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Pittsburgh Opera unveils new mobile app functionality at *La bohème*

Pittsburgh Opera will unveil industry-first functionality in their mobile app at their performances of **La bohème**, March 30 – April 7, at the Benedum Center.

This new functionality will allow patrons to receive exclusive visual and audio content through their smartphone in real time while they're at the Benedum, including *during the performance*. Specifically, audience members can:

- Listen to interviews with cast members, the director, and the conductor before the show
- Learn more about **La bohème's** musical themes and motifs
- Get historical context for specific scenes in the opera
- Enjoy interesting trivia about Puccini, **La bohème**, and Pittsburgh Opera's production
- Listen to supplemental audio commentary in real time

"We are delighted to offer this exclusive content to audience members who want more information about what they are seeing and hearing," says Pittsburgh Opera General Director [Christopher Hahn](#). "We are always looking for new ways to enhance the audience experience. We know people bring their smartphones with them everywhere, including to the theater, so we are embracing them. This is an innovative way to apply modern technology to a centuries-old art form."

While Pittsburgh Opera reminds people using the app to please be courteous of those around them, "our extensive testing has shown that the impact on other audience members is minimal to non-existent," [Hahn](#) continues. "The audio component only works if you are using earbuds or Bluetooth headsets, so there is no noise spilling over to other patrons. The visual content is delivered on dark backgrounds with dim screen settings, to minimize potential light seepage."

The Pittsburgh Opera mobile app is free and available for download on both [iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices. Full details are available at pittsburghopera.org/app, and a user guide is available [online](#) as well.

Background

Pittsburgh Opera launched their mobile app in 2016, to provide patrons with easy access to information about the company's productions, artists, and events. The app is powered by [InstantEncore](#), the leading provider of mobile solutions to performing arts organizations around the globe.

In the fall of 2018, InstantEncore began offering its customers a premium feature within its platform called [Live Note®](#). Created in partnership with the [Philadelphia Orchestra](#), LiveNote® initially delivered visual content (e.g. text and photographs) to patrons during orchestra performances. Pittsburgh Opera began carefully testing this functionality during its fall 2018 performances of **Madama Butterfly** and **Hansel & Gretel**. Pre-selected audience members served as beta testers and provided positive feedback on their experiences.

Thanks to an [Innovation Grant](#) from [OPERA America](#) funded by the [Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation](#), Pittsburgh Opera partnered with Instant Encore to add real-time audio capabilities to LiveNote®. Pittsburgh Opera began testing these capabilities in January at its performances of **afterWARDS – Mozart's Idomeneo Reimagined**, and continued testing during its performances of **Glory Denied** in February and March. Those tests proved successful, and the company is publicly rolling out the functionality on **La bohème's** opening night, Saturday, March 30th.

About OPERA America's Innovation Grants

OPERA America is the national service organization for opera and the nation's leading champion of American opera. Launched in fall 2016, [Innovation Grants](#) support exceptional projects that have the capacity to strengthen the field's most important areas of practice, including artistic vitality, audience experience, organizational effectiveness, and community connections.

Innovation Grants leverage OPERA America's role as the leading national advocate for opera, and harness the opportunity for field-wide advancement through expanded investment in innovation. The grants are generously funded by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

About InstantEncore

InstantEncore is the leading provider of mobile solutions to performing arts organizations around the globe. Our partners use the InstantEncore platform to power their mobile apps, enhance live experiences, and create deeper relationships with their audiences.

About Pittsburgh Opera

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 80th season in 2018-19. 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.