

Sarasota

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Lecture series shown on cable

SIMULCAST: Retirement center's program has outgrown Players Theatre

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SARASOTA — The Plymouth Harbor retirement community has begun simulcasting Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning lectures to meet a growing demand for the series.

The simulcasting, on Comcast Channel 19, comes amid the third consecutive soldout year at the 525-seat Players Theatre, where the lectures are

held from January to March.

Plymouth Harbor will broadcast SILL's "global issues" series in its 105-seat auditorium, bringing the institute full circle: It began there in 1972.

"They were trying to find something in size between the Players Theatre and the Van Wezel, and there was just nothing," said Gordon Okawa, Plymouth Harbor's director of community relations. "They were stuck."

In its 37-year history, the institute has become a victim of its own success: More than 19,000 people attend 72 lec-

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COMING UP

Upcoming Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning lectures:

Wednesday: "Japan — slipping or holding its own as the world's second largest economy?" by foreign affairs specialist and international consultant Stephen Dachi at 10:30 a.m.

Feb. 11: "Understanding Iran," by Peter Bechtold, chairman emeritus of Near East and North Africa Area Studies at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, at 10:30 a.m.

Feb. 18: "The revolutions to come: The forces that will shape the 21st century that we hardly understand today," by international advisory firm president and CEO David Rothkopf at 10:30 a.m.

More information:
sillsarasota.org

SILL lectures shown on cable

LECTURES FROM 1B

tures on music, politics or world issues each season.

In addition to the Players Theatre, SILL events are held at Holley Hall and G.WIZ in Sarasota and at the Unitarian Church in Venice.

Through the simulcasting, which began Jan. 8, SILL hopes to avoid turning away patrons, who pay \$7 per lecture.

Ed Schmith, a SILL board member and its marketing director, acknowledges the group was somewhat reluctant to try simulcasting. "Our great concern was, we didn't want to diminish the experience at the Players in any way," he said. "We didn't want to detract from the live performance."

SILL will meet in March to determine whether to continue — or expand — the simulcasting. Both Sarasota Bay Club and Village on the Isle, in Venice, have expressed interest in showing the simulcasts.

"The consensus, on the part of the remote audience, has been enthusiastic and positive," Schmith added. "At the Players, some folks don't even know we're doing it, it's so unobtrusive."

Simulcasting is not new, of course. Companies, universities and even the Metropolitan Opera in New York now offer remote conferences and performances.

The initial cost has been daunting. Plymouth Harbor has so far picked up the \$1,000 Comcast fee per lecture, as an amenity to its 300-plus residents.

However, all three groups worry the cost could hamper expansion.