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## **Sarasota Orchestra Identifies Location for New Home**

*Florida's Longest-Standing Orchestra Will Bring the Region its First State-of-the-Art Concert Hall  
Designed Specifically for Acoustic Music*

**SARASOTA, FL – March 24, 2022** – Sarasota Orchestra has entered into a purchase agreement for the land where it plans to build its new home, reaching a milestone in an eight-year process to meet a significant need for expansion.

Located at 5701 Fruitville Road, between Honore Avenue and Cattlemen Road, the 32-acre site will be anchored by an artistic asset currently not available from Tampa to Naples: a state-of-the-art acoustical concert hall. The site will also house new and increased performance, education, event, and outdoor space for the community.

Citing the region's growth, its evolving arts and cultural base, and the need for increased capacity, Orchestra leaders shared their vision at its annual public information meeting for patrons, community members, musicians, and staff. The announcement marks a critical juncture in the Orchestra's 73-year history and fulfills a longtime need for the organization's continued artistic growth and service to the community.

Orchestra leaders are committed to engaging in listening sessions with nearby neighborhoods, diverse communities, civic leaders, and local arts organizations seeking input to develop a masterplan for the full 32-acre site. The land, which is currently undeveloped, will be purchased through private philanthropy that has already been fully raised by Sarasota Orchestra.

"We're honored to be part of the growing momentum to elevate the area's artistic and musical experiences, and to play an even greater role in contributing to the cultural, economic, educational

and quality of life conditions of the greater Sarasota-Manatee area,” said Sarasota Orchestra President and CEO Joseph McKenna. “Our plans for this dynamic musical destination will bring to the community something it’s never had – a concert hall with outstanding acoustics that will transform the experience for patrons of our orchestra and the many local performing arts groups that will share our stage. This treasured asset will expand our region’s cultural capacity for the next century.”

Additional performance, rehearsal, practice, and music education space is acutely needed to serve local organizations, the region’s larger population and offer an array of experiences. With a state-of-the-art, acoustically engineered concert hall as its focal point, the new location creates a tremendous opportunity for Sarasota Orchestra, and other music and cultural organizations, to inspire new levels of innovation, collaboration, and discovery through diverse activities in a natural setting.

In addition, the site’s proximity to Interstate 75 increases accessibility to arts and cultural experiences for residents across the region and visitors from around the world. The location will serve as a gateway to the nearby, vibrant downtown Sarasota area.

“This is a pivotal moment in the Orchestra’s 73-year history, representing a bold, civic-minded vision about our future and our potential to enrich lives throughout the greater Sarasota area and beyond,” said Tom Ryan, chair of the Sarasota Orchestra’s board of directors. “Schedule limitations at existing venues place extraordinary burdens on cultural organizations both now and into the future. The opportunity to ease this pressure with well-designed acoustic space for music organizations will enhance and improve our region’s reputation as a premier destination for arts and culture in Florida.”

### ***State-of-the-Art Space to Meet Evolving Community Needs***

The plan for a new home builds on Sarasota Orchestra’s immediate and enduring commitment to bringing to the community a performance space designed and built to meet the unique needs of acoustic music. An estimated seven acres of the 32-acre site will be dedicated to a permanent home for the Sarasota Orchestra’s professional orchestra, extensive educational programs, and the internationally renowned Sarasota Music Festival.

Along with an 1,800-seat concert hall, the facility will include a 700-seat recital hall for chamber music and other flexible uses. Increased space will also support the Orchestra’s diverse education programs, expanding opportunities to partner more extensively with area schools and in reaching young people who are interested in exploring music and gaining skills of creativity, collaboration, and communication.

All performance and rehearsal spaces will incorporate noise and vibration control and isolation. Performance halls will also include contemporary technologies, patron conveniences and staging features to support creative and performing artists of the highest caliber. Informed by the COVID-19 pandemic, design considerations will also include flexible seating, air handling and related technology for audience safety.

The location provides ample space to serve more than just Sarasota Orchestra's needs for a permanent home and primary performance space. Other community music and cultural organizations will be engaged to assess their needs to support a wide range of musical genres and cultural activities.

"We want to ensure that everyone in the community has access to the benefits of cultural expression," said Bramwell Tovey, Sarasota Orchestra's music director. "Music is not only a source of inspiration and beauty, but also fundamental to health, wellbeing and to enriching quality of life. This music hub will offer an ideal combination of both natural and artistic beauty."

### ***Bringing the Vision to Life***

The vision for the full 32-acre site is still being formulated based on extensive community input over the coming months. Sarasota Orchestra anticipates the site may include walking trails, playgrounds, and water features. The upcoming insight gathering process will be the basis upon which the masterplan for the site will be developed.

### **About Sarasota Orchestra:**

Since 1949, Sarasota Orchestra has inspired and entertained music-lovers across the region and visitors from around the world. As the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida, each year the 76-member Orchestra performs more than 100 classical, pops, chamber music, and community outreach concerts. Sarasota Orchestra's acclaimed music education program includes the Sarasota Youth Orchestras, established in 1959. Sarasota Orchestra is also the parent program of the world-renowned Sarasota Music Festival, founded in 1965. For further information, please visit [www.SarasotaOrchestra.org](http://www.SarasotaOrchestra.org).

### **Images Available:**

- A high-resolution site map is available at:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1u5rj8ggrubn4ef/Site%20Map.png?dl=0>
- Additional Sarasota Orchestra photography is available at:  
<https://sarasotaorchestra.org/download>

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