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Sarasota Orchestra
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SARASOTA ORCHESTRA ROUSES INTEREST WITH OUTREACH PROGRAM

A concert, Mentors of Music, will culminate a month's worth of school performances.

**Mentors of Music
Saturday, October 4, 8 p.m.
Sarasota Opera House**

Sarasota, Fla. – October 2, 2008 – Oboist Karen Birch Blundell's cheeks puffed up much like those of a chipmunk when its mouth becomes stuffed with too much food. Proudly showing her shiny oboe to the energetic St. Stephen's Episcopal students sitting in the school's chapel, Blundell puffed again, creating a clear, penetrating sound.

"My instrument is the hardest to play," said Blundell, Sarasota Wind Quintet. "I also have to scrape my own reeds, which takes me roughly four hours."

And with that, Blundell produced a freshly plucked blade of grass and blew hard and loud enough to draw wide-eyed looks – and the undivided attention – from the majority of students.

The Sarasota Wind Quintet players sat in a circle before the students, each standing up briefly between pieces to announce a few fun facts about their instruments: the flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn. Had there been more time at the end of the performance to question Sarasota Wind Quintet's Joe Assi about the Star Wars theme song he played on the French horn, the students might have stayed in the chapel until dinner time.

It is with these visits to Sarasota and Manatee County middle and high schools that the Sarasota Orchestra's resident ensembles strive to help young people develop an appreciation for the arts. The Sarasota Wind Quintet, Brass Quintet and String Quintet gave 18 school performances during the month of September; the finale of which will be Mentors of Music, to be held Saturday, October 4 at the Sarasota Opera House.

"This is a culmination and celebration of music education," said RoseAnne McCabe, education director, Sarasota Orchestra.

The evening will celebrate local musical mentors with four stunning solo performances by Sarasota Orchestra principal musicians in honor of the music educators in our community. Each solo will open with a short video highlighting the mentor who most influenced and guided the professional musician's career.

The true stars of the evening will be our local music teachers and especially the winning "Music Educators of the Year" – Kathy Cook from Braden River High School and Owen Bradley from North Port High School. Videos will offer us a glimpse into their classrooms and their innovative and passionate teaching methods. The evening will close with Rimsky-Korsakov's rousing *Capriccio Espagnol*.

Additionally, the Sarasota Orchestra devotes its time and resources to other outreach programs throughout the year, such as Children's Concerts. Ongoing since 1953, nearly 10,000 Manatee and Sarasota County fourth- and fifth-grade students go to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall each year to hear live orchestral music in Children's Concerts produced and presented by the Sarasota Orchestra. The Orchestra's education staff works with music teachers on the concert's program and class preparation activities for many months prior to the concerts, which are designed to foster music appreciation and build students' general reasoning, comprehension and reading skills.

Tickets for *Mentors of Music* range in price from \$25 to \$50, with student tickets for \$10, and may be purchased online at www.SarasotaOrchestra.org, or at the Sarasota Orchestra Box Office by calling (941) 953-3434.

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