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Jose A. Giralt

Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism

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José A. Giralt
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Linda Collazo: A Bronx Aria

As a 14-year-old freshman entering the prestigious Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts in Manhattan, Linda Collazo was enthusiastic about polishing her piano playing skills. After her first week, however, she was returning home in tears wondering if she had made a big mistake. “Although my first love is the piano, I wasn’t a good sight reader and wasn’t as invested in it as my fellow students,” Collazo remembers.

After speaking with teachers at LaGuardia, she switched to the voice program where she wowed the music instructors. “They were fascinated by my voice and impressed by the sound and size of it,” Collazo says.

Since her time at LaGuardia, Collazo, now 22, has continued to hone her operatic skills through academic training as well as a full schedule of performances. She will be spending the winter of 2019 in Florida at the Sarasota Opera as an Apprentice Artist.

As a Bronx native, her journey into the world of opera has been sustained with little support from the neighborhood she grew up in. She can’t remember any conversations or appreciation about the artform as she grew up in the South Bronx. “I look at it now and see where I’m from and I see I grew up in a very impoverished neighborhood,” she says.

After graduating from high school, Collazo attended the Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York studying vocal performance at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. She continues to perform with some of the singing programs at the school such as the Queens College Choral Society.

Participating in as many singing opportunities as possible is crucial to Collazo’s training as a vocalist. She recently sang in a musical theater production held at Queens College. Her voice teacher, Dr. Sherry Holt, encourages the newest generation of opera singers to include vocal pieces from American theater in their repertoire. “One of the biggest changes I’ve seen in the last ten to fifteen years is how opera companies expect their incoming singers to know and perform American musical theater,” says Dr. Holt.

With an infectious enthusiasm, Collazo hopes to introduce others to the joys of singing whether it be musical theater or opera. “I love performing in front of people and the musicality of it all,” she says.