

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

**February 19, 2020**

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents Bellini's masterpiece *Norma*,  
April 25 – May 3 at the Benedum Center**

<b>What:</b>	<b>Norma</b> Music by <a href="#">Vincenzo Bellini</a> , libretto by <a href="#">Felice Romani</a>
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center, downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sat., April 25, 2020 * 8:00 PM</li><li>• Tues., April 28, 2020 * 7:00 PM</li><li>• Fri., May 1, 2020 * 7:30 PM</li><li>• Sun., May 3, 2020 * 3:00 PM</li></ul>
<b>Run Time:</b>	3 hours and 5 minutes with one intermission
<b>Language:</b>	Sung in Italian with English supertitles projected above the stage
<b>Tickets:</b>	Single tickets for adults start at \$14; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price.  For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or online at <a href="http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets">pittsburghopera.org/tickets</a> or <a href="http://CulturalDistrict.org">CulturalDistrict.org</a> .  Group discounts, including student discounts, are available.
<b>Media Events</b>	Photo Call (Mon., April 13, 12:30 PM) - location TBA  Full Dress Rehearsal (Thurs., April 23, 7:00 PM) - Benedum Center
<b>Related Events</b>  See pages 6-8 of this release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">April Brown Bag concert</a> (4/4)</li><li>• <a href="#">Opera Up Close</a> (4/19)</li><li>• <a href="#">WQED Preview</a> (4/18 &amp; 4/24)</li><li>• <a href="#">Pittsburgh Opera mobile app</a> (real-time during all performances)</li><li>• <a href="#">New Guard Opening Night Lounge</a> (4/25)</li><li>• <a href="#">Audio Commentary</a> (4/28)</li><li>• <a href="#">Meet the Artists</a> (4/28)</li></ul>



*Photo by Philip Groshong for Cincinnati Opera*

**Norma** is the tragic tale of a conflict between love and duty. Norma is a Druid priestess in ancient Gaul, which is being occupied by Roman invaders. Norma falls in love with, and bears two children to, the Roman leader Pollione, thereby betraying her own people and breaking her sacred vows. When Norma finds out Pollione is having an affair with another priestess, it pushes her over the edge with deadly consequences.

**Norma** is Bellini's ultimate masterpiece; this story of forbidden love has been called 'opera at its very best.'

These will be Pittsburgh Opera's first productions of **Norma** since 1997, making this truly a once-in-a-generation event.

The opera is sung in Italian with English supertitles projected above the stage.

Single tickets for adults start at \$14; kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or go online at [pittsburghopera.org/tickets](http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets) or [CulturalDistrict.org](http://CulturalDistrict.org). Group discounts, including student discounts, are available.

## Fun facts about *Norma*

1. The role of Norma has long been considered one of the most grueling and challenging in all of opera. Pittsburgh Opera is thrilled to present star soprano [Leah Crocetto](#), who captivated Pittsburgh audiences as Tosca in 2017, as she makes her staged role debut of Norma.
2. Singing the role of Norma helped make soprano [Maria Callas](#) one of the defining voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. She performed the role 89 times on stage during her illustrious career.
3. The Bellini cocktail, made with Prosecco and peach purée/nectar, was not named after **Norma's** composer Vincenzo Bellini, but after 15th-century Venetian artist [Giovanni Bellini](#). However, two other Italian opera composers have similar drinks named after them – the Puccini, which replaces the peach purée with mandarin juice, and the Rossini, which uses strawberry purée.

## The story, in brief

**ACT I.** The action takes place in ancient Gaul, under Roman occupation, where the Druid priestess Norma has fallen in love with a Roman official named Pollione and has secretly borne him two children. Norma is also the daughter of the Druids' leader, Oroveso.

As the action begins, Oroveso instructs his followers to go into the sacred forest and wait for Norma, who will signal the start of a planned revolt against the Romans. When the Druids leave, we find Pollione talking with the centurion Flavio. Pollione admits that he's no longer in love with Norma. His new romantic interest is the young acolyte Adalgisa, one of Norma's temple virgins. In the forest, a brass gong sounds. Pollione and Flavio leave, and a chorus announces the arrival of Norma.

As she cuts the sacred mistletoe, Norma sings the classic bel canto aria "Casta Diva," a prayer to the goddess for victory over the Romans. The Druids follow Norma off, leaving Adalgisa alone to struggle with her emotions. She's torn between her love for Pollione, and her loyalty to Norma and her sworn duties. Pollione joins Adalgisa and begs her to elope with him to Rome.

The second scene takes place at Norma's home. She tells her friend Clotilde to hide her two little boys — the sons Norma had with Pollione. She's afraid of her ambivalent feelings toward them: "I love, and at the same time, hate, my children," she says.

Adalgisa pays a visit to Norma, asking to be released from her vows. She admits she's found love, though she doesn't say with whom. Norma is touched, remembering her own early days with Pollione. She agrees to release Adalgisa from her vows. But when Pollione arrives, the truth comes out. Norma realizes that he has betrayed her with Adalgisa, and Adalgisa learns that Pollione had pledged himself to Norma.

The act closes in a fiery confrontation. Norma curses Pollione, saying "My burning fury will engulf you like the wind and the waves." She orders Adalgisa to go with him. Adalgisa tells Pollione she'd rather die than desert her people.

**ACT II.** So far, Norma has come across as an unpredictable and even dangerous woman. Now, we find her sounding vulnerable and filled with doubt — and with a knife in her hand. She's still angry with Pollione and contemplates killing their two young sons. She raises her dagger over the sleeping children, but at the last moment backs down.

Norma calls for Adalgisa, and tells her to take the children and go live with Pollione in Rome. In a spectacular duet, Adalgisa says she won't do it. Instead, she'll tell Pollione of Norma's suffering, hoping that will move him to come back to Norma.

The scene changes to the sacred forest. Oroveso tells his Druid warriors to keep their anger for the Romans in check. They must wait for just the right moment to attack. They leave, and Norma is alone with Clotilde, who tells Norma that Adalgisa has failed to change Pollione's mind. He still loves Adalgisa, and plans to carry her off to Rome.

Norma is furious. "The traitor will go too far," she says, "but I will strike first, and Roman blood will flow like water." She runs to the altar and strikes the ceremonial brass shield, summoning the troops to battle.

In the commotion, an intruder is discovered within the Druid temple. It's Pollione. The punishment for any outsider entering the temple is instant death, and Norma is poised to kill him with the sacred dagger. But she hesitates, admitting to herself that she can't go through with it.

Taking Pollione aside, Norma offers him freedom if he will leave Adalgisa. But Pollione refuses, saying he'd sooner die. Norma says she'd be delighted to arrange for that and for the death of their two young sons, plus the death of his beloved Adalgisa. Pollione begs Norma to spare Adalgisa's life.

Suddenly, Norma calls for her people, announcing that Pollione won't be killed after all. Instead, there's a new victim, one who has betrayed her country. "I am the guilty one," she says and then calls for the sacrificial pyre to be prepared. The crowd tries to bring Norma to her senses, but she won't budge. She's determined to go down in flames. In her final words to her father, Norma admits that she is the mother of Pollione's children and asks the shocked Oroveso to protect them. Meanwhile, Norma's bravery revives Pollione's love for her. He steps to her side, and the opera closes as the two walk into the flames together.

- Courtesy of NPR

## **Ticketing Information**

- Single tickets for adults start at \$14; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. Call 412-456-6666 or visit [pittsburghopera.org/tickets](http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets).
- Group discounts, including student discounts, are available. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#) for groups of six or more people, contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org).

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2019-20 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor.
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Season Media Sponsor.
- [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#) is the Tuesday performance and 'Meet the Artists' post-show event sponsor.
- The [DTE Energy Foundation](#) is the Brown Bag concert series sponsor.
- [Natural Awakenings Magazine](#) is the official media sponsor of Pittsburgh Opera's Brown Bag concert series.
- [Porter Wright](#) is the New Guard Lounge sponsor.

## Cast and Artistic Team: *Norma*

Norma	<a href="#">Leah Crocetto</a>
Pollione	<a href="#">José Bros+</a>
Adalgisa	<a href="#">Jennifer Johnson Cano+</a>
Oroveso	<a href="#">Oren Gradus**</a>
Flavio	<a href="#">Angel Romero*</a>
Clotilde	<a href="#">Caitlin Gotimer*</a>
Conductor	<a href="#">Antony Walker</a>
Stage Director	<a href="#">Stephanie Havey</a>
Set Designer	<a href="#">Johnmichael Bohach</a>
Costume Designer	James Schuette
Lighting Designer	<a href="#">Cindy Limauro</a>
Projection Designer	<a href="#">Joseph Seamans</a>
Wig and 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="#">Matthew Haney*</a>
Asst Stage Manager	Alex W. Seidel
Asst Stage Manager	Jinah Lee

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumnus

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

## Related Events for *Norma*

### **Brown Bag concert**

**Saturday, April 4, Noon - 1:00 PM**

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

You're invited to our free April Brown Bag concert, our last of the season. See our [Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artists](#) together one last time.

The performance takes place in the George R. White studio at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, 2425 Liberty Avenue in the Strip. The concert is free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet our [Resident Artists](#) afterward at an informal reception.

Doors open at 11:30AM. No reservations needed, except for handicapped parking in the Pittsburgh Opera garage. If you need a handicapped parking spot, please call Sue Solito at 412-281-0912 ext. 100 by 4:00 PM Friday, April 3rd.

Pittsburgh Opera Brown Bag Concerts are generously supported by [the DTE Foundation](#) and [DTE Midstream](#). [Natural Awakenings Magazine](#) is the official media sponsor of Pittsburgh Opera's Brown Bag concerts.

For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/april-brown-bag-concert4>

### **Opera Up Close - Norma**

**Sunday, April 19, 2020 2:00 - 3:30 PM**

**Founders' Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Join Robert Boldin, Artistic Administrator, and special guests from the production, for an in-depth look at [Norma](#).

Admission is \$5; the event is free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#), [New Guard](#), and donors at \$50+. No reservations needed, except for handicapped parking in the Pittsburgh Opera garage.

If you need a handicapped parking spot, please call Sue Solito at 412-281-0912 ext. 100. Handicapped parking reservations are due by 4:00 PM Friday, April 17th.

For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-norma>

**Norma Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and [wqed.org/fm](http://wqed.org/fm)  
Saturday, April 18, 12:30 - 1:00 PM  
Friday, April 24, 7:00 - 7:30 PM**

Make time for this half-hour preview of [Norma](#), with candid commentary from singers and directors.

Hosted by WQED's Anna Singer, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3, as well as the WQED website, WQED's preview gives listeners an engaging introduction to the story, music, and singers of the opera.

For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-norma>

**New Guard Opening Night Cocktail Lounge  
Saturday, April 25, 7:00 PM  
Benedum Center, Second Floor South Lounge**

Pittsburgh Opera [New Guard](#) Members can enjoy the private New Guard Lounge at the Benedum on opening night of all our operas.

The New Guard Lounge has its own private bartender, so you can skip the wait at the other bars. The Lounge is a great place to hang out with other members pre-show and during intermission.

The Pittsburgh Opera New Guard is proudly sponsored by [Porter Wright](#). For more information about the New Guard: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/about/newguard>

**Pittsburgh Opera Mobile App  
Real-time during each performance**

Pittsburgh Opera's innovative mobile app delivers real-time supplemental content to patrons via their smartphones during the performance. Free for both iOS and Android devices. Please use responsibly and be considerate of those around you. Learn more at [pittsburghopera.org/app](http://pittsburghopera.org/app).

**Audio Commentary: Norma  
Tuesday, April 28, 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 supertitles, 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, April 28<sup>th</sup> performance of **Norma** by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213, or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org). Braille and large-print programs are available at all performances.

**Meet the Artists of Norma**  
**Tuesday, April 28, immediately following the performance**  
**Benedum Center Lower Lobby**

Pittsburgh Opera [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of the show after the Tuesday evening performance.

You can ask your own questions and mingle with the artists too! This event is free to all Tuesday ticketholders.

“Meet the Artists” is generously sponsored by Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center. Learn more at <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/meet-the-artists-norma1>

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

**Our 82<sup>nd</sup> season opens with Dvořák’s *Rusalka*, October 10-18, 2020**

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 81st season in 2019-20. 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, internationally-recognized 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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