

## ENTERTAINMENT

# Sarasota Concert Association marks prominent farewells in 78th season



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Sarasota audiences will have one last chance to watch Riccardo Muti lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra before he steps down as music director and to hear the renowned Emerson String Quartet during the Sarasota Concert Association's 2023 Great Performers Series, before the artists retire after a 47-year run.

They are part of a five-show series, plus two special events put together for the organization's 78th season.

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Executive Director Linda Moxley said SCA had a rough start this past winter after the Detroit Symphony Orchestra canceled its Florida tour because of COVID concerns. But she was able to replace the Russian National Orchestra, which faced some visa issues last fall, with the Warsaw Philharmonic.

"Despite that our subscription sales were up 8 percent over 2020, which was the last regular season we had, and 42 percent of our subscribers were brand new, so it turned out to be a good season," said Moxley, who joined the organization after the start of the pandemic.

The concert association was able to present most of its 2020 series before COVID forced theaters and other arts groups to shut down. The 2021 season was made up of virtual concerts and two outdoor programs, both at Selby Botanical Gardens.

SCA will host two special events before the official start of the Great Performers Series.

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"A Chanticleer Christmas," featuring the Grammy Award-winning male vocal ensemble will be presented Nov. 29 in the Sarasota Opera House. And on Jan. 18, at the Venice Performing Arts Center, it will present the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, led by conductor Theodore Kuchar.

"We got them just as the war was beginning and they've been booked in many places around the country. We're just really hopeful that this war will end," Moxley said.

The 2023 Great Performers Series opens at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 30, with the Emerson String Quartet presenting a program of Beethoven, Haydn and Mendelssohn at the Riverview Performing Arts Center. The ensemble is on its farewell concert as the musicians prepare to split up after nearly five decades of performances.

Pianist Awadagin Pratt returns to Sarasota for a concert that will feature works by Philip Glass, Rachmaninoff and Liszt at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 15 at Riverview.

The 2022-23 season marks the final season of Muti's 13 years as leader of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The program on March 1 at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall will feature Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." Muti led the orchestra in an SCA concert in 2020.

"This is one last time to see him leading the orchestra in Sarasota and hear that special relationship between the conductor and the musicians," Moxley said.

The English Chamber Orchestra will be presented at 7:30 p.m. March 12, with works by Elgar, Mozart and Haydn.

The season concludes March 27 at Van Wezel, with music director JoAnn Falletta leading the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in Dvorak's Symphony No. 7 and Mendelssohn's violin concerto with violinist Sandy Cameron.

## **Great Performers Series**

Season subscriptions are available for \$135-\$430 for the five concerts. A three-concert mini subscription and single tickets will go on sale in the fall. More information: 941-966-6161;