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PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Grand Opera Appoints Brian Speck Director of HGO Studio

Houston, January 21, 2015—Houston Grand Opera (HGO) Managing Director Perryn Leech and Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers today announced the appointment of Brian Speck as director of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, the company's renowned young artist program, effective February 1. A trained singer who transitioned into administration, Speck for the past two years has been HGO's company manager, responsible for coordinating all day-to-day rehearsal activities of the company and for supporting its guest artists.

In a joint statement, Summers and Leech said, "Guiding and nurturing tomorrow's artists is one of the most important responsibilities in opera, one that HGO takes very seriously. So we are delighted to have discovered that, after an international search, someone already well known to us has proven to be the perfect person for the job. Brian Speck has shown himself to be extraordinarily adept at guiding and supporting artists, and he has the intelligence, dynamism, and vision to sustain and build on the Studio's brilliant legacy of achievement. We look forward to working with Brian and Studio Music Director Bradley Moore to shape an exciting future for the Studio."

Brian Speck began his career in opera administration with the Aspen Opera Theater Center, where his most recent position was program administrator. Prior to joining HGO in 2012 as artist liaison, he was assistant to the director of operations at Houston Public Media. He holds a bachelor's degree in music from Pepperdine University, and a master's in music from Rice University. From 2005–2013 he sang baritone in the HGO Chorus, appearing in 28 HGO productions. He is a native of Portland, Oregon.

The Houston Grand Opera Studio is one of the most highly respected young artist programs in the country. For more than 30 years, it has served young singers and pianist/coaches, providing a bridge between full-time training and full-fledged operatic careers. Each year after an exhaustive nationwide search, a hand-selected group of talented individuals is brought to Houston to work alongside the best in the business at Houston Grand Opera. These artists hone their craft as singing actors during a residency of up to three years; each performer receives customized training from an expert team while gaining invaluable performance experience at the highest level.

Alumni of the Studio perform at the best opera houses all around the world—but internationally renowned artists such as Joyce DiDonato, Scott Hendricks, and Ana María Martínez still regularly return to their home stage at the Wortham Theater Center, back to the audiences who watched them bloom in the springtime of their careers.

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 55 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. HGOco's *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 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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