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Sarasota Opera Announces Board Leadership for 2026-27 Season

SARASOTA, Fla. - Sarasota Opera has announced its Board of Trustees leadership for the 2026-27 season, with **David Chaifetz** elected Chair of the Board and **Syble DiGirolamo** elected Vice Chair. The appointments come as Sarasota Opera enters its 68th season, continuing a tradition of artistic excellence and community engagement that has established the company as one of the nation's leading regional opera organizations.

Chaifetz brings decades of leadership experience and philanthropic involvement to the role. A longtime supporter of Sarasota Opera, he joined the Board of Trustees in 2006, served as Vice Chair beginning in 2011, and was previously Chair of the Board from 2014 through 2017. Together, David and Edith Chaifetz have been among Sarasota Opera's most dedicated supporters through their leadership, philanthropy, and advocacy for the organization's artistic and educational mission. David and Edith Chaifetz are Season Producers, supporters of Sarasota Youth Opera & Education programs, and Gala Platinum Sponsors. They are the honorees of the 2027 Sarasota Opera gala.

Chaifetz's return to the role begins a new chapter under Richard Russell's leadership as both General Director and Artistic Director.

DiGirolamo, a Sarasota Opera trustee and longtime supporter since 2004, was elected Vice Chair. Since moving to Sarasota in 2004, she has been an active advocate for the arts as a Sarasota Opera season subscriber, donor, trustee, and past president of the Manatee Opera Guild. She previously served as treasurer, vice chair and most recently as chair of Sarasota Opera's board from 2018-2021.

Continuing in officer positions for the 2026-27 season are **Joseph Mallof, Treasurer**, and **David Bialosky, Secretary**. **Carol English** was named **Trustee Emeritus** in recognition of her dedicated service and ongoing support of Sarasota Opera.

Additional members of Sarasota Opera's Board of Trustees include J. Sumner Bagby, Katherine Benoit, Lynn Blackledge, Ulysses Brualdi, Thomas Garden, Alastair Hunter-Henderson, Tamara Jacobs, Rosanne Martorella, Sue Neumann, Steve Sabato, Art Siciliano, Toby Siegel, Janet Stern Solomon, John Suhre, Michal Wadsworth, and Donald J. Worthington.

Sarasota Opera also recognizes the ongoing leadership of its supporting guild organizations. **Sherry Wheeler** continues to serve as President of the Sarasota Opera Guild, and **Elizabeth Aversa** continues as President of the Manatee Opera Guild. These organizations play a vital role in supporting Sarasota Opera's educational programming, community engagement efforts, and special events throughout the season.

About Sarasota Opera

Sarasota Opera is in its 68th season of bringing world-class opera to Florida's Gulf Coast and celebrating 100 years of the historic Sarasota Opera House. 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 opera program in the U.S. The Sarasota Opera House, which underwent a \$20 million renovation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Richard Russell has served as General Director since 2012 and added the role of Artistic Director in June 2026. 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.

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