**NEWS RELEASE**  
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall  
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**VAN WEZEL PERFORMING ARTS HALL ANNOUNCES STAR-STUDDED 2015-2016 SEASON**

**Sarasota, FL** – **Single tickets go ON SALE Saturday, September 12, at 10 AM at the Box Office, online, and by phone! Appointments are available for ticket buyers by calling the Box Office at 941-953-3368.**

Once again crowned as the #1 Performing Arts Hall of its size in North America (*Venues Today*, 2000 seat number category), and for the first time the #1 Tourist Destination in Sarasota County (*Visit* Sarasota *County*), the **Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall** is proud to announce its 2015-2016 season full of fresh talent, and sensational stars and returning favorites bound to inspire Sarasota with song, dance, and nonstop laughter! Executive Director, Mary Bensel, on the diversity of the upcoming season; “We are absolutely thrilled to bring yet another season full of the best shows on the road today. The hottest shows on Broadway, playing back to back with the biggest recording artists in history, the funniest comedians, internationally acclaimed classical and dance shows have primed us to have another excellent season. We also look forward to announcing the star of the Van Wezel Foundation Gala, very soon!”

The stunning 2015-2016 lineup includes music sensations new to the hall: **Emmy® and Tony® Award-winner Kristin Chenoweth, Black Violin, Grammy® Award-winner Renée Fleming with the Sarasota Orchestra, Straight No Chaser.** Returning favorites **Rick Springfield, Kenny G, Air Supply, Patti LaBelle, Linda Eder, Vince Gill & Lyle Lovett, and Daryl Hall & John Oates, and The Ten Tenors** promise to bring top-notch performances for fans of all genres. In a very special treat, spend **An Evening with the exquisite Academy® Award-winning actress Sophia Loren!** Luminaries of the comedy world who are performing at the Van Wezel for the first time include the lovably-dubbed “Queen of Mean,” **Lisa Lampanelli, DL Hughley, Brian Regan, Craig Ferguson, and Billy Gardell.** The boisterous **Lewis Black** returns with his encore tour, **The Rant is Due: Part Deux.** Other returning comedians include **Carrot Top, Catskills on Broadway, and Paula Poundstone**.

The Broadway Season brings blockbuster shows of its own! From the creators of “South Park” and winner of nine Tony Awards, **The Book of Mormon** will play a limited one-week engagement Feb. 9 thru Feb. 14. *The New York Times* calls it "the best musical of this century" and *Entertainment Weekly* says it's "the funniest musical of all time." Other Broadway hits include **The Producers**, **Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, and 42nd Street.** Returning tours include fond classics and new hits such as **Bullets Over Broadway,** **Disney’s** **Beauty and the Beast, Million Dollar Quartet, and Mamma Mia!** The Classical Series features phenomenal talent from **Joshua Bell, The Czech National Symphony Orchestra, The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, and Salute to Vienna.**

Wrapping up the Van Wezel’s collection of performances, we have a selection of dance shows designed to entertain dance pros and novice fans alike. **Moscow Festival Ballet** returns with its full-length production of **Cinderella**, followed by **Joffrey Ballet**’s performance of classical beauty and fresh twists. Fan favorite **So You Think You Can Dance** returns, while **Dancing With The Stars Live!** and **America’s Got Talent Live!** make their tour premieres in Sarasota.

## 2015-2016 Complete Season Lineup

The 2015-2016 season will be starting off with a beloved smash-hit Broadway musical, **Disney’s Beauty and the Beast (Oct 14)**! Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature film, this eye-popping spectacle has won the hearts of over 35 million people worldwide. This classic musical love story is filled with unforgettable characters, lavish sets and costumes, and dazzling production numbers including “Be Our Guest” and the beloved title song. Following right on its heels will be singer-songwriter **Rick Springfield** and his rocking **Full Electric Band (Oct 15).** For all of his accomplishments as an actor, best-selling author, and documentary subject, **Rick Springfield’s** first love is musicCurrently co-starring opposite Meryl Streep on the big screne in *Ricki and the Flash* and on TV in *True Detective*. Selling 25 million records and with 17 top-40 hits, including “*Don’t Talk to Strangers,” “An Affair of the Heart,” “I’ve Done Everything for You,” “Love Somebody”* andthe mega hit, *“Jessie’s Girl*.”The twelfth-season Top 10 finalists of America’s favorite competitive dance television series, **So You Think You Can Dance (Oct 29)** will perform the season’s most popular routines as well as original pieces created specifically for the nationwide tour. Just announced, the Season 12 tour lineup includes the following Top 10 finalists: Team Stage’s Gaby Diaz, Edson Juarez, Jim Nowakowski, Hailee Payne and Derek Piquette; and Team Street’s Megan “Megz” Alfonso, Eddie “Neptune” Eskridge, Virgil Gadson, Jessica “JJ” Rabone and Jana “Jaja” Vankova.

November kicks off with another classic, the premiere of **All Hands on Deck! (Nov 4)**, featuring four sparkling Hollywood stars, accompanied by the Hollywood Victory Caravan Orchestra. Based on Bob Hope’s 1942 USO tour to the troops, **All Hands on Deck!** is a full-circle, patriotic salute to active duty and veteran members of the Armed Services! The talent doesn’t end with Broadway tours. In fact, performers from across the country get the chance to show their unique gifts when they appear on **America’s Got Talent Live: The All-Stars Tour! (Nov 5)**. The tour brings together some of the top performers from the hit TV show and serves up the home-grown talent America has to offer! Up next is the side-splitting comedy tour, **Lewis Black ~ The Rant is Due: Part Duex (Nov 13)**.A passionate performer who is more pissed-off optimist than mean-spirited curmudgeon, **Lewis Black** is the rare comic who can cause people to laugh themselves into incontinence while making compelling points about the absurdity of our world. **Cirque Dreams ~ Holidaze (Nov 14)** lights up the holidays with its all-in-one critically-acclaimed new stage extravaganza, Broadway musical, and family Christmas spectacular! Hailed by *The New York Daily News* as a “delicious confection of charm, sparkle and talent by the sleighload,” you will be able to witness snowmen, penguins, angels, reindeer, toy soldiers, gingerbread men, ornaments and, of course, Santa! Sarasota will be welcoming back **Straight No Chaser (Nov 19)**, an *a cappella* phenomenon with a massive fanbase, numerous TV appearances, and CD releases. **Straight No Chaser** comes to town on the heels of the release of their new album “The New Old Fashioned” (available Oct 2015). **Creedence Clearwater Revisited (Nov 21)** brings a blast of classic southern rock to the Van Wezel, featuring Stu Cook and Doug “Cosmo” Clifford, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame rhythm section (bass and drums respectively) from the legendary group Creedence Clearwater Revival. Launched in 1995 to once again perform live Creedence Clearwater Revival music, this band performs up to 100 shows a year and released the Platinum album *Recollection*. Come and hear the hits that were touchstones of a generation, including “Bad Moon Rising,” “Fortunate Son,” “Down on the Corner,” and “Who’ll Stop the Rain?” A cherished Sarasota holiday tradition, the **Dave Koz Christmas Tour 2015 (Nov 27)** returns with three friends: the irrepressible **Jonathan Butler**, who has earned accolades in the R&B, contemporary jazz and gospel fields; Dutch saxophone star **Candy Dulfer**, who performed the smash pop single “Lily Was Here”; and new to the tour the legendary **Bill Medley**, who co-founded The Righteous Brothers with Bobby Hatfield.

Scottish-born **Craig Ferguson (Dec. 1)** has become a huge success on the North American comedy circuit, having performed to sold-out theaters all over the country. He recently concluded his nine-year run as the host of CBS’s *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*, which set all-time viewer records and earned him a Primetime Emmy nomination. Welcome back the Number-One-Selling Duo in music history! **Daryl Hall & John Oates** **(Dec 2)** were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014.Their impact can be heard everywhere from boy-band harmonies, to neo-soul to rap-rock fusion. Well-known hits include “She’s Gone,” “Rich Girl,” “Kiss on My List,” “Private Eyes,” “You Make My Dreams” and “Say It Isn’t So.”Grammy Award-winning saxophonist **Kenny G (Dec 3)** has grafted elements of R&B, pop and Latin to a jazz foundation solidifying his reputation as the premiere artist in contemporary jazz. His most recent album, *Brazilian* *Nights*, is a salute to bossa nova, featuring Kenny’s performances of bossa nova classics as well as all newly-written originals. His return to the Van Wezel will include well-loved standards, highlighted by moving and spirited holiday tunes. Experience an Irish Christmas with **Women of Ireland ~ Celtic Angels’ Christmas (Dec 10).** This family show is a holiday celebration of Christmas in Ireland presented in an inimitable fashion by some of Ireland’s finest female performers. Celebrate the many moods of Christmas inspired by the beauty, power, and passion of the **Women of Ireland.** Becoming a pop culture icon is a difficult thing to achieve, but Scott“**Carrot Top**”Thompson **(Dec 12)** has done just that. The trademark red locks and the undeniably inventive use of props have vaulted him to the level that most comedians can only hope to reach. He is now a Las Vegas icon as well, celebrating his tenth anniversary with the Luxor Resort and Casino. No one is safe from the “King of Props” with his witty and infectious humor. **Bowzer’s Rock ‘n’ Roll Holiday Party (Dec 13)** returns to the Van Wezel with the sounds of the season! Hosted by **Bowzer**, star of TV’s *Sha Na Na* for 14 years, the show features **Herman’s Hermits** starring **Peter Noone** (“I’m Into Something Good” “Mrs. Brown, You’ve Got A Lovely Daughter,” “I’m Henry VIII, I Am,” “Silhouettes,” “Just A Little Bit Better,” “Wonderful World,” “There’s A Kind of Hush”), and new this year **Gary “U.S.” Bonds** (“This Little Girl Is Mine,” “Out of Work,” “Jole Blon,” “Daddy’s Come Home”.) Also on the bill are **Rocky & the Rollers** as well as **Bowzer & The Stingrays**. Delighting audiences nationwide, **A Christmas Carol (Dec 23)** offers a unique version of Charles Dickens’ holiday novel. This Victorian version of Christmas magic is presented with a full array of traditional Christmas carols interwoven with the well-known story. Performed by a cast of 23 performers from the Nebraska Theatre Caravan on a set evoking Currier and Ives prints and featuring special effects such as a spinning bed, this is a glorious holiday evening the whole family can enjoy! Broadway hits the Van Wezel stage once more with the “boffo” hit, **The Producers (Dec 30).** This winner of a record twelve Tony Awards sets the standard for modern, outrageous, in-your-face humor! A scheming producer and his mousy accountant aim to produce the biggest flop on Broadway in Mel Brooks’ classic cult comedy. Polishing off 2015 is undoubtedly one of Australia’s most successful touring entertainment groups of all time, **The Ten Tenors (Dec 31)**. Join Australia’s rockstars with a special New Year’s Eve show as they amaze and enthrall with traditional and contemporary seasonal favorites in Home for the Holidays: “Joy to the World,” “Sleigh Ride,” “White Christmas,” “Amazing Grace” and many more!

Sarasota’s 20th annual **Salute to Vienna (Jan 3)** New Year’s Concert of uplifting Viennese music captures a moment of ageless beauty. Sweeping melodies from operettas and Strauss waltzes will be performed by European singers, costumed dancers and full orchestra. At the threshold of 2016, let soaring arias from Die *Fledermaus* and *Merry Widow* along with the familiar strains of the Blue Danube whisk you off to a place of nostalgia and pleasure. **Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story (Jan 5 & 6)** ... Now in its 25th amazing year, the “World’s Most Successful Rock ‘n Roll Musical” continues to thrill audiences around the world. **Buddy** tells the story of Buddy Holly through his short yet spectacular career and features the classic songs “Peggy Sue,” “That’ll Be The Day,” “Not Fade Away,” “Oh Boy,” Ritchie Valens’ “La Bamba,” The Big Bopper’s “Chantilly Lace” and many more! Following suit are classically-trained viola and violin players **Wil B** and **Kev Marcus** in **Black Violin (Jan 12).** Their music is a blend of classical, hip-hop, rock, R&B, and even bluegrass. “**Black Violin** works hard, but makes it all look like play. Sometimes they play with the intense seriousness of orchestral soloists; at others they fiddle as if at a hoedown; at still others they strum the violin and viola like guitars.” – *The New York* *Times*. If you liked Jim Witter’s first *Piano Men* performance, then you are going to love **Jim Witter – The Piano Men II (Jan 13). Jim Witter** continues the fun of *Piano Men*, taking the music of Elton John and Billy Joel on into the 80’s. The Juno/Dove nominee and his band will transport you to the time when big hair was cool and when the Chevy Camaro was hot! This is a “must-see” musical journey and should be at the top of any Baby Boomer’s bucket list! Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of **Catskills on Broadway (Jan 14)** with **Sal Richards, Freddie Roman** and **Dick Capri.** Sit back, relax and get ready to enjoy a great evening of good old-fashioned humor with an evening of pure fun and delight that will take you back to the golden years of the Catskills! **Lisa Lampanelli (Jan 15)** will be making her Van Wezel debut as Comedy’s Lovable “Queen of Mean.” She is a regular on Howard Stern’s radio shows, and she has appeared on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,” “Late Show with David Letterman,” “Chelsea Lately,” and “Jimmy Kimmel Live,” Get ready to celebrate 40 years of hit-making with **Graham Russell** and **Russell Hitchcock** as **Air Supply** **(Jan 16)** comes to the Van Wezel.Known for their hit songs “Lost in Love,” “All Out of Love,” “The One That You Love,” “Sweet Dreams,” and “Making Love Out Of Nothing At All,” this is one of pop music’s most enduring powerhouse touring bands.

Joining his fans at the Van Wezel is the legendary singer/songwriter and one of the biggest teen idols of the late 50’s, **Paul Anka (Jan 17)**. With well over 500 songs to his credit, the most memorable being “Put Your Head On My Shoulder,” “My Way,” and the famous theme from “The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson,” Performing at the Van Wezel for the first time will be **DL Hughley (Jan 18)**, one of the most popular and highly-recognized standup comedians on the road today. He is known for being astute and politically savvy in true comedian style, but is also unafraid to tap into his playful side: he participated in the 16th season of “Dancing with the Stars.” The quintessential backstage musical comedy classic, **42nd Street (Jan 20 & 21),** is the song-and-dance fable of Broadway with an American Dream story. It includes familiar songs such as “We’re In the Money,” “Lullaby of Broadway,” “Shuffle Off to Buffalo,” and, of course, the title song. This new production is directed by Mark Bramble and choreographed by Randy Skinner, the team who staged the 2001 Tony Award-Winning Best Musical Revival. Come experience incomparable artistry as **Wynonna & The Big Noise: Stories & Song (Jan 24)** take you on a musical journey. For **Wynonna Judd**, her stories have always been told through music with one of the most influential and important voices of our generation. Delighting audiences of all ages since 1999, **Abba Mania (Jan 25)** has toured the world in its quest to bring the music of the Swedish supergroup to their millions of fans, old and new! From “Dancing Queen” to “Waterloo” to “Fernando,” you will be thrilled with a full spectrum of ABBA’s uplifting, “dance-inducing” and sometimes heart-breaking ballads.

Renowned soprano **Renée Fleming** **(Jan 27)** makes her Van Wezel debut with the **Sarasota Orchestra** in a concert of beloved songs and arias. The program of favorites will range from Italian opera and classic song literature to Broadway, including music of Puccini, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and the American Songbook. One of the most celebrated musical ambassadors of our time, **Ms. Fleming** is a four-time Grammy winner and is known as the ‘Peoples’ Diva.’ She was awarded the National Medal of Arts, America’s highest honor for an individual artist, in 2013. Her sumptuous voice, consummate artistry and compelling stage presence will give you an evening to remember forever! This performance is brought to you in partnership with the Sarasota Orchestra and the Van Wezel Foundation.

Following the 11th season of ABC’s hit show *Dancing with the* Stars, **Dancing With The Stars: Live! (Jan 29)** is going back on the road and coming to Sarasota for its Van Wezel premiere. See your favorite dancers in this one-of-a-kind action-packed live show with glamorous costumes and unbelievable dancing! Often referred to as the “poet of the violin,” **Joshua Bell (Jan 30)** returns to the Van Wezel stage by popular demand! He is one of the most celebrated violinists of his era: his stunning virtuosity, beautiful tone and charismatic stage presence have brought him universal acclaim.

A legendary composer and live performer, **Yanni** **(Feb 2)** has brought hundreds of millions of fans and fellow world citizens together via his concerts, with countless more experiencing the magic of his music through television broadcasts. Be sure to catch this new North American Tour 2016, which launches at the Van Wezel! **Masters of Illusion (Feb 4)**, America’s largest touring magic show returns on their **“Believe the Impossible”** tour! Nothing beats the experience of seeing a magic show in person. You will see grand illusions, levitating women, appearances, vanishes, escapes, comedy magic, sleight of hand and beautiful dancers all rolled up into one live show!

From the creators of “South Park” and winner of nine Tony Awards, **The Book of Mormon** will play a limited one-week engagement **Feb. 9 thru Feb. 14**. *The New York* Times calls it "the best musical of this century" and *Entertainment Weekly* says it's "the funniest musical of all time."

Back for its annual celebration of Broadway’s greatest songs, **Neil Berg’s 107 Years of Broadway (Feb 17)** is a dazzling all-new show featuring five of Broadway’s finest stars performing songs from the best and most-beloved Broadway musicals of the past! The Van Wezel will also be welcoming back **Michael Feinstein and his 17-Piece Band** **(Feb 18)**. **Feinstein** is a multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer. Enjoy romantic classics by Gershwin, Porter, Berlin, Johnny Mercer and friends, all in swing tempo, including “Night And Day,” “I Wanna Be Around,” “The Song Is You” and many others. Philadelphia maven, **Patti LaBelle (Feb 23)** returns to the Van Wezel by popular demand to belt out her Soul and R&B classics, pop hits, blues and spirituals – as only **Ms. Patti** can! **The Moscow Festival Ballet** was founded in 1989 when legendary principal dancer of the Bolshoi Ballet **Sergei Radchencko** brought together the highest classical elements of the great Bolshoi and Kirov Ballet companies in an independent new company within the framework of Russian classic ballet. **Cinderella (Feb 24)**, a full-length ballet, will delight the audience with Prokofiev’s beautiful score and an abundance of entertaining dance and elegant costumes! The ever-popular **The Beach Boys (Feb 25)** has tallied up dozens of hits and sold albums by the tens of millions, but the greater significance lies in the fact that this band changed the musical landscape so profoundly that almost every pop act since has drawn from their influence. Join **Vince Gill and Lyle Lovett (Feb 26)** as they perform together on stage at the Van Wezel with an evening of songs and stories! **Vince Gill**, winner of 18 CMA Awards, including Entertainer of the Year, made his name in traditional Country (“Victim of Life’s Circumstance,” “If It Weren’t For Him” and “Oklahoma Borderline”). Singer, composer, and actor **Lyle Lovett** fuses elements of Americana, swing, jazz, folk, gospel, and blues in his live performances. Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress and singer, **Kristin Chenoweth** **(Feb 27),** making her Sarasota debut has a spectacular career that effortlessly spans film, television, voiceover and stage. In her live show, the acclaimed star brings iconic songs from her best-known shows like *Wicked, Glee* and *On the Twentieth Century* – as well as popular standards and classics from Broadway, Hollywood and beyond! In her Van Wezel debut, **Kristin** promises a very fun evening with new songs and some exciting surprises! It’s *Saturday Night Fever* every night with **The Australian Bee Gees Show – A Tribute to the Bee Gees** **(Feb 29)**. One of the most successful and adored acts in musical history is recreated on stage in a multi-media concert event. Groove to their memorable music and immerse yourself in the disco era with hits like “Stayin’ Alive,” “How Deep Is Your Love” and “Jive Talkin’.”

With acclaimed Cellist/Conductor **Dmitry Yablonsky** at the helm, **The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra (Mar 1)** performs a diverse repertoire which ranges from the Baroque and the Classical periods, through the Romantic period and even extending to contemporary composers. The Symphony has partnered with many of the world’s greatest musicians and continues that tradition with **Yablonsky** and Israeli teenage virtuoso **Danielle Akta** as the guest soloist on the cello.

There are many Beatles tributes. But there’s only one show that celebrates the genius of Paul McCartney at the height of his career in the mid-1970s, and this is it! Praised by Sid Bernstein – the promoter who brought the original Beatles to North America – as “the best on the scene today,” **The McCartney Years** **(Mar 2)** is a note-for-note faithful recreation of a 1973 *Wings over America* concert. One of the most enduring shows of all time, Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webber’s **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (Mar 3 & 4)** is the irresistible family musical about the trials and triumphs of Joseph, Israel’s favorite son. Directed and choreographed by Tony Award-winner, Andy Blankenbuehler, this new production is a magical musical full of unforgettable songs, including “Go Go Go Joseph,” “Any Dream Will Do” and “Close Every Door.” **Disney Fantasia Live in Concert (Mar 9)** presents the music and imagery from the legendary animated films, *Fantasia* and *Fantasia 2000*. Recreated by the **Czech National Symphony Orchestra** and conducted by **Ted Sperling**, the breathtaking score takes on an astounding new power as it is performed live in unison with the classic films displayed on the backdrop! The **Joffrey Ballet (Mar 10)** is classically trained to the highest standards - proudly reflecting the diversity of America with its company repertoire, which includes major story ballets, reconstructions of masterpieces and contemporary works. A beloved dance story in a spectacular new production, **Saturday Night Fever (Mar 16)** is the coming-of-age tale of young Tony Manero who learns the value of life in 1970’s Brooklyn. Based on the movie, **Saturday Night Fever** is packed with legendary hits from theBee Gees, including “Stayin’ Alive,” “Night Fever,” “Jive Talkin’” and “How Deep is Your Love.” Debuting at the Van Wezel, spend St. Patrick’s Day with **The Young Irelanders** **(Mar 17)** comprised of eight sensational performers who have Irish traditional music, song and dance running through their veins. Although still in their 20’s and 30’s, these performers have achieved more than most people would aspire to in a lifetime! Between them they have performed for many heads of state, at Radio City Music Hall, the Great Hall of the People in China, Kremlin State Palace in Moscow and the US Capitol Building. **The Peking Acrobats (Mar 20)**, China’s most gifted tumblers, contortionists, jugglers, cyclists, and gymnasts, make a triumphant return to the Van Wezel with their Gala **30th Anniversary North American Tour** and Year of the Monkey Celebration! This year’s tour pulls out all the stops, featuring exciting new acts and innovative twists on old favorites.

Hailed by *Time* magazineas “Musical Theatre Gold!” **Bullets Over Broadway (Mar 21)** is a hilarious musical comedy about a young playwright who, in desperate need of financial backing for his next show, accepts an offer he can’t refuse. **Bullets Over Broadway** is written by Woody Allen, with original direction and choreography by Susan Stroman and based on the screenplay of the acclaimed film by Woody Allen and Douglas McGrath. Looking for a non-traditional musical experience? **Stomp (Mar 22)** is explosive, inventive, provocative, witty and utterly unique – an unforgettable experience for all ages. Come see what the noise is all about! **The Irish Tenors’ (Mar 23)** powerful vocal line-up of **Finbar Wright, Anthony Kearns** and **Ronan Tynan** are unquestionably the leading brand of this genre. All three classically-trained singers have performed in leading concert halls across the world. The original stars of the award-winning Broadway musical *Jekyll & Hyde,* **Linda Eder and Robert Cuccioli (Mar 24)** reunite on the Van Wezel stage! **Robert Cuccioli** opens the show and then joins **Linda Eder** as they perform showstoppers from *Jekyll & Hyde* and songs from both of their illustrious careers on and off Broadway. **The Midtown Men** **(Mar 25)** are bringing their magic back to the Van Wezel, singing their favorite ”Sixties Hits” from The Beatles, The Rascals, Motown, The Four Seasons and more! This sensational production reunites Four Stars from the Original Cast of Broadway’s *Jersey Boys*. Tony Award-winner **Christian Hoff, Michael Longoria, Daniel Reichard** and Tony Award-nominee **J. Robert Spencer** star in this concert experience celebrating the music that defined the ‘60s. **Million Dollar Quartet (Mar 26)** is the high voltage Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, inspired by the true story of the famed recording session when icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins were brought together for one unforgettable night. Synonymous with grace, beauty and artistry, Oscar-winning actress **Sophia Loren** will captivate you with **An Evening With Sophia Loren (Mar 31)**, featuring an intimate onstage conversation and a question-and-answer session as well as film clips from her prolific career spanning more than five decades. This legendary star earned a remarkable array of notable accolades including the first Academy Award presented for a foreign-language film with *Two Women.*

Featuring hits from shows like *Gypsy, 42nd Street, Damn Yankees, Guys and Dolls, Annie Get Your Gun* and *West Side Story*, **Broadway! The Big Band Years** **(Apr 4)** is a thrilling musical adventure! The Great White Way was a magnificent platform for a staggering number of hit songs during the Big Band Era, including standards like “The Lady is a Tramp,” “My Funny Valentine,” “Luck Be a Lady,” “I Got Rhythm” and “I Get a Kick Out of You.” Returning by popular demand with an intimate live concert, trumpeter **Chris Botti** **(Apr 5)** will again thrill you with his soaring musical imagination. The world’s largest-selling jazz instrumentalist, he’s equally at home playing a jazz solo, an operatic piece or a pop standard. Nine-time Grammy Award-winner, singer, songwriter, and performer **Natalie Cole** **(Apr 10)** rocketed to stardom in 1975 with her debut album, *Inseparable*, earning her a #1 single, “This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)” and two Grammy awards. With her latest Grammy-nominated album, *Natalie Cole En Español*, she has re-emerged as one of the most beloved pop artists of the last 40 years. It promises to be an “Unforgettable” evening! **Celtic Nights ~ Spirit of Freedom (Apr 12)** tells the story of Irish independence, beginning 100 years ago with the Easter Rising. Akin to our 4th of July, the Easter Rising of 1916 created the Ireland we know and love today. Thirty-two years ago, **Paula Poundstone** **(Apr 17)** climbed on a Greyhound bus and traveled across the country -- stopping in at open-mic nights at comedy clubs as she went. What separates Paula from the pack of comics working today and that has made her a legend is her ability to be spontaneous with a crowd. *The Boston Globe* writes: “Poundstone can regale an audience for several hours with her distinctive brand of wry, intelligent and witty comedy.” **Mamma Mia!** **(Apr 19 & 20)** is the ultimate feel-good show that has audiences coming back again and again to relive the thrill. Now it’s your turn to have the time of your life at this smash-hit musical that combines ABBA’s greatest hits, including “Dancing Queen,” “S.O.S.,” “Super Trouper,” “Take A Chance on Me” and “The Winner Takes It All,” with an enchanting tale of love, laughter and friendship. Enter the world of **Cirque Mechanics Pedal Punk (Apr 22)**, experience for the first time in Sarasota the excitement where cycling is the way to escape the technology-obsessed society. Experience the excitement, artistry and thrill that occurs when a wacky bike shop mechanic interacts with cyclists and bikes, and repairs more than broken pieces. *The New York Times* calls it “exceptional, evocative, eye-catching and grossly entertaining…in a word, excellent.” Welcome **Brian Regan** **(Apr 23)**, the comedian who can turn mundane situations into side-splitting stand-up material, as he makes his Sarasota debut! With 28 *Late Show With David Letterman* performances under his belt, Brian has the perfect balance of sophisticated writing and physicality to fill theaters nationwide with fervent fans that span generations. **Billy Gardell** **(Apr 29)** works hard. Not only is he the star of the hit CBS series *Mike & Molly*, he is also hosting the new *Monopoly Millionaires Club Game Show* on ABC. His powerhouse stand-up show is grounded and down-to-earth and hits a strong chord with audiences. The Irish music sensation, **Celtic Woman (Apr 30)** brings its newest musical journey to Sarasota. Named Billboard Magazine’s #1 World Music Artist six times, the all-female ensemble has sold over eight million albums with platinum sales in nine countries.

Also gracing the Van Wezel stage will be **John Cleese & Eric Idle Together at Last…for the Very First Time** **(Oct 2)**; the return of **Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra (Oct 13)**; **The Ultimate Doo-Wop Show (Oct 24)**; and the **Moscow Ballet: Great Russian Nutcracker (Dec 28)**.

The Van Wezel is also home to many groups including the Sarasota Orchestra, Sarasota Ballet, Ringling Town Hall, the Sarasota Film Festival, and the Sarasota Concert Association, among others.

The Van Wezel offers Schooltime shows (for school and homeschool groups) including: **Skippy Jon Jones (Oct. 27); The American Revolution (Nov. 3); Doktor Kaboom! Live Wire! The Electricity Tour (Nov. 16); Aesop Bops (Dec. 15); Black Violin (Jan. 12); Chicken Dance (Jan. 15); The Improvised Shakespeare Company (Feb. 22); Junie B.’s Essential Survival Guide to School (Apr. 27);** and **The Science of Pirates (May 10).**

Variety Series Subscriptions are available by choosing 4 or more shows for up to a 20% discount (on most shows and sections), while the Broadway Subscription and the Dance/Orchestra Subscription packages feature up to a 20% discount on most shows. Regular hours for the Box Office will begin Tuesday, September 8th, as follows: M-F 10-6; Sat. 10-4; open later hours on performance days, including Sundays. To accommodate our patrons, the Box Office will have extended hours on Saturday and Sunday, remaining open from 10am-6pm on September 12th and 13th. Discounts are available for Groups of 10 or more (some shows and sections are excluded). Join our E-mail Club at www.vanwezel.org to be the “first to know” about upcoming events and specials. Also, join the conversation on our Facebook and Twitter to get behind the scenes pictures, interviews, and more! For more information and to buy tickets, contact the Van Wezel Box office at (941) 953-3368 or log onto www.vanwezel.org. Performers, prices, performances, dates and times are subject to change without notice. There are no ticket refunds or exchanges unless an event is cancelled or rescheduled.

NETworks presents DISNEY’S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Wed, Oct 14 • 2015 • 7:30PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

RICK SPRINGFIELD

Thur, Oct 15 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and 107.9 WSRZ**

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE

Thur, Oct 29 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and Bright House Networks**

ALL HANDS ON DECK! The Musical

Wed, Nov 4 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota**

AMERICA’S GOT TALENT LIVE : The All-Stars Tour!

Thur, Nov 5 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and Bright House Networks**

LEWIS BLACK ~ The Rant is Due Part Deux

Fri, Nov 13 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

CIRQUE DREAMS ~ Holidaze

Sat, Nov 14 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Co-sponsored by Go Touch Down Travel and Tours**

STRAIGHT NO CHASER ~

The New Old Fashioned Tour

Thur, Nov 19 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and SRQ Media Group**

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVISITED

Sat, Nov 21 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Hotel Indigo**

DAVE KOZ CHRISTMAS TOUR 2015

With Special Guests Jonathan Butler, Candy Dulfer & Bill Medley

Fri, Nov 27 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Boar’s Head Family Series and Scene Magazine**

CRAIG FERGUSON: The New Deal Tour

Tue, Dec 1 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by AT&T and the Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES

Wed, Dec 2 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by The Resort at Longboat Key Club**

KENNY G

Thur, Dec 3 • 2015 • 8:00PM

WOMEN OF IRELAND ~ Celtic Angels’ Christmas

Thur, Dec 10 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Co-sponsored by Go Touch Down Travel and Tours**

CARROT TOP

Sat, Dec 12 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

BOWZER’S ROCK & ROLL HOLIDAY PARTY

Featuring Herman’s Hermits starring Peter Noone, Gary “U.S.” Bonds, Bowzer & The Stingrays and Rocky & The Rollers

Sun, Dec 13 • 2015 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and SNN Suncoast News Network**

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Wed, Dec 23 • 2015 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by the Boar’s Head Family Series & Bright House Networks**

THE PRODUCERS

Wed, Dec 30 • 2015 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

THE TEN TENORS ~ Home for the Holidays

Thur, Dec 31 • 2015 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series**

SALUTE TO VIENNA

Sun, Jan. 3 • 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and WUSF Public Media**

BUDDY – THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY

Tue & Wed, Jan 5 & 6 • 2016• 8:00PM

Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7

BLACK VIOLIN – ED Pick

Tues, Jan. 12 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series**

Jim Witter - THE Piano Men II

A Musical Journey Through the 80’s featuring

the Music of Elton John and Billy Joel

Wed, Jan. 13 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota**

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY

Thur, Jan. 14 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

LISA LAMPANELLI

Fri, Jan. 15 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

AIR SUPPLY

Sat, Jan. 16 • 2016 • 8:00PM

paul anka

Sun, Jan. 17 • 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by Morton’s Gourmet Market and Catering**

DL Hughley

Mon, Jan. 18 • 2016 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

42ND STREET

Wed & Thur, Jan. 20 & 21 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

WYNONNA & THE BIG NOISE: Stories & Song

Sun, Jan 24• 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series**

ABBA MANIA

Mon, Jan. 25 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Beneva Flowers**

RENÉE FLEMING

with the Sarasota Orchestra • Anu Tali, Conductor

Wed, Jan 27 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series**

DANCING WITH THE STARS: LIVE!

Fri, Jan. 29• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and Bright House Networks**

JOSHUA BELL

Sat, Jan. 30• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Co-sponsored by Go Touch Down Travel & Tours & Hyatt Regency Sarasota and sponsored by WUSF Public Media**

YANNI

Tue, Feb 2•2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Michael’s on East and Gateway Bank**

MASTERS OF ILLUSION ~ *Believe the Impossible*

Thur, Feb 4•2016 • 7:30PM

**Sponsored by the Boar’s Head Family Series and The Bradenton Herald**

The Book Of Mormon

Feb 9-14• 2016

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

NEIL BERG’S 107 YEARS OF BROADWAY

Wed, Feb 17• 2016 • 2:00 & 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN and his 17-Piece Band

*Swing Me A Love Song*

Thur, Feb 18• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and Sarasota Magazine**

PATTI LaBELLE

Tue, Feb 23•2016 • 8:00PM

**Co-sponsored by Hyatt Regency Sarasota**

MOSCOW FESTIVAL BALLET ~ *CINDERELLA*

Wed, Feb 24• 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota and Bright House Networks**

the beach boys

Thur, Feb 25 • 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and SNN Suncoast News Network**

VINCE gILL & lYLE lOVETT

Fri, Feb 26• 2016 • 7:30PM

**Sponsored by Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay**

KRISTIN CHENOWETH

*Coming Home* Tour

Sat, Feb 27• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the AT&T Star Series and Sarasota Magazine**

THE AUSTRALIAN BEE GEES SHOW

A Tribute to the Bee Gees

Mon, Feb 29• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota**

the jerusalem symphony ORCHESTRA

Tue, Mar 1• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee and WUSF Public Media**

THE McCARTNEY YEARS

Wed, Mar 2• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by The Pittsburgh Pirates/The Bradenton Marauders**

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

Thur & Fri, Mar 3 & 4• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

DISNEY FANTASIA LIVE IN CONCERT

CZECH NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Wed, Mar 9• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and WUSF Public Media**

JOFFREY BALLET

Thur, Mar 10• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Van Wezel Foundation Series and WEDU PBS**

saturday night fever

Wed, Mar 16• 2016 • 3:00 & 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

THE YOUNG IRELANDERS

Thur, Mar 17• 2016 • 8:00PM

THE PEKING ACROBATS

30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Sun, Mar 20• 2016 • 7:00PM

**Co-sponsored by Hyatt Regency Sarasota**

BULLETS OVER BROADWAY

Mon, Mar 21• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

STOMP

Tue, Mar 22• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

THE IRISH TENORS

Wed, Mar 23• 2016 • 8:00PM

LINDA EDER with ROBERT CUCCIOLI

Thur, Mar 24• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

THE MIDTOWN MEN

4 Stars from the original cast

of broadway’s jersey boys!

Fri, Mar 25• 2016 • 8:00PM

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

Sat, Mar 26• 2016 • 2:00 & 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

AN EVENING WITH SOPHIA LOREN

Thur, Mar 31• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **The Van Wezel Foundation Series**

BROADWAY! THE BIG BAND YEARS

Mon, Apr 4• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

CHRIS BOTTI

Tues, Apr 5• 2016 • 8:00PM

natalie cole

Sun, Apr 10 • 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by The Van Wezel Foundation Series and**  **WEDU PBS**

CELTIC NIGHTS ~ Spirit Of Freedom

Tues, Apr 12• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and** **WUSF Public Media**

PAULA POUNDSTONE

Sun, Apr 17• 2016 • 7:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and** **The Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

MAMMA MIA!

Tue & Wed, Apr 19 & 20• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by Wilde Lexus of Sarasota and ABC7**

CIRQUE MECHANICS PEDAL PUNK

Fri, Apr 22• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by the Boar’s Head Family Series**

BRIAN REGAN

Sat, Apr 23• 2016 • 8:00PM

**Sponsored by** **The Herald-Tribune Media Group’s Comedy Series**

BILLY GARDELL

Fri, Apr 29 • 2016 • 8:00PM

Sponsored by SNN Suncoast News Network

CELTIC WOMAN

Sat, Apr 30• 2016 • 7:30PM

**Sponsored by Argosy University**

RENTALS

JOHN CLEESE & ERIC IDLE

Together Again at Last...For The Very First Time

Fri, Oct 2• 2015 • 7:30PM

SHEN YUN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Tue, Oct 13• 2015 • 7:30PM

THE ULTIMATE DOO-WOP SHOW

Sat, Oct 24• 2015 • 8:00PM