

## **Pittsburgh Opera NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Stephanie Blythe Headlines Pittsburgh Opera's "Samson & Dalila"**

- What:** "Samson & Dalila" by Camille Saint-Saëns
- Where:** The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts
- When:** Saturday, October 18 at 7:00 PM  
Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00 PM  
Friday, October 24 at 8:00 PM  
Sunday, October 26 at 2:00 PM
- Run Time:** 2 hours and 45 minutes, including 2 intermissions
- Language:** Sung in French with projected English titles.
- Tickets:** Start at \$16. Call (412) 456-6666, visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org), or purchase in person at the Theater Square box office at 665 Penn Avenue.
- More info:** For an enhanced version of this release with artist bios, interview with the stage director, and related events, visit <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/pressroom/pressroom.shtml?search=action&category=H000>. **Pittsburgh Opera homepage** [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org)

Pittsburgh, PA (October 7, 2008) . . . The eyes of the opera world will be on Pittsburgh Opera when mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe makes her eagerly anticipated role debut as the *femme fatale* in "Samson & Dalila" by Camille Saint-Saëns. Samson is the highly regarded tenor Frank Porretta; Metropolitan Opera baritone Kim Josephson schemes against him as the High Priest of Dagon, and Harry Dworchak thunders as the despised ruler Abimélech. Music Director Antony Walker leads the sumptuous orchestra and chorus, and Michele de la Reza and Peter Kope bring the talents of Attack Theatre to the captivating Bacchanale, Saint-Saëns's famous dance of the Philistines. Stephen Pickover directs.

General Director Christopher Hahn comments, "This is such an honor for Pittsburgh Opera to have Stephanie Blythe returning for another 'first' in her repertoire—and just six months after her Amneris in 'Aida' last spring." Blythe, widely regarded as the world's leading mezzo-soprano, was looking for just the right place to make this role debut, and according to Hahn, "We were able to program this opera especially for her."

**The Production.** Pittsburgh Opera has purchased and enhanced a set originally designed for Opera Memphis by Peter Dean Beck. Its most striking element is an enormous medallion depicting Dagon, the fish/man god of the Philistines, that dominates the Temple scene in Act III. In the last seconds of the opera, that medallion breaks apart, and massive blocks fall as Samson rocks the pillars of the temple.

This production is generously sponsored by the H. J. Heinz Company Foundation

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Pittsburgh Opera, now celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> 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.

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