

# VPO Welcomes Guest Performers For Upcoming Show

Its first classical concert of 2025 is at 7 p.m. Sunday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND  
Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra’s first classical concert of the year will feature two guest artists.

Italian conductor and guest pianist Renato Balsadonna and violinist Laura Hamilton will join the orchestra to perform a program of timeless masterpieces by composers Benjamin Britten, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. The concert also marks Balsadonna’s first performance in The Villages.

“We are honored to welcome the esteemed maestro Renato Balsadonna — conductor and concert pianist — to The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center,” said maestro Pasquale Valerio, co-founder and music director of The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra. “It is with great anticipation that we look forward to his performance of Mozart’s ‘Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466.’”

Originally from Venice, Balsadonna is a symphonic and opera conductor with numerous accolades in his

“I really look forward to coming to Florida. It will be my first time doing a concert there and my first time in the south of the country. I know that the audience is very welcoming and very warm.”

**RENATO BALSADONNA**  
Italian conductor and guest pianist

home country and abroad. He is the former chorus master with the Theater Basel in Switzerland, the Royal Theatre of La Monnaie in Brussels and the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in London. As a conductor, he led prestigious orchestras in renowned opera



The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra performs during the Opera Gala: Magical Moments of Opera Scenes on May 6 at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. The orchestra will be back Sunday for its first classical concert of 2025.

houses like the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the Teatro Regio in Turin, the Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and more.

“I really look forward to coming to Florida,” Balsadonna said. “It will be my first time doing a concert there and my first time in the south of the country. I know that the audience is very welcoming and very warm.”

Despite his success as both a resident and freelance conductor, Balsadonna maintains a strong connection with

his first instrument, the piano. He is happy for the opportunity to continue exploring the piano repertoire through his performance of Mozart’s “Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466” in The Villages.

Mozart composed 27 piano concertos, and only two among them are in minor key. The “Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466” is one of those two.

For an audience not knowledgeable on music theory, Balsadonna said major key is best described as joyful, and minor key is best described as sad. He compares the concerto to Mozart’s “Don Giovanni”

as well as “The Magic Flute.”

“This piano concert leans more toward dramatism, with very strong contrasts,” Balsadonna said. “This piano concerto is so profound, so deep that no matter how many times you play it, you always find something more, something you can do better.”

In addition to “Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466,” the VPO and Hamilton also will perform Britten’s “Simple Symphony, Op. 4” and Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 4 in B-flat, Op. 60.”

Patrons are invited to join the resident orchestra

and its esteemed guests at 7 p.m. Sunday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Tickets for the concert are \$40 and up. Patrons can also sign up for the VPO subscription package, which includes at least four performances of their choice, and receive 10% off.

For both single tickets and the subscription package, go to thevillagesentertainment.com or visit the VPO site at thevillagesphilharmonic.org.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com.

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