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Pittsburgh OPERA NEWS RELEASE

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Pittsburgh Opera Announces 2007-08 Season

Pittsburgh, PA . . . Mark Weinstein, General Director, Christopher Hahn, Artistic Director, and Antony Walker, Music Director announce Pittsburgh Opera's 2007-2008 season, "The Italian Season: Opera from the Golden Age" at the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- **October 13 – 21, 2007:** Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* featuring Chilean soprano Veronica Villarroel in the title role, tenor Frank Lopardo (the Duke in *Rigoletto* 2005) as Pinkerton, Earle Patriarco (Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* 2004) and Zheng Cao (Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* 2002) in a production from the Sydney Opera House.
- **November 10 – 18, 2007:** Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* with Elizabeth Futral as Adina, tenor John Nuzzo as Nemorino, Palle Knudsen as Belcore, and opera's funniest man—Kevin Glavin—as Dr. Dulcamara in a new James Robinson production by Opera Colorado.
- **January 26 - February 3, 2008:** Pittsburgh Opera's nationally renowned resident artists present Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with special guests David Walker and Myrna Paris at CAPA Theater downtown. In addition, the popular Pittsburgh Opera Cabaret takes place at the Cabaret at Theater Square on **February 25, 2008**.
- **March 29 – April 6, 2008:** The triumphant return of Verdi's *Aida* starring Eszter Sümegi as Aida, Vladimir Kuzmenko as Radamès, Mark S. Doss as Amonasro, and Stephanie Blythe in her role debut as Amneris in a lavish Pittsburgh Opera production.
- **May 3 – 11, 2008:** Bellini's *The Capulets & the Montagues* starring Laura Claycomb as Giulietta and Vivica Genaux as Romeo in Thor Steingraber's acclaimed production from LA Opera.

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According to **General Director Mark Weinstein**, “This is a season for opera lovers and neophytes alike with spectacular singing talents, both familiar and new to our audiences.” “There’s no place like home, says **Artistic Director Christopher Hahn**, “and for opera lovers that means Italy. Our sumptuous Italian season takes us back to the heart of the Golden Age of opera with favorites by the four greatest Italian masters: Puccini, Donizetti, Verdi and Bellini.”

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*

October 13, 16, 19, 21, 2007

** Note: The Saturday, October 13 Opening Night performance begins at 7:00 pm.
Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.*

When American Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton marries the entrancing Butterfly on a whim, she abandons family, religion--everything for his sake. Years later, when Pinkerton returns with his “real” American wife, Butterfly’s child is her only hope to win him back. A clash of cultures that unfolds on the intimate stage of the heart, *Madama Butterfly’s* gripping drama and eloquent score have made it the most performed opera in the world.

International stars make up this dream cast: Chilean soprano Veronica Villarroel, tenor Frank Lopardo (the Duke in *Rigoletto* 2005), Earle Patriarco (Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* 2004), and Zheng Cao (Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* 2002). This shimmering production—it literally floats on water—comes to the U.S. for the first time from the Sydney Opera House. Conducted by Pittsburgh Opera’s resident Aussie, Music Director Antony Walker.

- "When Villarroel took her first curtain call after singing *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, everyone in the hall, this critic included, had the same immediate impulse: stand up and cheer!" *The New York Times*

The annual Diamond Horseshoe Celebration on Opening Night (Saturday, October 13) culminates with the Opera Blast, immediately following the opera. The Blast includes extravagant desserts, cocktails, entertainment, and silent auction; tickets are \$60 per person.

Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love (L'elisir d'amore)*

November 10, 13, 16, 18, 2007

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Everybody loves a con man, and who better than our own Kevin Glavin, whom *City Paper* calls “the funniest man in opera,” to capture the loquacious quack, Dr. Dulcamara. He sells his “magic potion” to the hapless Nemorino, who pines for the heartless Adina. The charming tenor John Nuzzo as Nemorino competes for her love with the swaggering Sergeant Belcore, sung by the devilishly handsome Palle Knudsen (*Così fan tutte*, 2006). Internationally acclaimed soprano Elizabeth Futral, hailed for her stunning vocalism and dramatic flair, sings the adored Adina.

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Conducted by Steven White and directed by James Robinson (*Carmen* 2003, *Lucia di Lammermoor* 2002), this co-production with Opera Colorado is set in small-town America, evoking our favorite con artist, Prof. Harold Hill from *The Music Man*.

- “Spectacular...Futral was born to sing.” *Houston Chronicle*

Dove's FLIGHT
January 26, 29, February 1, 3, 2008
CAPA Theater

Sung in English with English texts projected above the stage.

Take *Flight* with the resident artists of Pittsburgh Opera! Based on the same story that inspired Tom Hanks' movie *The Terminal*, Jonathan Dove's dramatic comedy follows passengers stranded in an international airport: a squabbling couple trying to rekindle their marriage, a diplomat whose pregnant wife suddenly becomes obstinate, a refugee getting by on spare change, a couple of randy flight attendants, and the omniscient controller, who comments on life and the weather. Countertenor sensation David Walker headlines as the Refugee, along with local favorite Myrna Paris as the older woman looking for love in all the wrong places.

- “Few operas in recent decades have been instant hits with audience and critics, but Jonathan Dove's *Flight* is one of them.” *Telegraph*, London
- “*Flight* soars to the heights of Greek tragedy, yet lands firmly in the bottomless humor of opera buffa.” *Boston Herald*
- “It is possible—modern opera can be gorgeous.” *Die Welt*, Leipzig

Verdi's Aida
March 29, April 1, 4, 6, 2008

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

The Triumphant Return of Aida!

Like no other composer, Verdi captures an intimate human drama within the epic sweep of ancient times. With its processions, ballets, and immense choral numbers evoking the glory and mystery of Ancient Egypt, the Triumphant scene is the pinnacle of operatic spectacle.

An Ethiopian princess enslaved at the Egyptian court, Aida secretly loves the one man with the power to destroy her homeland. Radamès returns Aida's love, but ruthless princess Amneris stands in their way. Whether they betray their country or their love, there is no escape.

Fiery Hungarian diva Eszter Sümegi and electrifying Ukrainian tenor Vladimir Kuzmenko light up the stage as Aida and Radamés. The incomparable mezzo Stephanie Blythe, a major star at the Metropolitan Opera, makes her role debut as Amneris. Conducted by Music Director Antony Walker and directed by Stephen Pickover in a sumptuous Pittsburgh Opera production.

- “Sümegi gave a dynamically charged performance notable both for its powerful surety and introspective finesse.” *James Wegg Reviews*

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- “It’s rare to hear an instrument so potent and so colorful—Kuzmenko never stinted on the high notes, but delivered them with panache.” *San Francisco Chronicle*
- “Stephanie Blythe’s voice is tremendous...thrilling. It pulls a listener to the edge of his seat.” *New York Times*

**Bellini’s *The Capulets & the Montagues (I Capuleti e i Montecchi)*
May 3, 6, 9, 11, 2008**

Sung in Italian with English translations projected above the stage.

Ah, Bellini: streams of ravishing melody and exquisite high notes—the very heart of *bel canto*. Harkening back to the medieval version of *Romeo & Juliet*, Bellini’s Tybalt is a central figure in a love triangle destined for disaster. Two extraordinary artists return to Pittsburgh to interpret this rare *bel canto* tour de force: the superb coloratura Laura Claycomb sings Giulietta to the dazzling mezzo of Vivica Genaux as Romeo. Thor Steingraber (*Cinderella* 2002, *La traviata* 2004) directs his own acclaimed production from Los Angeles Opera; conducted by Antony Walker.

- “In the voice of Laura Claycomb, one rediscovers the song of a bygone era. Her Giulietta becomes a grand romantic heroine, the embodiment of women in love for all time.” *Tribune de Genève*
- “For sheer heroics, there’s no beating Vivica Genaux...an almost inhuman gift for vocal pyrotechnics.” *London Financial Times*

**Pittsburgh Opera CABARET
February 25, 2008
Cabaret at Theater Square**

Leave your opera glasses at home and get up close and personal with the resident artists of Pittsburgh Opera. This uproarious evening of songs and comedy at the intimate Cabaret at Theater Square benefits Pittsburgh Opera Center. Get your tickets *NOW*—the Cabaret always sells out! Tickets: \$200, \$150, \$100, & \$50 *Prices are based on seating location and include dinner and drinks.*

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Free pre-opera talks

Artistic Director Christopher Hahn presents a lively preview of each opera’s performers and production one hour before each performance.

Meet the Artists

Artistic Director Christopher Hahn and members of the cast join audience members for coffee and conversation following each Tuesday evening performance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call 412-281-0912 or online at www.pittsburghopera.org.

Pittsburgh Opera, celebrating 69 years of opera in southwestern Pennsylvania, is a member of OPERA America, the national organization for opera companies, and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. Pittsburgh Opera’s performances are supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, and Allegheny Regional Asset District. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and WQED-FM are season media sponsors.

2007-2008 Season Cast List

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Conductor	Antony Walker
Production	Moffatt Oxenbould; from Opera Australia
Butterfly	Veronica Villarroel
Suzuki	Zheng Cao
B.F. Pinkerton	Frank Lopardo
Sharpless	Earle Patriarco
Kate Pinkerton	Katherine Drago*
Goro	Rodell Rosel
Prince Yamadori	Jonathan Beyer*
The Bonze	Liam Moran*

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Conductor	Steven White
Production	James Robinson; from Opera Colorado
Adina	Elizabeth Futral
Nemorino	John Nuzzo
Sergeant Belcore	Palle Knudsen
Dr. Dulcamara	Kevin Glavin
Giannetta	Deborah Selig*

AIDA

Conductor	Antony Walker
Production	Stephen Pickover; Pittsburgh Opera production
Aida	Eszter Sümegi
Amneris	Stephanie Blythe
Radamès	Vladimir Kuzmenko
Amonasro	Mark S. Doss
Ramfis	Morris Robinson
The King	Liam Moran*
Messenger	Carlos Feliciano*

THE CAPULETS & THE MONTAGUES

Conductor	Antony Walker
Production	Thor Steingraber; from L.A. Opera
Giulietta	Laura Claycomb
Romeo	Vivica Genaux
Tybalt	Arthur Espiritu**
Capellio	David Pittsinger
Lorenzo	Jonathan Beyer*

* Pittsburgh Opera Center member

** Pittsburgh Opera Center alumnus