

THE SARASOTA OPERA

Four Great Opera Productions

Tuesday, March 17th through Friday, March 20th



Ca' d'Zan, Ringling Museum; inset: Courtyard fountain

"Keeping with its decade-long tradition of performing either unusual works, or original versions of Verdi's operas... every opera lover must feel indebted to the Sarasota Opera Company for its choosing to walk a less traveled path."

Nicola Lischi, Radiotelevisione Italiana

"Where else can one spend the morning reveling in the beauty of works by Rubens, Hals and Botticelli and the afternoon lolling on a powdery white sand beach? That is the lure of Sarasota, where John and Mable Ringling, the circus impresario and his wife, set the stage for a vibrant cultural life."

NY Times

Victor DeRenzi: *"The Italian government bestowed the title of Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy to the Artistic Director of Sarasota Opera who led the company's 28-year Verdi Festival."*

Florida's innovative **Sarasota Opera**, now celebrating its **sixty-first season**, has established itself in recent years as one of our most imaginative and successful regional companies. The **Mediterranean Revival Opera House** remains an intimate and charming venue listed in our National Historic Registry as an authentic Florida landmark, but it is now equipped with the most up-to-date technical facilities. For more than ten consecutive years, our repeat travelers have recognized the high quality of the Sarasota Opera and continue to choose March as the ideal time for a Florida escape from winter.

The Sarasota Opera's outstanding productions and unusual repertory are due to the leadership of Artistic Director **Victor DeRenzi**. Under Mr. DeRenzi's long-term commitment, the company's 2020 season will encompass **four major productions**. In contrast to the offensive 'Euro-trash' that has infiltrated many of the world's leading houses, we can all be grateful that **the**

Sarasota Opera's traditional stagings continue to honor the values envisioned by the composers.

This year's repertoire will include four works spanning the 19th century. In chronological order, they will be Gaetano Donizetti's 'bel canto' comedy, **L'Elisir d'Amore**; Charles Gounod's French lyric opera, **Roméo et Juliette**; Alfredo Catalani's rarely encountered 'verismo' tragedy, **La Wally**; and Giacomo Puccini's romantic view of Monmartre, **La Bohème**. There are very few companies in the U.S. where opera aficionados can indulge in the luxury of different performances of such high quality on four successive days. The Sarasota Opera continues to set an ambitious example during this era of economic austerity by mounting realistic sets.

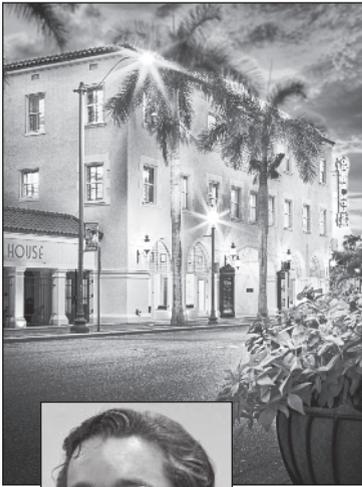
Our first daytime excursion this year will include the **Ringling Museum of Art**. A second excursion will take us to the lush **Marie Selbye Botanical Gardens**. The area's combination of musical, artistic and natural treasures truly offers the enticing winter break that everyone is looking for. The glorious coastal sands of Sarasota's Key islands continue unbroken for several miles and are justifiably ranked by National Geographic magazine as one of the three finest beaches in the world, matched only by Waikiki and the French Riviera .

IMPORTANT: *We urge you to make your air reservations AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE to avoid inflated high season airfares.*

Our accommodations are for **four nights** at the **Hyatt Regency Sarasota**. Conveniently located, the Hyatt is fully equipped with an outdoor swimming pool and health club, **Scalini Restaurant** dining facilities, and room service from 6:00 am until midnight. During the busy opera weeks, the Hyatt Regency is a popular choice for out-of-towners who return annually to enjoy the personal service and relaxed ambience. *The Hyatt was completely refurbished a few years ago and is now in optimum condition.*



Stephanie Sundine & Victor DeRenzi



Rafael Davila



Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Sarasota Opera House Early Tuesday evening, March 17th, a pre-theatre **dinner** is planned at the elegant **Bijou Café**, where we will enjoy Sarasota's finest continental cuisine in a private room. The Bijou Café is directly across the street from the Opera House and is well known as the best restaurant in town.

At 7:30 pm on Tuesday, our first opera will be Gaetano Donizetti's 'bel canto' comedy, **L'Elisir d'Amore**. Premiered in Milan in 1832, 'Elisir' maintains its popular position in the operatic repertoire by virtue of Donizetti's melodic genius in this charming comedy. "Ultimately, the work's continuing appeal lies in the appropriateness of Donizetti's music to the 'male Cinderella' myth. Nemorino's good-heartedness and his singleness of purpose win out in spite of potions and unforeseen inheritances." (*New Grove Dictionary of Opera*). Sarasota's cast will feature **Geoffrey Agpalo** as the lovelorn hero Nemorino, baritone **John Viscardi** as the swaggering Sergeant Belcore, and 'buffo' bass **Stefano de Peppo** as the charlatan Dr. Dulcamara. (The soprano role of Adina has not yet been announced.) The conductor will be **John Spencer IV** and the production is directed by **Marco Nistico** with sets designed by **Rover Hanna**. *Sung in Italian with English titles.*

Wednesday morning, March 18th, we will visit the priceless galleries of the **Ringling Museum of Art**. The large eclectic collection includes 17th century Italian paintings, tapestries and cartoons by Peter Paul Rubens, and other masterworks from the Dutch, Flemish and Spanish Baroque schools. The spacious Renaissance courtyard is flanked by full-size sculptural reproductions, including a bronze cast of Michelangelo's *David*.

At 7:30 pm on Wednesday evening, we will return to the Opera House for Alberto Catalani's 'verismo' rarity, **La Wally**. Premiered at La Scala in 1892, 'La Wally' is set in the Tyrolean mountains in 1800. The libretto's grisly plot by Luigi Illica (the proven co-librettist for Puccini's 'Boheme', 'Tosca' and 'Butterfly') culminates in the romantic hero's death in an avalanche, followed by the title soprano flinging herself into the abyss in desperation. Wally's soaring aria 'Ebben? Ne andrò

lontano' is a favorite vehicle for today's reigning divas. Catalani's early death at the age of 39 left his best friend Toscanini bereft, as he was at the forefront of the verismo composers. The cast is headed by soprano **Teresa Romano** in the title



Hyatt Regency pool

role, tenor **Rafael Davila** as Hagenbach, **Sean Anderson** as Gellner, and **Young Bok Kim** as Stromminger. The *new production* will be directed by **Stephanie Sundine** with scenic designs by **Steven C. Kemp**. Maestro **Victor DeRenzi** is the conductor. *Sung in Italian with English titles.*

On Thursday, March 19th, a morning excursion will take us to the **Marie Selby Botanical Gardens**, containing literally hundreds of species of orchids and other tropical plants. The outdoor grounds and the greenhouse specimens are studied by botanists and horticultural enthusiasts from all over the world and rank among Sarasota's most important attractions.

Thursday evening at 7:30 pm, we will enjoy the Sarasota Opera's production of Giacomo Puccini's **La Bohème**, first performed in Turin in 1896. This production from 2015 captures the Belle Epoque era of the Montmartre Parisian setting of Henry Murger's novel which was the original source of the libretto. Puccini's soaring arias, duets and ensembles account for the enduring popularity of this poignant operatic tragedy. Heading the cast will be soprano **Anna Mandina** and tenor **William Davenport** as the consumptive seamstress Mimi and the romance poet Rodolfo. **Jessica Sandidge** and **Filippo Fontana** will be heard as Musetta and Marcello, and bass **Young Bok Kim** will portray Colline. **Victor DeRenzi** is again the conductor, and the staging will be directed by **Mark Freiman** with sets designed by **David P. Gordon**. *Sung in Italian with English titles.*



Anna Mandina



Young Bok Kim

Early Friday evening, March 20th, a pre-theatre **dinner** will be arranged at **Selva**, one of Sarasota's newest restaurants serving Italian cuisine. 'Selva' is conveniently located on Main Street a short distance from the opera house.

At 7:30 pm on Friday, our final performance will be Charles Gounod's **Roméo et Juliette** (Paris, 1867). "Gounod's opera has been the greatest popular success of the many founded upon Shakespeare's play. The four love duets in the work have drawn particular praise." (*New Grove Dictionary of Opera*). Tonight's title roles will be sung by soprano **Hannah Brammer** and tenor **Andrew Surrena**. The supporting cast will include baritone **Matthew Hanscom** as Mercutio, bass **Ricardo Lugo** in the pivotal role of Friar Lawrence, and **Lisa Chavez** as Gertrude. The conductor is **Anthony Barrese**, and the production is directed by **Martha Collins** and designed by **Peter Dean Beck**. *Sung in French with English titles.*



Hannah Brammer

Independent departures should be on Saturday, March 21st.

The Sarasota Opera

Price per person, based on double occupancy	\$ 2,990
Single room supplement	\$ 670

Airfare NOT included.