

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

Early Autumn 2021

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS

Please send your reservations with a check (made out to MOG) for \$25 per person to

Jean Roberts
222 12th St West
Apt 302
Bradenton, FL 34205
730-0135

Menu

Chicken Blanquette

(Sautéed chicken breast with sherry-mushroom cream sauce)

Green beans

Champagne risotto

Rolls and butter

Coffee, Iced Tea, Hot Tea and Sodas

Peanut Butter Cheesecake

A vegetarian entree is also available,
please note it on your reservation.

Reservation for Luncheon October 20, 2021

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Reservations: _____

Entree selection: please circle

Chicken

Vegetarian

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We will be meeting on October 20 at the Palm Aire Country Club. Your Manatee Opera Guild Board has worked over the summer to put together what we hope will be close to a normal year. *We need it!*

Some members might still feel wary of venturing to an indoor venue for entertainment, fellowship and a good lunch. Be assured — Jean Roberts, our Hospitality Chair, has worked closely with Palm Aire to ensure the best possible experience. Members vaccinated against Covid and their vaccinated guests are welcome at our meetings and events. The Sarasota Guild held indoor events over the summer with no ill effect. We are raring to go!

Syble DiGirolamo has lined up an exciting onstage concert happening on November 5, and Elizabeth Aversa, our new Education Chair has been working on our Prelude Series. Syble is working on a possible fashion show, and Rich DeGennaro is busy with the Stars of Tomorrow Concert. The Board has scheduled a MOG Valentine party, and an awards brunch, featuring our Helen Jepson Deller and Deane Allyn winners. We eliminated our September and April meetings this year, but hope to bring them back in 2022-23.

Our membership this year has dropped. Some out-of-town members have opted to stay away from their Florida homes for a while, and we have sadly lost a number of our dear friends. With your help, we hope that when things do settle down again, we can bring our membership numbers up again.

Join me in thanking Board members Syble DiGirolamo, our new Tributes Chair, Elizabeth Aversa, our new Education Chair, and returning Board members Richard Degennaro, First Vice President, Terry Davis, Second Vice President, Maryanne Hazen, Treasurer, and Angela Korsmo, Secretary.

MANATEE OPERA GUILD PRESENTS

Lyrical Dreams Concert

Sarasota Piano Trio at Sarasota Opera House

November 5, 2021 | 5pm - 7pm

5:00 pm Cocktails - Selby Lobby

6:00 pm Concert - On Stage

7:00 pm Champagne After-Glow



Milene Moreira,
Violinist



Nadine Trudel,
Cellist



Jesse Martins,
Pianist

Questions? Contact Syble DiGirolamo (941) 773-3684 or sybled@aol.com

Manatee Opera Guild presents its fourth annual *up close and personal* concert on the stage at the Sarasota Opera House, November 5, 2021. The event begins with a 5pm cocktail party in the beautiful Selby Lobby. At 6:00, the participants will join the *Sarasota Piano Trio* in the theater for an exclusively designed evening of chamber music featuring repertoire for piano, violin, and violoncello from Italy, England, France, and Brazil.

The Sarasota Piano Trio includes pianist Jesse Martins, violinist Milene Moreira and cellist Nadine Trudel. Their *Lyrical Dreams* program is a special treat incorporating both well-known opera passages and lesser-known Brazilian gems.

Following the program, participants are invited back to the Selby Lobby for a champagne afterglow reception.

Sponsors: Judy & Rick Aarnes, Elizabeth & Rocco Aversa, Aline Blanchard & Art Siciliano, Carol & Les Brualdi, Edie & David Chaifetz, Syble & Peter DiGirolamo, Maryanne & Ray Hazen, Maria Cora Gaffar, Angela Korsmo, Joan Lovell & Wally Kraemer, Sheila & Joe Varady, Rachael & Don Worthington, and Mary Zabin.

Patrons: Katherine Benoit & John Brooks, Sandy Rath & Richard DeGennaro, Katherine Martinez & Jules Herbert, Rebecca & Bill Tompkins, Michal & Jim Wadsworth, and Jeanne Yeagle & Dave Luce.

Limited Seating Available: Admission \$50

To purchase tickets: Visit Sarasota Opera Box Office - 61 N. Pineapple, Sarasota, FL 34236 | Call (941) 328-1300 | Visit SARASOTAOPERA.ORG

MEET THE SARASOTA PIANO TRIO

The **Sarasota Piano Trio** is an ensemble based in beautiful Sarasota, Florida. The three artists were colleagues at the Sarasota Opera when they were first approached to perform a concert for the students of the Sarasota Youth Opera. While researching repertoire for the concert they discovered a trove of lesser-known pieces that they felt had been overlooked and merited to be heard. This motivated the official formation of their ensemble and led to a number of subsequent performances, earning them praise for their interesting programming and expressive playing.

Milene Moreira, violin

A native of Brazil, violinist Milene Moreira is an active chamber musician as well as a current orchestral member of the Sarasota Orchestra and Sarasota Opera Orchestra. During the summers, she performs and teaches at the Wintergreen Music Festival in Virginia

Prior to joining the Sarasota Orchestra in 2003, Milene served as Concertmaster of ULBRA and Teatro São Pedro Chamber Orchestras (Porto Alegre, Brazil). She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, a Master of Music degree from the Carnegie Mellon University, and an

Arts Diploma from Freiburg Musikhochschule in Germany.

Ms. Moreira has been invited to perform as a fellow at several prestigious international music festivals such as the Orford Music Festival, Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau and Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. In Germany she was invited as a featured guest artist at Offenburg Kreuzgang Konzerte. Her orchestral experience includes performances with The Florida Orchestra, Florida South West Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Tampa Opera, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Freiburg Theater Opera, Basel Theater Opera and Porto Alegre Symphony Orchestra.

Nadine Trudel, cello

Sought after for her rich tone and meaningful interpretations, Nadine Trudel is currently performing as Principal cellist of the Sarasota Opera Orchestra and with the Sarasota Orchestra. In 2009 she co-founded the cello and bass ensemble NONA with her husband Gil Katz. The duo has since been performing across the United States.

A native of Montréal, Québec, Nadine attended the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal. She earned her

Master of Music degree at the University of Southern California with grants and awards from both the FCAR in Québec and the USC School of Music. Nadine has been invited as a fellow to numerous prestigious music festivals such as Tanglewood, Aspen, and the Banff Center for the Arts. She has also performed at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music and the Utah Festival Opera. In 2010, as guest soloists with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, the NONA ensemble (Ms. Trudel and Mr. Katz) premiered a new concerto for cello and bass by Gil Katz.

Jesse Martins, piano

Jesse Martins is an accomplished conductor, chorus master, pianist, and voice coach who has extensive experience working with singers from children to experienced professionals.

Prior to joining the music staff of Sarasota Opera in 2011, Maestro Martins had worked extensively as a music coach in his native Brazil and in New Zealand. At Sarasota Opera, he has been integrally involved in all aspects of the company's music making. He has served as Youth Opera Music Director for Sarasota Opera's highly acclaimed Youth Opera program conducting their annual performances, as well as co-creating two works specifically for children's voices. During this time, he has also served as cover conductor for multiple main stage performances, served as Chorus Master and Head of the Apprentice Program for the 2020 Winter Festival, conducted Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (2019), and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (2021). In the upcoming season Maestro Martins will conduct Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*.

The Manatee Opera Guild expresses our appreciation to the generous sponsors and donors that enable our Guild to hold the On Stage concert on November 5, 2021. Your support is fundamental to the success of our 2021-2022 Season and our support for the Sarasota Opera. **Thank You.**

Sponsors

Judy & Rick Aarnes
Elizabeth & Rocco Aversa
Aline Blanchard & Art Siciliano
Carol & Les Brualdi
Edie & David Chaifetz
Syble & Peter DiGirolamo
Maryanne & Ray Hazen

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Michal & Jim Wadsworth
Jeanne Yeagle & Dave Luce

FUN FACTS ABOUT THIS YEAR'S OPERAS AT SOH

By Elizabeth Aversa

What a happy occasion it will be to return to the Sarasota Opera House (SOH) for the 2021-2022 Fall and Winter Festivals! The performances last year — somewhat abbreviated and socially distanced due to COVID-19 — were wonderful. They broadened our opera horizons by safely introducing us to enjoyable shorter operas. And now the 2021-2022 lineup will bring back full length works by composers who anchor the “top ten composer list” regardless of who is doing the ranking. The operas are among the most beloved by some of the best of the best among composers. This column, and the one to appear in the next *Bel Canto*, are meant to tune us up for the season with some basics and fun facts about the operas, along with links to musical selections we may want to hear before we head back to the opera house.

This season's list of composers represents five of the top six when ranked by popularity of opera composers' works, and at least four of the top ten when ranked by experts as the “best” opera composers. The chance to hear Verdi (*Attila*), Puccini (*Tosca*), Rossini (*The Silken Ladder*), Donizetti (*The Daughter of the Regiment*) and Bizet (*The Pearl Fishers*) in one season is a real gift as far as this opera fan is concerned. I'm happy to save Strauss, Wagner, and Mozart for another time!

So, what of the upcoming operas? We'll look at them in the order in which they'll open at SOH, but the full stories of the operas and the endings won't be revealed here. No need to spoil the fun! (continued next page)

Rossini's Mysterious Retirement

The Silken Ladder (*La scala di seta*) composed by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) is a one act farce comica that has to do with a silk ladder that is lowered from a window and used for entry into a woman's bedroom. The opera is one of four that established Rossini as a successful composer. His first opera was staged when Rossini was only 18 years old; another of his short operas of that early period, *Il Signor Bruschino*, was enjoyed at the Sarasota Opera last season. The overture of *The Silken Ladder* is often performed in concert, and it deserves a listen. Here is a [link](#) to a performance by the NHK Symphony.

Rossini was an interesting and complicated character: he composed 39 operas, but his career was short. His operas were written and performed in a twenty-year span (1810-1830), but his productivity ended when Rossini was 37 years old. He lived almost 40 years in retirement. Rossini spent his early years in Italy but later resided in France. He composed to both Italian and French libretti.

His early retirement has been attributed to declining physical and mental health but also to the possibility that he planned the retirement all along. One biographical source adds "Some cite his legendary laziness as the cause, while others point to the Parisian hostility to his work and Rossini's resulting sulkiness. Another cause might have been his jealousy over the Parisian success of the opera composer [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#)." *Lately Lyric*, a publication of Lyric Opera Chicago, provides another insight on the retirement: "[After retirement] Rossini spent the rest of his life—40 years!—as a celebrated gourmand. As one of the top foodies of the day, he was a close friend of noted Parisian chef Antonin Carême, whom he met while studying in Paris. The two of them had a unique version of a pen-pal correspondence: Carême would send Rossini pâté or another specialty item, and Rossini would reply with a short aria as thanks."

Among Rossini's most frequently performed longer operas are *L'italiana in Algeri* (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*), *La Cenerentola*, ossia *La bontà in trionfo* (*Cinderella, or Goodness Triumphant*), *Semiramide*, and his last opera *Guillaume Tell* (William Tell).

Sarah Bernhardt, and dueling divas

One of opera's greatest thrillers, *Tosca* was composed by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) with librettists Luigi Fellica and Giuseppe Giacosa. It premiered in Rome in 1900. The story of *Tosca* involves the efforts of a famous opera singer (Floria Tosca) to save her artist lover Mario Cavaradossi from the evil chief of police Baron Scarpia. Here is a link to "E lucevan le stelle" in which the imprisoned Cavaradossi proclaims his love despite knowing that he is about to be executed. Listen [here](#).

It is interesting to note that Luciano Pavarotti's last stage performance was in the role of Cavaradossi at the Metropolitan Opera.

Tosca is based on a French five-act play dating to 1887 by Victorien Sardou. He wrote the play *La Tosca* specifically for Sarah Bernhardt, and it is said that this contributed greatly to both her career as an actress and his as a playwright. She toured the play throughout Europe for several years after its premier.

The opera *Tosca* was mentioned over the decades in the entertainment tabloid press because of an ongoing question of "who was the best Tosca?" Much has been written about the alleged Renata Tebaldi (1922-2004) - Maria Callas (1923-1977) rivalry. The Callas 1953 recording of the opera is still touted as possibly the best opera recording ever made, but critics argued their preferences. A recording of *Tosca* with Tebaldi from 1958 is still labeled one of the best as well.

Conductor Arturo Toscanini once said Tebaldi had the voice of an angel, while some called Callas "The Tigress." The issue was described in Tebaldi's obituary in *Variety* in 2004, nearly 30 years after Callas preceded Tebaldi in death.

"For years, opera fans devoured details of what they perceived as a prima donna duel, and La Scala devotees were divided into Tebaldi and Callas camps. After her retirement, however, Tebaldi told an interviewer she had never considered Callas a rival and that the supposed feud was whipped up by the media." As for Callas, she said she admired Tebaldi but noted them as "different singers."

Both Toscas are worth hearing. Here are links to "Vissi d'arte" where the character Tosca reflects on her life, performed by Callas and Tebaldi respectively. [Callas recording](#). [Tebaldi recording](#) (continued next page)

The Daughter of the Regiment **uncertain beginning, continued success**

The Daughter of the Regiment is a comic opera by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) that premiered in Paris in 1840. The music is set to a French libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy Saint-Georges and Jean-Francois Bayard. It is the story of Marie, a young woman who had been raised from a foundling by a rough and tumble regiment of French guards. Marie is in love with a Tyrolean man perceived by the guards to be a spy. Her long lost mother appears with other ideas about matrimony for Marie, and several memorable characters who weigh in on the matter include the beloved sergeant of the guards and Marie's intended mother-in-law. It is a riot of an opera, story-wise and musically!

Donizetti moved from Italy to France in 1838 following the death of his wife. Italy held too many sad memories, so he began a new life in Paris. Although he was completing loose ends for an opera to open in Italy, he began several operas set to French libretti. *The Daughter of the Regiment* was the first of Donizetti's French operas to be heard. The opera opened to mixed reviews; Hector Berlioz contended that the music had been "lifted" from an Italian opera since Donizetti was so unbelievably productive since his move to Paris. In a rebuttal published the same week, Donizetti defended his work stating, "May I be permitted to assert, in turn, that the music making up *La fille du regiment* all was composed expressly for the Opera-Comique, and that not a single number appeared in any [other] score whatsoever?" The controversy died down with Donizetti's explanation and the opera went on to be a continuing success. The opera chronologically followed Donizetti's tremendously successful *Lucia di Lammermoor* which received its premier in Italy in 1835.

The origins of the story of this opera remain uncertain. Herbert Weinstock, a music historian, said, "No one has ever been sure whether Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Bayard found the basis for the story-line in the libretto...in some now forgotten novel or play, as was then the custom, or whether they invented it from whole cloth." Regardless, it is a sweet story with beautiful music.

Famous Maries in *The Daughter of the Regiment* include Jenny Lind and Joan Sutherland. Here is a link to "Quoi! vous m'aimez," featuring Sutherland as

Marie and Luciano Pavarotti as the young Tyrolean who is in love with her. Listen [here](#).

In the next issue this column will discuss Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* and Verdi's *Attila*.

TRIBUTES



Tributes are a note of kindness and acknowledgement. As your own lives unfold this year and events of meaning arise, consider recognizing these with an MOG tribute.

Jean Roberts and Anne Solley gave a Tribute in Memory of **John Collins**. "John was a true gentleman and volunteer Extraordinaire. He joined BOG soon after it was founded and served on the board as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for numerous years. He came to BOG/MOG meetings and functions until declining health in the last few years prevented him from doing so. He will be missed by us and by many in the community. Our condolences to his devoted wife Roberta."

Syble DiGirolamo sends a tribute to **Jeanne Yeagle** expressing gratitude for a year of *Bel Canto* newsletters that kept our MOG connected during a year that we couldn't be together in our normal meetings and events.

From **Beth Roberts** in memory of her mother, **Marian Roberts**. Marian loved attending Sarasota Opera performances and the Manatee Opera Guild meetings.

Tribute Cards will be available to pick up at all meetings. You can also send your Tributes (minimum \$10) to: Tribute Chair, Syble DiGirolamo at 3509 Little Country Rd. Parrish, FL 34219.

MANATEE OPERA GUILD CALENDAR 2021-2022

Meetings

At Palm Aire Country Club
5601 Country Club Way, Sarasota, FL 34243

Times

10 a.m. Coffee and conversation
10:30 Business Meeting
11:00 Singers from Sarasota Opera entertain
11:30 Optional Luncheon (\$25 per person)

Dates

October 20
November 10
December 8
January 19
February 16 (Manatee Opera Guild Valentine Party
celebrating our own member, Maryanne Hazen)
March 16 (Spring Fling Brunch includes the Helen
Jepson Deller and Deane Allyn Awards)

Preludes

All Preludes take place at Westminster Towers
Auditorium
1533 4th Avenue West, Bradenton 34205
Refreshments at 9:30, Program at 10
\$5 at the door, no reservations

October 22	<i>The Silken Ladder</i>
Martha Collins	
November 19	<i>Tosca</i>
Rosanne Martorella	
December 10	<i>The Daughter of the Regiment</i>
Martha Collins	
January 21	<i>The Pearl Fishers</i>
Peter Shimkin	
February 18	<i>Attila</i>
Phyllis Lowitt	

Board Meetings (All members are invited to attend)

First Tuesday
Location TBA
10 a.m.

October 5
November 2
December 7
January 4
February 1
March 1
April 5

On Stage Concert ‘Lyrical Dreams’ Featuring the Sarasota Piano Trio

November 5
Sarasota Opera House
Tickets \$50

5 p.m. Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres
6 p.m. Concert
7 p.m. Champagne and afterglow with desserts

Stars of Tomorrow Concert Featuring Apprentice Artists from Sarasota Opera in solos, duets and choruses

Neel Performing Arts Center at State College of Florida
February 6, 2022
1:30 pm
Tickets: \$15

Fashion Show Lakewood Ranch Country Club Date: TBA (late in March)

Up-to-date information about our meetings and events, past issues of the Bel Canto, access to
Sarasota Opera boxoffice, and other information can be found on our website:

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>



If you have already renewed, **Thank You**, and please pass this application on to a friend. If you haven't yet renewed for 2021-2022, please renew now!

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 literature (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

Please send this form and your check made out to MOG to:

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