



FIRST COAST OPERA
2023-2024 Season

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE
March 15 and 17, 2024



www.FirstCoastOpera.com
Curtis Tucker, General and Artistic Director

FIRST COAST OPERA PRESENTS



The Stranger's Tale

AN OPERA
IN ONE ACT

Music by Curtis Tucker
Text by Nelson Sheeley

Friday, May 10 2024 at noon
Ancient City Baptist Church
27 Sevilla Street, St. Augustine FL
This free performance is part of the
Romanza Festivale

A story of faith and hope, *The Stranger's Tale* examines modern homelessness through music and drama. Set around a park bench, the one-act opera centers around an unnamed man experiencing homelessness. His interactions, sometimes unwanted, uplift other parkgoers who encounter him. Are the effects accidental, coincidental, or divine?

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From the President



Welcome to this zany, exciting presentation of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. This is the first year First Coast Opera presented a second main-stage production as we continued to expand our repertoire and outreach. Laugh and be enchanted by this fun way to celebrate a part of the regional heritage when pirates were active on the high seas, and in St Augustine.

In May, as part of the Romanza Festivale of the Arts, First Coast Opera is presenting *The Stranger's Tale*, composed by our own Artistic Director, Curtis Tucker. This free performance presents one of the compelling social issues of our day, homelessness. A grant from the NEA helps to make this program possible.

As part of our outreach, FCO is using grants from Arts for All and The Truist Foundation to make our programs more accessible to special audiences. This includes special printings of our playbill in Spanish and large print as well as our super-titles. We are offering special voice over broadcasts of our programs for sight-impaired.

Don't miss any of the wonderful events of the opera season in St Augustine. We are ever grateful for your continued support by your attendance and your generous giving to keep opera alive in Northeast Florida.

Kerry Fradley

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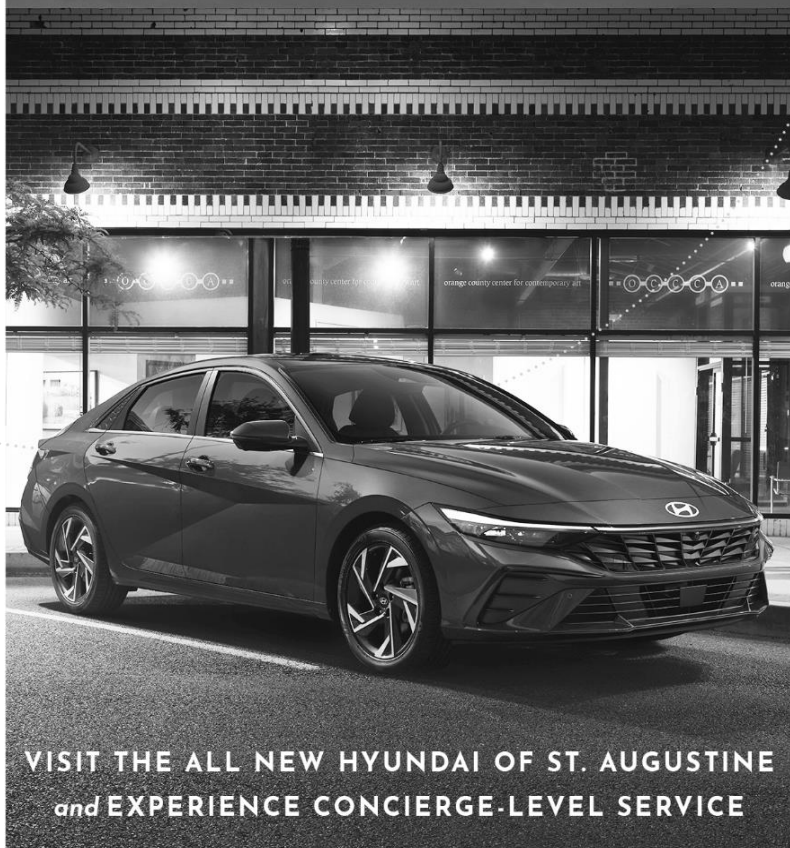
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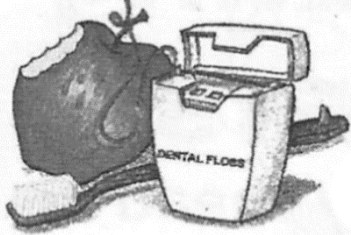
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The Pirates of Penzance

or

The Slave of Duty

Book by W. S. Gilbert
Music by Arthur Sullivan

Frederic	Stephen Ash
Mabel	Caroline Goodwin
Pirate King	Tyler Putnam
Ruth	Sarah Nordin
Major General Stanley	Curtis Tucker
Sergeant of Police	Jason Whitfield
Samuel	Noah Peacock
Edith	Hope Cruse
Kate	Caragh Zeigler
Isabel	Annabelle Wellschlager
Conductor	Clifford Parrish
Stage Director	Nelson Sheeley
Scenic Designer	In the Moment Arts Collective Studio
Costume Designer	Alan Michael Smith
Lighting Designer	Patrick W. Mathis
Hair & Makeup Designer	Gina Makarova
Props and Set Pieces Manager	Jean Rahner
Dance Consultant	Ellie Potts-Barrett
Stage Manager	Callista Payne

There will be one twenty-minute intermission between Acts 1 and 2

Synopsis

When Frederic was a young boy, his nurse Ruth was told to apprentice him to become a pilot. She heard the word incorrectly and apprenticed him to a band of pirates, remaining with them herself as a maid-of-all-work. Although Frederic loathed the trade to which he had been bound, he dutifully served. As the curtain rises, his indentures are almost up and he is preparing to leave the band and devote himself to the extermination of piracy.

He urges the pirates to join him in a more lawful calling, but they refuse. Ruth, however, wants to become his wife. Having seen few women, he does not know whether she is really as pretty as she says she is, but he finally consents to take her. A group of girls, all wards of Major-General Stanley, happen upon the scene. Frederic sees their beauty – and Ruth's plainness – and renounces her. Of these girls, Mabel takes a particular interest in Frederic, and he in her. The other girls are seized by the pirates and threatened with immediate marriage. When the Major-General arrives, he can dissuade the pirates only by a ruse: he tells them that he is an orphan. Working on their sympathies, they let him and his wards go free.

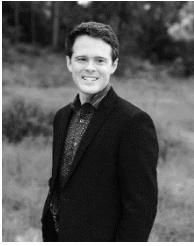
INTERMISSION

During the ensuing days and nights, this lie troubles the Major-General's conscience. He sits brooding over it at night in the courtyard of his estate. He is consoled by the wards' sympathy and Frederic's plan to immediately lead a band of police against the pirates.

Meanwhile, the Pirate King and Ruth seek out Frederic. They have discovered that his indentures were to run until his twenty-first birthday, and – as he was born on February 29 – he has really had as yet only five birthdays. Obeying the dictates of his strong sense of duty, Frederic rejoins the pirates. He tells them of the Major-General's deception, and they seize the Major-General.

But the police come to the rescue and charge the pirates to yield "in Queen Victoria's name." This they do. But Ruth explains that these men who appear to be lawless pirates are really all noblemen who have gone wrong. They are pardoned and permitted to marry the Major-General's wards.

Principal Artists



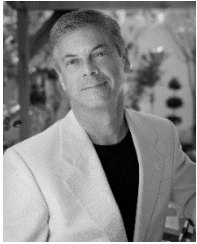
Stephen Ash (Frederic) debuts with FCO. He recently performed Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville in Texas* with Houston Grand Opera's *Opera To Go!*, Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* with Heartland Opera Theater, and Jeník in *The Bartered Bride* at the University of Houston Moores Opera Center. The Houston-based tenor earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor where he studied music education and voice performance, and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of Houston.

Caroline Goodwin (Mabel) makes her FCO debut. This past summer, she sang nine productions with the College Light Opera Company on Cape Cod, where she performed Elsie in *Yeoman of the Guard*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, and the The Plaintiff in *Trial by Jury*. The Indiana University graduate is active in new music. In April of 2021, she commissioned and premiered *A Few Figs from Thistles*, a song cycle by Alex Tedrow based on the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay. In 2022, she attended the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria.



Tyler Putnam (Pirate King) is pleased to return to First Coast Opera after performing the roles of Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, The Marquis in *La Traviata*, Mr. Cox in *Cox & Box/Penelope Ann's Revenge* and Dick Deadeye in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Last summer, Tyler made his European opera debut singing Sparafucile and Monterone in *Rigoletto* with Opera på Skäret, Sweden, and he returns there this summer to sing Orovoso in *Norma*. Recent performances include *Cura Viejo* in the world premiere of *Behold the Man* with Opera Las Vegas, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Gulfshore Opera, and Orovoso in *Norma* with Opera Tampa for which he received an award from Theatre Tampa Bay. Tyler Putnam grew up on Chebeague Island, Maine, and is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

Sarah Nordin (Ruth) has been featured in recent seasons as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Orlando and Gulf Coast Symphony as well as the title role in *La Cenerentola* with Geneva Light Opera. First Coast Opera fans will recognize her from her roles of Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Flora in *La Traviata*, Lydia in *Penelope Ann's Revenge* and Buttercup in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Her favorite classic Musical Theater roles performed are Nellie in *South Pacific*, Maria in *Sound of Music*, Sandy in *Grease* and Tzeitel in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Ms. Nordin is also an award-winning ballroom dancer and an accomplished french horn player.



Curtis Tucker (Major General Stanley) celebrates his tenth season as General and Artistic Director with First Coast Opera. During his tenure, the company has expanded its performances and been recognized as a Professional Company Member of Opera America. This season he directed *Copland's America*, conducted *La Bohème*, and now sings Major General Stanley. Elsewhere, he has led concerts and productions for Cincinnati Opera, Opera Memphis, Opera Saratoga, Syracuse Opera, Mobile Opera, Amelia Island Opera, and the University of North Florida. His original family opera, *The Trial of B. B. Wolf*, was performed at the annual conference of the National Opera Association, and First Coast Opera will perform his opera *The Stranger's Tale* during the upcoming Romanza in May.

Jason Whitfield (Sergeant of Police) moved to Saint Augustine with his wife and three sons after living in New York for fifteen years. He was recently seen as Frank in *Die Fledermaus* and Bouncer in *Cox and Box* with First Coast Opera. He also musical directed and played Burl Sanders in *Smoke on the Mountain* locally this past season. He still

performs with the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players (NYGASP), and favorite roles include Colonel Calverley in *Patience* and Bill Bobstay in *H.M.S Pinafore*. Some favorite Musical Theater roles are Frank Butler in *Annie Get Your Gun* and Cornelius Hackl in *Hello, Dolly*. He continues to sing with the all-male group FIGARO and croons with the all-female group The Manhattan Dolls.





Noah Peacock (Samuel) is pleased to return to First Coast Opera after previous ensemble roles in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Assorted theatre performances include Gus Esmond Jr. in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* at Thin Air Theatre Company and Peter Shaw in *Silent Sky* at The University of West Florida. His most recent work is with Hershey Park in Hershey, Pennsylvania working at the second season of Dark Nights. Peacock grew up in Florahome, Florida and got his degrees (A.A, A.S, B.F.A) from St. John's River State College, Florida School of the Arts, and The University of West Florida.

Hope M. Cruse (Edith), a Saint Augustine native, is a Junior at the University of Florida. She has been a mainstay with First Coast Opera since 2017. Ms. Cruse was featured as a young maiden in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and performed opposite Maestro Curtis Tucker in *A Life in Song; A Cabaret*. Other performed roles include Laurey in *Oklahoma!* and Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

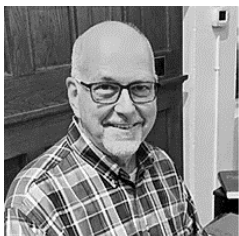


Caragh Zeigler (Kate) is thrilled to be back performing with First Coast Opera. Her last production was last season's *Die Fledermaus* as an ensemble member. Since then, she has performed with Kristin Chenoweth in concert with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra. She is a YoungArts 2024 Theater/Musical winner and is a home-schooled senior.

Annabelle's Wellschlager (Isabel) debuts with First Coast Opera. Recent roles include Maria von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, and Laurey in *Oklahoma!*. This Spring she will perform Elle Woods in Beachside High's *Legally Blonde*. Annabelle looks forward to continuing her music career by majoring in vocal performance.



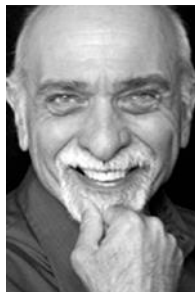
Artistic Team



Clifford Parrish (Conductor) has conducted numerous shows for community, high school, and college theaters. He was awarded for Outstanding Stage Direction and Music Direction for *1776* by the New Jersey Association of Community Theaters, and for music direction for *Sweeney Todd* and *Secret Garden*. Favorite shows include *A Man of No Importance*, *A Light in the Piazza*, *Nine*, *Fiddler on the*

Roof, and *Titanic*. A lifelong church musician, he is currently serving as organist/choirmaster at Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Jacksonville. He holds a BME degree from Jacksonville University (where he performed in *Pirates!*) and a MM in conducting from Westminster Choir College.

Nelson Sheeley (Stage Director) has worked in professional theatre and opera since 1970, acting, directing, and stage managing. For ten years he served as Managing Director of Allenberry Playhouse, where he directed over 90 productions of plays, musicals and operettas. He has directed several FCO productions, as well as for Opera Saratoga, The Liederkrantz Society, The National Opera Company, Whitewater and Sorg Operas, Opera Naples, Nevada Opera, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Author of works in many genres, he has collaborated on three operas with Curtis Tucker including *Penelope Ann's Revenge*, *The Stranger's Tale* and *The Trial of B. B. Wolf*. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, he currently teaches and resides in Dayton, Ohio.



In The Moment Arts Collective (Set Construction) Stephen and Jessica are a St. Augustine couple specializing in theatrical and visual arts. They have designed and crafted theatrical sets, props, puppets, museum exhibits, costumes, scripts, haunts, lighting, and sound design, including FCO's own *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 2020; The Alligator Farm Mural (2019); and numerous productions at the Flagler Playhouse, Limelight Theater, and Players by the Sea. They've also acted

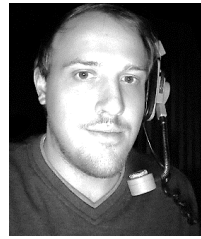
as directors and performers in numerous stage productions and films, and write

and perform musically. Their body of work can be explored on their website: <https://inthemomentartscollective.com>.



Alan Michael Smith (Costume Designer) has designed First Coast Opera productions of *La Boheme*, *Opera Mystique*, *HMS Pinafore*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *La Vie Parisienne*. He has worked as a freelance Costume Designer on Broadway and for various regional theaters in and around New York. As a member of the Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Alan has been associated with over 15 Broadway shows in the last 30 years. He had the pleasure of being the Resident Costume Designer for 8 years at Opera Saratoga and currently for 7 years at First Coast Opera. Mr. Smith is also the Resident Costume Designer at Wagner College.

Patrick W. Mathis (Lighting Designer) holds an MFA in Theatre Design and Technologies from Utah State University and a BS in Information Science and Technology from Mercer University. He has worked in theatre and live entertainment across the nation and internationally in the areas of technical theatre, as well as lighting and media design. Patrick is a member of CITT/ICTS, USITT, and Actors Equity. He currently proudly serves as Assistant Professor of Design and Technology at Flagler College.



Gina Makarova (Hair & Makeup Designer) debuted with FCO in this season's *La Boheme*. She has worked with Opera Orlando on *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World*, *Baseball: A Musical Love Letter*, *King for a Day* and *Lizbeth*, while as an assistant she worked on *The Secret River*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen* and many others. She works regularly with Orlando Ballet, including their new production of *The Nutcracker* and past productions of *Dracula*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Gina is also the Makeup Consultant for *Phantasmagoria Orlando* and has designed a handful of productions at Winter Park Playhouse and Valencia College.



Callista Veaghna-Payne (Stage Manager) is excited to make her debut with First Coast Opera. Recent productions include: Florida Grand Opera, *La Traviata*, *I Pagliacci*; The Rev Theatre Co., *A Chorus Line*; Opera Neo, *Mitridate*, *Il Trionfo del Tempo*, *Barber of Seville*; Opera Saratoga, *Sky on Swings*. Callista is presently based in Tallahassee, Florida, and is proud to be a member of AGMA.



Ellie Potts Barrett (Dance Consultant) prefers being on the production side of the stage after being on it. Professional dance credits include Mary Anthony (NYC), Boston Dance Company, Ina Hahn Modern Dance Company, national tours and theatrical productions. Internationally recognized, she loves to create dances, and has been doing so for many years. She currently teaches Modern Dance, Musical Theatre, Composition, and Dance Aesthetics at the prestigious Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, as well as teaching Modern Dance at Orlando Ballet. She is a proud member of Actor's Equity Association and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society as well as the Choreographer's Guild.

Accessibility

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This playbill is available online at firstcoastopera.com/pirates



Una versión en español del programa está disponible en nuestro sitio web en firstcoastopera.com/pirates



Should you need it, a large print version of the program is available upon request.



Chorus

David Abraham
Shannon Acevedo
Jessica Bergstol
Paul Dula
Sheridan Kelly
Ginger Lindberg
Wyatt Matlock
Chris Monnette

Helena Peterson
Steve Rich
Jeff Schaeffer
Deborah Smith
Laura Weiss
Jason Whitfield
Sebastian Williams
Camille Zeigler

Orchestra

Judy Steinmeyer, concertmaster

Flute

Don Gottlieb

Oboe

Kristin Kusic

Clarinet

James Hall
Kevin Clausen

Bassoon

Nathan Michaelson

Horn

Sean Morgan
Matt Monroe

Trumpet

Joe Jamerson

Trombone

Charlie Propper

Percussion/Timpani

Bill Cain

Violin

Judy Steinmeyer
Glynda Newton
Maggie Widener
AJ Pulliam

Viola

Jessye Russom
Ty Russom

Cello

Alex Downs

Double Bass

Aaron Kinman

Production Staff

Artistic DirectorCurtis Tucker
Stage Manager.....Callista Payne
Rehearsal Accompanist Thomas Rodgers
Chorus Master Clifford Parrish
Orchestra Contractor..... Music by Pegge, LLC
Property Master Jean Rahner
Props Crew Kerry Fradley, Nancy Perry,
..... Thomas Rahner, Andrew Schirmacher, Kathy Schirmacher
Specialty PropsThomas Rahner
Stage Crew..... Annika Klee, Wyatt Matlock
Supertitle Operator Katie Matson
Assisted Hearing Narrator Kerry Fradley
Wardrobe Supervisor Deb Smith
Wardrobe Crew Michael Ramsey-Smith
Wig & Makeup Assistant Carole Spivey

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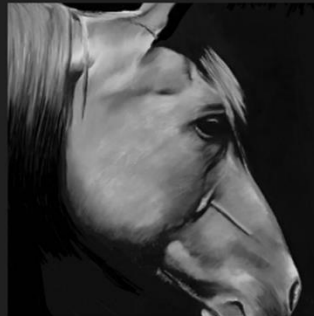


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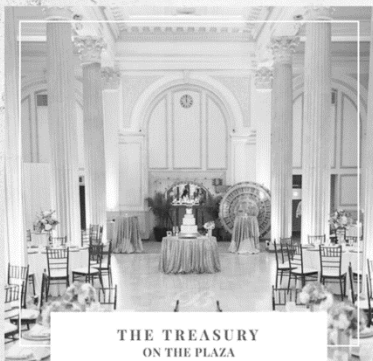


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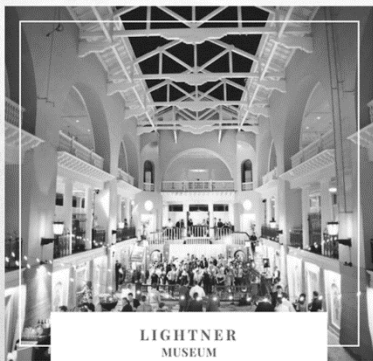


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