

HoustonGrandOpera



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 6, 2010

Press Contact: Christopher Novosad, Director of Public Relations
713/546-0278, cnovosad@houstongrandopera.org

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA BOARD EXTENDS CEO CONTRACT Cites Anthony Freud's Leadership and Vision

HOUSTON, TX. – October 6, 2010. At its meeting today, the **Board of Directors of Houston Grand Opera Association, Inc.**, extended **Anthony Freud's** contract as General Director and CEO through July 31, 2015. Freud, formerly the General Director of Welsh National Opera (UK) took the helm at HGO in 2006.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Houston Grand Opera Association, I am very pleased to announce the extension of Anthony Freud's contract," stated **Glen Rosenbaum**, Chairman since 2009. "It is indicative of the regard in which we hold Anthony, and the trust that the Board, Trustees, and staff all have in his leadership and vision. Anthony is the best in the business, and we are thrilled that he will continue to lead the company."

During the last five years, HGO's seasons have been of outstanding quality, highly innovative, and extremely popular. Freud stated, "I want to continue taking the company, the art form and especially the audience on a journey of discovery. We need always to be moving ahead, exploring, breaking new ground, innovating. Needless to say, that carries with it a certain amount of risk. But without risk, there can be no new discoveries, and we fail in our responsibilities to the audience, to the richly diverse city we serve, and to the art itself."

"One of the great delights of my time at HGO has been my close working partnership with our wonderful Music Director **Patrick Summers**," said Freud. Summers responded, "Anthony is the finest and most supportive artistic collaborator I've had in my career. His integral and rigorous knowledge, his personal and professional integrity, intelligence and strength of character are an anchor to HGO at this important moment in the company's history. I look forward with great joy to continuing our work together."

Another highlight of Freud's tenure at Houston Grand Opera has been the establishment of **HGOco** – a ground-breaking initiative to establish dynamic and evolving relationships with communities throughout the city of Houston, which has reached more than 600,000 people during its first three years of activities. In 2009, its **Song of Houston program** won the Leading Lights Diversity Award from the National MultiCultural Institute.

On arrival at HGO in 2006, Freud led the creation and implementation of the company's first comprehensive strategic and business plan, which is regarded as a blueprint for a twenty-first-century opera company. Speaking at the company's Annual Meeting in June, 2010, **Larry Faulkner**, CEO of Houston Endowment, Inc., which is one of the company's most generous supporters, stated, "With a clear focus on excellence, relevance and affordability, Houston Grand Opera is implementing a groundbreaking model for a performing arts company." Under Freud's leadership, the company's fundraising, marketing and audience development activities have been elevated, with the result that the company has raised over sixty million dollars in contributed support in the last thirty-eight months, and increased its subscription audience by thirty-eight percent.

Freud, who is currently serving a second term as Chairman of the Board of Opera America, is a Barrister and holds a law degree from the University of London King's College. He was previously General Director of Welsh National Opera (U.K.) for eleven years, and Executive Producer for Philips Classics. He served as Chairman of Opera Europa, and, for a decade, chaired the jury of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. In 2006, he was awarded the honor of Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II, and honorary fellowships at both the University of Cardiff and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. (Full biography follows).

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has grown from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. The company has a reputation for commissioning and producing new works, including 40 world premieres and six American premieres since 1973. In addition to producing and performing world-class opera, HGO contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse, innovative and balanced program of performances, events, community and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and it is the only opera company to have won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards. HGO's performances are broadcast nationally on the WFMT Radio Network.



Official Healthcare Provider to Houston Grand Opera



Official Airline of Houston Grand Opera

Anthony Freud, Houston Grand Opera General Director and CEO



Anthony Freud was appointed as Houston Grand Opera's third General Director and first CEO in July 2005, and began work full-time with the company in March 2006. On arrival, he led the creation and implementation of the company's first comprehensive strategic and business plan.

Marketing, Fundraising and Audience Development activities have been elevated with the result that the company has raised more than sixty million dollars in contributed support in three years, and increased its subscription audience by thirty-eight percent.

Acclaimed new productions and co-productions have been central to Freud's work at Houston Grand Opera; these have included Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Verdi's *Aida* and Wagner's *Lohengrin*; the world premiere performances and recordings of Christopher Theofanidis's *The Refuge*, Jake Heggie's *Last Acts (Three Decembers)*, and André Previn's *Brief Encounter*; and the launch of a multi-year series of the operas of Benjamin Britten.

Another highlight of Freud's tenure at Houston Grand Opera has been the establishment of HGOco – a groundbreaking initiative to establish dynamic and evolving relationships with communities throughout the city, which has reached more than 600,000 people during its first three years of activities. In 2009, its Song of Houston program won the Leading Lights Diversity Award from the National MultiCultural Institute. In 2008, he established the NEXUS Initiative, an audience development program that provides underwriting for free and affordably-priced performances for new audiences.

As General Director of the Welsh National Opera (WNO), a touring company of some 250 full-time employees, Mr. Freud produced 120 performances annually throughout England and Wales. WNO, the largest provider of opera to regional England, has consistently won more major national awards than any other British opera company. Under Freud's leadership, WNO established long-term relationships with the BBC, and nurtured lasting relationships with many of the field's brightest conductors, directors, and singers. During his time as General Director, the company doubled its contributed income and was heavily involved in the campaign to build the new \$210 million Wales Millennium Centre, the recent opening of which garnered international acclaim.

From 1992 to 1994, Mr. Freud lived in Holland as Executive Producer for Philips Classics (a division of PolyGram), an experience that afforded him an insider's knowledge on electronic media initiatives and the recording industry, which will greatly serve HGO as one of the only American companies consistently releasing their productions on CD. He oversaw large-scale recording projects for such artists as Jessye Norman, Seiji Ozawa, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and Bernard Haitink.

Mr. Freud graduated, with honors, with a law degree from the University of London King's College in 1978 and qualified as an attorney in 1979. From 2002 until 2005, Mr. Freud served as Chairman of Opera Europa, Europe's largest professional opera association consisting of 90 member companies from 29 different countries and he currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Opera America. Mr. Freud has served on the juries of many international singing competitions, and from 1995 to 2005, he chaired the jury of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. In 2006 he was appointed a Trustee of the United Kingdom's National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts, making him the only performing arts representative on the board, which oversees a \$500 million endowment to promote talent, creativity and innovation. In 2002, he received an honorary fellowship from Cardiff University, in 2005 he was made an honorary fellow of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and he was awarded the honor of Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) from Queen Elizabeth II during her 2006 Birthday Awards.