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PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Grand Opera's Historic Fundraising Campaign Raises \$172.9 Million, a First for Houston Performing Arts

Houston, January 14, 2015—Houston Grand Opera (HGO) has completed its fundraising campaign by raising an unprecedented \$172.9 million, topping its goal of \$165 million by December 31, 2014. *Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera* was the company's first comprehensive fundraising campaign, and the most successful campaign in the history of Houston's performing arts community.

Inspiring Performance was co-chaired by Houston businessmen and HGO Board members John Scott Arnoldy, chairman, president, and CEO of Triten Corporation, and Albert Chao, president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation. "Thanks to the tremendous generosity of donors from across Houston, the great state of Texas, and beyond," said Arnoldy, "Houston will have great opera for years to come, and a stronger future as a great American city."

HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech added, "We are humbled by the outpouring of support for HGO's mission and vision: to create the blueprint for a 21st century opera company, one that is of a high level, deeply connected to its community, and accessible. We have already taken some thrilling steps to meet these goals and are extremely proud to be serving the city of Houston now and into the future."

Noted HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, "An opera company must mature but never get old. HGO must continue to grow and to advance our art form so that more people in our dynamic, fast-growing city can experience the transformative power of opera for decades to come."

Inspiring Performance's success was driven by the visionary strategic plan adopted by HGO's board of directors, which focused on the company's three strategic pillars of excellence, relevance, and affordability. Among the projects and priorities the campaign has funded are:

- 30 new main-stage productions
- 17 world premieres, one American premiere
- The NEXUS initiative, which has funded more than 175,000 free or deeply discounted tickets and subscriptions since its inception in 2008
- Bringing Richard Wagner's epic *Ring* cycle to Houston for the first time

- Critically acclaimed performances of Mieczyslaw Weinberg's long-suppressed opera *The Passenger* in Houston and at New York's Park Avenue Armory as part of the Lincoln Center Festival
- The world's first mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon*
- Artistic growth of the HGO Orchestra and Chorus
- Increased investment in outstanding young operatic talent through the HGO Studio, whose alumni (such as Anna María Martínez, Joyce DiDonato, and many others) are building major careers around the world
- The continued success of the High School Voice Studio (HSVS), 100% of whose graduates have been accepted into higher education institutions
- East + West: the commission and presentation by HGOco, in collaboration with multiple community partners, of eight operas that celebrated the stories of Houston's diverse ethnic communities
- Other innovative HGOco programs involving partnerships with Writers in the Schools (WITS), Cristo Rey College Preparatory Houston, Houston Arts Alliance, and U.S.VETS-Houston, among many others
- The growth of HGO's budget from \$18.2 million in 2007–08 to \$27.8 million in 2013–14
- The growth of HGO's audience from 26,700 in 2007–08 to 36,760 in 2013–14.

The total amount raised for operational activity was \$124.2 million. *Inspiring Performance* also raised \$17.1 million for HGO's endowment, and \$31.6 million in legacy funding. A total of 6,648 donors contributed to the campaign, 4,558 of whom were new donors.

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 awards.

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 communities. Since 2007, HGOco has commissioned 17 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 world-class 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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