



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sarasota Youth Opera Welcomes New Coordinator

Conner Stigner brings wide array of experience to the company

Sarasota, FL – Sarasota Opera announced that Indiana native Conner Stigner has been hired as Sarasota Youth Opera’s new Youth Opera Coordinator. Mr. Stigner will provide administrative support for Sarasota Youth Opera programs and performances, as well as educational and outreach activities. He will be coordinating rehearsal schedules, serve as accompanist, and will also be the liaison to Sarasota Youth Opera members’ parents and parent volunteers. Sarasota Youth Opera’s educational program recently commenced its winter semester, as well as rehearsals for the upcoming 2022 Winter Opera Festival. Puccini’s *Tosca*, opening February 12, will feature a children’s chorus made up of members of the Youth Opera.

Mr. Stigner has a wide array of experience in the music world, including his former post as Director of Music and Liturgy at Our Lady of Hungary Parish in South Bend, Indiana. He also worked as accompanist and assistant director of the South Bend Symphonic Choir and was a pianist and director of vocals and music at the 574 Theater Company and the South Bend & Elkhart Civic Theater. His most recent position as Voter Registration Deputy/Clerk of St. Joseph County, Indiana Board of Elections helped burnish his administrative credentials while integrating his interest in civic engagement. Jesse Martins, Music Director of Sarasota Youth Opera states, “Conner brings a diverse array of interests and experiences to our Youth Opera program, and we are excited to welcome him to our community.” Sarasota Youth Opera Education Director Martha Collins adds,

“Conner’s engaging personality and musical skills make him a great fit for our Youth Opera program.”

2022 Winter Opera Festival

Tickets for Sarasota Opera’s 2022 Winter Opera Festival are on sale now. For more information, visit SarasotaOpera.org, call (941) 328-1300, or visit the Box Office at 61 N. Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236.

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ABOUT SARASOTA YOUTH OPERA

Since 1984, Sarasota Youth Opera has given thousands of young people an opportunity to experience opera first-hand through participation in after-school choruses, Sarasota Opera mainstage productions, summer workshops, and fully staged Youth Opera productions. As the only program in the United States committed to presenting annual full-scale opera productions for young voices, accepting all who wish to participate regardless of skill level or ability to pay, Sarasota Youth Opera is a national model for opera education.

Youth Opera Choruses: Beginning at age 8, singers are placed in one of two chorus levels. Each chorus provides a setting for everyone to participate and progress at their own level as they gain greater skills and experience. Selections performed are made up of classical music, which includes opera and choral pieces in different languages. The choruses perform throughout the community in formal concerts and outreach events.

Opera Mainstage Season: Members of the Youth Opera are selected to join Sarasota Opera’s Winter Festival season, appearing in the mainstage children’s chorus, as supernumeraries (extras who perform non-singing roles) and for special roles written by the composer for children’s voices. These have included roles in *Tosca*, *La bohème*, and *Carmen*. Singers are involved in the complete production process – from early music and dramatic rehearsals to performing alongside opera professionals.

Youth Opera Productions: Part of Sarasota Opera's commitment to young people includes the commissioning of new operatic works written for children and young adults. Six new works have been presented as part of this mission: Polly Pen's *Her Lightness* (1993), Tom Suta's *Eye of Ra* (1998), John Kennedy's *The Language of Birds* (2004), Daron Hagen's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (2012) and Rachel J. Peters' *Rootabaga Country* (2017). Members take part in the making of each opera, complete with professional staging, costumes, lighting, sound, and orchestral accompaniment.