

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

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## **Pittsburgh Opera Announces 2009-2010 Season: Discover Yourself**

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2008-2009  
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**Pittsburgh, PA...** [Pittsburgh Opera](#) announces its [2009-2010 season](#), "Discover Yourself", opening September 26 at the Benedum Center. The season focuses on masterpieces of the literary and theater worlds, from Beaumarchais's once-banned *Le Mariage de Figaro* to Pushkin's "novel in verse," *Eugene Onegin*, to Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Lucrece*. The operas on the 2009-2010 mainstage will be Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* will be performed by the Resident Artists at CAPA Theater.

[General Director Christopher Hahn](#) believes the Pittsburgh Opera audiences will be pleased with the variety of offerings and artists on the season: "I am proud that we are able to offer such wonderful productions and casts, in the current environment. We have worked very hard to make sure we continue to present a superb artistic product, while making a real effort to keep opera as accessible as possible, with our new lowest ticket price at \$10, and our new lowest subscription price at \$42."

Pittsburgh Opera's [Music Director Antony Walker](#), who conducts three mainstage operas in the 2009-2010 season, says, "It is no wonder that we often return to the masterpieces for inspiration – they always have something new to teach us in the context of our daily lives and, because they continue to inspire, they also give us hope for the future."

New Year's Eve 2009 presents an opportunity for Pittsburgh Opera to fill a void in the social calendar – the need for an extraordinary event on what should be a truly romantic night of

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the year. Pittsburgh Opera will offer *Auld Lang Syne*, an evening in three parts: elegant dinner, concert and party, all at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. Western Pennsylvania native, Pittsburgh Opera favorite, and Duquesne University alumna, mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti will give an unforgettable concert with orchestra, coupled with candlelight dinner and dancing, for a classic New Year's Eve experience. Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artists join the concert, and Pittsburgh Opera Music Director Antony Walker conducts. More details will be announced in July 2009.

The company also plans to launch its new website on February 16, which includes significant improvements in functionality and aesthetics. In process since summer 2008, the website will include an interactive calendar, an enhanced ticketing interface, slide-show capability, and a content management program for convenient in-house updates and additions. Flexibility is a huge asset with the new website, which is capable of hosting audio/video clips and gives the company many new options to facilitate the perception of opera as the three-dimensional art form it truly is. The company's public relations and marketing efforts will also incorporate more website use.

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Subscription renewals begin February 16; subscription prices are \$42 - \$562 for the mainstage series of four operas. For more subscription information, call 412-281-0912, ext. 1.

## 2009-2010 Season Highlights

**September 26 – October 4, 2009:** Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, showcasing the ravishing soprano Anna Samuil as Tatiana, Metropolitan Opera baritone Dwayne Croft in the title role, Susanne Mentzer as Madame Larina, and Pittsburghers Raymond Very (as the poet Lensky) and Susan Shafer (as Filipyevna) in a stylish production from Vancouver Opera. Music Director Antony Walker conducts this elegant evocation of love and class differences in Czarist Russia; Sam Helfrich (2005 *The Turn of the Screw*) directs.

**September 26, 2009:** Opening Night will showcase the 55<sup>th</sup> annual [Diamond Horseshoe Celebration](#). Details will be announced at a later date.

**October 24 – November 1, 2009:** Mark Delavan (2000 *The Marriage of Figaro*) as Sir John Falstaff and Veronica Villarroel (2007's *Butterfly*) as Alice Ford square off in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Music Director Antony Walker conducts; Paula Williams (2006 *Tosca*, 2003 *Il barbiere di Siviglia*) directs the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production from San Francisco Opera that exudes the rustic charm of Elizabethan England.

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**December 31, 2009:** *Auld Lang Syne*, a classic New Year's Eve with Pittsburgh Opera at Carnegie Music Hall, starring Marianne Cornetti and the Resident Artists, with Antony Walker conducting the orchestra.

**January 30 – February 7, 2010:** Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artists perform in Britten's intense, provocative chamber opera *The Rape of Lucretia* in a new Pittsburgh Opera production, at CAPA Theater downtown.

**February 26, 2010:** Perennial favorite *Cabaret* shows off the versatility of our Resident Artists – leave your opera glasses at home, let your hair down, and enjoy a program of musical theater and novelty songs. At Pittsburgh Opera's Bold New Home in the Strip District. Details to be announced at a later date.

**March 20 – 28, 2010:** Bizet's *Carmen* returns to Pittsburgh Opera in the guise of mezzo-soprano Kate Aldrich, a former Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist who is earning rave reviews for the role on world stages. Antony Walker conducts in this classic production from Austin Lyric Opera, which features fast-rising stars Roger Honeywell as Don Jose and Kelly Markgraf as Escamillo, as well as Yali-Marie Williams as Micaëla. Eric Einhorn (2006 *Xerxes*, 2009 *Don Pasquale*) will direct.

**April 24 – May 2, 2010:** Arriving in spring, *The Marriage of Figaro* lifts our spirits as only Mozart can. Pittsburgher Sari Gruber (2006 *Così fan tutte*) and Resident Artist alumnus Oren Gradus (2005 *Faust*) star as Susanna and Figaro, with Michael Todd Simpson (2006 *Pagliacci*) and Pamela Armstrong (2009 *La bohème*, 2001 *Don Giovanni*) as Count and Countess Almaviva. Zheng Cao (2007 *Madame Butterfly*, 2004 *Julius Caesar*) sings Cherubino; Kevin Glavin (2007 *The Elixir of Love*, 2003 *Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Joseph Gaines take the comic roles of Dr. Bartolo and Don Basilio, respectively. Kristine McIntyre (2008 *Flight*, 2002 *La Clemenza di Tito*) directs; Gary Thor Wedow conducts (2006 *Xerxes*, 2002 *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*).

**May 15, 2010:** [Maecenas XXVI](#), consistently listed as one of Pittsburgh's Top 10 Parties. Details to be announced at a later date.

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## 2009-2010 Season

### ***Eugene Onegin***

By Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky

September 26, 29; October 2, 4, 2009

*Sung in Russian with English translations projected above the stage.*

Pushkin's "novel in verse" inspired Tchaikovsky's grand treatment of a story of love that could never be: the soulful country girl Tatiana and the nobleman Eugene Onegin in Czarist Russia. Such tragedy is rarely so elegant: Tatiana's Letter Scene, beautiful dancing, and a magnificent set make this the season opener not to miss.

Anna Samuil's performance as Tatiana at Salzburg in 2007 (available on DVD) has earned her rave reviews; she stars alongside Metropolitan Opera baritone Dwayne Croft in his signature role as Onegin, with Susanne Mentzer as Madame Larina, Raymond Very as Lensky and Susan Shafer as Filipyevna. Pittsburgh Opera Music Director Antony Walker conducts; Sam Helfrich directs.

- "Anna Samuil is an ideal Tatiana par excellence, who can combine youthfulness and deep passion seamlessly..." – *Neues Deutschland*
- "a brilliantly phrased, lyric and dramatic soprano." *Nachrichten*
- "[Dwayne Croft] has become an incomparable Onegin." – *Washington Post*

### ***Falstaff***

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

October 24, 27, 30; November 1, 2009

*Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.*

The amorous pursuits of Sir John Falstaff are thwarted not once, but twice when he takes on the Merry Wives of Windsor in this Shakespeare classic. Widely considered to be Verdi's masterpiece, ***Falstaff*** is full of hilarity and pratfalls, starring Mark Delavan in the title role, and Veronica Villarroel as his comic foil, Alice Ford, who finally teaches the old man a lesson in love, with a little help from the Merry Wives of Windsor.

- "Mark Delavan sang Falstaff with deeply colored tone and an easy surplus of range and volume. He offered a well-developed portrait of the self deluded, pompous old rogue. He owned the performance, as any fine Falstaff must." – *Opera Canada*
- "Soprano Veronica Villarroel made a lively, burgundy-toned Alice Ford. The role seemed to fit the Chilean-born singer like a perfectly laced Elizabethan shoe, and she made a charming leader of the merry wives." – *Chicago Tribune*  
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## ***The Rape of Lucretia***

By Benjamin Britten

January 30; February 2, 5, 7, 2010

**Performed by the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artists at CAPA Theater**

*Sung in English with English translations projected above the stage.*

"In the forest of my dreams, you have always been the tiger!" Lucretia's story as told by Britten is compelling and tragic, his first "chamber opera." The ancient tale comes to Pittsburgh Opera via its Resident Artists program, in a new production. Britten's captivating score illuminates the story of Lucretia's faithfulness, the injustice visited upon her, and the real historical implications.

## ***Carmen***

By Georges Bizet

March 20, 23, 26, 28, 2010

*Sung in French with English translations projected above the stage.*

Kate Aldrich, a former Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist, again graces the stage at the Benedum Center, this time as the unbridled, compulsive Carmen, who must "live free and die free." Caught up in her passion are Don Jose (Roger Honeywell), Escamillo (Kelly Markgraf), and Micaëla (Yali-Marie Williams), a wild passion that can end in no other way but death. Bizet's beloved score, including the famous Habanera and Toreador Song, will be used in its original *Opéra comique* form, with spoken dialogue.

- "Kate Aldrich has all the elements of the Carmen package- movie-star beauty, dancer body and sensational voice—in a combo with "star" stamped all over it." – *Opera News*
- "Honeywell's voice has a distinctive quality and he has the vocal strength and ringing top register needed for this, the most dramatic role in the opera. ...the famous Flower Song in the second act [was] the high point it needs to be..." – *Calgary Herald*

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## ***The Marriage of Figaro***

By Wolfgang A. Mozart

April 24, 27, 30; May 2, 2010

*Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.*

Who can resist the return of love in spring? When Mozart tells the story of Susanna and Figaro's wedding day, love is in the air, behind a door, under a chair, and in everyone's hearts, when all is said and done. Sari Gruber and Oren Gradus headline as Susanna and Figaro, along with Michael Todd Simpson and Pamela Armstrong as the Count and Countess. Zheng Cao is Cherubino; Kevin Glavin and Joseph Gaines appear as Dr. Bartolo and Basilio in this classic farce – with some of the tenderest moments in opera – that romps through an 18<sup>th</sup>-century ducal palace.

- "Oren Gradus proves himself as one of the finest young basses in the world today." – San Francisco Sentinel
- Gruber as the wily Susanna ...draws all eyes whenever on stage, her perkiness and sensuality topped by a strong, clear voice capable of many colors and emotions." – *The News & Observer*
- "[Simpson was]...superb as Count Almaviva with a powerful voice and a surprising level of vulnerability, not just vengefulness." – Washington Post
- "Pamela Armstrong...had no problem projecting her luscious, creamy voice. So focused was it that both of her arias – especially the soft reprise in 'Dove sono'– reached the ear with ravishing effect. On top of that, Armstrong offered a detailed characterization. The pain at her husband's philandering, revealed so publicly at the end of the third act, registered with persuasive impact." – Los Angeles Times
- "A gifted comedienne, Zheng Cao was a definitive Cherubino who stole many of 'his' scenes. She has excellent stylistic command and sang with flexibility as she produced floods of honeyed sound." – Opera Japonica.com

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## **Additional Events**

***Free pre-opera talks***— One hour before each performance, General Director Christopher Hahn and a Pittsburgh Opera staff member give a lively 30-minute preview in the Orchestra level of the Benedum Center. Free for ticketholders.

***Free Brown Bag concerts*** – these free, 30-minute concerts by our Resident Artists and our arts partner groups continue on selected Saturdays in Pittsburgh Opera's Bold New Home at 2425 Liberty Avenue. See [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) for a confirmed 2009-10 schedule after July 1, 2009.

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**Free Opera Up Close events**—in-depth looks at the upcoming production, with the artists that make them happen, on selected Saturdays at Pittsburgh Opera's Bold New Home at 2425 Liberty Avenue. Free and open to the public, following selected Brown Bag concert dates. See [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) for a confirmed 2009-10 schedule after July 1, 2009.

**Meet the Artists**—Christopher Hahn and cast members meet the audience for refreshments and repartee in the Lower Lobby of the Benedum Center following each Tuesday evening mainstage performance.

## **2009-2010 Season Cast List**

*as of February 4, 2009; cast is subject to change*

### ***Eugene Onegin***

Conductor

[Antony Walker](#)

Stage Director

Sam Helfrich

Production

Vancouver Opera

Set Designer

Neil Patel

Costume Designer

Isabella Bywater

Lighting Designer

Cindy Limauro

Choreography

Michele de la Reza and Peter Kope, Attack Theatre

Wig & Makeup Designer

James Geier

Tatiana

Anna Samuil+

Eugene Onegin

Dwayne Croft+

Vladimir Lensky

Raymond Very+

Olga

Lindsay Ammann+ \*

Madame Larina

Susanne Mentzer

Nurse Filipyevna

Susan Shafer

Monsieur Triquet

Joseph Frank

Zaretsky

Liam Moran\*

Prince Gremin

TBA

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<p>+ Pittsburgh Opera debuts * Pittsburgh Opera <a href="#">Resident Artist</a> ** Pittsburgh Opera <a href="#">Resident Artist alumni</a></p>
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## ***Falstaff***

Conductor  
 Stage Director  
 Production  
 Set Designer  
 Costume Designer  
 Lighting Designer  
 Wig & Makeup Designer  
 Sir John Falstaff  
 Fenton  
 Ford  
 Alice Ford  
 Nannetta  
 Mistress Quickly  
 Dr. Caius  
 Bardolfo  
 Pistola  
 Meg Page  
 Robin, the Page

## [Antony Walker](#)

Paula Williams  
 San Francisco Opera  
 Jean-Pierre Ponnelle  
 Jean-Pierre Ponnelle  
 Cindy Limauro  
 James Geier  
 Mark Delavan  
 TBA  
 Stephen Powell+  
 Veronica Villarroel  
 Shannon Kessler+\*  
 Lindsay Ammann\*  
 Joseph Gaines+  
 Doug Jones+  
 Kevin Glavin\*\*  
 Katherine Drago\*  
 TBA

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## ***Carmen***

Conductor  
 Stage Director  
 Production  
 Set Designer  
 Costume Designer  
 Lighting Designer  
 Choreographer  
 Wig & Makeup Designer  
 Carmen  
 Don Jose  
 Micaëla  
 Escamillo  
 Zuniga  
 Moralès  
 Frasquita  
 Mercédès  
 Dancaïro  
 Remendado

## [Antony Walker](#)

Eric Einhorn  
 Austin Lyric Opera  
 Charles Allen Klein  
 Lennart Mork  
 TBA  
 TBA  
 James Geier  
 Kate Aldrich\*\*  
 Roger Honeywell+  
 Yalí-Marie Williams+  
 Kelly Markgraf  
 Liam Moran\*  
 Dan Kempson+\*  
 Shannon Kessler\*  
 TBA  
 TBA  
 TBA

<p>+ Pittsburgh Opera debuts                  * Pittsburgh Opera <u><a href="#">Resident Artist</a></u>                  ** Pittsburgh Opera <u><a href="#">Resident Artist alumni</a></u></p>
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## *The Marriage of Figaro*

Conductor	Gary Thor Wedow
Stage Director	Kristine McIntyre
Production	Glimmerglass Opera
Set Designer	Benoit Dugardyn
Costume Designer	Johann Stegmeir
Wig & Makeup Designer	James Geier
Figaro	Oren Gradus**
Susanna	Sari Gruber
Countess	Pamela Armstrong
Count Almaviva	Michael Todd Simpson
Cherubino	Zheng Cao
Dr. Bartolo	Kevin Glavin**
Marcellina	Lindsay Ammann*
Don Basilio/Curzio	Joseph Gaines
Antonio	Liam Moran*
Barbarina	TBA

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## *The Rape of Lucretia*

Conductor	TBA
Director	TBA
Production	<a href="#">Pittsburgh Opera</a> (new production)
Set Designer	TBA
Costume Designer	Toni West
Lighting Designer	Stevie O'Brian Agnew
Wig & Makeup Designer	James Geier

Male Chorus	TBA
Female Chorus	Danielle Pastin*
Collatinus	Liam Moran*
Junius	TBA
Tarquinius	Dan Kempson*
Lucretia	Lindsay Ammann*
Bianca	TBA
Lucia	Shannon Kessler*

<p>+ Pittsburgh Opera debuts * Pittsburgh Opera <a href="#">Resident Artist</a> ** Pittsburgh Opera <a href="#">Resident Artist alumni</a></p>
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*[Pittsburgh Opera](#), now celebrating its 70th season, is one of America's leading opera companies. It produces a range of programs, from mainstage productions to free community concerts to intimate cabarets. Pittsburgh Opera's internationally renowned resident artist program is among the country's top five training centers for rising opera stars. More than 20,000 students, families and educators participate in Pittsburgh Opera educational events annually. The company's newly designed administrative and rehearsal space is housed in a 140-year-old air brake factory in the city's Strip District.*

## **2008-2009 Season**

[Samson & Dalila](#) by Camille Saint-Saëns – October 18, 21, 24, 26, 2008

[The Grapes of Wrath](#) by Ricky Ian Gordon – November 15, 18, 21, 23, 2008

[Don Pasquale](#) by Gaetano Donizetti – February 7, 10, 13, 15, 2009

[La Bohème](#) by Giacomo Puccini – March 28, 31, April 3, 5, 2009

[The Italian Girl in Algiers](#) (L'italiana in Algeri) by Gioachino Rossini – May 2, 5, 8, 10, 2009

*Subscriptions for as little as \$41. Single tickets for as little as \$16. For ticket information visit our website [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) or call (412) 281-0912*

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