

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

*For Immediate Release*

*March 24, 2009*

**Contact:**

Kesha M. Pate, Public Relations Manager  
[kpate@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:kpate@pittsburghopera.org) or (412) 281-0912 ext 248

**Photos:**

Allison M. Ruppert, Marketing and Community Relations Manager  
[aruppert@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:aruppert@pittsburghopera.org) or (412) 281-0912 ext 262

## **Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Alumni Receive Prestigious George London Awards**

**Pittsburgh, PA...** [Pittsburgh Opera](#) Resident Artist alumni Sean Panikkar and Arthur Espiritu have been awarded the prestigious George London Award at the 38th annual George London Foundation Awards Competition.

*Experience is  
Everything  
2008-2009  
Season*

The awards are given annually to outstanding young professional opera singers to support and nurture the artists in the often difficult early stages of their careers. 100 contestants were chosen from over 300 applicants and only 26 competed in the final round.

Sean Panikkar, a tenor, was awarded the George London Award in memory of Lise Seligmann, sponsored by the Herbert J. Seligmann Charitable Trust, and a \$10,000 prize. Panikkar, a 2004-2005 Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumnus, most recently performed with the company as Jim Casy in this season's production of [The Grapes of Wrath](#). During his time as a Resident Artists, Panikkar performed as Giuseppe in *La traviata* and Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Panikkar also returned to Pittsburgh Opera in the 2006-2007 season as the First Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*.

Arthur Espiritu, also a tenor, received the George London Award and a \$10,000 prize in this year's competition. Espiritu was a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 seasons, returning in the 2007-2008 season as Tebaldo in the production of *The Capulets and the Montagues*. As a Resident Artist, Espiritu performed as Brighella in *Ariadne Auf Naxos*, First Priest in *The Magic Flute*, Beppe in *Pagliacci* and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*.

*(more)*

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

## The George London Foundation

The George London Foundation for Singers presents awards to outstanding young professional opera singers to support and nurture young singers during the financially difficult early stages of their careers. The award is named in honor of the great American bass-baritone, George London (1920-1985).

The competition is held each spring for American and Canadian singers in New York City at the Morgan Library & Museum in the Gilder Lehrman Hall, with thousands of dollars awarded to the most promising young performers. Previous award winners include Christine Brewer, Renée Fleming, Catherine Malfitano, James Morris, Matthew Polenzani, Sondra Radvanovsky, Neil Shicoff, and Dawn Upshaw.

For more information about the foundation, visit [www.georgelondon.org](http://www.georgelondon.org).

*Experience is  
Everything  
2008-2009  
Season*

*[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*

###