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**Contact:** Stephen Baker, Director of Marketing  
(941) 328-1333  
[sbaker@sarasotaopera.org](mailto:sbaker@sarasotaopera.org)

**Images at:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/k6k8s5nxhn9s7gyt5qart/h?rlkey=wrr0suvabpea7aejb4fs4sub5&dl=0>

## **Sarasota Opera Receives \$5,000 Grant from Manatee Community Foundation for Education Outreach**

**Sarasota, FL** - Sarasota Opera has been awarded a grant from the Jay K. Turner Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation to expand its education outreach activities through the Resident Artist program in Manatee County schools. The funding supports this year's pilot program, which has been extended from the standard one week to six weeks. The singers, pianists, stage director, and staff are working to serve as many schools as possible across both Manatee and Sarasota Counties this fall. The results from this year's extended outreach schedule will help us to expand the 2024-25 program as we work towards providing opera education outreach to the schools for longer periods to reach more and more students.

According to Sarasota Opera's General Director, Richard Russell, "we are grateful for Manatee Community Foundation's support which helps us expand our impact in schools in the county. With input from the schools, Sarasota Opera has been re-envisioning its education programming to serve more students. We look forward to even more opportunities in the future."

Martha Collins, Director of Education at Sarasota Opera, who works directly with the schools and oversees the artists and outreach schedule, says that the reaction from schools has been incredibly positive. "We are especially excited to work with underserved communities and Title 1 schools that often do not have the resources to attend a school-time performance at the Sarasota Opera House." Collins believes this expanded outreach schedule will allow teachers and schools more flexibility to incorporate opera education into their lesson plans.

## **ABOUT MANATEE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The mission of Manatee Community Foundation (MCF) is to partner with citizens to strengthen and enhance our community through philanthropy, education, and service—now and forever.

For 25 years, Manatee Community Foundation has partnered with caring donors to grow philanthropy, informed giving, and community impact in Manatee County. MCF has awarded over \$52 million dollars in grants and scholarships to local nonprofits and students. Collaborating with nonprofits and diverse community members, the Foundation supports gains that improve the quality of life in special places and for people and animals. MCF is the trusted steward of charitable legacies and the dependable guide for current giving through donor advised funds. See more information about Manatee Community Foundation at [www.manateecf.org](http://www.manateecf.org)

## **ABOUT SARASOTA OPERA**

Sarasota Opera is entering its 65<sup>th</sup> Season of bringing world-class opera to Florida's Gulf Coast. The company was launched in 1960 in the historic 320-seat Asolo Theater on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art. In 1984 the company moved into the former A.B. Edwards Theater—now the Sarasota Opera House. Since then, the company has gained an international reputation as one of the leading regional opera companies in the U.S. through initiatives such as the Masterworks Revival Series and the Verdi Cycle. The company's Sarasota Youth Opera is the most comprehensive Youth Program in the U.S. The Sarasota Opera House, which underwent a \$20 million renovation and rehabilitation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Since 1983, the company has been under the artistic leadership of Victor DeRenzi and administrative leadership of General Director Richard Russell since 2012.

Sarasota Opera is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts. Programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.

Sarasota Opera • 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL 34236 • (941) 366-8450 • [SarasotaOpera.org](http://SarasotaOpera.org)