

BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

January 2023

<https://manateeoperaguild.org>

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS

Please send your reservations with a check (made out to MOG) for \$30 per person to

Cathy Knobel
787 Ben Franklin Drive, #8
Sarasota, FL 34236
941-706-2490
knobelwd@aol.com

Menu

Chicken Blanquette

*Sautéed chicken breasts with
sherry mushroom cream sauce*

Green Beans and Champagne Risotto

Dessert: Fig and Pear Pie

A vegetarian entree will be available.
Please note your choice on your reservation.
Reservations are due by January 13.

Reservation for Luncheon January 18, 2023

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Reservations: _____

Entree selection: please circle

Chicken Blanquette

Vegetarian

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed the holidays, had the opportunity to be with family and friends, and that 2023 proves to be a year of health and happiness. We already know that it will be full of glorious operas.

Many thanks to Maryanne and Ray Hazen and Syble DiGirolamo for hosting the Holiday Party and providing entertainment, and to everyone who brought something delicious to enjoy. It was a magical evening with much conversation and laughter, plenty of good food and drink, and wonderful entertainment from the charming husband and wife GS Duo—Angela Galestro on flute and Jonathan Smith on guitar. Hear songs from their Christmas album [here](#).

We had a great time at the December picnic meeting in the Opera House Courtyard. The weather was perfect, neither too hot nor too cold, sunshiny sky, and music provided by Heather Johnson, mezzo-soprano. Here, in Sarasota, she appeared as Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, the title character in *La Cenerentola*, Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*. Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Beppe in *L'Amico Fritz*. Her list of operatic achievements can be found on her webpage: <https://heatherjohnsonmezzo.com/>

Soon, you will be getting your five tickets to the Stars of Tomorrow Concert that takes place on February 5, at 1:30 p.m. at the Manatee Performing Arts Center. You can sell your extra tickets. You can give them away to friends. Or, you can return them, unused. For newer members who have never attended a Stars Concert, it is a full program of arias, duets, and ensemble pieces and choruses done by the Apprentice Artists of Sarasota Opera. They are generally singing on the Sarasota Opera stage in choruses, but at this concert, they get to really shine!

Don't forget to bring your excess bling to the meeting on the 18th. We are collecting all sorts of necklaces, earrings, shawls, formal dresses, cummerbunds, cuff links, and other pieces of formal wear for our apprentice artists to choose from at an event run by Martha Collins. Imagine seeing your clothes and jewelry on the stage on February 5 at the *Stars of Tomorrow Concert*.

If you enjoy Elizabeth Aversa's column this month, there will be a talk about the subject at Selby Library. Details on page 4.

See you at the prelude on the 6th and at the meeting on the 18!

DANCE IN OPERA

By Elizabeth Aversa

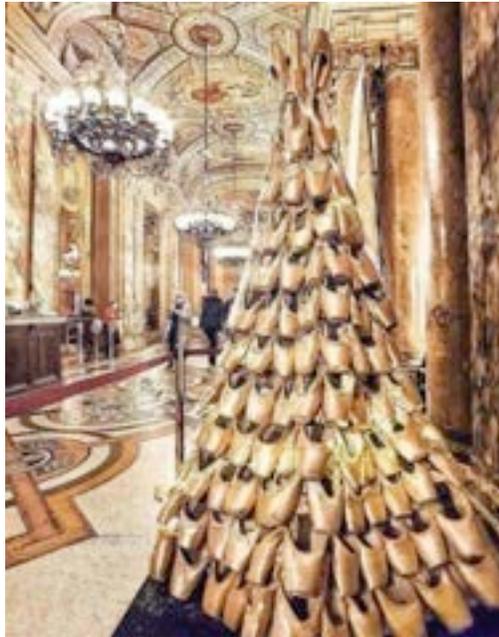
When I inquired of Jeanne Yeagle about a topic for this month's *Bel Canto*, she suggested "ballet in opera." It is clear that ballet is the main entree on the dance-in-opera menu. To make the point, the photo below shows a different kind of "shoe tree," this one constructed from pointe shoes and displayed where ballet has always been part of opera — at Paris's Opera Garnier.

Dance has been associated with opera from the very beginning. Forms of entertainment that preceded opera included festive masquerades that were performed at carnival time and pastorales that lauded nature. Both included dance, and dance also accompanied the intermedii, plays with music that were performed on special occasions in cities throughout Italy. Fred Plotkin, author of *Opera 101: A complete guide to learning & loving opera*, explains why the emergence of ballet was significant: "it was a sustained form of storytelling through music and dance," and "a new art form based on, but not confined to, the movements developed over centuries in rustic and courtly dances..." (1) Since ballet was popular in France, it was natural that ballet would be incorporated into French opera more readily than in Italian, German, or Russian works, although we have examples of dance throughout the broader repertoire. James Bennett, with WQXR, reminds us that "in French opera the dancing is usually framed within the context of the narrative, while in other operatic traditions it is sometimes removed from the drama." (2) A 2020 article from the Welsh National Opera (WNO) adds to the history: "The inclusion of ballet in opera began around 1645, when Italian operas were taken to the court of King Louis XIV and were tailored to fit French tastes — which included ballet. Ballets had been enjoyed in the French courts (ballet de cour) since at least 1581."(3)

Traditionally, ballets were included in the second or third acts of French operas; they provided small breaks from the singing when audiences could reflect without listening too carefully. Ballet provided, in a word, a *divertissement*, or a distraction. The Paris Opera required the inclusion of ballet, and operas could not be performed there without the dance. Although the ballets sometimes had a political agenda, for many, including contemporary audiences, the beauty of the dance and the music is the point. The importance of ballet to French opera is illustrated by two of the most well-known composers of the 19th century. It is said that Giuseppe Verdi, who worked closely with the Paris Opera, rewrote no fewer than six of his operas to include ballet. (4) And Richard Wagner learned the Paris rules the hard way. He added a ballet to his *Tannhäuser* but placed the ballet between the overture and the first act. Since the French elite often came late to the opera, at the Paris premier of the opera

they missed the ballet. As a result of the unconventional placement of the ballet, chaos broke out with booing, threats, and bad reviews. The opera closed quickly. But Wagner retained the ballet in the same position when it was performed in Vienna to greater success. (5)

Here are ten links to some ballet music and videos to enjoy. Please note that the operas whose titles are preceded with an asterisk (*) have no videos to watch — just the music!



*[Aida](#) by Giuseppe Verdi. Act II, Scene 2.

[Carmen](#) by Georges Bizet. Gypsy Dance Scene.

[La Gioconda](#) by Amilcare Ponchielli. Dance of the Hours.

[Lakmé](#) by Leo Delibes. Ballet.

[Parsifal](#) by Richard Wagner. Flower Maiden Dance.

[Prince Igor](#) by Alexander Borodin. Polovtsian Dances.

*[Romeo et Juliette](#) by Charles Gounod. Ballet Music. &

[Samson et Delilah](#) by Camille Saint-Saëns. Bacchanale.

[Tannhäuser](#) by Richard Wagner. Ballet, Act I.

*[Les Troyens](#) by Hector Belioz. Act IV Ballet.

See you at the opera!

References

(1) Fred Plotkin, *Opera 101: A complete guide to learning and loving opera* (Hatchette Books, 2014), p. 6.

(2) James Bennett, "Why are there ballets in the middle of French operas?" (WQXR, August 9, 2017), <https://www.sutori.com/>.

(3) Welsh National Opera, *The role of ballet in opera* (WNO, March 17, 2020), <http://wno.org.uk/>.

(4) Mary Ridley, *Opera e Balletto* (Cultural Project, n.d.) Boston University Global Programs: Study Abroad. <https://www.bu.edu/abroad/media/padua-what-students-say/opera-e-balletto/>

(5) Houston Symphony, "Dangerous decadence: Wagner's overture and Venusberg music from Tannhäuser," (Houston Symphony, September 20, 2019), <http://houstonSymphony.org/> >Tannhäuser.



Please bring your unused and unwanted accessories to our meeting January 18.

Women:

- Shawls
- Shrugs
- Large scarfs
- Jewelry - Necklaces, Earrings, Bracelets, Brooches
- Shoes - Only if in excellent condition.
- Gowns

Men:

- Cummerbunds
- Bow Ties & Handkerchiefs
- Ties
- Cuff Links



*MOG Sweetheart Luncheon
Honoring
Angela Korsmo*



Stars of Tomorrow Concert

with the Apprentice Artists of Sarasota Opera performing solos, duets, ensembles and choruses.

February 5, 2023

1:30 pm

Manatee Performing Arts Center

502 3rd Avenue West

Bradenton, FL 34205

Tickets: \$20 or 5 for \$80

Fashion Show and Luncheon

February 28, 2023

11:30 am

Lakewood Ranch Country Club

7650 Legacy Boulevard

Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202

Fashions from Evelyn and Arthur

Main Street, Sarasota



PRELUDES — INTRODUCTIONS TO SARASOTA WINTER FESTIVAL OPERAS

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

January 6 — Don Giovanni

January 20 — Ernani

February 27 — Thérèse

UPCOMING EVENTS — JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

MEETINGS

- 10:00 Coffee and conversation
- 10:30 Business Meeting
- 11:00 Singers from Sarasota Opera entertain
- 11:30 Optional Luncheon

Dates

- January 18
- February 15 (Manatee Opera Guild Sweetheart Party celebrating our own member, Angela Korsmo)
- March 15 (Spring Fling Brunch includes the Helen Jepson Deller and Deane Allyn Awards)
- April 19

BOARD MEETINGS (All members are invited to attend)

First Tuesday
Location Angela Korsmo's home. 319 36th Street NE
Bradenton, FL 34208
10 a.m.

January 10
February 7
March 7
April 11

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Patricia Paul
1700 3rd Ave W
Apt 106
Bradenton, FL 34205

Kathleen Matthews
2103 Island Estates Drive
Parrish, FL 34219-2306

Mimi Bagley
17652 Northwood PL
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202-3228

TRIBUTES

To **Syble DiGirolamo** and **Maryanne and Ray Hazen**:
Thank you for a great holiday party! What fun!
—from Jeanne Yeagle

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.

Tributes can be purchased by sending a minimum of \$10 to Linda Buchhart, 6350 29th Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34209. Phone: 792-5962 Email: lindapros4477@yahoo.com. Not only will your tribute be listed here in the *Bel Canto*, but the recipient will receive a card and the donor will receive a receipt.

Tribute Cards will be available to pick up at all meetings.

TWO EVENTS TO ENJOY

The **Sarasota Musical Archive** is presenting two new programs that might interest members of MOG.

These take place at 10:30 am at the Selby Library auditorium. The Selby Library is across from Sarasota Opera House.

January 11 – Musical Performance: Stacy and Richard Ridenour.

Pianists Richard and Stacy studied piano at the University of Michigan with Bachelors' degrees in piano performance. Richard recently performed with the orchestras of Indianapolis, Atlanta, Kansas City, and Mazatlan, Mexico. Stacy joined the Sarasota Opera as Director of Development in August of 2013. Richard earned his Master's degree from Juilliard School of Music and is an international Steinway Artist.

January 18 – Lecture: Opera and Dance—An uneasy marriage

Joy McIntyre, Opera singer & Associate Professor Emerita, Boston University

For required reservations, call 941-861-1168 or visit: www.sarasotamusicarchive.org



GS Duo at Holiday Party