



NEWS

Opera Theater of Pittsburgh

Contact: Yvonne Hudson

yhudson@otsummerfest.org

412-621-1499 or (mobile) 412-512-0589

Digital images available upon request

BOX OFFICE & PUBLIC INFORMATION: 412-326-9687

otsummerfest.org

FIFTH OPERA THEATER SUMMERFEST OPENS

JULY 7 AND RUNS THROUGH JULY 24

AT NEW VENUE, WINCHESTER THURSTON SCHOOL, SHADYSIDE

Tour of acclaimed *CARMEN THE GYPSY* kicks off Season of Divas
June 22-July 2 in intimate Oakland, West End and Sewickley venues

- Met artist Andrey Nemzer leads *Julius Caesar* by Handel with Chatham Baroque
- Pittsburgh Premiere: *The Silent Woman* is third opera in Richard Strauss series
- Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* offers a classic Broadway hit inspired by Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *Little Red Riding Hood* serves up family opera and fun on Saturday mornings
- *Night Caps* series features hilarious mini-operas by Dwayne Fulton, Alberto Garcia Demestres, Daron Hagen, Eric Moe and Roger Zahab
- Recitals, opening night festivities, late night cabaret, production forums, and much more!

PITTSBURGH, PA (May 5, 2016) — Strong women are in the spotlight as Opera Theater of Pittsburgh announces its 2016 SummerFest season of opera, musical theater, concerts and cabarets, from June 22 through July 24.

Artistic and General Director **Jonathan Eaton** says: "The season boasts powerful women, from Cleopatra to Carmen, and from waspish Kate to a champagne glass-shattering *Silent Woman*. Each one of these women is an extraordinary, charismatic, sometimes dominating character. To cope with them we have some pretty strong men, too—from Julius Caesar to Don José to ego-strutting seducer Petruccio. All in all, this makes for a season that promises fireworks of the most magnificent kind – a Diva Riot!"

Celebrating its **fifth SummerFest season and Opera Theater of Pittsburgh's 38th year**, the festival begins with *Carmen the Gypsy* in a revival of the company's acclaimed flamenco-style adaptation of the Bizet opera by **Jonathan Eaton** and **Robert Frankenberry**. *Carmen the Gypsy* tours to unique and intimate Pittsburgh spaces of 75-100 seats: Sphinx Cafe, Oakland; Artifacts, West End; and Snuggery Farm, Sewickley Heights, near Wexford, PA, June 22-July 2.

SummerFest continues with *Julius Caesar* by George Frederic Handel, starring Metropolitan Opera artist Andrey Nemzer and accompanied by Chatham Baroque; *The Silent Woman* by Richard Strauss, fourth in a series of rarely performed Strauss operas; *Kiss Me, Kate* by Cole Porter, part of a Classic Broadway series; and *Night Caps*, five riotous mini-operas commissioned and first presented to sold-out houses at SummerFest 2012. All main stage operas are sung in English with projected English titles.

In addition, concerts feature [Marianne Cornetti](#), [Liam Bonner](#), [Andrey Nemzer](#) with The Three (Counter)Tenors, [Daphne Alderson](#), and members of the the SummerFest Young Artist Program.

The main stage festival expands to a new venue, July 7-24, in the beautifully renovated Falk Auditorium at **Winchester Thurston School** on its City Campus in Shadyside, at 555 Morewood Ave. at Ellsworth, Pittsburgh (15213).

“Winchester Thurston School provides a wonderful new setting for expanded SummerFest programming,” says Eaton who has served as artistic and general director since 1999. “After five successful seasons, we have outgrown our boots – and we are thrilled to be moving to larger facilities and WT’s Falk Auditorium, beautifully renovated by Pittsburgh’s premier theater architect, **Al Filoni**. This is now perhaps the most attractive medium-sized theater in the city.

“We think our audiences will love the theater’s great acoustics, comfortable seating, easy private parking and proximity to one of Pittsburgh’s liveliest neighborhoods,” Eaton shares.

The school provides multiple spaces for both audience members and the more than 150 singers, instrumentalists and production team members who work virtually round-the-clock for approximately six weeks.

“The move allows us to rehearse five productions simultaneously and to host an ever more substantial Young Artist Program all on the same campus,” says Eaton. “We are so grateful to Winchester Thurston’s principal, staff and board of trustees for welcoming us to this splendid facility.”

SummerFest is now established as the go-to midsummer option for opera, musical theater, and vocal music for a broad regional audience. Eaton conceived the move to a summer season as a way to serve local and regional communities better. “We created SummerFest to fill a void in the summer arts landscape and are thrilled that audiences and critics are supporting us as a cherished addition to the summer cultural calendar.”

THE 2016 SUMMERFEST PRODUCTIONS

SummerFest 2016 runs from June 22 through July 24 with productions designed to appeal to music and theater lovers of all ages, in intimate spaces seating approximately 100 to 300 patrons, and sung in English.

CARMEN THE GYPSY An alluring gypsy. A handsome officer. The world’s most fiery love story, told through some of opera’s favorite music by Georges Bizet. Opera Theater’s acclaimed adaptation sets Carmen’s story in an intimate gypsy tavern where the pulsations of flamenco guitar and dance propel a tragedy of dangerous liaisons. Featuring **Kara Cornell** reprising her acclaimed title role (2012), **James Flora** as Don José (also reprising his 2012 role), **Christopher Scott** as Escamillo, the toreador, and **Katie Manukyan** as Michaela. Favorite arias include *The Habanera*, *The Toreador Song* and *The Flower Song*.

Directed by **Jonathan Eaton** and conducted by **Robert Frankenberry**, SummerFest Music Director.

Tours:

Wed., June 22 & Thurs., June 23 at 7 pm, Sphinx Café, 401 Atwood St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213;

Sat., June 25 at 7:30 pm & Sun., June 26 at 2 pm, Artifacts, 110 S. Main St., Pittsburgh, PA 15220;

Fri., July 1 & Sat., July 2 at 7:30 pm, Snuggery Farm, 1551 Camp Meeting Rd., Sewickley Heights/Wexford, PA 15143;

Sat., July 9 at 7:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston School (one performance only at SummerFest season venue).

KISS ME, KATE Cole Porter’s take on Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, is one of America’s greatest classic Broadway shows. SummerFest Young Artist Program singers are showcased in this show-within-a-show, centered around a “first couple of the theater” who take their battle of the sexes

into their roles in the Bard's comedy. Baritone **Isaiah Feken** returns to SummerFest as Fred Graham/Petruchio and is joined by mezzo-soprano **Christina Overton** as Lilli Vanessi/Katherine. Audiences should expect some surprises, including some pre-show entertainment from actors from Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks.

Favorite songs include: *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*, *So in Love*, *Too Darn Hot*, and more.

Directed by **Mark Lamanna** and conducted by **Douglas Levine**.

Opens Fri., July 8 at 7:30 pm; Sun., July 10 at 2 pm; Sat., July 16 at 7:30 pm; Sat., July 23 at 2 pm; Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston School.

JULIUS CAESAR Politics explode into Romance! SummerFest goes for Baroque with a new production of George Frederick Handel's masterpiece *Julius Caesar*, sung in English. Acclaimed countertenor and Metropolitan Opera artist **Andrey Nemzer** stars in a role he was born to sing as the tyrannical Julius Caesar is seduced by the beauty and power of Cleopatra, sung by **Lara Lynn McGill**. **Chatham Baroque**, Pittsburgh's celebrated early music ensemble, provides authentic and expert musical accompaniment. Pre-show entertainment will be provided by actors from Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks.

Directed by [Dan Rigazzi](#) and conducted by [Walter Morales](#), at the continuo.

Opens Fri., July 15 at 7:30 pm; Sun., July 17 at 2 pm; Sat., July 23 at 7:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston School.

THE SILENT WOMAN Retired sea captain Dr. Morosus marries a quiet young woman who finds her own voice in this frothy romantic comedy sung in English, based on a story by Ben Jonson. A troupe of boisterous players stirs up the romance with a succession of disguises. Acclaimed guest artist and Met singer **Jeremy Galyon**, recognized for his SummerFest performances in *Capriccio*, returns to the company in the lead role. **Julia Fox** also returns to SummerFest as Aminta, his silent then shrill new bride, and **Dimitrie Lazich** join us as Morosus' trusted Barber Schneidebart. Richard Strauss's 1935 *The Silent Woman (Die schweigsame Frau)* is the third ravishing but lesser-known work by this 20th century master in our four-year cycle of Strauss operas, following Opera Theater's celebrated *Ariadne on Naxos* in 2014 and *Capriccio* in 2015. *The Silent Woman* is a Pennsylvania premiere, not having been staged by the leading professional companies here.

Directed by **Jonathan Eaton** and conducted by [Brent McMunn](#).

Opens Fri., July 22 at 7:30 pm; Sun., July 24 at 2 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston School.

NIGHT CAPS

Five short comic operas tell stories of hilarious antics in hotel bedrooms. Perfect for new audiences, these recently commissioned mini-operas dispel any preconceived notions about opera and debuted to sold-out audiences in 2012 – and guarantee laughter! *Night Caps* take audiences to Miss Darlington's hotel, a place of romance, mystery and danger. Journey through each of its bedrooms, enchanted by the decadence of secrets, haunted by the ghosts of presidents, and perfumed with the memory of love. *Night Caps* are served up with a complimentary SummerFest cocktail.

Night Caps are sung in English. Libretti by **Rob Handel**.

Directed by **Young Artist Program Resident Directors**.

Conducted by [Robert Frankenberry](#).

George Washington Suite by **Daron Hagen**. Directed by **Briana Sosenheimer**

Moonlight Suite by [Gilda Lyons](#). Directed by **Seamus Ricci**

Penthouse Suite by **Roger Zahab**. Directed by **Seamus Ricci**

Honeymoon Suite by **Alberto Garcia Demestres**. Directed by **Daniel Brylow**

Valkyrie Suite by **Eric Moe**. Directed by **Aaron Dunn**

Two evenings only: Thursday, July 21 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, July 24 at 6:30 pm, Hilda Willis Room, Winchester Thurston School. (see website for additional plot details and more)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD A delightful take on a classic story! So, did the wolf just get a bad rap? Little Red goes into the woods to help her grandmother in this fast-paced, imaginative musical adventure—a great introduction to opera for children of all ages. With familiar characters, an up-close and casual performance space, and an attention-friendly 50-minute duration, this is the perfect opportunity for whole families to discover the joys of music drama together. After each performance, families stay to enjoy themed crafts and activities and photo opps with cast members **Valerie Hosler, Candice Shaughnessy, and Jesse Davis**.

Directed by **Jonathan Eaton** Musical Director: **Joel Goodloe** Pianist: **Agnieszka Sornek**
Saturdays at 11 am on July 9, 16, and 23, Hilda Willis Room, Winchester Thurston School.

CONCERT AND RECITAL SERIES Continuing Opera Theater's tradition of sold-out recitals, SummerFest includes an expanded array of concerts, featuring world-class singers and pianists, emerging international talent, and special programs to celebrate music from around the world.

LIAM BONNER IN CONCERT, Thurs., July 7 at 7:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston. SummerFest celebrates the international success of Pittsburgh baritone **Liam Bonner** who started his career with Opera Theater and ended up at the Met. The Pittsburgh native and Carnegie Mellon University alumnus performs an evening of French and German arias, selections by Cole Porter and more, accompanied by Brent McMunn. SummerFest Opening Night Party follows the recital.

THE THREE (COUNTER) TENORS, Sun., July 10 at 6:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston. Taking on the repertoire of the famed *castrati*, acclaimed countertenor **Andrey Nemzer** joins **Min Sang Kim** and **Zachary Wood** as they chart the path and the music of the castrato, through the male alto, to today's countertenor voice.

ALDERSON AS PIAF IN RECITAL, Thurs., July 14 at 7:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston. When French icon Edith Piaf came to Carnegie Hall in 1956 she received a seven-minute standing ovation. Beloved Pittsburgh chanteuse Daphne Alderson recreates this legendary 1956 recital to mark Bastille Day 2016.

YOUNG ARTISTS' SCHUMANN RECITAL, Wed., July 17 at 6:30 pm, McClintic Hall, Calvary Episcopal. This free recital showcases the stars of tomorrow as talented Young Artist Program participants take the stage with art songs by Robert Schumann at the historic Calvary Episcopal Church on Shady Avenue. Open to the public at no charge.

LA DIVINA CORNETTI IN CONCERT, Thurs., July 20 at 7:30 pm, Falk Auditorium, Winchester Thurston. Internationally-acclaimed mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti (and Western PA native) headlines an evening of the great Italian arias of Verdi, Puccini and Ponchielli, accompanied by Stephen Varianes. Then Marianne is joined by 'her' Divos and Divas, the SummerFest Young Artist Program Cornetti scholars, in a musical melange of arias, duets and songs from Bellini to Broadway, and Mozart to madcap Mame! Ticketed reception follows the concert.

OPENING NIGHT PARTIES AND LATE NIGHT CABARETS

The festival spirit permeates Opera Theater SummerFest with ticketed Opening Night Parties (\$25) for each main stage production, featuring the popular Late Night Cabarets, food, drink, and good company. Two additional free Late Night Cabarets follow *Kiss Me, Kate* on Sat., July 16 and the closing performance *Julius Caesar* on Sat., July 23 at 10:30 pm. See *website for details*.

Tickets: Main stage opera and musical tickets start at \$25 (Falk Auditorium) with pick 2/3/4 packages available. A SummerFest Gold Passport provides admissions to every event and all post-opening receptions; the Silver Passport provides admission to every SummerFest event. *Night Caps* general admission tickets are \$35. Recitals tickets are \$25-75 for reserved seating in the Falk Auditorium.

The Young Artists recital at Calvary Church is open to the public at no charge. Children's opera tickets (Hilda Willis Room) are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and children. **Discounts** are offered for AAA members, groups, and many others at discounts of 10% and more. **Student tickets** (half-price) are available in advance on line or at door, with a valid student ID. Carmen at Sphinx student tickets are \$5. Students with ID are admitted to recitals at no charge.

Order tickets online at otsummerfest.org or by phone at **412-326-9687**. Details on the website include reserved parking passes, accessibility information, and much more.

THE OPERA THEATER SUMMERFEST COMPANY

SummerFest features a company of performers including top national and regional singers, and rising stars from its Young Artist Program. Members of the six-week Young Artist Program are recruited from more than 300 candidates in auditions in Pittsburgh and six cities across the US. The program combines performance opportunities for emerging professionals with a comprehensive training experience including coaching, master classes, and a variety of special events. Forty-five young artists, including singers, pianists and stage directors from the United States and nine other countries take part.

ABOUT OPERA THEATER OF PITTSBURGH

Opera Theater reaches out across traditional lines of demarcation in the arts, presenting works which engage diverse, new and younger audiences, bringing in supporters of music, theater, dance, and the visual arts. By presenting high-quality productions not available elsewhere, the company works at the forefront of the genre. In its 38-year history, Opera Theater has presented more than 50 Pittsburgh premieres, many of them American operas that would not have been produced by other regional companies, including more than 20 world premieres. Over its first four seasons, SummerFest has drawn more than 25,000 people to operas, musicals, new works and recitals. Founded by Mildred Miller Posvar in 1978, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh has served a diverse market of music drama audiences in Western Pennsylvania and beyond. Jonathan Eaton has served as Artistic and General Director since 1999.

Opera Theater of Pittsburgh is on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and at 412-326-9687 and otsummerfest.org.

ABOUT WINCHESTER THURSTON SCHOOL

Winchester Thurston School is a nationally recognized coeducational independent school in Pittsburgh, PA with a pre-K – 5 campus in Allison Park and a pre-K – 12 campus in Shadyside. Winchester Thurston actively engages each student in a challenging and inspiring learning process that develops the mind, motivates the passion to achieve, and cultivates the character to serve. www.winchesterthurston.org

Visit otsummerfest.org for tickets and details on all events.

SummerFest Box Office (for publication): 412-326-9687

**Performance Venue: Winchester Thurston School, 555 Morewood Ave. at Ellsworth (Shadyside),
Pittsburgh, PA 15213**

###

For more information, contact: Yvonne Hudson, yhudson@otsummerfest.org
Phone: 412-621-1499 or 412-512-0589
Interviews, photos, and art upon request.

Opera Theater of Pittsburgh Office: 286 Main Street, Third Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15201
Office Phone: 412-621-1499
otsummerfest.org