

HoustonGrandOpera



For Immediate Release: January 15, 2009 **UPDATED** January 26, 2009
Press Contacts Christopher Novosad, 713-546-0278, cnovosad@houstongrandopera.org

High-resolution production photos and headshots can be found at
www.houstongrandopera.org/PressPhotos/PressPhotos.htm

Houston Grand Opera Presents CityCast: A Free HD Simulcast **HGO's First Live HD Simulcast to Discovery Green and Five HISD School Locations**

HOUSTON — On February 7, 2009, for the first time in four years, **Houston Grand Opera (HGO)** will offer a free live simulcast of its newest production, *Chorus!* from the stage of the Wortham Theater Center in downtown. This event represents the return of the once-popular free live transmissions formerly called “Plazacasts,” which will be transmitted to a climate controlled tent at Discovery Green as well as to five HISD school throughout Houston. Due to the expanded reach, HGO “Plazacasts” have been renamed **CityCasts**. This broadcast also marks the first time that HGO’s simulcasts will be in **High Definition**. “Audience members at the simulcast locations will experience an exciting night of entertainment,” say **HGO General Director and CEO Anthony Freud** “The world renowned talents of Houston Grand Opera will be broadcast in High Definition for the first time in company history, taking the experience of the opera outside the Wortham walls.” In addition to the CityCast venues, the performance will also be simulcast live on **KUHF Houston Public Radio 88.7 FM**.

Thanks to substantial funding from a number of generous Houstonians and Houston-based organizations – including the companies that form the core of HGO’s **NEXUS initiative** – the transmission will reach not only the downtown Discovery Green Park but also HISD schools in various neighborhoods. “Both HISD and HGO share the common goal of creating a powerful sense of community and shared direction among the organizations and the public,” says HISD District Superintendant **Dr. Abelardo Saavedra**. “We are thrilled by the opportunity to collaborate with Houston Grand Opera to promote arts, community and connections.” Generous underwriting has been provided by the **Honorable Peter and Anne S. Brown** to support this CityCast as well as future free public HD transmissions. “We believe that the renowned works and superb talent of the HGO should be enjoyed by audiences throughout the city, particularly our young people,” says Peter Brown. “It is our hope that countless Houstonians will be moved by the magic of these performances, and that a

precedent will be set for future such public productions. We are honored to make it possible for the everyone to share in the amazing artistry of one of America's premier opera companies."

The live transmission will feature the new production *Chorus!*. A unique evening of musical theater which celebrates the critically-acclaimed HGO chorus and orchestra, *Chorus!* takes the audience on a quirky, witty and sometimes irreverent musical journey that explores everything from Verdi to Rodgers and Hammerstein. "Our chorus comprises eighty of the best voices in Houston; this is Houston singing," says Anthony Freud, "and we want to share this incredible collection of talent with the whole city." *Chorus!*, created and directed by acclaimed British director **David Pountney**, is a new production that includes more than eighty voices, six hundred costumes and music from twenty-three operas, oratorios and American musical theater classics. "It is such an unusual project," says HGO Music Director and *Chorus!* Conductor **Patrick Summers**. "For the seasoned opera-goer it will provide a mix of familiar classics, and music that has not been heard in Houston before, while the new opera-goer will be introduced to so much." CityCast is directed by **Bruce Bryant**, who directed many HGO transmissions in the past. The live HD transmission will include sneak peeks backstage as well as interviews with key persons in the production. The CityCast project will be hosted by ABC13 Eyewitness News team member **Laura Whitley**.

CityCast is a free public event. The site at Discovery Green will be tented and climate controlled. Admission is unticketed and on a "first come-first served" basis. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. with the CityCast beginning at 7:15 p.m. Attendees at Discovery Green are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for seating. Alcoholic beverages may not be brought into any CityCast venue. For further information please contact HGO at 713-228-OPERA or visit www.houstongrandopera.org/citycast.

CityCast Venue Locations:

Discovery Green Park – Downtown Houston

Johnston Middle School – 10410 Manhattan, 77096

Stephen F. Austin High School – 1700 Dumble, 77023

Jefferson Davis High School – 1101 Quitman, 77009

Cesar Chavez High School – 8501 Howard, 77017

James D. Ryan Middle School – 2610 Elgin, 77004

The **CityCast** of *Chorus!*, which is part of HGO's NEXUS Initiative, is made possible through the generosity of

The Honorable Peter and Anne S. Brown

The NEXUS Initiative is also made possible by:

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Houston Grand Opera has swiftly grown from a small regional organization into an internationally recognized company with a reputation for commissioning and producing new works (38 world premieres since 1973) as well as for reaching out to new audiences. HGO has toured extensively, including becoming the only opera company to have won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards.

Houston Grand Opera's productions are broadcast nationally and internationally over National Public Radio's *World of Opera*, the WFMT Radio Network, New York City's WQXR, the European Broadcasting Union, and the Australian