Celebrate the Silver Anniversary of Concert of Arias

For twenty-five years, Concert of Arias has supported the finest training in the opera world.

On February 7, 2013, you have a special opportunity to see outstanding young singers on the brink of exciting careers in opera.

Concert of Arias—the final round in HGO’s Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers, one of the world’s most prestigious singing competitions—will take place in the Cullen Theater at the Wortham Theater Center.

You’ll be mesmerized by the performances of the best emerging singers in the world, vying for the top prizes. You’ll also be able to cast your vote for the Audience Choice Award, and, if you wish, you may attend the post-performance celebration dinner in the Wortham’s Grand Foyer.

As always, the Concert of Arias will be a thrilling evening that supports the Houston Grand Opera Studio, one of the most highly renowned young artist training programs in the world.

But there’s more to it this year. Not only will we celebrate great young talent, but we will mark the twenty-fifth year of this event, one of the most popular nights in Houston’s social calendar.

This year’s event is chaired by Donna and Robert Bruni, and will honor Marianne and David Duthu—all leading benefactors of the event.

COA 2012 winners Andrea Carroll, Natalya Romaniw, and Peixin Chen with HGO’s Eric Melear (far left) and Laura Canning (second from far right).

lights of HGO’s special events, particularly the Concert of Arias.

The 25th Concert of Arias will also have two special honorary chairs: esteemed American composer Carlisle Floyd and former HGO General Director David Gockley. These two men founded the HGO Studio in 1977, and directed its growth during its formative years. Floyd and Gockley founded the HGO Studio in response to a need: there were few programs that provided comprehensive training along with performance opportunities in order to nurture young talent.

For the first several years of the HGO Studio, Gockley and Floyd personally heard hundreds of auditions every year.

In 1988, an unknown singer named Renée Fleming auditioned for the HGO Studio. Gockley recognized a true star in the making, and told her she did not need to join the HGO Studio—she was ready to begin her career.

It was a revealing moment, and it made Gockley think of turning the HGO Studio auditions into a public competition—so that Houston audiences could share in the exhilaration of discovering the opera stars of tomorrow.

The first Concert of Arias took place in February 1989; the inaugural winner was tenor Eric Perkins. Beginning in 1991, the awards were named for HGO benefactor Eleanor McCollum, a longtime champion of the HGO Studio and an accomplished singer in her own right. She spoke briefly at the competition every year until her death in 2002, making her celebrated “twirl” on the arm of Gockley.

Over the last quarter century, the Concert of Arias has grown into one of the most prestigious events of its kind, and the main annual fundraiser for the HGO Studio. Winners are often offered positions in the Studio.

In 1995, the Audience Choice award was instituted, allowing Houston audiences the chance to select and recognize their favorite singers.

The Concert of Arias stage has been graced by celebrities including Garrison Keillor, Tony Randall, Walter Cronkite, and, this year, Rudy Giuliani. Guest judges have included legendary singers like Joyce DiDonato, Laura Claycomb, and Frederica von Stade.

So, for the 2013 Concert of Arias, we look back on a quarter century of growing success—as well as forward to the next generation of opera stars. We hope to see you there!

For information about this event, please contact Director of Special Events Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

HGO welcomes Rudy Giuliani

For the 25th Concert of Arias, HGO welcomes a special guest to the stage of the Cullen Theater: Rudy Giuliani, the 107th mayor of New York City.

Mr. Giuliani may be the most famous opera fan in America. As a boy in Brooklyn, he was spellbound by the Saturday broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera. He bought his first opera records at thirteen, and at sixteen he started an opera club at Brooklyn’s Bishop Loughlin High School.

He regularly attends performances at the Met and around the world, and was a good friend of the late Luciano Pavarotti. His favorite opera is Verdi’s Otello.

In 2005, Mr. Giuliani joined the Houston-based law firm Bracewell & Giuliani LLP, and helped to establish the firm’s New York office. In the last year, Bracewell & Giuliani became a generous Underwriter of HGO. We’re proud to welcome the firm to the ranks of our supporters, and to welcome Mr. Giuliani to our stage.
Unleashed is your source for information about the progress of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera.

We’re very happy to announce a major gift that will support this campaign. Longtime arts supporter and philanthropist Kitty King Powell has generously made a gift of $500,000 to Houston Grand Opera.

This gift will support production underwriting for the 2012–13 and 2013–14 seasons and will also support the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, ensuring Mrs. Powell’s support will serve as a legacy for future generations of opera audiences in Houston.

Kitty King Powell serves as the founding director of The Powell Foundation, which she and her husband, Ben, created in 1967. Her daughter, Nancy Powell Moore, is the president and treasurer.

Nancy Powell Moore said, “Our mother firmly believes that the performing arts, specifically ballet, opera, and symphony, are necessities for a great city. She is proud of the city Houston has become and wants to ensure that the performing arts continue to be an integral part of Houston’s cultural growth in the future.” At the same time as her gift to HGO, Mrs. Powell also made equal gifts to Houston Ballet and the Houston Symphony.

HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech said of the gift, “This kind of philanthropy, coupled with civic pride, is what differentiates Houston from other cities. Kitty King Powell has steadfastly supported the arts in Houston and exemplifies our city’s optimism, generosity of spirit, and her commitment to making the future of the performing arts central to the bright future of Houston.”

Since the last issue of Unleashed, HGO’s comprehensive campaign, Inspiring Performance, has raised more than $95 million. The campaign total now stands at $118 million—but we still have a long way to go to reach our goal of at least $165 million by the end of 2014.

Your gifts are keeping us on pace for success. Thank you!
Welcome to HGO’s New Patrons

You can make every HGO experience an event to remember—and make a great contribution to our campaign, as well.

One of the best ways to support **Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera** is by becoming a member of the Patrons Circle. When you join this group of people who make a regular annual gift of $4,000, you receive complimentary valet parking for the season, access to the Masterson Green Room during intermissions, tickets to dress rehearsals, invitations to events like guest artist recitals and the popular “Opera Unwrapped” previews, and more!

Young professionals also enjoy these benefits by making an annual gift of $2,000 to become Young Patrons.

It’s no wonder that opera lovers are joining in record numbers. Since August, eighteen members of the HGO family have become Patrons Circle members.

For more information, please contact Angela Lane at 713-546-0704.

### Make a Gift That Lasts

Friends of HGO can help ensure the company’s future by including HGO in their wills. Contributions made through a will, trust, or life-income arrangement are all forms of legacy giving—and anyone can make a legacy gift at any time.

It can be as easy as naming HGO on the beneficiary form of an IRA, pension account, or charitable trust, but making a bequest in a will is the easiest way to create your legacy. The following is an example of how you might word an outright bequest.

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc., with offices located at 510 Preston Street, Houston, TX, 77002-1504, the sum of _____ (state amount or use percentage of) to be used for general endowment purposes."

Your generous gift will be well cared for. The Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc., manages all legacy gifts with professional investment managers and an independent board of trustees overseeing the fund.

Ultimately, including HGO in your will means that you have become a partner with HGO in perpetuating the art form we love, ensuring its vibrant good health for future generations.

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HGO welcomes these new members of the Patrons Circle for 2012–13:

- Marcheta and John Beasley
- Stephen Brenner
- Kenneth Broughton
- Patrick Carfizzi
- Madlyn and Anthony Constant
- Charlotte and Dorian Coppenhaver
- Joyce Cramer
- Bailey Dalton-Binion
- Elizabeth and Allan Ecker
- Jeff Graves
- Michael Harberg
- Harold Kuehn
- Mary Ann and Lance Littlejohn
- Nancy and Rob Martin
- Judith Oudt
- Adrienne Shepherd
- Phyllis and Arnold Singer
- Reuel Sosa
- Barbara Tilley
- Joanna and Driskoll Tubbs
- Marion Ward and Frank Dutton
- Karan Watson
- R. Alan York and Michael Rutledge
- Shelly and Rick Zachardy

Mena Mark Hanna, HGO’s dramaturg, leads an Opera Unwrapped preview for Patrons.
A Hairy Job

Dotti Staker, HGO’s wig and makeup department head, has brought her artistry to HGO for the past thirty years.

Like many high school seniors, Dotti agonized over the college decision. Her parents urged her to take the full ride scholarship she’d been offered to attend Ohio University to pursue engineering. But her technical theater teacher, who had been an important mentor, counseled her to choose something she could envision herself enjoying 24 hours a day for the rest of her life. “I knew the answer right away—doing wigs and makeup for theater,” says Dotti.

Luckily, the best program in her chosen field was in her hometown at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Her degree there led to an apprenticeship at Santa Fe Opera, which led to an assistant position, which led her to Houston in 1983.

One of the most important changes she has witnessed over the years has been the advent of HDTV and the need for makeup that looks more natural to the camera. That hit close to home for Dotti in 2001, when HGO’s Little Women was shot in HD for PBS’s Great Performances.

But the methodology for creating wigs remains the same. Dotti, along with her assistant, will create some thirteen to fourteen new wigs for Show Boat—“not counting the men,” says Dotti—and several new ones for Don Giovanni. The process? She creates a mold of the singer’s head and transfers it to a wig block, where she makes a wig foundation out of a mesh-like material. And then, with a needle, she threads individual strands of hair onto the foundation and knots them in place.

All that meticulous handwork would make most people, well, wig out, but Dotti takes it in stride. After all these years, what she loves most about her job are the transformations that can be wrought through her craft—and she does whatever it takes.

CRUZAR LA CARA DE LA LUNA
TO CROSS THE FACE OF THE MOON

March 21-24, 2013

HoustonGrandOpera.org 713-228-OPERA (6737)
Come see two of Houston’s legendary organizations making beautiful music together.

Join HGOco in February 2013 for performances of *Rodeo Songs*, a unique, “only-in-Houston” musical collaboration between HGO and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

The Rodeo has been a lead supporter of HGO for almost fifteen years, helping more than half a million students experience HGOco’s Student Performance Series, Opera to Go! and Storybook Opera.

In conjunction with the Rodeo’s 80th anniversary earlier this year, HGOco commissioned *Rodeo Songs*, inspired by the incredible stories and characters of the Rodeo in Houston. The songs will be performed by two singers and a small country and western band.

With music by four composition graduate students at the University of Houston, the songs are based on dozens of stories from Rodeo participants, volunteers, students, staff, and other community members who shared their tales. The songs are the perfect blend of opera and country and western music: moving and heartfelt, catchy and toe-tapping, and above all, 100 percent Houstonian.

*Rodeo Songs* will be performed in conjunction with the annual Show in February and March 2013. Please stay tuned on HGOco’s website HoustonGrandOpera.org/hgoco/ for updated dates and times.

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**Raves from the Press**

**La bohème**

“A strikingly original reading of this highly familiar opera. … Credit goes to the nimble and energetic cast for realizing [director John] Caird’s vision.”

—*Opera News*

**The Italian Girl in Algiers**

“Houston Grand Opera’s eye-popping, ear-pleasing … *Italian Girl in Algiers* is so good on so many levels the biggest challenge is deciding where to begin singing its praises.”

—*Houston Chronicle*