

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 24, 2024

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

Patricia Horwell, Public Relations Consultant  
phorwell@sarasotaopera.org  
Mobile: 941.363.0261

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Sarasota Opera Artistic Director Discusses Selections for Upcoming Verdi Concert**

**Sarasota, FL** — Sarasota Opera is world-renowned for its Verdi Cycle. Between 1989 and 2016, the company undertook an ambitious project to perform all of the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi's operas and other musical compositions. Sarasota Opera is the only company in the world to have achieved this, earning itself the name of Verdi's American home.

Scheduled for Nov. 15 and 17, the company will revisit that historic legacy with its Fall concert, *The Music of Giuseppe Verdi*. Principal Artists from the Sarasota Opera, with the Sarasota Orchestra, conducted by Artistic Director Victor DeRenzi, will present selections from Verdi's works in concert. These selections will include well-known arias, duets and ensembles from a range of Verdi operas, nine in all, spanning most of Verdi's career, from *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843) to *Aida* (1871). In between, there will be moments from such beloved works as *Rigoletto* (1851), *La traviata* (1853) and *Don Carlos* (1867).

Artistic Director Victor DeRenzi, a noted Verdi specialist, chose this concert's selections for a specific reason. "There are some familiar arias and duets, but I tried to find works that aren't often done in concert form. Like the duet from *Rigoletto* that ends the concert, 'Piangi, fanciulla,' for Rigoletto and his daughter Gilda. It's one of the great moments in Verdi opera, but it's not something that is usually performed outside the context of the opera," he said. "And 'Ella giammai m'amò,' from *Don Carlo*. The man who sings it was perhaps the most important leader in the world at the time, King Philip II of Spain, but he feels the same things we do. To me, *Don Carlo* is one of the first works of *Verismo*, an opera about real people. The characters in that opera, although they are aristocrats, feel the same loves and disappointments we all experience."

Another selection to be performed at the concert is "Tardo per gl'anni e tremulo," a duet from *Attila*, an epic, patriotic moment in an opera about Attila the Hun's desire to conquer Rome.

“Verdi was very active in the movement for Italian unification and liberation from the Austrian Empire in the 19th century. This opera was a product of that feeling. In the duet, Ezio tells Attila, ‘You can have the universe, but leave me Italy.’ That idea was very meaningful to Verdi, and one that people could understand at the time it was written. One of the reasons Verdi became so popular was that he was a man of his time,” DeRenzi said.

### **The Cast**

Soprano Virginia Mims made her debut with Sarasota Opera in 2024 covering the role of Lucia in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*. She has sung the role of Zemfira in Rachmaninoff’s *Aleko* and Cleopatra in Händel’s *Giulio Cesare* with IU Opera Theater, Susanna in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Brevard Music Center, and Mary Bailey in Jake Heggie’s *It’s A Wonderful Life* with IU Opera Theater. She will return to the stage at Sarasota Opera in March 2025 to sing the role of Susanna in Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Soprano Rochelle Bard made her debut with Sarasota Opera in 2019 as Abigaille in Verdi’s *Nabucco*. She has sung the title role in Verdi’s *Aida* with Washington Opera Society, the title role in Puccini’s *Tosca* with Hawaii Opera Theater and the Opera Theater of Connecticut, and Rosalinda in Johann Strauss II’s *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Tampa.

Baritone Jean Carlos Rodriguez made his Sarasota Opera debut last season as Enrico in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has sung Paris in Gounod’s *Romeo et Juliette* and Fiorello/Ufficiale in Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Tampa. He was also accepted into the prestigious Sherrill Milnes’ Savannah Voice Festival where he sang the title role of Figaro in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. He will return to the stage at Sarasota Opera in February 2025 to sing the roles of Alfio/Tonio in Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* and Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*.

Tenor Victor Starsky made his Sarasota Opera debut last season as Don José in Bizet’s *Carmen*. He has sung the role of the Duke of Mantua in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* with Opera Modesto, Radamés in Verdi’s *Aida*, George Gibbs in Rorem’s *Our Town* at the Utah Festival Opera, and Nemorino in Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore* with Charlottesville Opera. He will return to the stage at Sarasota Opera in March 2025 to sing the title role in Verdi’s *Stiffelio*.

Bass Young Bok Kim has performed with Sarasota opera for more than 20 years where he has sung the title role in Verdi’s *Attila*, Sparafucile in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, and Raimondo in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, among others. A native of Korea, he has also sung Don Alfonso in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* with the National Opera of Korea and the Seoul Metropolitan Opera. He will return to the stage at Sarasota Opera in March 2025 to sing the role of Jorg in Verdi’s *Stiffelio*.

*The Music of Giuseppe Verdi* will take place Friday, Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 17 at 3 p.m. Tickets are on sale now 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).



## FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** The Music of Giuseppe Verdi

**WHEN:** November 15, 7:30 p.m. and November 17 at 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** Sarasota Opera House, 61 N Pineapple Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236

**WHO:** Victor DeRenzi, Conductor

Virginia Mims, Soprano

Rochelle Bard, Soprano

Jean Carlos Rodriguez, Baritone

Victor Starsky, Tenor

Young Bok Kim, Bass

**TICKETS:** Sarasotaopera.org: (941) 328-1300

**CONTACT:** Lael Mohib, Director of Marketing  
lmohib@sarasotaopera.org  
Mobile: 202.257.4822

Patricia Horwell, Public Relations Consultant  
phorwell@sarasotaopera.org  
Mobile: 941.363.0261