



2025-2026 Season

First Coast  
*Opera*

# FANFARE!

HOSTED BY | CURTIS TUCKER, GENERAL & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
FEATURING | UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA OPERA DEPARTMENT

FRIDAY OCTOBER 10, 2025  
CELEBRATION HALL, ANASTASIA ISLAND



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# From the President



Welcome to *Fanfare!*, the opening event of First Coast Opera's 26th season. And what an exciting and notable season it is!

Tonight, you will see a blend of great music, from the past and present, and the great singers of the future from the University of Florida's Opera Department. Enjoy the music and the wonderful dinner catered by La Cocina.

For the first time, First Coast Opera will present three performances (New Year's Eve, and January 2nd and 4th afternoons) of an opera. And this is for one of the greatest and most popular of all operas, *Carmen*. The masterpiece, by French composer Georges Bizet, tells the story of a strong willed woman who wants to live her life as she sees fit. With a fabulous cast, this is an opera you don't want to miss.

On March 20th and 21st, we will present *The Mikado*, another satirical masterpiece by Gilbert and Sullivan. In English, with both spoken and sung dialogue, this operetta shows how well their humor and wit from 1885 transfers to the 21st century.

Opera is the most expensive of all the performing arts. If we sold every seat for every performance, we would still fall well short of meeting the costs of production. With current cutbacks in government support, the generosity of support from folks like you becomes even more important. Thank you and enjoy tonight.

*Steven Rich*

Steven Rich, President



## **Robert A. Dawkins, Esq.**

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**Rejoice!** Sat Dec 20 at 7:30pm & Sun Dec 21 at 2pm  
at The Cathedral Basilica

**Journey  
Americana** Saturday March 7 at 7pm &  
Sunday March 8 at 3pm

**The Way to Peace** Saturday May 9 at 7pm

**3rd Annual Messiah Sing-In** Saturday Dec 13 at 2pm  
at Memorial Lutheran Church

Season Tickets available  
Join us on Facebook or at our website  
[Staugustinecommunitychorus.org](http://Staugustinecommunitychorus.org)



## 2025 - 2026 Season Schedule

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| OCT<br>30 | FALL CONCERT    |
| DEC<br>11 | HOLIDAY CONCERT |
| MAR<br>6  | SPRING CONCERT  |
| MAY<br>8  | SEASON FINALE   |

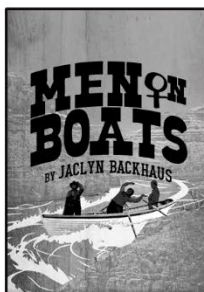


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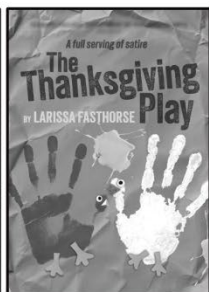


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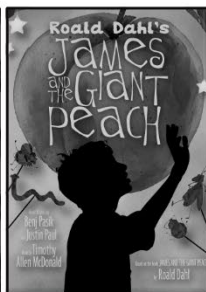
OCT 3-6, 2025



NOV 14-17, 2025



FEB 27-MAR 2, 2026



APR 10-13, 2026

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**November 1, 2025**

6:30PM hors d'oeuvres/7:30PM concert

**November 2, 2025**

4PM hors d'oeuvres, / 5PM concert

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Ticket Price: \$75

[ameliaislandopera.org](http://ameliaislandopera.org)

# St. Augustine Orchestra

Scott C. Gregg, Artistic Director

## Fall Concert

Tocoi Creek High School

Friday, October 24, 2025 7:30pm

## Fall Concert

Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center, Palm

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 7:30pm

## Sounds of the Season

Kelly Farm

Saturday, December 6, 2025

2:00pm and 5:30pm

## Winter Concert

Tocoi Creek High School

Friday, March 13, 2026 7:30pm

## Afternoon Tea

St. Anastasia Catholic Church

Saturday, May 2, 2026 4:00pm



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In Jacksonville:  
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Community Presbyterian Church  
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# Angels of Light

In St. Augustine:  
**Thursday, December 14, 2025, 4 pm**  
Trinity Parish Church  
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Songs celebrating the  
many symbols of the season  
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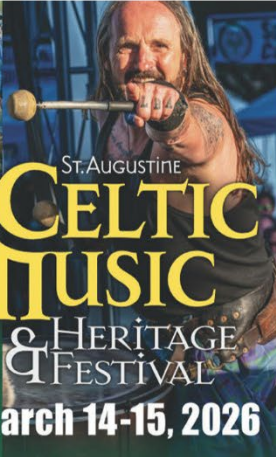
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| FRIDAY     | SATURDAY   | SUNDAY     |
|------------|------------|------------|
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| 7:30 P.M.  | 7:30 P.M.  | 1:00 P.M.  |

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# The Nutcracker

December 19-21

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2025-26  
CONCERTS  
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SOCIETY



THURSDAY  
**DEC 11**  
7:00 PM

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SELECTIONS FROM THE MESSIAH



THURSDAY  
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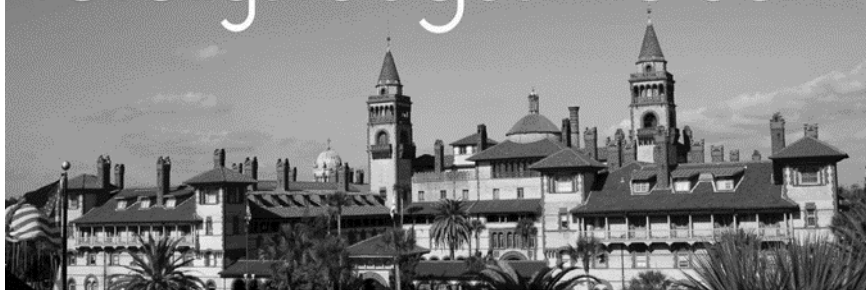
FRIDAY  
**JAN 30**  
7:00 PM

CARMEN  
TEATRO LIRICO D'EUROPA



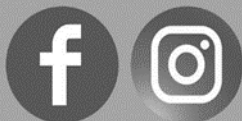
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# First Coast Opera Launches Its 26<sup>th</sup> Season with a little **FANFARE!**

Cocktail Reception Guitarist ..... Jonathan Dotson



## School of **MUSIC**

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From the UF Opera Theatre  
Under the direction of Dr. Anthony Offerle, Professor of Voice/Opera  
Accompanied by Shiyi Zhu

### ***The Mikado – Sullivan***

Three Little Maids from School Are We

Yum-Yum ..... Natalie Hamel  
Peep-Bo ..... Ava Neary  
Pitti-Sing ..... Vanessa Esposito

### ***The Pirates of Penzance – Sullivan***

Stay Frederic Stay

Mabel ..... Haley Surprenant  
Frederic ..... Ron Earl Nicolas

### ***The Mikado – Sullivan***

The Sun, Whose Rays Are All Ablaze

Yum-Yum ..... Delany Geiser

### ***The Mikado – Sullivan***

Here's a how-de-do

Yum-Yum ..... Natalie Hamel  
Nanki-Poo ..... Ron Earl Nicolas  
Ko-Ko ..... Garrett Rosenb

### ***Carmen – Bizet***

#### Toreador Aria

Escamillo .....Israel Lalama  
..... Full Ensemble

### ***Lakmé - Delibes***

#### Flower Duet

Lakmé ..... Lily Mancini  
Mallika .....Payton Francis

### ***Pearl Fishers – Bizet***

#### Au fond du temple saint”

Nadir ..... Shuo Wang  
Zurga ..... Israel Lalama

### ***Cosí fan tutte – Mozart***

#### Soave sia il vento” (trio)

Fiordiligi ..... Lily Mancini  
Dorabella .....Payton Francis  
Don Alfonso .....Israel Lalama

### ***Carmen – Bizet***

#### Quintet

Carmen ..... Sydnee Howard  
Frasquita ..... Natalie Hamel  
Mercédès ..... Vanessa Esposito  
Dancaïro .....Anthony Celano  
Remendado ..... Ron Earl Nicolas

The UF Opera Theatre’s mission is to continue the School of Music’s rich tradition of opera performance by offering students numerous stage opportunities in a variety of operatic styles and performing venues. In addition to the educational and performing opportunities available to its students, one of the UF Opera Theatre’s foremost goals is to introduce the exciting world of opera to the regional community by producing musical dramas that appeal to a wide range of audiences.

Under the direction of Dr. Anthony Offerle, the UF Opera Theatre’s staging of Paul Richard’s, *The Golem of Prague*, was a 2023 winner of the National Opera Association award for large scale opera production.

## From the General Director



When I arrived at First Coast Opera in 2014, Saint Augustine was preparing to celebrate the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding with many Spanish-themed events. The FCO Board asked me to produce either *Don Giovanni* or *Carmen*, neither in Spanish nor written by Spaniards, but, of course, both with well-known Spanish settings and stories. That year, we performed Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Back then, I didn't think we were ready to tackle the much-bigger *Carmen*, and it has remained at the top of our wish list. Eleven years later, it is finally time! Our upcoming *Carmen* will be the company's largest to date, with more than 80 people creating it, including a cast of 40 and orchestra of 22. I hope you will attend one of our three performances.

FCO has performed more Gilbert and Sullivan operettas than works by any other composer, with *The Mikado* last done here in 2006. It is a brilliant comedy with creative characters and tuneful music. Set in the fictional Japanese town of Titipu, the work satirizes British government of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We now sit in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and governments remain popular fodder for comedians. Don't miss this traditional toe-tapping favorite!

I am very pleased to welcome, this evening, members of the Opera Department at the University of Florida. Providing opportunities for local and regional talent has always been part of FCO's mission. Talented young performers prove that opera and singing remain vital and inspiring art forms. Thank you for attending *Fanfare!* and supporting First Coast Opera.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Curtis Tucker'.

Curtis Tucker

General and Artistic Director

~ The ~  
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# Thank You to Our Generous Donors

This evening's celebration would not be possible without the generous support of our community partners, artists, and friends who share in our mission to bring exceptional opera to the First Coast.

We extend heartfelt appreciation to **The Pinnacle Singers**, a talented ensemble from DeLand, Florida, who have provided tonight's wine, purchased from **Naked Wines of California**. Naked Wines is a direct-to-consumer wine club that connects wine lovers with independent winemakers, creating opportunities for small producers to thrive. Learn more at **NakedWines.com**.

A special thank you to the gifted **Raquel Rubí**, whose vibrant artwork enhances our event this evening. Raquel has generously pledged to donate a portion of all proceeds from her art sales to First Coast Opera. Please take time to enjoy her pieces on display and visit **RaquelRubi.com** to see more of her extraordinary work.

We are also grateful to those who have donated prizes for tonight's raffle:

- **The Nolton Family** – Bottle of sake
- **The Gifted Cork** – Two bottles of Spanish wine
- **La Cocina International Restaurant** – \$50 gift certificate

And finally, we thank **Lucky Goat Coffee Co.** for providing this evening's coffee. Visit **LuckyGoatCoffee.com** to shop online or find a café near you.

## Additional Thanks

First Coast Opera would like to recognize the continued support and dedication of the following individuals and organizations:

### **Friends of First Coast Opera**

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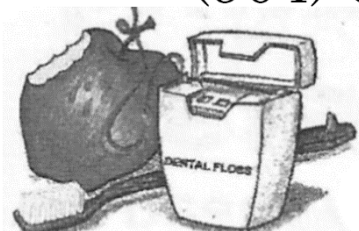
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**Love opera? Want to get involved behind the scenes? Join the Friends of First Coast Opera, a lively group of volunteers who help make our performances possible. Friends assist with box office and ushering, publicity, artist hospitality, fundraising events, and more—while enjoying camaraderie and shared passion for the arts.**

The group meets every other month on Tuesday at 1:30 PM at Marsh Creek Country Club. Annual dues are just \$20 per person.

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