

# ENSEMBLE

THE VOICE OF THE CHORAL ART FORM IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Volume 1, Issue 31  
January 2016

## Happy New Year !!!

Robert Parrish  
Artistic Director  
Musica Sacra  
Cantorum



Anatomy of  
Change  
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## Light concert schedule this month

It isn't often that southwest Florida has the opportunity to see and hear an award winning, nationally renowned professional choral ensemble but that opportunity will be here in January when Seraphic Fire presents their American Spiritual Concert at Moorings Presbyterian Church in Naples. (See sidebar for details)

This will be the second of four concerts scheduled here. The first concert in November had a surprising and disappointingly small crowd and certainly didn't reflect the interest and the growth of the choral art form in southwest Florida. They presented the same concert the following night on the east coast to a sell-out crowd.

We at Ensemble strongly recommend this performance. Choral singers in particular will hear the perfect blend of voices, the artistry and the disciplined singing that we all strive for in this hobby of ours; the hallmark of a quality group.

## SERAPHIC FIRE

*The American Spiritual* is made possible through a generous gift by Marty Davis and Allx Ritchie.

PROGRAM II

### THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

*An Expression of Pure Joy*

From the hills of Appalachia to small African-American churches of the Deep South, the American Spiritual is America's first home-grown musical art form. From the plaintive sounds of *Amazing Grace* and *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* to the unbridled joy of *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*, the American Spiritual gets to the very essence of our national heritage. Seraphic Fire will explore this compelling genre in depth, illuminating both familiar tunes and soon-to-be favorites.

January 14, 2016 7:30pm Moorings Presbyterian  
791 Harbour Dr, Naples, FL 34103

4 For tickets or information, call 1-888-673-7735 or visit [www.SeraphicFire.org](http://www.SeraphicFire.org)

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# The Naples Orchestra & Chorus

Max Rabinovitsj  
*Artistic Director*  
& *Orchestra Conductor*  
Ronald Doiron, DMA  
*Choral Director*  
& *Assistant Conductor*

## SEASON OPENER

**Saturday, January 9, 2016 at 7:00 PM**  
**Sunday, January 10, 2016 at 2:00 PM**

*Ludwig van Beethoven Egmont Overture, Op. 84*  
*Edward Elgar Sospiri, Op. 70 (Adagio)*  
*Franz Schubert Mass No 2 in G Major, D.167*  
*Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*

 Naples  
Orchestra  
and  
Chorus

**Naples High School**  
**1100 Golden Eagle Circle**  
**Naples, FL 34102**

Ticket purchase  
\$18 in advance online  
\$20 at the door

[www.NaplesOrchestraAndChorus.org/tickets](http://www.NaplesOrchestraAndChorus.org/tickets)  
(239) 298-7911

The Naples Orchestra & Chorus is a 501 (C) (3) multi-generational community organization dedicated to bringing affordable classical and popular music to Collier and Lee Counties, and scholarship awards to students studying music.

*Symphonic*  
**Chorale**  
of Southwest Florida  
**Presents**

**LEE LESSACK**

AN AMERICAN SONGBOOK SOIREE

The Landings Yacht Club  
4420 Flagship Dr., Fort Myers  
January 30, 2016  
6:00-10:00 PM  
With Pianist Johnny Rodgers

Guest Emcee:  
Reiko Niya, SWFL Symphony Concert Master

Guests: \$75.00 per person - Includes Dinner,  
Show, Live and Silent Auctions, 50/50 and more!

For more information contact Karen Bang (239) 943-6728 or Emory Bjorkedal (239) 267-0020  
All Proceeds benefit the Symphonic Chorale of Southwest Florida a 501 (c) 3 not for profit corporation.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION (MORTGAGE) AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA  
TOLL FREE (800-455-7022) WITHIN THE STATE, REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. APPROVAL OR REJECTION IS SOLELY UP TO THE REGISTERED PARTY.

**Robert Parrish**  
Artistic Director  
Musica Sacra Cantorum



## Anatomy of Change

In August 2014, Musica Sacra Cantorum (it's a long name, so let's just say MSC from here on) took a brave step into the realm of professional artistry, a result of the organization's strategic planning initiative. Over a six-month period that began in October 2013, all stakeholders including performers, patrons and donors took a deep look at who we were and what we wanted to be and decided some fundamental artistic changes needed to be made. First, we would become two ensembles: one fully professional and the second a marriage of professional and volunteer artists working closely together. Each ensemble would have its own events, no sharing of the limelight. We would celebrate each ensemble for what it is, how it is staffed, and with appropriate literature. So, the professional ensemble MSC Voices was born, with the larger hybrid group becoming MSC Chorus.

A full article could be written about the birth of a professional choral group, but my focus here is on the incorporation of a professional core within an already existing all-volunteer ensemble. It's widely recognized that members of volunteer choral ensembles are very passionate about their 'family.' I anticipated that a flock of members would let the Board of Directors and me know their displeasure at the perceived harm that was being done to their family. Well, I was pleasantly surprised at the low number of such comments. It turns out that although there was some trepidation at the changes being made, most members could see that they were necessary. So, unlike other choral ensembles that have tried to incorporate professional and volunteer singers into one unit and failed, we had cleared the first hurdle: overcoming internal resistance. Other important areas that needed advance planning and careful consideration were finances, egalitarianism, and professional qualifications.

Finances: Has any treasurer ever said "You have more than enough money to do this project. Just go for it." If so, I've never met them. So, how could we engage professional singers for our ensembles? Well, the simple answer was that we were spending money in the wrong places. Too many rehearsals, requiring large expenditures for the rental of rehearsal space coupled with requisite accompanist remuneration. Plus, the artistic result was not equal to the amount spent. An agreement to use a new rehearsal and performance site (at a great reduction in cost) and a reduction in the number of rehearsals resulted in the forecasted balanced budget for the 2014-2015 season being achieved. The reduction in the number of rehearsals was possible for two reasons. First, professionals bring not only their voice, but also their musicianship to the ensemble, meaning we could work faster with higher standards. Our volunteers benefit from working in an atmosphere of heightened musicianship reaching levels they never dreamed possible.

Egalitarianism: Every member of MSC Chorus is treated equally. We have a very detailed Member's Handbook. Roles and respon-

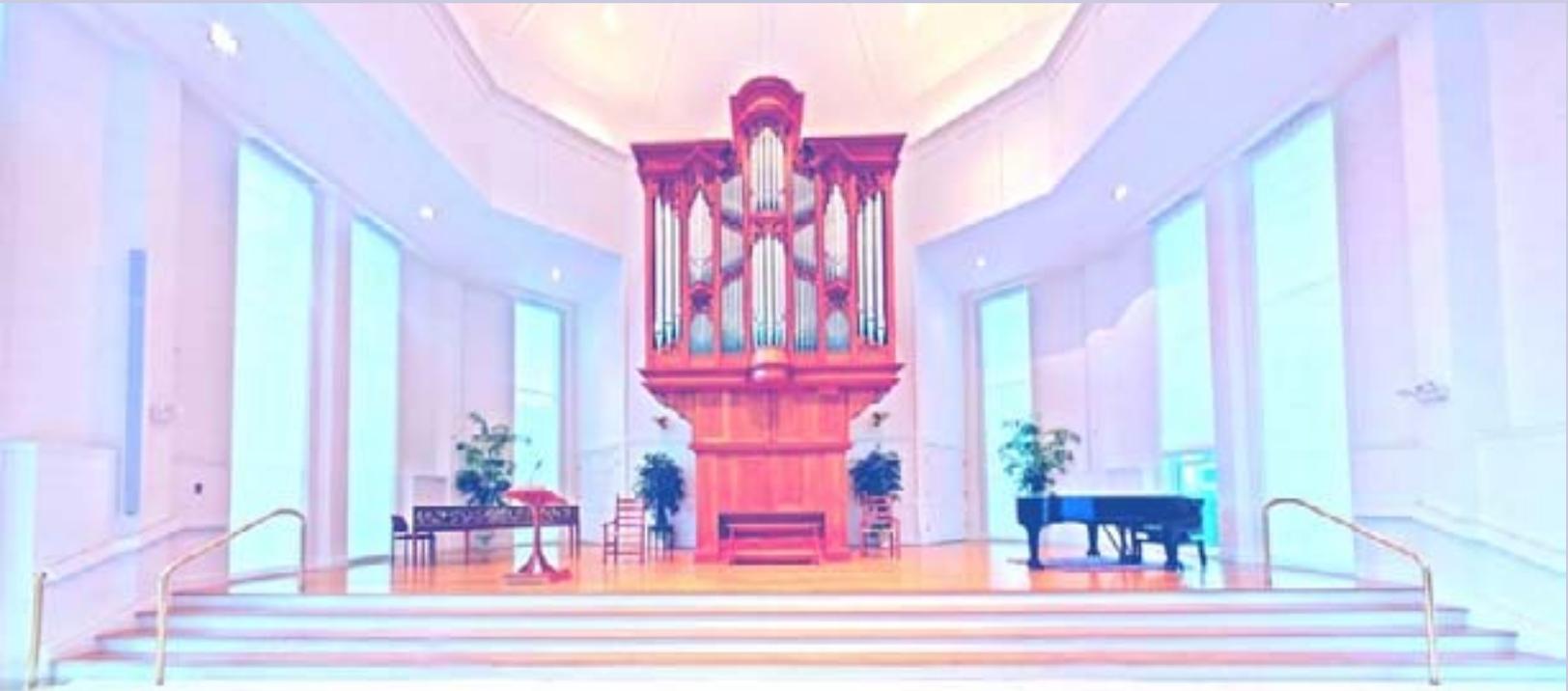
**Continued page 5. See Parrish**

## Golden Rules for Ensemble Singing:

1. Everyone should sing the same piece.
2. Take your time turning pages.
3. Do not worry if you do not have perfect pitch - you may find singing less stressful without it.
4. The right note at the wrong time is the wrong note.
5. The wrong note at the right time is still a wrong note.
6. A wrong note sung timidly is still a wrong note.
7. A wrong note sung with authority is an interpretation.
8. A true interpretation is realized when not one note of the original remains.
9. If you happen to sing a wrong note, give a nasty look to one of your neighbors.
10. If everyone gets lost except you, follow those who get lost.
11. If you are completely lost, stop everyone and start an argument about repeat marks.
12. Strive to achieve the maximum notes per second - that way you at least gain the admiration of the totally incompetent.
13. If a passage is difficult, slow it down. If it is easy, speed it up. Everything will work itself out in the end.
14. Markings for slurs, dynamics, ornaments and breathing should be ignored. They are only there to embellish the score.
15. When everyone else has finished singing, you should not sing any notes you may still have.

Cristiano R...  
on Facebook

# The Bach Ensemble



William Noll  
Artistic Director

“Bower Chapel is to Baroque Music as the  
Sunset is to the Gulf” -- William Noll

Sunday, January 10th, 2016 at 3:30 pm, Bower Chapel, Naples

“Joy and Praise in D Major”

Organ Prelude and Fugue in D Major - J. S. Bach

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 - J. S. Bach

Gloria in excelsus Deo - A. Vivaldi

Tickets: [www.thebachensemble.org](http://www.thebachensemble.org)

## Annamaria Island Concert Chorus and Orchestra

### New Years Eve Waltzes

January 24, 2 PM

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

Tickets: [www.amicco.org](http://www.amicco.org)



Alfred Gershfield  
Artistic Director and  
Conductor



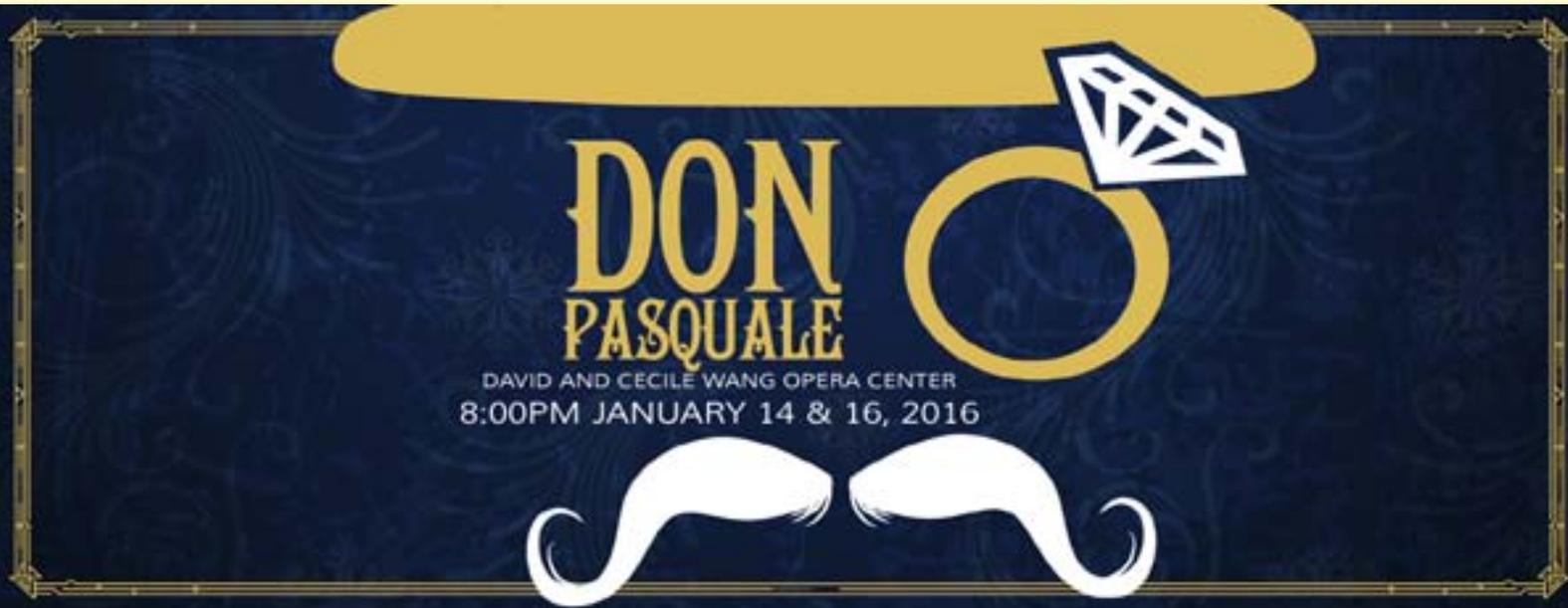
# Opera Naples

Don Pasquale - An Opera Bouffe in 5 Acts

By Gaetano Donizetti

Conductor: Ramón Tebar

Stage Director: Jeffrey Buchman



At its premiere at La Scala in April 1843 Don Pasquale was performed by four of the most celebrated singers of the day and was a sensational success. It was recognized as Donizetti's comic masterpiece and, to this day, is still considered his supreme masterpiece. Don Pasquale remains one of the most popular of his 66 operas, as well as being one of the three most popular Italian comic operas of all time, the others being Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Donizetti's own *L'elisir d'amore*. Since January 2012, the opera has been performed in 75 productions in 66 cities in the US alone.

**Tickets: [www.operanaples.org](http://www.operanaples.org)**

## Parrish, continued from Page 3

sibilities are clearly outlined. Solos can be assigned to any member of the ensemble, not just the professionals. All members are expected to pay a yearly assessment to support non-performance business expenses. No one is exempt. All rehearsals are 2 hours in length. All members are expected to attend every rehearsal for which they are called. The only difference is in the total number of rehearsals for pros and volunteers. Volunteers rehearse 5 times (including dress rehearsal) and pros rehearse 3 times. A typical rehearsal schedule is:

Week 1: All forces. Music is distributed, phrasing marked, general sing through.

Weeks 2 & 3: Volunteers only for note shedding and interpretation work as needed.

Week 4: All forces. No note shedding. Interpretation only.

Week 5: Dress Rehearsal. Performance ready attitude and presentation. One fact that has probably lessened the tension of incorporating pros into the ensemble is the fact that eight to ten pros regularly attend rehearsals for which they are not called (on a voluntary basis.) Because we are incorporating a balanced ensemble of profession-

als into another balanced ensemble of volunteers, we have complete resources at all rehearsals.

The Professional's Qualifications: First and foremost, each pro must possess excellent musicianship, especially sight-reading. (I cannot stress enough that singers who consider themselves to be professional need to be excellent sight readers. No pro singer should ever ask to have a line played for him or her.) Second, they need to have the vocal range and timbre suitable for the ensemble. Third, they must be excellent role models, prepared for every rehearsal. Finally, they must be team players. They are being engaged as professional choral artists, not soloists. If a solo gets assigned, that should be looked on as a bonus. (By the way, in MSC there is no extra pay for solos, no matter the length.) Musicianship and vocal ability can be assessed in an audition. The last qualification is a condition required to receive continued contracts and engagements, as assessed by the Artistic Director. I need to add here that any volunteer singer can apply for a pro position. In fact, when the change was made, nine MSC members passed the audition to become a member of the pro core.

So, there we have it. This process is not a one size fits all solution. In the end, it's all about teamwork and commitment. Commitment to the music, the

composer/s, each other and our patrons.

*Robert Parrish has been hailed throughout the East for the assurance of his conducting, the power of his performances and the musicality of his interpretations.*

*This reputation was gathered over a thirty-one year career at The College of New Jersey, where for twenty-one of those years Dr. Parrish was Artistic Director of its Opera Theatre. Dr. Parrish was named successor to founding Artistic Director Byron Steele in 1983. During the next twenty-one years, he built upon the traditions established by Professor Steele, expanded the number of yearly performances, programmed many regional premieres and cultivated new performance opportunities.*

*In addition to his duties as Artistic Director, he was also Music Department Chairperson from 1990 until his retirement in 2002. Upon his retirement from the college he was awarded the title Professor Emeritus of Music.*

*Today, Dr. Parrish dedicates his enormous energy to the success of Musica Sacra Cantorum.*