






**SARASOTA OPERA**

**SARASOTA YOUTH OPERA**

**ONLY 2 SHOWS!**

**Nov. 9 • 7:30 PM**  
**Nov. 10 • 1:30 PM**

Sarasota Youth Opera presents *The Hobbit™* by Dean Burry, a prelude to Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, sponsored by the Les and Carol Brualdi Endowment Fund.

Sarasota Magazine | WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT FOUNDATION | Exchange | COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Sarasota County | ROBERTA LEVENTHAL SUBAROFF FOUNDATION Sarasota Youth Opera Education Program

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**IMPORTANT:** Curtain times for *The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup> have changed from those originally published due to the impact of Hurricane Milton.

## ***The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup> Returns to Sarasota Opera House**

***Sarasota Youth Opera to perform the prelude to Tolkien's classic to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

**SARASOTA, FL** - Sarasota Youth Opera is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year by reprising its production of Canadian composer Dean Burry's *The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup>. Burry wrote the music and the libretto for the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus in Toronto, which performed it in 2004.

Sarasota Youth Opera first presented *The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup> (the American premiere) in 2008 and then again in 2014. The Covid pandemic precluded a 2020 production. Sarasota Opera had commissioned Burry to write the orchestrations, as the original was written for piano only.

This fantastical story, a prelude to Tolkien's classic, *The Lord of The Rings*, recounts how a comfort-loving hobbit, unwillingly dragged into a heroic quest, accidentally acquires the golden ring of power.

“One of the great things about Youth Opera is that it gives so many kids a chance to have a special moment,” said Martha Collins, Sarasota Opera’s director of education and stage director for this production. All 74 Youth Opera members will perform on stage.

Right from the start, the cast has been rehearsing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as all day Saturday. Collins said that once they are closer to the actual performance dates additional rehearsals are sometimes scheduled.

Collins has had a successful career as a professional opera singer and directs Sarasota Opera mainstage productions. But she relishes her work with her opera kids. “It's just so rewarding and touching to see these young performers who start out shy and then grow into someone who can command the stage,” she said.

Lead performers include Isabella Maltese as Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit; Luke Harnish (a Sarasota Opera resident artist) as Gandalf, the wizard and Smaug, the dragon; Giuliana Bordes as Thorin, leader of the dwarves; Finley MacBeth as Elrond, the elf-lord; Zane Hancock as Azog, the great goblin; Nikolina Supe as Amarlind, the elf

maiden; and Ovid Rawlins as Thranduil, king of the wood elves.

To celebrate Youth Opera's 40th anniversary, the company has been working to contact all alumni to invite them to a special reception. Any former Youth Opera member interested in attending should email [youthopera@sarasotaopera.org](mailto:youthopera@sarasotaopera.org).

*The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup> will be performed on stage with orchestra at the Sarasota Opera House.

**What:** Dean Burry's *The Hobbit*<sup>™</sup> by Sarasota Youth Opera

**When:** Saturday, Nov. 9 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 10 at 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota

**Tickets:** Children, \$15; Adults \$30, Premium \$50, and Family Pack \$65, at the Sarasota Opera Box Office, by phone at (941) 328-1300, in person at 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota, or online at <https://tickets.sarasotaopera.org>.

### **About Sarasota Opera**

This is Sarasota Opera's 66th 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).