



Pittsburgh Festival Opera Ushers in Exciting Year-Long Operaganza!

Instead of its typical July season, a mix of digital and in-person programming will run throughout 2021

PITTSBURGH (May 10, 2021) -- The Pittsburgh Festival Opera is changing things up with exciting new programming that will run from May through December 2021.

“Since I began as artistic director here at Pittsburgh Festival Opera, my mantra has been to be visible, viable and victorious --- even during a pandemic,” said Marianne Cornetti, internationally recognized as one of the leading Verdi mezzo-sopranos of her generation and artistic director of the Pittsburgh Festival Opera. “Because we are still in a pandemic year, and not knowing how confident our audience would be in attending performances before July, we wanted to maintain being visible, but not having huge production costs. It was time to get creative.”

This year’s festival lineup features the following:

“Cendrillon”

This charming version of Cinderella, composed by Pauline Viardot, will be performed by local artists, reimagined by Pittsburgh Festival Opera’s director of education Seamus Ricci. This 45-minute fairy tale adaptation is perfect for the whole family. This will be PFO’s first filmed version of an opera shown in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. It streamed to classrooms for free beginning in April. The digital release for the public will premiere **July 16**.

Open Air Series (Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park)

The Pittsburgh Festival Opera presents favorite opera arias and ensembles, as well as Broadway standards, at 7:30 p.m. **May 31** in partnership with [Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre’s Open Air Series](#). Performers include Colin Aikins, Alice Chung, Brian Kontes, Danielle Pastin, John Pickle, Kevin Ray, Schyler Sheltroun and Benjamin Taylor accompanied by Mark Trawka and Robert Frankenberry. WQED’s Anna Singer will be the emcee.

The Pittsburgh Festival Opera has 100 chairs available to rent at \$40 each. Up to six friends and family can sit in groups, or “pods,” together during this outdoor experience. The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Pittsburgh Festival Opera are taking appropriate COVID-19 precautions.

“Lysistrata, or The Nude Goddess”

Written by Mark Adamo -- one of America’s leading and most prolific composers -- “Lysistrata” is a comic account of a woman’s extraordinary mission to end the Peloponnesian War between Greek city states by denying all the men of the land any sex. Sung in English, this film version will be recorded in and around Pittsburgh from June 20 - July 26. It’s directed by Derrick R. Brown and conducted by PFO Young Artists Program Director, Robert Frankenberry. It features the Pittsburgh Festival Opera’s Hans and Leslie Fleischner Young Artists Program, as well as the Pittsburgh Festival Opera Orchestra, and is produced by Lynne Squilla and Lindsay Lehman, with directors of photography Iain Crammond and Jim Ledoux. This will be the first film ever made of this rare opera gem. Slated for release in **October**, the public will be invited to screen the film this fall at a red carpet premiere.

“Voce al Fresco: Fresh Voices Under the Stars”

The Hans and Leslie Fleischner Young Artists Program will offer favorite opera arias and ensembles, as well as Broadway standards, throughout the month of July, kicking off with “Piazza in the Park” on **July 2** at the Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall. Find them again on **July 9** at the Schenley Plaza Oval Tent and on **July 23** at the Varischetti Pavillon at La Roche University.

“Legends in the Limelight”: Pittsburgh Festival Opera Live at Carnegie Music Hall

Running monthly from **August through December**, five major opera singers will each perform a concert at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. The lineup so far includes Alexandra Loutsion, soprano, **Aug. 3**; Michael Chioldi, baritone, **Sept. 14**; Gregory Kunde, tenor, **Oct. 19**; and Marjorie Owens, soprano, **Nov. 16**. All performances are at 7:30 p.m. Tickets range from \$75-\$125.

Pittsburgh Festival Opera’s “Holiday Spectacular”

Kevin Glavin as Santa and Marianne Cornetti as Mrs. Claus will entertain guests at their North Pole workshop -- also known as the Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland -- at 7:30 p.m. **Dec. 8**. Tickets start at \$10.

“There isn't really a rule that says a festival has to be held over two to three weeks in the summer. A festival is a celebration, and opera is worth celebrating without boundaries,” said Christopher Powell, executive director of the Pittsburgh Festival Opera. “The staff and Board of Pittsburgh Festival Opera have worked tirelessly to both survive the pandemic's economic shock and to reinvent its artistic presence in our community.

“In less than a year, we created over 50 hours of all-new digital programming employing over 60 artists, and it’s all available to stream on our website,” Powell continued. “As we emerge from this extended pause in live performances, Pittsburgh Festival Opera will

return stronger and more focused on showcasing the artists who bring opera to life. Through all the uncertainty of 2020, the good people of Pittsburgh supported us. What better way to give back than to celebrate opera throughout the year.”

Tickets for online and live performances will go on sale **June 1**, ranging in price from \$10-\$125. For more information, please visit: pittsburghfestivalopera.org

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ABOUT PITTSBURGH FESTIVAL OPERA: Pittsburgh Festival Opera is dedicated to presenting innovative opera, including American works, reinterpretations of older works, and new works, for the widest possible audience.

Pittsburgh Festival Opera
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