



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sarasota Opera to open 2025 Winter Opera Festival

Sarasota, FL—Sarasota Opera will open its 66th season on Saturday, Feb. 15 with the double bill of Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* and Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*. Patrons will enter the historic opera house as a festive brass fanfare is played from the theater’s outside balcony.

Even before the curtain rises, opera patrons can attend a pre-performance dinner in a private room at Sage Restaurant, around the corner from the Opera House. Cocktails will be served at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. Cost is \$200 per person.

The two operas tell the stories of two betrayed husbands with two tragic ends.

In *Cavalleria rusticana* the calm of a Sicilian Easter morning is broken by a betrayed lover who sets off a chain of events ending in violent tragedy. And in true theatrical tradition *Pagliacci*’s clown tries to go on with the show, but his real-life humiliation and despair lead to a grim climax. The violent passions and raw emotions of these two works changed the direction of Italian opera forever.

Both operas tell tales of love, betrayal, and revenge. In direct, compact storytelling, the plots move quickly and dramatically, keeping the audience enthralled in the extreme emotions of the characters. They launched the operatic style known as “verismo” or “realism” — emerging from the Italian literary style of realism, these stories are about simple people, illustrated with music that is full of emotion and passion.

The demanding vocal parts and dramatic roles challenge performers, promising unforgettable, high-energy performances that will captivate audiences.

The world-class cast in *Cavalleria rusticana* includes mezzo-soprano Lisa Chavez as Santuzza, tenor [Rafael Dávila](#) as Turridu, and baritone [Jean Carlos Rodríguez](#) as Alfio. Mr. Dávila returns in *Pagliacci* to sing the role of Canio and Mr. Rodríguez will sing Tonio. They will be joined by soprano [Ashley Milanese](#) as Nedda. Both works will be conducted by Artistic Director Victor DeRenzi and directed by Martha Collins with costumes by Howard Tsvi Kaplan, lighting by Ken Yunker and sets by David P. Gordon. Hair and makeup are by Susan Sittko-Schaefer.

Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci will be performed Feb 15, 20, 23 (matinee), 26 and March 1 (matinee), 7, 11, 19 (matinee), 22, 29 (matinee). Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. and matinee performances begin at 1:30 p.m.

For dinner reservations, contact Development at 941-366-8450, ext. 813 or email development@sarasotaopera.org. Tickets for performances are on sale 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>.

For more information, visit <https://www.sarasotaopera.org/event/cavalleria-rusticana-and-pagliacci>

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.

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