

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

September 2024

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
PALM AIRE COUNTRY CLUB

Coffee and Conversation at 10 a.m.
Business Meeting at 10:30 a.m.
Speakers at 11 a.m.
The dynamic duo of
Martha Collins and Jesse Martins

Followed by an optional luncheon.

September Luncheon Menu:

Chicken Provençale -- with fresh tomato, olives, capers, fresh herbs, green beans and Orzo

Vegetarian Choice -- Vegetable Napoleon - layered mixed vegetables

Dessert -- Carrot Cake

Checks made out to: Manatee Opera Guild (MOG)

Reservations to: Barbara Quinn

3205 Wilderness Blvd. W.
Bradenton, FL 34219
Telephone: 941-776-0038
email: barbquin@aol.com

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

Reservations must be received by September 13.

A MESSAGE FROM JEANNE

Welcome to another exciting season of meetings and events at the Manatee Opera Guild! While you were (hopefully) enjoying the beaches and golf courses, trips, and maybe some nice cool weather up North, Syble DiGirolamo and Richard DeGennaro were preparing a series of fun and interesting programs for you to enjoy. On the next pages of this newsletter is a list of all these events, along with our regular meetings. Please look them over and anticipate all the fun you'll have this season.

You will notice that our meeting schedule this year is a little different with meetings often occurring on days other than the third Wednesday. This was necessary to accommodate the schedules of both Sarasota Opera and Palm Aire Country Club. Congratulations and thanks to Cathy Knobel for her negotiations between these two entities.

Our September meeting will feature Martha Collins and Jesse Martins, speaking about Sarasota Youth Opera, their summer camp, and their upcoming production of *The Hobbit*.

Both Martha and Jesse are dynamic speakers and favorites of our MOG family. We know that their talk will be inspirational and leave us amazed at their talent and dedication to the young singers. Please plan on being there.

Also, please take time to pay your 2024-2025 dues if you haven't already. A membership form is included later in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing all my MOG friends again on September 18.

HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OPERA

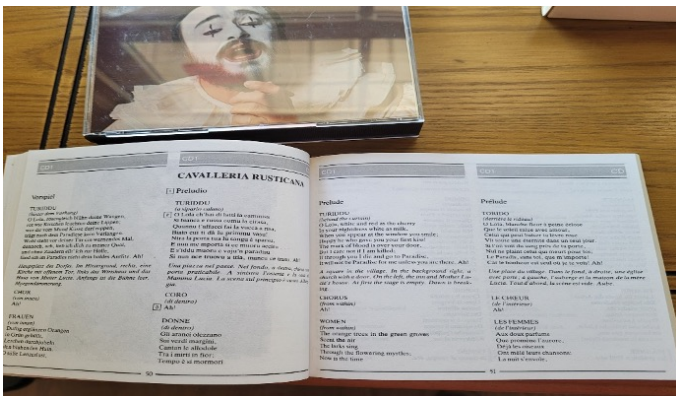
Elizabeth Aversa

This August through September “down time” for opera performance provides a convenient opportunity to learn more about this most fascinating performing art. Fall seasons have yet to begin, and summer opera festivals are winding down. Later in the fall, your opera guild will offer minimum cost lectures about the upcoming operas, but now is the time to jump start your journey to opera expertise! Here are four ways to increase your knowledge of opera.

1. Learn how to listen to opera.

How to Listen To and Understand Opera is an excellent guide to begin. Presented by Robert Greenberg, a composer, lecturer, historian, and musician, this series of more than 30 45-minute lectures is available as a boxed set comprised of four print volumes and a collection of CDs. It is available to borrow at the Manatee County Public Library. If you have an Audibles (recorded books) subscription, you can access the lectures on your phone or tablet device. Greenberg is a good speaker and his selections of music are ideal illustrations of the content of the series that takes us from the beginning of opera to the early 20th century. To sample Greenberg’s lectures, play this clip:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HviNwbjlydk>

Another resource for learning the basics of opera is an older book (1994, but still relevant) by Fred Plotkin entitled *Opera 101: A Complete Guild to Learning and Loving Opera*. Plotkin’s suggestion that, when approaching a new opera, one should read the story or synopsis, listen to the opera, and then listen again with the libretto. I agree wholeheartedly with that suggestion, but disagree



with Plotkin on other points. For example, he is not a fan of super titles, stating “A generalized English reduction of much of the language only serves to cheapen the opera.” Plotkin discusses 11 individual operas and points to specific recordings to accompany the chapters. The recordings are on vinyl and may be difficult to access today, but substituting CD- or streamed versions is not difficult. Opera 101 is also available on Audibles, but the 11 operas discussed in the book still require the reader to access recordings separately.

A very quick introduction, that you can recommend for first-timers for opera, can be found at <https://www.eno.org/discover-opera/the-beginners-guide-to-opera/> Brought to us by the English National Opera, this Beginner’s Guide to Opera offers the basics along with links to pursue more detail.

Finally, a series of more than 300 podcasts by Nicolas Reveles for the San Diego Opera is available at <https://podbay.fm/p/san-diego-opera-podcast> . For additional podcasts by other opera companies and organizations, check out 45 Best Opera Podcasts for 2024 at https://podcasts.feedspot.com/opera_podcasts/

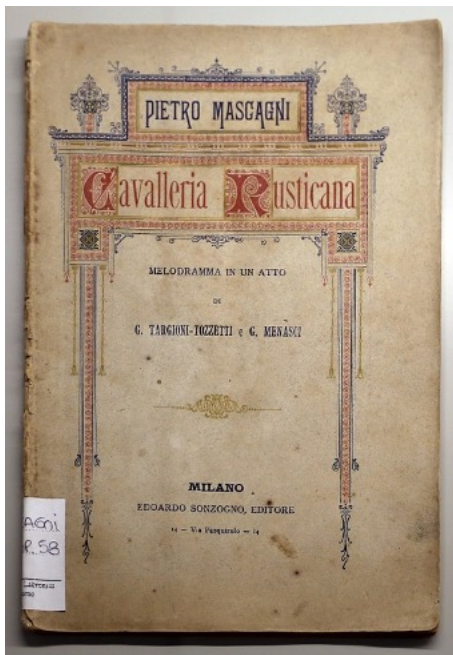
2. Learn about specific operas.

There are several ways to learn about specific operas before you go to the opera house to hear them.

First, you can read the stories of the great operas and then pursue more information about the music. The classic for summaries is by Milton Cross. His Complete Stories of the Great Operas, published in 1948, provides background for each of 76 operas; act-by-act coverage makes this a helpful guide. Chapters on ballet in opera and a history of opera are included. Another favorite is 100 Great Operas and Their Stories: Act-By-Act Synopses by William Simon. This 1957 guide covers 100 operas and background is given for each.

Libretti also provide extensive information about the operas along with the text of the operas, usually in two or more languages. Here is an example from the libretto for Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci, the London compact disc edition. The text appears in German, Italian, English, and French.

The libretti from vinyl record sets are similarly informative. Here is a page from the libretto for Cavalleria Rusticana with Italian and English that came with the Angel recording. On this libretto one follows along by sides of the records. On the CD version, one follows in act-by-act sequence.



Finally, libretti are also available online. Click on this link for a look at the online libretto database. <https://www.operalibretto.com/en/who-we-are/>

There are other ways to locate online libretti. Simply search on the opera title and “libretto” to access them.

3. Attend opera online.

Today’s technology allows us free access to opera. Spend some time online watching opera. When you have the time – either a few moments or an afternoon – listen to and watch excerpts and whole operas online. Here are links to videos related to the upcoming operas at the Sarasota Opera House. Enjoy them while we await the next season at The Sarasota Opera.

Cavalleria Rusticana: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5etIW7G8svQ>
Barber of Seville: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZO2BPS_pOw

Marriage of Figaro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oknX-Gi6f5k>
Stiffelio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACCBnnFwOj8>
The Hobbit [excerpt]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD18_eL5LjI

See you at the opera!

MANATEE OPERA GUILD 2024-2025 SCHEDULE

Board Meetings: Second Wednesday at 10 a.m., location tba

September 11

October 9

November 13

December 4 (First Wednesday)

January 15

February 12

March 12

April 9

General Membership Meetings: Coffee and conversation at 10 a.m.; meeting 10:30 a.m., Singers/speakers at 11 a.m., luncheon at 11:30 a.m.

September 18 (Wed)

October 16 (Wed)

November 14 (Thurs)

December: 11 (Wed) —Courtyard picnic at Opera House

January 16 (Thurs)

February 19: (Wed) Sweetheart Luncheon

March 14: (Fri) Spring Fling — HJD Award and Deane Allyn Award

April 16: (Wed) New Member Recognition

Preludes: Coffee and conversation at 9:30, speaker at 10 to 11:30 Westminster Point Pleasant Towers Building Auditorium.

October 18: Music of Verdi

November 22: *Cavalleria rusticana, Pagliacci*

December 13 ** (not 3rd Friday): *Barber of Seville*

January 17: *Marriage of Figaro*

February 21: *Stiffelio*

Special Events:

¡Una Fiesta Cubana!

On Stage Concert. October 22 5:00 p.m. - 8 p.m. Sarasota Opera House

Experience a very special evening “Una Fiesta Cubano” that will begin on the second floor of the Sarasota Opera House with lavish appetizers and featured beverages celebrating the Cuban culture. Following this cocktail hour, the audience will be seated on the Opera stage with the artist to enjoy a light-hearted musical program featuring global prize winning classical guitarist **Edel Muñoz**. The program will include a personal conversation with Edel about the instrument and the artist’s musical journey to international acclaim. After the concert, the artist and the audience return to the second floor to enjoy champagne and desserts.

A Cuban-American, Edel Muñoz is the first prize winner in more than 20 international guitar competitions. He has taught master classes at major music festivals, courses, seminars and workshops in prestigious universities around the world. He is currently on faculty at the Sarasota Conservatory of Music. Edel Muñoz is a world acclaimed performer who is known for his unique interpretations that touch and move audiences while creating a warm and magical atmosphere.

Holiday Party, Sunday, December 8, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. At the home of Maryanne Hazen. Co-hosted by Syble Di Girolamo.

Festive Holiday Party featuring plentiful hors d'oeuvres, wine and desserts.

This year's entertainer will be our own Valerie Giuliani, soprano. Valerie has sung professionally with several opera companies, and now is a member of the Choral Artists of Sarasota.

Contemporary Opera Film Showing Thursday, January 2, 2025 Westminster Towers Auditorium, Bradenton.

Enjoy a showing of a *The Ghosts of Versailles*, composed by John Corigliano, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, having its debut there in 1991. You will recognize some of the characters in this modern opera -- Figaro, Susanna, Count Almaviva, Cherubino -- who have roles in both *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville* during the 2025 Winter Season at the Sarasota Opera. In this opera, the ghosts of the Versailles court of Louis XVI, especially Marie Antoinette, are being consoled and entertained by Pierre Beaumarchais, the author of both the Figaro plays that were turned into the operas mentioned above.

Stay tuned for more exciting events.



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

Publicity

Event planning

Refreshments

Fundraising

Serving on the Board

Greeting

Soliciting advertising and gifts

Developing membership

Telephoning

Photography

Editing (newsletters, brochures, letters)

Writing

Setting up/cleaning up

Hosting parties

Modeling at fashion show

Hospitality

Other talent

Membership Level:

- Single Regular** Membership \$40
- Single Sustaining** Membership \$50
- Couple Regular** Membership \$60
- Couple Sustaining** Membership \$70

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

Send application and payment to:

Jeanne Yeagle
1700 3rd Avenue West, Apt 111
Bradenton, FL 34205

or bring to membership meeting