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PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Grand Opera Board of Directors Extends Term of Chair Dr. John Mendelsohn

Houston, March 6, 2015—Houston Grand Opera’s (HGO) Board of Directors has elected Dr. John Mendelsohn as chairman for an additional year beyond his current two-year term. Dr. Mendelsohn assumed the chairman’s role on August 1, 2013; his term will now end on July 31, 2016.

“Since assuming the chairman’s role John has proven himself to be a great leader and recruiter,” said J. Scott Arnoldy, chair of the board’s Governance Committee. “He has strengthened the board enormously and we feel it is important to continue that work.”

“I have had a great time working with my fellow board members, the leadership team of Perryn Leech and Patrick Summers, and the great staff at Houston Grand Opera” added Dr. Mendelsohn. “I am looking forward to making further progress together.”

Under Dr. Mendelsohn’s leadership HGO has continued to grow both its audience and its financial support. In December 2014, the company completed its *Inspiring Performance* comprehensive fundraising campaign, the largest campaign in the history of Houston’s performing arts community, which included the largest special event in HGO history, the 2014 Opera Ball. During his tenure the board has added eight new members.

Currently director of the Khalifa Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Dr. Mendelsohn served as president of the institution from 1996 to 2011. Under his leadership, MD Anderson greatly expanded its clinical and research programs, ranked No. 1 in cancer care in *U.S. News & World Report’s* “America’s Best Hospitals,” and ranked first in NCI funding.

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About Houston Grand Opera

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has grown from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. HGO enjoys a reputation for commissioning and producing new works, including 56 world premieres and seven American premieres since 1973. In addition to producing and performing world-class opera, HGO contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards—the only opera company to have won all three honors.

Through HGOco, Houston Grand Opera creates opportunities for Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to observe, participate in, and create art. Its *Song of Houston* project is an ongoing initiative to create and share work based on stories that define the unique character of our city and its diverse cultures. Since 2007, HGOco has commissioned 16 new works along with countless innovative community projects, reaching more than one million people in the greater Houston metropolitan area. The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy superlative opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007 NEXUS has enabled more than 175,000 Houstonians to experience first-quality opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

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