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Pittsburgh Opera to Broadcast “Women’s March” Concert Celebrating Works by Women Composers on March 26th

Pittsburgh Opera will be broadcasting a free concert celebrating works by women composers on its [YouTube Channel](#), on Friday, March 26th at 7:00PM.

Called “[Women’s March](#)”, the 55-minute concert spans 900 years of classical music composed by women.

Pittsburgh Opera’s acclaimed [Resident Artists](#) will explore a breadth of repertoire with Pittsburgh Opera Music Staff Associate Coach/Pianist [James Lesniak](#) and Head of Music [Glenn Lewis](#) in this concert directed by Resident Artist Stage Director [Kaley Karis Smith](#).

The program includes works by these composers:

- Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179), a mystic, healer, artist, scholar, and composer. Her “dramma per musica,” *Ordo Virtutum*, is the earliest surviving liturgical drama set to music; opera traces its origins to this piece.
- Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677) - Born in Venice, she was an extremely popular performer who self-published eight volumes of her own compositions, more than any other musician of her time, all without the assistance of the church or a noble patron.
- Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–1847), Alma Mahler (1879 -1964), and Clara Schumann (1819-1896), all incredibly talented musicians and composers who were often overshadowed by a famous brother (Felix Mendelssohn) or husband (Gustav Mahler, Robert Schumann).
- Pauline Viardot (1821–1910), an opera singer and composer, she was one of the strongest musical presences in 19th-century France.
- Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930), a Scottish musician and scholar whose passion for preserving the traditional songs from the Gaelic-speaking islands of Scotland became her life’s work.
- Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979), a British-American composer and a virtuosic viola player, she was one of the first women to be a professional member of an orchestra.
- Nadia (1887-1979) and Lili (1893–1918) Boulanger – this multi-talented duo were both composers, performers, and teachers in Paris during the early 20th century.
- Margaret Bonds (1913–1972) – a Chicago-born African American composer who graduated from Northwestern University at a time when it was almost impossible for Black students to even attend. An incredible advocate for other Black artists, she is best known for her arrangements of traditional spirituals, her frequent collaborations with Langston Hughes, and as the first Black artist to perform as a soloist with the Chicago Symphony in 1933.

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 82nd season in 2020-21. 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.

- [Libby Larsen](#) (b. 1950), one of today's most prolific composers, who has already created more than 500 works including opera, chamber work, and song cycles.
- [Lori Laitman](#) (b. 1955), a contemporary American composer who has produced hundreds of pieces, including opera, choral work, and art song, and who set the poetry of Pulitzer Prize winner Mary Oliver to music.

“These composers have given us more than just beautiful music—they have used their talent and tenacity to ensure women have a place in the world of classical music” says Pittsburgh Opera Manager of Community Engagement and IDEA Initiatives Rebekah Diaz. “They’ve had to navigate an industry and a world where women were not always respected as much as their male colleagues, but they chose to raise up their voices so that others could be heard.”

People can register online for “Women’s March” at pittsburghopera.org/march to receive reminder emails with links to the free broadcast.

“Women’s March” is generously supported by [DTE Foundation](#); [Natural Awakenings Magazine](#) is the official media sponsor.

**This media release was updated March 9th to clarify that Felix Mendelssohn was Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's brother.*

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