

LIBRETTO

 SARASOTA OPERA

THE NEWSLETTER OF SARASOTA OPERA
SPRING 2010, ISSUE 127

In this LIBRETTO

Editor's Note: *We realize that many of our patrons do not really know much about our Sarasota Youth Opera program. Therefore we have dedicated this issue to better inform you about our young singers. We hope to see you at their production of The Black Spider.*

- An interview with Youth Opera founder Victor DeRenzi
- Get ready for Summer Workshop
- A chat with the director
- Cast of *The Black Spider*
- Youth Opera on the main stage
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- Meet our marketing interns
- Next season at Sarasota Opera
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Get Caught in The Black Spider's Web!

In *The Black Spider*, composer Judith Weir weaves an intricate web combining two tales — one based on a news story that appeared in *The Times* (London) in 1983 and the other on the novella *Die Schwarze Spinne* (*The Black Spider*), written in 1842 by Jeremias Gotthelf.

The news story that Ms. Weir read in *The Times* referred to the 1973 opening of the ancient tomb of King Casimir IV in Cracow, Poland. At least 10 people who were part of the team present at the crypt's opening died mysteriously. Called Casimir's Curse, it was eventually determined that a deadly microbe trapped in the tomb along with Casimir's body for more than 500 years was responsible for the deaths.

Die Schwarze Spinne author Gotthelf, who was a Swiss pastor, set his tale of good vs. evil in a mountainous peasant village.

Audience members are time travelers, as the interludes are set in 1970s Poland while the sung acts of the opera are based on Gotthelf's novella and set in Eastern Europe's Carpathian Mountains in 1492.

The four main roles in Sarasota Youth Opera's production are double cast, with



Judith Weir

one set of principal singers performing on Friday evening and the other at the Saturday matinee.

Commissioned by Kent Opera and first performed in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, U.K., in 1985, *The Black Spider* was first performed by Sarasota Youth Opera in 1999.

Weir's opera runs about 90 minutes with one intermission. Performances are Friday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 8 at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for students, \$20 for adults, and \$50 for a family pack that includes up to two adults and four students.

— Patricia G. Horwell, Editor

"I like being able to perform on the main stage like a professional. I've learned more than just the music — about how the rest of the opera works: backstage, costumes, lights. It's all been fascinating!"

YO Member Elizabeth, Age 17

Why Youth Opera?

Victor DeRenzi didn't grow up in a home where opera was heard. Instead, he came to love it as a teenager, after being exposed to it by one of his school teachers. Eventually, that early experience prompted him to begin Sarasota Youth Opera in 1985, when he saw a need waiting to be fulfilled. "Since schools have cut back on music programs, young people do not have the same chance to hear great music in school as my generation may have had. It has become the responsibility of arts organizations to provide what is lacking."

Youth Opera members learn about all aspects of opera. According to the Maestro, "It's not just about singing, but singing in a dramatic way, that tells a story. Opera singing is different than singing in a school chorus or church choir. It's about learning how to make an operatic sound that is connected to a text. You'll hear someone say that a child is tone-deaf. Often this is not true! Part of making the right sound is learning to find the pitch in your throat. They learn to sing, but they also learn to listen. By doing this we hope to develop a better audience."

Sarasota Youth Opera accepts all young people ages 8-18 who are willing to make the commitment to the program. But what if a child cannot sing? Although some Youth Opera members may pursue singing careers, most will not. Maestro points out that there are other related options for them. "There are many roads available to people in opera who don't sing - instrumental performance, backstage technicians, designing positions and administration staff. When we say we expose Youth Opera

members to all aspects of opera, we mean the work in a production that you may not see in the spotlight, but the things that make opera a complete art form."

For those who crave the spotlight, there are plenty of opportunities for Youth Opera members to be part of Sarasota Opera's mainstage productions. "Pagliacci and *La bohème* are operas that have choruses written for children's voices, for example." During the 2010 mainstage Winter Festival Season, 48 singing and non-singing roles were filled by Youth Opera members.

Sarasota Youth Opera is indeed special. "No company I know of has such

an intensive program for young people." But the one thing Maestro hopes Youth Opera members take away with them is some good, solid experience to help them throughout their lives. "I like kids and I like opera and this is my chance to bring them together!"



Youth Opera founder
Victor DeRenzi

— Patricia G. Horwell

It's time to register for Summer Workshop

The Sarasota Opera Summer Workshop promotes serious study of all aspects of opera in a structured, but informal atmosphere, offering classes in music, voice, acting, opera appreciation, design, and technical production. This year's theme is **Fairy Tales and Folk Music in Opera**. The final day of the workshop is an open house, when family members may travel with their campers to classes on a typical workshop day.

The three-week program will run June 14-July 2, five days a week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Ave. Sarasota. Before- and after-camp care will also be available. Campers will bring their own lunches, but two daily snacks are provided. Here is a typical day at camp:

Morning: Opera Appreciation, Acting and Movement, Snack Break, Voice Class.

Lunch: in the Donna Wolf Steigerwaldt Courtyard of the Opera House.

Afternoon: Chorus Rehearsals, Snack Break, Production Workshop (Daily mini-workshops in Costumes, Stage Make up, Sets, Lighting Design).

Tuition for the workshop is \$300. A limited number of scholarships are available. Registration paperwork is available by visiting www.sarasotaopera.org or calling (941)366-8450, ext. 249.

— Kate Gigliotti,
Youth Opera Coordinator



Learning all about stage make-up at Summer Workshop

LIBRETTO

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Executive Director

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Artistic Director

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'Fantastical and magical' — filled with eerie delight!

Creepy crawlies. Kids love 'em.

Judith Weir knew that and so does Martha Collins, stage director of Sarasota Youth Opera's production of Weir's *The Black Spider*. Ms. Collins says that children are naturally drawn to the "fantastical, magical evil spider" that Weir created.

Ms. Collins, who directed the young singers in *The Hobbit* in 2008 and *The Second Hurricane* in 2006, says this is the type of tale kids enjoy.

"This is the kind of story

kids can revel in. They are drawn to the fantastical." Ms. Collins says those who attend *The Black Spider* should expect lots of variety, including a speaking chorus, a chorale at a wedding, and a fun Polish drinking song with toe-tapping rhythms.

Beyond the stage directing, what Collins loves is the teaching. "The dialogue and the music allow the kids to develop skills in both these areas, whether or not they choose to go into theater or music." It's the confidence

she deems most worthwhile. "They'll need to be able to speak in public – in school, in business. It's an invaluable skill they'll take with them through their lives." Not all Youth Opera members are going to make their careers in the performing arts, but after participating in this program they'll develop a love for the art form and take it with them through their lives, she says.

"I love the teaching aspect of Youth Opera," she says. "It's important to me to



Martha Collins

work to make this experience a positive one – one the young people can carry with them through their teenage years and into adulthood. It's touching to me that later some have told me how much they remember when they were in a Youth Opera production and how much it changed their lives!

"I love that kids are not turned away," Ms. Collins says of Youth Opera's policy of accepting all who apply. "If they are dedicated and want to be there, they may join the program. We are building future audiences and music lovers – and that is a wonderful thing!"

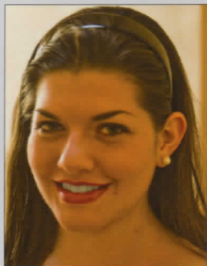
— Patricia G. Horwell

The Black Spider

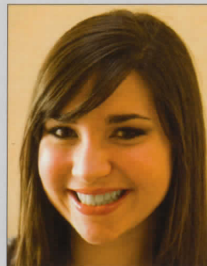
Opera in three acts (one intermission) by Judith Weir

Sung in English with English supertitles

- Conductor.....Lance Inouye
- Stage Director.....Martha Collins
- Scenic DesignerLino Toyos
- Costume DesignerB. G. FitzGerald
- Lighting Designer.....Ken Yunker
- Wigs and Make-up Designer.....Fred Werling



Elizabeth Devitt
Heinrich



Amanda Capps
Christina



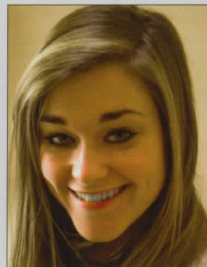
Cami McLean
Caspar



Jasper Fox
Green Man



Courtney Fults
Heinrich



Caroline Pfeiffer
Christina



Jackie Stotler
Caspar



Maria Elena Arrate
Green Man

Photos by Patricia G. Horwell

"I like learning the music and practicing on the stage. I also learned a song in Polish."

YO member Sadie, age 12

Youth Opera Performed in all Winter Festival mainstage productions

This year, nearly 50 Youth Opera singers had the opportunity to perform in Sarasota Opera's Winter Festival.

The kids hit the ground running in January with rehearsals, coachings, and costume fittings. And, unlike the other opera artists, on top of their busy rehearsal schedules these young people still attended school and did homework! With the help of their families to make this kind of busy schedule possible, these singers were able to take part in our mainstage season. On average, the YO singers were at the Opera House an additional 15 hours per week. But as the kids will tell you, it's "totally worth it!"

Three singers in particular had an exciting and challenging three months. Mary Akemon, Maria Elena Arrate, and Amanda Capps were cast as the Three Spirits in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. They learned these difficult roles in just a few months with the help of the music staff. For the girls, this meant intensive study

of the German language and drilling of harmonies found in their parts. Their hard work and dedication were tireless. Those who attended *The Magic Flute* can confirm that the final product was heavenly!

For all of the tangible things that the kids took away from their experiences, I believe it is the intangible things that will stick with them. The self confidence that comes from singing to a packed house, the determination and will power to push toward a common goal, and the pride in seeing that goal realized – these are all things that our Youth Opera singers will take away with them this year. What a wonderful year to be a member of Sarasota Youth Opera!

— Kate Gigliottii



Juliana Laney, in *Hansel and Gretel*, gets some assistance from Ruth Clark, head of women's wardrobe, as she gets ready to complete her costume with a hat.



Photos by Patricia G. Howell

Elizabeth Devitt tries on her costume for *Hansel and Gretel* under the watchful eye of Linda Bayne, a stitcher in the costume shop.

"I get to sing! And I learned songs and rhythms I never knew before."

YO Member Lexi, Age 14

Productions 1986-2008

<i>Space Opera/Rooster Rag/Jack and the Beanstalk</i>	April 1986
<i>Sam, the Sad Circus Clown/Charlie, the Carousel Horse</i>	Fall 1986
<i>Chanticleer</i>	Winter 1986-1987
<i>The Frog Prince</i>	November 1987
<i>Cinderella</i>	November 1988
<i>Deadline (Commission/World Premiere)</i>	November 1989
<i>Cornelius Coyote (World Premiere)</i>	December 1990
<i>Karlsson on the Roof (U.S. Premiere)</i>	October 1991
<i>Yanomano</i>	October 1992
<i>Her Lightness (Commission/World Premiere)</i>	October 1993
<i>Ocean World</i>	October 1994
<i>African Jigsaw</i>	October 1995
<i>Pinocchio</i>	October 1996
<i>Arabica</i>	October 1997
<i>Brundibar</i>	May 1998
<i>Eye of Ra (Commission/World Premiere)</i>	May 1998
<i>The Black Spider</i>	October 1999
<i>The Second Hurricane</i>	May 2001
<i>The Happy Prince/Down in the Valley</i>	May 2002
<i>The Piper of Hamelin</i>	May 2003
<i>The Language of Birds (Commission/World Premiere)</i>	May 2004
<i>The Little Sweep</i>	May 2005
<i>The Second Hurricane</i>	May 2006
<i>The Hobbit (U.S. Premiere)</i>	May 2008



Winter Festival 2010

Youth Opera members were in all mainstage productions during the Winter Festival. Clockwise from top left: *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *The Magic Flute*.

Photos by Rod Millington



On the main stage this season...

Alexandra Ladyzhensky, Alexander Grubbs, Cami McLean, Campbell Thomas, Caroline Pfeiffer, Dara Messenger, Devin Bradbury, Dominique Cecchetti, Elizabeth Davis, Elizabeth Devitt, Emily Hayes, Juliana Laney, Katherine Morgan Powell, KC Herbert, Kelly Hatton, Khaleelah Elhajoui, Mackenzie Martin, Meike Wittmann, Olivia Perry, Olivia Pfeiffer, Olyanna Koniszczuk, Skyler Stahlmann, Tiffany Cupo, Deborah Harding Yvonne Ross, Abby Highland, Jackie Stotler, Jasper Fox, Mary Akemon, Maria Elena Arrate, Amanda Capps, Gabrielle Gillard, Lily Walker, Eleni Martin, Zanna Hocker, Robbie Eginton, Courtney Fults, Alex Koutelias, Angela George, Eric Kimsey, Alaina Kimsey, Rebecca Kimsey, Laura Kimsey



Sarasota Youth Opera — Then and Now

Sarasota Youth Opera has been around for more than 25 years, yet many people are still not aware of its scope.

The program has established a reputation as the most innovative and comprehensive program in the U.S. to introduce and involve young people ages 8 and above in the performance of opera. Our members perform in choral settings, participate in Winter Festival productions, and mount their own opera productions of works designed for young voices. More than 3,000 members have participated in YO since its inception.

EARLY DAYS

Sarasota Opera's Youth Opera Program had its beginnings in 1985 under the direction of Sarasota Opera's Artistic Director Victor DeRenzi. First called *Programs for Young People*, it had three performing groups — one each in Bradenton, Sarasota and Venice. The program was supported in part by a \$5,000 grant from the Women's Exchange of Sarasota and a gift of \$2,000 from the Sarasota Opera Society. The program was administered by Dr. Emily Hammood, president of Opera Youth, Inc. Children in fourth and fifth grades auditioned for acceptance into the program and tuition was \$150 for the year.

By the fall of 1986, all three groups had merged and evolved into the Children's Opera Company, also known as CHOP, complete with its own staff, including administrative, music, and stage directors. That year, CHOP produced two children's operas, *Sam, the Sad Circus Clown* and *Charlie, the Carousel Horse*, with 46 young people participating. CHOP members met twice a week and received classes in voice, music training, foreign language, stage movement, choreography, and dramatic improvisation.

In 1988, fourteen CHOP members appeared in the Sarasota Opera mainstage production of Puccini's *Tosca* and one member performed a principal role in Britten's *Turn of the Screw*. Also in 1988, the company staged an adults-performing-for-children production of Barab's

The Toy Shop. The touring company performed at eighteen local elementary schools and in Ft. Lauderdale as well. CHOP was subsequently selected for the 1989-1990 Florida Arts on Tour Program and gave performances in St. Petersburg, Wachula, Ormond Beach and Neptune Beach. In 1989, the company changed its age requirement and began to accept singers ages 8 to 14, though still by audition only. In 1990, the program changed its name for a final time to Sarasota Youth Opera and now accepts young people of all skill levels.

YOUTH OPERA PROGRAMS TODAY

Sarasota Youth Opera programs continue to be some of the most unique and creative music education programs in the county. All program activities are designed to help young people to find their own voice. Youth Opera helps young people understand the language, history, and culture of many parts of the world.

Even more important, it offers participants an opportunity to interact with peers from a broad range of backgrounds in a safe and nurturing environment. This experience fosters teamwork focused on a common goal, allowing members to bridge cultural, racial, and ethnic barriers.

Though innate, imagination must be nurtured and channeled by discipline and hard work. Learning to do the hard work of the arts — finding the fun in it — is the essence of Youth Opera.

YO members participate in year-round activities that include vocal instruction, performance in choral groups,

and involvement in the Sarasota Opera mainstage season. Singers have the op-



Photo by Patricia G. Hornell

Sarasota Youth Opera in full uniform just before a concert.

portunity to perform in a variety of venues within Sarasota, Manatee and Charlotte counties, and even in Europe! YO outreach performances positively impact thousands of young people each season.

The actual cost per member to run the program is \$1,200 annually or \$600 per semester. In contrast, singers pay only \$150 per semester. Additionally, approximately 25 percent of families annually are provided with full or partial scholarships. In order to make up the difference, the company seeks other funding or uses operational dollars to subsidize the program.

It is estimated that each chorus member receives the equivalent of at least 200 hours of instruction in music history and culture, voice, and foreign languages, while at the same time making new friends and building self-confidence.

Besides providing music education for more than 75 young people each year, chorus performances, outreach concerts, and family-inclusive events provide fun and informational cultural opportunities for an additional audience of almost 3,000. Singers perform at a variety of outreach venues from television programs to nursing homes.

— Rita Chamberlain, Grants Officer

Looking Ahead to 2011 and beyond

One of the many challenges of running our Youth Opera program is providing adequate opportunities for performances both onstage and in venues that are exciting to the members. Youth who enjoy performing have many opportunities from which to choose. Obviously we want to be the best choice with the most exciting projects and the future holds two such possibilities!

During the Spring of 2011 the Youth Opera Program will again be traveling and performing. We won't be going quite as far as the last time (Tuscany) but the members are no less excited to be venturing across the state to perform at Walt Disney World and another Florida East Coast destination. Performing at such an important venue not only legitimizes the work of our chorus but it certainly will provide a fun-filled weekend for all.

In 2012, contingent on funding, it is our goal to return to the stage and our commissioning of new work for the Youth

Opera Program. We have commissioned composer Daron Alec Hagen and librettist J. D. McClatchey for our upcoming production of *Little Nemo in Slumberland*.

Later this year Mr. Hagen's opera *Amelia* will premiere at the Seattle Opera. Hagen is a graduate of Curtis and Juilliard. He has served twice as Composer-in-Residence for the Princeton University Atelier; as Composer-in-Residence at the Chicago Conservatory of Music

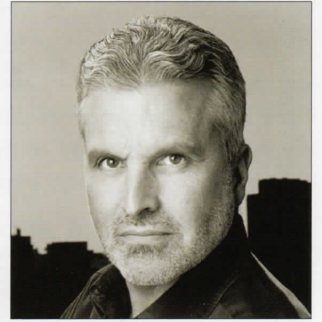


Daron Alec Hagen

of the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, as Franz Lehar Composer-in-Residence at the University of Pittsburgh; and many others including nine years on the composition faculty of Bard College.

He has received awards from the Rockefeller Foundation (twice), the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Mellon

Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet-the-Composer, the Columbia University Bears Prize, the Barlow Endowment Prize, Opera America, the ASCAP-Nissim Prize, and the Kennedy Center Friedheim Prize.



J. D. McClatchey

J. D. McClatchey is the author of five collections of poetry: *Scenes from Another Life* (1981), *Stars Principal* (1986), *The Rest of the Way* (1990), *Ten Commandments* (1998) and *Hazmat* (2002). His selected poems, *Division of Spoils*, appeared in England in 2003. His work appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, and many other magazines. He has won numerous prizes including an Award in Literature by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He has written the libretti for eight operas in recent years, with performances at such venues as Lincoln Center, Covent Garden, and Los Angeles Opera. He has also written the texts for several song cycles. Mr. McClatchey teaches at Yale University, and since 1991, has been editor of *The Yale Review*. It was his idea to use the inspiration of the comic strip of the famous illustrator, Winsor McKay to develop his libretto. The title character, Little Nemo, was the main fictional character in a series of weekly comic strips that appeared in the *New York Herald* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York American* newspapers from 1905 to 1914.

So as you can see, we have an exciting future ahead for you and for our Youth Opera Program. Look for opportunities to meet the creative team in person and hear our singers perform highlights from *Little Nemo in Slumberland*.

— Susan T. Danis, Executive Director

Funding for Youth Opera

Sarasota Youth Opera offers a variety of wonderful opportunities for local youth yet funding these programs is often challenging. While grants and individual contributions make a considerable impact on annual funding, additional resources are needed.

In 2009 Sarasota Opera held two running events to broaden our funding base and increase our visibility in the community. The first, a Fun Run, was exclusively for our Sarasota Youth Opera members. Members were asked to collect donations from friends, family, and community members to sponsor them in the run. Participants gathered in Ken Thompson Park on April 24 to run laps. The run was followed by a picnic sponsored by

Sarasota Opera Guild. This first-time event raised \$10,000!

Building on the success of the Fun Run, Sarasota Opera held *Divas and Dudes: Going the Distance for Youth Opera*, a 5K run and 1-mile walk on November 14, which was open to the community. Nearly 200 runners and walkers participated. Most were from Sarasota, but some came from as far away as Orlando and Naples. Whole Foods provided a terrific post-run breakfast. This event also raised \$10,000.

A special thank-you goes to Youth Opera mom and lawyer Patricia Meringer for securing sponsorship for both events from local law firm, Icard Merrill.

— Kristina Rogers, Campaign Officer

From an Alum...

My love affair with opera and the gift of song began many years ago in the hallways and rehearsal rooms of the Sarasota Opera House. When I was eight-years-old I attended a Youth Opera performance, and I was immediately enthralled with the idea of performing onstage. My parents were baffled the next year when I begged them to allow me to audition for the Youth Opera program, as I was a particularly shy individual. However, they allowed me to audition, and somehow I was accepted. I grew up running around backstage, singing, acting, learning about opera, and becoming acquainted with some of the most influential role models in my life.

I learned countless life lessons in my many hours spent on Pineapple Avenue, and I have benefitted tenfold from my experiences in the Sarasota Youth Opera. The

chance to perform every year in a full production with a cast consisting entirely of youth is unheard of, yet I was privileged to have that opportunity every year. As I grew older I graduated from small speaking roles to leading singing roles in our various youth operas, and I learned stage craft. However I didn't learn the true value of the program until I was asked to perform the role of Barbarina in the Sarasota Opera's production of *Le nozze di Figaro*. As I experienced the professional side of opera, while working on



Photo by Deb Hessert

Adelaide Boedecker as Barbarina in the 2006 production of *Le nozze di Figaro*

Figaro, I realized that the Youth Opera program had completely prepared me for life as a performer. The maestros, directors, costume designers, and production crew expect the Youth Opera members to conduct themselves as professionals, and thus I had no trouble adjusting to working in a professional setting. The Sarasota Youth Opera inspired me to pursue opera as a career, and now in college, I am still reaping the benefits provided me by the Youth Opera program. I am years ahead of my peers with regard to my conduct in rehearsals and my knowledge of "the business."

I do not know where I would be had I not been a member of the Sarasota Youth Opera. I surely would never have discovered my passion for singing on stage or my ability to sing classically. There are quite a few graduates of the program who, like me, found their love for music and are now professionally singing, all because of Sarasota Youth Opera. I am immensely thankful for the fact that I was able to be a part of such a profound program, and I hope that one day I can give back all that the Sarasota Youth Opera has afforded me in my life.

— Adelaide Boedecker, former Youth Opera member



Photo by Deb Hessert

The Little Sweep — 2005



Photo by Deb Hessert

The Language of Birds — 2004



Photo by Sal Brancifort

The Hobbit — 2008

"I am able to grow and make my skills in singing so much better, stretch my range, and practice new languages. No matter how intense the practice is, the end results are always astounding and promising."

YO member Erin, Age 17

Youth Opera and Arts Education

Sarasota Youth Opera program is a unique model for arts education. There is no other program in this country that provides such an amazing experience for young singers from ages 8 to 18.

It is difficult to define what opera education should be. Is the goal to give students a tiny nugget of an experience? Should touring programs include condensed versions of standard repertoire? Does touring have any lasting impact on students? What are the goals of opera education programs? While working in the trenches with educators, I formulated a philosophy about what opera education programs should be. Imagine my surprise when I arrived here in Sarasota to find the Sarasota Youth Opera Program is everything opera education should be – and more.

A challenge faced by education directors at opera companies across the nation is defining what is the most useful and effective form of programming for students. In the past, many companies have relied on revenue generated by touring operas out into schools to help support their general operating budget. In these difficult financial times, with educators facing daunting fiscal challenges, this approach to opera education is no longer viable since schools don't have the money to pay for programs.

It is important to note that arts in the classroom are becoming more and more limited. In the past, most school systems offered art, band, orchestra, and choir along with school plays and musicals so students could explore the arts to find their likes and dislikes. This is often not the case anymore. With programming offered by schools becoming more limited, it is a natural

progression for opera companies to try to step in and fill some of this void. After all, opera is the most collaborative art form and through opera education programs students can learn about drama, dance, instrumental music, choral music, and visual arts. Young people are able to learn about the arts and discern for themselves the role the arts will play in their future.

Such is the brilliance of the Sarasota Youth Opera program. Students in the program, from ages 8 to 18, are immersed in the genre of opera through cultural studies, voice lessons, history lessons, movement, hands-on experience with conductors and directors, and have the opportunity for performance experience both on the main stage as well as in concerts.

The importance of what the Sarasota Youth Opera program does is twofold. First of all, it gives kids the chance to learn about the arts and what performing is like. Former students from the Sarasota Youth Opera are pursuing careers as singers and musicians at such places as The Juilliard School. Perhaps the most important thing the Sarasota Youth Opera program does is teach young people to appreciate opera. By creating this enthusiasm and by providing a life-altering experience to children, we are creating future opera patrons. Kids that have this amazing and unique experience head out into the world with a knowledge and appreciation for the art form. They may become ticket buyers, donors, and board members. In a time when pop culture pervades, a program that reaches out and gets students invested in opera will be what keeps opera alive and well in America.

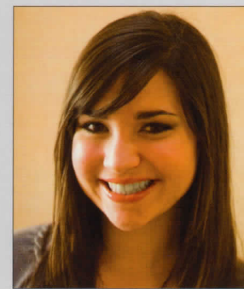
— Dr. Julie Maykowski, Individual Giving Officer

Ten-year YO member recalls the experience

Being a part of Sarasota Youth Opera for the past ten years has been such an incredible experience. There are so many amazing things that I have been able to do as a member of youth opera. I've sung amazing music, learned from talented teachers, visited a foreign country, appeared in professional operas, appeared in a world premiere as well as a U.S. premiere, made some of the best friends in my life, and had the amazing opportunity to share the music I love so much with my community. Youth Opera is such a central part of who I am, not just because I've been doing it so long, but also because of how much I love it. I feel like a large part of my character is a result of the many years I've spent committed to the program. Studying opera hasn't just taught me how to read music and how to sing — it's taught me perseverance, discipline, patience, confidence, and how to juggle a busy schedule.

Now that I'm a senior in high school, I really feel as if my experience in Youth Opera has come full circle. It doesn't seem that long ago that I was a little nine-year-old girl playing a fairy in *Falstaff*, idolizing the "big kids" and wishing I could sing like

them, wishing I was good enough to get a big part. Now, I'm seventeen, and I'll be playing a lead role, Christina, in this spring's youth opera, *The Black Spider*. It would be hard for me to pinpoint the best experience I've had in Youth Opera, there have been so many! If I had to choose, however, I would say it's my involvement in *The Magic Flute* this year. I play the First Spirit, not really a big part, but so, so special to me. I was eleven when Sarasota Opera last did *The Magic Flute*, and I knew I was too young to get the part of a spirit, but I auditioned anyway. I wanted it so very badly and I tried my best, but understandably it went to a much older girl. Now, I got that part that I had so yearned for years ago. It's a wonderful culmination to my ten years in Youth Opera, and to be on stage, singing music I've been thinking about and wishing I could sing for six years, is the most amazing feeling in the world.



Amanda Capps

— Amanda Capps

Meet Marketing Interns **Retley Locke Jr. and Mary Akemon**

Retley Locke Jr. and Mary Akemon love performing and the feeling of accomplishment when you work in rehearsals and come up with the finished product. Both are studying voice, interested in vocal performance and have been involved with Sarasota Youth Opera. This season, Retley and Mary have volunteered as marketing interns and have been learning about the business of opera. Working with Communications Officer, Patricia Horwell, Mary and Retley have been responsible for keeping up pages on MySpace and Facebook, updating the YO blog, adding performance listings to internet-based sites, and researching media outlets.



Retley Locke Jr.

“We want to reach out to young people in the area and keep in touch with our alumni,” says Horwell. “What better way than to involve some of our Youth Opera members?”

Retley is a junior at Pine View HS, looking forward to studying Music Performance and History at FSU. Although he isn't singing with YO this year because of his very busy schedule, Retley believes Youth Opera gave him confidence in his singing and helped him discover he may want a career in opera. Exposure to the music, languages and cultures revealed in opera has enriched his education. Citing salaries, the competitive nature of the business and the traveling one must do, Retley says he is not sure about the lifestyle that comes with singing opera professionally. But, he says, “I want to pursue opera in school even if not as a career.”

Mary, a senior at Braden River High School, values the connections she has made through Youth Opera with other students and the professionals in the company. She says working on



Mary Akemon

mainstage productions has helped her be more professional and helped her mature. This year, Mary appears as one of the Spirits in *The Magic Flute*. She is also part of choirs at school and church, involved in student government, taking private lessons and, like Retley, a member of the music honor society. Love of performance runs in Mary's family. Her great-grandmother was a performer and her great-grandfather was an assistant to Irving Berlin. Although she thinks she might like to be a museum curator eventually, Mary hopes to one day return to Sarasota Opera as an Apprentice Artist.

Bravi to these bright, industrious young people. We know they will do well whatever path they take and are pleased they have been a part of our Youth Opera program.

— Susan Reeves,
Theater Manager/Volunteer Coordinator

— Susan Reeves,
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Tributes

Warm wishes to Pat Donegan

Susan T. Danis

In loving memory of Elena Ekeblad and in dedication to Sarasota Youth Opera

John and Marjorie Connor

Susan T. Danis

Victor DeRenzi and Stephanie Sundine

Jenny D. Lassen

Anne Moore

Cohen and Byrne Murtagh

Ms. Dorothy Piepke

A. Raymond and Mary Louise

Schmalz

William and Jeanne Seiberling

Michael and Carol Wrotniak

In celebration of Nancy Gridley's birthday

Lee Chaverin

Leslie Gardier

To Monique Hussong

David Lusk

In memory of our young friend Susan's loving father, Fred Isenberg

Bess and Sid Teitelbaum

In celebration of Elayne Kalberman's birthday

Lee Chaverin

In memory of Harry Lieberman

Susan Danis

Victor DeRenzi and Stephanie

Sundine

Harvey and Betsy Hinrichs

In celebration of Ed Riggins' birthday

Lee Chaverin

Leslie Gardier

To Alex Scott in honor of his brother

Michael and Sally Christ Brown

**As of March 9, 2010*

To have your Tribute listed, please send your contribution, payable to:

Sarasota Opera, to 50 Central Avenue, Suite 820, Sarasota, FL 34236, Attention: Kyle Daniels

Mark your calendars now for an exciting 2010-2011 season!

Everyone here at Sarasota Opera is excited about our 2010-11 Season. Although many opera companies are playing it safe, we've decided to take a different track. We are looking forward to a season with three operas new to the Sarasota Opera House and the launch of our latest artistic initiative: *American Classics: Great American Opera of the 20th Century*.

It had long been an objective of Sarasota Opera to perform a full production in the fall and in 2008 we began with *The Barber of Seville*. Any trepidation that there was not audience in November immediately dissipated with full houses and was further validated this season with six sold-out performances of *La traviata*.

Now an important part of our activities, in Fall 2010 we will go back to Rossini with his delightful retelling of the Cinderella story *La Cenerentola*. This is not the same story you know from Disney or Rodgers and Hammerstein: there is no fairy godmother, no pumpkin carriage and no slipper. Instead Cinderella (Angelina), abused by her stepfather and sisters, wins the heart of her Prince with the aid of a sympathetic philosopher, the Prince's valet and a pair of matching bracelets. Rossini's typically exuberant score is teaming with exciting ensembles and vocal fireworks.

La Cenerentola, never before performed at the Sarasota Opera House, will run for six performances from October 29 through November 14.

The Winter Opera Festival will return February 5 with the most popular opera in the repertoire: Puccini's *La bohème*. Is there anything more wonderful

than young love in Paris? Or more heartbreaking? This poignant story of four bohemians and their loves tugs at the emotions in a way that has touched opera-lovers throughout the world.

Don Giovanni (*Don Juan*) returns to seduce audiences on February 12. Aided by his faithful servant Leporello, Mozart's libertine adds conquest after conquest to his list, but even he can't fight divine intervention when it drags him to his fiery end.

We add to our list of Verdi operas with *I Lombardi*, the 27th in our Verdi Cycle. This dramatic story of war, love, and murderous family tensions is set against a backdrop of the First Crusade. Although not often performed, the work gained Verdi early acclaim and a number of its highlights (including the chorus "O signor dal tetto natio," the trio "Qual volutta trascorrere," the aria "Di mia letizia infondere") have become popular on records and in concert.

The 2011 Winter Festival culminates with the launching of our new artistic initiative: *American Classics: Great American Operas of the 20th Century* with Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. Although we have regularly included American works (including *The Crucible*) as part of our Apprentice Scenes and concert programs, this will be the first time we have performed a full-length American Opera at the Sarasota Opera House.



Photo by Deb Hesser

La bohème 2006

Ward's opera, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1961, is based on Arthur Miller's Tony Award winner play. Taking place during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, it tells the story of a community consumed by false accusations of witchcraft with strong parallels to the 1950s Red Scare. It had its premiere at New York City Opera in 1961 and has since been one of the most successful of American Operas.

With *American Classics* we are introducing a number of important American works to our stage. Among the works you can expect in future years are Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* and Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*.

Three new operas, a new initiative, and of course our widely acclaimed Verdi Cycle, Sarasota Opera goes from strength to strength. We are extremely excited about the upcoming season and hope that you will be a part of it.

— Richard Russell,
Director of Marketing

News from the Opera Guilds

Sarasota Opera Guild

SPRING FLING

April 14, Michael's On East, 11 a.m.

GENERAL MEETING

April 20, Cohen Hall, 9:45 a.m.

PICNIC

April 23, Turtle Beach, 5 p.m.

INSTALLATION AND ANNUAL MEETING

May 4, Michael's On East, 11 a.m.

Bradenton Opera Guild

BOARD MEETINGS

April 13, May 11, Central Library, 10 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

April 21, El Conquistador, 10 a.m.

LIBRETTO

THE NEWSLETTER OF



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BOX OFFICE UPDATE

TICKETS FOR THE BLACK SPIDER

Performance dates are Friday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 8 at 1:30 p.m.

TICKET PRICES

Adult - \$20

Child/Student - \$15

Family Pack - \$50 (for two adults and up to four children.)

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

All subscribers should have received their subscription renewal package, including the Early Bird Single Ticket order form. If you are a subscriber and have not yet received your information, please call the Box Office.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

May 1 - Return your subscription renewal by this date to enter the Early Bird Prize Drawing. The winner will receive the subscription that was ordered free!

September 1 - Single opera tickets for both the Fall Season and the Winter Festival may be purchased online on our website.

September 1 - Single opera tickets for *Cinderella (La Cenerentola)* on sale in the Box Office.

October 1 - Single opera tickets for the Winter Festival on sale in the Box Office **or in person** at:

Sarasota Opera Box Office
61 N. Pineapple Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236

HOURS

April and May: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

June, July and August: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

(The Box Office is located in the Pavilion Building, adjacent to the Opera House. The entrance is under the green awning.)