



**HoustonGrandOpera**

510 Preston Street  
Houston, Texas 77002-1504  
Tel: 713-546-0200  
Fax: 713-228-4355  
HGO.org

**Patrick Summers**

Artistic & Music Director  
*Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*

**Perryn Leech**

Managing Director

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

**Melissa Arredondo**

Melissa@elmorepr.com  
713-524-0661

**Judith Kurnick**

HGO Director of Communications  
jkurnick@hgo.org  
713-546-0240

---

## Houston Grand Opera Presents *Götterdämmerung* (April 22–May 7) and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (April 28–May 12)

*Spring repertory showcases spectacular final installment of Wagner Ring cycle and  
Mozart comic masterpiece*

Houston, March 7, 2017—Houston Grand Opera presents *Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods)*, the final installment of Wagner’s epic *Ring* cycle, featuring a new generation of leading Wagnerians including **Simon O’Neill** as Siegfried and **Christine Goerke** as Brünnhilde, starting April 22. Mozart’s zany yet deeply emotive comedy, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*—featuring Russian coloratura soprano and HGO Studio alumna **Albina Shagimuratova** as Konstanze and leading American tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** as Belmonte in HGO’s inventive 2002 co-production—will close the company’s mainstage season, beginning April 28.

HGO’s four-year mounting of Wagner’s epic cycle reaches its thunderous climax this season with *Götterdämmerung* in the dazzling **La Fura dels Baus** staging, directed by **Carlus Padrissa**. The heroic Siegfried gives Brünnhilde the ring as a token of their love, but they unexpectedly face challenges beyond their control. In the definitive act of self-sacrifice, Brünnhilde returns the universe to its natural order. The Rhine overflows, Valhalla burns, and the kingdom of the gods is destroyed.

New Zealand tenor Simon O’Neill takes on the role of Siegfried with “a sound to give one real hope for the healthy future of [Wagnerian] singing” (*International Record Review*). Superstar soprano Christine Goerke returns as Brünnhilde; of her portrayal in HGO’s *Die Walküre* in 2015, *Opera News* wrote, “beyond the power and warmth of her voice, Goerke’s vigorous performance radiated brash confidence.” Italian bass **Andrea Silvestrelli**, who sang Fafner in *Das Rheingold and Siegfried*, returns as Hagen, and bass-baritone and HGO Studio alumnus **Ryan McKinny**, who performed Donner in *Das Rheingold*, portrays Gunther. Award-winning mezzo-soprano and HGO Studio

alumna **Jamie Barton**, whom the *New York Times* terms “a leader of a new generation of opera stars,” returns as Waltraute/Second Norn after singing Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and in *Die Walküre*. Reprising his role as Alberich will be English bass-baritone **Christopher Purves**, who will also play Pasha Selim in HGO’s concurrent production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Contralto **Meredith Arwady**, who portrayed Erda in *Das Rheingold*, will sing First Norn. Soprano **Heidi Melton** will sing Third Norn/Gutrune. HGO Artistic and Music Director **Patrick Summers** conducts.

Set designer for HGO’s *Ring* operas is **Roland Olbeter**; costume designer is **Chu Uroz**. **Peter van Praet** is lighting designer, and projection designer is **Franc Aleu**.

HGO brings back Mozart’s comic singspiel *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in the widely admired staging by **James Robinson** that the company premiered in 2002 and last presented in 2008. A damsel in distress and her maidservant are captured by Turkish pirates and await their fate in the harem of the Pasha Selim. Her fiancé and his valet set out to rescue their beloveds as the colorful comedy unfolds. The updating of the Middle Eastern–flavored action from Istanbul to the decadent railcars of the 1920s Orient Express was deemed by *Opera News* “inventive...a dramatic refocusing that puts Mozart’s wonderfully emotive arias into high relief...also looked wonderful, in **Allen Moyer**’s cleverly designed sets.”

The demanding dramatic coloratura role of Konstanze will be performed by Russian soprano and HGO Studio alumna Albina Shagimuratova, who last appeared at HGO as Violetta in *La traviata* (2012). Of her 2016 Metropolitan Opera performance as Konstanze, the *New York Times* wrote, “The virtuosic runs, leaps and trills of Konstanze’s arias held no terrors for Ms. Shagimuratova. She offered a memorable and fiery rendition of ‘Martern Aller Arten,’ a ferociously difficult showstopper that also requires delicate balancing with the orchestral part.”

Tenor Lawrence Brownlee, acclaimed as part of a “new golden age of bel canto” (*New York Times*), will sing Belmonte. A regular performer at HGO, he last portrayed Lindoro in HGO’s 2012 *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. Making his HGO debut as Osmin will be bass-baritone **Ryan Speedo Green**, noted by the *New York Times* as “excellent as Osmin...a scene-stealing baritone with a robust voice.” Ukrainian soprano and HGO Studio alumna **Uliana Alexyuk** returns to the company as Blonde. Her 2014 last-minute portrayal of Gilda in *Rigoletto* “captured Gilda’s sweetness, ardor, and vulnerability” (*Houston Chronicle*). The role of Pedrillo will be sung by HGO Studio artist **Chris Bozeka**, who performed Nemorino in performances of *The Elixir of Love* earlier this season.

Austrian conductor **Thomas Rösner**, who led HGO’s 2013 *Die Fledermaus*, will be in the pit. James Robinson returns to direct. Costumes are by **Anna R. Oliver**, lighting by **Paul Palazzo**, and projection design by **Wendall K. Harrington**.

To mark the close of HGO’s historic first *Ring* cycle, the company will present **Scott Warrender** and **Jim Luigs**’s *Das Barbecü* on April 23 and 30. A fast-paced comedic retelling of the *Ring* epic set in Wild West Texas, the production will be performed in two iconic Houston locales, Jackson Street BBQ and Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon. The full list of events for the rest of the HGO season is provided below. More information is available at HGO.org.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Houston Grand Opera: 2016–17 Season

\* *Company debut*

\*\* *HGO Studio artist*

# *Former HGO Studio artist*

### Wagner: *Götterdämmerung*

Sung in German with projected English translation

**April 22, 25, 29, May 4, 7m, 2017**

Siegfried	Simon O'Neill
Brünnhilde	Christine Goerke
Hagen	Andrea Silvestrelli
Gunther	Ryan McKinny #
Waltraute/Second Norn	Jamie Barton #
Alberich	Christopher Purves
First Norn	Meredith Arwady
Third Norn/Gutrune	Heidi Melton *
Conductor	Patrick Summers
Production	La Fura dels Baus
Director	Carlus Padrissa
Set Designer	Roland Olbeter
Costume Designer	Chu Oroz
Lighting Designer	Peter van Praet
Projection Designer	Franc Aleu
Chorus Master	Richard Bado #

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

*A co-production of Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia,  
and Maggio Musicale, Florence*

### Mozart: *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

Sung in German with projected English translation

**April 28, 30m, May 6, 10, 12, 2017**

Konstanze	Albina Shagimuratova #
Belmonte	Lawrence Brownlee
Osmin	Ryan Speedo Green *
Blonde	Uliana Alexyuk #
Pedrillo	Chris Bozeka **
Pasha Selim	Christopher Purves
Conductor	Thomas Rösner
Director	James Robinson
Set Designer	Allen Moyer
Costume Designer	Anna R. Oliver
Lighting Designer	Paul Palazzo
Projection Designer	Wendall K. Harrington
Chorus Master	Richard Bado #

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

*A Houston Grand Opera production*

**Das Barbecü**

**Music by Scott Warrender/Book & Lyrics by Jim Luigs**

*Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.*

**Sunday, April 23**, at Jackson Street Barbecue, 209 Jackson St.

**Sunday, April 30**, at Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon, 11410 Hempstead Rd.

Cast TBA

Director	Mitchell Greco *
Musical Director	Patrick Harvey #
Technical Director	Kyle Coyer
Properties Design Director	Megan
Costume Designer	Clair Hummel

\* \* \* \* \*

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 62 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. 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 225,000 Houstonians to experience first-quality opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

---

**Media Contact:** Melissa Arredondo, [melissa@elmorepr.com](mailto:melissa@elmorepr.com), (713) 524-0661

**Director of Communications:** Judith Kurnick, [jkurnick@hgo.org](mailto:jkurnick@hgo.org) (713) 546-0240

[HGO.org](http://HGO.org)

[facebook.com/houstongrandopera](https://facebook.com/houstongrandopera)

[twitter.com/hougrandopera](https://twitter.com/hougrandopera)



Official Health Care Provider  
for Houston Grand Opera



Official Airline of Houston Grand Opera



Preferred Jeweler of Houston Grand Opera