

If you're going to the opera anyway . . .

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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If you're going into the city for the opera anyway, here's a good reason to leave an hour early.

An hour before each performance, the Dallas Opera presents the Joy and Ronald Mankoff Opera Overture, a free lecture about the opera you're attending.

Held in Hamon Hall (on the right side of the venue), "lectures are prepared and presented by experts in the field and explore topics such as the historical context of the production, insights into the composer of the work and previews of musical highlights in the opera."

For "Rigoletto," we were fortunate to have Dr. Hank Hammett, professor of opera at Southern Methodist University.

Dr. Hammett's knowledge of every aspect of Verdi's "Rigoletto," including the difficult time the composer had bringing the story to the stage, was impressive. His enthusiasm for the music, characters and story was contagious. My husband, who doesn't attend many operas, said he had a greater appreciation for the entire experience.

This was my first exposure to "Rigoletto," and I even though I'd read a synopsis, was familiar with several arias and had interviewed one of the principal singers, Dr. Hammett's presentation enhanced the performance for me, too.

Bravo to the Dallas Opera for reaching out to its audiences in this effective and entertaining way.

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