

# Style

ARTS & CULTURE EDITION



## THE PLAYERS' FUTURE

Charging Forward with  
New Centre for Performing Arts

## CHANGE *or Die?*

Arts Leaders on Stayin' Alive

PLUS: Social & Arts Agendas, Spotlights, Out & About

JANUARY 2020









ON THE COVER

Managing Artistic Director and Interim CEO Jeffery (l), Board Chair Donna DeFant (c) and Advancement Director Morgan Gerhart (r) on stage at The Player Centre for Performing Arts. Photo by Maria Lyle.



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## Having Fun Over Here!

I hope you like reading this issue of Style: Arts & Culture Edition as much as I have enjoyed overseeing its creation. Spending quality time immersed in the world of ideas and imagination is my favorite place to be. Plus, when growing up, the pursuit of arts and culture was a way of life for my family

Much like I imagine other folks went to church or temple or mosque, we went to museums, concert halls and theaters: those were our sacred places. My earliest memories are of seeing Fiddler on the Roof on Broadway, going to a Max Ernst Retrospective at New York's Guggenheim and following along on a kid's treasure hunt at The Brooklyn Museum.

But the real credit for the high fun factor in this issue goes to the people and places highlighted in the following pages.

For example, in "How Did You Know You Were An Artist?" (page 24) learn how five artists with the superpowers of acting, writing, art making and design discovered and sustain their passion for what they do. Also, gain a better understanding of what our most cherished art organizations are planning in order to survive and thrive in "Change or Die" on page 14.

When hanging with creative people anything can happen (in a good way). That's how I found myself singing show tunes with Jeffery Kin – as if real life were an episode of "Glee" – during a photo shoot for the cover story on The Players Centre for Performing Arts.

It turns out that gifted, intelligent and creative people are really fun to be around. Top on that list is Style's Designer, Kim Collister, who is one of the most talented people I know and the hardest working (I can see her eyes rolling, but it's true).

There's a lot more I could tell you about this issue of Style's Bulletins, Spotlights, Agendas, Out & About and Astrology. But, I'll leave that to you readers to discover. See you in March for Style: Transformations in Health Edition.

– Emily Leinfuss



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# THE PLAYERS POWER



## ENSEMBLE CAST LEADS NEW CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS INTO THE FUTURE

**S**how business loves a trio. “The Wiz” has Scarecrow, Lion and Tin Man. “Star Trek” has Kirk, McCoy and Mr. Spock. There are three Charlie’s Angels, Three Musketeers and three Marx Brothers.

The Players Centre for Performing Arts has also harnessed the power of three. They are Jeffery Kin, Morgan Gerhart and Donna DeFant: Managing Artistic Director and Interim CEO, Advancement Director, and Board Chair respectively.

This determined trio is conjuring the magic, wielding the Force and using their considerable charm and humor to advance the biggest, boldest production in the Player Centre’s 90-year history. That is to build the

first-ever performing arts community and education center in the Lakewood Ranch area.

The inspiration for the move is The Players Centre’s mission to improve its programs, enhance its reputation for artistic innovation and broaden its inclusiveness.

The perspiration is formed by having to raise an estimated \$35 million total in capital to complete all phases of this bold, multi-year strategy.

The motivation is an unequivocal belief in community theatre’s capacity to educate, enlighten and embolden everyone involved: not only the audience, but also students, technicians, designers and all manner of local people who give of their ‘time, treasure and talent.’

BY EMILY LEINFUSS | PHOTOS BY MARIA LYLE

“About a year ago I realized that the most important thing I do at my job isn’t choosing the shows or putting together creative teams,” said Kin. “It’s creating an environment that people want to come to and be entertained, where volunteers feel welcome and thanked, and everyone who wants to can find a way to be engaged in the arts,” he added.

The new Players Centre will certainly help Kin and his team realize those goals by providing significantly more accessibility for residents to get involved with the performing arts. It will also help support educational development and play an important role in community life and community building.

Another huge plus about planning three performance spaces, totaling 70,000 sq. ft., is that The Players can open its doors to area arts organizations that are seeking new audiences and homes. “We changed our name to The Players Centre for Performing Arts (from The Players Theatre) to reflect our desire to be an arts center for the entire community,” said Kin.

“We will have up to a dozen organizations with us who want to have productions on our stages and space in the center,” explained Kin. “(Arts groups) all need to grow, and not all of them want their own bricks and mortar. We are confident there will be a great mix of cultural organizations – dance, orchestral, choral, and other theatre troupes. It will be a true home for the arts,” he added.

#### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Gerhart, who came on board in November 2018 to lead fundraising for the capital campaign is quick to mention that the new location, slated for the center of Lakewood Ranch’s newest devel-

opment, Waterside, is the furthest south it could be and still have a Lakewood Ranch address. Being east of Interstate 75, right off Fruitville Road, places the new Players Centre campus in close proximity to the majority of its existing patrons and opens it up to audience expansion from all sides.

“While important, growing audiences is not the only reason for these plans and strategies,” said Gerhart. “It’s also about extending the many benefits of community theatre to more area neighborhoods. Lakewood Ranch is ideal for this,” she added. Population growth there is made up primarily of people who are starting and growing families and ‘boomers’ who are reaching retirement. These are the demographics most often associated with community theatres.

#### CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER

That art and culture have a transformative effect on our community is a certainty, according to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The NEA recently reported a study that proved “what we’ve witnessed anecdotally for decades: that the arts improve lives. (They) draw upon our most fundamentally human qualities such as creativity, discovery, and community.”

Gerhart can attest to that. At four years old she started practicing ballet and theatre in her hometown of Ramsey, NJ. She then attended The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and went on to perform in summer stock and community theatre. “One reason why I joined the team at The Players is because I know firsthand what community theatre does for people. I wanted to be a part of something that will open the scope of the arts in our area and change lives in our



Opposite page: Jeffery Kin, Managing Artistic Director and Interim CEO at The Players Centre For the Performing Arts.  
Above: Morgan Gerhart, Advancement Director at The Players Centre.



*Donna DeFant, The Players Centre's Board Chair.*

community," she said.

Board Chair Donna DeFant feels the same. When she is out and about, she said people tell her, unsolicited, about how The Players positively impacted their lives. "Parents explain how their children gained confidence and were better able to handle school bullying; how they learned teamwork and to just be nice to other people. It's amazing," she said. (See sidebar on the next page.)

"Since I retired from being a financial planner five years ago, I've spent time at the theatre every day," said DeFant. "I'm working full time on connecting with people – like members of the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance – to get the word out on what The Players is all about. They all say they want us, which is heartwarming to hear," she added.

## YOU'RE ONLY 90 ONCE

Arguably, no area arts organization is more qualified to attest to the positive impact of community theatre than The Players Centre. Its founders were educators from what is now Sarasota's Out of Door Academy. They started the group in order to engage with the growing community of the 1920s – particularly visitors to the area – and of course, to put on a show.

And that's something The Players Centre knows how to do! Enter That's Entertainment – the organization's 90th anniversary party to be held April 18, 2020, at Sarasota Municipal Auditorium. This truly memorable event will be a great way to support the Players Centre's plans while enjoying an evening of cocktails, dinner, dancing, performances and special guest appearances.

The night is set to honor some of The Players' outstanding supporters, starting with Heritage Honoree Eva Slane – an area doyenne known for her generosity to the arts. A Hometown Talent honor will go to Eve Caballero; Community Philanthropist honors will go to Angela & John Fain, and Barbara & Dick Johnson will be honored for Hearts of Gold.

That's Entertainment is a wonderful way "to celebrate and take stock on how incredible it is to have an organization that is celebrating 90 years of service to the community," said Kin. "The mission is ever changing but the goal is always the same: we are THE local community theatre here to entertain the masses with

## THE PLAYERS CENTRE SAVED HIS LIFE

In 1995, Attorney Michael Brown was living in New Jersey and commuting to work in New York City when severe headaches led him to see a neurologist. An MRI revealed two brain tumors. Surgery was recommended but Brown determined that the headaches were caused by stress.

He moved with his wife and children to Sarasota in 1999 to live a more relaxed life. "Soon after my wife's mother put my business card in a raffle and won us free tickets to see the show, 'The Secret Garden,' at The Players," he said. "From the first time I walked in I felt like I was home."

In November 2003 he had a grand mal seizure and the neurologist told him he needed brain surgery right away. The subsequent biopsy revealed that he had stage four glioblastoma,

the deadliest brain cancer of all. The doctor told him he had 50 weeks to live.

Not accepting that verdict, Brown decided he would fight the cancer and beat the odds. "I thought: those are just statistics and doctors are not God." He chose to undergo 16 rounds of IV chemo, two years of oral chemo and 30 focused radiation sessions. But he is certain that medicine alone wasn't what kept him alive – going on 17 years now. "I took stock of my life. I decided family was number one but what came second was theatre," he said.

Brown had always loved theatre – from when his mother took him to Broadway shows as a youngster through acting in high school productions. In college he acted in shows and minored in theatre.

His first audition in more than 20 years was with The Players, but he didn't get cast until a year later. Since then, his whole family has participated in shows and worked behind the scenes: even his dog Daisy played Bruiser in "Legally Blonde The Musical." Brown also served more than seven years in nearly every position on The Players Board of Directors.

"When you are given a terminal cancer diagnosis there is a tendency to become negative," Brown explained. A book he read at the time, "You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought," made him realize that his thinking had to change. And it did: from the moment he revived his love of theatre, the negativity ended. "I loved what I was doing at The Players. It helped me feel good and happy again."



great revivals of shows that have had Broadway and off Broadway runs,” he added.

## SEASON SHOWS GO WILDE

On that note, another entertaining way to support The Players is by purchasing tickets for its current Wilde Broadway Season. There are three popular shows still to come.

Opening January 2020 is the musical “Sister Act,” based on the hit Whoopi Goldberg movie. It runs through February 2, 2020. The show is a divine musical comedy about a woman hiding in a convent who helps her fellow sisters find their voice...as she discovers her own!

Next up, on stage February 19 through March 8, 2020, is the area premiere of the Go-Go’s musical “Head Over Heels.” It is a celebration of love that follows the escapades of a royal family who discover the salvation to saving their kingdom is within each of their hearts.

The last musical of the season is the truly magical “Anything Goes.” On stage from March 25 through April 12, 2020, the show brings Cole Porter’s enchanting score to life aboard a ship that is equally delightful, delicious and de-lovely.

## CAMPAIGN FOR CAPITAL

Launching a new Players Centre for Performing Arts on such a grand scale is sure to enhance our culture and community in a myriad of ways, including directly boosting the economy. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis the arts and cultural arena contributes almost five times more than the agricultural sector, nearly \$60 billion more than construction and \$227 billion more than transportation and warehousing to the overall U.S. economy.

All these details will factor into The Players Centre’s continuing efforts to successfully raise the funds needed to complete its plans. “We still have a lot of money to raise,” said DeFant. “We are asking for help from the community directly to accomplish the first phase of our plan, which is to build the main theatre,” she said. “It is a monumental job that takes a team effort,” added Gerhart.

The Players’ Center Stage Capital Campaign was first boosted by a lead gift of \$1 million from the Muriel O’Neil Fund for the Performing Arts of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. It was helped further when Schroeder-Manatee Ranch donated the land, plus parking for 450 vehicles and a promise to build an outdoor event plaza, for a total worth of about \$1.4 million. The October 2018 sale of The Players’ downtown Sarasota building then added 9.5 million to the organization’s funds. All that puts the capital campaign about 30 percent along the way to its goal, Gerhart confirmed.

“It’s no secret that our population is growing to the east and south, and the opportunities for organizations like The Players to enhance the region’s vibrant cultural offerings are many,” said Roxie Jerde, President and CEO of the Community Foundation of Sarasota

## A PROUD MOM MOMENT

### *The Players Studio summer session helps disabled teen blossom*

Nick Hayes was 18 when he attended The Players summer camp in 2017. His first time on stage that summer was a smaller role, but in Session II he had a lead as Melman the Giraffe in the show “Madagascar.” The experience was so life giving his mother, Nadine Hayes, was compelled to write a letter thanking the staff.

#### *To The Staff at Players Studio*

*Your program is amazing. You may not understand that your kindness has brought happiness back to my son, Nick Hayes.*

*He suffers from depression, Asperger’s, ADHD and bipolar. He can be awkward, shy, a bit abstract, and very sensitive – especially with rejection. He tries to be “normal” and “fit in” but his imagination and disabilities make it hard.*

*Now he is back to a more bubbly person, telling me his thoughts and ideas, singing, laughing, smiling and daydreaming of future plans.*

*I am so grateful that you were able to not only accept him into your program at such short notice, but was able to help with a scholarship. I do appreciate the opportunity that you have given him, more than my words can express.*

*With much respect and sincerely,  
Nadine Hayes*

County. Jerde explained that the lead gift was given in Muriel O’Neil’s name because of O’Neil’s belief in The Players’ mission and “its ability to expand its role in our region and add to the richness of so many lives.”

When complete The Players Centre will feature a 480-seat main stage auditorium with balcony seating, a 125-seat black box theatre, a 100-seat cabaret theatre with dining, and the main campus of The Players Studio, which is the education department of the organization. In order to maintain a downtown Sarasota presence, a satellite studio location will continue to operate in Rosemary Square.

There will be an in-between stage. “Schroeder-Manatee Ranch feels it will have its part of Waterside completed by February of 2021. That is when we would like to break ground,” said Kin. The Players’ lease-back agreement with the building’s buyer goes through October 2020. However, there’s a high possibility its 91st season will continue to perform there through May of 2021. But after that it will likely spend some time as an itinerant travelling show.

“We will be homeless for sure for a while and it is part of my job to figure out what that is and where we go,” said Kin. “We will continue to produce, most likely in an alternative space,” he added.

When complete, the new campus for the arts will power our region’s reputation as an art and cultural Mecca – beyond Lakewood Ranch to towns and cities both north and south. And Jeffery Kin, Donna DeFant and Morgan Gerhart will take up residence in their new professional home.

But until that magical day, the team will be very busy doing what they do best: putting shows on stage, educating and edifying the community, and working hard to complete the funding needed to boldly go and build The Players Centre for the Performing Arts.

# Keeping The Arts Alive



With With Sarasota listed as 2020's #2 best place to retire in the country (USNews.com), it's no wonder that the population of the Suncoast continues to grow. New development projects are increasing in number; major expansions are on the radar; and with detours delaying traffic and construction cranes defiling our downtown skylines, residents can get a little cranky. Where can we turn to escape the relentless bustle of progress? The arts.

Go to a show, visit the opera, take pleasure in a live concert; visit artifacts, old and new, at a museum or gallery. It's what our region is known for. But to continue, even our most stalwart art organizations are walking a tightrope across an uncertain, future-driven landscape.

Some are tweaking processes or changing names to stay ahead of the curve, while others endure outrage from the community in a fight for space. Regardless of how much these organizations strategize and struggle, it feels like a change or die environment. All are traveling down the same road, driving a move toward innovation, to keep the arts alive.

## ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE SETTING THE STAGE

A fortuitous expansion is underway at The Asolo Repertory Theatre. "We were very fortunate to be able to purchase the land next door to our current Robert and Beverly Koski Production Center, said Asolo Rep's Managing Director Linda DiGabriele. The build out will make room for improved rehearsal and production facilities.

This is "a bold strategic plan for our future," said DiGabriele. The larger and enhanced space will certainly allow the Asolo to expand youth and community education programs, which are always popular. Even more enticing is the opportunity for the Asolo to diversify its revenue streams and step into the ranks of the nation's top theatres as a launching pad for internationally renowned productions.

It's had some experience with this dynamic: Asolo Rep's 2007-2008 season saw the world premiere of "A Tale of Two Cities," and in 2010-2011, it was "Bonnie and Clyde." Both musicals were launched in Sarasota and went on to try their luck on Broadway.

When its expansion is complete, and with a little bit of help from the community, Asolo Rep will set a course to elevate into the ranks of theatres like San Diego's La Jolla Playhouse. That theatre incubated "Bonnie and Clyde" and touts itself as a place where artists and audiences create what's new and next in American Theatre.

"Expanding our production facilities and modernizing our stage

# INSIDERS SAY IT'S A CHANGE OR DIE SCENARIO

systems are key building blocks for our success,” said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director. He said the efforts are a thrilling time of growth, artistic exploration, and community engagement.

Asolo Rep’s capital campaign notes the benefits of providing the housing, scenic studio, costume shop, rehearsal facilities, and a 535-seat theatre to attract nationally-respected producers that take shows from idea to performance.

While it may not be essential to Asolo Rep’s survival, serving as a springboard for American theatre would allow the company to rise to greater artistic heights. That, in turn, would enhance Sarasota’s reputation as a national cultural capital.

## SARASOTA ORCHESTRA A ROOM OF THEIR OWN

Joe McKenna, President and CEO of the Sarasota Orchestra, takes this imagery further. Facing increasingly urgent restrictions of scheduling and artistic limitations of performing in venues such as the shared, multi-purpose Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, McKenna sees the organization at a crossroads. Either it fulfills a decades-long quest for a new world-class acoustic music center - one where its musicians can unleash their artistry - or it remains restricted and stifled.

Even more, as the redevelopment project, The Bay Sarasota, has committed to revitalizing more than 50 acres downtown, including a state-of-the-art performance center that will seat 2,250, change is closing in. The Orchestra Board realized that it would be better for all if it relinquished its own parcel of prime bay-front property and sought a new home outside of the high-risk (and costly) flood zone.

The orchestra’s goal is to build and move into a new upscale concert hall

by its 75th anniversary, the 2024-2025 season. Its proposal to build in Sarasota’s Payne Park was stifled by what it considered to be unexpected public opposition. The local community was concerned that the project would reduce greenspace, harm wildlife and increase traffic. So the mystery remains, where will it be built?

McKenna drew a parallel between why many people choose to live in the area, wanting a rich cultural environment and to achieve a more vibrant life – and the vibrancy that the orchestra could achieve if only it were unfettered of its current limitations of space, acoustics and so on. “If everyone thought about it in this way, there might be a more favorable reception across the community,” he added.

According to McKenna, building within the City of Sarasota is not off the table yet, but the Board has voted on expanding its search beyond the city. “We are still looking for any opportunities that will meet our critical success factors.”





## THE PLAYERS THEATRE SQUEEZED OUT

**O**n the Sarasota Bayfront sits the Players Theatre, recently rechristened The Players Centre for Performing Arts. It has resided in this enviable location since 1936 and now has firm plans to move out of the city to east of I-75.

“Ours is a simple story of being squeezed out of our home,” explained Jeffrey Kin, the Players’ Artistic Director and Interim CEO. “Our current building is of an age. Five years ago, our strategic plan

revealed a situation that was a little frightening. We had an aging AC, roof, and electrical system; and parking had become a real issue for our audience - especially with all the new construction around us. Fighting for parking is never fun before a show.”

After thoroughly exploring all the possibilities for re-investing in its current property, which was clearly quite valuable for location alone, the organization concluded that staying in place was just not workable. “We never had the opportunity to get a foothold in the 21st Century. How do you grow, plan, and help your organization thrive when you have all these limitations weighing you down?” asked Kin. The answer seemed evident: sell the property and invest the proceeds in a new, modern location somewhere else.

As those in theatre often do, according to Kin, the organization’s management just kept asking “What if?” When that question was explored with Rex Jensen and the Schroeder Manatee family, the result was a gift of land off Fruitville Road beyond I-75 and a parking garage to go with it.

Audiences were at first shocked, but Kin and the board were able to make their case clear. “All we are trying to do is make the tough choices, be bold, and put the health of the organization before anything else,” said Kin. The organization must meet a fundraising goal before it can break ground, a multi-year journey, which it hopes to do in early 2021. (See cover story for more details).

## ARTS ADVOCATES A ROSE BY ANOTHER NAME

**T**he stature of legacy arts organizations such as the Ringling Museum, Asolo Repertory Theatre and the Sarasota bastions of Ballet, Orchestra, and Opera too often overshadow smaller grassroots organizations and the visual arts. Those groups, like the Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, could be easily lost in the shuffle. That’s one reason the Society rebranded as Arts Advocates.

In comparison to other places, the changes Arts Advocates considered might seem slight, but the matter of its transformation was an organizational life-or-death situation. The membership application and review process was off-putting and the (former) name hinted at exclusion.

“Our name was a mouthful and it turned off younger members,” said Board President Donna Maytham. “We also needed to raise our visibility and offer programming that would serve the community in a more dynamic way to attract a diversity of member support.” The group modified its membership process from personal interview to a simple online payment system and dropped “society” from its name.

A \$1,100,000 bequest from the estate of longtime member Barbara Hentzpeter, who directed her gift for the purchase of art that, ignited the changes and prompted the Board into more active strategic planning. Arts Advocates mounted a complete





assessment of its current collection of art (some of which can be seen on exhibition in the Grand Foyer of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.)

More visible, and perhaps just as impactful, was the launch of a new lecture series designed to bring in nationally recognized leaders of the arts for town-hall-type events. At the November inaugural lecture of famed orchestra conductor Marin Alsop, some in the audience speculated on the potential of building this fledgling effort to the stature of the long-successful Ringling College Library Association's Town Hall Series.

Arts Advocates' forward motion represents growth that few would oppose, unlike the contention that arose from proposed plans of the Sarasota Orchestra and others. The stakes are higher when extremely visible organizations, with passionate constituencies, move to undertake substantial strategic initiatives. And these stakes become controversial when the proposed changes would impact many different community members, neighborhoods, and property values.

Yet some initiatives – especially those that are rooted more in adding lines of business or revenue streams – seem to have smoother paths than others.

#### THE SARASOTA OPERA EXPANDING ITS WARDROBE

**T**he Sarasota Opera announced its acquisition of the Malabar Ltd. opera costume collection – 30,000 costumes – in October 2019. An investment of \$2 million covered the purchase as well as the construction of a new climate-controlled warehouse for the props, sets, scenery, and the collection.

Working from a position of relative financial strength with a longtime average of earned ticket income covering 50 percent of their costs – high for that industry – the Sarasota Opera nonetheless had been seeing a reduction in that percentage in recent seasons due to situations beyond its control.

“We have been working to decrease our reliance on ticket sales and find other sources of revenue,” said Executive Director Richard Russell. Then the opportunity to purchase the Malabar costume collection arose and due diligence research encouraged the organization to act. “We estimate that we will save \$100,000 annually by owning the costumes that we typically rent each season, as well as create a new income stream through the rental of the costumes to other opera companies and performing arts organizations.”

#### A NATURAL EVOLUTION THE BISHOP MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND NATURE

**I**n Bradenton, when the South Florida Museum rebranded as The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature last April, it was a move long in the making. The organization's board of directors had been deliberating the change since 2006, according to CEO Brynne Anne Besio.

The strategic plan from that year, more than a decade ago, had identified a need to raise the museum's community visibility and clarify its mission. The existing name was both generic and confusing as the entity was not located in what is perceived as South Florida, nor was it a museum of art or history, the categories that might come to mind.

This long simmering discomfort over feeling invisible evolved into a full master campus plan on the



conceptual level, which then led to the capital campaign to complete its new North Education Center and the cornerstone exhibition Mosaic Backyard Universe.

The Bishop's process was thorough, supported by research and facilitated by out-of-state consultants. Its board collected anecdotal and quantifiable data and tested the ideas in the community before taking action.

"Even families familiar with us for the past 73 years supported the change. There was never a question that we weren't doing the right thing," observed Besio.

As she described the process, Remi Gonzalez, the Bishop's Director of Communications noted, "It is clear now that institutions must make strategic decisions on how to change. It is literally evolve or die."

For The Bishop, the results have been remarkable. It reported more members and member activity, increased donor engagement, and increased attendance, which will mean more earned revenue.

The museum acknowledged that is not the only arts organization that has directly benefited from Bradenton Riverwalk – a 1.5-mile outdoor gathering place and park that was completed in October 2012. The result of collaboration between the City of Bradenton and the nonprofit Realize Bradenton, the devel-

opment has revitalized downtown Bradenton resulting in increased parking, walking traffic and more.

## ART CENTER MANATEE WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS

Art Center Manatee's Executive Director Carla Niemen also expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for the synergy that has resulted from downtown Bradenton's structural development and the economic surge of new businesses. It certainly ignited major change for the 83-year-old arts organization.

Since 1955, Art Center Manatee has resided in a quaint, but growth-limiting building located on the corner of 9th Street and 3rd Avenue. It just happens to be adjacent to property owned by Bradenton Riverfront Partners – a group that developed the new condominiums of River Dance and River Song between 3rd Avenue and the Manatee River.

Meanwhile, Art Center Manatee has had to turn away new business and has been unable to start new initiatives due to space concerns and facility limits. "We did all we could with the current facility through upgrades, rehab, creative use of space, storage, but it has not been enough to satisfy the requests of our community," Niemen explained.

"When the five gentlemen of Bradenton Riverfront Partners offered to donate the property immediately to the east, it opened up an avenue not only for expansion, but for the development of more greenspace and public art," said Niemen.

Without this opportunity, Art Center Manatee was at risk for stagnation, atrophy and gradual loss of member support. Instead it plans to build a larger home next door with up-to-date plumbing, electricity, and plenty of space for expanded offerings.

When its new home is completed, the existing structure will be razed to make way for a sculpture garden and the creation of an arts corridor between the Manatee Players Performing Arts Center and The Bishop. That gateway will also serve as an adjunct to Riverwalk.

## REACHING FOR FULL POTENTIAL

The urge to grow and excel is a natural imperative and each of these arts organizations points to its community as the reason to do so. Serving the demands of patrons while reaching for full potential is the goal.

But, if there is a lesson to be learned here, then it is one of how open discussion and collaboration between all parties – city officials,

arts organizations and local residents – is the smoothest road to travel. This was exemplified by the work of Realize Bradenton, which served as both a catalyst and connective tissue for downtown Bradenton's renaissance.

Realize Bradenton's Executive Director Jeanette Isham agrees. She points to the active participation of Bradenton residents and leaders, of all generations and genres, in creating a feeling of place and connection among all the cultural assets in the downtown core. "With everyone willing to collaborate on finding solutions, there is a growing sense of civic pride that we can get this done together."





# ART SCHOOL PIONEERS

## New Majors at Ringling College of Art + Design

Ringling College of Art + Design is undergoing significant changes centered on meeting the future head on. In the past two years, it added two new majors, Virtual Reality Development and Entertainment Design, to the College's already broad roster of educational career paths. Both degrees are expected to pioneer a fresh wave of innovators and creative thinkers.

### ENTERTAINMENT DESIGN IS EVERYWHERE

Entertainment Design students, now experiencing their first year at Ringling College, are blazing new trails. With no precedence or seniors to follow they are learning to "build spaces and environments that bring stories to life in industries such as theme parks, cruises, museums, zoos, retail stores, restaurants, and more," said Entertainment Design inaugural faculty member Jeremy DeRuyter.

Whether they realize it or not, people experience entertainment design all the time, DeRuyter explained. For example, businesses rely on brand identity to give the best first impression to customers, which makes the establishment's environment a crucial concern. This is where entertainment designers come in.

"Within the educational experience at Ring-

ling, the major focuses on imparting a strong foundation of concept development and building a knowledge of three-dimensional spatial relationships, material properties, and fabrication techniques," said DeRuyter. As a result students become fluent in digital design techniques such as drawing, CAD drawing, 3D modeling, and 3D prototyping. They also learn a versatile set of skills that can propel them into careers as attraction designers, production designers and more.

### VIRTUALLY NO HISTORY FOR VR EDUCATION

Entertainment Design is a new major but not a totally new concept. Virtual Reality, however, is a whole new industry with no direct educational history. The VR Development major at Ringling College is the first fine arts degree of its kind, ever.

That leaves a lot of potential for experimentation and innovation.

The goal of virtual reality development is to create an immersive world that provides an insightful experience. Participating students will range from those who've never touched VR before to those who have a better familiarity with it, said Morgan Woolverton, department head of VR Development and Game Art. "By the end

BY JOSHUA WOOD



of the program, students should be able to put together this

complete experience,” he added.

When it comes to crafting such an experience, VR majors will need to do and know more than just design. “VR majors will need to know everything that’s happening at all times. This includes sound design, navigations, the flow of information, and what the take away is from this experience,” he added. Most importantly they will need to know how to embed a compelling story line.

What VR design will become in the future and how it will impact people’s lives is, perhaps, up to the efforts of these pioneers: Ringling graduates among them. “The effects will be broad,” Woolverton added. “It might even be unnoticeable at first, but (VR) will fundamentally change the way we view design.”

#### UNIQUE CHALLENGES AWAIT

**R**ingling College encourages innovation and finding ways to improve and excel in existing art forms. But, virtual reality development faces unique challenges, as there is no precedent on how to do it. Students majoring in this field will need “a certain amount of entrepreneurship,” said Woolverton. “Once they’re out in the world, they’ll find problems no one has answers for, and they’ll have to be

#### CHANGES WITHIN OLLI SPELL GOOD NEWS FOR THE PROGRAM

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) is a program at Ringling College dedicated to giving stimulating learning experiences to members of the community who are more than 50 years old. Members can learn topics as varied as finance, politics, foreign language, and technology.

Although OLLI is not a new program for Ringling College, it is poised to enter a new era. Not only is it fully up and running at the just-opened Sarasota Art Museum, it was recently awarded a \$1 million endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation, and a 50K bridge grant for the first year. “This endowment secures our ability to provide ongoing efforts toward building community through activities and messaging,” said Janna Overstreet, Director of OLLI. “We experienced 14 percent enrollment growth and our Winter/Spring catalog now includes 139 OLLI courses and 39 OLLI events,” she added.

Overstreet noted that the catalog, “also reflects our coming together, in location, with RCAD Studio and Digital Arts programs. It includes those offerings, of 61 Studio and Digital Arts classes, including the always popular Spring Art Week filled with immersive learning experiences provided by visiting artists.”

— Joshua Wood



the ones to solve them. They need to be visionaries who find new ways to use this technology.”

VR development also provides a brand new way to experience art. “The values I’m trying to create are solving problems through real insight. I want people to get something meaningful out of these experiences,” said Woolverton, who feels there is exponential potential for growth and change within the virtual reality space. This is exciting for Ringling students. “As we see the beginnings of a new major, we also see the first generation of thinkers who can truly mold VR technology into their own vision, writing the history for future designers,” he added.

#### MORE DEVELOPMENTS AT RINGLING

**A**mong other major developments going on at Ringling College, the Film department finally completed its new post-production studio in November 2018, making it the third production facility in its Studio Labs complex. The move backs up two major, long-term Ringling initiatives. The first is to attract commercial production and economic development to Sarasota while providing career-making experiences for students. The other is its ‘collaboratory commitment,’ that states that every student will have the opportunity to take on professional-client work during their studies as an undergraduate.

If it seems like Ringling College never sleeps, you might be right. Every year it continues its commitment to push towards the future: developing more building blocks for students’ success.





# 5 Artists

## HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE AN ARTIST?

HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE AN ARTIST? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ARTIST? HOW DO YOU STAY AN ARTIST? THESE ARE DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE QUESTIONS THAT STYLE EDITOR EMILY LEINFUSS ASKED FIVE TALENTED INDIVIDUALS WHO ALL HAVE DEEP CONNECTIONS TO OUR AREA. WHILE PARTS OF THEIR ANSWERS WERE SURPRISINGLY DIVERSE, OTHER RESPONSES WERE VARIATIONS ON A THEME ABOUT PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE.



## CHARLIE BARNETT

### SARASOTA-RAISED ACTOR GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Charlie Barnett is one of the best-known alumni of Booker High School's Visual and Performing Arts Theatre Department and is also a veteran of the Sarasota Youth Opera and The Players Theatre. After he graduated from the Juilliard School of Drama he landed small, and then larger roles in movies and TV including NBC's "Chicago Fire," and Netflix's "Tales of the City" and "Russian Doll." His star continues to rise; yet his personality remains grounded in family and in the art of performance.

#### ***How did you know you were an artist?***

When I was growing up I became very invested in the arts, to which I give a lot of credit to Sarasota. When I was six or seven years old I was at The Players Theatre and a girl, my age, booked a role in the Sound of Music on Broadway. (Ashley Rose Orr attended The Players Performing Arts School and went on to Broadway as Gretl in "The Sound of Music" in 1998.) I went to see it and I thought 'this is a person I know doing this. Why can't I?'"

#### ***Was there an experience that led you to really commit to being an actor?***

Well, I come from a sailing family. My sister was an unbelievable sailor and I was terrible. One time we were in a race at the Sailing Squadron and I was winning for the first time. Then my rudder got caught on the line of a buoy and I not only lost the race, I got stuck out in the water. I was so pissed I told my Mom I would never go sailing again. My parents have always been very open about not pushing us into something, but they also wanted us to choose a direction. My mom laid out ideas, sports included and I chose the arts. Living in Sarasota the arts environment was all around me.

#### ***What do you like best about acting?***

Acting is a like a relationship. There is the science and the ballet of reply and response and the reaction to cause and effect. There is also a balance and energy that passes back and forth between people. That is what drew me in.

#### ***How have you persevered through a roadblock?***

That's a funny question because in this industry there are always challenges. I appreciate them. Sometimes they demand that you make yourself more vulnerable. Other times you have to climb mountains and that makes you more invested and clear about your voice. At the end of the day it's about

continuing to ask questions and go deeper. It sounds like a cliché but I ask myself: how I can help? What can I do to be of service? Where do I fit in with my art? Those are hard questions but they help you become more clear on what you want to do and why. You have to face challenges, prepare, and do your work: myself included.

## MIKE SOLOMON

### ESTABLISHED IN HIS OWN LEGACY

Mike Solomon is the real deal. He grew up in Sarasota in the 1960s and, as the son of noted abstract expressionist Syd Solomon, he was also raised in the larger art world of the time. When he was 15 years old he decided to seriously pursue art for himself. After college he worked as a studio assistant to John Chamberlain, the famed abstract artist who resided in Sarasota for two decades. Solomon then moved to New York and returned to Sarasota in 2003. His artwork has won prestigious awards and has been exhibited in prominent galleries and museums across the U.S.



#### *How, and when, did you know you were an artist?*

In my case, because I grew up with art and painted from the age of five, the issue was finding my own voice or if I even wanted to sing at all, so to speak. So I had to go out from the context of my background and find out. In time I started to have my own authentic experiences with art so that was when I allowed myself to really identify as an artist. It was in New York, in the fall of 1978.

#### *What form, or genre, of art making is primary for you?*

I work in the area between painting and sculpture. My process combines painting with assemblage. The suspended Mylar pieces I am doing now appear as one translucently painted layer but are in fact composites of four or five painted layers bound together. Assembling is a sculptural process because the individual parts have physical autonomy before they are put together and, because the works suspend in space and are viewable from both sides, their context is spacial.

#### *Do you practice other art(s)? If so what?*

I have always played music just for enjoyment. I also write a lot. Writing is often how I think philosophical things through. There's also an historical writing that is the basis of my curatorial practice and lectures (Solomon is the curator for his father's body of work). I like sound and music just for the place it takes me. It's a simple yet profound pleasure. There are certain scales that I play in the morning before the painting begins. It's a preparation of sorts, a sound meditation.

#### *How have you persevered through a roadblock?*

Sometimes one has to wait for the train of whatever to pass: moods, distractions, or not knowing what to do next – it means having patience. "Roadblocks" can signal that one is not headed in the right direction or the timing is not right, so they are usually blessings in disguise. We often think prayers are only answered in the affirmative but the negative is an answer too, and often very beneficial. There's a prayer that goes,

"Thou art my guide and my refuge." A guide moves one along the path and a refuge is where one rests and consolidates. Both are the process.

#### *As a member of the Baha'i faith how do your beliefs influence, or impact, your art?*

The Baha'i faith is centered in the oneness of humanity. There is an essence, a heart that art has always spoken to. It transcends borders and other separations the world sets up. This is inspiring to me spiritually and creatively. I aspire to express this universal reality, yet all symbols, images and one's identity are culturally specific. My recent works came from thinking about Kristalnacht, 1938, yet the broken glass imagery goes beyond that event and speaks more universally, to the breaking of standards or barriers as well as what were presumed to be safe spaces. In the imagery of the shards there is the drama, and the danger and beauty of light and dark.



## ANNETTE BREAZEALE

### IF THERE IS A QUESTION THEN ART IS THE ANSWER

Annette Breazeale is entering her seventh season as prop master at the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. She is also a professional artist, painter, sculptor, art conservator, and a production designer for film and video. Originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, she's lived in Sarasota for more than 30 years.

#### *How did you know you were an artist?*

When I read that question it stopped me cold. I never thought about it because it is pre-memory. My earliest recollections are of picking up a crayon at two or three years old, drawing something, and having all the adults in the room say 'she's an artist.' I was identified as an artist by my extended family from my earliest memories.

#### *Were there artists in your family?*

No. My grandmother collected art and we would visit museums and go to concerts. But my actually being an artist was unusual.

#### *How have you persevered through a roadblock?*

I just don't know how to do anything else. For better or worse, there are many, many things in life I cannot do, but (I can do) artistic endeavors. So, when I have been broached with a roadblock in one field, I just switch to another. Another way to say it is: when I have been faced with opportunities in the arts that I have no experience in I say 'ok, I'll do that.' That's how I ended up running a gallery and doing art direction for film. I just take the skills I learned from one field and make a little adjustment.

#### *How did you gain the confidence to say 'yes' to creative opportunities?*

It's not that. I literally don't know how to do anything else. So, for example, I was running the JABU Art Gallery here in Sarasota. (JABU exhibited the art of Joseph Anthony Buzzelli who settled in Casey Key in the 1960s. His son, Bob Buzzelli owned the gallery). Bob was a lovely man and he passed away very suddenly in 2007 at age 45. I just broke my heart, but before I could even wonder what I was going to do next, someone asked me to work with them in the theatre. I ended up doing costumes and set dressing for "Streetcar Named Desire" for a local production.



## JOHN SIMS

### AN ENIGMA BY ANY OTHER NAME

Is John Sims a mathematician who makes art or is he an artist who visualizes his ideas in the language of math? You might as well ask: what came first: chicken or egg? Sims arrived in Sarasota to develop a visual mathematics curriculum at Ringling School (now College) of Art and Design. His artworks span the areas of installation, text, music, film, performance and large-scale activism. He recently concluded a month-long Artist-in-Residence program at the Irwin House in Detroit, with the aim of developing a three-part, multi-media project about his childhood block, the west side neighborhood at Sorrento Avenue and West Chicago Street.



#### *How did you know you were an artist?*

I think I was born an artist because of my capacity and interest to connect to the language and the process of creating thinking. But there is also the idea of, when you decide to be an artist, what does that mean? To me it means accepting the challenge of behaving like an artist, which is making a commitment to creating art and creating a lifestyle around that to maximize creative production.

#### *Did your family encourage your artistic side?*

My mother guided me with basic things like math and art at an early age. She also gave me the space to explore, create and build things both conceptually and physically. But more importantly what I learned from my mother is to be patient.

#### *How have you persevered through a roadblock?*

I've discovered that working on different problems and processes takes time in both math and art. This idea of the quick solution and superfast

rendering is overrated. It's not reflective of the nature of how evolution works. In 2004 I created "The Proper Way to Hang a Confederate Flag," at Gettysburg College, PA. It was met with resistance and ended up being compromised. That was disheartening, but instead of dropping it, I continued to work on the project. It was revisited in 2015 and 2017 it was performed as "Confederate Flag: A Public Hanging" at Ohio University. In 2020 (after 20 years) I'm planning to conclude project with shows in Buffalo and Birmingham.



## NANCY OLIVER

### THE REAL GIRL RETURNS

Nancy Oliver's body of work – whether she's writing stage plays, screenplays or directing or producing for TV– always seems ahead of the curve. She was a writer and co-producer for HBO's landmark series "Six Feet Under," worked on the HBO series "True Blood" and received an Academy Award nomination for her original screenplay "Lars and the Real Girl." Oliver earned a Masters degree in Acting and Directing from Florida State University and just moved back to Sarasota from Los Angeles.

#### *How, and when, did you know you wanted to be an artist?*

I think always. I started with creative writing pretty much as soon as I learned the alphabet. But I was 20 or 21 by the time I had a real sense of what an artist is and what price I'd have to pay to become one, if I ever did become one and I'm not sure I have. I'll never be sure. But I had to try, it was a compulsion, it drove me, it still drives me.

#### *Do you practice other art(s)? If so what?*

Writing and directing are very much connected for me, but for many reasons, personal and professional, I haven't been able to practice the directing art the way I would have liked. But I did get

a chance to direct an episode of True Blood and it was a wonderful and terrifying experience.

I also produce, which can mean a lot of things, for me it means collaborating on set with a director to help bring a script to life – sharing ideas about shots, performance and the feel of the scene. It's different with every director. It also means I get to contribute in the editing bay, where so much of the action happens.

#### *How have you persevered through a roadblock?*

I'm not entirely sure what you mean by "roadblock." Do you mean writer's block? I've had that several times and I've learned it has its own timeline, like grief, and the best thing to do when the well runs dry is to step away from computer. Stop

trying. Stop pushing. Immerse myself in life, in things completely different from writing. Have adventures, help people, learn something new and over time the desire and ability to write return. So far it has. You never know. You have to face the question, "What if I can't ever write again?" And you have to figure out an answer and come to peace with it.

If you mean professional roadblocks or "failures" as some people like to say (I don't believe in failure, personally – you always learn something), they happen all the time. It's a discipline: you learn what you can, don't waste time feeling bad about yourself or anybody else, put it firmly behind you and move on to more work. That's what perseverance is.





## EXPANDING DIVERSITY AT VENICE THEATRE

### *An Interview with Kristofer Geddie*

A North Carolina native, Geddie came to Venice Theatre via New York to play the role of Coalhouse Walker in the show *Ragtime* in 2010 and never left. Since 2011 he's served as the general manager and director of diversity as well as its education liaison for area schools and organizations. Here writer Martha Maggio finds out what that entails.

**Q.** You've had many roles as an actor but how did your role as Director of Diversity start at Venice Theatre?

**A.** When I came here to do "Ragtime" Murray Chase, (Producing Executive Director) and I started talking about the lack of diversity in Venice and the surrounding community. From there, ideas were developed to address the changing demographics of Venice. We decided to put on the shows we wanted...ones that represent and reflect others. We applied for, and received, a grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation to fund my position.

**Q.** Tell us more about what a director of diversity actually does.

**A.** I am the person who is not afraid to tackle the questions of race and diversity here at the theatre. (I work) to expand our audience, diversify our education programming and clientele, diversify our outreach and service, and include more multi-ethnic productions.

**Q.** What are some of your best success stories?

**A.** My job is never the same from day to day. [It involves] reaching out to add more diverse casts, but also making sure everyone knows they are welcomed at the theater. We are inviting people to audition for roles in which they would not traditionally be considered. We are inviting more diverse people to be on the Board of Directors. I also serve as a liaison to the schools and teachers and (am creating) more opportunities for youngsters to be in the building.



[COURTESY PHOTO]



## MANATEE PLAYERS BOOSTS ITS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Do you love the theater but prefer to work "behind the scenes?" Manatee Performing Arts Center is in the process of identifying a dedicated building for classes in costume design, lighting, carpentry, set building and other aspects of the performing arts. It will also include rehearsal space, host children's activities and welcome college interns, who can be housed in nearby apartments the organization owns. Want to learn more? Call 941-749-1111.

— Linda Joffe



## ACTRESS ANAT COGAN

### *Making a Match at Florida Studio Theatre*

Finding the right person, especially when it comes to romance, isn't simple. But when Florida Studio Theatre (FST) cast Anat Cogan for the part of Ayelet, in the cross-cultural romantic comedy "Handle With Care," it seems like it would have been an easy decision.

Cogan has attributes in common with Charlotte Cohn, the actress who played the role in the show's first off-Broadway run. Cohn is also the wife of the playwright, Jason Odell Williams, and the inspiration for the part.

The first five words Odell uses to describe Ayelet in the script fit both women: "Female. Thirties. Israeli. Beautiful, lovely." The part is written in Hebrew and English and both Cogan and Cahn were raised in Israel (Cogan is Israeli and Cahn is Danish) and now live in New York.

They also both served in the Israeli Defense Forces. However, while Cohn was a Lieutenant, Cogan was in the Israel Army Theatre. "I went through basic training, but for most of my service I was performing in front of soldiers who got back from the field," she said.



[COURTESY PHOTO]

## A THEATRICAL FAMILY

Cogan credits her family's influence for wanting to be an actress and for knowing what that means. "My grandfather was an actor. He played in the first Israeli movies and founded one of the first Israeli theaters. My grandmother was one of the first television producers in Israel and my mother is a musician," she explained.

The Army Theater group wrote the shows, which were either comic relief about army life or educational: dramatizing what to do in serious situations. That's where Cogan rediscovered the reason to be on stage. "We want to connect and touch people, and crack their hearts open with a story," she said.

It's what Cogan was always meant to do: the role of Ayelet perhaps and acting for sure. "I used to follow my grandfather. I'd sit backstage and just watch. I remember seeing that moment when an actor transforms to the character. It was magic to me. It's a weird cosmic moment where you are kind of not yourself anymore: you're about to enter a new story."

Handle with Care is one of FST's Winter Mainstage productions, along with American Son and the Legend of Georgia McBride. Learn more at [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org).

## [BULLETIN]

### FOGARTYVILLE ART EXHIBIT

#### *The African American and The Vote*

You may be aware that 2020 is the centennial for the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote. It also marks 150 years since the Fifteenth Amendment, in which black men were given the ballot following the Civil War.

"The African American and The Vote" commemorates the struggle of both black men and women for these civil rights. It is part of Fogartyville Media & Arts Center's World Culture Series, which is designed to generate conversation around social and political themes by displaying art through different mediums.

The reception opens with the work of visual artist Brenda Robinson, who uses surrealistic nature to universalize the human experience and unveil the common thread that connects us all.

The exhibit is free and open to the public, running from Saturday, January 11 to Sunday, February 16, 2020. Fogartyville, and its symbiotic twin, radio station WSLR is located in the Rosemary district of downtown Sarasota. It is a multi-media community center for creative expression and community engagement. For more information go to [wslr.org/fogartyville](http://wslr.org/fogartyville) and choose Fogartyville.

—Jiana Johnson



[COURTESY PHOTOS]

ART



[GEORGES MEGUERDITCHIAN - CENTRE POMPIDOU, MNAM-CCI/DIST. RMN-GP]

## STROLL THROUGH SURREALIST PARIS AT THE DALI MUSEUM

For those of us who have long dreamed about living in Paris during the heyday of the surrealists, our wishes have come true. *Midnight in Paris: Surrealism at the Crossroads, 1929*, the newest special exhibition at The Dali Museum in Saint Petersburg, FL, is designed as an inspiring stroll through the City of Light, circa 1929.

The show, on view through April 9, 2020, profiles the work, friendship and clashes of more than 20 avant-garde artists



ADAM RZEPKA - CENTRE POMPIDOU, MNAM-CCI/DIST. RMN-GP

of the era, from the painters Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, to sculptors Hans Arp and Alexander Calder, to filmmakers Germaine Dulac and Luis Buñuel. Man Ray, the great American artist, and perhaps the first paparazzo, made splendid photo portraits of these and other Surrealists, turning them into international celebrities.

Evoking the intellectual and sensational concepts of the era – of Dream, Desire, Freedom, Love and Revolution – the exhibition challenges visitors to consider some of the thought-provoking questions at the heart of the Surrealist enterprise: Is art obsolete? Are dreams or reality more important to portray? Would painting survive the new experiments with photography, film and collage?

Accompanying the exhibition is a diverse array of programming that explores and educates - featuring Dali experts from all over the globe.



PHILIPPE MIGEAT-CENTRE POMPIDOU, MNAM-CCI/DIST. RMN-GP

# SKYWAY

A CONTEMPORARY COLLABORATION 2020

## SKYWAY 2020 AT THE RINGLING MUSEUM

The Skyway Bridge connects the communities of Florida's west coast, including those in Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties. Similarly, the second annual exhibition of Skyway: A Contemporary Collaboration brings together a diversity of artists (and art lovers) from all those places, creating another experience of community connection.

The first Skyway exhibition, Skyway 2017, was a partnership between the Tampa Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, and Sarasota's The Ringling. By adding a fourth institution – the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum – to the mix, Skyway 2020 will be highlighting an even wider range of artistic careers across those geographic regions.

Selected artists will be on display at The Ringling between June 21, 2020 and October 4, 2020. Attendance is free with museum admission. The exhibition dates for the other three institutions can be found at [mfast-pete.org](http://mfast-pete.org), [tampamuseum.org](http://tampamuseum.org), and [ira.usf.edu/CAM/cam\\_about.html](http://ira.usf.edu/CAM/cam_about.html).

– KyKye Knorr



## CREATING TOGETHER

### *Bradenton's Riverwalk is Set to Expand*

Riverwalk, the 1.5-mile park along the Manatee River in downtown Bradenton, has been internationally recognized by the Urban Land Institute as a top waterfront open space. It is a very popular gathering place and point of pride for residents of all ages.

One might think it there would be clear public support for expanding it along the shores east of the downtown center. Yet when the City of Bradenton contracted architects Kimley-Horn in 2017 to develop the master plan, it brought the nonprofit Realize Bradenton into the mix to coordinate resident participation through a process it called, "Creating Together."

This was acknowledgement that the introduction of a public park into the historic neighborhood to the east was a potentially contentious situation. Previous development projects, such as relocating an existing playground, had already generated skepticism and distrust.

Gathering a coalition of community-based partners, such as local history organizations, churches, and wellness organizations to work with, Realize Bradenton, Kimley-Horn and the City of Bradenton began a collaborative process that resulted in a considerable amount of participation by community members including about 200 completed surveys.

The many aspects of the process brought the community together face to face and helped form relationships, build trust, and raise excitement about the project. 89 percent of those surveyed reported they plan to use the park often. 90 percent said that participating in the Riverwalk East process was worth their time.

The "Creating Together" process proved successful in building broad public support and even enthusiasm while minimizing discord. The Riverwalk East expansion is expected to be completed in late 2020.

- Gayle Williams



[COURTESY PHOTO]





## [SPOTLIGHT]



# RICK KERBY

## Four Decades in the Theater and Never Bored

**R**ick Kerby was a voice major at Eastern Kentucky University when his theater troupe went on a field trip to New York City and he decided to go for an audition. At age 19 and not yet a member of Actor's Equity, he landed a small role in "Oklahoma."

It was a singular moment for Kerby who, four decades later, is producing artistic director of the Manatee Players. He had studied voice from an early age, took his first real dance lesson as a teenager and got bit by the theater bug in college, where he was told he was "a performer and didn't know it."

And so Kerby returned to his tiny Appalachian Mountain town to inform his family that he was wasn't going back to college. Instead, he was moving to the Big Apple for a part in one of the most beloved musicals of all time, then on tour.

"They were happy for me, but thought I should stick it out and complete my education," recalled the 57-year-old Kerby. "But who knew when I would luck into an opportunity like this again?"

### DANCING COWBOY

The six-month tour launched Kerby into a successful career as a performer, choreographer, director and teacher. "Work gets you more work if you can prove yourself," he said. "People called me the 'dancing cowboy,' since I was later in "The Best Little Whore House in Texas" and "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers!"

New York remained Kerby's base until shortly after 9/11. At the time, he was the entertainment director for the USO of Metropolitan New York.

"Our offices were in the middle of the Port Authority, where men with machine guns showed up every day," he remembered. "I was feeling beat up." One visit to Sarasota and it was love at first sight for the arts-rich area. He was hired by Manatee Players in 2004.

"I'd never worked in community theater before, but there's something to be said about people who act for passion, not a paycheck," said Kerby.

Back then, Manatee Players (est. 1947) was located on Old Main Street in downtown Bradenton, but its leaders were thinking about a move. In 2013, the Manatee Performing Arts Center opened to the public. "It was exciting to be in on the ground floor," Kerby recalled.

### IN THE WINGS

The small staff is supplemented by a cadre of volunteers who build sets, sew costumes, do the laundry, sell tickets and help behind the scenes. The organization's newest focus is adding an auxiliary building where theater lovers can learn how to do all of those things without interfering with rehearsals and center happenings.

In the meantime, Kerby will continue to select and direct a few shows for the season, and take on leadership roles in the national and state associations of community theaters. "I'm never bored," he quipped, "there's always a new project." He is also an avid cook, having studied at New York's Institute of Culinary Education. Kerby and his spouse, Jonathan Coleman, love to travel.

Just like the play he produced last month, his does appear to be a wonderful life.

BY LINDA JOFFE | PHOTO BY MICHAEL FULTS

## [SPOTLIGHT]



# KAREN KOBLENZ

## Leading The Exchange: Consignment into Arts Grants

**W**hen Karen Koblenz accepted the position as Executive Director and CEO of The Woman's Exchange she thought it would be the perfect career exit strategy: a feel-good job to ease her into retirement. She was wrong – but definitely not disappointed.

“After decades in media sales and management, I was looking to slow down a bit,” recalled Koblenz, whose prior positions included general manager of the Pelican Press and VP of sales and marketing for Sarasota Scene Magazine. “I thought it would be a good fit: professionally because of my background and personally because I wanted to become more involved in the community where I could have an impact.”

Impact indeed. In its most recent fiscal year, the sale of furniture, jewelry, clothing, ceramics, art, rugs et al, allowed The Exchange, as it is now known, to grant \$250,000 to 23 area arts organizations and award 22 college scholarships to young people interested in a career in the arts. Factor in the support of local arts organizations since 1962 and the total exceeds \$8 million in gifts, plus the sustainability of turning trash into treasure and the consignment income that flows back into the community.

### VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUME

Koblenz gives much credit to The Exchange's 260 amazingly loyal volunteers. Without them, the impact of the organization would be reduced by standard retail personnel costs. Volunteers run the register, stock the floor, and handle pricing and consignment intake. Several have been there for 30 years; others keep working past 100 years old.

What surprised her most about the business was the daily volume. “We handle 200 consigners in a four hour period three

times a week. We sell an average of 12,000 items per month. This past October, we sold 1,585 pieces of jewelry, nearly 3,644 items of ladies' clothing, 350 purses, 554 furniture items and 4,651 miscellaneous items.”

### BUSINESS FORMULA AND GROWTH

Koblenz pointed out that The Exchange is not run like other nonprofits, which rely on fundraising for a significant portion of revenue. The Exchange raises funds solely through the sale of goods: and for the most part, 65 percent of that goes back to the consigners. So nonprofit or not, the business needs to be managed smartly and efficiently.

At no time was Koblenz's business acumen more tested than in 2017-2018 after the organization purchased the former Short Stop convenience store next door. She led a dramatic transformation and much-needed reorganization that included expanding the sales floor to 14,000 sq. ft. and creating a furniture gallery, a much larger jewelry department and a men's section. Shoppers also benefit from wider aisles, improved traffic flow and more parking.

The \$2.5 million expansion required a five-year business loan, yet The Exchange board decided to maintain its current level of giving. “In another couple of years we will be debt-free again, and with the increased volume, we expect to be able to increase our giving substantially,” said Koblenz.

When not working, Koblenz and her husband, a retired airline pilot, take care of their three grandsons on weekends and after school. Oh, did we mention she loves to shop? Koblenz does, every single day, at the non-profit consignment business she now calls home.

BY LINDA JOFFE

## [SPOTLIGHT]




# OLA WLUSEK

## Champion of Multidisciplinary Contemporary Art

**T**here is an air of mystery about Ola Wlusek, who is the first to hold the endowed position of the Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Ringling.

Maybe it's because she is not inclined to talk about her personal history. Or maybe it's because her speaking voice reveals a slight accent. Maybe it just doesn't matter: which is what she would probably say.

Then again, maybe it is her way of creating a conceptual context for herself in Sarasota and in the contemporary art world. If so, it is a statement that implies, 'don't scrutinize me. Pay attention to the art: that's what is important here.'

That would be fitting given that Wlusek champions artists whose work emerges from the society or community in which it was created.  cultural perspective stems from her early education.

"I had an art historian teacher in high school who emphasized the importance of contemporary theory and social context, and to understand why artists produce their work and how those works translate, or are a reflection of our society," she added.

### ART AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Having that lens, from early on, allowed Wlusek to see the important contribution living artists make to today's world and it became the curatorial focus of her career. Before she arrived here, nearly two years ago, it was at the center of her work as public art coordinator for the City of Calgary and as curator of contemporary art at the Ottawa Art Gallery.

All this bodes well for art enthusiasts who hunger for work that has been mostly absent at The Ringling. "In general, I've

been interested in art that has been marginalized. Art made by women (who have been overlooked) and very emerging artists," said Wlusek.

Wlusek plans to curate and work with artists who have diverse backgrounds and multidisciplinary ways of creating and collaborating with others. "I'll be looking to always change things up with what we present. I want a balanced, dynamic schedule – anything from installations to film to performances in the community," she added.

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

For example, she is currently collaborating with the performance art department of The Ringling to bring in Rhondnie Desir, from October 25, 2020 to January 17, 2021. A Canadian artist of Haitian origin, Desir "uses dance as a discipline to talk about historical issues of slavery and forms of resistance," explained Wlusek. The artist will also go out into the community to discuss issues of slavery and the impact it's had, historically, in Sarasota.

"Social justice is so important. What I feel, and what I hear from artists, and from everything I read is that more social justice needs to be done on a continuous basis. This can happen through physical and social manifestation of art in various spaces," she said.

Two years is just a drop in the bucket list for all Wlusek has planned. That includes gaining a better understanding of all the treasures in The Ringling's vaults and researching indigenous practices of the area in advance of a large-scale group exhibition. There is so much more work to do.

BY EMILY LEINFUSS



## More Than Souvenirs

### GIFT STORE ENHANCES MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

If you are wondering where to go to find nowhere-else-in-Sarasota gifts then look no further than the new Sarasota Art Museum (SAM) Store. Located just inside the main entrance, this small (only 600 sq. ft.) shop is skillfully curated to add lasting oomph to the museum experience as a whole.

"Everything in here is either related to our exhibitions, current or past, or it is mission-driven by supporting sustainability, recycling and 'made in the USA,'" said Peter Capriotti, manager of museum retail operations.

For mementos of the museum itself there are SAM-branded coffee cups and water bottles, as well as mouse pads and coasters that feature the historic building's Arts & Craft-era tile floor star mosaic. SAM's store is open to everyone not just museum visitors, said Capriotti. Hours are 10 a.m.-5:30 daily, and 11 a.m.-5:30 on Sunday.



This richly colored set of six Vik Muniz-designed and Bernardaud-created porcelain dinner plates feature the beautiful patterns created by different bacteria studied at the microscopic level.



Books that highlight exhibiting artists include "Weaving as Metaphor" and "Lifelines," about the artwork of Shelia Hicks.

A range of Pantone products, including notebook sets, cups and matchbook-styled USB Flash drives, complement the exhibit "Color. Theory. & B/W."



Bright Beam Goods' handcrafted treasures, like this spinning top kit, evoke Sarasota's circus history.





# Social

## JANUARY

**19**

### **GOLDIE FELDMAN AWARD BRUNCH**

Hershorin Schiff Community Day School  
Honoree: Sue Rosin

*Michael's On East, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.*

\$90-\$180

Melissa Rivera: 552-2770

[mriviera@communityday.org](mailto:mriviera@communityday.org)

**20**

### **SHOWCASE LUNCHEON DOMINIC WALSH, CHOREOGRAPHER**

Friends of the Sarasota Ballet

*Michael's on East, 11:30 a.m.*

359-0099, [FSBReservations@gmail.com](mailto:FSBReservations@gmail.com)

**21**

### **MUSE LUNCHEON**

Hermitage Artist Retreat

*Michael's on East, 11 a.m., \$125*

475-2098 ext. 2

[development@HermitageArtistRetreat.org](mailto:development@HermitageArtistRetreat.org)

**22**

### **38TH WOMEN IN POWER LUNCHEON**

National Council of Jewish Women  
(NCJW)

*Michael's on East, 11:30 a.m.*

342-1855, [ncjwsarasota-manatee.org](mailto:ncjwsarasota-manatee.org)

**23-27**

### **13TH ANNUAL FORKS & CORKS**

1/23: VIP & Sponsor Kick Off Party

1/24: Winemaker Events

1/25: University Master Classes  
& Winemaker Events

1/26: The Grand Tasting

1/27: The Trade Tasting

*The Sarasota-Manatee Originals*

365-2800, [eatlikealocal.com/forksandcorks](http://eatlikealocal.com/forksandcorks)

**25**

### **THE GREAT GATSBY PARTY: CASINO NIGHT 2020**

We Care Manatee

*IMG Golf and Country Club, 6-10 p.m.*

755-3952, [wecaremanatee.org](http://wecaremanatee.org)

**28**

### **EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES**

Annual Luncheon

*Michael's on East, 11:30 a.m.*

404-5710, [embracingourdifferences.org](http://embracingourdifferences.org)

**28**

### **MASTERWORKS DINNER**

Guest Conductor Ludovic Morlot  
Sarasota Orchestra

*The Field Club, 6 p.m., \$200*

953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

**29**

### **AN AFTERNOON WITH AUTHOR MITCH ALBOM**

Tidewell Hospice

*Art Ovation Hotel, 3-5 p.m., \$100-\$125*

552-7551, [tidewellhospice.org](http://tidewellhospice.org)

**30**

### **BLOOMING FRIENDSHIPS GALA**

Friendship Center

*Michael's on the Bay at Selby Gardens*

5 p.m., \$200, 556-3253

### **AN EVENING FOR HEALTHY START**

Healthy Start Coalition

*Sarasota Architectural Salvage, 6-9 p.m.*

\$50 and up

373-7070, [healthystartsarasota.org](http://healthystartsarasota.org)

**31**

### **MYSTICAL MAGICAL CIRCUS EVENING**

Circus Arts Gala, Circus Arts  
Conservatory

*Under the Big Top at Nathan Benderson*

*Park, 6:30-11 p.m., \$300 and up*

355-9805, [circusarts.org](http://circusarts.org)

# [AGENDA]

This year's Sarasota Opera Gala kicks off the month of February with style. Co-chairs Carol and Larry English hosted the event in 2019. [Herald-Tribune photo]



## FEBRUARY

1

### SARASOTA OPERA GALA

The Ritz-Carlton Sarasota, 6:30 p.m., \$350  
Sarasota Opera Guild  
328-1300, [sarasotaopera.org/special-events](http://sarasotaopera.org/special-events)

### 7TH ANNUAL PARTY UNDER THE STARS 2020

Florida Cancer Specialists Foundation  
Hyatt Regency, 5:30 p.m., \$225  
677-7181, [fcsf.org](http://fcsf.org)

### THE PALM BALL: "FOREVER GREEN, FOREVER BLUE"

Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast  
Bay Preserve at Osprey, 6:30 p.m., \$350.  
918-2100, [conservationfoundation.com](http://conservationfoundation.com)

### 11TH ANNUAL SNOWFLAKE BALL

PACE Center for Girls  
Laurel Oak Country Club, 5-9 p.m.  
\$250/couple, \$150 adult, \$50 per child  
751-4566, [pacecenter.org](http://pacecenter.org)

### BLACK TIE 2020

SKY Family YMCA, 6-11 p.m., \$225  
312-7070, [jbrowning@skyyymca.org](mailto:jbrowning@skyyymca.org)

6

### NIGHT OF HOPE AND HEALING

Child Protection Center  
Suncoast Air Center, Venice, 6 p.m.  
\$75 and up, 365-1277  
[cpsarasota.org/events/night-of-hope](http://cpsarasota.org/events/night-of-hope)

7

### STEAK & BURGER 2020

Boys & Girls Club of Sarasota County  
Lee Wetherington Boys & Girls Club, 6 p.m., \$150  
366-3911, [bgcsarasota.com](http://bgcsarasota.com)

### THUNDER BY THE BAY "BORN TO BE WILD" KICKOFF PARTY

Suncoast Charities for Children  
White Buffalo Saloon, 6 p.m., \$75  
487-7904, [thunderbythebay.org](http://thunderbythebay.org)

### JDRF SARASOTA/MANATEE NIGHT OF HOPE GALA

An Evening of Kings & Queens, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation  
The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota, 6 p.m.  
685-6875, [jdrf.org/southernflorida/](http://jdrf.org/southernflorida/)

8

### ORCHID BALL 2020

Expect the Unexpected  
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 6-11 p.m.  
248-3086, [orchidball@selby.org](mailto:orchidball@selby.org)

### LIVE LAUGH LOVE EXTRAVAGANZA

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast  
The Ritz Carlton, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
\$125 and up  
303-6011, [JSimms@bbbssun.org](mailto:JSimms@bbbssun.org)

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL 2020

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Venice, Inc.  
The Ritz-Carlton Grand Ballroom  
6 p.m., \$300  
355-4680, ext. 301, [jpierse@ccd1s1.org](mailto:jpierse@ccd1s1.org)

9

### ALL FORE KIDS INVITATIONAL DINNER

Johns Hopkins All Children's Foundation  
The Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club  
7:30 a.m.-1 p.m., 727-767-4199  
[achfoundationevents@jhmi.edu](mailto:achfoundationevents@jhmi.edu)

10

### 8TH ANNUAL AUTHOR LUNCHEON WITH BOB WOODWARD

Library Foundation for Sarasota County  
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium  
11:30 a.m., \$125, \$200  
228-6274, [sarasotalibraryfoundation.org](http://sarasotalibraryfoundation.org)

### SHOWCASE LUNCHEON: 10 YEARS WITH THE SARASOTA BALLET

Featuring Ricardo Graziano & Iain Webb  
Friends of the Sarasota Ballet  
Michael's on East, 11:30 a.m.  
359-0099, [FSBReservations@gmail.com](mailto:FSBReservations@gmail.com)

### ALL FORE KIDS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Johns Hopkins All Children's Foundation  
The Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club  
5-8 p.m., 727-767-4199  
[achfoundationevents@jhmi.edu](mailto:achfoundationevents@jhmi.edu)

12

### LEGACY LUNCHEON - JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SARASOTA

Michael's on East, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., \$150  
953-5600, [jlsarasota.org](http://jlsarasota.org)

## [AGENDA]



This year's SPARCCle on the Runway luncheon and fashion show will also celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC).  
[Herald-Tribune photo]

**16**

### LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Humane Society of Manatee County  
Fundraiser  
Sarasota Polo Club, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., \$25  
747-8808, [humanemanatee.org](http://humanemanatee.org)

**19**

### 17TH ANNUAL CARING HEARTS LUNCHEON

First Step Sarasota Celebrating 25 years of Mothers and Infants Drug-Free Babies Program  
Michael's on East, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
\$75 and up  
552-2065 (Kelly French), [fsos.org](http://fsos.org)

**20**

### MASTERWORKS DINNER

Guest Conductor Bramwell Tovey  
Sarasota Orchestra  
The Field Club, 6 p.m., \$200  
953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

### FOOD AND OPERA: DON'T SING WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL

Sarasota Opera Guild  
Church of the Redeemer, 4 p.m.  
\$20, 448-2420  
[sarasotaopera.org/sarasota-opera-guild](http://sarasotaopera.org/sarasota-opera-guild)

### 11TH ANNUAL SIGNATURE LUNCHEON

Featuring Melissa Gilbert  
Tidewell Hospice  
The Ritz-Carlton, 11:30 a.m., \$125  
552-7660, [dmason@tidewell.org](mailto:dmason@tidewell.org)

### 8TH ANNUAL COOKING FOR WISHES

Make-A-Wish Foundation  
Michael's on East, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.  
378-9474, [cookingforwishes.com](http://cookingforwishes.com)

**21**

### SPARCCle ON THE RUNWAY FASHION SHOW

40th Anniversary of Sarasota Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center  
The Ritz-Carlton, 11:30 a.m., \$155  
365-0208, [sparcc.net](http://sparcc.net)

### VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION INSPIRATION GALA

Featuring John Fogerty  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall  
5:30 p.m. cocktails, 8:30 performance  
\$600 and up  
366-5578, [vwfoundation.org](http://vwfoundation.org)

### ST. JUDE CATHOLIC CHURCH GALA 2020

Celebration of Fr. Celestino's 80th Birthday  
Michael's on East Ballroom, 6 p.m., \$175  
Kathy at 955-3934, [stjudesarasota.com](http://stjudesarasota.com)

**22**

### UNCONDITIONAL LOVE GALA

20th Anniversary of Animal Rescue Coalition  
Michael's on East, 6:30 p.m., \$250.00  
957-1955, [arcsrq.org](http://arcsrq.org)

### AVENUES TO THE FUTURE

State College of Florida, 5-9 p.m., \$150  
[wuorioe@scf.edu](mailto:wuorioe@scf.edu) (Erica Neal)  
[scf-foundation.org](http://scf-foundation.org)

**25**

### MAJOR GIFTS DINNER

Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee  
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 5-7 p.m.  
706-0029, [gpintchuck@jfedrsq.org](mailto:gpintchuck@jfedrsq.org)

**26**

### 2020 HOME AGAIN LUNCHEON

Harvest House  
Michael's on East, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
\$25-\$250  
953-3154, [info@harvesthousecenters.org](mailto:info@harvesthousecenters.org)

**28**

### 14TH ANNUAL PAWS ON THE CATWALK LUNCHEON

Humane Society of Sarasota County  
Art Ovation Hotel, 11:30 a.m.  
955-4131, [hssc.org](http://hssc.org)

**29**

### 2020 MARDI GRAS GALA

Goodwill Foundation for Goodwill Manasota  
Michael's on East, 6:30 p.m., \$175 and up  
355-2721, [pavitra.ciavardone@gimi.org](mailto:pavitra.ciavardone@gimi.org)

## MARCH

**4**

### ABILITIES SHINING LUNCHEON

Easterseals Southwest Florida  
Michael's on East, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
355-7637, [easterseals-swfl.org](http://easterseals-swfl.org)

**5**

### SARASOTA-MANATEE DINNER OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Featuring author Rebecca Traister  
Circus Arts Conservatory, 6:30 p.m.  
\$500 and up  
209.7952 (Megan Bradley),  
[Events@PPSWCF.org](mailto:Events@PPSWCF.org)

**7**

### ASOLO REP ANNUAL GALA: A BOLLYWOOD BALL

The Ritz-Carlton, 6 p.m., \$400 and up  
351-9010 ext. 4712 (Laura Stuart Wood)  
[asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org)

### ASOLO REP GALA AFTER PARTY

Lemon Tree Kitchen, 10:30 p.m.-1 a.m., \$50  
351-9010 ext. 4712 (Laura Stuart Wood)  
[asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org)

# arts & culture



Suzette Azariah Gunn plays Kendra Ellis-Connor in FST's "American Son" [Courtesy photo]

## JANUARY

**1/20-3/7**

### ASALH BLACK MUSE EXHIBITION 2020

Art Center Sarasota  
365-2032, [artsarasota.org](http://artsarasota.org)

**21-25**

### LIL & LOUIS

A play about jazz pioneers  
Lil and Louis Armstrong  
JoMo Productions at First Presbyterian  
Church, \$38.00, [liliandlouis.com](http://liliandlouis.com)

**22**

### FIRE AND LIGHT

ensemblenewSRQ  
First Congregational Church, 8 p.m.  
\$20, [ensrq.org](http://ensrq.org)

### MUSIC MATINEE

Sarasota Concert Association  
Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center, Noon  
Free, [scasarasota.org](http://scasarasota.org)

**1/22-3/22**

### AMERICAN SON

FST's Gompertz Theatre  
366-9000, [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)

**22-26**

### SPACE AND BEYOND

Sarasota Orchestra, Holley Hall, \$50-\$60  
953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

**23**

### THE FLORIDA HIGHWAYMEN: OLD FLORIDA CAPTURED IN OIL

Arts Advocates  
Historic Spanish Point, 1:15 p.m., \$50  
330-0680, [artsadvocates.org](http://artsadvocates.org)

**24**

### SONGS ACROSS AMERICA WITH JIMMY MAZZ

The Players Centre for the Performing Arts,  
7:30 p.m. \$20-\$25, 365-2494, [theplayers.org](http://theplayers.org)

### BROADWAY BOYS

The Venice Institute For Performing Arts  
7 p.m., \$25-\$60, 218-3779  
[veniceperformingartscenter.com](http://veniceperformingartscenter.com)

**1/24-3/19**

### THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT

Asolo Repertory Theatre, \$30.60-\$87  
351-8000, [asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org)

**26**

### DREAMS OF LOVE

North Port Symphony, 3 p.m., \$5-\$12  
North Port Performing Arts Center  
[northportsymphony.com](http://northportsymphony.com)

### JASON FARNHAM, AMERICA'S FUNNIEST PIANO PLAYER

Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 2 p.m.,  
\$20, 552-5325, Full schedule of shows  
available at [gpactix.com](http://gpactix.com)

**27**

### RINGLING COLLEGE TOWN HALL LECTURE SERIES

General John F. Kelly, January 27: Rick  
Steves, February 11: Ambassador Wendy  
Sherman, February 17: Sam Quinones,  
March 2: Lisa Genova, March 23  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, 10:30  
a.m. and 7:30 p.m., \$65-\$125  
tickets: [rclassociation.org](http://rclassociation.org)

**29**

### THE ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Sarasota Concert Association  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.  
\$30-\$90, 225-6500, [scasarasota.org](http://scasarasota.org)

**30**

### DICK HYMAN, KEN PELOWSKI, AND CLAIRDEE: MOVIE MUSIC

The Venice Institute For Performing Arts  
7 p.m., \$28-\$66, 218-3779  
[veniceperformingartscenter.com](http://veniceperformingartscenter.com)

## [AGENDA]

30

### KRISTIN CHENOWETH IN CONCERT – FOR THE GIRLS

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 8 p.m.,  
\$37-\$117, 953-3368, [vanwezel.org/boxoffice/](http://vanwezel.org/boxoffice/)  
Full schedule of shows available at [vanwezel.org](http://vanwezel.org)

1/30-2/2

### CHANG PLAYS DVORAK

Sarasota Orchestra  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, \$35-\$98  
953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

### DANCE MAKERS

Sarasota Contemporary Dance Company  
FSU Center for the Performing Arts  
Cook Theatre, \$10-\$45, 359-0099  
[sarasotacontemporarydance.org](http://sarasotacontemporarydance.org)

1/31-2/3

### REDEFINED MOVEMENT

Sarasota Ballet  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, \$35-\$115  
359-0099, [sarasotaballet.org](http://sarasotaballet.org)

## FEBRUARY

1

### MICHAEL LASSER & FRIENDS/IRVING BERLIN

Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 8 p.m.  
\$27.50, 552-5325

### THE BEATLES VS. THE STONES: THE GREATEST SHOW THAT NEVER WAS

The Venice Institute For Performing Arts  
7 p.m., \$28-\$66, 218-3779  
[veniceperformingartscenter.com](http://veniceperformingartscenter.com)

2/5-6/14

### LIGHT MY FIRE

FST Goldstein Cabaret  
366-9000, [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)

3-4

### BUDDY RETURNS!

Venice Theatre, \$40  
488-1115, [venicetheatre.org](http://venicetheatre.org)

4

### ¡MARIACHI Y MÁS!

Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota  
Plantation Golf & Country Club, 11 a.m.,  
12:15 luncheon, \$49  
306.1200, [artistseriesconcerts.org](http://artistseriesconcerts.org)

5

### SOUND/FLAVOR 2.0

ensemblenewSRQ  
Lemon Tree Kitchen, 6:30 p.m., \$125, [ensrq.org](http://ensrq.org)

### TOUR: SARASOTA ARTS MUSEUM (SAM)

Arts Advocates at SAM, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
\$25, 330-0680, [artsadvocates](http://artsadvocates)

6

### BEETHOVEN'S EROICA

Sarasota Orchestra  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, 8 p.m.  
\$25-\$75, 953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

6-16

### 12 ANGRY JURORS

Backstage at The Players Series  
The Players Centre for the Performing Arts  
\$21.50, 365-2494, [theplayers.org](http://theplayers.org)

6-23

### GOAT SONG REVEL

Manatee Performing Arts Center Studio Series  
Bradenton Kiwanis Theater  
749-1111, [manateeperformingartscenter.com](http://manateeperformingartscenter.com)

7-8

### ALINE KUPPENHEIM'S/ TEATRO Y SU DOUBLE: FEOS

Art of Performance at The Ringling  
Historic Asolo Theater, 7:30 p.m., \$30-\$40  
360-7399, [ringling.org](http://ringling.org)

2/7-3/1

### CIRCUS SARASOTA 2020

Circus Arts Conservatory, \$15-\$42  
Sailor Circus Arena, 355-9805, [circusarts.org](http://circusarts.org)

2/7-3/8

### YARD SALE: A MUSICAL ABOUT JUNK

Venice Theatre, \$34  
488-1115, [venicetheatre.org](http://venicetheatre.org)

8

### SERGIO & ODAIR ASSAD- BRAZIL

Guitar Sarasota  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, \$45-\$49  
260-3306, [guitarsarasota.org](http://guitarsarasota.org)

2/8-3/22

### WINTER OPERA SEASON OF SARASOTA OPERA

La bohème, Romeo & Juliet,  
The Elixir Of Love, La Wally  
Sarasota Opera House  
328-1300, [sarasotaopera.org](http://sarasotaopera.org)

9

### LOVE TRIANGLE

Sarasota Orchestra, Holley Hall, 4 p.m.  
\$50-\$60, 953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

### WE SHALL OVERCOME

The Venice Choral  
The Venice Performing Arts Center, 7 p.m.  
\$5-\$20, 484-8491, [thevenicechorale.org](http://thevenicechorale.org)

10

### STAYIN' ALIVE

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 8 p.m.  
\$17-\$57, 953-3368, [vanwezel.org/boxoffice](http://vanwezel.org/boxoffice)

### TOUR OF ARTS ADVOCATES' COLLECTION AT VAN WEZEL

Arts Advocates at Van Wezel Performing Arts  
Center, 10 a.m.-11:30 p.m., Free  
330-0680, [artsadvocates](http://artsadvocates)

11

### MUSIC MATINEE

Sarasota Concert Association  
Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center, Noon  
Free, [scasarasota.org](http://scasarasota.org)

### FOLLOW OUR FOOD: A HISTORY OF FOOD IN SARASOTA

Conversations at the Crocker  
The Historical Society of Sarasota, 7 p.m.  
\$10, 364-9076, [hsosc.org](http://hsosc.org)



Kristin Chenoweth  
will be at the Van Wezel  
Performing Arts Center in January.





# [AGENDA]



The Russian National Ballet: Cinderella will be at the The Van Wezel Performing Arts Center in March.

**2/11-3/13**

## THREE MODERN MASTERS, KELLOGG GALLERY

Florida Suncoast Watercolor Society,  
Searle & Reid Hodges Gallery  
ArtCenter Manatee  
364-9076, 746-2862, [artcentermanatee.org](http://artcentermanatee.org)

**12**

## CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sarasota Concert Association  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.  
\$94-\$175, 225-6500, [scasarasota.org](http://scasarasota.org)

**2/12-3/21**

## INTO THE BREECHES

Asolo Repertory Theatre, \$26.10-\$87  
351-8000, [asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org)

**12-16**

## HEART & SOUL

Sarasota Orchestra, Holley Hall, 4 p.m.  
\$50-\$65, 953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

**14-15**

## LECTURE & WORKSHOP WITH NORA SWAN FOSTER

C.G. Jung Society of Sarasota  
952-8100, [cgjung Sarasota.org](http://cgjung Sarasota.org)

**16**

## GERSHWIN WITH A TWIST

The Venice Institute For Performing Arts  
3 p.m., \$25-\$60, 218-3779  
[veniceperformingartscenter.com](http://veniceperformingartscenter.com)

## LIVING AND DEAD:

### THE GETTYSBURG PROJECT

New Music New College  
Caples Fine Arts Complex, 2:30-4 p.m.  
487-4888, [newmusicnewcollege.org](http://newmusicnewcollege.org)

**18-22**

## DEAD MAN'S CELL PHONE

FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training  
Asolo's Cook Theatre, \$27-\$30  
[asolorep.org/conservatory](http://asolorep.org/conservatory)

**2/19-3/8**

## HEAD OVER HEELS

The Players Centre for the Performing Arts  
\$29-\$34, 365-2494, [theplayers.org](http://theplayers.org)

**2/19-3/13**

## KUNSTLER

FST Bowne's Lab Theatre  
366-9000, [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org)

**20**

## DRUM CIRCLE LED BY INEZ BARLATIER

Art of Performance at The Ringling  
The Ringling Campiello, 6 p.m., \$5  
Members free, 360-7399, [ringling.org](http://ringling.org)

**2/20-3/8**

## DAMN YANKEES

Manatee Performing Arts Center, Stone Hall  
749-1111, [manateeperformingartscenter.com](http://manateeperformingartscenter.com)

**21**

## INEZ BARLATIER IN CONCERT: MOUN-MOON SPOTLIGHT FLORIDA

Art of Performance at The Ringling  
Historic Asolo Theater, 7:30 p.m., \$25-35  
360-7399, [ringling.org](http://ringling.org)

**21-23**

## SOUNDS OF NOBILITY

Sarasota Orchestra  
21&-22 Van Wezel Performing Arts Center,  
\$35-\$98  
2/23 Neel Performing Art Center, \$47-\$75  
953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

**2/21-3/22**

## GUYS AND DOLLS

Venice Theatre, \$15-\$38  
488-1115, [venicetheatre.org](http://venicetheatre.org)

**2/22-3/29**

## WORLD CULTURE: CARIBBEAN EXHIBIT

Fogartyville Center Visual Art Gallery  
894-6469, [wslr.org](http://wslr.org) (click on Fogartyville)

**22-23**

## CARMINA BURANA

Choral Artists of Sarasota, \$25-\$60  
387.6046, [choralartistssarasota.org](http://choralartistssarasota.org)

**2/24-3/14**

## LIGATURE SHOW X: A TYPOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Ringling College of Art & Design  
Lois & David Stulberg Gallery  
359-7563, [ringling.edu](http://ringling.edu)

**25**

## THE KNIGHTS AND GIL SHAHAM, VIOLIN

Sarasota Concert Association  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.  
\$25-\$75, 225-6500, [scasarasota.org](http://scasarasota.org)

**29**

## THRILL OF A LIFETIME WITH THE YOUTH PHILHARMONIC

Sarasota Orchestra  
Riverview High School, 7:30, \$16  
953-3434, [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org)

# MARCH

**3**

## RUSSIAN NATIONAL BALLET: CINDERELLA

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, 7:30 p.m.  
\$17-\$69, 953-3368, [vanwezel.org/boxoffice](http://vanwezel.org/boxoffice)

**5-22**

## LEADING LADIES

The Island Players  
778-5755, [theislandplayers.org](http://theislandplayers.org)

## [OUT & ABOUT]

### A HAVANA NIGHT

PHOTOS BY MIKE LANG

Cuban Fiesta was the theme for the Junior League of Sarasota's Lilly Luncheon on October 25, 2019 at The Westin, featuring a fashion show followed by a rooftop after-party.



Co-chairs Shana Zamikoff and Monica Barth.



Amy Sankes and Ellie Decker



Alene Fowler, Leah Redmond and Jeanne Paulus



Tracy and Roy Kretzler.



Christina Preissner, Mary Jo Wortman, Shauna Stobbs and Brooke Baker



Matt and Diana Buchanan, Sandy and Vern Buchanan, Lea and James Buchanan

### OCEAN TO OCEAN

PHOTOS BY ROD MILLINGTON

Mote Marine Laboratory's scientists and conservation programs were fêted at its annual black-tie gala, "Oceanic Evening," held October 26th, 2019 at the Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota



Jesse and Katie Biter



Mary Ellen and John Mancini

### FLIP FLOPS & FASHION

PHOTOS BY MIKE LANG

Children First's "Flip Flops & Fashion" fundraiser was held at Venice's Sharky's on the Pier on October 30, 2019.



Event co-chairs Krystel Beall, Samantha Gholar and Renee Ryckman.



Heather Wrigley, Caroline Clark, Ashley Carson and Daria Ferreira



## [OUT & ABOUT]

### ARTFUL LOBSTER

PHOTOS BY MATT HOUSTON

Fun and seafood was had by all at the Hermitage Artist Retreat's annual Artful Lobster fundraiser on November 9, 2019, held at the organization's Manasota Key waterfront location.



Susan McLeod and Carolyn Michel



Patrica Caswell, Steve Dvoskin and Clarke Dvoskin



Bruce Rodgers and David Green



Wyn Citrin and Ken Papagan



Leslie Edwards, and Michelle Redwine



Gwen Grottola, Karla Gustafson, Karin Gustafson and Warren Kepp

### CLAMBAKE TRADITIONS

PHOTOS BY THOMAS BENDER

Nearly 400 New College supporters showed up for the institution's 41st annual Clambake. The signature fundraising event was held on campus on November 13, 2019.



Clambake committee  
George Augustin and Pam Daniel



Barbara Feldman and Regina  
John Annis

### SOME ENCHANTED EVENING

COURTESY PHOTOS

The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature's imaginative exhibitions were the inspiration for "An Enchanted Evening," the museum's 27th annual gala held November 2, 2019.



Jeanie Kirkpatrick and Alyssa Nohren



Lee-En Chung



Dom and Rita DiMaio

## [OUT & ABOUT]



*Susan Weiss, Becky Thornhill, Kevin Pustay*



*Dr. Eddy and Angela Regnier*



*Jim and Anna Reuss, Yvette and Bob Morgan*

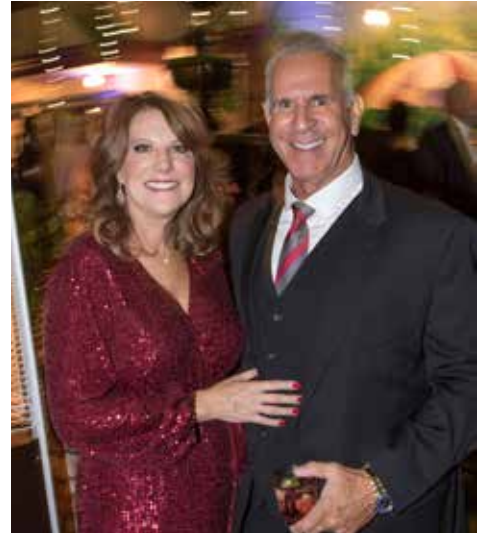


*Kathryn Ross-Nash, Yvette Morgan,  
Sandy Humenik, Anna Reuss, Barb Chalson*

### **RUBY ANNIVERSARY**

PHOTOS BY ROD MILLINGTON

The Florida Center for Early Childhood's Winter Gala doubled as the agency's 40th anniversary celebration, held December 6th, 2019 at Michael's on East Ballroom.



*Jim and Sharon Talkie*



## [OUT & ABOUT]

### HEARTS OF GOLD

PHOTOS BY ROD MILLINGTON

The JFCS of the Suncoast celebrated hope and resilience with its supporters, at the organization's "Hearts of Gold" Gala at The Ritz-Carlton on December 15th, 2019.



Nelle Miller, Iris Starr



Gail and Skip Sack



Benjamin and Gigi Huberman, Heid Brown



Mort and Bunny Skirboll



Scott Stevenson, Sharon Stark



Elizabeth Moore, Margaret Wise



Judith Schwartzbaum,  
Nancy Shapiro, Faith Goldman



Madara Mancinska, Laura Macukane,  
Elita Krums-Kane

### YOUNG AS YOU FEEL!

PHOTOS BY ROD MILLINGTON

There was entertainment galore, including WBTT, Circus Arts and more, at Designing Women Boutique's 17th Annual Gala, "Forever Young," held Sunday December 8, 2019 at Michael's on East ballroom.



Donna Messenger, Karen Manfield, Sheri Riley, Marian Turner



Paul and Ann Levinson, Sandy and Neil Malamud

# The Art & Science of Astrology

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2020

BY KARI NOREN-HOSHAL



## FEBRUARY 2020

During the month of February the outer planets, Jupiter through Pluto, will be in Capricorn or Pisces. This combination of Capricorn/earth and Pisces/water energies generates the perfect celestial environment for great new avenues of artwork to be expressed. This phenomenon is happening across all art forms.

In film and TV, the emergence of the long-cycle series, with the backing of mini-studios like Amazon, Netflix and others is giving us a huge new influx of options in home entertainment. In the fine art world, paintings and sculptures are being made out of recycled materials or have a Gaia-centered theme of eco-conservation. This is also true for fashion designers, who are using repurposed materials on the runway. In music a host of new artists of all genres have come available through internet-based “channels,” and in dance and theater, seasoned performers are coming back to the live stage to create intimate experiences.

Perfect weekends to get out and enjoy the arts at a performance or festival are:

- February 8 & 9 with the full Moon in Leo
- February 14 through 15 – Valentine’s Day/President’s Day weekend with the Moon in Scorpio and Sagittarius
- February 22 & 23 – with a Pisces New Moon

## MARCH 2020

On Sunday, March 22, Saturn enters the sign of Aquarius where it will give our lives an electrical charge-up in the areas of career, life and work balance, and standing in the community.

From March 22, 2020 to March 7, 2023 Saturn will be imposing its limits and demands for self-discipline. Saturn in Aquarius tells us to ‘clean up our act’ in order to upgrade our careers and family life. For some of us, this may mean taking a job with greater benefits in order to better support the family. For others this transit indicates working harder than ever to manifest our career dreams.

If you have an art, a service or a product that you want to bring to a larger stage, NOW is the time to do it! The best way to get such a big mission accomplished is to set quarterly goals. Keeping a checklist of milestones along the way is also helpful.

– Kari Noren-Hoshal is a Sarasota-based evolutionary astrologer and the executive director of The White Bison Association, a non-kill sanctuary for the endangered white buffalo. To learn more visit her website at [VisionQuestastrology.com](http://VisionQuestastrology.com).



[END NOTE]

CHILDLIKE CURIOSITY IS  
SOMETHING I HAD TO FIGHT  
LIKE HELL TO GET BACK...  
IT'S UNTAMEABLE  
IT'S UNFILTERED.  
IT'S PURE  
MAGIC





