

HoustonGrandOpera



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## **Houston Grand Opera Presents** **Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor***

OPENING FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2011

HOUSTON—**Houston Grand Opera** (HGO) continues its 2010-11 season with a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gaetano Donizetti's *bel canto* masterpiece, opening on Friday, January 28, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the Brown Theater of the Wortham Theater Center.

"*Lucia di Lammermoor* is a veritable showcase of elaborate and athletic singing," said HGO's General Director and CEO **Anthony Freud**. "It requires a central quartet of singers of the greatest technical virtuosity and vocal charisma. We have assembled some of the best young voices for this new production."

The volatile religious and political conflicts of two ancient Scottish clans fuel the drama of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. HGO Studio alumni **Albina Shagimuratova** and **Scott Hendricks**, who thrilled audiences in HGO's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* in 2009, make their role debuts as Lucia and her brother Enrico. "Far beyond its Scottish setting, its interesting history, and its performance challenges, *Lucia di Lammermoor* is, more than anything, a celebration of the human voice," says HGO Music Director and conductor **Patrick Summers**. "The first time I heard the voice of Albina Shagimuratova, I thought I had indeed stepped back into a golden age, for rarely had I experienced such tonal radiance coupled with a timbre that sounded like none I'd ever heard."

American tenor **Dimitri Pittas**, whom *Opera News* calls "a huge talent with an easy ringing tenor voice," makes his HGO debut in the role of Edgardo, the scion of the Ravenswoods and secret love of Lucia. American bass and HGO Studio alumnus **Oren Gradus** (Leporello in HGO's production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, 2006) joins the cast as the minister Raimondo.

Drama Desk and Tony Award-winning Scottish director **John Doyle** (*Sweeney Todd* – Broadway, 2006) and designer **Liz Ascroft** create intense drama amid the ever-shifting Scottish landscape in this new Houston Grand Opera production. Late seventeenth-century period costumes and broad expansive skies dominate this new production. "It will be a beautiful production that is

both true to the spirit of Sir Walter Scott’s novel, and to the intense drama of Donizetti’s thrilling opera,” explains Freud. This production also features lighting by British designer **Jane Cox**.

Exciting young Italian conductor **Antonino Fogliani**, renowned throughout the opera world for his interpretation of the great *bel canto* works, will make his North American debut with this production. Fogliani has conducted *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Bergamo, Italy, Liège, Belgium and Lucerne, Switzerland. **Richard Bado** is the Chorus Master.

*Lucia di Lammermoor* will be sung in Italian with English surtitles.

***Lucia di Lammermoor* is supported in part by**

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## Performance Summary

All performances of Houston Grand Opera's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* are held in the Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas Avenue at Smith Street, Houston, TX.  
Sung in Italian with English surtitles.

### Performance Dates

Friday, January 28, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. \*  
Sunday, January 30, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.  
Saturday, February 6, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.  
Friday, February 11, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

\* ON for Young Professionals intermission mixer and performance

### Ticket Information:

- Single tickets for *Lucia di Lammermoor* are available now and start at \$24.
- Tickets may be obtained online at [www.houstongrandopera.org](http://www.houstongrandopera.org) or by phone at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 1-800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372)
- Tickets are also available at the HGO Box Office (in the lobby of the Wortham Theater Center) from 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday. The Box Office operates on weekend performance days from 11:00 a.m. till the first intermission (hours are subject to change).
- All performances will take place at the Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002. The Wortham Theater Center features wheelchair access to both theaters, with a choice of seating locations and ticket prices. An infrared listening system, underwritten by Shell Lubricants, is available and free of charge at all performances. Disabled access and TDD: 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 1-800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372); Descriptive Services: 713-546-0230.
- Opera Insights Lectures** take place forty-five minutes before each performance. Guest speakers present a twenty-minute informal lecture in the orchestra level of the Brown Theater. These lectures, free and open to all ticket holders, are intended to enhance the audience's enjoyment by preparing them for the production they are about to attend.

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has swiftly moved from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. The company has a reputation for commissioning and producing new works (41 world premieres and six American premieres since 1973) as well as a reputation for reaching out to new audiences. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and it is the only opera company to have won a Tony, two Grammy, and two Emmy awards. Houston Grand Opera's productions are broadcast nationally over the WFMT network, and internationally over the European Broadcasting Union, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

### About the artists:

#### **Antonino Fogliani—Conductor**

Maestro Antonino Fogliani makes his North American debut with this production. Renowned throughout the opera world for his interpretation of the great *bel canto* works, he has conducted *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Bergamo, Italy, Liège, Belgium and Lucerne, Switzerland. He has led numerous operas by Donizetti at leading European opera houses, including *Maria Stuarda* at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Teatro Comunale in Modena and the Teatro Municipale in Piacenza; *The Elixir of Love* at the Teatro Verdi in Salerno and the Teatro Lirico in Cagliari; and *Il diluvio universale* at the St. Gallen Festival in Switzerland. His other notable credits include the Rossini operas *Semiramide* at Montpellier Opera in France; *La Cenerentola* in Wildbad, Germany and at the St. Gallen Festival; *Il signor Bruschino* and *La scala di seta* in Wildbad; and

*Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Teatro la Fenice in Florence. He has also conducted the Puccini operas *La bohème* at the Opera of Monte-Carlo and at the Teatro Piccinni in Bari, *Madame Butterfly* at the Teatro Vittorio Emanuele in Messina, Mascagni's *Amica* at the Opera Theater of Rome, and Verdi's *Oberto* at the Teatro Filarmonico in Verona. Upcoming engagements include *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice.

**John Doyle—Director** John Doyle makes his Houston Grand Opera debut with this production. His most recent opera credits include Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* at Grange Park Opera, Britten's *Peter Grimes* at the Metropolitan Opera, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* by Kurt Weill at Los Angeles Opera and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Mariinsky Theatre in Russia and at Scottish Opera. His recent theater work includes his celebrated 2005 staging of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* which played on Broadway, starring Patti LuPone and Michael Cerveris. Mr. Doyle won the Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critic's Circle awards as for "Best Director of a Musical." In the following season he directed Sondheim's *Company* at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway, which won the Tony Award for "Best Revival of a Musical." In New York he has also directed *A Catered Affair* on Broadway, Sondheim's *Road Show* at the Public Theatre, and a recent revival of Arthur Kopit's *Wings* for Second Stage Theatre. Regional theater productions include *The Three Sisters* at Cincinnati Playhouse, *Caucasian Chalk Circle* at ACT in San Francisco and Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* at Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Work on London's West End includes Jerry Herman's *Mack and Mabel* and John's own adaptation of *The Gondoliers*. He has recently directed the feature film *Main Street* starring Ellen Burstyn, Colin Firth, Orlando Bloom and Patricia Clarkson.

#### **Liz Ascroft—Set and Costume Designer**

This production marks the North American operatic debut of designer Liz Ascroft, who has previously designed productions for the Mariinsky Theatre and Scottish Opera. Having trained at the Wimbledon School of Art, she has since gone on to an international career in theater design. Ms. Ascroft's numerous credits include *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in London and on tour with the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Merrily We Roll Along* for the Watermill Theatre, *Losing Louis* at London's Trafalgar Theatre and on tour, and *Mary Barton* for the Royal Exchange. She has also designed *On Golden Pond*, *Golden Leaf Strut*, *Sad Arthur's Trip*, and *Agnes of God* for the Belgrade Theatre Company. Among her numerous credits at the Gate Theater in Dublin, Ireland, are *All My Sons*, *Uncle Vanya*; *See You Next Tuesday*, which also played at the Duke of Yorks in London; *Afterplay*, which also traveled to the Spoleto Festival USA, the Gielgud Theatre and to the Sydney Festival; and Harold Pinter's *One for the Road*, which was also seen at St. Martin's Theatre in London and was presented, along with *A Kind of Alaska*, at New York's Lincoln Center as part of the Pinter Festival. Ms. Ascroft won the UNESCO award for the Promotion of the Visual Arts and the Theater Managers Association award for Best Designer. Her sets and costumes for *Lucia di Lammermoor* will be seen at the Teatro la Fenice in Florence next year.

#### **Jane Cox—Lighting Designer**

Lighting designer Jane Cox makes her Houston Grand Opera debut with Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* this winter. Her recent operatic credits include Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Gounod's *Faust* at Minnesota Opera, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at New York City Opera, Menotti's *The Consul* and Cole Porter's *Kiss me, Kate* at Glimmerglass, and Sutermeister's *Die schwarze Spinne* at Gotham Chamber Opera in New York City. She has lit the Broadway productions of *Come back, Little Sheba*, *Mornings at Seven*, *Dame Edna: Back with a Vengeance*, and *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* and numerous Off-Broadway productions such as Sondheim's *Road Show* directed by John Doyle at the Public Theatre, *Wings*, *Distracted*, and *100 Saints You Should Know*. Ms. Cox's lighting designs for *Lucia di Lammermoor* will also be seen at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice next year.

#### **Brian Byrnes—Fight Director**

Brian Byrnes served as fight director for Puccini's *Tosca* and Wagner's *Lohengrin* at HGO last season, and this season's new production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. This winter he serves as fight director for *Dead Man Walking* by Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Mr. Byrnes has been fight director for numerous HGO productions including Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Billy Budd*. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance where he teaches on the graduate and undergraduate levels, received a 2006 Teaching Excellence Award, and directed numerous main stage productions. His fight direction credits include productions at Lincoln Center, Lucille, Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival, Tulsa Opera, San Antonio Opera, and Dallas Theatre Center among others. His Houston fight direction credits include the Alley Theatre, Stages Repertory Theatre, Theatre Under the Stars, Houston Shakespeare Festival, Houston Ballet, and Ensemble Theatre. Brian has worked with animation companies as a "motion capture" fight director and performer including Retro Studios/Nintendo and Starbreeze. He has been honored with the title of SAFD Fight Master in recognition of outstanding contributions to the art form and service to the Society of American Fight Directors.

#### **Richard Bado—Chorus Master**

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Richard Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading Houston Grand Opera's acclaimed production of *Show Boat* at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, Mr. Bado has conducted at Teatro alla Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, the Tulsa

Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and for the Aspen Music Festival, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony and the Houston Ballet. He has also conducted the Robert Wilson production of Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* at the Edinburgh Festival. He has appeared regularly in recital with Renée Fleming and has also accompanied Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Denyce Graves, Susan Graham, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey and Nathan Gunn. Mr. Bado, who holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University, has studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. Mr. Bado has served as Houston Grand Opera's Chorus Master since 1988. This season marks Mr. Bado's sixth year as Director of the Opera Studies Program at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. He has been on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the International Vocal School in Moscow and has served on the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Australia, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Chautauqua Opera and Wolf Trap Opera. Mr. Bado regularly judges for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and served as Houston Grand Opera's Head of Music Staff for fourteen seasons.

#### **Albina Shagimuratova—Lucia di Lammermoor**

Houston Grand Opera Studio Alumna Albina Shagimuratova was recently named People's Artist of the Republic of Tatar, and was the gold medal winner of the 2007 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. She was last heard here as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* both on the main stage at the Wortham Theatre Center and at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Ms. Shagimuratova recently garnered critical acclaim as the Queen of Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Los Angeles Opera, and Berlin's Deutsche Oper. Next year she will sing that role at Milan's Teatro alla Scala. Ms. Shagimuratova's other credits include Flaminia in Haydn's *Il mondo della luna* with Gotham Chamber Opera and Gilda at West Palm Beach Opera. She has appeared at Houston Grand Opera as Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème*, the Dew Fairy in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and the Queen of the Night. Ms. Shagimuratova studied vocal and opera performance at Kazan State University and holds a doctoral degree from the Moscow Conservatory. Her upcoming engagements include Mozart's Requiem at the Maggio Musicale Festival in Florence.

#### **Dimitri Pittas—Edgaro**

Dimitri Pittas makes his Houston Grand Opera debut as Edgaro in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a role he sang for his debut at Frankfurt Opera last season. He recently made important career debuts at Berlin's Deutsche Oper as Alfredo Germont in *La traviata*, at Vienna State Opera as Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth*, and at Dresden's Semperoper as Rodolfo in Puccini's *La bohème*. Last season he also sang a recital on tour with the Metropolitan Opera in Japan, and performed the role of Narraboth in Richard Strauss's *Salome* at the Saito Kinen Festival, also in Japan. Mr. Pittas's further credits include Macduff at the Metropolitan Opera and Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* on tour with Welsh National Opera, and at the Metropolitan Opera and the Santa Fe Opera. His upcoming engagements include Tebaldo in Bellini's *I Capuleti e I Montecchi* at the Munich Opera Festival and the Bavarian State Opera, and Macduff at Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

#### **Scott Hendricks—Enrico**

Houston Grand Opera Studio Alumnus Scott Hendricks was last heard at HGO in the title role of *Rigoletto*, opposite Albina Shagimuratova as Gilda. His other past HGO credits include Silvio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen*, Sharpless in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Count Almaviva in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Chucho in the world premiere of *Salsipuedes* by Daniel Catán. Last fall he performed the role of Amonasro in Verdi's *Aida* at Canadian Opera Company. His other recent notable credits include the title role of *Macbeth* at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Iago in Verdi's *Otello* at Canadian Opera Company and Baron Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca* at Opéra National de Paris (Bastille). Mr. Hendricks has performed numerous roles at Cologne Opera, including Marcello in Puccini's *La bohème*, Germont in Verdi's *La traviata*, Malatesta in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and the title role of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He frequently appears with the Bregenz Festival, where his roles have included Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*, Roderick in the world premiere of Debussy's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and the title role of Szymanowski's *Król Roger*, which he has also performed at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona—the production is available on CD and DVD from Naxos. Mr. Hendricks can be heard on the Naxos recordings of Mark Gray's *Enemy Slayer: Navajo Oratorio* on CD and the Bregenz Festival production of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, for which he sang Roderick Usher. Upcoming engagements include the title role of Eugene Onegin in Bilbao and the title role of *Król Roger* in Warsaw.