

Floyd's "Susannah" Takes to the Howard Stage

Department of Music presents spring opera production

[Music](#) | Posted on March 22, 2016



Emily McAndrew and David Ortiz, playing main characters Susannah Polk and her brother Sam, rehearse in the Howard Performing Arts Center. Tickets to the March 31 and April 2 performances are available at howard.andrews.edu. (Photo by Darren Heslop)

By: Becky St. Clair

Andrews University's Department of Music invites the public to attend one of two performances of Carlisle Floyd's "Susannah," an opera in two acts. Performances will take place at the Howard Performing Arts Center on Thursday, March 31, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, April 2, at 8:30 p.m.

"For many people opera is an unexplored genre," says Charles Reid, associate professor of voice and artist-in-residence in the Department of Music, director of the production. "Some may assume its primary function is to entertain the audience, but in reality, composers and librettists have historically used this medium to shine light on societal and political situations."

Written during the height of McCarthyism, the story of "Susannah" takes place in New Hope Valley in the Smoky Mountains in a time before modern transportation and communication. This secluded holler is filled with well-meaning people devoted to their faith and community, but

some choose to lie about another to disguise their own moral failings. An American tragedy ensues, destroying the lives of many, all the result of lies, gossip and spiritual pride.

“When Floyd created Susannah he refused to openly admit it was a direct criticism of the McCarthy trials, yet the message is striking,” says Reid. “Today the story is still relevant as we consider the current political environment and the prevalent fear of the ‘other’ witnessed all around the nation and sometimes even within our own community.”

This production features Andrews University students and faculty, starring Emily McAndrew as Susannah Polk. Graduate conducting student Meriel Loura directs the orchestra for both performances.

Please note that there is a parental caution for this performance, due to the mature subject matter.

Tickets are \$7 general admission and \$5 Andrews students and seniors, and can be purchased at howard.andrews.edu or by calling the Box Office at 269-471-3560.

Contact:

PR

pr@andrews.edu

269-471-3322