

November 30, 2016 - For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Opera presents Handel's Richard the Lionheart
Betrayal, Greed, Love and War –
All the ingredients for a thrilling opera

What:	George Frideric Handel's Richard the Lionheart
Where:	Pittsburgh CAPA Theater, Downtown Pittsburgh
When:	Sat, Jan 21, 2017 * 8:00 PM Tue, Jan 24, 2017 * 7:00 PM Fri, Jan 27, 2017 * 7:30 PM Sun, Jan 29, 2017 * 2:00 PM
Run Time:	2 hours, 12 minutes, with one intermission
Language:	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
Tickets:	Most tickets are \$50.75. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit pittsburghopera.org/tickets .
Media Events	<i>Please contact ccox@pittsburghopera.org for reservations</i> Photo Call (Monday, Jan. 9 th , 12:30 PM) – location TBD Full Dress Rehearsal (Thursday, Jan. 19 th , 6:30 – 9:30 PM), Pittsburgh CAPA Theater
Related Events <i>See pages 5-6 of this release.</i>	Brown Bag Concert (Jan. 7 th) Opera Up Close (Jan. 8 th), including Sensory Workshop WQED Preview (Jan. 14 th & 20 th) Meet the Artists (Jan. 24 th) Audio Commentary (Jan. 24 th)



King Richard is not to be trifled with. Photo by Ken Howard for Opera Theatre of St. Louis's 2015 production.

Pittsburgh, PA

Pittsburgh Opera continues its 78th season with the Pennsylvania premiere of Handel's **Richard the Lionheart**, at Pittsburgh CAPA Theater January 21st-29th.

Before he wrote his famous Messiah, [George Frideric Handel](#) composed a number of beautiful operas. He wrote **Richard the Lionheart** ([Riccardo Primo](#)) for the Royal Academy's 1726–27 opera season in London. It was neglected for a considerable amount of time before being resurrected in Europe in the mid 1960's. This will only be the second time **Richard the Lionheart** has been performed in the United States (the first was by Opera Theatre of St. Louis in 2015).

The story takes place in Cyprus in the late 1100's, and is about King Richard the First of England's pending marriage to the Spanish princess Costanza.

This is a traditional, Baroque opera, so in order to make the live accompaniment sound authentic, Pittsburgh Opera is partnering with [Chatham Baroque](#) to add three classical Baroque performers to its orchestra. Founded in 1990, [Chatham Baroque](#) continues to excite local, national and international audiences with dazzling technique and lively interpretations of 17th- and 18th- century music played on authentic instruments of the period.

Pittsburgh Opera is also proud to partner with [Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama](#) to create custom sets for these performances.

Our CAPA Theater productions are dedicated to showcasing Pittsburgh Opera's talented [Resident Artists](#), and provide audiences the opportunity to see tomorrow's big league opera stars today.

On stage January 21, 24, 27 & 29, 2017, **Richard the Lionheart** offers the rare opportunity to see a 'new' 300-year old opera by one of the most celebrated composers in history. Most tickets are \$50.75 and are [available online](#).

Fun facts about Richard the Lionheart

1. The role of King Richard will be sung by a woman – mezzo-soprano [Leah de Gruyl](#). In opera, when a woman plays the role of a man, it is called a “pants role.” Handel wrote the role of King Richard for a castrato - a man who was castrated before puberty. Given that pre-pubescent castration no longer takes place, roles written for castrati are usually performed by mezzo-sopranos, whose voices most closely resemble them. (The only surviving recording of a castrato singing can be heard on Wikipedia at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castrato>.)
2. George Frideric Handel was a German living in England, who composed **Richard the Lionheart** for the Royal Academy in London. Nevertheless, the libretto was written by an Italian ([Paolo Antonio Rolli](#)) in Italian, which was considered the operatic gold-standard at the time. (Pittsburgh Opera will be projecting English supertitles in translation above the stage.)
3. In years past, Baroque operas were performed frequently enough that some opera singers solely sang Baroque. Nowadays, modern opera singers receive specific training in Baroque techniques so that it can be part of their repertoire while not severely limiting their careers.

The story, in brief

Taking place in Cyprus in the late 1100's, the story is about King Richard the First of England's pending marriage to the Spanish princess Costanza.

On her journey to be married to King Richard, Costanza and her party are shipwrecked off the coast of Cyprus. She finds shelter at the court of the local governor, Isacio. Isacio's daughter Pulcheria is engaged to Oronte, Prince of Syria, but Oronte is quickly attracted to the beautiful Costanza, as is Isacio himself.

King Richard arrives in Cyprus to collect Costanza, who Isacio promises to deliver. However, Isacio is up to no good. He intends to send his daughter Pulcheria to King Richard in place of Costanza, and keep Costanza for himself. Costanza and her servant Berardo suspect treachery, and Berardo promises to investigate.

When Isacio informs Pulcheria of his plot she is conflicted. She does not want to be party to a fraud, but she sees an opportunity to punish her unfaithful lover Oronte.

King Richard arrives, disguised as his kingdom's ambassador. Pulcheria presents herself to him as Costanza. Berardo has discovered and relayed the plot to Oronte, who reveals the treachery to a now angry King Richard. Richard vows to either return with the real Costanza or avenge himself by force of arms.

King Richard offers Isacio the choice of either peace or war. Isacio chooses war, with Costanza as the proposed prize. The armies battle, and Richard's army captures Isacio. Isacio must renounce his power, but is allowed to live. Pulcheria, now reconciled with Oronte as her husband, shall reign in place of her father. Richard and Costanza sail off into the sunset where, “gentle, sweet affection will set their hearts aglow.”

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

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Most tickets to **Richard the Lionheart** are \$50.75
- All performances are at the Pittsburgh CAPA Theater, 111 9th St, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, in downtown Pittsburgh
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or buy online at https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/47949/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

King Richard I of England
Costanza
Isacio
Pulcheria
Oronte
Berardo

[Leah de Gruyl](#)*
[Shannon Jennings](#)*
[Andy Berry](#)*
[Claudia Rosenthal](#)*
[Taylor Raven](#)*
[Brian Vu](#)*

Conductor
Stage Director
Assistant Stage Director
Costume Designer
Stage Manager
Set Designer
Lighting Designer
Assistant Lighting Designer/ Master Electrician
Wig Master
Director of Musical Studies
Associate Coach/Pianist

[Michael Beattie](#)
[Crystal Manich](#)
[Frances Rabalais](#)*
[Richard St. Clair](#)
Cindy Knight
[Alison Gondek](#)
[Tiàloc Lopez-Watermann](#)
Todd Nonn
Nicole Pagano
[Mark Trawka](#)
[James Lesniak](#)

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Related Events for Richard the Lionheart

January Brown Bag concert

Saturday, January 7th, 2016 Noon - 1:00PM

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

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free January 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/january-brown-bag-concert1>.

Opera Up Close: Richard the Lionheart

Sunday, January 8th from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Founders' Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

Opera Up Close is an in-depth look at the music and story of George Frederic Handel's **Richard the Lionheart**, 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-richard-the-lionheart>

Richard the Lionheart - Sensory Workshop for patrons with visual impairments

Sunday, January 08, 2017 4:00 - 6:00 PM

Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

Pittsburgh Opera is proud to offer, free of charge, a unique sensory workshop about Richard the Lionheart prepared for our patrons with visual impairments. The workshop is in partnership with members of Blind Outdoor Leisure Development, the Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh, and their companions. Participants will have a chance to meet artists and explore the set, props, and costumes. Light refreshments will be served.

The Set Tour and Sensory Workshop will begin at 4:00PM, following the conclusion of Opera Up Close. To register, call Marilyn Egan at 412-281-0912 ext. 242.

Richard the Lionheart Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG

Saturday, January 14, 2017 from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and

Friday, January 20, 2017 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 **Richard the Lionheart 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-richard-the-lionheart>

Pre-opera Talks for Richard the Lionheart **One hour prior to each performance**

Pittsburgh CAPA Theater

Ticketholders are invited to attend a free Pre-Opera Talk one hour before each performance's curtain in the CAPA Black Box Theater. 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: Richard the Lionheart **Tuesday, January 24th, 7:00 PM**

Pittsburgh CAPA Theater

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, January 24th performance by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are also available at all performances.

Meet the Artists of Richard the Lionheart **Tuesday, January 24th**

Immediately following the opera, in the CAPA Black Box Theater

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, January 24th performance of **Richard the Lionheart** are invited to gather in the CAPA Black Box Theater 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.

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera: **Laura Kaminsky's [As One](#), February 18th – 26th, 2017**

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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