



SARASOTA OPERA

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Contact: Lael Mohib

Email: lmohib@sarasotaopera.org

Phone: 202.257.4822

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Sarasota Opera Presents Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* March 14 – 28, 2026

February 23, 2026—Sarasota Opera will open *Susannah* on Saturday, March 14—the fourth and final production in its 2026 Winter Festival. Audiences have six opportunities to see the production, which runs through March 28. With music and libretto by Carlisle Floyd – whose centenary is being commemorated this year – the opera follows an innocent young woman as she falls under the jealous scrutiny of her rural Appalachian community in 1950s Tennessee, and explores themes of religious hypocrisy, isolation, and loss of innocence.

First staged at Florida State University in 1955, *Susannah* is loosely based on the biblical tale from the Apocrypha of *Susannah and the Elders*. In the opera, Susannah is a young lady of humble origins living in a small mountain town in Tennessee who is falsely targeted as a sinner. When the traveling preacher Reverend Olin Blich appears at her door offering redemption, tragic events unfold that force Susannah to take a stand for her dignity. *Susannah* is one of the most celebrated American operas, and even more significant this year as it is performed in the state where it premiered and in recognition of Floyd's 100th birthday.

Carlisle Floyd—himself the son of a Methodist minister—says he drew inspiration from a creative writing teacher in college who advised him to ‘write what you know.’ Stage director Martha Collins writes, “Floyd’s score is renowned for its melodic accessibility and directness, blending American folk melodies, traditional folk hymns and powerful operatic drama which perfectly depicts the moods and tension of this Tennessee setting.”

Why You Should See It

Since *Susannah*'s 1955 premiere at Florida State University, the opera continues to be one of the most powerful and frequently performed American operas, due to its beautiful, folk-influenced melodies and a story that seems as relevant today as it was during the era in which it was written.

Artists and Creative Team

Sarasota Opera favorite soprano Hanna Brammer (*Gilda*, *Rigoletto*; *Juliette*, *Roméo et Juliette*;

Fiordiligi, *Così fan tutte*) returns to play the title role in *Susannah*. Bass-baritone Jason Zacher plays Olin Blicht in his Sarasota Opera debut, and tenor Jeremy Brauner is Susannah's protective brother Sam. The production will be conducted by Jessé Martins and directed by Martha Collins, with scenic design by Keith Brumley, costume design by Howard Tsvi Kaplan, and lighting design by Ken Yunker.

Performance Dates

Saturday, March 14, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. (Opening night)

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 22, 2026 at 1:30 p.m. (Matinee)

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 28, 2026 at 1:30 p.m. (Matinee)

Explore and Engage

For a deeper understanding of *Susannah*, guests are invited to enjoy a specially curated *Susannah* [Spotify Playlist](#) and the latest episode of Sarasota Opera's **Behind the Blue Curtain** podcast: [Susannah: Sin, a loss of innocence, and repentance](#) featuring **Martha Collins** with soprano **Hanna Brammer** (*Susannah*) and conductor **Christopher James Ray**, former assistant and protégé of Carlisle Floyd, who reflects on Floyd's legacy, his mentorship, and why *Susannah* remains one of the most enduring and relevant works in American opera.

Tickets are available at the Sarasota Opera Box Office, by phone at (941) 328-1300, in person at 61 N. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota, or online at tickets.sarasotaopera.org.

About Sarasota Opera

Sarasota Opera is in its 67th 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 and rehabilitation in 2007, has been called "one of America's finest venues for opera" by Musical America. Since 1983, the company has been under the artistic leadership of Victor DeRenzi and the administrative leadership of General Director Richard Russell since 2012. In June 2026 Maestro DeRenzi will be stepping down from the company and Mr. Russell will add Artistic Director to his responsibilities. 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.

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