugula, tomato and grilled lemon) served with wild rice

or

Wild Mushroom Ravioli in Creamy Alfredo Sauce

Dessert: Pumpkin Cheesecake in a Gingerbread Crust

Reservation for the Luncheon
October 18, 2022

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

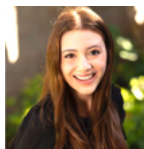
Number of reservations at \$30. _____

Menu choice _____

Checks made out to MOG, please.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was wonderful to see everyone at our September meeting, and to hear the enthusiastic talk about the Sarasota Youth Opera given by Maestro Jesse Martins and Martha Collins. This year they introduced us to another enthusiastic member of the Youth Opera Staff, Cameron Maxwell (pictured at left). With the help of a beautifully created video production, they explained the workings of the



Youth Opera with emphasis on their summer camp, putting together their professionally presented Fall Youth Opera, and working with children's voices and abilities, and with composers who are commissioned by Sarasota Opera to write operas for children's vocal range. We also heard moving accounts from two former Youth Opera members about how important Youth Opera was to them in preparing them for their adult life. One, soprano Monica Conesa, sang Aida at the Verona, Italy Arena this past summer. Imagine,

seeing and hearing one of "our own" at such a renowned venue! It was such a pleasure to present the Youth Opera with a check for \$5,000 from our Guild.



Our October 18 meeting will feature artists from Sarasota Opera singing some of our favorite and some less well known pieces. We hope that you all will join us then.

Thank You to **Syble DiGirolamo** whose fund-raising skills netted the Guild \$18,500 in Gold and Silver Sponsor donations to the October 25 On-Stage Concert, *Flutes and Bassoons, Tapas and Tunes*. Thank you to all MOG members who signed on as Gold and Silver Sponsors. Your generosity helps us to reach our annual fundraising goal. Now, whether you have donated or not, be sure to sign up to attend the concert, because as Syble says, "It's not a concert without an audience." Tickets are now available through the Sarasota Opera website <https://tickets.sarasotaopera.org/6044/6045>. This link will take you directly to the correct web page for your purchase. Or you can call the Opera box-office at 941-328-1300.

TUNE-UP FOR THE UPCOMING OPERA SEASON

Elizabeth Aversa

It's the end of summer, the beginning of a new school year, and football season is underway. This means that our opera season will begin in a matter of weeks – the Sarasota Youth Opera's fall production is just over a month away (November 3 & 5) and the Puccini concert follows on November 10 & 12.

Before our full operas begin in Winter 2024, we might want to review some opera basics – just a little tune-up for the coming season. If you are new to opera, enjoy the brief descriptions of terms and concepts along with the examples that are linked here. And if you are already an expert on this fabulous performing art, then just enjoy the videos. Each entry in the list has a link to an example and then a link to the full opera. Just click and enjoy!

Opera, which tells a story through music, consists of three basic elements: music, drama, and spectacle. The video here, from Verdi's *Aida* illustrates the elements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTJT8U5rcJQ> And here is a link to the full opera from the San Francisco Opera <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8rsOzPzYr8>

The **Prologue** is an introduction to the opera in which a character prepares the audience for the story to come. Here is the Prologue to Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in which "Music" tells the listener about the story that is about to unfold. For the prologue from *Orfeo* listen to the first 6 minutes of this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcRFFmgVGlc> To hear the full opera, continue listening.

The **Overture** is an instrumental introduction in which the orchestra gives the audience a preview of the moods and themes they will hear in the upcoming acts. Leitmotifs are introduced as well. Here is the overture to Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cum3HoVhMIs> It is not difficult to "hear" a stormy sea in the music! For the full opera, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hLnblMqbDk>

A **Recitative** is a type of singing in which the rhythm, cadence, and pitch of ordinary speech are adopted to move the plot of the story forward or to allow for conversation between characters. Instrumental accompaniment is minimal. The recitatives provide links between the arias of the opera. Here is a lighthearted explanation of recitative from Leonard Bernstein: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDq4KqP7Pxs> An example of recitative is this conversation from Puccini's *Tosca* where Scarpia instructs his servant to take his note to Tosca: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O23tDhn6QoQ> The opera can be heard by clicking on this link to a movie of *Tosca*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnO7FBS1akI>

An **Aria**, or air, is a song usually with instrumental accompaniment for a single voice. Arias are the "big numbers" in opera, but they rarely move the plot forward. They generally provide reflection or emotion rather than

action. Here is the famous aria "La donna è mobile" from Verdi's *Rigoletto*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKoa3BHHbB8> The full opera is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYDI6MWkCW8>

An **Ensemble** is a piece that is sung by two or more characters at once. (Duet = two characters, trio = three characters, quartet = four characters and so on.) The singers may be expressing a shared emotion (as in a love duet) or they may be telling conflicting points of view. Here is a duet from *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bflW3M9yRU> Listen to the entire opera, which has many ensemble pieces, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OYtlGpApc0

During the upcoming season, we will have the opportunity to hear music by Giacomo Puccini, Benjamin Britten, Georges Bizet, Gaetano Donizetti, Joseph Haydn, and Giuseppe Verdi. So, for November, we'll have a brief review of the lives and music of these masters.

Until then, enjoy the links!

TRIBUTES

Wishing a Happy Birthday and a blessed life to my wonderful friend, **Kristi Greenslade**
From Jean Roberts



My gift of \$ _____ is given:
_____ In memory of _____
_____ In honor of _____
_____ On the occasion of _____
Please send an acknowledgement card to:

From: _____
Checks made out to MOG please. Mail to:
Linda Buchart 6350 29 th Avenue West Bradenton, FL 34209

Manatee Opera Guild presents

Flutes and Bassoons Tapas and Tunes

A musical Evening at the Sarasota House
Featuring food and music of the Spanish culture

October 25, 2023
5:00 p.m. Cocktails and tapas
6:00 p.m. Concert
7:00 Champaign and Sweets Afterglow

Limited Seating Available:
Admission \$60, Patron \$75
Tickets: (941)328-1300
or Sarasota Opera.org

SPECIAL PRELUDE



On Friday, October 20 at 10 a.m., Sarasota Opera Executive Director **Richard Russell**, will be presenting a special multimedia talk on the life and works of Giacomo Puccini, composer of such beautiful works as *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madame Butterfly*. The talk will take place in the Towers Auditorium., located on the 2nd floor of the

Towers Building, 1533 4th Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205. Coffee and pastries will be served at 9:30. Admission is \$5.

Mr. Russell is a dynamic speaker with an encyclopedic knowledge of opera, having started his career as a tenor with many opera companies throughout the nation, including Sarasota Opera. He was director of Princeton Opera, and has been with Sarasota Opera for thirteen years.

Giacomo Puccini was born December 22, 1858 in Lucca, Tuscany, Italy, and died November 29, 1924 in Brussels, Belgium. He was one of the greatest exponents of operatic realism, or *verismo*.

He was born into a family of musicians, and was educated in music from a young age. Once he heard Verdi's *Aida*, he

was convinced that his future was in opera. Lucky for us!



'Tis the Season...

December 3, 2022: 4:00 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.

Hosted by Syble DiGirolamo and Maryanne Hazen
At the home of Maryanne Hazen, 3637 Wilderness
Boulevard West in Parrish

\$30 plus an appetizer or dessert to share

Entertainment will be provided by MOG member Maria Cora Gaffar and pianist Ferminita Francia both of whom have entertained at a number of local venues. We will have a variety of seasonal songs and maybe even a sing-along.

Guests are \$30 each *PLUS* - please bring an appetizer or a dessert to add to the "merrymaking." Make reservations

Manatee Opera Guild
2023-2024 Calendar

SEPTEMBER

September 12
Board Meeting

September 20
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC

Welcome Back!

Hear about
Sarasota Youth
Opera with Maestro
Jesse Martins and
Martha Collins.

OCTOBER

October 10
Board Meeting

October 18
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC
Featuring singers
from Sarasota Opera

October 20
Prelude: *Puccini*
10 a.m.
Westminster Towers

October 25
On Stage Concert
Sarasota Opera
House
5 p.m.

NOVEMBER

November 7
Board Meeting

November 16*
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC
Featuring singers
from Sarasota Opera

November 30**
Prelude: *Carmen 10*
a.m.
Westminster Towers

**Thursday, not our
usual Wednesday.*

***Not the Friday after
our meeting*

DECEMBER

December 3
Holiday Party
4 - 6:30 pm
Maryanne Hazen's
\$30

December 5
Board Meeting

December 6
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Opera House
Courtyard with
catered picnic lunch
or byo lunch
Featuring singers
from Sarasota Opera

December 14
Prelude: *Lucia di
Lammermoor*
10 a.m. Westminster
Towers

JANUARY

January 4
***Carmen Jones*,**
Movie based on
Carmen
2:00 p.m.
Westminster Towers
Auditorium

January 9
Board Meeting

January 17
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC.

Featuring singers
from Sarasota Opera

January 19
Prelude: *Luisa Miller*
10 a.m.
Westminster Towers

FEBRUARY

February 11
Stars of Tomorrow
Concert
Location MPAC

February 6
Board Meeting

February 14
Member Meeting
Sweetheart
Celebration
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC
Featuring singers
from Sarasota Opera

February 16
Prelude: *Deceit*
Outwitted

February 28
Fashion Show
11:30 a.m.
Lakewood Ranch
CC

MARCH

March 12
Board Meeting

March 20
Member Meeting
Helen Jepson
Dellera and Deane
Allyn Awards
Brunch
10:00
Palm Aire CC

APRIL

April 9
Board Meeting

April 17
Member Meeting
10:30 a.m.
Palm Aire CC
Welcome New
Members!

MONICA CONESA RISING OPERA STAR

At our September meeting, we met two former Sarasota Youth Opera singers in a video produced to introduce the public to SYO. Moving commentaries on their experiences at YO were given by two former members: **Soprano Monica Conesa** (birth name: Monica Gonzales) and visual artist **Pablo Gonzalez** (no relation to Monica).

At 17, Monica performed the lead role of Rowan in the 2013 production of *The Little Sweep* by Benjamin Britten, and dreamed of becoming an international opera star. Monica adored Anna Netrebko, and listened to her recordings as she drove to rehearsals for *The Little Sweep*. Netrebko, in fact, was her muse and inspiration. She did what she could to enter the world of opera: study French at Mooney High School, take vocal lessons via Skype and pay close attention to her mentors: vocal coach Maestro Jesse Martins and acting coach Martha Collins. How very proud they must be of her!



She studied at the Manhattan School of Music and the International School of the Voice. She has won many prestigious vocal competitions.

In 2022 she debuted at the age of 26 in the title roles of *Aida* (twice) (the youngest artist to premier in this role except for Maria Callas) and *La Gioconda* at the world famous Arena di Verona. She returned to reprise the role of Aida in 2023. Who was playing Aida in Verona when Monica wasn't? Who else but Anna Netrebko!

She also performed last summer in concert with Riccardo Muti in Ravenna. Maestro Muti was the Artistic Director of La Scala for 19 years, as well as principal conductor of the London Philharmonia, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, as well as many others.

You can hear her sing online by searching for **Monica Conesa soprano**.

We hope that Ms. Conesa continues to fulfill her dreams, and are so proud that as a Guild we were able to help her and all the other Youth Opera members.

Please welcome new members:

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