

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

November 2025

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

Happy Tuesday! Happy Tuesday! Happy Tuesday!

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This month's meeting is on
Tuesday!
November 11, 2025

PALM AIRE COUNTRY CLUB

Coffee and Conversation at 10 a.m.
Business Meeting at 10:30 a.m.
Singers at 11 a.m.

Optional Lunch Menu

Chicken blanquette -- sauteed chicken breast with sherry mushroom cream sauce, sweet potato mashed and roasted seasonal medley vegetables

Or winter salad-- chopped kale, pecans, pomegranate, goat cheese over shredded brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, roasted butternut squash with a red wine maple syrup dijon mustard dressing

Dessert: flourless chocolate torte (gluten free)

Reservations To: Cathy Knobel, 787
Ben Franklin Drive #8
Sarasota, FL 34236
knobelwd@aol.com
941-706-2490 or 941-666-3253 (cell)

Reservations are due by November 7, 2025
Checks made out to: Manatee Opera Guild (MOG)

Luncheon is \$35 per person. Please indicate your choice of entrée when making your reservation. If paying by cash, please bring exact change.

Happy Tuesday! Happy Tuesday! Happy Tuesday!

Greetings, MOG Friends,

It's hard to believe but fall is here and we are already off and running with a robust schedule of events for our Manatee Opera Guild (MOG).

Besides the fall opera *Così fan tutte* (through November 15th) and Youth Opera's *Brundibar* (November 8 & 9), both at the Sarasota Opera House, MOG will hold several upcoming events as well. The **Onstage Concert**, featuring pianoforte, grand piano, and a wind quintet, will follow a French-themed party with French food and wine. After the concert, we'll enjoy champagne and French-themed desserts. The date is November 12, 5:00 to 8 p.m. at the Opera House. You won't want to miss this signature event of MOG. Tickets are available on the MOG website and through the box office.

Our regular membership meeting with singers will be on Tuesday, November 11, a departure from our usual Wednesday date, at Palm Aire Country Club. Be sure to make your reservation if you will be staying for lunch and bring a friend or colleague who enjoys opera. If last month's program was an indicator, we can expect some beautiful music at the meeting!

We'll host Stephanie Sundine at the next Educational Prelude. Ms. Sundine will be talking about Puccini's popular *La Bohème*, the first opera in the Winter Opera Festival. Mark your calendar for December 5th at 10 a.m. at Westminster Manor.

If you wish to acknowledge an event or honor a friend, relative, or colleague, as the holiday season approaches, send your tribute and contribution to Linda Buchhart.

Finally, if we shouldn't see you before, we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and that any travels are healthy, safe and without scheduling delays.

Elizabeth Aversa

Devilish Operas

Elizabeth Aversa

Since we've turned the calendar on Halloween it seems appropriate to recall the operas that are "devilish." The devil has played a role in a number of our favorite operas, with the plots centering on someone "making a deal with the devil." This column will introduce a few of the operas with links to the music. Enjoy these while you're putting away the skeletons, pumpkins, and spider web decorations!

The Faustian Legend

The first three operas described here are derived from a tragedy in two parts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, considered to be one of the greatest German writers of all time. (The basis for Goethe's work was a German legend.) The plays, *Faust, Part One* and *Faust, Part Two* were published in 1790 in German verse. The characters of the plays and the operas are Faust, an old philosopher; Mefistofeles, the spirit of the devil; Gretchen/Margurite, a young girl; Valentine, her soldier brother; and supporting roles that vary by opera.

The gist of the story is this: Faust makes a deal with the devil – his soul in perpetuity for a lavish and youthful life on earth. He falls in love with Gretchen/Margurite, she gives birth and then is imprisoned for killing the baby. Faust begs her to join him in his "Faustian" deal with Mefistofeles, but she remains loyal to God and upon death, enters heaven. In some operas, Faust renounces the devil and joins her and in others he remains condemned.

Hector Berlioz, *The Damnation of Faust*

The Damnation of Faust is a French-language "dramatic legend" that premiered in 1846 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. It opened to less than a warm reception and closed after only a few performances. It was revived in both concert and full opera formats and remains in the repertoire, although it is heard less often than some other "Faustian" operas. The link here is to Joyce Di Donato singing "D'amour, l'ardente flamme" ("Love's burning flame...") from scene XV, in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In the opera, Faust has traded his soul for youth and vigor, and is in love with Marguerite, who sings this romantic aria. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4i1C2yETNWU>

Charles Gounod, *Faust*

Gounod's *Faust* is a French "grand opera" in five acts. It premiered in Paris in 1859, and is the most frequently performed of the operas discussed here. This opera tells an abbreviated story of Margurite and Faust, and was based on Goethe's work, but not the Faust legend on which he based his work! Some of the music from *Faust* will be familiar. Here are Mefistofeles' aria "Le veau d'or" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzCxoMbmZfA> and the soldiers' chorus from *Faust*. Your grandchildren will enjoy the latter! "My Uncle Roasted a Kangaroo" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNafVpBcUEQ>

Arrigo Boito, *Mefistofele*

Mefistofele is an opera in five acts (reduced later to four) by composer/librettist Arrigo Boito. The opera received its premiere in 1868 at LaScala in Milan. Like Berlioz' treatment of the same subject, the opera was not immediately a success with audiences. Boito's opera is more true to Goethe's original plays about Mefistofele, and includes content that is absent from Gounod's opera *Faust*. Here is a famous aria by the devil, "Ecco il mondo" from Act II. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKdVsMf3juw>

Giacomo Meyerbeer, *Robert le Diable*

Robert le Diable is another opera in which the devil plays an important part; it is not based on the story of Faust, but the legend of the Duke of Normandy. Here, in Meyerbeer's 1831 opera, Robert learns that his

father Bertram is the devil. (Does this sound familiar? – See Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader in *Star Wars*.) Characters include Robert, Duke of Normandy; Bertram, Robert's father, the devil; Raimbault, a troubadour; Isabelle, Princess of Sicily; and Alice, Robert's half-sister.

Robert le Diable is considered to be one of the first French grand operas. Here is a video that discusses the opera. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m29rD1ZqVU>

And here is a link to the entire opera, should you wish to continue delving into this work that has not, to my knowledge, been performed in Sarasota. An extra attraction – Samuel Ramey sings Bertram, which added to his reputation in devilish roles. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEsLX4Ni1Sk&t=761s>

Sergei Prokofiev, *The Fiery Angel* and Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Christmas Eve* also involve roles for the devil, Russian style. Check out these less frequently performed works online, respectively, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLZQ22p8MnU>

and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxwX-fv8YTg>

Enjoy the music!



Une Soirée Française, an evening of sophistication, elegance, and musical excellence.

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 from 5 to 8 p.m.
Sarasota Opera House

Enjoy a lavish, French-inspired cocktail party followed by A musical performance, on stage, of works by Mozart, Beethoven and Poulenc.

After party with dessert and champagne.

Tickets: \$75.00 www.sarasotaopera.org or 941- 328-1300

Easy way to get your tickets to our upcoming MOG events!

Valerie Giuliani will have her computer at the ready at our meeting on November 11 so that you can purchase tickets to both the Soirée Française event and the Stars of Tomorrow Concert on Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 1 PM at the Neel Performing Arts Center at SCF. Just bring your credit card for fast, easy service.

Happy Thanksgiving to all

From Linda Buchhart



Please Welcome New Members

Rega Powers
2306 Little Country Road
Parrish, FL 34219
RMP101A@gmail.com
315-243-2244

June Seaton
Single Regular \$40
3018 Woodland Fern Drive
Parrish, FL 34219
Bobbysgirl@tampabay.rr.com
412-496-6447

Sarasota Opera Fall Season Presenting Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Krasa's *Brundibár*



October 31, 2025: 7:30 PM
November 2, 2025: 1:30 PM
November 11, 2025: 7:30 PM
November 13, 2025: 7:30 PM
November 15, 2025: 1:30 PM

November 8, 2025: 5 PM
November 9, 2025: Noon

November 5, 2025 12:00PM

Sarasota Opera House

Resident Artists at Noon

Hear our Resident Artists perform timeless operatic arias, duets, and ensembles. Tickets \$10



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**

Send application and payment to:

Babs Noah 4635 Runabout Way Bradenton, FL 34203