



FIRST COAST OPERA *COPLAND'S AMERICA*

October 27 and 29, 2023

Curtis Tucker, General and Artistic Director

FIRST COAST OPERA

2023-2024 Season



COPLAND'S AMERICA

October 27 and 28, 2023



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Curtis Tucker, General and Artistic Director



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From the President

This is an exciting and full season for First Coast Opera! We are celebrating Curtis Tucker's tenth season with FCO with our biggest and most creative season ever.

Aaron Copland is one of the best known and loved American composers of the 20th century. He used many American songs and themes in his symphonies, ballets, and his one opera, *The Tender Land*. Tonight, the program features music and scenes from that opera set in the American Midwest.

La Bohème, by Giacomo Puccini, one of the most popular and best-loved operas of all time, will be the main-stage production at Lewis Auditorium. Join us New Year's Eve, December 31, at 7:30 pm or on December 30 for a 2 pm matinee. Raise a glass to the New Year as we experience this timeless story of love, passion, and loss. Don't miss this lavish production with full costumes, staging, orchestra, and of course, beautiful singing. This story has been produced and adapted in a variety of settings including the Broadway production "Rent" so be surprised at this creative setting of *La Bohème* with full costuming, staging, orchestra, and of course, beautiful singing.

For the first time we are including a second main stage production at Lewis Auditorium, March 15 and 17. This is the rollicking, zany *The Pirates of Penzance* by Gilbert and Sullivan. What a fun way to celebrate part of the St Augustine heritage. Laugh and be enchanted by this fanciful romp of an operetta with catchy tunes and whimsical characters.

Our special fundraising Gala this year will be a Roaring 20's Ball at the Lightner Museum on February 14, Valentine's Day. Dust off your Roaring Twenties flapper/gangsta costumes and join us for dancing to the Raisin Cake Band, sumptuous food and drinks, and a live auction. Mark your calendar for all of these wonderful events. We are ever grateful for your continued support by your attendance and your generous giving to keep Opera alive.

Kerry Fradley

Kerry Fradley, President



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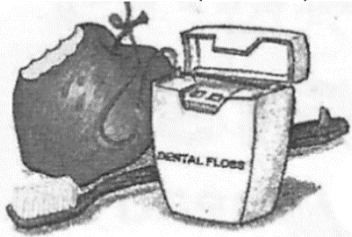
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The Friends of First Coast Opera provides volunteer support to the opera company through assistance with Box Office, Ushering, Membership, Publicity, Artist Hospitality, Fundraising Events, and in many other ways.

Meetings are held every other month on Tuesday at 2:00 PM at Marsh Creek Country Club. We would love to have you join us! Annual membership dues are \$20 per person. If you would like an “operatunity” to join the Friends, please email us for a membership form.

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NEW SEASON DATES:

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Tickets and information: www.staugband.org



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AT TOCOI CREEK HIGH SCHOOL
FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024 8PM

SPRING CONCERT w/ EMMA

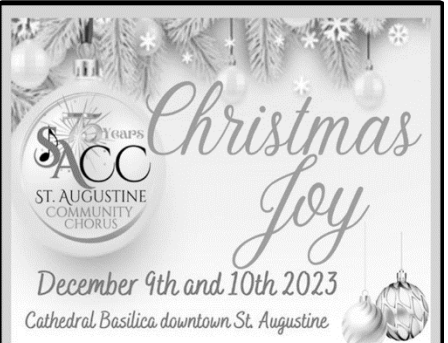
AT LEWIS AUDITORIUM
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 204 7:30PM

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'ART'

by Yasmina Reza
Translated by Christopher Hampton
Directed by David Buchman

How much would you pay for a white painting? Would it matter who the painter was? Would it be art?

November 3, 2023

For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls

by Christopher Durang
Directed by Dawn Knipe

In this parody of *The Glass Menagerie*, a fading Southern belle tries to prepare her hypersensitive, hypochondriacal son for "the feminine caller."

February 9, 2024

Salon de Paris

by Amy Lauer Goldin
Directed by Grace Reed

An original play. Cultures collide amid the faded elegance of a salon catering to a refined "mature" clientele, to the consternation of the cantankerous staff.

January 12, 2024

Other Desert Cities

by John Robin Baitz
Directed by Hazel Robinson

Brooke returns home after a 6-year absence to celebrate Christmas with her family, when she announces she's about to publish a memoir dredging up a pivotal event in the family's history they don't want revisited.

April 12, 2024



www.aclassictheatre.org

The Waterworks is available through the generous support of the City of St. Augustine and the St. Johns Cultural Council

Main Productions at The Waterworks



by Lauren Gunderson
Directed by Michael Lipp
December 1-10, 2023



by Willy Russell
Directed by Cindy Alexander
featuring Francesca Bellavista
March 1-10, 2024



A Musical Directed by Cliff Parrish
May 3-12, 2024



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Four performances
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7 p.m. December 15

1:30 p.m. & 7 p.m.

December 16

2 p.m. December 17



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Bad Boys of Opera - Oct 28



Jacksonville Symphony Holiday Pops - Dec 12

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Sofia Philharmonic - Jan. 21



Neil Berg's 50 Years of Rock n Roll - March 16



St. Augustine Orchestra - May 4

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Dr. Jonathan Dotson's amazing guitar skills will span works from Bach through Rock and an original composition from this guitar virtuoso.

Nov 11 - Soiree á Paris

Immerse yourself in a night of music and stories of the incomparable Edith Piaf as only our own international sensation Yael ZaZa Flamenca can deliver.

Jan 27, 2024 - On Point

A Cappella Quartet

This internationally renowned Jacksonville favorite will bring a variety of popular songs from rock to jazz.

Feb 3, 2024 - Dr. Richard Alston

In celebration of Black History Month, this masterful pianist/recitalist presents classical piano compositions by composers of African-American Descent.



Tickets \$20 • Get yours at
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The Waterworks is available through the generous support of the City of St. Augustine and the St. Johns Cultural Council

First Coast Opera Presents



LA BOHÈME

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Saturday, December 30 Matinee
Sunday, December 31 Champagne Performance
Lewis Auditorium
14 Granada St, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Experience the timeless passion of Puccini's masterpiece while ringing in the New Year. Prepare to laugh, weep, and feel the full range of human emotions as Puccini's lush and evocative music takes you on a journey of love and loss.

Curtis Tucker,
General and Artistic Director

TICKETS & INFORMATION:
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 La Boheme

Copland's America

Featuring music from *The Tender Land*

Music by Aaron Copland
Libretto by Horace Everett

Cast, in order of appearance

Emcee/Mr. Splinters Curtis Tucker
Ma Moss..... Caitlin McKechney
Laurie Moss, a young girl..... Megan Warburton
Grandpa MossDirk Gavin McCoy
Martin, a drifterAaron Smith
Top, a drifter.....Jacob Pence

Music Director/Pianist..... Michael Giuliani
Stage Director..... Curtis Tucker
Costume/Hair Design Deborah Smith
Props/Set Decoration Jean Rahner
..... Tom Rahner
..... Kerry Fradley
..... Vicki West
Technical SupportAndrew Schirmacher
..... Kathy Schirmacher

First Coast Opera is committed to making our productions available to all our patrons. Should you need it, a large print version of the program is available upon request.

Artist Biographies



St. Augustine baritone **Dirk Gavin McCoy** is a frequent performer with First Coast Opera. In addition to multiple FCO concerts, he has appeared as Marcello in Pasta & Puccini/*La Boheme*; Sergeant Miller in the 2018 FL premiere of Curtis Tucker's *The Stranger's Tale* (with subsequent reprisal this past week); King Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Uncle Bonzo in *Madama Butterfly*. Dirk recently sang the role of David in Samuel Barber's *A Hand of Bridge* for Jacksonville-based Bold City Opera's inaugural production. He sang the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* and the 3rd Trio Member in *Trouble in Tahiti* with the Mid-Ohio Civic Opera Company, having previously sung the role for the 2022 Romanza Festivale. Dirk has sung in the prestigious choruses of the New York City Opera and Washington National Opera, singing or covering comprimario roles in both houses.

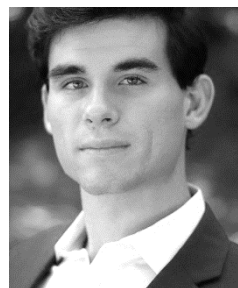
Caitlin McKechney is thrilled to be making her First Coast Opera debut! Recent performances include Bradamante in *Alcina* with St. Petersburg Opera; the title role in *Carmen* with Painted Sky Opera, Opera Memphis and Tacoma Opera; Virginia Woolf in the staged production of Argento's *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*; and Woman 4 in the world premiere of *Letters That You Will Not Get* with The American Opera Project, for which she also served as Associate Producer. Upcoming performances include *The Opera Cowgirls* performance with Pensacola Opera as well as her final DMA recital at SUNY Stony Brook, after which you may call her "Dr. McKechney."



Jacob Pence is excited to make his First Coast Opera debut in *Copland's America*. Recent performances include Sam in Curtis Tucker's *The Stranger's Tale*; Opera Orlando's *Daughter of the Regiment*; Jeff in *OutLoud!* with Opera Tampa; Ben Weatherstaff in *The Secret Garden* with Central Florida Vocal Arts; Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* with Opera Orlando; and Boy Capel in the première of Nathan Felix's new Opera, *No*.



5 *Chanel* at the Timucua Arts Foundation. Jacob Pence has also performed roles with St. Petersburg Opera, Indianapolis Opera, and Kentucky Opera. A native of Crestwood, Kentucky, Jacob is a graduate of The Ohio State University and the University of Evansville.



Aaron Smith began his musical career as a classical violinist, where he encountered and quickly fell in love with operatic style. Aaron most recently appeared as Sam in Curtis Tucker's *The Stranger's Tale*. He has performed with Arizona Opera, Druid City Opera, and at the Brevard Music Festival, including roles as Mr. Earlanston in *A Little Night Music*, The Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Aaron also enjoys performing concert works. He was privileged to appear as the soloist in Joseph Julian Gonzalez's work *Misa Azteca* and as the tenor soloist cover in Verdi's *Requiem* under Kieth Lockhart. When not singing, Aaron performs as an improv violinist and studio musician.

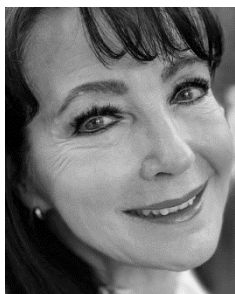


Soprano **Megan Warburton** is pleased to make her First Coast Opera debut. She recently performed as Kay in Curtis Tucker's *The Strangers Tale*; sang with the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra as the soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana* and as Sophie in *Werther* with the University of Michigan. Other highlights include Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, La Feé in *Cendrillon*, and Joyce in *Triangle* at the University of Michigan, covering Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* as a Young Artist with Opera Saratoga, and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Second Woman in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Emily in *Help, Help, the Globolinks!* at Utah State University. Ms. Warburton sings as a soloist in concerts and festivals around the globe including Celebración de las Naciones in Guayaquil Ecuador and Year of the Woman Concert with the American Festival Chorus and Orchestra in Northern Utah. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan's Master of Music program and teaches at the College of Charleston.



Curtis Tucker celebrates his tenth season as General and Artistic Director with First Coast Opera. During his tenure, the company has expanded its performances and budget and been recognized as a Professional Company Member of Opera America. This season he directs *Copland's America*, conducts *La Bohème*, and sings Major General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Elsewhere, he has led concerts and productions for Cincinnati Opera, Opera Memphis, Opera Saratoga, Syracuse Opera, Mobile Opera, University of Mobile, 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 his opera *The Stranger's Tale* recently received a performance grant from United Arts of Central Florida.

A sought-after collaborative pianist and organist of unique versatility, **Michael Giuliani** graduated from North Park University in Chicago, IL with a degree in piano, and went on to pursue a Master's degree in organ at Concordia University Chicago. He has held positions with Charleston Southern University, North Central College, Tim Zimmerman & The King's Brass, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Gospel & Spiritual ensembles, and the acclaimed St. Charles Singers, among others. Primarily a church musician, Michael is currently the Director of Music & Organist at Trinity Parish in beautiful downtown St. Augustine.



Deborah Smith has been a professional actor for over 30 years performing locally in such shows as *Showboat*, *Christmas Carole*, *King and I*, and *Lend Me a Tenor*, to name a few. Deborah has also worked both backstage in makeup and hair for the First Coast Opera as well as costumed several operas including *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *La Bohème*, *Cox and Box/ Penelope's Revenge*, *Le Doctor Miracle* and *Bon Appetit*. Deborah and husband Michael are retired (well, maybe almost!) and living in beautiful Saint Augustine with two cats.



Part of bringing these programs to you involves recruiting talent from out of town. In order to do that, we need to find homes for our visiting artists to stay.

There are no expectations on the host to feed or entertain their guests; they will be quite busy preparing for the show! We also need drivers to run to the airport, and sometimes we even need to borrow a car.

BE OUR GUEST! We would be glad to offer our hosts two tickets to the performance.

We are looking for homes now for December and March. If you can help us, contact fcopera@gmail.com or call 904-417-5555.

Thank You

To this program's hosts.

Cindy Alexander
John Bova & Chong Ae Whang
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Nancy Perry
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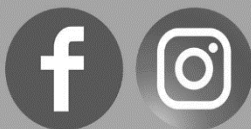
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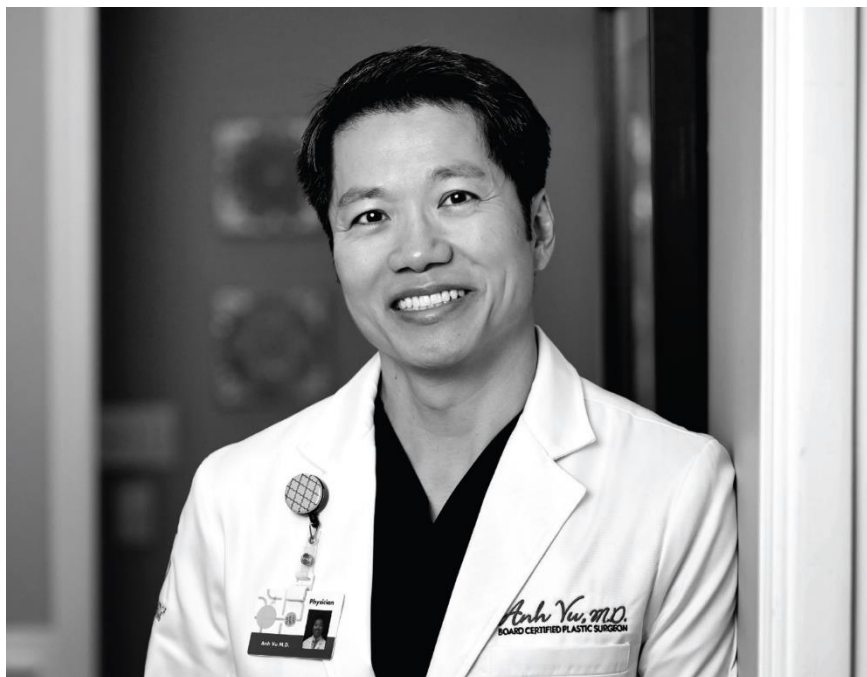
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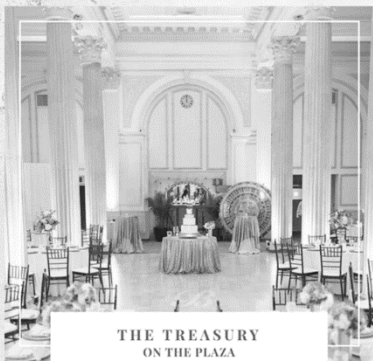


THE TREASURY
ON THE PLAZA

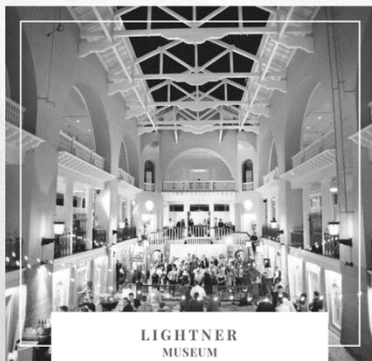


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THE TREASURY
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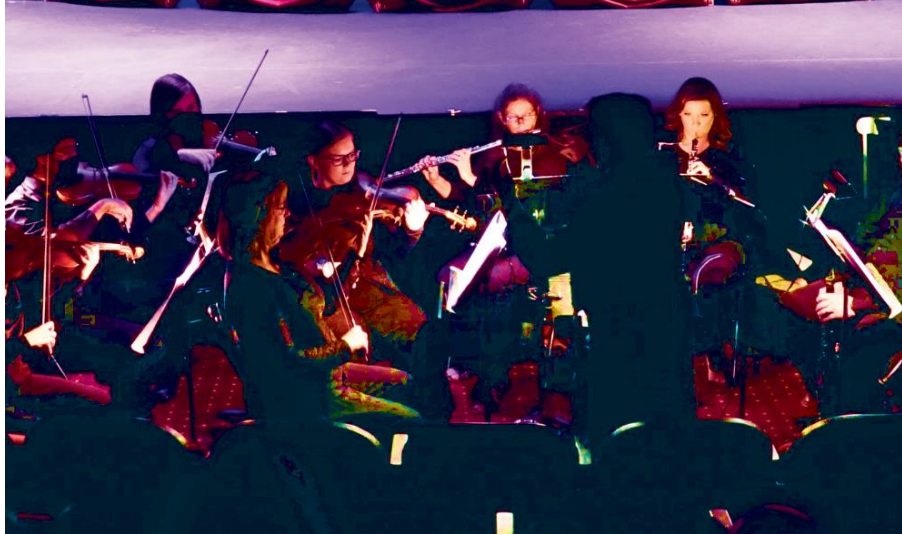


LIGHTNER
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