

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

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## **Pittsburgh Opera Bids a Fond Farewell to the 2008-2009 Resident Artists**

**Pittsburgh, PA**...As the [2008-2009 season](#) comes to a close, [Pittsburgh Opera](#) is preparing to bid the current class of [Resident Artists](#) a fond farewell. Each year, a wonderfully talented group of young opera singers is chosen to enter the [Resident Artist Program](#) from a pool of over 600 applicants through a highly competitive audition process. This season's amazing young artists have upheld the tradition of excellence that has come to be expected from Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artists.

*Discover Yourself*  
 2009-2010  
 Season

"This has been a really encouraging season for our Resident Artists," said [General Director Christopher Hahn](#). "It was a pleasure to have these talented young artists in the program this year. Including them in our mainstage productions has given them the experience they will need for successful professional careers, while helping the company put on the high level of artistic excellence our patrons have come to expect from us."

This season, the Resident Artists have performed 5 supporting roles and 10 primary roles in the Company's mainstage productions. In addition, each year Pittsburgh Opera mounts a fully-staged production with Resident Artists featured in all of the roles. This season's production was the delightful comedy [Don Pasquale](#), performed at CAPA Theater.

Performing so many roles, each with its own challenges and rewards, is vital to the advanced development of the Resident Artists. Having first-hand experience in mainstage performances while being guided and educated by some of the industry's leading directors, artists, conductors and administrators is vital to the singers' overall development.

"We invest a great deal in each of the young artists," said [Glenn Lewis, Head of Music](#) for Pittsburgh Opera. "It is always tough when it's time for them to move on, but it is very rewarding to see how much they've grown over such a short period of time."

Three of the Resident Artists – [Katherine Drago](#), [Liam Moran](#) and [Danielle Pastin](#) – will be returning for the 2009-2010 season, while four – [Jonathan Beyer](#), [Carlos Feliciano](#), [Dean Kokanos](#) and [Deborah Selig](#) – will be continuing their professional careers.

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"I am very proud of our Resident Artists this season," said [Mark Trawka, Pittsburgh Opera Director of Musical Studies and Chorus Master](#). "They have given us some great performances this season and I look forward to following all of their careers."

## **Pittsburgh Opera 2008-2009 Resident Artists**

### **Jonathan Beyer, baritone**

At the close of the 2008-2009 season, [Jonathan Beyer](#) will have completed his second season as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera.

Last season, Mr. Beyer performed in the Pittsburgh Opera productions of *Madama Butterfly* as Prince Yamadori, *The Elixir of Love* Behind the Curtain as Belcore, *Flight* as the Steward, and *The Capulets & the Montagues* as Lorenzo. This season, Mr. Beyer has appeared as Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Schaunard in *La bohème* and Ali in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

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"Jonathan is a very gifted young singer," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "A combination of dedication and talent will surely carry him on to great things."

In addition to his Pittsburgh performances, Mr. Beyer has also performed with Opera Santa Barbara, Chicago Opera Theater, Chautauqua Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Teatro Verdi, as well as the Indianapolis Symphony, Baton Rouge Symphony, Festival d'Aix en Provence and the Châteauville Foundation with Lorin Maazel.

His most recent awards include this year's Solti Foundation Vocal/Operatic Award, the 2009 Encouragement Award from the Gerda Lissner Foundation in New York City, third place in the 2009 National Opera Association Vocal Competition in Washington, DC and the Pittsburgh Concert Society 2009 Majors Auditions Award. In 2007, Mr. Beyer won the Marian Anderson Prize for Emerging Classical Artists. He was also a national finalist in the 2006 Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition and has taken first prize in the American Opera Society, the Union Civic League Competition and the grand prize of the Bel Canto Foundation.

Mr. Beyer completed his musical studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and earned his Bachelor's and Master's at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

"I have very much enjoyed my time as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera. Working with such great musicians and a marvelous staff has been an inspiring and artistically enriching experience," said Mr. Beyer.

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Mr. Beyer can be seen as Ceprano in the Ravinia Festival production of *Rigoletto* in August; in recital at the Pittsburgh Concert Society in September; as Schaunard in *La Bohème* at Austin Lyric Opera in November; in recital with Nancy Gustafson, Denyce Graves, Samuel Ramey and Richard Leech at the Over the Rainbow Foundation in Chicago; as a soloist in *Messiah* with the Algoma Chamber Players in Canada in December; in recital for the Marilyn Horne Foundation in Huntsville, Alabama in January; and as the Rachel Captain in the 2010 Dallas Opera production of *Moby Dick*.

Mr. Beyer is represented by Columbia Artists Management. Mrs. J. William Futrell, Dr. Michael White and Mr. Rick LeBeau generously sponsored his residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Katherine Drago, mezzo-soprano**

A second-year member of the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program, [Katherine Drago](#) will be returning in 2009-2010 for a third season with Pittsburgh Opera. She will perform as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, Bianca in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Mercedes in *Carmen* and Cherubino in the Student Matinee production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

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"We are delighted that Katie will be joining us for another season," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "We have several great roles lined up for her next season and it is going to be very exciting watching her continue to grow as an artist."

In the 2008-2009 season, Ms. Drago appeared as Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, the Stewardess in *Flight* and Romeo in the Student Matinee performance of *The Capulets & the Montagues*. In the summer of 2008, she performed as an Apprentice Artist with The Santa Fe Opera.

Ms. Drago recently debuted in the role of Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea* with Opera Vivente and performed as Zulma in the Pittsburgh Opera production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. She has also performed in the Broadway National Tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*; as Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* at the Rising Star Opera Theater; Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Milwaukee Opera Theater, as well as Venere in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and French Mother in *Death in Venice* with Chicago Opera Theater.

Ms. Drago has also appeared in concert with the Asheville and Cheyenne symphonies, Peninsula Music Festival, Erie Philharmonic and Chatham Baroque. She has twice been a regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and holds a Master's degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University.

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"The Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program has given me some amazing performance opportunities," said Ms. Drago. "Singing Romeo in the Student Matinee of *The Capulets & the Montagues* on the Benedum stage with full orchestra and production values was a real thrill."

This summer, Ms. Drago will return to The Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Artist to cover Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and will be performing in the ensembles of *Alceste*, *The Elixir of Love* and *La Traviata*.

The Hansen Foundation generously sponsors Ms. Drago's residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Carlos Feliciano, tenor**

[Carlos Feliciano](#) will have completed his second season as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera at the close of the 2008-2009 season.

Last season with Pittsburgh Opera, Mr. Feliciano performed as the Messenger in *Aida* and was the cover for Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. This season he sang the Philistine Messenger in *Samson & Dalila* and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*.

"Carlos continues to grow as an artist," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "His passionate delivery and Italianate color will stand him in good stead as his career develops."

A native of Puerto Rico, Mr. Feliciano earned a Bachelors of Music at the Manhattan School of Music and continued his studies at the Juilliard School. While at Juilliard he sang Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and Satirino in *La Calisto*. He has won the Herbert Gold Award of the Five Towns Music & Art Foundation and was a finalist in the Violetta Dupont Competition.

Mr. Feliciano's professional credits include Fenton in *Falstaff* and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* on the New York Opera Society's tour to Castres, France; Don Fernando in the zarzuela *Doña Francisquita* and the *Christmas Oratorio* by Saint-Saëns in Puerto Rico; the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* with Project Opera of Manhattan, as well as Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* with Little Opera Company of New Jersey. With the Assisi Music Festival in Italy he sang in Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, Mozart's "Coronation" Mass, and St. Francis in the world premiere of *Il poverello* by F. Santelli.

"This has been a great experience for me," said Mr. Feliciano. "Having the opportunity to learn from such amazing people has given me the tools I need to continue to grow as an artist. I know my time here will give me great advantages in the future."

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Mr. Feliciano's upcoming engagements include a concert series with the Norwegian Road Orchestra in the newly constructed, state-of-the-art Oslo Opera House in Oslo, Norway.

Carmen and Jim Moore generously sponsored Mr. Feliciano's residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Dean Kokanos, tenor**

At the close of the 2008-2009 season, [Dean Kokanos](#), a Pittsburgh native who grew up singing at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Dormition in Oakmont, will have completed his second season as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera.

In his first season with Pittsburgh Opera, Mr. Kokanos performed as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love* Behind the Curtain, Bill in *Flight* and Tebaldo in *The Capulets & the Montagues* Student Matinee. This season he performed as the First Philistine in *Samson & Dalila*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* and most recently stepped in at the last minute to perform the role of Lindoro in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

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"Dean is a talented young artist who has grown so much in the program. We were lucky to have him on hand to step in at the last minute for *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. As we expected, he did a wonderful job and we are very proud of him," said [Mr. Hahn](#).

Mr. Kokanos has also performed as Beppe in *Pagliacci* with Mercury Opera of Edmonton, the title role in *L'amico Fritz* with the Opera Theatre of Lucca, Remendado in *Carmen* with Opera Memphis, Dr. Wilson in *Street Scene* and covered Devereux in *Gloriana* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* with Cleveland Opera on Tour and Hadji in *Lakmé* with Sarasota Opera.

Mr. Kokanos's concert repertoire includes Rossini's *Stabat mater*, Handel's *The Messiah*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass, Mozart's *Vesperae solenne de confessore*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

An alumnus of the young artist training programs of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Sarasota Opera, and Opera Memphis, Mr. Kokanos holds a Bachelors of Music from Duquesne University and a Master's of Music from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. In 2008 he won First Prize in the National Society of Arts & Letters Competition for Pennsylvania. In 2006 he received an encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera District Council Competition and was a finalist in the 2004 Palm Beach Opera Competition.

"I have greatly enjoyed and benefitted from the supportive nature of the artistic and administrative staff, not to mention the influence of world-class guest artists," said Mr. Kokanos. "It's been a wonderful opportunity to grow as an artist in a safe atmosphere."

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Mr. Kokanos can be seen this month singing in Choral Festival: Mendelssohn's *Saint Paul* oratorio for the Music in a Great Space Concert Series at Shadyside Presbyterian Church May 17, and as a part of the Pittsburgh Opera ensemble kicking off the 2009 Summer Concert Series at Hartwood Acres June 7.

Dr. and Mrs. George White generously sponsored Mr. Kokanos' residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Liam Moran, bass**

A second-year member of the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program, [Liam Moran](#) will be returning in 2009-2010 for a third season with Pittsburgh Opera. He will perform as Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*.

"Liam has made great strides over the last two years, and he will be returning for a third," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "The vocal development for bass singers is slower than that of other voice types and Liam is well on his way to being an outstanding artist."

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Last season, Mr. Moran performed as The Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love* Behind the Curtain, the Immigration Officer in *Flight*, the King in *Aida* and Capellio in *The Capulets & the Montagues* Student Matinee. This season he performed as The Old Hebrew in *Samson & Dalila*, the title role in *Don Pasquale* and Colline in *La bohème*.

Mr. Moran performed for two seasons with Wolf Trap Opera in Virginia as Melisso in *Alcina*, Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, excerpts from *Fidelio*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* and Siroco in *L'Etoile*. He has also performed with Florida Grand Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Glimmerglass Opera, San Francisco Opera's Merola Program and Opera Omaha.

Mr. Moran's concert work ranges from Monteverdi to Penderecki and he has been featured with the National Symphony, Washington Concert Opera, the Palm Beach Symphony, the New World Symphony's "Concerts in Context" series, Los Angeles's Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra and several recital series. A prize winner in the Florida Grand Opera Competition and Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions/New England region, Mr. Moran completed his studies at McGill University in Montreal and the Yale School of Music.

"The Resident Artist Program at Pittsburgh Opera has afforded me myriad chances for personal and artistic growth," said Mr. Moran. "I've enjoyed the support of an outstanding staff and the collegiality of world-class artists, and I know my time in Pittsburgh has given me an immeasurable advantage in my career."

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In addition to his roles with Pittsburgh Opera next season, Mr. Moran will also make his debut with Austin Lyric Opera, reprising the role of Colline in *La bohème*.

Pat and Michele Atkins generously sponsor Mr. Moran's residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Danielle Pastin, soprano**

A first-year Resident Artist, [Danielle Pastin](#) made her Pittsburgh Opera mainstage debut as Rosasharn in *The Grapes of Wrath* and sang Mimi in the *La bohème* Student Matinee. She will return in the 2009-2010 season as Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* and will cover Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Micaela in *Carmen* and the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*. She will also be performing the role of the Countess in the Student Matinee performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

"Danielle is compelling young singer," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "She took on a lead role this season in "the Grapes of Wrath" with great success and we look forward to her return next season."

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Having grown up in a Navy family that traveled and lived in many places, Ms. Pastin claims Annapolis, Maryland as her home. She received her Bachelor's in voice and opera from the University of Maryland and has been a member of various young artist programs, including Central City Opera, where she played Lucinda in the world premiere of Henry Mollicone's opera *Gabriel's Daughter* and the Intermezzo Opera Festival Training Program, where she performed Nanetta in *Falstaff*. At Capital Opera in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Ms. Pastin has performed as Nedda in *Pagliacci* and Annina in *La traviata*.

Ms. Pastin's awards include the Pittsburgh Concert Society 2009 Majors Auditions, finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council regional competition, finalist in the National Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Competition and the Audience Choice award at the Annapolis Opera Competition. She received the Fine Arts Fellowship award from Central City Opera and the Enrico Aloï Bronze Medallion of the Rosa Ponselle Foundation.

"The Resident Artist Program at Pittsburgh Opera is the perfect place for any young artist to spread their wings, while totally supported by the people around them," said Ms. Pastin. "I have really enjoyed my time here and look forward to another season."

Ms. Pastin can be seen this summer as Violetta in *La Traviata* at New Rochelle Opera in Rochelle, NY.

Mr. and Mrs. Hans Fleischner generously sponsor Ms. Pastin's residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

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## **Deborah Selig, soprano**

[Deborah Selig](#) will have completed her second season as a Resident Artist with Pittsburgh Opera at the close of the 2008-2009 season.

"Deborah has given us some beautiful performances in her time with Pittsburgh Opera," said [Mr. Hahn](#). "She has all the potential for an excellent career."

Last season, Ms. Selig made her mainstage debut with Pittsburgh Opera as Giannetta in *The Elixir of Love*, sang Tina in *Flight* and the High Priestess in *Aida*. After a summer that included Rose in *Street Scene* with Chautauqua Opera and Nanetta in *Falstaff* with Opera Roanoke, she returned to Pittsburgh Opera as a soloist in Ricky Ian Gordon's staged song cycle, *Orpheus and Euridice*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Musetta in *La bohème* Student Matinee and Elvira in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

Ms. Selig has appeared with Central City Opera as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Mobile Opera as Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Connecticut Lyric Opera as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Chautauqua Opera as Mary Warren in *The Crucible* as well as Dayton Opera as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and Amy in *Little Women*.

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Ms. Selig's concert appearances include Handel's *The Messiah* with the Dayton Philharmonic and Cincinnati Baroque, *Carmina Burana* with Greater Bridgeport Symphony and the Erie Philharmonic, Górecki's Symphony #3 with Kentucky Symphony, Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass with Harvard Pro Musica and selections from *The Merry Widow* with Cincinnati Symphony.

Ms. Selig was educated at the University of Michigan and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She trained as a young artist with The Santa Fe Opera, Chautauqua Opera and Tanglewood Music Center. She received the Richard F. Gold Career Grant of the Shoshana Foundation, was a winner of the Southern Ohio district Metropolitan Opera Competition and won 2nd place in the National Opera Association Competition.

"I had invaluable experiences over the last two years as a member of the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program," said Ms. Selig. "With much help and guidance from the fantastic music staff, I have added all sorts of wonderful new roles to my repertoire, grown as a singer and artist, and gained the stage experience and confidence to take the next step in my professional career. I know that I will always look back on my time here in Pittsburgh with enormous gratitude."

This summer, Ms. Selig will join Santa Fe Opera as an apprentice to cover Adina in *The Elixir of Love* and in 2010 will perform in a recital tour with Baritone Jesse Blumberg and Pianist Cameron Stowe as well as with the Asheville Symphony for Mahler's 4th Symphony.

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Ms. Selig is represented by Wolverton Artists Management. The Filstrup Foundation generously sponsored Ms. Selig's residency with Pittsburgh Opera.

## **Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program**

Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artist Program has long been hailed as one of the country's leading training programs for young artists. While providing guidance from the opera industry's leaders and innovators, the program guides young singers through the development of their vocal skills, improvement of their stage presence and expansion of their repertoire.

"We take great pride in the development of our young singers," said [Bill Powers, Director of Administration and Artistic Operations](#) for Pittsburgh Opera. "We do our best to create many opportunities for our Resident Artists to perform on stage, work with world-class artists and continue to grow as artists."

*Discover Yourself*  
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Each year, exceptional young singers from around the world are selected to enter the program from a pool of more than 600 applicants through [national auditions](#) held in New York City, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Each applicant must demonstrate significant operatic potential and thorough musical and theatrical training. Applicants who are granted an audition must demonstrate their versatility and proficiency in various musical styles and foreign languages by performing five contrasting arias in at least two foreign languages. To ensure each artist receives highly personalized time and attention, [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) selects no more than eight artists to participate in the program each year.

After the completion of an academic education in musical studies, the program provides young singers advanced professional development in languages, diction, movement and acting. Along with highly personalized coaching sessions with [Pittsburgh Opera artistic staff members](#) the Resident Artists are given access to the knowledge and critiques of opera legends through private and public master classes.

Resident Artists serve as ambassadors for the company, touching the community through participation in programs for public schools, community centers, libraries and corporate events. In addition to performing supporting roles, covering and sometimes performing principal roles in Pittsburgh Opera's mainstage productions, as well as performing all of the supporting and principal roles in the fully-staged Pittsburgh Opera production featuring the Resident Artists at CAPA Theater, the Resident Artists gain valuable performance experience through regular Brown Bag concerts and special events, such as the annual Cabaret show and parties hosted by Pittsburgh Opera.

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## Leadership

Pittsburgh Opera's leadership is a unique team of administrative, artistic and musical directors working in collaboration with an experienced board of directors to bring extraordinary opera productions to the Pittsburgh community.

[Christopher Hahn](#), General Director

[Antony Walker](#), Music Director

[William J. Powers](#), Director of Administration and Artistic Operations

[Glenn Lewis](#), Head of Music

[Mark Trawka](#), Director of Musical Studies and Chorus Master

[James Lesniak](#), Associate Coach and Pianist

[Shawn M. Fertitta](#), Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program Administrator and Facility Manager

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[Pittsburgh Opera](#), now concluding 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.

## [2009-2010 Season](#)

**Eugene Onegin** September 26, 29; October 2, 4, 2009

**Falstaff** October 24, 27, 30, November 1, 2009

**The Rape of Lucretia** January 30; February 2, 5, 7, 2010

**Carmen** March 20, 23, 26, 28, 2010

**The Marriage of Figaro** April 24, 27, 30; May 2, 2010

Beginning in August 2009, single tickets for as little as \$10

2009-2010 season subscriptions now for as little as \$42

For ticket information visit our website [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) or call (412) 281-0912

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