On May 28, HGO lost a beloved family member, longtime Director of Patron Services Rudy Avelar. Rudy passed away in his sleep after a wonderful day of vacationing with his family in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Beneath the shock and sadness everyone at HGO has expressed over this profound loss, there is an even stronger current of deep gratitude.

During his 38 years of service to HGO, Rudy left an indelible mark on the company and on everyone who was privileged to know him. He had been here longer than anyone else on the staff, and embodied everything that HGO stands for—dedication, excellence, and service.

“At the car park stand when you arrived, he always made it special...seeing Rudy made it feel like now the opera is official and can begin. He had an incredible knack for making everything joyous—just hearing his voice meant something good was in the air,” said Bobbie-Vee Cooney, HGO Board member and close friend.

Rudy believed that opera brought people together. That personal connection was part of what made him so extraordinary at his job. He loved taking care of people, and saw the work that he did for HGO as a great opportunity to help others.

When he greeted guests at the valet stand, he made them feel unique. He always showed that he cared sincerely about everyone—Patrons, performers, valet team, ushers, everyone. “Starting each and

“Oh, how we shall miss you so very, very much. If music is the lifeblood of Houston Grand Opera, you were the heart.”

—Stephen Brenner

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
every opera with a smile and a hug from Rudy began our, and so many others', nights at HGO,” said Michele LaNoue, HGO trustee.

If you were Rudy’s friend, you were a friend for life. The sheer number of personalized holiday cards Rudy sent every year boggles the mind—and he meant every warm wish from the bottom of his heart. “Rudy just wouldn’t let people go,” says HGO Director of Publications Laura Chandler. “He kept in touch with former HGO colleagues by hosting the most wonderful Christmas parties just for them. You had to be former HGO to get an invitation!”

Thanks to Rudy’s efforts, HGO has become a model for how performing arts companies across the country serve their audiences. His Patron Program was the most successful and preeminent of its kind, and that legacy of extraordinary service will live on.

It is a loss for all of Houston. He was able to bring so many people together and we all love Rudy. He is part of the fabric of our lives and will always be there alive in us.

Fred Aguilar

A warm, elegant human being who wrapped his care around every patron like an opera cape. A generous, wry, funny soul. We will miss his graciousness.

Peter M. Webster

Rudy’s passing signals the end of an era at HGO that he helped create. We grieve for him, and we know that his family was not only San Antonio brothers and sisters, but all of us who loved him for his thoughtful kindness, his humor—sometimes wicked, always clever—and his dedication to his life’s work. His unexpected death took him much too early from us all.

Laura McWilliams

To make a gift in honor of Rudy, please visit HGO.org/VivaRudy or contact Richard Buffett, director of major gifts and legacy planning, at rbuffett@hgo.org or 713-546-0216.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
invites you to an evening of great stories and beautiful music

¡Viva Rudy!
Celebrating the Life of Rudy Avelar

SPECIAL GUEST ARTISTS INCLUDE

Joyce DiDonato
Heidi Stober
Patrick Carfizzi

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016
6:30 p.m.
Brown Theater | Wortham Theater Center

Free ticketed event. Advanced reservation required by September 12.
To reserve your tickets, visit HGO.org/VivaRudy, email SpecialEvents@HGO.org, or call 713-546-0700.

IN TRIBUTE TO RUDY

The Rudy Avelar Chair is being established in Rudy’s memory, ensuring that his name will be part of HGO in perpetuity. Earnings from this named fund in the HGO Endowment will forever help support the Opera. You will be enshrining Rudy’s legacy for generations of future patrons.
Several HGO Studio artists opted to go bohemian this summer.

Not that they’re going to sit around in Parisian cafés and talk about literature and politics. They’re cast in Puccini’s *La bohème*—and when you put them all together, you’ve got almost an entire cast!

Departing HGO Studio soprano D’Ana Lombard and current tenor Yongzhao Yu sang the leading roles of Mimi and Rodolfo at Wolf Trap Opera in the Washington, D.C., area on August 5, with alum Reginald Smith Jr. as Marcello.

Pureum Jo sang *La bohème*'s other soprano role, the feisty Musetta, and baritone Federico De Michelis performed Colline at the Aspen Music Festival, July 14–18. Pureum has completed her training in the HGO Studio, but Federico will return for the 2016–17 season.

Summer is a busy time for young artists because “festival” opera offers numerous opportunities. Soprano Mane Galoyan, baritone Ben Edquist, and pianist/coach Kirill Kuzmin are at Wolf Trap, while tenor Chris Bozeka and mezzo-soprano Zoie Reams are at Glimmerglass Opera. Mezzo Megan Mikailovna Samarin is performing in scenes and doing private study at Aspen, and soprano Yelena Dyachek is performing with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program. Pianist/coaches Geoffrey Loff and Peter Walsh are attending the Conductors Institute of South Carolina and the Ravinia–Steans Music Institute, respectively.

Incoming tenor Sol Jin went the farthest afield: he is honing his skills at the International Meistersinger Akademie in Neumarkt, Germany.
Refusing to have his feathers ruffled by reports of fowl weather, the newest member of HGO’s flock was seen flapping its wings at the Miller Outdoor Theatre stage for two free public performances of Puccini’s *Tosca* in May—a production that truly fit the bill.

While the Opera Duck kept his quacking to himself, the rest of the crowd was invited to tweet. Using the hashtag #HGOoutdoors, audience members were invited to join the Twitter conversation about *Tosca,* and some of their responses quacked us up.

Randy Eckman @emanspeaks
So did that guard keep Mario’s ring after all this? Not cool, dude. #TeamMario #HGOoutdoors

Jay Weber @JWeb8
First opera ever = great. I’m hooked! #HGOoutdoors #tosca #datenight

Truong Lam @tlaminator313
@MillerOutdoor Weather has changed for the better! Beautiful #tosca has defeated evil #scarpia. Can’t wait for last act! #HGOoutdoors

Alissa Anderson @AMACContralto
Don’t want to alarm anyone but... Scarpia is a hoarder #HGOoutdoors @HouGrandOpera

Emily Engelking @engelkinger
Classy nights with classier friends at the Outdoor Opera! #HGOoutdoors

Jamelah Elbatsh @arabeyes517
Came alone but found a whole theater of opera fans!! Only in Houston!! #HGOoutdoors

Perryn Leech @HGOMDLeech
#HGOoutdoors Amazing HGO chorus at the end of Act 1 of Tosca. Body count about to rise.....

Dianne Reece @HRDianne
#HGOoutdoors - what makes Houston great - Tosca at Miller Outdoor Theatre!

Grea Alexander @SeaMonkeyInk
@HouGrandOpera’s #Tosca has seriously made me remember why I fell in love with #opera in the first place. #phenomenal #mustsee

David Feheley @dfheley
Yikes! Bit of a bloodthirsty crowd! Applause for Scarpia’s death. Oh well, he had it coming #hgooutdoors

Viv Black @lifecoachtips
Loving TOSCA outdoors...amazing setting.wonderful performance #hgooutdoors

Opera Duck checks out the crowd. Photo by Marc Melcher.

Vincenzo Modugno @vincemodugno
If Scarpia was in love with me and I heard his ominous children's choir, I would run... (no matter how beautiful) #HGOoutdoors

Amber @SK0TAK
Already on the edge of my seat and it’s only Act 1!!! #HGOoutdoors

A crowd gathers on the hill. Photo by John Lewis.

A glass of wine, opera, and thou. Photo by Felix Sanchez

Rodney Remo @jorel_rodney
The entire production team needs a big round of applause. The sets, lighting, and costumes are amazing. #HGOoutdoors

Kristen Burke @Callmemrchang @kellykaduce is killing it tonight as Tosca, literally... #hgooutdoors

Join the conversation on Twitter @HouGrandOpera

Houston Grand Opera gratefully acknowledges the support of The Anchorage Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; The Wortham Foundation, Inc.; Nabors Industries; Shell Oil Company; MD Anderson Cancer Center; and M.D. Anderson Foundation. Together, they make it possible for thousands of Houstonians to experience the thrill of world-class opera without the barrier of cost. Thank you for your generous support!
In 2010, Rebecca Ferrell was invited to see *The Queen of Spades* at HGO as part of a young professionals group hosted by the Dow Chemical Company. This networking group attended a number of social and sports events in the Houston area, but when Rebecca came to the Wortham Theater Center for the first time, she fell in love.

“From that first night, one of my favorite things about the opera was the atmosphere,” Rebecca says. “The story, the production, the music—the way it all comes together. It was magical.”

Two years later, Rebecca’s brother, Stephen Ferrell, moved to Houston from their family home in Baton Rouge, and Rebecca had an opera buddy for life. “It’s fun to get dressed up and go out for the evening,” Rebecca says. “We come early, have dinner in the Grand Foyer, and go to the opera. It’s a really nice night out!”

Although the Ferrell siblings are 17 months apart, they “function as twins,” enjoying bonding time at fine arts events and taking vacations together.

Earlier this spring, Stephen noticed an invitation to an HGO dinner in Rebecca’s mail, and insisted that they attend. Rebecca had been considering joining HGO’s Young Patrons Circle, a special group of HGO supporters under the age of 40, and she saw the dinner and backstage tour as an excellent introduction.

While on the backstage tour, Rebecca and Stephen saw the sets and props for *Carousel* and were mesmerized by the scope and magnitude of HGO productions. “I knew the backstage had to be big, but I never thought of storing two sets back there. The mechanics to make that happen were mind-blowing,” Rebecca says.

The Ferrell siblings made a gift to HGO and signed on as Young Patrons that very night. They have already taken advantage of the valet parking—“worth every penny,” according to Rebecca—and they look forward to the 2016–17 season with great enthusiasm. “One of the best things about Houston is the arts,” Rebecca says, “and we want to keep that alive for other people to enjoy.”

A graduate of Louisiana State University, Rebecca works as a lead process automation engineer at INEOS in Houston. Stephen is an accountant with Economy Transportation & Logistics, LLC. Joining HGO’s Young Patrons Circle represents the beginning of what promises to be a lifelong relationship with the arts, and HGO is thrilled to welcome them.

**JOINING FORCES FOR OPERA**

Siblings, opera buddies, and now Young Patrons—the Ferrell “twins” are opera lovers for life.

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**HSVS 2016**

Bauer Family
High School Voice Studio members
ham it up at their May 15 Graduation Recital!

**Congratulations to**
- Savannah Rucoba (Houston Christian H.S.),
- Connor Krusleski (Friendswood H.S.),
- Madison Mackey (Tomball H.S.),
- Leah Moody (Clear Springs H.S.),
- Sidney Fabregas (Cy-Fair H.S.),
- Nathaniel Thompson (Glenda Dawson H.S.), and
- Taryn Surratt (North Shore Senior H.S.).

From left:
- Congratulations to
  - Savannah Rucoba
    (Houston Christian H.S.),
  - Connor Krusleski
    (Friendswood H.S.),
  - Madison Mackey
    (Tomball H.S.),
  - Leah Moody
    (Clear Springs H.S.),
  - Sidney Fabregas
    (Cy-Fair H.S.),
  - Nathaniel Thompson
    (Glenda Dawson H.S.), and
  - Taryn Surratt
    (North Shore Senior H.S.).
The 2015–16 season was filled with highlights...and we thank you for making it a memorable year.

We opened in the fall with a Tosca that thrilled, thanks to star performances by Liudmyla Monastyrska, Alexey Dolgov, and Andrzej Dobber, alongside Eugene Onegin in a beautiful new-to-Houston production featuring Studio alum Scott Hendricks in the title role. During the holidays, we brought back the popular HGO commission The Little Prince—so popular that we added a performance to meet demand. The Marriage of Figaro opened our winter rep in a witty new production, and Ana María Martínez melted hearts as the doomed mermaid in Rusalka. In March, the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players was brought to life by a marvelous cast comprising mostly HGO Studio members, and spring brought the third installment of Wagner’s Ring cycle, Siegfried, plus an operatically scaled production of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Carousel by Rob Ashford.

The season was also a financial success. Compared to the last fiscal year, group sales revenue was up 23 percent, plus we generated an additional $121,853 in single ticket revenue from demand-driven pricing. In addition, the run of The Little Prince was sold at 104 percent, thanks to those who turned in tickets for those waiting to snap them up.

Thank you for the starring role you play in each of our productions, through subscribing, attending, and donating!

Tosca
With a riveting cast, a traditional yet nuanced production, and a powerfully precise and expressive orchestra, this Tosca is a triumph in every regard.”
—CultureMap

Rusalka
“Houston Grand Opera scores one of its greatest triumphs of recent seasons with its revelatory production of Dvorák’s enchanting Rusalka.”
—Houston Chronicle

Eugene Onegin
A lit scrim, a bare stage, and a cascade of autumn leaves—such is the stuff of triumph in Houston Grand Opera’s production of... Eugene Onegin.
—CultureMap

Prince of Players
“Houston Grand Opera has a great success with [Carlisle Floyd’s] Prince of Players, the company’s most beautiful premiere in many years.”
—CultureMap

The Little Prince
“It sees with the eyes of a child and sings from the heart.”
—Houston Chronicle

Siegfried
La Fura dels Baus continues to make exquisite magic in Siegfried… The power here is life force.
—Houston Chronicle

The Marriage of Figaro
“HGO assembled a talented cast... who sang beautifully and caught the madcap spirit of [producer Michael] Grandage’s take on the familiar story.”
—Opera Warhorses

Carousel
American opera companies such as Houston Grand Opera can bring together the resources for mounting these musicals as they should be performed.
—Opera Warhorses