

David Freiman, a baritone who performed in Sunday's final performance of "The Merry Widow," started with the company at 10 and has been involved for 36 years.

"I was shocked," he said, when he heard the news from a fellow singer on Facebook. "I went through all the stages of grief simultaneously."

"It's been a place for singers around the country to get training," he added. "So many singers get a chance to get onstage here and try out a role in costume with instruments and full scenery and makeup, and the whole production. And where are they going to find that? There are just very few opportunities to find that in this country."

Mr. Amato has directed and conducted most of the performances, and his wife handled lighting, costumes and finances. Since her death, some of those duties have been taken over by Irene Frydel Kim, Mr. Amato's niece.

With an average of six productions a season, the company has given thousands of performances, mostly of war horses but occasionally of rarely heard works. Its repertory includes 60 operas. The company also has a successful Saturday morning children's series of shortened operas.

The Amatos founded the company in 1948, and the first performances were in the auditorium of Our Lady of Pompeii Church in Greenwich Village, where bingo was often played. After several stops, the company settled in 1962 into the building at 319 Bowery, near Second Street, which the Amatos had bought and renovated.

Dapper as always in a dark suit, the courtly Mr. Amato made no announcement at Sunday's matinee performance. He held the usual raffle at intermission, giving away Amato Opera T-shirts this time.

A longtime patron, George Sulkhan, mourned the closing. "Every time I come here, it's special," he said. "To me this is the grandest of the grand. It's the smallest place, but it's the biggest place."

After the show Mr. Amato took off his tie and jacket and joined the cast in striking the set.

A version of this article appeared in print on January 13, 2009, on page C3 of the New York edition



Try unlimited access to NYTimes.com for just 99¢. SEE OPTIONS »

Past Coverage

ARTS, BRIEFLY; Opera Company to Close (January 12, 2009) MUSIC REVIEW; For Opera, the Longest Day, Crammed in a Smallish Space (May 21, 2007) MUSIC REVIEW; A Small Stage That's All Set For Marriage (September 25, 2006) OPERA REVIEW; In Tiny Quarters, Pomp And a Grandness of Spirit (February 22, 2006)

Related Searches

Amato Opera	
Opera	
Shutdowns (Institutional)	

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM

TRAVEL »

the Balkans





'Middle C,' by William H. Gass

SUNDAY REVIEW »

Get E-Mail Alerts Get E-Mail Alerts Get E-Mail Alerts

> **Observer: Who** Can Bring the E.U. to Its Senses? Until there are leaders who will push for the interests of Europe as a

-disasters.



'Game of Thrones' Stars

Soar Like Dragons

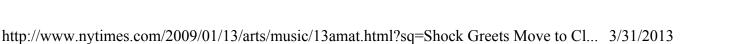
TELEVISION

More Articles in Arts »



Sunday Dialogue: Choosing

Weddings and Celebrations



How We Die

Winter is prime in Puglia ALSO IN TRAVEL » IKEA and Marriot International are teaming up to create Moxy, a chain of budget hotels across Europe Among the vines in Chile, villas and views nytimes.com TRAVEL SAVE - → SUNDAY REVIEW » FASHION & STYLE

 Home
 World
 U.S.
 N.Y. / Region
 Business
 Technology
 Science
 Health
 Sports
 Opinion
 Arts
 Style
 Travel
 Jobs
 Real Estate
 Automobiles
 Back to Top

 Copyright 2009 The New York Times Company
 Privacy Policy
 Search
 Corrections
 SRSS
 First Look
 Help
 Contact Us
 Work for Us
 Site Map