

**September 6, 2016 - For Immediate Release**

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents Verdi's La traviata**  
*The most popular opera in the world,  
 at the Benedum for the first time in five years*

<b>What:</b>	Verdi's <a href="#">La traviata</a>
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	Saturday, October 8th, 8:00 p.m.  Tuesday, October 11th, 7:00 p.m.  Friday, October 14th, 7:30 p.m.  Sunday, October 16th, 2:00 p.m.
<b>Run Time:</b>	2 hours 12 minutes, including 2 intermissions
<b>Language:</b>	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
<b>Tickets:</b>	Single tickets start at \$12 for all performances. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit <a href="http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets">pittsburghopera.org/tickets</a> .
<b>Media Events</b>	<i>Please contact <a href="mailto:ccox@pittsburghopera.org">ccox@pittsburghopera.org</a> for reservations</i>  Photo Call (9/26, 12:30 PM) – Artifacts Antique Store, <a href="#">110 S Main St, Pittsburgh, PA 15220</a>  Full Dress Rehearsal (10/6, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center
<b>Related Events</b>  <i>See pages 6-7          of this release.</i>	Opera Up Close (9/25)  WQED Preview (10/1 & 10/7)  Meet the Artists (10/11)  Audio Commentary (10/11)



Party time! Photo: Eric Antoniou for Boston Lyric Opera © 2014

## **Pittsburgh, PA...**

Pittsburgh Opera opens its 78th season with the Giuseppe Verdi favorite **La traviata**, at the Benedum Center October 8<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup>.

**La traviata** – the fallen woman – is a compelling tale of love, intrigue, money, and power in 19th century France.

It tells the heart-wrenching story of courtesan Violetta Valéry, played by Pittsburgh favorite [Danielle Pastin](#). Alfredo Germont – played by [Cody Austin](#) in his Pittsburgh Opera debut – wins Violetta’s love and his father’s displeasure. His father, going behind Alfredo’s back, coerces Violetta into breaking up with Alfredo because their relationship threatens his daughter’s engagement and his family’s reputation.

Violetta will not disclose his father’s role in their breakup, so Alfredo erroneously believes she loves someone else. He publicly denounces her, leaving them both grief-stricken. Will they reconcile before it’s too late?

Pittsburgh Opera will be performing a production of **La traviata** which is new to Pittsburgh. Set in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris, it does not shy away from some of the more ribald aspects of that society.

From the rousing “Brindisi” drinking song to touching arias, **La traviata**’s singing and music are sure to delight.

**La traviata** features a superlative cast, including:

- [Danielle Pastin](#) (Violetta Valéry), a favorite of Pittsburgh Opera audiences, who last performed here in 2015's [Così fan tutte](#). Praised by Opera News as having “one of the most sheerly beautiful voices on the scene today,” the former Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist continues to gain critical acclaim for her engagements across the country and internationally. Ms. Pastin made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2011.
- [Cody Austin](#) (Alfredo Germont), described as “beautifully talented” and “charismatic,” is making his Pittsburgh Opera debut. In March 2016, he sang this role with Opera Tampa, where the Tampa Bay Times said it was “a part he might have been born to play.” Mr. Austin has sung across the country to high praise.
- [Sebastian Catana](#) (Giorgio Germont), also making his Pittsburgh Opera debut. Originally from Romania, Mr. Catana first performed at the Metropolitan Opera in **La bohème** in 2003. Despite the fact that most of his performances are in Europe, Mr. Catana and his family live in Bethel Park.

On stage October 8, 11, 14 & 16, **La traviata** is an unforgettable way to open the opera season. Tickets start at just \$12 and are [available online](#).

## Three facts about **La traviata**

1. **La traviata** is the opera that Richard Gere took Julia Roberts to see in the hit movie **Pretty Woman**. In the movie, Julia Roberts plays a prostitute who falls in love with a wealthy man, and **La traviata** moved her character deeply enough to exclaim “it was so good I almost peed my pants.”
2. As the [most popular opera in the world](#), even non-opera fans know the music from **La traviata**. It's been featured in TV commercials for all things Italian, and the Brindisi drinking song was the bedrock of a classic [Heineken commercial](#).
3. Violetta wears a white camellia flower on her dress, which she removes in the first act and tosses to Alfredo. In the book [Lady of the Camellias](#) by Alexander Dumas, fils, which **La traviata** is based on, the Violetta character, also a prostitute, wears a white camellia to signify she is ‘available’ for customers, and a red one to signify she is not.

## The story, in brief

Pittsburgh Opera's production of Verdi's **La traviata** takes place in France during the mid-1800s.

The story opens in Paris. Violetta Valéry has been out most of the night running from party to party with her friends, who are now continuing the festivities in her luxurious apartment.

An admirer of Violetta's, Alfredo Germont, who has long adored her from afar, flirts with her in a rousing drinking song, the famous Brindisi "Libiamo ne'lieti calici."

Alfredo then proceeds to confess to Violetta that he has loved her for more than a year. Moved, Violetta attempts to warn Alfredo, saying that she "doesn't know how to love." Besides, as you'll hear in a stunning aria, Violetta wants to be 'sempre libera' – always free. "Free and aimless she must flutter, from pleasure to pleasure."

Alfredo eventually wins Violetta over, and they move to a house in the country. Alfredo sings about how happy he has been ever since Violetta told him "I want to live, faithful to you alone."

However, Alfredo's father Giorgio Germont disapproves of Violetta's relationship with Alfredo, because it threatens his family's reputation and also his daughter's engagement. He coerces Violetta into breaking up with Alfredo, then returns to console his son and remind him of his loving family back home in Provence.

Alfredo confronts Violetta at a party. She will not disclose his father's role in their breakup, so Alfredo erroneously believes she loves someone else. Angry, he scorns her and storms off.

Violetta and Alfredo are both miserable. Six months later, Germont finally confesses his plot to Alfredo. Alfredo regrets the way he mistreated Violetta and attempts to reconcile. Violetta, however, is sadly succumbing to tuberculosis, and bids farewell "to happy dreams of by-gone days." Alfredo's father enters with a doctor, regretting what he has done. However, it is too late – she dies in Alfredo's arms.

For additional information, videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit [pittsburghopera.org/traviata](http://pittsburghopera.org/traviata).

## Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of **La traviata** start at \$12
- All performances are at the [Benedum Center](#), 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or buy online at [https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/47932/list\\_performances](https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/47932/list_performances).
- Group discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, x 213

## Sponsors

- The 2016-17 Pittsburgh Opera season is generously supported by [PNC](#)
- [WQED-FM](#) is Season Media Sponsor
- Tuesday performance sponsor: [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#).

## Cast and Artistic Team

Violetta Valéry	<a href="#">Danielle Pastin</a> **
Alfredo Germont	<a href="#">Cody Austin</a> +
Giorgio Germont	<a href="#">Sebastian Catana</a> +
Flora Bervoix	<a href="#">Leah de Gruyl</a> *
Baron Douphol	<a href="#">Brian Vu</a> *
Doctor Grenvil	<a href="#">Matt Scollin</a> **
Gastone de Letorieres	<a href="#">Eric Ferring</a> *
Annina	<a href="#">Claudia Rosenthal</a> *
Marquis d'Obigny	<a href="#">Andy Berry</a> *
Conductor	<a href="#">Christian Capocaccia</a>
Stage Director	<a href="#">Chas Rader-Shieber</a>
Set Designer	<a href="#">Julia Noulin-Mérat</a>
Costume Designer	Jacob Climer
Lighting Designer	Mike Inwood
Wig & Make-up Designer	James Geier
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Asst. Conductor	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Chorus Master	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>
Asst. Stage Director	Frances Rabalais*
Asst. Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Asst. Stage Manager	Sarah Cowing
Asst. Stage Manager	Attitra Lelehuta

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

## Related Events for La traviata

### **Opera Up Close: La traviata**

**Sunday, September 25 from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Opera Up Close is an in-depth look at the music and story of Verdi's **La traviata**, with singers and the production's conductor. Admission is \$5; free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) and \$50+ donors. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-la-traviata>

### **La traviata - Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**

**Saturday, October 1st from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and**

**Friday, October 7th from 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

Hosted by WQED, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3 as well as the WQED website, the **La traviata Preview** gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information:

<http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-la-traviata>

### **Pre-opera Talks for La traviata**

**One hour prior to each performance**

**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders are invited to attend a free Pre-Opera Talk one hour before each performance's curtain in the Main Floor/Orchestra section of the Benedum Center. Learn about the composer, the story and some juicy details about the opera!

Pre-Opera Talks are free to all ticketholders at all performances.

### **Audio Commentary: La traviata**

**Tuesday, October 11th, 7:00 PM**

**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders with visual impairments are invited to use Pittsburgh Opera's Audio Description service at our Tuesday performances. Trained volunteers describe the scenery, costumes, and stage action. The listeners hear these descriptions via assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> performance by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org). Braille and large-print programs are also available.

**Meet the Artists of La traviata**

**Tuesday, October 11th**

**Immediately following the opera, in the Benedum Center's Lower Lobby**

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, October 11th performance of **La traviata** are invited to gather in the Benedum Lower Lobby immediately following the performance for interviews with [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) and the stars of the opera. This event is free to all Tuesday performance ticketholders.

**October Brown Bag concert**

**Saturday, October 15, 2016 Noon - 1:00PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free October Brown Bag concert. The program includes some of our 2016-17 Resident Artists' favorite selections. It's free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet the Resident Artists afterward in an informal reception.

Doors open at 11:30AM. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/october-brown-bag-concert1>

***COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:***

**[Richard Strauss's Salome, November 2016](#)**

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 78th season in 2016-17. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.

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