

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pittsburgh Opera and Carnegie Mellon University present Co-Opera on April 1st

Pittsburgh, PA...

[Pittsburgh Opera](#) is again partnering with students, alumni, and faculty from Carnegie Mellon University's [School of Music](#), [School of Drama](#), and the [Master of Arts Management \(MAM\) Program](#) on the innovative Co-Opera program.

This year-long collaboration culminates with the premieres of three newly-composed operas at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters on Saturday, April 1st at 7:00 PM.

Each opera is approximately 20 minutes, with a total evening run time of 75-80 minutes, including a brief pause between each opera. Each will be fully staged and sung in English. They include:

- "My Opera Nemesis", a tale of operatic brotherly love, by composer Evan Neely and librettist Mora Harris
- "The Women on the Wall", a story of the power of art and longing, by composer Jordan Speranzo and librettist Jess Honovich
- "ID, please", about a border agent interrogating a series of passengers, by composer Soosan Lolavar and librettist Daniel Hirsch

Ironically, Lolavar, the composer of "ID, please", has been [in the news recently](#) because of President Donald Trump's controversial immigration bans. Lolavar, who is currently in London, holds dual British/Iranian citizenship. Her ability to re-enter the United States for the premiere of her opera is uncertain.

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 process.

"We live in a golden age of opera creation," said Pittsburgh Opera General Director Christopher Hahn. "More new operas are being written now than at any time in history. It's important that we help develop the next generation of opera composers, librettists, producers and singers so that this beautiful art form can thrive for years to come."

“No one sits down and just writes a 2-hour opera out of the blue”, said Denis Colwell, head of CMU’s School of Music. “These short productions give our students wonderful real-life work experience, and are a foundation they can build upon as they start their careers.”

Adds Peter Cook, head of CMU’s School of Drama, “Just because the operas are short does not mean they aren’t compelling. On the contrary, they explore contemporary issues in easily-digestible chunks.”

“It is gratifying to see the fruits of so much labor by our talented, dedicated students,” says Dan Martin, Dean of CMU’s College of Fine Arts. “This is going to be a wonderful evening, where they get to showcase their artistic creations to the public.”

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

Full cast and artistic team information is below.

My Opera Nemesis

Composer: Evan Neely

Librettist: Mora Harris

Cast: Lindsey Chinn, Sarah Nadler, William Ottow, Michael Protacio

The Women on the Wall

Composer: Jordan Speranzo

Librettist: Jess Honovich

Cast: Emily Hopkins, Virginia Sheffield

ID, please

Composer: Soosan Lolavar

Librettist: Daniel Hirsch

Cast: Guillaume Poudrier, Robert Raso, Shannyn Rinker

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Co-Producer: Robert Boldin, Pittsburgh Opera

Co-Producer: Kevin O’Hora, Carnegie Mellon University

Artistic Director / Conductor: Daniel Nesta Curtis

Stage Director: Stephen Eckert

Set Designer: Caitlin Ayers

Media Designer: Jess Mendenbach

Costume Designer: Nina Bova

PITTSBURGH OPERA

Dean, College of Fine Arts: Dan Martin

Head of School of Music: Denis Colwell

Head of School of Drama: Peter Cook

Asst. Dean Heinz College; Director Masters of Arts Management (MAM) Program:
Kathryn Heideman

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.

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