



Patrick Summers  
Artistic and Music Director  
*Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*

HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers joined Houston Grand Opera as its Music Director in 1998. Now in his second decade with the company, Mr. Summers has been responsible for many of HGO's important artistic advances, including the formation and development of the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra, regularly praised by critics as a world-class ensemble. A conductor, pianist and writer with a formidable grasp of a diverse and extensive repertoire, Mr. Summers' interests and experience range from early baroque through bel canto and grand opera to contemporary works and world premieres. In August 2010, he was named one of "The 25 Most Powerful Names in U.S. Opera" by *Opera News*.

During his tenure as HGO Music Director, Mr. Summers has supervised and conducted more than 45 operas. These have included the world premieres of Tod Machover's *Resurrection*, Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair* and *Last Acts (Three Decembers)*, André Previn's *Brief Encounter* and Christopher Theofanidis' *The Refuge*. His work at HGO represents the full range of the operatic canon - including works by Verdi (*La Traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Falstaff*, *A Masked Ball*), Puccini (*La bohème*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Tosca*), Mozart (*Così fan tutte*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Idomeneo*); Donizetti (*The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*; *Don Pasquale*); Lehar (*The Merry Widow*); Handel (*Julius Caesar*); Rossini (*The Barber of Seville*); R. Strauss (*Ariadne auf Naxos*); Benjamin Britten (*Billy Budd*, *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Peter Grimes*) and Richard Wagner (*Lohengrin*).

"Credit belongs to HGO music director, Patrick Summers and the HGO Orchestra, which from delicate shimmers and flutings to brazen climaxes ravished the ear." –*The Dallas Morning News*

"Summers demonstrated...impressive command of the idiom: the sheer breadth of the overture's minutes-long opening crescendo, the nimble orchestral accompaniments and interjections and, above all, the narrating instrumental leitmotifs called for an unprecedented discipline and virtuosity on the orchestra's part, which they delivered. Under Summers's ever alert and sensitive direction, the eighty-piece orchestra - at times commenting with crispness and agility, at times shaking the walls with sweeping, transcendent climaxes - took its rightful place alongside the singers as a narrative instrument."  
– *Opera News* (Wagner's *Lohengrin*)

Mr. Summers is featured on the HGO CD recordings of Tod Machover's *Resurrection*, Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree*, *Of Mice and Men*, Mark Adamo's *Little Women* (also released on DVD), Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Christopher Theofanidis' *The Refuge*, Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers*, André Previn's *Brief Encounter* and the upcoming EMI recording of *Dead Man Walking* (expected release in Fall 2011). In addition to these, Mr. Summers's discography includes Renée Fleming's Grammy® Award-winning *Bel Canto* (Decca Records), an album of bel canto Arias & Duets with Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Olga Borodina, and the English Chamber Orchestra (Phillips), and the world premiere recording of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Erato).

For more than two decades Mr. Summers has been an essential member of the San Francisco Opera. As music director of the Opera Center – the SFO’s training program for young singers – from 1989 to 1994, he also worked extensively with the Center’s touring company, the Western Opera Theater, leading five tours of Asia and the Pacific and helping to develop the Pacific Voices program. Mr. Summers began conducting SFO main stage productions in the early 1990s and became the SFO’s Principal Guest Conductor in 1999. The list of works he has conducted there includes Handel’s *Ariodante* and Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Otello*, and the US premiere of *Ermione*, Bellini’s *Norma*, Donizetti’s *L’Elisir d’amore* and *La fille du régiment*, Johann Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*, Puccini’s *Tosca* and *Il Trittico*, Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*, Saint-Saëns’ *Samson et Dalila*, Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*, and Aribert Reimann’s *A Ghost Sonata*. Next season he will conduct Handel’s *Xerxes* and the world premiere of Christopher Theofanidis’ *The Heart of a Soldier* at SFO.

“Sunday’s chief hero was Summers, leading a performance of astounding depth, virtuosity and clarity.” – *San Francisco Chronicle*  
(Handel’s *Ariodante*)

In addition to San Francisco Opera, Mr. Summers also has a long association with Opera Australia. After his 1994 debut with Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, Mr. Summers has returned regularly, conducting a range of diverse repertoire including Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*, Massenet’s *Werther*, Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Puccini’s *La bohème*, Handel’s *Rinaldo*, Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers*.

“A large amount of credit for the evening’s success must go to the conductor, Patrick Summers, for steering all this energy, and a responsive orchestra and chorus, with fine dramatic pace, musical discernment and unflinching good taste.”  
– *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*)

Mr. Summers is also a frequent guest at the Metropolitan Opera, an association that began in 1998 with Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*. He regularly returns conducting repertoire ranging from Handel’s *Rodelinda* to Strauss’ *Salome* and Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*. Most recently he led Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride* with Susan Graham and Plácido Domingo and in the same season, Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* featuring Natalie Dessay and Joseph Calleja. Both productions were transmitted into theaters and cinemas around the world in HD format. He has also led the Metropolitan Opera’s National Council competition finals concert on several occasions.

“It is all moodily effective, and it suited the Met orchestra’s warmly powerful, propulsive performance under the conductor Patrick Summers.” – *The New York Times* (Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride*)

Other North American credits include Seattle Opera, Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa).

His international credits include the Bregenz Festival (Austria), Oslo Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Welsh National Opera, Opera Australia, Opera de Bordeaux, and Teatro São Carlos (Lisbon). He also led the 1997 European concert tour of the English Chamber Orchestra, featuring Olga Borodina and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, in performances at Berlin’s Deutsche Oper, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, London’s Royal Festival Hall, and Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. He conducted the first-ever *Tosca* produced in China and has conducted, coached, and taught at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and throughout Japan.

Among singers, he is equally well known as tutor, mentor and friend. Many leading singers frequently seek him out to conduct their premiere productions in signature roles, such as Renée Fleming (Verdi’s *La Traviata*), Frederica von Stade (*Dead Man Walking*, *Three Decembers*) Susan Graham (Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*, Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking*), Marcello Giordani (Verdi’s *Il Trovatore*), Patricia Racette (Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, and *Il Trittico*, Verdi’s *Don Carlo*), Anna Netrebko (*Puritani*) and Dmitri Hvorostovsky (Verdi’s *Simon Boccanegra*).