

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

*For Immediate Release*

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents *The Italian Girl in Algiers* May 2-10**

**What:** Gioachino Rossini's opera *The Italian Girl in Algiers (L'italiana in Algeri)*

**Where:** Benedum Center for the Performing Arts  
7th Street and Penn Avenue, Downtown Pittsburgh

**When:** Saturday, May 2, 8:00 PM      Tuesday, May 5, 7:00 PM  
Friday, May 8, 8:00 PM      Sunday, May 10, 2:00 PM

**Run Time:** Two hours, 45 minutes, including one intermission

**Language:** Sung in Italian with English titles projected above the stage

**Tickets:** Start at \$16. Call 412-456-6666 for more information  
or visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org)

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Season*

**Pittsburgh, PA...** [Pittsburgh Opera](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) presents Gioachino Rossini's opera [\*The Italian Girl in Algiers \(L'italiana in Algeri\)\*](#) at the Benedum Center May 2 – 10. This effervescent comedy gets a 1930s-style makeover and takes us behind the beaded curtain of a sultan's harem. Hilarity ensues when the Amelia Earhart-style heroine Isabella crash-lands on the Algerian coast while attempting to rescue her beloved Lindoro from the Bey of Algiers, Mustafà. Pittsburgh Opera's updated production includes an elaborate storybook set, bold costumes and a hot air balloon that provides the heroine's dramatic departure in the finale. Music Director Antony Walker conducts.

Vivica Genaux returns to Pittsburgh Opera in one of her signature roles as the feisty heroine Isabella. Genaux has over 40 roles in her repertoire, 25 of which are trouser roles,

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and she last performed with Pittsburgh Opera as Romeo in *The Capulets & the Montagues* in 2008. She has since performed at several major opera houses around the world as well as in this year's Easter celebrations at the Basilica di Santa Maria in Ara Coeli in Rome, where she made her role debut as Elizabeth in Andrew T. Miller's *The Birth of Christ*.

William Burden returns as Isabella's beloved Lindoro, having last worked with Pittsburgh Opera in 2001 as Narraboth in *Salome*. In addition to the role of Lindoro, his performances around the world include the title roles of *Faust*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Béatrice and Bénédict*, and *Candide*. Burden also created the role of Gilbert Griffiths in the world premiere of Picker's *An American Tragedy* at The Metropolitan Opera.

Also having performed at major opera houses around the world, Paolo Pecchioli makes his Pittsburgh Opera debut as Mustafà, the Bey of Algiers, a role he most recently performed this season with Dallas Opera. In addition to Mustafà, Pecchioli's roles include Assur in *Semiramide*, Selim in *Il Turco in Italia* and Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*.

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Earle Patriarco returns to Pittsburgh Opera as Taddeo, having previously performed in the 2007 production of *Madama Butterfly* as Sharpless and in the 2003 production of *The Barber of Seville* as Figaro. Patriarco's recordings include *Carmina Burana* with Donald Runnicles and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for TELARC and *Manon* with Antonio Pappano for EMI. Both were recently nominated for GRAMMY® Awards.

Rounding out this exemplary cast are Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artists Deborah Selig as Elvira, who most recently performed as Norina in Pittsburgh Opera's production of *Don Pasquale*; Katherine Drago as Elvira's slave Zulma, who most recently performed a role debut as Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea* at Opera Vivente in Baltimore; and Jonathan Beyer as the pirate captain Ali, who most recently performed as Schaunard in Pittsburgh Opera's production of *La bohème*.

Chris Alexander returns to direct, having last worked with Pittsburgh Opera on *Ariadne Auf Naxos* in 2005. The son of a soprano and a baritone who sang in Pittsburgh in the 1950's, Alexander started his career as an actor and director for drama in Germany. His many European productions include the German premiere of Battistelli's *Prova d'orchestra*, as well as Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Bizet's *Carmen*. Alexander made his US debut at Seattle Opera directing Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* in 2000. Since then, Alexander has worked with several opera companies in North America. Founder of the Bremer Shakespeare Company, Alexander has directed more than 60 plays in Germany and Switzerland, has translated many of Shakespeare's dramas and wrote with his wife the comedy *Shakespeare in Trouble*, which has been presented in Bremen and Berlin.

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Pittsburgh Opera Music Director [Antony Walker](#) will conduct, completing this star-studded ensemble. Since his conducting debut in 1991, Maestro Walker has led companies in Europe, the United States and Australia and is currently in his third season as Pittsburgh Opera's Music Director. At the young age of 22, he became musical director of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and currently, in addition to his post as Music Director for Pittsburgh Opera, holds the positions of the Music Director for Washington Concert Opera, Music Director and founder of Cantillation, Orchestra of the Antipodes & Sinfonia Australis and co-Artistic Director for Pinchgut Opera. Recent productions in the Maestro's extensive repertoire includes the North American premiere of Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* and the US premiere of Petitgirard's *The Elephant Man*, as well as, Puccini's *La Bohème*, Mercadante's *Il Giuramento*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Saint-Saëns's *Samson & Dalila*, Verdi's *Aida* and Bellini's *The Capulets and the Montagues*.

*The Italian Girl in Algiers* opens Saturday, May 2 and continues May 5, 8 and 10. Tickets start at \$16. Call 412-456-6666 or visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org).

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PNC Foundation (Opening Night Sponsor)  
WSHH and WQED, media sponsors

## **Cast and Artistic Team**

(cast is listed in order of vocal appearance)

Elvira	Deborah Selig *	soprano
Zulma	Katherine Drago *	mezzo-soprano
Mustafà	Paolo Pecchioli +	bass
Ali	Jonathan Beyer *	baritone
Lindoro	William Burden	tenor
Isabella	Vivica Genaux	mezzo-soprano
Taddeo	Earle Patriarco	bass

Conductor	Antony Walker
Stage Director	Chris Alexander
Set Designer	Robert Innes Hopkins
Costume Designer	David C. Woolard
Original Lighting Designer	Duane Schuler

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Lighting Supervisor	Stevie O'Brian Agnew
Hair & Makeup Designer	James Geier
Head of Music/ Assistant Conductor	Glenn Lewis
Piano Continuo	Glenn Lewis
Chorus Master	Mark Trawka
Associate Coach/Pianist	James Lesniak
Assistant Stage Director	Aaron Miller
Stage Manager	Christine Schott

+ Pittsburgh Opera Debut

\* Pittsburgh Opera [Resident Artist](#)

## **Facts About *The Italian Girl in Algiers***

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- *The Italian Girl in Algiers* is a two-act opera by Gioachino Rossini. The libretto was written by Angelo Anelli as a re-setting of the libretto used by Luigi Mosca for his 1808 opera of the same name.
- *The Italian Girl in Algiers* is most notable for his successful mixing of opera seria and opera buffa.
- There is some controversy over how quickly the opera was written. Rossini claims it was written in only 18 days.
- Rossini was only 21 in 1813 when *The Italian Girl in Algiers* premiered.
- *The Italian Girl in Algiers* was first performed at the Teatro San Benedetto in Venice on May 22, 1813. Upon opening, the opera was a notable success and continued to be performed with slight improvements by Rossini in Vicenza, Milan and Naples over the following two years.
- The overture is well known for its distinct opening of slow, quiet pizzicato basses, leading to a sudden loud burst of sound from the full orchestra, giving the piece a shocking and semi-comic affect.

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## Related Events

### **Pittsburgh Opera Preview on WQED-FM 89.3**

Saturday, April 25 at 11:30 PM and Friday, May 1 at 7:00 PM.

An in-depth introduction to the singers, music and production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

### **Brown Bag Opera Concerts**

Every Saturday during the 2008-2009 season

Pittsburgh Opera, 2425 Liberty Avenue in the Strip District.

Free and open to the public, these half-hour concerts begin at noon and feature Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artists. It is the perfect highlight to a day of shopping in the Strip!

Attendees are encouraged to bring a lunch or order an **il mercato** boxed lunch in advance.

For more information or to pre-order a boxed lunch, call Kristin Gatch at 412-281-0912 x227.

### **Opera Up Close: *The Italian Girl in Algiers***

Saturday, April 25 at 12:45 PM, following the weekly Brown Bag Concert

Pittsburgh Opera, 2425 Liberty Avenue, in the Strip District

Opera Up Close is an exciting and informative program offered five times per season, before the opening of each production, offering an insider's look into the upcoming opera.

The star-studded panel will consist of internationally-renowned conductor and Pittsburgh Opera Music Director Antony Walker, Italian bass Paulo Pecchioli, American tenor Bill Burden and director Chris Alexander, son of a soprano and a baritone who sang in

Pittsburgh in the 1950's. This event is free and open to the public. For program

information, or to pre-order a deluxe gourmet box lunch from **il mercato**, call Kristin Gatch at 412-281-0912 x227.

### **Opera Straight Up**

Friday, May 8, starting at *The Italian Girl in Algiers* at the Benedum Center at 8:00 PM.

Young professionals won't find a better entertainment deal: Opera Straight Up is \$35 for the Friday evening performance of *The Italian Girl in Algiers* plus an afterparty with complimentary food and beverages at Bossa Nova. For tickets, call 412-281-0912 x216 or visit our website [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org).

### **Free Pre-Opera Talks**

One hour before each performance in the Main Floor/Orchestra section of the Benedum Center. Join Pittsburgh Opera's Manager of Education Programs, Kristin Gatch, for an introduction to *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. Free to all ticketholders. No reservations necessary.

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## Meet the Artists

Immediately following the Tuesday production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, ticketholders may gather in the lower lobby to enjoy light refreshments and interviews with General Director [Christopher Hahn](#) and the artists. Free to all ticketholders. No reservations necessary.

*[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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