

**September 21, 2017 - For Immediate Release**

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro**

***Mozart's screwball comedy returns to the Benedum  
 for the first time in seven years***

<b>What:</b>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's <a href="#">The Marriage of Figaro</a>
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	Saturday, Nov. 4, 2017 - 8:00 PM  Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017 - 7:00 PM  Friday, Nov. 10, 2017 - 7:30 PM  Sunday, Nov. 12, 2017 - 2:00 PM
<b>Run Time:</b>	3 hours and 3 minutes, including one intermission
<b>Language:</b>	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
<b>Tickets:</b>	Single tickets start at \$12 for all performances. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit <a href="http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets">pittsburghopera.org/tickets</a> .
<b>Media Events</b>	<i>Please contact <a href="mailto:ccox@pittsburghopera.org">ccox@pittsburghopera.org</a> for reservations</i>  Photo Call (10/23, 12:30 PM) – location TBA  Full Dress Rehearsal (11/2, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center
<b>Related Events</b>  <i>See pages 6-7          of this release.</i>	Opera Up Close (10/22)  WQED Preview (10/28 & 11/3)  Meet the Artists (11/7)  Audio Commentary (11/7)  Brown Bag concert (11/11)



Photo: David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera © 2010

## Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera presents Mozart's beloved madcap comedy **The Marriage of Figaro**, at the Benedum Center November 4<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>.

Figaro is in love with the Countess's servant Susanna, who he plans to wed that very day. However, their employer Count Almaviva has his eye on Susanna. In fact, the Count intends to invoke the hated feudal practice of *droit de seigneur* - the infamous right of the lord to sleep with a commoner's bride on her wedding night. Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess are understandably outraged at this possibility, and are determined not only to prevent it, but to teach the Count a lesson while they're at it.

The cast includes a quartet of talented American singers making their Pittsburgh Opera debuts plus some returning favorites.

Debuting are bass-baritone [Tyler Simpson](#), a mainstay at the Metropolitan Opera, as Figaro; star soprano [Joëlle Harvey](#), singing the famously challenging role of Susanna; baritone [Christian Bowers](#), who recently sang in Bordeaux and Malta, as philandering Count Almaviva; and eight-year Met Opera veteran bass [Brian Kontes](#) as the scheming, meddling Dr. Bartolo.

Pittsburgh's own Danielle Pastin brings her "lovely demeanor and irresistibly creamy timbre" (Opera News) to the touching role of Countess Almaviva, and recent Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist [Corrie Stallings](#) makes her triumphant return to the Benedum as the irrepressible Cherubino.

Music Director [Antony Walker](#) conducts the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra and Chorus in this traditional 18<sup>th</sup>-century production.

On stage November 4, 7, 10 & 12, **The Marriage of Figaro** has been entertaining audiences around the world for hundreds of years. Tickets start at just \$12 and are [available online](#).

## Fun facts about The Marriage of Figaro

1. Thanks to its abundant use in pop culture, virtually everyone knows the music from **The Marriage of Figaro**. The overture has been used in movies including *Trading Places*, *The King's Speech*, *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, and *Zombieland*. Tim Robbins' character famously played "Sull 'aria" over the prison loudspeaker in *The Shawshank Redemption*, despite knowing the malicious warden would put him in solitary confinement for it.
2. **The Marriage of Figaro** was the second of three plays in a trilogy written by Pierre Beaumarchais in the 1700s, all of which have been turned into operas. While it and **The Barber of Seville** - the first of the three – continue to be operatic mainstays hundreds of years after they were written, the third (**The Guilty Mother**) is rarely performed.
3. Although it may seem hard to believe given its enduring popularity, **The Marriage of Figaro** (the play) was initially banned from being performed by French King Louis XVI, and opera librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte had to rework certain elements of the play to get the opera approved by Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II.

## The story, in brief

Based on the play by Pierre Beaumarchais, **The Marriage of Figaro** is a sequel to **The Barber of Seville**. The story opens several years after **The Barber of Seville**, in Count Almaviva's palace near Seville, Spain. Rosina is now the Countess, but her husband has lost much of his interest in her and is a would-be philanderer.

Figaro, the happy bachelor at the end of **The Barber of Seville**, is in love with the Countess's servant Susanna, whom he plans to wed that very day. However, while Figaro and Susanna plan their wedding, Figaro learns that their employer Count Almaviva has his eye on Susanna.

In fact, the Count intends to invoke the hated feudal practice of *droit de seigneur*. This is the infamous right of the lord to sleep with a commoner's bride on her wedding night. Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess are understandably outraged at this possibility, and are determined not only to prevent it, but to teach the Count a lesson while they're at it.

Meanwhile, another amorous man, the teenage page Cherubino, essentially develops a crush on every woman he sees. The Count had caught him with the gardener's daughter, and as punishment is forcing him to join the army, which makes Cherubino very despondent. Figaro rubs some salt in the wound, singing how Cherubino will no longer be an "amorous butterfly", "fluttering round by night and day", but instead march through the mud "in snow and days of listless heat."

Act Two opens with the Countess lamenting that the Count no longer loves her. She asks Love to give her back her loved one, "or in mercy let me die."

Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess then set their plot in motion. It involves disguising Cherubino as Susanna for a fake rendezvous with the Count. However, they are interrupted by Doctor Bartolo, Basilio, and Marcellina, and even the Count himself, and the whole scene quickly devolves into chaos.

In Act Three, Count Almaviva believes Susanna will be meeting him in his gardens on the night of her marriage to Figaro, which he hopes to prevent. But after overhearing Susanna and Figaro plotting, he realizes he is being tricked and becomes incensed.

To set up the fake rendezvous, which is essentially a sting operation, the Countess and Susanna compose a letter to the Count setting up the meeting. In the famous duet "Che soave zeffiretto", the Countess dictates the letter while Susanna transcribes it.

Act Four takes place in the Count's garden. While waiting for the fake rendezvous to take place, Susanna sings of her love for Figaro, bidding him to "come where love calls thee to joy."

Finally, after a complicated series of misadventures, including the sting operation, Almaviva's interest in his wife has rekindled. He begs her to pardon him, and she graciously accepts his apology. The opera concludes with a great multitude singing that love can end only in contentment and joy, and a celebration of lovers and friends.

For more complete plot information, plus videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit [pittsburghopera.org/figaro](http://pittsburghopera.org/figaro).

## Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of **The Marriage of Figaro** start at \$12
- All performances are at the [Benedum Center](#), 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or buy online at [https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/51753/list\\_performances](https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/51753/list_performances).
- Group discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, x 213

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2017-18 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor
- Tuesday performance sponsor: [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#).

## Cast and Artistic Team

Susanna	<a href="#">Joëlle Harvey</a> <sup>+</sup>
Countess Almaviva	<a href="#">Danielle Pastin</a> <sup>**</sup>
Figaro	<a href="#">Tyler Simpson</a> <sup>+</sup>
Count Almaviva	<a href="#">Christian Bowers</a> <sup>+</sup>
Cherubino	<a href="#">Corrie Stallings</a> <sup>**</sup>
Marcellina	<a href="#">Leah de Gruyl</a> <sup>*</sup>
Dr. Bartolo	<a href="#">Brian Kontes</a> <sup>+</sup>
Don Basilio/Curzio	<a href="#">Eric Ferring</a> <sup>*</sup>
Antonio	<a href="#">Andy Berry</a> <sup>*</sup>
Conductor	<a href="#">Antony Walker</a>
Stage Director	David Paul
Set Designer	Benoit Dugardyn
Costume Designer	Myung Hee Cho
Lighting Designer	Cindy Limauro
Wig & Make-up Designer	James Geier
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Asst. Conductor	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Chorus Master	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>
Asst. Stage Director	<a href="#">Frances Rabalais</a> <sup>*</sup>
Asst. Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Asst. Stage Manager	Lisa-Marie Shuster
Asst. Stage Manager	Emily Duffin

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

## Related Events for The Marriage of Figaro

**Opera Up Close: The Marriage of Figaro**  
**Sunday, October 22, 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM**  
Founder's Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

Opera Up Close is an in-depth look at the music and story of Mozart's **The Marriage of Figaro**, 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 <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-the-marriage-of-figaro>

**The Marriage of Figaro - Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**  
**Saturday, October 28, 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and**  
**Friday, November 3, 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 **Marriage of Figaro Preview** gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information: <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-the-marriage-of-figaro>

**Pre-opera Talks for The Marriage of Figaro**  
**One hour prior to each performance**  
**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders are invited to attend a free Pre-Opera Talk one hour before each performance's curtain in the Main Floor/Orchestra section of the Benedum Center. Learn about the composer, the story, and some juicy details about the opera!

Pre-Opera Talks are free to all ticketholders at all performances.

**Audio Commentary: The Marriage of Figaro**  
**Tuesday, November 7, 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 assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> performance by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org). Braille and large-print programs are also available.

**Meet the Artists of The Marriage of Figaro  
Tuesday, November 7**

**Immediately following the performance, in the Benedum Center's Lower Lobby**

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> performance of **The Marriage of Figaro** are invited to gather in the Benedum Lower Lobby immediately following the performance when [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of the opera. This event is free to all Tuesday performance ticketholders.

**November Brown Bag concert**

**Saturday, November 11, Noon - 1:00 PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free November Brown Bag concert, our second of the season. The program includes some of our 2017-18 Resident Artists' favorite selections. The concert is free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet the Resident Artists afterward at an informal reception.

Doors open at 11:30 AM. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/november-brown-bag-concert2>

***COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:***

**The Pittsburgh premiere of Jeremy Howard Beck's [The Long Walk](#), January 20 – 28, 2018**

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 79th season in 2017-18. 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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