

February 17, 2017

Chris Cox, Director of Marketing and Communications

Office: (412) 281-0912, ext. 217

Cell: (412) 427-7088

ccox@pittsburghopera.org

Pittsburgh Opera collaborates on free community events promoting *The Summer King* – the Josh Gibson Story

Pittsburgh, PA

Pittsburgh Opera is partnering with [The Josh Gibson Foundation](#) and other organizations on a series of free community events, during Black History Month and beyond, to mark the world premiere of [The Summer King](#) – the Josh Gibson Story.

The events will be held in February and April at venues including Hill House, Pittsburgh Project, Steel Valley High School, the Carnegie Library of Homestead, and additional locations to be announced. All events are free and open to the public.

Each event will feature an engaging line-up of panelists:

- **Sean Gibson**, Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, will discuss his great-grandfather Josh, Josh's career and Negro League Baseball in Pittsburgh.
- **Pittsburgh Opera General Director Christopher Hahn** will discuss the development of **The Summer King** from its early concept to the decision to launch the world premiere here in Pittsburgh.
- Members of the cast or chorus, as well as other Pittsburgh Opera artists, will talk about their roles or sing special sneak previews of songs from **The Summer King**.
- The opera's composer, Daniel Sonenberg, will be available to join the discussion for many of the April community events.
- When available, some of the special celebrity VIPs who are appearing as supernumeraries in **The Summer King** may attend.
- Other guests may appear at events as well.

Pittsburgh Opera will be having special "Pay What You Want" flash sales on ticket to **The Summer King**. Plus the events will include contests and giveaways, such as the opportunity to win Josh Gibson merchandise or free VIP tickets to see **The Summer King**.

The current events schedule is on the following pages of this document.

The Summer King will be performed at the Benedum Center April 29th – May 7th.

Free Community Events Schedule

Additional events being added, check pittsburghopera.org for updates

Free Community Event at The Pittsburgh Project

February 22 @ 6:30 PM

Pittsburgh Project, 2801 N. Charles St., Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Come join a free roundtable discussion about Josh Gibson, Negro League Baseball, and **The Summer King**, led by Sean Gibson, Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, and Pittsburgh Opera representatives. Sean Gibson speaks on Negro League Baseball on a national basis, and brings a depth of personal and historical knowledge to any discussion on this topic. Pittsburgh Opera representatives will discuss the opera and sing sneak previews of Sam Bankhead's and Wendell Smith's arias. [Alfred Walker](#), who will sing the role of Josh in the opera, will talk about the role and why he is looking forward to it.

Space is limited. RSVP at pittsburghopera.org/PqhProject or call DeOndra Parker at 412-321-1678, ext. 536.

Free Community Event at Steel Valley High School

February 23 @ 7:00 PM

Steel Valley High School, 3113 Main Street, Munhall, PA 15120

Come join a free roundtable discussion about Josh Gibson, Negro League Baseball, the history of baseball in Homestead, and **The Summer King**. The event is sponsored by the Steel Valley High School History Club, whose members will serve as moderators. Sean Gibson, Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, will speak about Josh Gibson and the Negro Leagues. [The Battle of Homestead Foundation](#) will discuss the history of Homestead steel mill baseball teams and their role in providing talent to the Homestead Grays. Pittsburgh Opera representatives will discuss the opera and sing sneak previews of Sam Bankhead's and Wendell Smith's arias. [Alfred Walker](#), who will sing the role of Josh in the opera, will talk about the role and why he is looking forward to it. No reservations needed.

Free Community Event at Hill House Kaufman Center

February 27 @ 7:00 PM

Hill House Kaufman Center, 1825 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Come join a free roundtable discussion about Josh Gibson, Negro League Baseball, and **The Summer King**, led by Sean Gibson, Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, and Pittsburgh Opera representatives. Sean Gibson speaks on Negro League Baseball on a national basis, and brings a depth of personal and historical knowledge to any discussion on this topic. Pittsburgh Opera representatives will discuss the opera, and sing sneak previews of Grace's and Wendell Smith's arias.

Space is limited— RSVP at pittsburghopera.org/hillhouse or call 412-392-6479.

Free Community Event at Carnegie Library of Homestead Sunday, April 23rd, 2017

Carnegie Library of Homestead, 510 E 10th Ave, Munhall, PA 15120

Come join a free roundtable discussion about Josh Gibson, Negro League Baseball, and **The Summer King**, led by Sean Gibson, Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, and Pittsburgh Opera representatives. Sean Gibson speaks on Negro League Baseball on a national basis, and brings a depth of personal and historical knowledge to any discussion on this topic. Pittsburgh Opera representatives will discuss the opera and perform musical excerpts. Composer Daniel Sonenberg will talk about the process of creating an opera.

[FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) is generously sponsoring a reception afterwards for all attendees.

The Summer King Community Event Sponsors

Pittsburgh Opera received special funding for these community events from OPERA America's Opera Fund.



The Josh Gibson Foundation received special funding for these community events from Huntington Bank.



Pittsburgh Opera Sponsors of The Summer King

In addition, the following organizations are providing funds to help Pittsburgh Opera produce **The Summer King**.

- The 2016-17 Pittsburgh Opera season is generously supported by [PNC](#)
- Production Sponsor: [People's Natural Gas](#)
- Season Media Sponsor: [WQED-FM](#)
- Tuesday performance sponsor: [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#).

- Student Matinee sponsor: [EQT Foundation](#). The EQT Foundation is the philanthropic arm of EQT Corporation, and is committed to the social and economic vitality of its operating regions. For more than a decade, the EQT Foundation has made a difference by supporting local programs and initiatives that involve education, community and economic development, diversity, the arts, and the environment. Together with a variety of non-profit organizations, the EQT Foundation develops strong partnerships that enrich our communities, sustain the principles of continuous learning and understanding, and focus on environmental protection efforts.



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.

For additional information about **The Summer King**, including videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/show/the-summer-king>.

View the full media release for **The Summer King** [on the web](#), or [download the PDF](#).

Josh Gibson™ used with permission of Josh Gibson Enterprise, Inc., c/o Luminary Group LLC, www.JoshGibson.org

###