DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

THANKS TO HARVEY DONORS, NEW COSTUME SHOP OPENS

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THIS ISN’T A bizarre joke. Thanks to incredible HGO supporters like you, this is exactly what’s happening at our brand new Costume and Wig Shop. It’s just a short drive away from the Wortham in a former bank building on Leeland, where the fitting room is indeed a vault.

By now you’ve heard countless times about Hurricane Harvey flooding the Wortham Theater Center. You’ve heard about the devastation it caused in the former Wig and Makeup Department and Costume Shop, which had previously been housed in our basement. If you’re like some of us at HGO, images of thousands of masterpieces made out of fabric and human hair swirling in their watery grave haunted at least a few of your dreams.

“It was very emotional to hear that the basement was underwater, and that everything was destroyed,” says Norma Cortez, HGO’s head of costumes.

After the storm, when the entire community faced a season of sacrifice and hard work to recover, Norma and her intrepid crew of costumers set up shop in the massive warehouse where we store costumes and set pieces from productions long past. Norma and her team worked around the clock, collecting new materials and shuttling back and forth to the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Any time it felt like a struggle, Norma felt uplifted by the generosity of HGO’s donors. “It’s great to know how much the community cares about the arts.”

For Dotti Staker, head of HGO’s Wig and Makeup Department, losing so much of her life’s work in the flood was heartbreaking. Not one to shy away from a challenge, she rolled up her sleeves and literally took her work home with her—building a temporary shop in her backyard shed and filling her living room with Styrofoam heads. Overwhelmed as she might have been, she made sure that every performer who went onstage at the HGO Resilience Theater looked the part.

“But even as Dotti lamented the loss of over 3,000 painstakingly handmade wigs—a 34-year legacy for the expert craftswoman—she never gave up hope. And that’s because of you.

BETTER THAN EVER—BECAUSE OF YOU

A hunchbacked court jester, a feather-wearing bird catcher, and an Ethiopian princess all walk into a bank vault...and come out looking amazing.

“I just want to say thank you to everyone who was part of making all of this happen. My whole team is very, very grateful!”

—NORMA CORTEZ, HEAD OF COSTUMES

“Within five minutes of walking into this new space, I could see that it had tremendous potential. I would never have believed we could have found such a great space so close to the theater.”

—DOTTI STAKER, WIG AND MAKEUP DEPARTMENT HEAD
Last season, you heard our cries for help. You saw our need and gave above and beyond your regular support to our Hurricane Harvey Relief fundraising campaign, which helped replenish some of our lost supplies and kept our season going. Your gifts also ultimately put Dotti and Norma and their talented teams into the shop of their dreams.

Thanks to your generous support, the bad dreams are over and the sun is shining—and because they’re in an above-ground facility, Dotti and her crew have plenty of natural light to work in. “I feel rejuvenated,” says Dotti.

Norma is also thrilled about the new building. “We never had windows, not even at the Wortham! I just want to say thank you to everyone who was part of making all of this happen. My whole team is very, very grateful!”

Dotti agrees: “Within five minutes of walking into this new space, I could see that it had tremendous potential. I would never have believed we could have found such a great space so close to the theater.”

Today, the Costume Shop and Wig and Makeup Department on Leeland is looking toward the future and buzzing with activity as the crew rises to the challenge of creating the costumes, wigs, and makeup designs that will define The Phoenix, HGO’s 66th world premiere. The story of The Phoenix will take audiences through four distinct countries and time periods—and that’s a lot of quick changes!

But our team absolutely loves bringing the characters in a new story to life for the very first time. It’s like building a piece of history—and the most important component is you. We can’t thank you enough.
“PEOPLE SAY THAT when you retire, you should take up a foreign language to keep your mind active,” says HGO Patron Diane Marcinek. “And that’s just what I did. The language I chose to learn was the language of opera.”

Diane has certainly been an excellent student. She loves learning more about the art form at our Opera Unwrapped series, and she was part of a group of HGO Patrons who explored the Santa Fe Opera last year. With the friends she’s made through her frequent international travels with Dean Dalton Tours, she continues to visit opera houses all over the world.

After 39 years of working in the U.S. Social Security Administration, Diane came to opera a little later in life than some. A friend took her to a free HGO performance at Miller Outdoor Theatre—where so many Houstonians fall in love with opera. Diane subscribed for the 2002–03 season at HGO, otherwise known as “The Year of the Diva,” and experienced breathtaking performances by opera legends like Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Elizabeth Futral, Ana María Martínez, and Laura Claycomb. Needless to say, Diane was hooked. And now her support helps to secure opera’s future for years to come. “The more you learn, the more you want to learn. That’s why it’s so important for our generation to train and educate younger generations in opera. We’ve got to get them interested and to get a new group invested in the art form.”

For the past several years, Diane has been a proud member of the HGO family. And like a true family member, she was there for us in our time of need, making a generous donation above and beyond her regular support toward our “Stock the Shops” campaign following Hurricane Harvey. HGO is a better company because of Patrons like Diane.

HGO’S ALL-NEW 2019–20 SEASON

Say goodbye to your socks, friends, because they’re about to get knocked off!

THROUGHOUT HGO’S 2019–20 SEASON, the stage will be populated by living legends and rising stars, not a single one of the seven productions has ever been seen in Houston, the stories are daring and powerful, and the music will break your heart and make it soar.

Call 713-228-6737 or visit HGO.org to secure your seats today—and get ready to sit on the edge of them all season long!

Verdi: Rigoletto
Oct. 18–Nov. 1, 2019

Handel: Saul
Oct. 25–Nov. 8, 2019

World Premiere!
Javier Martínez | Leonard Foglia
El Milagro del Recuerdo/
The Miracle of Remembering
Dec. 5–22, 2019

Donizetti: La favorite
Jan. 24–Feb. 9, 2020

Verdi: Aida
Jan. 31–Feb. 16, 2020

R. Strauss: Salome
Apr. 17–May 1, 2020

Mozart: The Magic Flute
Apr. 24–May 8, 2020
A SONG OF INCLUSION

Your visionary support launches a groundbreaking new work.

LUCKILY FOR THE future of opera, we will never run out of stories that beg to be told through music and through diverse perspectives. Your support brings the power of music and storytelling to a wider audience than ever before.

One of the most exciting developments this season has been the addition of Damien Sneed to the HGO family. Damien is HGOco’s music director and composer-in-residence, and HGO’s cover conductor. We’ll get a taste of Damien’s enormous talent in the Cullen Theater in March 2020, at the premiere of his first HGO commission: Marian’s Song.

With a libretto by Houston’s outstanding poet laureate, Deborah Mouton, Marian’s Song honors Marian Anderson, the legendary African American singer and civil rights pioneer. In 1939, after having been refused permission to perform before an integrated audience in Constitution Hall, Anderson performed an unforgettable concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial attended by 7,500 people.

“I approach this project with a great deal of reverence, because Ms. Anderson was such an important figure—not only to African American artists, but also to women,” says Damien. “What she had to go through, what she stood for, and what she represents is truly inspiring.”

Because of your investment in great artists like Damien and Deborah, the art form we love is richer and more inclusive. Thank you!

PURSE POWER!

Nationally recognized estate planning authority inspires HGO Laureate Society.

PATRICIA ANNINO, book author and a partner in the Boston law firm Prince Lobel Tye LLP, says that when it comes to estate planning, many of us would rather be like Scarlett O’Hara—because “After all, tomorrow is another day!” But she warns that proper planning requires thinking ahead, so it’s never too early to begin.

For over 30 years, Patricia has used the power of storytelling to educate, inspire, and empower women on managing wealth—and creating an impactful legacy.

On January 16, 2019, members of HGO’s Laureate Society and other guests enjoyed a lively, informative presentation when Patricia was the keynote speaker at HGO’s Power of the Purse event. This annual luncheon and panel discussion hosted by the Laureate Society Council delves into various topics related to charitable giving among women.

“You have to protect yourself first, and when you have done so, you can take the time to protect your family, your loved ones, and the charitable organizations you care about—like HGO,” Patricia says.

HGO Trustee Barbara Tilley says, “She was very clear and interesting; she had a lot of good ideas, and great stories to tell. I ended up buying her book, and I can’t wait to read it!”

For information regarding legacy gift planning and how it might positively impact you, your loved ones, and Houston Grand Opera, please contact Richard Buffett, director of major gifts and legacy giving, at 713-546-0216 or visit HGO.org/LaureateSociety.
HGO

IN THE

MEDIA

Florencia en el Amazonas

"Ana María Martínez was at her very best in the title role: Her solos as Florencia were rapturous and impassioned, and her middle range gorgeously colored and rich, with soaring high notes… HGO’s production successfully marries magic and realism in Florencia in a way that’s true to its essence, and the final scene at Manaus is jarring exactly because it’s not what we expect.”

—Houstonia

The Pearl Fishers

“The chorus and dance elements were essential to the visual and musical landscape of the production. The HGO chorus was a tight ensemble that sculpted the mood of each scene with sensitivity…Extended dance numbers were a brilliant synthesis of ballet and stylized Sri Lankan folk dance. The nine dancers… [bestowed] additional splendor on an already stunning evening at the opera.”

—Arts and Culture Texas

CIELITO LINDO

HOU STON GR AND OPE RA BALL 2019

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019 | THE REVAIRE

Marcia and Alfredo Vilas, Chairmen
Monica Fulton and Hector Villarreal, Auction Co-Chairman
Sara and Gabriel Loperena, Wine Auction Chairmen

A grand fiesta honoring the vibrant culture and creative contributions of Mexico.

“Cielito Lindo”—loosely translated to “pretty darling” or “heavenly one”—is a traditional Mexican song written by Quirino Mendoza y Cortés in 1882 and beloved throughout the Spanish-speaking world and beyond as a symbol of unity.

For table, ticket, and underwriting information, contact Brooke Rogers, 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

HGO.ORG/OPERABALL