



Houston Grand Opera appoints first principal guest conductor in 25 years

Eun Sun Kim will take up role in 2019–20 season

Houston, May 17, 2018—Houston Grand Opera (HGO) has appointed Eun Sun Kim as principal guest conductor starting in the 2019–20 season. She will be the first person to hold this position since 1993, when Vjekoslav Šutej completed two seasons in the role. Ms. Kim will conduct at least one opera per season, beginning with R. Strauss's *Salome*. The position will extend through four seasons. Ms. Kim made her United States debut conducting HGO's season-opening production of *La traviata* in October 2017. She is leading the Cincinnati Symphony and May Festival Chorus this week in the Verdi Requiem.

"Eun Sun Kim seems to me a limitless talent at the outset of an important career," said HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, "as her music-making is elegant, effortless, precise, and deep. Her incredible facility with languages and ability to communicate with singers, both supporting and challenging them, are all-too-rare qualities in a conductor. Having been the music director of HGO for a long time now, I am excited to welcome her fresh ear and new musical ideas, and I couldn't be more thrilled to be working with her."

"I'm thrilled to join HGO as principal guest conductor," said Eun Sun Kim. "Opera is by its very nature dramatic, but I'll never forget my debut, conducting *La traviata* in the Houston convention center after the big flood last fall. Despite the extraordinary circumstances, it was impressive how HGO was able to create an environment where the orchestra and chorus and soloists were able to still perform at the highest level. To join such a team is an honor and a pleasure."

Equally at home conducting operatic and symphonic repertoire, Eun Sun Kim has made a name for herself in opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe. Important operatic debuts in the current season include at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and Zurich Opera (*Carmen*). She has return engagements with Semperoper Dresden (*Rigoletto*), Berlin State Opera (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Bergen National Opera (*The Flying Dutchman*) and Frankfurt Opera (*La sonnambula*) as well as concert engagements in Aarhus, Oslo, Malmö, and Bergen.

In 2016–17, she returned to the Royal Opera Stockholm to lead *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and the Berlin State Opera for *Madama Butterfly*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *La traviata*; *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Toulon Opera, and *Carmen* at the Den Norske Opera in Oslo. She conducted concerts with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra.

Ms. Kim is a frequent guest conductor at the Frankfurt Opera, where, after her celebrated debut with *La bohème* in 2012, she has returned in several seasons, conducting Lehár's *Graf von Luxemburg*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, a highly praised new production of *La sonnambula*, and a semi-concertante production of *Die Csárdásfürstin* for New Year's Eve 2014. Her Vienna Volksoper debut, leading *Carmen*, resulted in an invitation for regular guest appearances, and she has since led productions of *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Die fledermaus*, and *La traviata*. Earlier opera engagements included a new production of *Tosca* at the Macerata Opera Festival, and at Teatro Real conducting *Il viaggio a Reims*. Ms. Kim has also conducted a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Cologne Opera, *Madama Butterfly* at Royal Opera Stockholm, *La bohème* at Semperoper Dresden, *Un ballo in maschera* at Berlin State Opera, and a new production of *Die fledermaus* with the English National Opera in London.

Symphony orchestra engagements have included concerts with the Beethoven Orchester Bonn, the symphony orchestras of Palermo, Torino, Bergen, and Stuttgart, the Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Lille National Orchestra, and Madrid Symphony Orchestra.

Eun Sun Kim studied composition and conducting in Seoul and continued her training in Stuttgart, where she graduated with distinction. Immediately after graduation, she was awarded first prize at the International Jesús López Cobos Opera Conducting Competition.

Houston Grand Opera announced its 64th season at the end of January. The mainstage season will include 33 performances of six productions, including two free community performances. Details are available at HGO.org

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About Houston Grand Opera

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. HGO was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year at the 2017 International Opera Awards. In fulfilling its mission to advance the operatic art to serve an ever-evolving audience, HGO has led the field in commissioning new works (65 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company 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's pioneering community engagement initiative, HGOco, has served as a model for other arts organizations.

The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007, NEXUS has enabled more than 250,000 Houstonians to experience superlative opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and three Emmy awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

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