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Pittsburgh Opera and Carnegie Mellon University present biennial partnership “Co-Opera” April 13 & 14

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[Pittsburgh Opera](#) and Carnegie Mellon University are once again joining forces for their innovative Co-Opera Program. Through this program, students, alumni, and faculty from CMU's [School of Music](#), [School of Drama](#), and the [Master of Arts Management \(MAM\) Program](#) work closely with Pittsburgh Opera to create new works.

This collaboration, which takes place over a two-year time span, culminates with the premieres of three newly composed operas at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters on Saturday, April 13, at 7 PM and Sunday, April 14, at 5:30 PM. Each opera is approximately 25 minutes, with a total evening run time of approximately 90 minutes, including a brief pause between each opera. Each will be fully staged and sung in English. They are:

- ***Mel Rides the Bus Alone***
 - Mel is a young woman returning home to see a family from whom she has long since drifted away. Filled to the brim with anxiety and boredom, she begins to distract herself by imagining personalities for various passengers. The more she forces the distraction, the more her daydream pushes back – each imaginary person returning to the subject of “home” with increasing insistence. At the heart of the piece is a complex guilt – simultaneously loving your family, but knowing you’re better off apart from them.
- ***languagemachine***
 - In a not-so-distant future, a waste prevention initiative called The Language Machine has been established to cut down the time people spend speaking — but what began as erasure of “umms” and “likes” has become the elimination of almost all communication. Amidst global institution of the initiative, a married couple struggles through their last conversation, and two operators alter their once-successful relationship when they peek inside of the machine. As language grows less and less and more and more, the two pairs must learn how to navigate the complexities of communication anew.
- ***Not our First American***
 - An earthquake devastates a small town in southern Mexico. Idealistic and good hearted, Dr. James arrives at its rural clinic to aid a disaster relief effort. However, he soon finds himself out of his depth when confronted with his powerlessness against the chaos, death, and poverty around him. The clinic’s directory Catalina has little patience for Dr. James. Their relationship comes to a head when they have to decide what to do about one patient in particular, whose leg-wound has been infested by maggots.

Begun in 2015, Co-Opera's purpose is to create new, short operatic works while training the next wave of opera professionals. Composers, librettists, singers, directors, designers and orchestra (from CMU Contemporary Ensemble) are chosen from the students at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Music and School of Drama. In coordination with CMU faculty and staff, Pittsburgh Opera provides professional-level guidance throughout all phases of the biennial process.

"The first two Co-Opera events were major successes," said Pittsburgh Opera General Director [Christopher Hahn](#). "We are tremendously excited for this new crop of productions. It's gratifying to help develop the next generation of opera composers, librettists, producers, and singers. They are the future of our beautiful art form."

"I am so pleased that our students are able to collaborate on these fresh, new works," said [Dan Martin](#), Stanley and Marcia Gumberg Dean of Carnegie Mellon's College of Fine Arts. "I also am very proud of the remarkable performances that come out this partnership among these key areas of study and practice at Carnegie Mellon."

"Co-Opera makes it possible for our young artists to experience a nearly fully realized production of their emerging work, a rare opportunity for opera composers and librettists to gain some valuable feedback," adds [Daniel Nesta Curtis](#), the Artistic Director of Co-Opera and the Music Director of Carnegie Mellon University Contemporary Music Ensemble. "It has the potential to be a stepping stone to life-long careers for these talented and dedicated young men and women."

Co-Opera admission is free and open to the public, but a ticket is required. Capacity is limited. Tickets are available at co-opera2019.eventbrite.com. A free artist Meet & Greet reception will take place following each of the two performances at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters.

CASTS AND ARTISTIC TEAMS

- ***Mel Rides the Bus Alone***
 - Joshua Brown - Composer/Director
 - Lauren D'Errico - Librettist/Director
 - Jaqueline Tardenico - Mel
 - Alex Taylor - Green Shirt Guy
 - Russell Holbert - Blond Ass Tat
 - Emma McAlister - Chapstick Girl

- ***languagemachine***
 - Ramin Akhavijou - Composer
 - Lauren D'Errico - Librettist
 - Brandy Carie - Director
 - Chantal Braziel - Lucy
 - Caleb Glickman - Andy
 - Emily Gallagher - Diana
 - William Ottow - Charles

- ***Not our First American***
 - Marina López - Composer
 - Daniel Burns - Librettist/Director
 - Joseph Sandler - Dr. James
 - Kristin Howard - Catalina

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

- Artistic Director / Conductor: Daniel Nesta Curtis
- Co-Producer: Robert Boldin, Pittsburgh Opera
- Program Administrator: Emily Grand, Pittsburgh Opera
- Student Producers: Elizabeth Devonshire and Lauren Cornwell. Carnegie Mellon University
- Scenic Designer: Dana Wintraub
- Media Designer: Sean Leo
- Costume Designer: Jean-Luc DeLadurantaye
- Lighting Designer: Anirudh Anand
- Dean, College of Fine Arts: [Dan Martin](#)
- Head of School of Music: [Denis Colwell](#)
- Head of School of Drama: [Peter Cooke](#)
- Asst. Dean Heinz College; Director Masters of Arts Management (MAM) Program: [Kathryn Heidemann](#)

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 80th season in 2018-19. 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.

Founded in 1905, the College of Fine Arts (CFA) was one of the first comprehensive arts teaching institutes in the United States. Quickly, Carnegie Mellon's CFA became one of the nation's — and the world's — leaders in architecture, art, design, drama and music. Our [alumni](#) make a difference in their fields every day. Well into its second century, CFA continues to set the standards for excellence in professional education within a top-tier research university setting. Every day, our students, faculty and staff bring a special energy to Carnegie Mellon, the region, the nation and the world with projects and performances of beauty and power. The entire university takes great pride in the creative contributions of our students, faculty, staff and alumni to the arts, architecture and design in America and around the world.

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