

Pittsburgh Opera NEWS RELEASE

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Pittsburgh Opera Announces Partnership with ‘Locks of Love’ Wigmaster for ‘Samson & Dalila’ Leads Charity Drive

Pittsburgh, PA (September 8, 2008) . . . Talk about a bad hair day! Nobody beats Samson, the Hebrew warrior in Pittsburgh Opera’s season-opener, *Samson & Dalila*. With one swift slash of Dalila’s shears, the hero loses his God-given strength. But a haircut for Locks of Love makes a hero out of anyone willing to donate their long locks to help children with total hair loss.

OPERA WIGMAKER CURES BAD HAIR DAYS

Pittsburgh Opera wigmaster James Geier will snip the locks of five (5) people who wish to donate their hair to help children suffering from hair loss. On hand will be “Dalila,” mezzo-soprano star Stephanie Blythe. Blythe, dubbed “the finest singer in the world” by *Newsday*, returns to the Pittsburgh Opera stage for her role debut as the Philistine temptress. The event will be held at Pittsburgh Opera’s new headquarters in the Strip at 2425 Liberty Avenue on Wednesday, October 8. The refurbished building – George Westinghouse’s original air brake factory – includes creative space for costumers, wigmakers, makeup artists, and other theater crafts.

“I am delighted to participate with Locks of Love. When creating, customizing, and fitting wigs, I can see that they transform a person and bolster confidence, whether on stage or in real life,” noted theatrical wigmaster Mr. Geier.

Each person invited to participate in the event at the Opera building will receive two tickets to *Samson & Dalila* and a backstage tour, along with special gifts from Pittsburgh Opera.

Those wishing to participate should send their name, a photo, and contact information to Allison Ruppert at aruppert@pittsburghopera.org. Please type “Locks of Love” in the subject line.

OPERA TICKETS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND SALONS

Pittsburgh Opera invites salons to register for this drive by downloading an application form at www.pittsburghopera.org. Participating salons that have submitted 5 ponytails or more to Locks

of Love between August 1 and October 1 will receive four tickets to a performance of *Samson & Dalila*. They also will be given four free passes to OperaBLAST!, a late-night party celebrating the opening of the Pittsburgh Opera's 70th season on October 18.

LOCKS OF LOVE

Pittsburgh Opera's partnership with Locks of Love raises awareness for the non-profit, which uses donated human hair to make wigs for children, most of whom suffer from an auto-immune condition called alopecia areata, for which there is no known cause or cure. Others have suffered severe burns, endured radiation treatment or experienced other dermatological conditions that result in permanent hair loss. The custom-fitted hair prosthetics are provided free of charge or on a sliding scale to children whose families meet the Locks of Love guidelines.

NOTE: All ponytail donations must to be sent directly to Locks of Love. Hair cannot be accepted by Pittsburgh Opera.

LINKS:

Locks of Love website: <http://www.locksoflove.org/index.html>

Guidelines for donating hair: <http://www.locksoflove.org/donate.html>

Samson & Dalila <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/0809season/samson.shtml>

<p>Pittsburgh Opera, now celebrating its 70th season, is one of America's leading opera companies. It offers a range of programs, from main-stage productions to free community concerts to intimate cabarets. Pittsburgh Opera's internationally renowned resident artists program is among the country's top five training centers for rising opera stars. Each year, more than 20,000 students, families, and educators participate in Pittsburgh Opera educational events. 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.</p>

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