



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2025

Contact: Lael Mohib, Marketing Director
lmohib@sarasotaopera.org
Mobile: 202.257.4822

***The Marriage of Figaro* to open this weekend at Sarasota Opera**

Sarasota, FL—Sarasota Opera will open Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* on Saturday, March 8. Commonly recognized as one of the great achievements of Western music, *The Marriage of Figaro* is admired by connoisseurs, musicians, and those new to the art form. There will be seven performances of the opera through March 28 at the Sarasota Opera House.

The Marriage of Figaro is based on the second of a trio of plays centered around Figaro by French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais. It takes place after the events of *The Barber of Seville*--in which the barber Figaro aids Count Almaviva in winning the heart of Rosina--and can be considered its sequel. Now, Count Almaviva's eye has wandered, and his current objective is Susanna, Figaro's fiancée. The distressed couple, along with Rosina (now the Countess Almaviva), conspire to reveal the count's lechery, despite the many obstacles thrown in their way.

The music for *The Marriage of Figaro* contains some of Mozart's most famous work. The overture is one of opera's greatest and a frequent concert selection. The Countess' aria "Dove sono" is often performed, as is Figaro's aria "Non più andrai," Cherubino's "Voi che sapete," and Susanna's "Deh, vieni non tardar." The duet "Canzonetta sull'aria" for the Countess and Susanna was famously featured in the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*.

Mozart's timeless score, coupled with Da Ponte's witty libretto has made this one of the few operas to have maintained its place in the operatic repertoire. Seeing *The Marriage of Figaro* offers a perfect combination of beautiful music, engaging storytelling, and historical significance, making it a must-see for both opera lovers and newcomers alike.

Making his Sarasota debut, award-winning Italian bass-baritone [Mattia Venni](#) will sing the role of Figaro. He has performed on stages across the globe, most recently at the Teatro Amintore Galli in Italy in the role of Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. Venni's performance as Crispino in Ricci's *Crispino e la comare* was lauded in the New York Times: "his handsome baritone and capacity for self-parody allowed him to evolve from the melodramatic sobs of an almost-suicide scene to the complacent patter of success."

[Michelle Johnson](#) will sing the role of the Countess Almaviva. A soprano of extraordinary talent and acclaim, she has captivated audiences worldwide with her mesmerizing performances. In 2016, she closed Sarasota Opera's Verdi Cycle singing the title role in *Aida*. As a Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she has been hailed by critics as

"a clear audience favorite," lauded for her impeccable breath control and velvety voice that effortlessly transports listeners into a realm of musical splendor.

Soprano [Virginia Mims](#), a former apprentice and studio artist with Sarasota Opera, will sing the role of Susanna. She recently sang in Sarasota Opera's 2024 Fall concert *The Music of Giuseppe Verdi* and made her Carnegie Hall debut as the soprano soloist in Taylor Scott Davis' *Magnificat*.

Baritone [Jake Stamatis](#), who will sing the role of the philandering Count Almaviva, has charmed audiences in such roles as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Figaro in both *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème*. Stamatis has been a studio artist at Sarasota Opera, a fellow at the Music Academy of the West, an emerging artist at Seagle Music Festival, and an artist in residence with Tri-Cities Opera and Opera Memphis.

Noted by Opera News for his "dark bass and strong dramatic energy", bass [Brian Kontes](#) will perform the role of Don Bartolo. Mr. Kontes began this 2023-2024 season at Pittsburgh Opera where he sang the role of Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*. After which, he returned to the Metropolitan Opera in New York to cover the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly* for the entire season. Kontes made his Sarasota debut in 2019 as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Praised as "hilarious" and "vocally charming", Canadian mezzo-soprano [Tessa Fackelmann](#) will sing the role of Cherubino. In March, she was a National Semifinalist in the 2024 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. Fackelmann makes her Sarasota debut this season.

The Marriage of Figaro will be conducted by [Louis Lohraseb](#) and directed by Tom Diamond, with set design by J. Michael Wingfield. Costumes were designed by Howard Tsvi Kaplan, hair and makeup are by Sue Schaefer, and lighting by Ken Yunker. It will be sung in Italian, with English supertitles, for 7 performances through March 28.

The Marriage of Figaro will be performed March 8, 13, 16 (matinee), 19, 22 (matinee), 25, and 28. Evening performances begin at 7 p.m. and matinee performances begin at 1:30 p.m.

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/marriage-figaro>

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](https://www.sarasotaopera.org).

