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STETSON UNIVERSITY

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Stetson Opera Theatre Opens Season with Passionate and Powerful 'Giulio Cesare in Egitto'

DELAND, Florida, Oct. 23, 2019 – [Stetson Opera Theatre](#) and the [Chamber Orchestra](#) at the [Stetson University School of Music](#) begin its 2019-20 season with George Frideric Handel's opera *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. The sexy and tragic Baroque opera tells the musical story of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra's love affair and the war between Rome and Egypt in 48 B.C.

The production, directed by [Russell Franks, MM](#), director of Stetson Opera Theatre, and conducted by [Anthony Hose, ARCM](#), hits the stage on Saturday, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 3, 3 p.m., at the historic [Athens Theatre](#), 124 N. Florida Ave., DeLand, 32720. The opera will be sung in Italian with English supertitles projected on the proscenium.

The three-act opera portrays Caesar's campaign in Alexandria where he meets Cleopatra for the first time and falls head over heels for the Egyptian goddess. The plot thickens when Cleopatra's brother Tolomeo wages war against Caesar to keep her from becoming the queen of the Nile.

Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, which made its debut on Feb. 20, 1724, at the King's Theatre in London, has become one of his most performed operatic works.

"The Baroque era was rich in operatic repertoire and many Italian, German and French composers were prolific in this genre, which spanned 150 years," said Franks. "Handel, a German composer, rose to fame after he moved to London. Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* is considered one of his most successful operas because of the music, story (libretto) and dramaturgy."

The double-casted production features Alesandra Collins (Giulio Cesare); Adam Benton (Giulio Cesare's understudy); Max Wolf (Curio); Vanessa Moya (Cornelia); Annabrett Ruggiero (Cornelia's understudy); Colby Harter (Sesto); Melissa Feurich (Cleopatra); Lauren Prestifilippo (Cleopatra); Kat Kirby (Cleopatra's understudy); Matthew Harris (Achilla); Adam Benton (Achilla); Allison Fahey (Tolomeo); Tony Capizzi (Nireno); and Bradley Monroe (Nireno).

Stetson Opera Theatre students will be performing in authentic costumes, which represent the time period and were created by Franks, while collaborating with Stetson's Chamber Orchestra.

"The students receive invaluable experience when learning how to perform with a live orchestra," said Franks. "Most, if not all, opera companies perform with an orchestra, which prepares students for the professional arena. The Chamber Orchestra is another cast member that lends expressive qualities to the drama and helps set the mood for each scene."

Florida opera fans and first-timers are in for a real treat.

“For folks who are attending their first opera, the action is easy to follow, the story is interesting and the music is beautiful, exciting and accessible to any level of operagoer,” said Franks.

“Stetson Opera Theatre is unique in its operatic offerings because the operas are not always performed in Florida or the southeast, so to see a live production of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* is rare in Florida.”

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth and are available to purchase [online](#) or at the door.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 5 on U.S. News & World Report's 2019 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 385 Best Colleges, 2020 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

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