



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Images at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/mqcdkpr71nw1ase8ebkfk/AKE07V8mNj5UmHoxedTOAbM?rlkey=ixt1qh3kg46eh6lh08wlcbb2y&st=l9ad8svm&dl=0>

Auditions Now Open until Aug. 30 for Sarasota Youth Opera's Fall Production, *Rootabaga Country*

Sarasota, FL – Young performers may now register to audition to be a part of Sarasota Youth Opera's fall production of Rachel J. Peter's *Rootabaga Country*. This is a fully staged production with professional sets, costumes, and live orchestra, with the Youth Opera singing the lead roles and chorus.

Inspired by Carl Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*, this whimsical adventure follows a family of a father and two children as they journey through the imaginative landscape of Rootabaga Country to learn more about the mother they miss. Along the way, they discover that love and belonging come in many forms, offering a gentle, resonant reflection on curiosity, courage, and the shape of family. Musically crafted for young voices yet rich in character, *Rootabaga Country* blends playful storytelling with heartfelt themes.

In addition to performing in *Rootabaga Country*, Youth Opera members will also have the opportunity to audition to be part of Sarasota Opera's Fall Mainstage production as part of the Children's Chorus in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* where they will perform on the Opera House stage with professional opera singers. Members can also audition to join

the Children's Chorus of Sarasota Orchestra's *Carmina Burana*, being performed in the winter on the Van Wezel stage.

FALL 2026 DATES, TIMES, AND INFO:

- The semester starts the week of Monday, August 17 and culminates with performances of *Rootabaga Country* on November 7 and 8.
- Program enrollment opened June 19 and runs through **August 30**. Auditions will be held by appointment.
- All rehearsals and performances take place at the Sarasota Opera House, 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota.
- The official rehearsal calendar will be sent out upon acceptance.
- Tuition assistance is awarded on a need-based policy. Decisions are communicated upon acceptance into the program.
- To register to audition, visit <https://www.sarasotaopera.org/youth-opera-program>

Prep Chorus: Ages 8-10

- Must be 8 or older by Dec. 31, 2026
- Tuition **\$250**

Mixed Chorus: Ages 11 and above (based on ability)

- Must be 11 or older by Dec. 31, 2026
- Tuition **\$325**

ABOUT SARASOTA YOUTH OPERA

Sarasota Youth Opera is a national model for opera education and one of a few programs in the United States that presents an annual fully staged Youth Opera production with professional orchestra, sets, and costumes, where our young singers are given a chance to shine. Our mission is to attain the highest level of artistic excellence through quality instruction from noted professionals in the opera industry and through participation in Youth Opera productions, Sarasota Opera main stage productions, concerts throughout the community, and summer camps. We pride ourselves in encouraging personal and social growth in our members by fostering a sense of self-worth, self-esteem, leadership, accomplishment, pride, cooperation, and enriching the lives of young people of all backgrounds. More information: [Youth Opera Program](#) | [Sarasota Opera](#)

Sarasota Opera • 61 N. Pineapple Avenue • Sarasota, FL 34236 • (941) 366-8450
SarasotaOpera.org



ABOUT SARASOTA OPERA

Sarasota Opera is in its 68th season of bringing world-class opera to Florida's Gulf Coast and celebrating 100 years of the historic Sarasota Opera House. The company was launched in 1960 in the historic 320-seat Asolo Theater on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art. In 1984, the company moved into the former A.B. Edwards Theater — now the Sarasota Opera House. Since then, the company has gained an international reputation as one of the leading regional opera companies in the U.S. through initiatives such as the Masterworks Revival Series and the Verdi Cycle. The company's Sarasota Youth Opera is the most comprehensive youth opera program in the U.S. The Sarasota Opera House, which underwent a \$20 million renovation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Richard Russell has served as General Director since 2012 and added the role of Artistic Director in June 2026. Sarasota Opera is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts. Programs are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.