

For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Opera brings back COSÌ FAN TUTTE
Mozart's "School for Lovers", not seen here since 2006

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| What: | Mozart's COSÌ FAN TUTTE |
| Where: | Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh |
| When: | Saturday, November 7, 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 10, 7:00 p.m. Friday, November 13, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, November 15, 2:00 p.m. |
| Run Time: | 3 hours, including 1 intermission |
| Language: | Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage |
| Tickets: | Start at \$12 for all performances. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit pittsburghopera.org |
| Media Events | <i>Media welcome to attend - Please contact ccox@pittsburghopera.org for reservations</i> Photo Call (10/26) Full Dress Rehearsal (11/5) |
| Related Events <i>See pages 5-6 of this release.</i> | Opera Up Close (10/25) WQED Preview (10/31 & 11/6) Meet the Artists (11/10) Audio Description (11/10) Brown Bag Concert (11/14) |



Don Alfonso explains all, and bids the lovers learn their lesson. Photo by Eric Antoniou for Boston Lyric Opera

Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera continues its 77th season with a Mozart favorite - *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*, or the "School for Lovers."

"Britain's Favorite Baritone," Sir Thomas Allen (the real-life inspiration for "Billy Elliot") not only directs, but plays the cynical philosopher Don Alfonso in this charming production. Combine a cast as talented as they are attractive with Mozart's brilliant score, and you have a sublime opera experience of poignant comedy. Set in the Italian seaside, the story centers around two couples and one wager - will they be faithful? Two young military officers are confident their girlfriends will remain true to them. Don Alfonso believes otherwise, and unleashes an inventive scheme to find out.

COSÌ FAN TUTTE is the last of the three masterful collaborations between Mozart and librettist Lorenzo da Ponte (the other two were *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* and *DON GIOVANNI*). It premiered just a year before Mozart's death.

On stage November 7, 10, 13, and 15, it brings laughs and soul searching to the Benedum Center. Tickets start at \$12.

Three facts about COSÌ FAN TUTTE

1. Known as “The School for Lovers”, the title, “Così fan tutte”, literally means “Thus do all [women],” and is often translated into English as “Women are like that”.¹
2. Sir Thomas Allen, who grew up in a mining community in northern England where a career in the arts was “not highly looked upon,”² was the inspiration for the famous character “Billy Elliott” in the namesake movie and play. Sir Thomas was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1989 and Knight Bachelor in 1999 for services to opera. Sir Thomas is also Chancellor of Durham University.
3. There are multiple versions of the ending. In Mozart’s original production, the ladies remain with their original boyfriends. However, some contemporary directors have them swap boyfriends, or have only one couple stay together, or have them both break up. (No spoiler alert for Pittsburgh Opera’s production...)

The story, in brief

Mozart's COSÌ FAN TUTTE takes place in Naples during the late 18th century.

Act I

Two young officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, boast about the beauty and virtue of their girlfriends, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella. Their older friend, the cynical Don Alfonso, declares that a woman’s constancy is like the phoenix—everyone talks about it but no one has ever seen it. He proposes a wager: if they’ll give him one day and do everything he asks, he will prove to them that the sisters are unfaithful, like all other women. Amused, the young men agree.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella think of their lovers, imagining that they will soon be married. Alfonso’s plot begins when he arrives with terrible news: the young officers have been called away to their regiment. Ferrando and Guglielmo appear, apparently heartbroken, and the four make tearful farewells.

The sisters’ maid Despina complains about how much work she has to do around the house. Dorabella vents her despair at her lover’s absence. Despina refuses to take her seriously: they should simply find new lovers, since men are unworthy of a woman’s fidelity. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are shocked. Alfonso bribes Despina to assist him, without revealing his plot. Ferrando and Guglielmo enter in disguise as foreigners, and declare their admiration for the ladies, each addressing the other’s girlfriend. The sisters reject their advances, Fiordiligi comparing her constancy to a rock in a storm. The men are confident of winning the bet. Ferrando expresses his love for Dorabella, and the two friends leave.

As the sisters continue to lament the absence of their lovers, the “foreigners” return, pretending to have poisoned themselves in despair over their rejection. Despina and Alfonso go off to fetch help, leaving the two girls to care for the strangers. Despina reappears, disguised as a doctor, and pretends to treat the patients. When Ferrando and

Guglielmo request kisses in order to fully recover, the sisters again reject them, but it is clear they're beginning to show interest in the strangers.

Act II

Despina lectures her mistresses on how to handle men and the sisters agree that there can be no harm in a little flirtation. They decide on their partners, each picking the other's suitor. Guglielmo, flirting with Dorabella, succeeds, but Ferrando has less luck with Fiordiligi. When he leaves, though, she struggles with her emotions.

Ferrando is certain that they have won the wager. Guglielmo is happy to hear that Fiordiligi has been faithful to him, but when he shows his friend the portrait that Dorabella gave him, Ferrando is furious. Guglielmo, adopting Alfonso's philosophy, blames it on the women. He asks Alfonso to pay him his half of the winnings, but Alfonso reminds him that the day is not yet over.

Fiordiligi reproaches her sister for her behavior, but Dorabella replies that love is a thief who rewards those who obey him. Alone, Fiordiligi decides to join Guglielmo at the front, when suddenly Ferrando appears. He tries one last time to seduce her and succeeds.

Guglielmo is furious, but Alfonso again declares that this is the way women are. A man who has been deceived can blame only himself.

The sisters have agreed to marry the "foreigners." Everything is ready and Alfonso arrives with the notary—Despina in another disguise. As Fiordiligi and Dorabella sign the contract, military music announces the return of their former lovers. In panic, they hide their intended husbands, who return as their real selves, first pretending surprise at their reception, then, when they discover the marriage contract, blaming the girls and threatening revenge. Finally, the men reveal their disguised identities and Fiordiligi and Dorabella ask forgiveness. Alfonso bids the lovers learn their lesson.

- Courtesy of Opera News, freely edited

For additional information, videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit pittsburghopera.org.

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of [COSÌ FAN TUTTE](#) start at \$12
- All performances are at the [Benedum Center](#), 7th Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or visit www.pittsburghopera.org
- Group discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, x 213

Sponsors

- The 2015-16 Pittsburgh Opera season is generously supported by [PNC](#)
- [WQED-FM](#) is Season Media Sponsor

Cast and Artistic Team

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fiordiligi | Danielle Pastin ** |
| Dorabella | Jennifer Holloway ** |
| Ferrando | Christopher Tiesi + |
| Guglielmo | Hadleigh Adams + |
| Don Alfonso | Sir Thomas Allen + |
| Despina | Sari Gruber |
| Conductor | Antony Walker |
| Stage Director | Sir Thomas Allen + |
| Set Designer | John Conklin |
| Costume Designer | Gail Astrid Buckley |
| Lighting Designer | Marcus Dilliard |
| Wig & Make-up Designer | James Geier |
| Stage Manager | Cindy Knight |
| Assistant Conductor | Glenn Lewis |
| Chorus Master | Mark Trawka |
| Associate Coach/Pianist | James Lesniak |
| Asst. Stage Director | Jennifer Williams * |
| Asst. Lighting Designer | Todd Nonn |
| Asst. Stage Manager | Sarah Cowing |
| Asst. Stage Manager | Vanessa Chumbley |

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Related Events for COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Opera Up Close: COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Sunday, October 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 Mozart's COSÌ FAN TUTTE 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 [pittsburghopera.org](#).

COSÌ FAN TUTTE Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG

Saturday, October 31 from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and

Friday, November 6 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 COSÌ FAN TUTTE preview gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music and story of the opera. For more information: [pittsburghopera.org](#)

Audio Description: COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Tuesday, November 10

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 via headphones. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, October 13 performance: contact Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are also available.

Meet the Artists of COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Tuesday, November 10

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

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, November 10th performance of COSÌ FAN TUTTE 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.

Brown Bag Concert, "Mozart"

Saturday, November 14 - 12:00 p.m.

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

At the second Brown Bag concert of the season, our [Resident Artists](#) will treat you to an all-Mozart program. Guests can meet the performers after this casual, one-hour concert. Free and open to everyone; no RSVP required. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Handicapped parking available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or pittsburghopera.org

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

[Mark Adamo's LITTLE WOMEN, January 23, 26, 29, & 31, 2016](#)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cos%C3%AC_fan_tutte

² <http://britainsfavouritebaritone.webs.com/biography.htm>

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 77th season in 2015-16. 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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