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Michael McClelland, Sarasota Orchestra Violist and Orchestra Committee Member, Dies at 62

SARASOTA, FL – July 23, 2021 – Sarasota Orchestra violist Michael McClelland passed unexpectedly at his home on Saturday, July 17, at the age of 62.

McClelland was an accomplished musician who was an integral member of the Sarasota Orchestra. He was known for his wit, compassion, intelligence and impact on the classical music community locally, nationally and internationally.

McClelland joined Sarasota Orchestra's viola section in 2004 and recently served as Orchestra Committee Chair. His music career spanned more than 40 years. He was regarded as one of the leading viola teachers and performers in the U.S.

Joseph McKenna, President & CEO of Sarasota Orchestra said, "The unexpected passing of Michael McClelland has been a shock to the whole Orchestra family of musicians, staff, board, education faculty and patrons. Michael was a superb musician, a great leader and a first-rate friend and colleague to all of us. We are profoundly saddened by his loss."

Prior to joining Sarasota Orchestra, McClelland held appointments as an assistant professor of music at the University of Illinois and as a faculty artist of the Harid Conservatory. Other career highlights include engagements with the York Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Opera, Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, Champaign-Urbana Symphony, Sinfonia da Camera, and the Florida Philharmonic.

He was a founding member of the Baltimore String Quartet from 1984-1988 and performed three tours of Europe with the ensemble. He also founded the Chroma Quartet with three Sarasota Orchestra colleagues, which performed from 2006-2014. His solo recitals and chamber music performances took him to concert halls throughout the United States, Canada, Scandinavia, and the former Soviet Union, and he performed at Carnegie Hall. McClelland also performed with the Theater Chamber Players of the John F. Kennedy Center and the Jefferson String Quartet and was a member of the Chamber Artists of Washington.

“Michael blessed us with his many gifts,” said McKenna. “His contributions to Sarasota Orchestra over the last 17 years are immeasurable, and he will be deeply missed.”

About Sarasota Orchestra:

For 71 years, Sarasota Orchestra has been engaging music lovers from around the region and visitors from around the world. The Orchestra performs more than 125 classical, Pops, education and community engagement concerts each year and is recognized as the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida. Youth programs provide concert experiences for about 10,000 students per year and include an extensive youth orchestra program of eight ensembles with 325 students. The Sarasota Music Festival is a world-renowned performance and teaching festival that attracts young musicians and faculty from across the globe each June. For further information, please visit www.sarasotaorchestra.org.

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