

St. Petersburg
OPERA COMPANY



Mark Sforzini, Artistic Director



(Maestro Sforzini behind the set conducting The Magic Flute in 2018) Photo: Jim Swallow

July 2020

Dear SPO Family and Friends,

Over 15 years ago, I conducted my first opera in St. Petersburg, Florida. Little did I know that this was the beginning of what would grow into the vibrant, prolific, sensational St. Petersburg Opera Company. We thrived from the beginning despite the economic crisis of 2008; we expanded offerings and outreach year after year and purchased, renovated, and paid off our building (Opera Central). At times we have been likened to 'the little engine that could'. And, we did! We now find ourselves amid a pandemic and facing challenges that seem daunting, to say the least.

I am writing today to give you **my commitment** to see SPO through this current crisis. When we emerge, and **we will emerge**, there will certainly be changes, but our goal stays the same: to enrich lives through great opera performances, collaboration, education, and outreach. We are getting even more creative to bring performances to you in ways that address all our concerns for health and safety.

We officially begin our 15th Anniversary Season on August 1.

Season Fifteen will kick off Sunday, August 9 with [POPera – a popup outdoor opera float](#) that will stop at 4 locations in St. Petersburg. Exciting plans coming up include:

- Monthly **POP**era shows at locations around the area
- A New Artist Recital Series

- New virtual programs modeled after the Mornings with the Maestro Series
- Pinocchio in the Park
- More productions available on YouTube
- Expanded Facebook Live shows to include interviews with singers, directors, designers, choreographers, and industry professionals.

The bottom line is we are here for the long haul! We are learning the skills we have to learn and overcoming the challenges that face us. Maybe I'm biased, but I think of SPO as a winning enterprise, and we have a lot going for us right now:

- A 14-year history of outstanding financial management
- Temporary financial help to cover payrolls from the federal PPP program
- Ongoing financial support from recurring city and state grants
- Our building (affectionately dubbed "Opera Central") is owned free of any mortgage payments
- A great staff and board that are committed to not just our survival, but our success
- Thousands of loyal donors who are committed to our mission

I'm not the only one who thinks St Petersburg Opera is worth supporting:
1301 Season 14 Donors --- **100%** of Board Members Contribute --- **675** donations since March 13, 2020
 \$48,787 in unused tickets converted to donations since March 13

It warms my heart to count so many wonderful people among our friends and supporters, and I am deeply moved by the very high percentage of ticket holders that have opted to convert unused tickets to donations. I write today to **thank you** for all you have already done and to encourage you [to give](#) what you can at this crucial time. We have trimmed our expenses to ensure our ability to create interesting operatic offerings in the short term as well as resume full operations in the longer term. Our core staff remain committed to reaching new heights of ingenuity and mission fulfillment, but our staff need to be paid. We also have essential business and building expenses, as well as artistic expenses associated with upcoming virtual and outdoor performances.

Let's make 2020 special in a positive way. A gift of any size is appreciated: \$20, \$202, \$2020? Will you consider a [recurring monthly gift](#) of \$15 a month in honor of 15 years? Or your own special figure that has significance to you? Have some fun with it and help us at the same time.

We have exciting plans for this season and the seasons to come. We welcome your support at any level.

Musically Yours,

Mark Sforzini
 Executive & Artistic Director

[DONATE NOW](#)

Questions? Please contact Mark Sforzini at sforzini@stpeteopera.org or 727-823-2040

Checks payable to St. Petersburg Opera Company can be mailed to

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We sincerely apologize if your SPO gift and this email crossed paths.
Thank you for your contribution!

