

VENICE INSTITUTE *for* PERFORMING ARTS

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VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE

The Venice Institute for Performing Arts (VIPA) is proud to present The Sarasota Cuban Ballet School's *The Nutcracker*, featuring The Venice Symphony, on December 14 and 15. Returning to the Venice Performing Arts Center (VPAC) for the third year, The Sarasota Cuban Ballet school is sure to thrill patrons of all ages. A pre-professional program, Sarasota Cuban Ballet School graduates have gone on to perform with such companies as The San Francisco Ballet, The Royal Ballet, and more. With the addition of 26 musicians from The Venice Symphony and guest conductor Joseph Caulkins, Venice will have the only Nutcracker performance on the Gulf coast that includes live musicians.

Bringing an All-New Nutcracker to Venice

"We are incredibly fortunate to have live music this year," says Ariel Serrano, Artistic Director of The Sarasota Cuban Ballet School. "There is nothing like live music to make you feel the Christmas spirit." This collaboration will also give the audience the chance to enjoy a rare glimpse of the orchestra pit—one of the state-of-the-art features installed in the VPAC when it opened five years ago.



"I am overjoyed that we are able to use this fabulous asset," says VIPA's Managing Director, Becca Eldredge. "The orchestra pit is a gift to the space, and I can't wait to see the faces of the youngest audience members as they realize there are people playing instruments below the stage."

In addition to the inclusion of The Venice Symphony in this year's Nutcracker performance, VIPA and The Sarasota Cuban Ballet are enhancing the production elements. "The audience will be treated to brand new professional quality sets and costumes," says Ariel. The \$70,000 set is being designed by Steve Rubin. "He is truly a legend in the industry and we count ourselves lucky to have him as a friend and colleague." The scenery will feature stunning imagery that transports the audience into Clara's dream world.

VIPA's apprentices, 18 Venice High School students, will have a master class with Mr. Rubin who will walk them through his design process from initial conversations to final designs. Then, the students will work with a professional crew to install the set in the VPAC, getting a firsthand experience in the design process from concept to creation.

"This is one of my favorite activities our team has put together for the Apprenticeship program," Becca says. "Learning how to work collaboratively, and how to solve problems creatively,

is such an important skill and I'm thrilled our students have the opportunity to learn these skills from industry professionals."

All of these elements come together to bring audiences an exciting holiday classic that is sure to become a family tradition. When asked what he was most excited about for this year's Nutcracker, Ariel said "The same thing I'm excited about every single year, watching the faces of the audience when the lights go down and the music starts. Everyone, young and old, is transported to a happy place and you can literally see it."

For more information about this advertorial or to purchase tickets, call the VPAC box office at 941.218.3779 or log on to MyVIPA.org.

