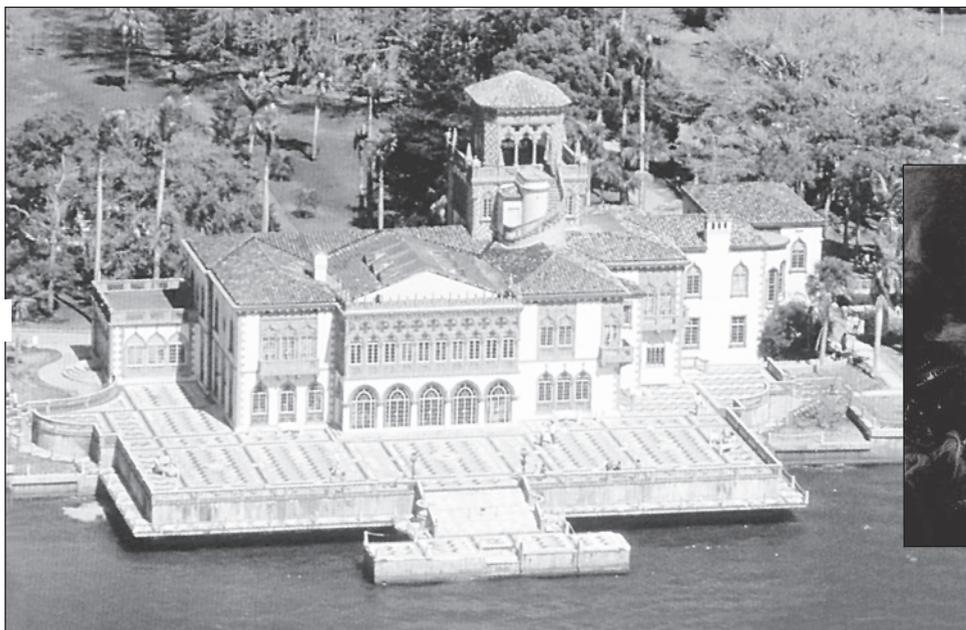


THE SARASOTA OPERA

Four Great Operas

Wednesday, March 14th through Saturday, March 17th



Ca' d'Zan, Ringling Museum

Rubens' Archduke Ferdinand, Ringling Museum

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

"Beyond Verdi: Italian Masters Series: "With this series, Sarasota Opera will bring you the works that followed the footsteps of Italy's most important opera composer. Puccini's 'Manon Lescaut' will continue the series, inaugurated Winter 2017 with Montemezzi's 'L'amore dei tre re'."

Sarasota Opera

Florida's innovative **Sarasota Opera**, now celebrating its **fifty-ninth 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 the past decade, 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 2017 season will encompass **four major operas**. 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.

In chronological order, this year's repertoire will include Bellini's 'bel canto' Italian opera, **Norma** (1831); Bizet's popular French masterwork, **Carmen** (1875); Puccini's melodic lyric tragedy, **Manon Lescaut** (1894); and Eugen d'Albert's rarely encountered German verismo opera, **Tiefland** (1903). There are very few companies in the U.S. where opera aficionados can indulge in the luxury of four 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. **All four of the operas will be staged in new productions.**

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.*



Victor DeRenzi
Artistic Director



Stephanie Sundine



Joanna Parisi



Jennifer Black

Early Wednesday evening, March 14th, 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 Wednesday, our first opera will be Vincenzo Bellini's **Norma**. Premiered at La Scala in 1831, 'Norma' is acknowledged to be the pinnacle of 'bel canto' opera and is still revered above all the works of this school (Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini). "The title role is one of the most taxing and wide-ranging in the entire repertory: a noble character whose tragedy lies in her fatal love for an enemy of her people. The many different aspects of Norma's temperament are marvelously drawn by Bellini." (*New Grove Dictionary of Opera*). Tonight's cast is headed by soprano **Joanna Parisi** as the Druid priestess Norma, mezzo-soprano **Jennifer Black** as Norma's rival Adalgisa, tenor **Cameron Schutz** as the two-timing Roman Consul Pollione, and bass **Young Bok Kim** as the High Priest Oroveso, Norma's father. Music Director **Victor DeRenzi** will be the conductor, and the *new production* is directed by **Mark Freiman** with set designs by **Michael Schweikhardt**. *Sung in Italian with English supertitles*.

Thursday morning, March 15th, 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



Hyatt Regency pool

Renaissance courtyard is flanked by full-size sculptural reproductions, including a bronze cast of Michelangelo's *David*.

At 7:30 pm on Thursday evening, we will return to the Opera House for a performance of **Tiefland**, a

German verismo work from the pen of Eugen d'Albert which was premiered in Prague in 1903. The title translates as 'The Lowlands' and refers to the Catalan setting, where the heroine Marta eventually finds love with the shepherd Pedro after being woefully mistreated as the mistress of the rich landowner Sebastiano. Despite violent action and a darkly brooding atmosphere, 'Tiefland' resolves in a happy ending when the true lovers escape from the lowlands to the purity of the mountainous Pyrennees. D'Albert's score is his most effective dramatic opera, adopting an Italian verismo style while preserving the German cultural heritage reflected in Rudolph Spitzer's libretto. While 'Tiefland' remains in the repertory of central European houses, Sarasota's intriguing production is only the second in the U.S. in a century. The cast will feature soprano **Kara Shay Thomson** as Marta, tenor **Ben Gulley** as Pedro, and baritone **Aleksey Bogdanov** as Sebastiano. **David Neely** is the conductor, and the

new production is by the team of director **Michael Unger** and scenic designer **Steven C. Kemp**. *Sung in German with English supertitles*.

Friday, March 16th, a morning excursion will take us to the **Marie Selbye 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.

Friday evening at 7:30 pm, we will enjoy the Sarasota Opera's production of Georges Bizet's 19th century French landmark,



Sarasota Opera House

Carmen. Based on Prosper Mérimée's French novel, 'Carmen' maintains its primary position in the operatic repertoire by virtue of Bizet's sensuous orchestral score and seamless succession of melodic arias, duets and ensembles. Tonight's principal artists will include **Liza Chavez** as the seductive gypsy, tenor **Cody Austin** as her obsessed suitor Don José, lyric soprano **Hanna Brammer Dillon** as Micaela, and baritone **Steven LaBrie** as the macho toreador Escamillo. The conductor is **John F.**

Spencer IV, and the *new production* is under the direction of **Martha Collins** and set designs of **David P. Gordon**. *Sung in French with English supertitles*.

Early Saturday evening, March 17th, 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 Saturday, our final performance will be Giacomo Puccini's **Manon Lescaut**. Puccini's revised version was premiered at La Scala in 1894, yielding a more passionate and richly orchestrated delineation of Abbé Prevost's classic French novel than the glittering Massenet setting of the same story. The title soprano's two poignant arias and a series of dramatic arias for the tenor are the solo highlights, and the extended Act Two love-duet with Wagnerian overtones is a remarkable achievement by the youthful Puccini. Sarasota's cast will be headed by soprano **Sandra Lopez** as Manon opposite tenor **Matthew Vickers** as the Chevalier Des Grieux and baritone **Filippo Fontana** as Lescaut. Music Director **Victor DeRenzi** is again the conductor, and the *new production* will be directed by **Stephanie Sundine** (a formidable dramatic soprano in recent years, and now Mrs. DeRenzi). The scenic designer is **David F. Gordon**. *Sung in Italian with English supertitles*.



Matthew Vickers



Kara Shay Thomson

Independent departures should be on Sunday, March 18th.

The Sarasota Opera

Price per person, based on double occupancy \$ 2,975
Single room supplement \$ 680

Airfare NOT included.