

For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Opera presents 27
The Pittsburgh premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's
story of Pittsburgh native Gertrude Stein

What:	Ricky Ian Gordon's 27
Where:	Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, 2425 Liberty Avenue in the Strip District
When:	Saturday, February 20 th , 2016, 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 23 rd , 7:00 p.m. Friday, February 26 th , 7:30 p.m. Sunday, February 28 th , 2:00 p.m.
Run Time:	95 minutes; 27 does not have an intermission
Language:	Sung in English with texts projected above the stage
Tickets:	Start at \$40. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit pittsburghopera.org/tickets
Media Events	<i>Media welcome to attend – Please contact ccox@pittsburghopera.org</i> Photo Call - Monday, Feb. 8 th Full Dress Rehearsal - Thursday, Feb. 18 th Meet the Composer and Librettist – Saturday, Feb. 20 th
Related Events <i>See pages 4-6 of this release.</i>	Brown Bag Concert - Saturday, Feb. 6 th Opera Up Close - Sunday, Feb. 14 th WQED Preview - Saturday, Feb. 13 th & Friday, Feb. 19 th Meet the Composer and Librettist – Saturday, Feb. 20 th Meet the Artists - Tuesday, Feb. 23 rd Audio Description - Tuesday, Feb. 23 rd

Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera continues its 77th season with the Pittsburgh premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's **27**.

Spotlighting larger-than-life novelist, poet, playwright, and Pittsburgh native Gertrude Stein and her partner Alice B. Toklas, **27** will delight you with Ricky Ian Gordon's "tuneful score" and Royce Vavrek's "quick-witted libretto."

27 is a humorous and touching snapshot of the women's shared lives at 27 Rue de Fleurus in Paris in the early 1900s, featuring their famous salon and its visitors, including Picasso, Matisse, Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and others.

On stage February 20, 23, 26 & 28 at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, most tickets for **27** are \$40.

Three facts about 27

1. While the opera premiered on June 14, 2014, at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Pittsburgh Opera will be performing a new production of **27**. This will be the first time **27** has been performed since its premiere.
2. Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania (now part of Pittsburgh), in 1874. She moved to Paris with her brother Leo in 1903, where she began collecting art, writing, and hosting Saturday evening salons frequented by famous painters, writers, and other notables of the day.
3. Stein met her life partner Alice Toklas on Toklas's first day in Paris. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was actually written by Stein in Toklas's voice, and became Stein's first best-seller.

The story, in brief

27 takes place in Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas' apartment at 27 Rue de Fleurus in Paris, spanning pre-World War I to post-World War II.

Alice B. Toklas sits in her living room at 27 Rue de Fleurus in Paris, and conjures the world she shared with Gertrude Stein by knitting the memories of their past back to life.

Gertrude enters the salon and invites her guests to peruse her collection, praising the genius of the artists, as Alice attends to everyone. Pablo Picasso reveals his own portrait of Gertrude in a ceremony that is met with disdain by Leo Stein and a bit of jealousy by Henri Matisse. Leo announces he is moving to Italy, and storms out. Gertrude and Alice toast his departure and sing of the ringing bells of genius that celebrate their love.

Gertrude and Alice weather the First World War in Paris. Gertrude continues to write as the cold sets in and food becomes scarce. An American doughboy stationed in Paris becomes

a friend, and provides them with coal and cigarettes, but fails to return with sought-after eggs. Another boy is added to the tally of the lost generation.

After the war, Gertrude's attention shifts from painters to writers, now welcoming the likes of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the photographer Man Ray. Ernest and "Scotty" are desperate for Gertrude's endorsement, so she encourages them to wrestle for her attention – she will announce the winner a genius. As the next war approaches, the writers are expelled from the salon.

Gertrude and Alice survive the Second World War by sacrificing paintings. Picasso's portrait of Gertrude preys on her conscience, asking her to explain how a Jewish-American authoress survived Nazi-occupied France. The guilt eats away at her, and she dies in Alice's arms.

Alice, now alone, is surprised by the return of Picasso. Together they say goodbye to the portrait of Gertrude as it is being shipped to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Picasso sketches an image of Gertrude for Alice as the bells of genius and love chime once more.

- Courtesy of the composer and librettist, freely edited

For additional information, videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit pittsburghopera.org/27

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Most tickets to **27** are \$40
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666 or visit http://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/44087/second-stage-project-27#tab=buy_tickets
- Group discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, x 213

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Cast and Artistic Team

The 27 Cast

Gertrude Stein
Alice Toklas
Pablo Picasso (and others)
Leo Stein (and others)
Ernest Hemingway (and others)

[Laurel Semerdjian*](#)
[Adelaide Boedecker*](#)
[Adam Bonanni*](#)
[Brian Vu*](#)
[Matthew Scollin*](#)

The 27 Creative Team

Conductor
Stage Director
Set Designer
Lighting Designer
Associate Coach/Pianist
Guest Pianist
Hair & Makeup Designer

[Mark Trawka](#)
[Jennifer Williams*](#)
[Julia Noulin-Mérat](#)
[Todd Nonn](#)
[James Lesniak](#)
Karen Jeng
[Nicole Pagano](#)

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

Related Events for 27

[Brown Bag Concert](#)

- **Saturday, February 6th - 12:00 p.m.**
- **George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Let **27** cast members serenade you with a plethora of love songs at a free Valentine's-themed Brown Bag concert. Enjoy a heart-melting combination of duets and ballads from musical theater and operettas. You'll be treated to selections from the Tony Award-winning Camelot, Cole Porter's Kiss Me Kate, Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern's Show Boat, die Fledermaus and more. And to top it off, we're including a sneak preview of an excerpt from Ricky Ian Gordon's **27**, which opens on February 20th. Guests can meet the performers after this casual, one-hour concert. Free and open to everyone; no RSVP required. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Handicapped parking available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/february-brown-bag-concert>

[Opera Up Close: 27](#)

- **Sunday, February 14th, from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM**
- **George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Opera Up Close is an in-depth look at the music and story of Ricky Ian Gordon's **27** with members of the cast and artistic team. Panelists will be conductor [Mark Trawka](#), stage director [Jennifer Williams](#), [Laurel Semerdjian](#) (who plays Gertrude Stein), and Director of Administration and Artistic Operations [Bill Powers](#). 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-27>.

Sensory Workshop for patrons with visual impairments- 27

- **Sunday, February 14th 5:00 - 7:00 PM**
- **Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters in the Strip, 2425 Liberty Ave.**

Pittsburgh Opera is proud to offer a unique sensory workshop about **27** for our patrons with visual impairments in partnership with Blind Outdoor Leisure Development, Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh, and their companions. Participants will have a chance to meet artists and explore the set, props, and costumes. The event is free; light refreshments will be served. For more information see
<http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/27-sensory-workshop-for-patrons-with-visual-impairments>.

27 Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and [WQED.org/fm](http://www.wqed.org/fm)

- **Saturday, February 13 from 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM**
- **Friday, February 19 from 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

Hosted by WQED, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3 as well as [WQED.org/fm](http://www.wqed.org/fm), the **27** 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-27>

Pre-opera talk and meet-and-greet with the Composer and Librettist

- **Saturday, February 20th**
- **Pre-opera talk from 7:00 – 7:30**
- **Meet-and-greet reception immediately after the opera**
- **Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](http://www.pittsburghopera.org)**

Pittsburgh Opera is excited to announce that both the composer and librettist of **27** are joining us on opening night! Composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist Royce Vavrek will give a special pre-opera talk hosted by [Pittsburgh Opera General Director Christopher Hahn](http://www.pittsburghopera.org) from 7:00 – 7:30 PM. Then, after the opening night performance, join them for a special reception. Mingle, enjoy light refreshments, and chat with Mr. Gordon, Mr. Vavrek, and members of the cast and crew. Free to all Saturday ticketholders.

Audio Commentary: 27

- Tuesday, February 23rd during the opera
- George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

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, February 23rd performance by contacting Randy Adams at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are available for all four performances.

Meet the Artists of 27

- Tuesday, February 23rd immediately after the opera
- Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

General Director Christopher Hahn interviews the stars of **27** after the Tuesday evening performance. Ask your own questions, too! Free to all Tuesday ticketholders.

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, April 2, 5, 8 & 10, 2016

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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