

# FLORIDA GRAND Opera

## History

**Florida Grand Opera**, celebrating its 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of continuous performances, stands as one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Florida. Florida Grand Opera is one of the four resident companies of Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, making its home at the *Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House*. Florida Grand Opera was formed in June 1994 by the merger of Greater Miami Opera, founded in 1941, and The Opera Guild Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, founded in 1945. The Greater Miami Opera began as a dream of its founder, Dr. Arturo di Filippi, a voice teacher at the University of Miami. The first production, held at Miami Senior High School, was a single performance of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, performed in English, with Dr. di Filippi in the lead. In 1945, Dr. di Filippi appeared in a production of *Il trovatore*, at Ft. Lauderdale Central High School, representing the first production of the The Opera Guild, Inc. Florida Grand Opera has a rich history of presenting internationally-acclaimed artists such as Robert Merrill, Dorothy Kirsten, Richard Tucker, Renata Tebaldi, Roberta Peters, Franco Corelli, Renata Scotto, Montserrat Caballe, Jon Vickers, Sherrill Milnes, Nicolai Gedda, Birgit Nilsson, Anna Moffo, Plácido Domingo, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland, Evelyn Lear, James Morris, Diana Soviero, Justino Diaz, Simon Estes, Elizabeth Futral, Helen Donath, Deborah Voigt, Fernando de la Mora, and Mary Mills. Luciano Pavarotti made his American debut in 1965 with the company's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

In addition to producing standard repertoire, Florida Grand Opera also presents lesser known operas by great composers, as well as commissions of works of living composers. In April 2007, Florida Grand Opera presented the critically acclaimed world premiere of David Carlson's *Anna Karenina* with libretto by Colin Graham. *Anna Karenina* was commissioned as a co-production by Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In May 1997, the Company presented the world premiere of *Balseros*, an opera by Robert Ashley with libretto by world renowned Cuban writer, Maria Irene Fornes. *Balseros* was commissioned as a co-production by Florida Grand Opera, Miami-Dade Community College and the South Florida Composers Alliance. Another world premiere was Robert Ward's *Minutes Till Midnight*. American premieres include Gioachino Rossini's *Bianca e Falliero* and the final revised version of Alberto Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*.

Florida Grand Opera offers several highly successful outreach and educational programs including its internationally-recognized Young Artist Studio Program. The program attracts young singers who train and enhance their professional skills during a 35-week residency. Each year, the young artists tour the Miami-Dade and Broward County Public Schools in a fully-staged opera production, reaching 50,000 students of diverse backgrounds. In addition, the young artists perform and cover lead roles in the main-stage productions.

Florida Grand Opera presents five main-stage productions annually in the Ziff Ballet Opera House at Carnival Center for the Performing Arts in Miami, and at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale.

67<sup>th</sup> Season 2007/08

Doral Center

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