# BEL CANTO

Newsletter of the Manatee Opera Guild

March 2020



Christopher Nazarian, Bass, from Sydney, Australia, at our February meeting.

Picture by Marge Melun.

Name

# President's Message

March "comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." as the adage goes. For opera lovers in the area, this is particularly true. The four supremely melodic and romantic operas presented this month will thrill us now, and have us humming all through the summer. I hope that you have tickets to all four, and that you enjoy them as much as I am sure I will. Thank you to Marge Melun and Ky Thompson for organizing our excellent Prelude series. Through those talks, we had the opportunity to learn more about what we are to see and hear. The Preludes make each opera experience more pleasurable.

To be sure, February was marked with sadness. We will always remember **Greg Trupiano** and the infectious joy he brought to our Guild, and to every one who attended his classes "Understanding Opera" which he gave with Richard Russell every fall. Dave and I attended for many years, and always appreciated **Greg's** vast knowledge of opera and the very special dynamic between **Greg** and **Richard**. We are so proud that we honored **Greg** at our Soirée in 2015. To my knowledge, he is the only honoree who ever brought gifts for the attendees, but that was pure **Greg**. We will surely miss him. There will be a memorial service for **Greg** on March 12 at 2 p.m. at the Opera House. All are welcome.

Thank you to **Jean Roberts** for the lovely luncheon honoring past and present Presidents of the Guild after our February meeting. Joey Frye, Eileen Witzgall representing her husband Bill, Mary Zabin, Richard DeGennaro, Syble DiGirolamo and I felt truly appreciated.

I hope to see you at the Fashion Show on the 4th of March, and again at our March 18 Spring Fling Luncheon following the membership meeting. We will be awarding the Helen Jepson Dellera and Deane Allyn Awards to the most promising Studio Artist and Youth Opera participant respectively. It's such a lovely event, and gives us the opportunity to know these young people at the beginning of their promising careers. Do come!

# RESERVATION FORM MARCH 18, 2020 — SPRING FLING AND AWARDS LUNCHEON

Number attending	Phone Number

Please send your reservation and check made out to MOG for \$35.00 (\$50.00 Patron) per person to: Jean Roberts, 222 12th St W, Apt 302 Bradenton, FL 34205 Email: jeanshawne@tampabay.rr.com or phone 730-0135

Deadline for reservations: Friday, March 13. Your remittance must be received by that date.

**Menu:** House salad, Filet Mignon (medium), Roasted fingerling potatoes, Sauteed vegetables, Mixed berry cake with whipped cream. A Chefs' Choice vegetarian entree is also available. Please indicate your choice when making reservation.

Meeting and Luncheon take place at IMG Country Club, 4350 El Conquistador Parkway, Bradenton, FL 34210 Coffee and conversation at 10:00, Business Meeting at 10:30 and Entertainment at 11:00. Luncheon follows.



Past and present presidents, front row Mary Zabin, Eileen Witzgall representing Bill Witzgall, Joey Frye. Standing, Syble DiGirolamo, Jeanne Yeagle and Rich DeGennaro (photo by Jean Roberts)

# **Board Meeting**

The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 11at 10:00 a.m. at the Westminster Shores (1700 3rd Avenue West) in the Card Room. Park in the parking lot in front of the building. There are several parking spaces that are reserved for staff after 2 p.m., but feel free to park in them in the morning. Come in under the awning, sign in, and follow the corridor on the left.

# **Preludes**

With **Dr. Peter Shimkin's** superb presentation on *La Wally*, the MOG has concluded its Prelude program for this season. We wish to thank all of our wonderful presenters who gave 5 excellent programs to a total of 90 persons. This enabled us to make a contribution of \$450.00 to the SOA.

We also wish to acknowledge the hospitality of the Westminster Point Pleasant community for hosting our meetings, at no cost to us. In addition to having the use of their classroom facility and electronic equipment, they provided morning refreshments of coffee, tea, juice, fruit and pastries. We thank them for their generosity. We look forward to the 2020-2021 season of SOA operas and our Prelude series, which will provide insights that will surely enrich our opera going experiences.

Marge Melun Chair of Education, MOG



Steven Aguiló-Arbues, Program and Music Director of Studio Artists at Sarasota Opera, Tenor Samuel Hall, Bass James Eder, Baritone Scott Purcell and Bass Christopher Nazarian. (Photo by Syble DiGirolamo).

February's meeting was a Valentine to the ladies of the Guild — an all male review, and I think our gentlemen enjoyed it as well. You can hear more from these singers by clicking on their names in blue.

James Eder began with "La Vendetta," Bartolo's aria from *Marriage of Figaro*. Bartolo dislikes Figaro because he prevented him from marrying the current Countess of Almaviva, who was Dr. Bartolo's ward at the time. He describes the sweetness of revenge that he will achieve.

Following was <u>Samuel Hall</u> singing "Salut! demeure chaste et pure" from Gounot's *Faust*. Faust, realizing his love for Marguerite arrives at her cottage and wonders how such a divine creature rose from such humbleness.

Our next selection was "O du mein holder Abendstern" from Wagner's *Tannhäuser* sung by <u>Scott Purcell</u>. Wolfram describes the soul yearning to escape the world, conveying his sorrow at Elisabeth's approaching death. But as Wolfram catches sight of the Evening Star, he takes comfort in its light.

Christopher Nazarian, bass, followed with "Infelice!... e tuo credevi" from Verdi's *Ernani*. Silva has entered his niece and fiancee Elvira's room to find both Ernani and Carlo inside. He is shocked at this and laments.

The final selection was the lovely Pearl Fishers duet "Au fond du temple saint" from **The Pearl Fishers** by Bizet. In spite of their both having loved the priestess Leïla, Zurga and Nadir vow to remain friends.

They were accompanied by Steven Aguiló-Arbues who told me that the singers are so excited to sing for MOG.



**In March, Women's History Month,** and in 2020, 100 years since the adoption of Amendment 19 of the U.S.



Dame Ethel Smyth by John Singer Sargent

Constitution that gave women the right to vote, and a chance at equality, I am moved to write about women composers, and specifically women opera composers. There are more than you think!

My first discovery is an amazing English suffragette and composer, Dame Ethel Smyth, born in 1858. At a time when women were meant to be demure and obedient, Ethel defied her father, a major general in the British

artillery, and went to study music at the Leipzig Conservatory where she was friends with and admired by composers Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Clara Schumann, and Grieg.

Dame Ethel Smyth wrote the stirring *March of the Women*, the Suffragette Anthem, sung at all suffrage marches in the 1910's. When women protested in the street outside Holloway Prison where Smyth was jailed for malicious mischief, Dame Ethel conducted the piece, her arms outstretched through the prison bars of her window, holding her baton – her toothbrush!

Smyth's extensive body of work includes the *Concerto for Violin, Horn and Orchestra* and the *Mass in D Minor*, and many choral works, and six operas. The opera *The Wreckers is* the story of Cornish pirates, religious hypocrisy and clandestine love, ending of course with tragedy. She also wrote *The Boatswain's mate* in 1913-14 using her own libretto, as well as *Entente Cordiale* (1926), *Fête Galante* (1923) and *Fantasio* (1898). Another of her operas, *Der Wald (The Wood)*, was produced in 1903 at New York's Metropolitan Opera. Not until 2016, 113 years later, was another woman's opera produced there, Kaija Saariaho's *L'Amour de loin*.

Dame Ethel's music was both appreciated and derided in her lifetime. Amazingly, her critics found her music "too masculine." On her seventy-fifth birthday in 1934, her work was celebrated in a festival, the final event of which was held at the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of the Queen. By this time, she was totally deaf and unable to appreciate her music or the applause of the audience.

To hear some of her music and judge for yourself, click on these links: <u>The Wreckers Overture</u>, <u>The Boatswain's Mate</u>, Melodies from <u>Entente Cordiale</u>, <u>Mass in D Minor</u>, <u>Serenade</u>.

### Please Welcome New Members

### Rich and Sue Lutz

4204 37th Avenue Drive W Bradenton, FL 34205 97170 873-1296 rlutz019@comcast.net

### Linda Buchhart

6350 29th Avenue West Bradenton, FL 34209 792-5962 lindapros4477@yahoo.com

# **Tributes**

In fond memory of **Greg Trupiano** and his wonderful contributions to Sarasota Opera and our Guild from Mary Zabin, Juanita Connell, Joe and Sheila Varady, MOG Board, Jeanne Yeagle and Dave Luce, Richard DeGennaro, and Syble DiGirolamo.

Many thanks to **Jean Roberts** for our two recent luncheons celebrating MOG's Anniversary in January and our Presidents' Recognition in February. We appreciate your reminders of our significant Guild history. Kudos! From Sheila Varady

Tribute on the occasion of an OASIS event: We are so proud of **K. C. Herbert** for singing at "Opera for Animals: Singing is Saving" on March 7th at Palm Aire. This combines KC's love of opera and animals. From Proud Mom Kate

In appreciation to **Marge Melun and Ky Thompson** for another great Prelude series from Jeanne Yeagle and Dave Luce.

### Concerts at Noon

## Peterson Great Room, Sarasota Opera House at noon

Enjoy these hour-long concerts featuring Sarasota Opera's Apprentice and Studio artists singing arias and ensembles with piano accompaniment.

Tickets: \$5

March 5 Apprentice Concert
March 13 Studio Understudies
March 20 Apprentice Concert

Tickets from the SO Box office 366-8450 Ext. 1 or at www.sarasotaopera.org



MANATEE OPERA GUILD

of the Sarasota Opera Association

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