

April 11, 2016 - For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Opera presents THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
The Pittsburgh premier of this
'living David Hockney art installation set to music'

What:	Stravinsky's THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
Where:	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
When:	Saturday, April 30, 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 3, 7:00 p.m. Friday, May 6, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 8, 2:00 p.m.
Run Time:	3 hours 5 minutes, including 2 intermissions
Language:	Sung in the original English with 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/tickets .
Media Events	<i>Please contact ccox@pittsburghopera.org for reservations</i> Photo Call (4/18, 12:30 PM) – Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters Full Dress Rehearsal (4/28, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center
Related Events <i>See pages 6-7 of this release.</i>	Kegs + Eggs + Opera brunch (4/17) Opera Up Close (4/17) Carnegie Museum of Art 'Third Thursday' (4/21) WQED Preview (4/23 & 4/29) Meet the Artists (5/3) Audio Description (5/3)



Tom in Mother Goose's brothel. Photo: Alastair Muir for Portland Opera

Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera concludes its 77th season with the Pittsburgh premiere of the [David Hockney](#) production of Stravinsky's [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#).

The plot follows Tom Rakewell, who squanders his large inheritance on women, drinking and gambling.

- Tom's journey from fortunate heir, to gambler, to inmate at Bedlam is based on a [famous series of engravings](#) by [William Hogarth](#) from 1732.
- The [opera itself](#) is by [Igor Stravinsky](#), who was inspired by Hogarth's engravings. It premiered in 1951.
- The libretto was written by poets [W. H. Auden](#) and [Chester Kallman](#).
- Pittsburgh Opera is performing the [David Hockney](#) production (which Pittsburgh Opera owns), with jaw-dropping sets, props, wigs and costumes designed by "the most influential British artist of all time". Hockney mimics the feel of Hogarth's original engravings, using black cross hatching and the three colors printers used in Hogarth's time: red, blue and green.

The performances are essentially a living David Hockney art installation set to Stravinsky's beautiful neo-classical music. For an easy video overview of this, please see [Glyndebourne's YouTube video "The Rake's Progress: An Introduction"](#) at https://youtu.be/DxeeWlp4AZ8?list=PL3yrlvmdaUwil-c_A6zVEqA-FbGOnP469, which includes an interview with David Hockney.

[THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) features a superlative cast, including:

- [Alek Shrader](#) (Tom Rakewell), a past winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions who has had a meteoric rise in the opera world. Alek has performed around the globe to great acclaim, and is making his Pittsburgh Opera debut.
- [Layla Claire](#) (the virtuous Anne Trulove), who has received rave reviews by *The New York Times* and others for her performance in this role at the Metropolitan Opera. Her most recent Pittsburgh Opera appearance was in 2013, singing the role of Pamina in **The Magic Flute**.
- [David Pittsinger](#), who sings the role of the sinister Nick Shadow, makes his 13th appearance at Pittsburgh Opera, but first since 2008. Mr. Pittsinger is renowned for his Helen Hayes Award-nominated performance as Emile de Becque in Rodgers & Hammerstein's **South Pacific** at the Kennedy Center. He famously performed in both The Met's **Hamlet** and on Broadway in **South Pacific** on the same day.

On stage April 30, May 3, 6 and 8, [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) is a powerful way to end the opera season. Tickets start at just \$12.

Three facts about THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

1. An amazing assemblage of 20th century cultural titans had their hands in this opera:
 - Music by [Igor Stravinsky](#)- "one of music's truly epochal innovators"
 - Libretto (screenplay) by [Chester Kallman](#) and [W. H. Auden](#), "arguably the 20th century's greatest poet"
 - Sets and costumes designed by [David Hockney](#), "the most influential British artist of all time"
2. You might expect the owner of the largest [David Hockney](#) collection in the greater Pittsburgh area to be one of the regions' many fine museums, or perhaps a wealthy private collector. It's not. Pittsburgh Opera is the fortunate owner of Mr. Hockney's [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) production, which features hundreds of meticulously designed period costumes, amazing wigs, sets and props.
3. [David Hockney](#) was a contemporary of Andy Warhol in the Pop Art movement. Andy interviewed David for *Andy Warhol's T.V* in 1981. [The Andy Warhol Museum](#) is generously loaning Pittsburgh Opera that interview footage, which will be played in the Benedum Center lobby prior to each performance of [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#).

The story, in brief

Pittsburgh Opera's production of Stravinsky's [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) takes place in England during the 1700's.

Act I

Anne Trulove is admiring the springtime in the garden of her father's house with her suitor, Tom Rakewell. Anne's father sends her into the house and tells Tom he has arranged an accountant's job for him. Tom declines the offer and declares his determination to live by his wits and enjoy life.

When Tom says "I wish I had money," a stranger introduces himself as Nick Shadow, and tells Tom that a forgotten rich uncle has died, leaving the young man a fortune. Anne and Father Trulove return to hear the news, and urge Tom to accompany Shadow to London to settle the estate. As Tom leaves, promising to send for Anne as soon as everything is arranged, Shadow announces, "The Progress of a Rake begins."

At a brothel in the city, whores entertain a group of dissolute young playboys; together they toast Venus and Mars. Shadow coaxes Tom to recite for the madam, Mother Goose, the catechism he has taught him: to follow nature rather than doctrine, and to seek beauty and pleasure. Tom refuses, however, to define love. Seeing that Tom is restless to escape, Shadow turns back the clocks and commends him to the pursuit of hedonism in the brothel. Tom responds with ruminations of love. When the whores offer to console him, Mother Goose claims him for herself and leads him off.

As evening falls, Anne leaves her father's house, determined to find Tom, since she has heard nothing from him.

Act II

Tom begins to tire of city pleasures and no longer dares to think of Anne. When he says "I wish I were happy," Shadow appears, showing a poster of Baba the Turk, a bearded lady whom he urges Tom to marry, because only when one is obligated to neither passion nor reason, can one be truly free. Amused by the idea, Tom gets ready to go out.

Anne approaches Tom's house but hesitates to knock when she sees servants enter with strangely shaped packages. Tom arrives, and startled to see Anne, he says she must forget him. Baba calls out from the sedan, and Tom admits to the astonished Anne that he is married to Baba. Anne faces the bitter realities, while Tom repeats that it is too late to turn back. As Tom helps Baba from the sedan, a curious crowd gathers. Anne hurriedly leaves.

Tom sulks amid Baba's curios as she chatters about them. When he refuses to respond to her affection, she complains bitterly. Tom silences her and she remains motionless as Tom falls asleep. Shadow wheels in a strange contraption, and when Tom awakens, saying "Oh I wish it were true," the machine turns out to be his dream: an invention for making stones into bread. Seeing it as a means of redemption, Tom wonders whether he might again deserve Anne. Shadow points out that the device will attract potential investors.

Act III

Tom's business venture has ended in ruin, and his estate is being auctioned, complete with a mute and motionless Baba. Amid rumors as to what has become of Tom, Anne enters in search of him. The auctioneer Sellem hawks various objects – including Baba, who resumes her chatter after the crowd bids to purchase her. Indignant at finding her belongings up for sale, she orders everyone out. She draws Anne aside, saying the girl should try to save Tom, who still loves her. Anne, hearing Tom and Shadow singing in the street, runs out.

Shadow leads Tom to a graveyard with a freshly dug grave, where he reminds the young man that a year and a day have passed since he promised to serve him: now the servant claims his wage. Tom must end his life by any means he chooses before the stroke of twelve. Suddenly, Shadow offers a reprieve: they will gamble for Tom's soul. When Tom, placing his trust in the Queen of Hearts, calls upon Anne, and her voice is heard, Shadow realizes he has lost. In retaliation, he condemns Tom to insanity. As Shadow disappears and dawn rises, Tom – gone mad – imagines himself Adonis, waiting for Venus.

In an insane asylum, Tom declares that Venus will visit him, and his fellow inmates mock him. Anne arrives, and believing her to be Venus, Tom confesses his sins. Briefly they imagine timeless love in Elysium, and Tom asks her to sing him to sleep. As she does, her voice moves the other inmates. Father Trulove comes to fetch his daughter, who bids the sleeping Tom farewell. When he awakens to find her gone, he cries out for Venus.

Epilogue

The principals gather to tell the moral that each finds in the story. Anne warns that not every man can hope for someone like her to save him; Baba warns that all men are mad; Tom warns against self-delusion, to Trulove's agreement; Shadow mourns his role as man's alter ego; and all concur that the devil finds work for idle hands.

- Courtesy of Opera News, freely edited

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

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) 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 pittsburghopera.org/tickets.
- 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

Tom Rakewell

Anne Trulove

Nick Shadow

Baba the Turk

Mother Goose

Keeper of the Madhouse

Father Trulove

Sellem

Alek Shrader+

Layla Claire

David Pittsinger

Jill Grove+

Laurel Semerdjian*

Matthew Scollin*

Wei Wu+

Keith Jameson+

Conductor

Stage Director

Set Designer

Costume Designer

Lighting Designer

Wig & Make-up Designer

Stage Manager

Chorus Master

Associate Coach/Pianist

Guest Coach/First Pianist

Assistant Stage Director

Assistant Lighting Designer

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

[Antony Walker](#)

[Roy Rallo](#)

[David Hockney](#)

[David Hockney](#)

Cindy Limauro

James Geier

Cindy Knight

[Mark Trawka](#)

[James Lesniak](#)

[Allen Perriello](#)

[Jennifer Williams](#)*

Todd Nonn

[Sarah Cowing](#)

Randy Ahmed

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

Related Events for THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

'Kegs + Eggs + Opera' brunch at [The Mattress Factory](#)

Sunday, April 17 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

[The Mattress Factory](#), 500 Sampsonia Way Pittsburgh

“Join The Mattress Factory for your best Sunday funday ever! Spend an afternoon sampling brews from [Penn Brewery](#) and the [War Street Brewery](#), sipping a [WigleWhiskey](#) Bloody Mary, or perusing the museum's galleries. [Pittsburgh Opera](#) will offer a pop up performance previewing their upcoming production of [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#), and food will be available for purchase from [Burgh Bites](#), [Pgh Crepes](#) and the [MF Café](#) omelet bar.” For tickets and more information see <https://www.showclix.com/event/kegs-eggs-opera>

Opera Up Close: THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

Sunday, April 17 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 Stravinsky's [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) 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/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-the-rakes-progress

Carnegie Museum Of Art ['Third Thursday': DREAM](#)

Thursday, April 21st, 8:00 – 11:00 PM

Carnegie Museum Of Art, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artists will perform a selection of arias from [THE RAKE'S PROGRESS](#), in full costumes and make up, at the Carnegie Museum of Arts' Third Thursday event on April 21st. “Stay up late with CMOA for a dreamy Third Thursday. It will be like that time you dreamt about riding a unicorn with that one guy on the bus, except not that at all. Keep your feet grooving with In Bed By Ten Dance Party, feed your eyes with films from the CMOA collection, and get swept away by the voices of the [Pittsburgh Opera](#). Who needs sleep when you have art?” Info at <http://www.cmoa.org/CalendarEvent.aspx?eid=27417&cat=All>

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG

Saturday, April 23 from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and

Friday, April 29 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 RAKE'S PROGRESS](#) gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information: pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-the-rakes-progress.

Audio Description: THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
Tuesday, May 3rd, 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 headphones. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, April 5th performance by contacting Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are also available.

Meet the Artists of THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
Tuesday, May 3rd
Immediately following the opera, in the Benedum Center's Lower Lobby

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, May 3rd performance of THE RAKE'S PROGRESS 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.

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

Verdi's LA TRAVIATA, October 2016
[2016-17 Season: "Take Me Out to the Opera!"](#)

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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