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Sarasota Opera Receives \$30,000 Grant from Community Foundation of Sarasota County

August 26, 2026 — Sarasota Opera has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County in support of [Sarasota Youth Opera](#) and Education programs and the company's Aficionado Dinner. The funding will help expand access to high-quality arts education, live opera experiences, and meaningful engagement opportunities for young people, families, educators, and community supporters throughout Sarasota County.

Support from the Foundation will sustain programs that introduce students and families to opera as a living, welcoming art form. Through Sarasota Youth Opera Choruses, young performers receive more than 400 hours of extracurricular instruction each school year, building vocal technique, musicianship, stage presence, confidence, collaboration, and a sense of belonging. Productions such as [Rootabaga Country](#) (Youth Opera's 2026 Fall production) give young performers leading roles in a professional setting while student audiences see their peers succeed on stage.

The grant will also support school-based and community learning opportunities, including Invitation to Opera, Youth Opera Matinees, Artists in Schools, Opera House Tours, and access to Winter Opera Festival dress rehearsals.

"We are deeply grateful to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County for investing in Sarasota Opera's education and community engagement programs," said Richard Russell, General & Artistic Director. "This support helps ensure that students can learn from professional artists, experience live performance, and discover the many creative and administrative careers that make opera possible."

A portion of the funding will also support Sarasota Opera's Aficionado Dinner, an annual stewardship event for Leadership donors giving as Double Co-Producers or more annually. The event celebrates patrons whose generosity helps Sarasota Opera produce operas that entertain, enrich, educate, and inspire diverse and growing communities.

For more information about Sarasota Opera and its education programs, visit SarasotaOpera.org.

About the Community Foundation of Sarasota County

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County is a public charity founded in 1979 by the Southwest Florida Estate Planning Council as a resource for caring individuals and the causes they support, enabling them to make a charitable impact on the community. With assets of \$605 million in more than 1,600 charitable funds, the Community Foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$44.7 million last year in the areas of education, the arts, health and human services, civic engagement, animal welfare and the environment. Since its founding, the Community Foundation has been able to grant \$542 million to nonprofits in our community thanks to the generosity of charitable individuals, families and businesses. For more information, visit cfsarasota.org or call 941-955-3000.

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