



Brazilian Voices captivates the community through song

“He who sings chases all troubles away.” This Portuguese adage is fitting for both audiences and fans of the Broward-based, female vocal group Brazilian Voices. Their music not only entertains, but is also filled with the soothing rhythms and meaningful lyrics of famous Brazilian composers.

Formed in 2001 by two celebrated Brazilian performers, Beatriz Malnic and Loren Oliveira, Brazilian Voices was born out of passion for a musical style and the desire to offer vocal training workshops to the community. The intention of its creators was to form a chorus that would comprise both male and female singers who could delight and enlighten audiences in South Florida and beyond.

Ann Friedda Sambiase, singer and publicist for Brazilian Voices, recalls the day of the very first auditions six years ago. “Thirty women showed up, so it naturally became a female vocal group. They were women longing for a reconnection with their own cultures and their customs, and at the same time needing to be integrated into a new society. Through that exchange we became one with the community.”



BY HELENE FOSTER

According to its co-founders, the 55-member troupe sold out its performances at the Sunrise Civic Center last year and also held concerts at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Additionally, its “Exploring Brazil Educational Seminars” have proved highly popular, as have presentations at area public libraries. On national and international stages, the group has wowed sell-out crowds in New York and Spain.

“Through these successful events, we noticed that we had reached another dimension – not only vocally, but in

the way we touch our community,” says performer Katia Iole. “We are here to stay, to delight, to transform ordinary things into more meaningful and joyful experiences we wish to share with people everywhere.”

For those interested in becoming a part of Brazilian Voices, co-founder Oliveira says that auditions are held annually and are open to all women who enjoy singing. “We schedule auditions each January. We listen to their solo voices as well as in combination with others to evaluate how well their voices will blend.”

Malnic adds that Brazilian Voices has grown not just into a performance organization, but rather a “cultural movement.” She says that timing was in their favor.

“The time was right to share our ‘Latin flavor, our cheerfulness.’ It’s refreshing to see people joining forces, spreading harmony, tenderness and joyfulness. Audiences respond so positively to our music, our vision, and our mission,” she explains.

The volunteer performers come from all walks of life. Educators, professionals, amateur and seasoned singers alike all meet twice weekly

to rehearse, rotating among the homes of three of the chorus' members. Sambiase explains, "[The singers] come from different cities in Brazil, Argentina, Taiwan and Colombia. Nearly all of the group members live in Broward County, with several in Miami-Dade."

This rapidly growing, award-winning vocal ensemble recently received a Cultural Diversity Program grant from the Broward Cultural Council to continue to bring its messages of peace and social responsibility to a wider audience base. "Today we are 55 voices! We have grown immensely and we needed to organize ourselves and create several departments – supporting directors and different committees like marketing, legal, artistic, financial, grants, website, administration and international – to support our growth," Oliveira says. "This will enable us to continue to expand our group every year, embracing new lives and new voices."

The troupe looks forward to several upcoming events, including "Exploring Brazil – A Musical Seminar" on May 18 in Stuart and "Women that Rock," on August 18 at the Sunrise Civic Center as well as on November 16 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

Also on the horizon for Brazilian Voices is more international exposure. "We wish to take our music to different corners of the United States, Europe and Japan," Oliveira says. "We have released two



Brazilian Voices regularly sells out its concerts, such as these shows at Sunrise Civic Center in 2006.

CDs, the first one in 2005 – *Brazilian Voices*, and the second in 2006, entitled *Brazilian Voices Holiday*."

"Brazilian music is respected and often interpreted worldwide," adds Oliveira. "We pour our sentiment into how and when we sing, and I think that we make that very transparent to people. They cry with us, they smile with us and they rejoice with us."

To learn more about Brazilian Voices, its recordings and upcoming performances, visit www.brazilianvoices.com. ★

Helene Foster is a writer and former dance teacher living in Parkland.



HISTORY

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historic railway station. But even these accolades could not keep it from suffering the ravages of time and extreme weather. In 1990, renovations began to create a new life for the old station. Much of the roof had to be replaced. The floors had to be completely redone, but by doing so the station was restored to much of its original appearance.

An extra added attraction for the station was the creation of space in the old freight room for the South Florida Railway Museum. A haven for railway buffs of all ages, it has an extensive model railroad display, sponsors auctions and swap meets for railway equipment and memorabilia, and features displays showing the impact of railroads on the economic and cultural lives of Americans. (Call 954-698-6620 for museum hours or visit www.sfrm.org for more information.)

Today, this fine old building is still important to rail transportation in the area. It is served by Amtrak and Tri-Rail, South Florida's commuter railway system. During 1999 and 2000, the Tri-Rail Authority completed station renovations and installed double-tracking through the Deerfield Beach station. There is new parking and better handicapped access to both sides of the track.

This historic building is a jewel serving as a tribute to the great days of the railroads in South Florida. By housing the South Florida Railway Museum and serving as an active stop for Amtrak and Tri-Rail riders, the richness of the station's heritage lives on. – *Susan F. Davis*