

Salute to the Arts

A Look at the Season Ahead

Here are some highlights, insights and events worth noting...

At Asolo Rep: something very new and something very familiar

A major highlight of Asolo Rep's 52nd season is the pre-Broadway tryout production of *Bonnie & Clyde* opening on November 19.



Bonnie & Clyde premiered in 2009 at La Jolla Playhouse in California, where it garnered national attention. With music by Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*), lyrics by Tony Award-winner Don Black (*Sunset Boulevard*, *Song and Dance*), book by Ivan Menchell (*The Cemetery Club*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*), and direction and musical staging by Tony Award-winning Jeff Calhoun (*Deaf West's Big River* and *Pippin*, *Grease!*), this new musical has a new score that combines rockabilly, blues and gospel music.

The musical examines how a troubled Texas teen and a lovesick waitress became America's most infamous couple. This is a pre-Broadway engagement. The Asolo's production is the final step before *Bonnie & Clyde* goes to New York.

In the Mertz Theatre. Previews November 12 and 13. Performances November 14-18.

Contact the Box Office at 941-351-8000 or toll-free at 800-361-8388, or go to the website at www.asolo.org.

By contrast, a play (or movie) you've probably seen (and seen again) is coming to Asolo Rep. It's the most successful and popular whodunit in history: *Deathtrap* by Ira Levin.

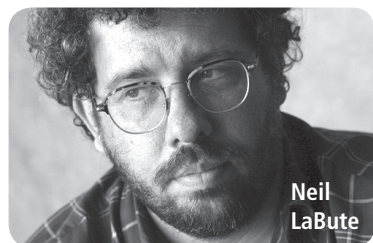


Sidney Bruhl was once a celebrated playwright famous for his intricate thrillers. Now slightly past his prime, he enlists an ambitious younger writer, Clifford, to help him pen his deadliest tale yet. But as Clifford secretly begins writing his own version of Sidney's life story, and the quirky psychic next door begins to have real premonitions of murder, events quickly spiral out of control — who will survive? Even though you probably know the outcome, it's still an enjoyable show. In the Mertz Theatre March 11 – May 14, 2011.

Our fixation on Beauty

The FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training has *Reasons to be Pretty* by Neil LaBute and directed by Barbara Redmond. A passing comment about a female coworker's pretty face threatens to unravel the relationships between four friends. It promises to be a scathing, dark comedy about "our culture's fixation on surface beauty."

It's written by a man who is also the author of *Fat Pig*. *Reasons to be Pretty* played Off-Broadway May 14 to July 5, 2008 in a production by MCC Theater at the Lucille Lortel Theatre and was LaBute's first ever Broadway production.



It began previews at the Lyceum Theatre on March 6, 2009 with an opening on April 2, 2009. The play was nominated for three 2009 Tony Awards—including Best Play, Best Leading Actor in a Play (Thomas Sadoski), and Best Featured Actress in a Play (Marin Ireland)—but did not win in any category. *Reasons* opened to good reviews and continued to pick up fans, but, not enough to sustain its existence on Broadway. The producers ended the run early, with the last performance on June 14, 2009.

LaBute has written for both stage and film. You may know his film work: *In the Company of Men* (1997); *Your Friends & Neighbors* (1998); *Tumble* (Sundance short-narrated by Neil LaBute-2000); *Nurse Betty* (2000); *Bash: Latter-Day Plays* (2001) (TV); *Possession* (2002); *The Shape of Things* (2003); *The Wicker Man* (2006); *Lakeview Terrace* (2008) and *Death at a Funeral* (2010).

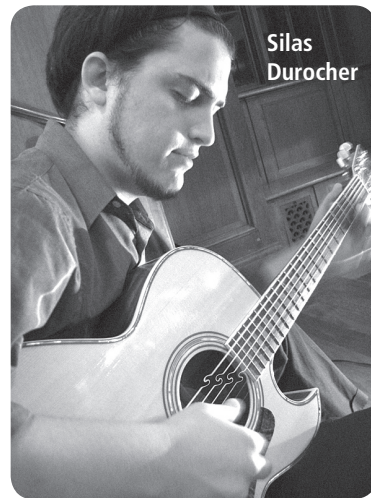
The play runs January 4-23. Contact the Box Office at 351-8000 or go to www.asolo.org.

Happy 50th Birthday, New College!

As part of its New Music New College's season of contemporary music, there will be a February 12 concert of mostly

contemporary music as part of the College's Celebration on the Bay to commemorate its 50th anniversary.

Celebration on the Bay will be an evening of fun and festivities with the Sarasota Orchestra led by Leif Bjaland — it will be the school's "gift to the



community" featuring the premiere of a new composition by New College alum **Silas Durocher**, followed by fireworks over the bay and bands, bands and more bands. Paul Wolfe, conductor laureate of the orchestra and founder of both the New College Summer Music Festival and the New College String Quartet (now the Sarasota Music Festival and the Sarasota String Quartet), will conduct a movement of the Mozart Symphony No. 40—the same piece he conducted at the dedication of the campus in 1962. Best of all—it's all free.

For more information, visit www.newmusicnewcollege.org, or call 941-487-4888.

WBTT Celebrates 10 Years and a New Home

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe (WBTT) marks its 10th Anniversary this year and continues its mission of "diversifying Sarasota's cultural landscape with exciting theatre and musicals that celebrate African American artists giving voice to the African American experience," according to Nate Jacobs, WBTT's hard-working founding Artistic Director.

The Troupe will continue its high-energy shows that celebrate the Black experience through comedy and drama and original works at its own home at 1012 North Orange Avenue, Sarasota (behind the BINZ building at 10th and Orange). The new location gives the Troupe a bigger space to perform in, and will also allow them to expand the season with more scheduled shows. This will be the first time in its 10-year history that WBTT has had a performance space that was solely dedicated to its needs.

The new location includes a fully air-conditioned 6,500 SF space for a black box theater, dressing rooms, rehearsal space, rest rooms and a lobby concession stand. Plans are to create a stage surrounded by stadium chair seating on three sides.

Audiences can expect the same intimate and up close experience enjoyed at previous venues. With WBTT as the sole user of the space, the Troupe will be able to almost double the number of performances from four to seven a week. The new calendar will offer two preview nights before each show's opening night. A regular weekly schedule will include five evening performances Tuesday through Saturday and two weekend matinees.

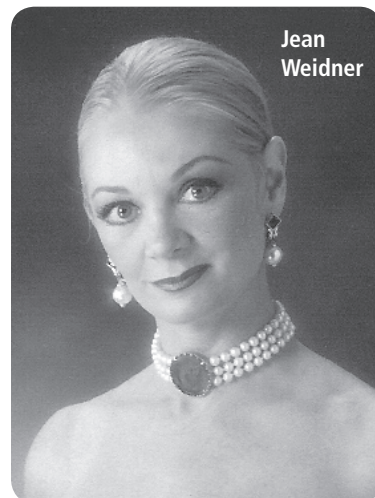
Their next show is *Ain't Misbehavin'*, a rollicking, swinging, finger-snapping revue that is still considered one of Broadway's best. The inimitable Thomas "Fats" Waller rose to international fame during the Golden Age of the Cotton Club, honky tonk dives along Lenox Avenue, rent parties, stride piano players and that jumpin' new beat, Swing. Although not quite a biography, *Ain't Misbehavin'* evokes the delightful humor and infectious energy of this American original as a versatile cast struts, strums and sings the songs he made famous. The show runs December 15 2010 – January 16, 2011.

Tickets: 941-366-1505 or go to www.wbttroupe.org.

A Salute to the Sarasota Ballet's Real Star

The Sarasota Ballet marks a major milestone this year — its 20th anniversary. As part of its celebration it will honor the woman who was instrumental in its creation and who has been its guiding star ever since: **Jean Weidner**.

Jean will receive her well-deserved tribute on March 25 at 8 p.m. at the FSU Center. For tickets, call 359-0099 or visit www.sarasotaballet.org.



Betcha didn't know...

The Players Theatre is Sarasota's first and oldest performing arts organization, second oldest in the State of Florida and it will celebrate 81 years of entertainment this year.

The non-profit organization opened with a season of one-act plays in the midst of the Great Depression with 281 patrons paying only \$2 to be a season subscriber.



THE PLAYERS

Your Community Your Theatre

But did you also know that The Players Studio, established in 1995, offers performing arts classes and serves more than 300 beginner to advanced students annually, from children to adults?

More impressive numbers...in one year of productions, The Players Theatre "employs" as many as 800 volunteers who participate in all aspects of putting a show together.

Box Office: 941-365-2494. Tickets are also available at www.theplayers.org and at the door one hour before show times. The Players Theatre is at 838 N. Tamiami Tr., Sarasota.

Reaching Out at the Asolo

Asolo Repertory Theatre now offers **OUT@AsoloRep** with dates, prices and introduces a subscription package for its new season of events. OUT@AsoloRep is a special event series launched last season that offers people a chance to hang out with friends and meet kindred spirits in a comfortable LGBT friendly environment. Anyone is eligible to attend.

Each event includes a ticket to the selected play performance and a post-show reception. Ticket buyers may select individual tickets or a six-show subscription package for only \$225 that saves them an additional 7%.

Contact the Box Office at 941-351-8000. Mention OUT@AsoloRep to receive the discount and party access.

2010-2011 OUT@ASOLOREP Schedule:

- **Bonnie & Clyde**: The New Musical Thursday, November 18, 2010 at 8 p.m.; \$45
- **La Bête**—Friday, February 11, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.; \$45; includes a pre-show backstage tour
- **Deathtrap**—Thursday, March 31, 2011 at 8 p.m.; \$45
- World premiere of **The Innocents** Friday, April 15, 2011 at 8 p.m.; \$23 includes opening night festivities

And for something really *out* there...

- John Epperson as Lypsinka as Joan Crawford in **The Passion of the Crawford**—Monday, May 9, 2011 at 8 p.m.; \$40
- **Marilyn: Forever Blonde!**—Friday, June 24, 2011 at 8 p.m.; \$45

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Gretchen Porro, Roscoe, and Jake Staley in the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*



Photo by Frank Atura

It's that LOVE thing again...

FSU/Asolo Conservatory has Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* November 2-21. It's a high-voltage romp about love, passion and the fickleness of youth, but not your usual Shakespeare.

In the hands of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory team, it will be, in the words of Greg Leaming, director of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory, and also director of this production, a "wild ride that will be unlike any Shakespeare local audiences have ever experienced."

This is Shakespeare's play about passionate young love. It's about a group of young people falling in love for the first time and suddenly discovering just what a dramatic and crazy experience that can be."

Leaming explains that he changed the setting of the production from Verona and Milan, where older notions of romantic love and passion hold sway, to a contemporary world that "looks more like the TV reality show, *Jersey Shore*, than anything anyone usually associates with Shakespeare. It's about loud, aggressive, over-educated kids who learn what it means to grow up. What better place to set the play than in the contemporary club scene?"

The Conservatory's version is "full of music, dancing and heart-break," according to Leaming. "These are characters who dance too much, drink too much, fall in love too hard, and get caught up in their own drama. And who better to do this kind of

wild rethinking of the play than our second-year students, all of whom are thrilled to get the chance to find themselves in this wild play?"

The production will showcase the talents of two very special canines. After auditioning more than 40 local dogs at an event co-sponsored by Animal Rescue Coalition, they've selected two dogs, Roscoe and Cody, to alternate in the role of Crab the dog.

Two Gentlemen of Verona plays in the Cook Theatre. Tickets: call 941-351-8000 or visit www.asolorep.org.

Happy 200th, Chopin

"The Chopin Project" celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederic Chopin. Guided by Artist Series Artistic Director, Lee Dougherty Ross, Chopin Project events will include piano performances at the



Historic Asolo Theater, lecture/performance and an in-school program for young people. From November 12-16, 2010 they will present a total of seven concerts and events—each unique and presented in a variety of venues.

In May, 2011, special concert performances of the popular operetta, *The Student Prince* will be dedicated to Deanne and Rex Allyn, who were instrumental in bringing opera to Sarasota beginning in the 1970s. BTW, this is the 15th anniversary of the Artist Series of Sarasota. For tickets, call 388-1188 or visit www.artistseries.net.

A Milestone year for Selby Gardens

Selby Gardens will celebrate its **35th anniversary** on **November 13**. Members are invited as the Mansion gates open at 8 a.m. for plant selection, coffee and tea in the Great Room by the Bay. The Annual Meeting starts at 9 a.m. Plant Distribution runs 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. under the Banyans.

Members may choose from a dozen specially cultivated plants as a benefit for membership. Doors open to the public at 1 p.m.



Most of the plants for sale are propagations of Selby Gardens' extensive living plant collection. This year the horticulture staff has worked hard to rejuvenate their extensive bromeliad collection, and they will have an abundance of unusual bromeliad species for sale, most suitable for landscape use.

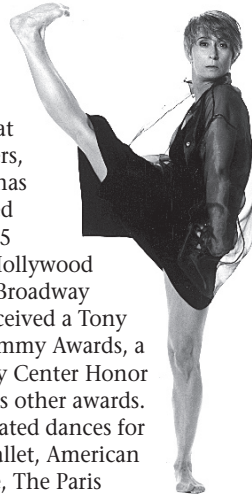
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota. Info: www.selby.org.

Sarasota Ballet Takes on Twyla

The Ballet has added no less than 10 new ballets each season. Artistic Director Iain Webb has them dancing three significant new ballets by three contemporary choreographers at their Modern Greats program in early December. This will be the first time the company has ever danced the choreography of **Twyla Tharp** when they perform *In the Upper Room* to the music of Phillip Glass, a new

experience for audience and dancers alike.

One of America's great choreographers, Twyla Tharp has choreographed more than 135 dances, five Hollywood movies, four Broadway shows and received a Tony Award, two Emmy Awards, a 2008 Kennedy Center Honor and numerous other awards. Tharp has created dances for The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, The Paris Opera Ballet, The Royal Ballet,



New York City Ballet and others.

In the Upper Room will be performed at the Sarasota Opera House December 3 at 8 p.m. and December 4 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets: go to www.sarasotaballet.org.

Sarasota Orchestra

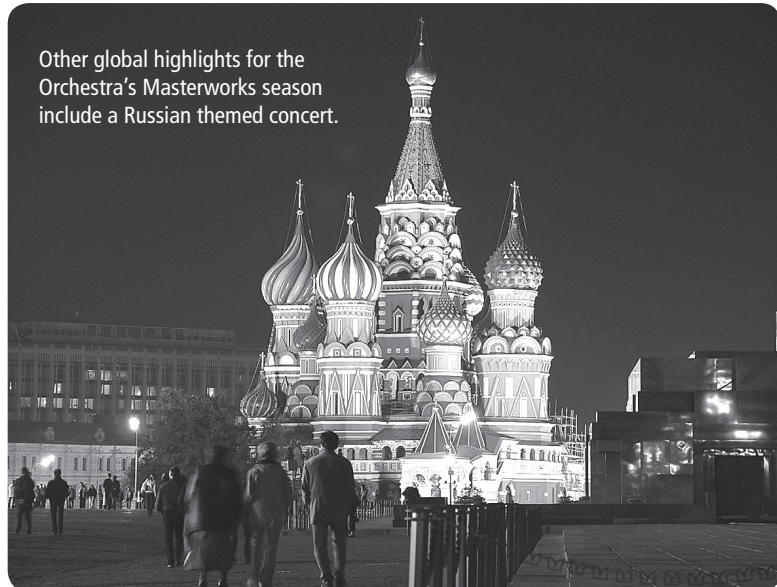
The Sarasota Orchestra's popular **Masterworks series** of seven concerts will explore classical music from around the world with concert themes such as **Finlandia, Russia, Rome and España**.

España is a concert that will feature 10 works, performed in a collage format, without pause between each



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Other global highlights for the Orchestra's Masterworks season include a Russian themed concert.



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piece. The program will feature a Spanish accent and highlights three guest artists: Caroline Goulding, violin; Jeanine De Bique, vocalist; and Robert Belinic, guitar.

Other global highlights for the Masterworks season include Russian and Italian themed concerts. Guest conductor **Anu Tali** will make her Florida debut and lead the Sarasota Orchestra in a concert entitled *Finlandia*.🎻