

September 14, 2016 - For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Opera presents Richard Strauss's Salome
The opera that shocked the world,
in a production never before seen in Pittsburgh

What:	Richard Strauss's Salome
Where:	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
When:	Saturday, November 5th, 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 8th, 7:00 p.m. Friday, November 11th, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, November 13th, 2:00 p.m.
Run Time:	90 minutes, with no intermission
Language:	Sung in German with English texts projected above the stage
Tickets:	Single tickets start at \$12 for all performances. 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 (10/24, 12:30 PM) – Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh Full Dress Rehearsal (11/3, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center
Related Events <i>See pages 6-7 of this release.</i>	Opera Up Close (10/23) WQED Preview (10/29 & 11/4) Meet the Artists (11/8) Audio Commentary (11/8) Brown Bag Concert (11/12)



Salome has a strange way of expressing her affection for Jochanaan. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Opera

Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera continues its 78th season with Richard Strauss's powerful **Salome**, at the Benedum Center November 5th -13th.

First performed in 1905, **Salome** was originally censored in Vienna, banned in London, and even protested in New York. However, now it's considered a classic. **Salome** helped reinforce Strauss's reputation as "the greatest genius of the age".

Based on the play by Oscar Wilde, **Salome** reimagines the biblical story of King Herod, his stepdaughter Salome and John the Baptist - Jochanaan. **Salome** provides one interpretation of why exactly Salome forced Herod to give her John the Baptist's severed head on a silver platter.

We are thrilled that the title role of Salome will be sung by the international star soprano Patricia Racette, who sang the role to critical acclaim last year, including the famous, seductive "Dance of the Seven Veils". The dance is being choreographed by Michele de la Reza of [Attack Theatre](#).

Pittsburgh Opera has not performed **Salome** since 2001, and is performing a different production that the company now owns. The production is 'traditional'- meaning that the sets and costumes make it look like the biblical era in which it takes place.

Two-time Grammy winner Nmon Ford makes his Pittsburgh Opera debut as Jochanaan. Robert Brubaker plays King Herod and Michaela Martens is Herodias.

Music Director Antony Walker conducts.

Salome features a superlative cast, including four stars making their Pittsburgh Opera debuts:

- [Patricia Racette](#) (Salome) – Patricia Racette makes her long-awaited Pittsburgh Opera debut. Known as “one of the great singing actresses of our time,” soprano Racette is a mainstay at The Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera. She regularly performs in major opera houses around the world.
- [Nmon Ford](#) (Jochanaan) –“Matinee-idol handsome, with a rich and supple baritone capable of both power and subtlety. He radiates star quality,” testifies the *Hollywood Reporter*. Ford has performed throughout the country, as well as in France and Italy. He was a featured soloist on the Grammy Award winning [Transmigrations](#) (Telarc) and [Songs of Innocence and of Experience](#) (Naxos).
- [Robert Brubaker](#) (King Herod) – Originally from near Lancaster, PA, Brubaker is now a leading tenor in opera companies throughout the United States and Europe, and is “praised for the clarity and power of his voice and the impact of his acting.” His performance as Herod at the famous Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona was called “without vocal defect.”
- [Michaela Martens](#) (Herodias) – A “passionate and sympathetic vocal actress” according to *The Boston Globe*, Michaela Martins performs around the world in places such as Toyko, Switzerland, England, and Germany. Her performance in this role with the Santa Fe Opera drew considerable praise.

On stage November 5, 8, 11 & 13, **Salome** is retains the power and emotion that made it a classic. Tickets start at just \$12 and are [available online](#).

Four fun facts about Salome

1. The Dance of the Seven Veils has been described as “the most shocking moment in operatic history,” in large part because Salome is intended to be fully naked at the end of this ‘biblical strip-tease.’ Many opera stars refuse to do this, but Patricia Racette will perform the role as intended.
2. No two Dances of the Seven Veils are ever exactly alike. For this production, Pittsburgh Opera is partnering with [Attack Theatre](#), who will be choreographing a unique version of the Dance specifically for Patricia Racette.
3. Because Salome performs the Dance of the Seven Veils for King Herod, he is forced to give her the severed head of John the Baptist on a silver platter. Pittsburgh Opera Wig & Make-up Designer James Geier is overseeing the creation of a replica of Nmon Ford’s head that will be startlingly realistic.
4. The story of **Salome** appears throughout pop and artistic culture. Besides the opera and the play by Oscar Wilde, it has been a ballet, the subject of over two dozen movies – including one starring Rita Hayworth and the classic **Sunset Boulevard** – and a video game. Salome even has an asteroid named after her.

The story, in brief

Salome is set in biblical times, and recreates the story of King Herod, his stepdaughter Salome, and John the Baptist (called Jochanaan).

Princess Salome becomes obsessed with Jochanaan, who is being held prisoner in her stepfather King Herod's dungeon. She is filled with an overwhelming desire for him and asks to kiss him, but he rejects her. King Herod, meanwhile, lusts after his own stepdaughter Salome, much to his wife Herodias's disgust. Herod implores Salome to dance for him, promising to reward her with her heart's desire – even if it were to be one half of his kingdom.

Sensing an opportunity, Salome agrees and performs the seductive “Dance of the Seven Veils”. This dance has her slowly removing her seven veils until she stands naked at her stepfather's feet. Salome then intends to make good on Herod's promise to give her whatever she wants. What she wants is the head of the prophet Jochanaan, presented on a silver platter. Herod unsuccessfully tries to change her mind, and ultimately he is forced to give her what she demands.

Salome holds her trophy triumphantly. Jochanaan had prevented her from kissing his lips before - now she mocks him and passionately kisses his severed head. Repulsed and terrified, Herod has his guards kill Salome as the curtain falls.

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

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of **Salome** 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 buy online at https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/47939/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

Salome - [Patricia Racette](#)+
King Herod - [Robert Brubaker](#)+
Herodias - [Michaela Martens](#)+
Narraboth - [Jonathan Boyd](#)
Page of Herodias - [Leah de Gruyl](#)*
Jochanaan - [Nmon Ford](#)+
First Soldier - [Joseph Barron](#)**
Second Soldier - [Matt Scollin](#)**
A Cappadocian - [Andy Berry](#)*+
A Slave - [Shannon Jennings](#)*+
First Jew - [Michael Papincak](#)+
Second Jew - [James Flora](#)**
Third Jew - [Adam Bonanni](#)**
Fourth Jew - [Eric Ferring](#)*+
Fifth Jew - [Andy Berry](#)*+
First Nazarene - [Thomas Shivone](#)+
Second Nazarene - [Brian Vu](#)*

Conductor - [Antony Walker](#)
Stage Director - [Andrew Sinclair](#)
Set Designer - [Boyd Ostroff](#)
Costume Designer - [Richard St. Clair](#)
Lighting Designer - [Andrew Ostrowski](#)
Wig & Make-up Designer - [James Geier](#)
Choreographer - [Michele de la Reza](#) of Attack Theatre
Stage Manager - Cindy Knight
Asst. Conductor - [Glenn Lewis](#)
Associate Coach/Pianist - [James Lesniak](#)
Asst. Stage Director - [Frances Rabalais](#)*
Asst. Stage Manager - [Sarah Cowing](#)
Asst. Stage Manager - [Attitra Lelahuta](#)

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Related Events for Salome

Opera Up Close: Salome

Sunday, October 23 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 Richard Strauss's **Salome**, 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-salome>

Salome - Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG

Saturday, October 29th from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and

Friday, November 4th 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 **Salome 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-salome>

Pre-opera Talks for Salome

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: Salome

Tuesday, November 8th, 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, November 8th 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 Salome

Tuesday, November 8th

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

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, November 8th performance of **Salome** 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.

November Brown Bag concert

Saturday, November 12, 2016 Noon - 1:00PM

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

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free November 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/november-brown-bag-concert1>

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

George Frideric Handel's [Richard the Lionheart](#), Jan. 21st – 29th, 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.

Under the artistic direction of Peter Kope and Michele de la Reza, Attack Theatre, now celebrating its 22nd Season, combines contemporary dance, live music, and multimedia to create "wickedly entertaining stage productions" (Pittsburgh City Paper). The company has choreographed and performed in numerous productions with Pittsburgh Opera, including: Carmen, Rigoletto, Aida, Samson & Dalila, Pearl Fishers, and Turandot.

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