

Opera is theme of holiday decorating at Osborne Homestead in Derby

By Patricia Villers

DERBY - The Osborne Homestead Museum is once again adorned for the holiday season, as it has been for more than three decades.

Area garden clubs have decorated the Colonial Revival-style house following the theme of “Holiday at the Opera” to highlight Frances Osborne Kellogg’s love of the genre.

Kellogg was a businesswoman, civic leader, philanthropist, and patron of the arts.

The museum is operated by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. A DEEP release says in part that Kellogg “frequently attended the Metropolitan Opera, and her uncle Henry Krehbiel was a famous music and opera critic. As president of the Women’s Club, Frances invited many opera singers, such as Caterina Jarbora, John Brownlee, and Marjorie Lawrence, to perform in Derby.”

Those singers performed at the Sterling Opera House on Elizabeth Street.

Kellogg lived in the homestead at 500 Hawthorne Ave. for her entire life, and died there in 1956 at the age of 80.

The rooms, hallways, and staircases of the estate are adorned to depict some of the operas she loved.

Not an opera aficionado? Not a problem! Neither am I. But no doubt you’ll enjoy seeing the creativity of the decorations as much as I did.

The Olde Ripton Garden Club of Shelton bedecked the elegant dining room to depict Giuseppe Verdi’s *La Traviata*, a tragic tale of a fallen woman. The dining room chairs were festooned with costumes from that era, giving visitors the feeling that partygoers are seated there.

The kitchen and butler’s pantry were decorated by Jen Plasky of American Institute of Floral Designers to highlight Giacomo Puccini’s *La Boheme*.

The story is about four Bohemians in Paris and the simplicity of the decor - which differs from that of the other rooms - reflects their humble lives.



Curator Susan Robinson leads a tour.



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All of the rooms were wonderfully adorned.

The other groups who decorated include:

- Derby Garden Society,
- Garden Club of Orange,
- Long Hill Garden Club,
- Naugatuck Garden Club,
- Oxford Garden Club,
- The Roxbury/Bridgewater Garden Club,
- Women Redefining Retirement Milford,
- and Ye Olde Kellogg Garden Club.

They depicted the following operas:

- * *Lakme* by Leo Delibes;
- * *Aida* and *A Masked Ball* by Verdi;
- * *The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart;
- * *Faust* by Charles Gounod;
- * *Tristan & Isolde* and *Das Rheingold* by Richard Wagner;
- * *The Barber of Seville* by Giachino Rossini.

Tours run through Dec. 17. They will be offered Thursdays through Sundays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. On Friday and Dec. 8 and 15, from 4-7 p.m., the museum will present "Twilight Tours" to display the shimmering glow of the decorations.



See more about the Osborne Homestead over the years at the following links:

2011 - "[Holiday at the Cinemas](#)"

2012 - "[Holiday in Bloom](#)"

2013 - "[Holiday in Connecticut](#)"

2015 - "[Holiday at the Farm](#)"

2016 - "[Twilight Tours](#)"

