THANKS TO YOU!

Wow—what an incredible season you made possible!

Mayor Sylvester Turner addresses HGO's opening night crowd, with Patrick Summers, Jim Crownover, and Perryn Leech.
Houston has never needed beautiful music like we did this past year, and you delivered like never before. You were here for us so that we could be here for our city. You’ve given us so much to celebrate.

Losing the Wortham for an entire year after Harvey, and then struggling to salvage a season against rising odds, all while facing the greatest financial challenge in HGO’s history—these circumstances could have done permanent damage to your opera company.

But you were resilient. You weren’t going to let HGO fail on your watch. You dug a little deeper, gave a little more, and you showed up to experience the power of great opera—even if the seats were a little less comfortable! Thanks to you, we didn’t just survive this season—we actually grew, and your HGO family just got a lot bigger!

This season, a record-breaking 101 opera lovers agreed to join the Patrons Circle, our wonderful group of core supporters who donate at the $5,000 level and above. Thirty-six new members joined our Laureate Society, which is a group of passionate HGO supporters who make HGO a beneficiary in their wills and estate plans. The Laureate Society now has a total of 320 generous members. We’ve also had 15 new major corporate and foundation donors join us, along with three new HGO Board members.

Our community needed HGO more than ever after Hurricane Harvey, and we needed you. We have estimated that damage from Harvey will cost the company over $15 million in direct and indirect losses, and you answered our call for help. To date, we have raised more than $11.2 million for Hurricane Harvey’s impact on HGO, which includes major contributions from new and existing supporters. Every gift has touched us deeply and made a significant difference to the future of this company.

The HGO Resilience Theater, our home for a tumultuous and triumphant 63rd season, has been dismantled, and our space in the George R. Brown looks like a convention center exhibit hall again. We’re celebrating our return to the Wortham with a living opera legend, Plácido Domingo, and HGO and Plácido—Coming Home! promises to be the cultural event of the year. We’re reaching new audiences with new technology through livestreaming events and our digital opera series, Star-cross’d, and the second year of our Seeking the Human Spirit initiative will continue with breathtaking mainstage operas and exciting community collaborations.

Whether you have been an HGO supporter for many years, or you are a first-time supporter, you made this one of the most incredible years in our history, and we can’t wait to see what comes next.

HGO celebrates a record-breaking number of new Patrons.

“For me, going to HGO is an exciting, intelligent spectacle where I experience creative excellence from the moment I step on the escalators until I leave at the end of the performance. I chose to become a Patron to keep having these wonderful experiences, to learn more about how an opera company operates, and to be around people who have similar interests.”

—ELAINE DECANIO, NEW HGO TRUSTEE

“I have loved HGO because it was where I saw my first opera shortly after moving here more than 20 years ago…During this past year, I decided to stretch beyond season tickets and become a Patron for two reasons: First, I knew that Harvey took a heavy toll on the company and I (selfishly) didn’t want to miss an opera season. And second, I just personally felt that I owed HGO so much for the decades of performances that have enhanced my life in so many ways…

—STEVEN PORUBAN, NEW PATRON
FOR THE LOVE OF OPERA

Janet Langford Carrig brings years of experience and acumen to her new post as chairman of the HGO Board of Directors.

ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT in the Carrig household, you might see Janet, the new chairman of the HGO Board of Directors, and John, who serves on the Executive Committee of the Alley Theatre’s board, arguing over which performing arts company wowed them most. No matter how the fight goes, we all win—because this wonderful couple’s passionate dedication to Houston’s cultural life has had a profound impact on our community.

Janet has worn a lot of hats at HGO since she joined the board in 2007: she chaired the Development Committee from 2009 to 2012 and the HGO Endowment Board from 2013 to 2017. Her incredible business expertise combined with her deep appreciation for the art form make her an ideal leader for this company.

As senior vice president, legal, general counsel and corporate secretary of ConocoPhillips, Janet has provided guidance in all areas of corporate strategy, business initiatives, and corporate governance. Her honors include recognition among the National Law Journal’s 50 Most Influential Women Lawyers in America, the Burton Awards Legends in Law, the Houston Business Journal’s Women in Energy Leadership, and Crain’s Chicago Business’s 40 Under 40.

According to Janet, “HGO’s performers, staff, and leaders showed the world this year how great art can overcome enormous odds. I am honored to follow Jim Crownover in working with this dedicated board and outstanding leadership team as we return to our creative home in the Wortham and build an ever more exciting future for opera in Houston.”

THE FUTURE OF OPERA

The talented students in the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHSVS) are making sure that opera has a bright future at HGO.

“THROUGH BFHSVS, I have grown as a musician and made lifelong connections and friendships,” says 16-year-old Alina Dong, who will be a second-year BFHSVS artist and a senior at Clear Lake High School this fall. “From the jokes we shared backstage during The House without a Christmas Tree to the encouragements we give each other for our auditions and competitions, the studio has become family.”

After Hurricane Harvey closed the Wortham Theater Center for the season, Alina wanted to give back to her HGO family. “I thought a student-run benefit concert was the best way to bring awareness about the power of music, community, and hope.”

This spring, 40 student performers joined Alina at Houston Baptist University’s Belin Chapel for an evening of world music that raised over $4,000 for HGO. About 400 people were in the audience, and Alina and her classmates found their own sponsors and organized every detail.

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MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK!

Co-production partnerships help us offer exciting opera—affordably.

WHEN YOU DONATE to HGO, you are trusting us to bring the world’s best artists and productions to Houston. We all know that opera can be very expensive to produce. Ticket sales cover only about a quarter of our costs, and the remainder comes from wonderful patrons like you!

One way we defray costs is by partnering with opera companies around the world on co-productions. Rather than a single company taking on 100 percent of the financial responsibility to build sets, costumes, and props, several companies work together on the creative vision and, importantly, we share the production costs. This allows us to maximize the value of every single dollar that you have generously invested in HGO.

In the 2018–19 season, half of our mainstage productions were created in collaboration with other companies:

- *The Flying Dutchman*: The Atlanta Opera and Cincinnati Opera
- *La bohème*: Canadian Opera Company and the San Francisco Opera
- *Don Giovanni*: Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Gran Teatre del Liceu; and the Israeli Opera

Co-producing is more than a sound financial practice—it strengthens HGO’s creative relationships with great companies across the globe and brings people from all over the world closer together with the power of opera!

A scene from *Don Giovanni*
ART FOR ALL, FOR ALWAYS

Craig Miller and Chris Bacon love Houston, the arts, and making people smile.

A PAIR OF LED traffic wands and a fluorescent vest: this was the strange gift that Scott Ipsen, our intrepid director of patron services, found on his desk at HGO one morning. It was shortly after we opened the 2017–18 season at the George R. Brown Convention Center, and Scott had been directing traffic at the valet stand in a strange new place during a very busy post-season for the Astros. He knew exactly where the gift had come from: Chris Bacon and Craig Miller are two members of the HGO family who always know how to put a smile on our faces.

Chris and Craig have been coming to HGO together since 1994. Chris, an attorney with Vinson & Elkins, has done pro bono work with HGO for 20 years, and this season he joined the HGO Board of Directors as general counsel and secretary. Craig is an HGO Trustee and vice president/wealth advisor for Frost Brokerage Services. They’re active members of HGO’s Overture, the company’s LGBT-friendly initiative to build community and a love for opera, and have recently become members of the HGO Laureate Society, a special group of opera lovers who have made commitments to HGO in their wills.

“I really love Houston,” says Chris. “I have lived here all of my adult life. It’s extremely diverse, generous, and provides excellent opportunities for people, and its vibrant art scene is essential to the city. HGO is part of that…the company reaches out to the entire community and manages to keep tickets priced low so that everyone can enjoy great opera.”

In his role at Frost, Craig helps people with their legacy plans every day, and he wants people to know that the money they leave to HGO in their wills or estate plans is in good hands. “HGO is not just an excellent arts organization, it’s also a well-run nonprofit business. Your legacy is a personal decision—a life-cycle decision. Looking at the arc of our lives, we need to think about the continuation of those things that bring us joy and happiness. We have these things because others have made that possible, and we want that to go on for others. You don’t have to be a Rockefeller to contribute.”

“Everything helps,” adds Chris. “There are a lot of us, and together we can make a difference.”

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.

FUTURE continued

“Something about the meaning behind the benefit concert made the music really beautiful that night,” she says. “I realized that when everyone works together as a team, we can accomplish beautiful things… even in the bleakest moments.”

Alina says that HGO inspires her to greatness—and we are certainly inspired by her. When you support our impactful student programs, you can trust that you’re not just helping us teach kids how to sing—you’re helping kids like Alina grow into compassionate, dedicated communitarians.

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HGO SPECIAL EVENTS

FALL 2018–19

HGO & PLÁCIDO—COMING HOME!
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018
7:00 P.M.
CHAIRMAN AND PRESENTING UNDERWRITER
Margaret Alkek Williams

7:00 P.M.
Plácido Domingo Concert
Post-performance Celebration Dinner with Plácido Domingo
The Post Oak
Black Tie

OPENING NIGHT DINNER CELEBRATION
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2018
7:00 P.M.
CHAIRMEN
Anne and Albert Chao
HONOREES
Molly and Jim Crownover

7:00 P.M.
Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman
Post-performance Celebration Dinner
The Ballroom at Bayou Place
Black Tie

HGO.ORG/SPECIALEVENTS
BROOKE ROGERS
Director of Special Events
713-546-0271 | BROGERS@HGO.ORG

Cruzar la Cara de la Luna

[W]ith “Cruzar” we have a score that is poignant, passionate and unabashedly melodic, yet comes by its vibrant cultural color naturally and honestly. Opera’s largely European culture is enhanced by the authentic Mexican cultural cred this relative newcomer brings to the table. And that should be enough to recommend it.

—Houston Chronicle

Like the story it tells, Cruzar la Cara de la Luna comes full circle, opening and closing with the same parable of a butterfly, but it offers one unmoving resolution: “Only forgiveness will give us peace,” one character sings. Tender yet straightforward, there’s no need to say anything more.

—Houstonia