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60th ANNIVERSARY
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PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Grand Opera Celebrates 60th Anniversary with Gala Concert featuring Opera Star Joyce DiDonato

Houston, February 27, 2015—Houston Grand Opera (HGO) invites patrons to celebrate 60 years of producing and performing world-class opera in Houston at a gala anniversary concert featuring renowned mezzo-soprano and HGO Studio alumna Joyce DiDonato at the Wortham Theater Center's Cullen Theater on Thursday, March 19. Tickets to the anniversary concert start at \$40, on sale now at HGO.org.

Winner of the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Solo, Kansas-born Joyce DiDonato—"perhaps the most potent female singer of her generation," according to the *New Yorker*—returns to the Houston stage to perform in this one-night-only concert alongside current HGO Studio artists and the HGO Orchestra led by Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers. DiDonato began her international opera career after training in the HGO Studio for two seasons (1996–1998) and has reappeared in HGO main stage productions in such leading roles as Sister Helen in *Dead Man Walking* (2011) and the title role in *Mary Stuart* (2012).

"Joyce DiDonato is not only one of today's greatest operatic voices," notes Maestro Summers, "but she is also among a distinguished pantheon of artists who raise the standard of their era and will forever define it. We are thrilled that she will be back at HGO to celebrate our diamond anniversary."

A seated dinner in the Brown Theater will follow the concert. The intimate, black-tie dinner, chaired by Terrylin G. Neale, benefits the Houston Grand Opera Endowment. Tickets for the gala portion of the evening begin at \$2,500 and include admittance to the concert and seated dinner. A limited number of \$40+ tickets are available for the concert only and do not include admittance to the celebration dinner.

Joyce DiDonato has performed at HGO in the title role in *Mary Stuart*, Sister Helen in *Dead Man Walking*, Beatrice in *Beatrice and Benedict*, the title role in *La Cenerentola*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, among others. In HGO world premieres, she also created the roles of Maslova in Tod Machover's *Resurrection*, Meg in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, and Princess Grace in Michael Daugherty's *Jackie O*. This season, she holds residencies at both Carnegie Hall and the Barbican Centre in London. Recently she completed an acclaimed recital tour of South America, and has appeared in concert and recital in Berlin, Vienna, Milan, Toulouse, Mexico City, and Aspen, in addition to appearing as guest singer at the BBC's Last Night

of the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, London. She appeared last season in the title role of *Cendrillon* at Gran Teatre del Liceu, Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at the Metropolitan Opera, and Mary Stuart at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Highlights this season include Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in her native Kansas City, Elena in *La donna del lago* at the Metropolitan Opera, Mary Stuart in Barcelona, the title role of *Alcina* with the English Concert, and Marguerite in *La damnation de Faust* with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle.

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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.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

60th Anniversary Concert

March 19, 2015

Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center

Joyce DiDonato, mezzo-soprano

Conductor: Patrick Summers

HGO Studio artists

HGO Orchestra

Tickets and Information: HGO.org / 713-228-6737

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