



SARASOTA OPERA

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Sarasota Opera Celebrates 100 Years of its Historic Opera House with Community Open House and Concert & Dinner, April 11-12

January 26, 2026 — During Sarasota Opera’s 2026 Winter Festival, the company celebrates 100 years of the [Sarasota Opera House](#), described by *Musical America* as “one of the finest venues for opera in America.” The historic occasion will be marked with two days of celebratory events, including a Centennial Concert at the Opera House followed by a gala dinner at Michael’s On the Bay on Saturday, April 11, and a Community Open House on Sunday, April 12, as well as special documentary and book projects.

The events will commemorate a century of music, history, and community. On Sunday, April 12, Sarasota Opera will host a Centennial Community Open House that is free and open to the public. Visitors can learn more about the history of the building through talks and exhibits. The event will end with a screening of the documentary about the Sarasota Opera.

On Saturday, April 11 at 1:30 PM, Sarasota Opera will host a Centennial Concert at the Opera House that will pay tribute to the theater’s 100 year history and feature the Sarasota Orchestra, West Coast Black Theatre Troupe, the Circus Arts Conservatory, and the Sarasota Ballet as well as performances by soloists of Sarasota Opera including soprano Virginia Mims, mezzo-soprano Lisa Chavez, tenor Rafael Dávila, and baritone Jake Stamatis. This special concert will be followed by cocktails and a gala dinner at Michael’s On the Bay at Selby Gardens at 5 PM. Ticket packages for both the concert and dinner are available now at [sarasotaopera.org/100-years](#). Single tickets for the concert go on sale February 2.

Also in April, a new documentary will air on PBS/WEDU that chronicles the landmark’s remarkable evolution—from its origins as a 1920’s vaudeville and movie palace to its status today as one of Florida’s cultural treasures. The documentary will be accompanied by a forthcoming book on the Opera House’s rich and colorful history, authored by renowned Sarasota historian Jeffery LaHurd. The community is invited to share photos, stories and memories of their time at the Opera House over the decades as part of a special social media initiative. Together, these projects will offer community members a vivid and engaging look at

the people, performances, and preservation efforts that have shaped the Opera House over the last 100 years, honoring its legacy as a cornerstone of the region's artistic life.

"The Sarasota Opera House is far more than the home of Sarasota Opera—it is a cultural anchor for our entire community. For a century, this historic theater has welcomed opera, orchestra, ballet, film, and countless artistic endeavors that have shaped Sarasota's identity as a world-class arts destination," says Sarasota Opera General Director Richard Russell. "Its stage has nurtured generations of performers, inspired audiences, and contributed immeasurably to the vitality of our downtown. As we celebrate its 100th anniversary, we are not only honoring its storied past but also reaffirming our commitment to preserving and advancing this remarkable space for the next century of creativity and community."

For comprehensive information about the Sarasota Opera House and Centennial Celebrations, please visit www.sarasotaopera.org/Centennial.

About Sarasota Opera

Sarasota Opera is in its 67th 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 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 the 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.

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