

# HGO & PLÁCIDO

*coming home!*

A TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO THE WORTHAM THEATER CENTER



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

Plácido Domingo heard how hard HGO fought to deliver beautiful music to our community after Hurricane Harvey kept us out of the Wortham Theater Center for an entire season. He wanted to help.

Of all people, Plácido Domingo knows how special HGO's home is. When the Wortham was completed in 1987, his electrifying performance opposite Mirella Freni in Verdi's *Aida* opened the opera house with a bang—establishing on our beloved stage a grand tradition of powerful, soul-stirring music.

With one of the world's most unforgettable voices, Plácido Domingo tops every list of the greatest living

opera performers. We are thrilled to announce that on **Wednesday, September 26**, he will be back in Houston for the first time in 30 years to celebrate our homecoming.

The doors of the Wortham will reopen to the incredible sounds of a benefit concert: *HGO and Plácido—Coming Home!* All net proceeds from this celebration will benefit HGO's post-Hurricane Harvey efforts to create thrilling and engaging art for our community. We want you to join us for this once-in-a-lifetime musical experience.

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This wonderful evening of music will be filled with over two hours of opera arias and duets, as well as some special treats from the Broadway repertoire. Domingo will be joined by the incomparable soprano Ana María Martínez and the HGO Orchestra, led by Patrick Summers.

Following the concert, HGO will host an elegant celebration dinner across the street at the Ballroom at Bayou Place. This will be a unique opportunity to celebrate a living legend while supporting HGO's Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

Margaret Alkek Williams, longtime HGO Board member and one of our city's leading advocates for the arts, is the chairman and presenting underwriter of this illustrious event. HGO is deeply grateful for her leadership gift, which makes this historical evening an occasion for the entire city to celebrate.

We are thrilled to come home to the Wortham. Your support of this homecoming will help secure HGO's future, while you enjoy an evening you'll never forget. Plácido Domingo is the most beloved opera singer living today, and this concert will be the cultural event of the year in Houston—a fitting return to HGO's artistic home.



## DON'T MISS IT

Concert tickets and celebration dinner reservations are currently available through HGO's Special Events office. For more information, contact **Brooke Rogers**, director of special events, at [brogers@hgo.org](mailto:brogers@hgo.org) or 713-546-0271.

Concert-only tickets will be available to **HGO Patrons** (Patrons Circle and above) beginning on Monday, June 11, at 10 a.m.

Concert-only tickets will be available to **HGO 2018–19 season subscribers** beginning on Monday, June 25, at 10 a.m.

Concert tickets will go on sale to the **general public** beginning on Wednesday, July 11, at 10 a.m.

From top: Domingo made his HGO debut in 1967 in the title role in *Faust*, opposite Norman Treigle as Méphistophélès. Domingo's roles at HGO also included Radames in *Aida* and Don José in *Carmen*.

# FINDING HOPE THROUGH ART

Does music have the power to heal? We're fortunate to partner with Dr. Mauro Ferrari and HGO's official health care provider, Houston Methodist, as we ask that question through our *Seeking the Human Spirit* initiative.

Dr. Mauro Ferrari lives in Houston with his wife, Paola, the co-founder and president of L'Accademia di Gagliato delle NanoScienze, and his five children. As a lifelong opera lover, Dr. Ferrari has had highly personal experiences with music's ability to bring comfort to families who are dealing with illness.

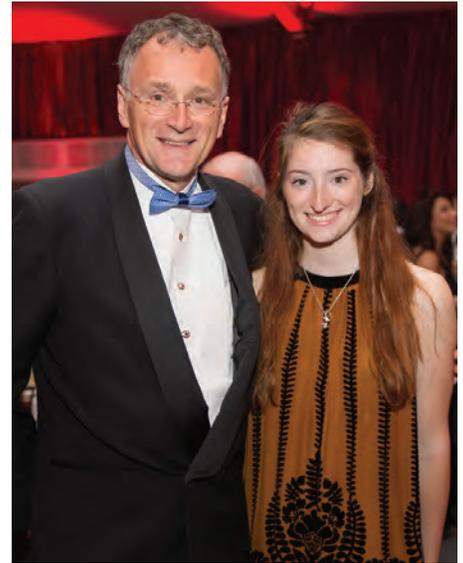
He recalls his mother's stay in the Intensive Care Unit in a hospital in his hometown of Padova, Italy. He remembers the two of them finding solace as they sang arias from his

mother's favorite opera: Verdi's *La traviata*: "Since it was the ICU, there were not many people who could come over and tell us to be quiet!"

Dr. Ferrari's mother is alive and well today, and music helped his family get through a frightening time and connect with their medical team.

Dr. Ferrari is the president and CEO of the Houston Methodist Research Institute (HMRI), and he has been instrumental in helping us explore the connections between art and medicine as part of HGO's six-year initiative *Seeking the Human Spirit*. The initiative explores the ways the arts intertwine with the big questions of life and, in this case, even our physical well-being.

Creativity has always been at the center of Dr. Ferrari's research, which includes using nanotechnology, microtechnology, physical sciences, material sciences, mathematics, and biomechanics to develop



Dr. Ferrari and his daughter, Federica, at the Opening Night Dinner at HGO in 2015. Photo by Wilson Parish.

new technologies for healthcare applications.

"At HMRI, we rely on all types of creativity to create our product, which is hope," Dr. Ferrari says. His team is bringing creative solutions to the future of medicine, bringing hope to countless people.

As *Seeking the Human Spirit* progresses, we're excited to explore how opera can be healing—and to share those stories with you.

## 2018-19

# SUBSCRIPTIONS ON SALE NOW!

<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">NEW PRODUCTION</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Wagner</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">THE FLYING DUTCHMAN</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">OCT. 19-NOV. 2</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">HGO PREMIERE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Bizet</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">THE PEARL FISHERS</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">JAN. 25-FEB. 8</p>
<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">Puccini</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">LA BOHÈME</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">OCT. 26-NOV. 11</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">NEW PRODUCTION</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Mozart</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">DON GIOVANNI</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">APR. 20-MAY 5</p>
<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">Catán</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">JAN. 18-FEB. 3</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; color: #ccc;">WORLD PREMIERE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Tarik O'Regan   John Caird</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">THE PHOENIX</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">APR. 26-MAY 10</p>

CALL 713-228-6737 OR VISIT [HGO.ORG/SUBSCRIBE](http://HGO.ORG/SUBSCRIBE)

# SEND A KID TO OPERA CAMP

Do you have a young person in your life—a child, grandchild, niece, or nephew? HGO's Opera Camps are the just the ticket to summer creativity and fun.

HGO's Opera Camps offer something for all students, whether they'll be in kindergarten or 12th grade this fall. Camps will be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center this summer, with the exception of **Sing! Move! Play!**, which will be held at the Clayton Library, 5300 Caroline Street.

- Participants in **Create an Opera** (June 4–8) will write, design, build, and perform their own musical masterpiece. For students entering grades 3–8.
- In **Create a Singer** (June 11–15, formerly called Opera Experience), campers entering grades 4–9 will develop healthy singing technique while preparing for a final performance of group and solo repertoire.
- Campers in **Art of Opera** (June 11–22) rehearse and perform a fully staged opera or musical production. This two-week camp is for students in grades 9–12.
- **Sing! Move! Play!** (June 18–22) offers half-day activities for the youngest students, Pre-K–2, and is packed full of singing, storytime, movement, and lots of fun!



Campers in the Art of Opera perform *The Tinker of Tivoli*. Photo by Lynn Lane.

While the registration fees are a good value at \$250–500 per camper, they can be out of reach for many deserving children. To sponsor a child at Opera Camp, please contact **Jennifer Wijangco** at 713-546-0704 or [jwijangco@hgo.org](mailto:jwijangco@hgo.org).

For more information about Opera Camps or to register, contact **Meredith Morse** at 713-546-0230 or [mmorse@hgo.org](mailto:mmorse@hgo.org), or visit [HGO.org/community-programs](http://HGO.org/community-programs).

## SHELL: CONNECTING KIDS AND CREATIVITY

Kids experience the arts from the inside out, thanks to Shell.

When HGO's season ends this summer, we'll say farewell to some of the biggest stars working in opera today and hello to the (somewhat smaller) artists of tomorrow. At Opera Camps, the kids are taking over the stage, and we can't wait to see what they do.

Our generous partners at Shell have underwritten this exciting summer program. Participants from grades Pre-K–12 become empowered to express themselves through singing, choreography, staging, making costumes, and designing and building their own sets. Scholarships are available for families demonstrating need, and free post-Camp daycare is available.

"I love Opera Camps because it lets kids' imaginations run free—and we get to be a part of the arts," says 11-year-old camper Jack. "We get to go up onstage and sing for our friends and family. And making costumes and props is so much fun," adds Haven, age nine.

Last summer, when 11-year-old Florencia started her first day of Opera Camps, she was so shy that her instructors couldn't understand her when she spoke her own name. By the third week of camp, she stood in front of an audience of over 100 people and belted out a solo—with 30 of her new friends singing backup. Her parents were thrilled. They couldn't believe how much she had opened up, thanks to this life-changing opportunity.

Studying music helps build kids' skills in critical thinking, creative problem solving, literacy, communication, and teamwork. Florencia and her fellow students are fortunate that Shell's generosity makes this unique experience something they will never forget.

# A FABULOUS LIFE IN THE ARTS

Rosemary and Michael Malbin find joy in supporting the Opera—and in ensuring its future.

HGO Trustees and Laureate Society members Michael and Rosemary Malbin have always loved music. Michael's collection of over 5,000 records began with the 1954 album *Jazz Goes to College* by the Dave Brubeck Quartet. But when Michael's mother gave them tickets to see the Metropolitan Opera's production of *The Barber of Seville* when it toured to Detroit in 1966, they became opera lovers for life.

Michael is retired from Shell, where he held a number of management positions over the course of his career. He and Rosemary moved to Houston for work in 1975, and they have been HGO subscribers ever since. "One of the things that is so appealing about HGO is that they take care of people," Michael says. "I get the feeling that this company really pays attention to its patrons. People who aren't from Houston might be surprised to know how the arts are appreciated and taken care of by the public here."

"We want for Houston to always have a great opera company, and opera is very expensive to do," Rosemary adds. Michael has served on the Laureate Society Council and Rosemary has volunteered as an usher for HGOco student programs.

"HGO makes us feel so honored," Rosemary says. "So many people work so hard to make our time here wonderful...from the person who turns on the lights, to the conductor, to the people who design the wigs,



makeup, and costumes—it makes you feel so special just to be a part of it."

The Malbins are proud to help ensure the future of the arts in our community by including HGO in their estate plan. In addition to their fantastic support of HGO, the Malbins are patrons of Mercury and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston—where Rosemary, who earned a master's degree in arts education from the University of Michigan, has served as a docent. They also support their alma mater, the University of Michigan, and Rosemary serves as a lifetime member on the Sheep and Goat Committee of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, where she demonstrates spinning and weaving.

Says Rosemary: "Whether we're walking with sheep at the Rodeo or helping the opera, it's all interconnected. We live a fabulous life because of arts and education, and we're happy to do our part to help it continue."

## MAKE A GIFT THAT LASTS

Include HGO in your will!

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 independence board of directors overseeing the fund.

For information regarding charitable estate 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](http://HGO.org/LaureateSociety)**.

# HGO IN THE MEDIA



## Elektra

[Christine] Goerke's Elektra prowled the stage with a caged-animal ferocity that marked a complete change from the self-sacrificing nobility Goerke brought to Brünnhilde. The familiar vocal heft remained. As the deranged protagonist invoked her slain father's name—"Agamemnon!" "Agamemnon!"—Goerke filled it with a weightiness and depth that mirrored the horrific memories burdening the character's mind.

—*Texas Classical Review*



## The Barber of Seville

[Lucas Meachem's] Figaro is loaded with charm and is casually dazzling—

whether tossing off triplets with David Portillo's nimble-voiced Count Almaviva, or deploying his buttery-smooth lyric baritone in his famous aria "Largo al factotum."

—*Houston Chronicle*



## West Side Story

"Maria" as sung by Norman Reinhardt's Tony brought heart-stopping vocal beauty; natural, bright open American diction; bel canto technique including a breathtaking pianissimo ending; and a thrilling high A that sounded as if he could hold on to it for days if he wanted. Here, and in the balcony scene when Reinhardt's Tony is joined by Andrea Carroll's Maria in the duet "Tonight," the performance took flight. These are the moments opera-goers keep coming back for, when it all—music, drama, sets, costumes—unites to transport the audience and make the performance come alive. Friday night at least one inveterate opera-goer was moved to tears during these two scenes.

When an opera company fully commits to producing a masterpiece of American musical theater, the

results are eminently worthy to share the stage with anything Mozart, Verdi, or Puccini wrote.

—*Houston Chronicle*



## Norma

Vincenzo Bellini's bel canto extravaganza might have been all but forgotten if not for a few commanding performers who exploded onto the scene more than a half-century ago and revealed its musical and dramatic depths... Friday's performance yielded echoes of those heady days. Soprano Liudmyla Monastyrskya, in the title role [at right in photo], set her voice loose in stratospheric pianissimo flights: Again and again, she conjured up memories of Montserrat Caballé, the revered spinner of vocal gossamer. When mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton, playing the young priestess Adalgisa, blended her rich tones with Monastyrskya's in their Act 2 duet, "Mira o Norma," the mellifluous outcome recalled the classic pairing of Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne.

—*Texas Classical Review*

Photos by Lynn Lane