

*For Immediate Release*

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**Pittsburgh Opera brings back NABUCCO**  
*The opera that made Verdi famous, not seen here since 1973*

- What:** Verdi's epic **NABUCCO**
- Where:** Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
- When:** Saturday, October 10, 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 13, 7:00 p.m.  
Friday, October 16, **7:30 p.m.\*** Sunday, October 18, 2:00 p.m.
- Run Time:** 2 hours, 50 minutes, including 1 intermission
- Language:** Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
- Tickets:** Start at \$12 for all performances.  
Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit [pittsburghopera.org](http://pittsburghopera.org)
- Note:** **\* 7:30 is the new start time for our Friday performances.**
- Related Events:** Opera Up Close; Market Square concerts; WQED Preview; Meet the Artists; Audio Description. *See page 4 of this release.*



In a moment of insanity, Nabucco crowns himself king and god. Photo by Jon Silla for Opera Carolina

**Pittsburgh, PA...** Pittsburgh Opera opens its 77th season with a grand, traditional production of Verdi's opera **NABUCCO**. On stage October 10, 13, 16, and 18, [NABUCCO](#) brings a fusion of epic scale and intimate family drama to the Benedum Center. Pittsburgh favorite Mark Delavan (seen here as **Falstaff** 2009, **Scarpia/Tosca** 2012, and **Rigoletto** 2013) stars as the troubled monarch, and rising star Csilla Boross takes the fiendishly difficult role of his treacherous daughter Abigaille, in her Pittsburgh debut. Music Director  
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Antony Walker conducts the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra and Chorus; Bernard Uzan is director and co-designer of the traditional set and its projections. Tickets start at \$12.

NABUCCO is the opera that made Verdi famous, and rightly so: the world saw his genius at work in this appealing early opera, and the famous Hebrew slaves' chorus "["Va. pensiero"](#) is still sung by those who yearn for peace. Director Bernard Uzan, a recipient of the [Giulio Gari Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award](#), created this moving production that features a series of projections depicting the Jews in exile through the ages – and bringing to mind current events such as the exodus of refugees from Syria and other countries.

NABUCCO also calls for a skilled supporting cast, and it includes including former Resident Artist and Metropolitan Opera regular Oren Gradus as the Israelite priest Zaccaria, Raymond Very as Ismaele, and Resident Artists Laurel Semerdjian, Matthew Scollin, Adelaide Boedecker and Adam Bonanni in the roles of Fenena, High Priest of Baal, Anna, and Abdallo, respectively. There is also a large chorus presence required for NABUCCO, and the Pittsburgh Opera Chorus has been in rehearsal with Chorus Master Mark Trawka since late August.

Tickets to [NABUCCO](#) start at \$12, with all performances at the Benedum Center, 7th Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District. For additional information, videos, photos, cast biographies, and the full story of NABUCCO, visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org). To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666 or visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org).

## Three facts about NABUCCO

1. **Nabucco is the Italian name for King Nebuchadnezzar II.** However, Nabucco is a composite character, based on several Babylonian kings, and the opera is also a commingling of Biblical episodes from the books of Jeremiah and Daniel.
2. **Nabucco established Verdi as a star composer.** The opera was a huge success after its premiere, and Verdi commented that "this is the opera with which my artistic career really begins. And though I had many difficulties to fight against, it is certain that *Nabucco* was born under a lucky star."
3. Several sopranos famously refused to sing the difficult role of Abigaille, including [Leontyne Price](#) and Dame [Joan Sutherland](#).

## The story, in brief

In the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the Israelites pray for help against Nabucco (Nebuchadnezzar), the King of Babylon, who has attacked the city. Zaccaria, their high priest, enters with Nabucco's daughter, Fenena, whom the Hebrews hold hostage. He reassures his people that the Lord will not forsake them. As the Israelites leave, Ismaele, nephew of the king of Jerusalem, is left alone with Fenena, who helped him escape from imprisonment in Babylon. Their conversation is interrupted by Fenena's half-sister, Abigaille, with some Babylonian soldiers. Abigaille tells Ismaele that she can save his people if he will return her love, but he refuses. The Israelites rush back into the temple in a panic, and when Nabucco enters with his warriors, Zaccaria confronts him, threatening to  
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kill Fenena. Nabucco orders the destruction of the temple.

Nabucco has appointed Fenena regent while he is away at war. Abigaille, back in the royal palace in Babylon, has found a document saying that she is not the king's daughter, but the child of slaves. Foreseeing a future in which Fenena and Ismaele will rule together over Babylon, she swears vengeance on Nabucco and Fenena.

The High Priest of Baal arrives with news that Fenena has freed the Israelite prisoners. As a result of Fenena's treason, he offers the throne to Abigaille and spreads a rumor that Nabucco has died in battle. Ismaele enters and the priests accuse him of treachery, but Zaccaria announces that he has been pardoned for saving a fellow Israelite – the newly converted Fenena. An officer warns Fenena that the king is dead and her life is in danger. Before she can escape, the High Priest of Baal proclaims Abigaille ruler. She is about to crown herself when Nabucco snatches the crown from her, faces the crowd and declares himself not only their king but their god. For this blasphemy, a thunderbolt strikes him down. A triumphant Abigaille takes the crown for herself.

In the Hanging Gardens, the Babylonians hail Abigaille as their ruler. The High Priest urges her to have the Israelites killed, but before she can give the order, a disheveled Nabucco wanders in. Abigaille dismisses the crowd. Alone with Nabucco, she tricks him into signing the death warrant for the Israelites. He asks what will happen to Fenena, and Abigaille replies that she too must die. When Nabucco tries to find the document proving Abigaille's ancestry, she produces it and destroys it. Nabucco pleads in vain for Fenena's life. On the banks of the Euphrates, the Israelites rest from forced labor, their thoughts turning to their homeland.

Fenena and the Israelites are led to execution, and Nabucco can only watch, as he has been imprisoned by Abigaille. Desperate, he prays to the God of Israel for forgiveness, pledging to convert himself and his people. His sanity restored, he forces open the door and summons his soldiers to regain the throne and save his daughter. The Israelites are about to be executed. Nabucco rushes in and stops the sacrifice. Abigaille takes poison and dies, confessing her crimes and praying to the God of Israel to pardon her. Nabucco announces his conversion and frees the Israelites, telling them to return to their native land and rebuild their temple. Israelites and Babylonians are united in praising God.

Tickets to [NABUCCO](#) start at \$12, with all performances at the Benedum Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District. For additional information, videos, musical samples, cast biographies, and the full story of NABUCCO, visit [pittsburghopera.org](#). To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit Theatre Square Box Office, or visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](#).

The 2015-16 Pittsburgh Opera season is generously supported by [PNC](#). [WQED-FM](#) is Season Media Sponsor.

The Fine Foundation is a production sponsor of NABUCCO.

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## Cast and Artistic Team

Nabucco	<a href="#">Mark Delavan</a>
Abigaille	<a href="#">Csilla Boross</a> +
Zaccaria	<a href="#">Oren Gradus</a> **
Ismaele	Raymond Very
Fenena	<a href="#">Laurel Semerdjian</a> *
High Priest of Baal	<a href="#">Matthew Scollin</a> *
Anna	<a href="#">Adelaide Boedecker</a> *
Abdallo	<a href="#">Adam Bonanni</a> *

Conductor	<a href="#">Antony Walker</a>
Director	<a href="#">Bernard Uzan</a>
Set Designer	<a href="#">Bernard Uzan</a> and <a href="#">Michael Baumgarten</a>
Costumes provided by	Malabar Limited
Lighting Designer	<a href="#">Michael Baumgarten</a>
Hair & Makeup Designer	James Geier

Chorus Master	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut  
\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist  
\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

## Tickets and Group Discounts

Tickets for all performances of [NABUCCO](#) start at \$12. Group discounts are available. For tickets, call (412) 456-6666 or visit [www.pittsburghopera.org](http://www.pittsburghopera.org). For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, x 213.

***COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:***  
**[Mozart's Così fan tutte](#), November 7, 10, 13, 15**

## Related Events for NABUCCO

### Market Square Farmers Market Noontime Concerts

Thursday, September 24; Thursday, October 1 – 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. both dates

### Market Square Center Court, Downtown

Our Resident Artists will dazzle the lunchtime crowds at Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's successful [Market Square Farmers Market Noontime Concerts](#) on two Thursdays:

September 24 and October 1. The Resident Artists will perform popular arias and musical theater selections at each event. For more information, call (412) 281-0912.

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***Opera Up Close: NABUCCO***

**Sunday, September 27 – 2:00 p.m.**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters (2425 Liberty Ave.)**

[Opera Up Close: NABUCCO](#) includes an in-depth analysis of the opera, with directors and artists from the production. Admission is \$5; free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) and \$50+ donors. For more information: (412) 281-0912 or [pittsburghopera.org](http://pittsburghopera.org).

**NABUCCO Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**

**Saturday, October 3 – 12:30 p.m.; Friday, October 9 – 7:00 p.m.**

Hosted by WQED's Stephen Baum and Anna Singer, and broadcast over the airwaves as well as the WQED website, the [NABUCCO](#) preview gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music and story of the opera. For more information: [pittsburghopera.org](http://pittsburghopera.org)

**Audio Description: NABUCCO**

**Tuesday, October 13**

**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 via headphones. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, October 13 performance: contact Randy Adams 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 NABUCCO**

**Tuesday, October 13**

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

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, October 13 performance of NABUCCO are invited to gather in the Benedum Lower Lobby immediately following the performance for interviews with [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) and the stars of the opera. This event is free to all Tuesday performance ticketholders.

**Brown Bag Concert, "Getting to Know You"**

**Saturday, October 17 – 12:00 p.m.**

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

At the first Brown Bag concert of the season, our Resident Artists sing some of their favorite arias and ensembles. These casual, one-hour concerts feature our [Resident Artists](#) in the George R. White Opera Studio at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters. Guests can meet the performers afterward. Free and open to everyone; no RSVP required. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. For more information: (412) 281-0912 or [pittsburghopera.org](http://pittsburghopera.org)

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 77th season in 2015-16. 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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