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p. 33
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Norma photos by Cory Weaver
Cover art by Pattima Singhalaka
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Welcome back to the HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

We welcome the creative team and the large cast of Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, many of whom are making their HGO debuts. We are proud to be the first major American opera company to present this intensely operatic work in the centennial not only of composer Leonard Bernstein’s birth but also that of the original director-choreographer, Jerome Robbins. *West Side Story* is a modern take on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, with Maria and Tony as the “star-crossed lovers,” but it is also a plea for understanding and tolerance—which makes it possibly even more relevant now than it was when it first opened on Broadway in 1957. Francesca Zambello directs and Timothy Myers conducts this landmark event.

Bellini’s *Norma* is the summit of bel canto opera, with a title role that has been called the Mount Everest of the soprano repertoire. We are delighted to present Liudmyla Monastyrska in her first American performances as Norma, along with three HGO Studio alumni in principal roles: Chad Shelton as Norma’s lover, Pollione; Jamie Barton as her rival, Adalgisa; and Peixin Chen as her father, the high priest Oroveso. We welcome back Kevin Newbury as director.

Though *Norma* concludes our mainstage season, two very special opportunities are coming in mid-May.

On May 17, 19, and 20, we bring back the world’s first mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, which had its world premiere at HGO in 2010. We are proud that this opera has struck a chord with audiences everywhere it has been seen. *Cruzar* will be performed at the Resilience Theater with the Grammy Award–winning mariachi ensemble Los Camperos.

And no season would be complete without *al fresco* opera! We will bring *The Barber of Seville*, seen this past winter on our main stage, to Miller Outdoor Theatre on May 18 and 19 and to The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands on May 23. Performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre are always free, and free seats are available for the Cynthia Woods Mitchell performance as well. See the calendar on p. 94 for details.

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More Fun than a Barrel of Monkeys

*Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers* brings three free performances, May 2–4 at 11 a.m. daily, to Miller Outdoor Theatre—just around the corner from the zoo! This 40-minute opera is inspired by Indian and Chinese mythology and the Bollywood style. A hilarious fable and HGO’s 65th world premiere, *Monkey & Francine* demonstrates the power of teamwork as a monkey prince and his brainy sister outwit a hungry crocodile and escape from the City of Tigers. No tickets or reservations required. Email operatogo@hgo.org for more information.

Register Now for Camp!

Opera Camp registration is open, and only a limited number of spots are still available. The camps, held in June, offer students a creative environment in which to invent, perform, and develop important 21st-century skills while enhancing their vocal and dramatic talents. Each camp culminates in a performance for friends and family on the last day of the session. Camps include the new Sing! Move! Play! for grades K–2, as well as Create an Opera for grades 3–8, Create a Singer for grades 4–9, and Art of Opera for grades 9–12. See our calendar on p. 94 for more information, or visit HGO.org/operacamp.

HGO Children’s Chorus Featured on Grammy-winning Recording

When the Houston Symphony won its first-ever Grammy Award on January 28, the HGO Children’s Chorus and director Karen Reeves received part of the glory: the Children’s Chorus was featured on the Symphony’s recording of Berg’s *Wozzeck*, conducted by Hans Graf. The recording won in the Best Opera Recording category.

Celebrate the Class of ’18

Please join us for the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHSVS) graduation recital. The eleven members of the BFHSVS will show off the progress they’ve made during their year of intensive training—and they’ll be singing for scholarships as well. This year the recital will be held at Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University, May 20, 2018, at 6 p.m. A total of $6,000 in scholarships will be awarded by a panel of distinguished judges and a reception will follow the program. This event is free and open to the public.

From left: Rameen Chaharbaghi, Taelon Stonecipher, Priscilla Salisbury, Tahnee Aluwihare. Photo by Lynn Lane.

Performance of Rosie Revere, Engineer by Create an Opera Camp 2016. Photo by Lynn Lane.

From left: Sean Holshouser (homeschooled), Maximillian Macias (HSPVA), Riley Vagis (The Woodlands High School), Alina Dong (Clear Lake High School). Back row from left: Hannah Jones (HSPVA), Christian Mathews (Friendswood High School), Emily Hansen (Klein Oak High School), Elisabeth Leone (Klein Oak High School), Mallory Williams (Glenda Dawson High School), Solomon Alabkeem (HSPVA), Dann Lewis (Ridge Point High School). Photo by Carleen Graham.
Dear Opera Patron,

On behalf of the more than 1,400 Houston-area BBVA Compass employees, welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s new production of Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, one of the most beloved American musicals of all time. We are honored to be part of this historic production—the first time a major American opera company has presented this masterpiece.

BBVA Compass is the fourth-largest bank in Texas and proudly serves the Houston community with nearly 80 branches, providing innovative products and services that give customers access to their money when, where, and how they choose.

We are exceptionally proud of our investments in Houston’s world-class performing arts, which have created opportunities for people from all walks of life to experience our city’s diverse artistic and cultural offerings. We champion the arts because we know they have the power to change lives.

So thank you for helping the arts thrive in Houston. We hope you enjoy the show.

Best regards,

Onur Genç
CEO, BBVA Compass
U.S. Country Manager, BBVA Group
Dear Opera Patron,

On behalf of PwC, thank you for joining us for tonight’s performance of one of the most popular American musicals of all time, West Side Story. We’re excited for an evening full of riveting drama, iconic dancing, unforgettable music, and soaring voices.

PwC’s accounting practice originated in London well over a century ago. As times changed and PwC has expanded worldwide, our commitment to clients has never wavered. Our global network of more than 236,000 people in 158 countries shares one goal: to help your business thrive.

This commitment extends to our local community partners. We’ve been part of the HGO family for nearly 40 years and are thrilled to help create and share world-class opera with the city of Houston. For all of our nonprofit partners in the arts, education, social services, and financial literacy, PwC provides not only financial assistance, but pro bono and volunteer hours to strengthen their business models and help them do even more great work. This includes pro bono consultation services to HGO and several other organizations navigating recovery from Hurricane Harvey.

Thank you so much for your support of HGO. Enjoy the performance!

Sincerely,
Michaela Greenan
Energy Advisory Principal
PwC
THE IMPACT OF OPERA

This season showed us more than ever before that opera is good for the soul. As part of HGO’s six-year Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, we are asking our audiences and the HGO family about the role of art and music in everyday life. This fall, we distributed a survey to our audience after our first Seeking the Human Spirit opera, Verdi’s La traviata, which illuminated the theme of sacrifice. Here are some of the responses.

“The combination of seeing the opera, reading the book, and participating in the [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston] book discussion and art tour led me to reflect more on the role of art in my life.”

“I was reminded of how much art enriches my life, and told myself I would commit to taking greater advantage of the many wonderful opportunities we have in Houston for artistic experiences.”

“I thought it greatly added to the spirit of Houston in this trying time. This production keeps popping up in my thoughts and discussions with friends.”

“Beautiful music lifts the spirit and gives hope and refreshment to the soul!”

“I have always been of the opinion that music heals. As my first time seeing opera in person, I felt this keenly. It was a truly amazing experience!”

“Every time I see La traviata, I think about the relationship between love and sacrifice.”

“With the immense challenges HGO faces, this performance reinforced my belief that art can be found or made in even the most unlikely places, and art is essential to my own well-being.”

“Seeing how HGO has adapted in the aftermath of the hurricane has helped me to do the same in dealing with disruptions in my life.”

“With the personal turmoil that my family has been through because of Hurricane Harvey, the start of the opera season buoyed my spirits and helped me realize that suffering and sacrifice are part of the human experience. We will make it through as stronger individuals.”

As Seeking the Human Spirit continues, we’ll continue asking for your feedback. Find out more by visiting us at HGO.org/HumanSpirit.
HGO Studio artists partner with Houston Methodist to access the healing power of music.

By Laura Chandler
Director of Publications
MUSIC IS POWERFUL. MUSIC CAN HEAL.

Most of us can attest to that. Music lifts us up when we are down, calms us when we are worried, and carries us through some of life’s most difficult moments. But most of us know that only on a personal level. Few have the opportunity to see how music can be used to heal other people.

Two HGO Studio artists were able not just to observe but to be part of the process in a three-day mini-residency at Houston Methodist, thanks to a partnership with Houston Methodist and its Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM). The mini-residency, which was a part of HGO’s Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, was the first of its kind at Houston Methodist.

Guided by Houston Methodist’s music therapists, HGO Studio soprano Mané Galoyan and pianist Jonathan Gmeinder worked with psychiatric patients who were receiving inpatient therapy to stabilize after psychotic episodes.

“We have the only acute psychiatric floor in the Texas Medical Center,” says Jennifer Townsend, manager of the Music Therapy Program at Houston Methodist. “The patients who come to us are high-risk patients who require some stabilization before going back home or to other facilities.”

The first day of the mini-residency started with a song—Mané sang and Jonathan played “My Favorite Things,” from The Sound of Music. But, Mané says, “It wasn’t just me singing and them listening and clapping. After I sang, we started reading the text, then everybody wrote down their favorite things. We did several exercises.” Mané and Jonathan taught vocal warmups and there was a discussion about what happens when we sing and why singing makes us happy. The goal of that first day was to learn how to improve mood with music. In short, says Jennifer Townsend, “The use of creativity became a powerhouse to guide us.”

On the second day, Mané and Jonathan again participated in the group, but the emphasis was on wellness strategies, how to stay on an even keel. They used the song again, slightly modified to “My Wellness Things,” to make points more memorable.

They focused on coping strategies on the third day: techniques that the patients—or anyone, for that matter—could use to get themselves back on track when things aren’t going well. The residency ended with a performance for the patients’ friends and family members. Mané and Jonathan performed “My Favorite Things,” and any patients who wanted to join in were invited to come up to the front and sing along. And several did—“Some of them just sang their hearts out,” says music therapist Audrey Zybura. In fact, Mané was surprised at their participation: “It was very special for me to see some of the patients I’d never seen smile, not only smile, but also sing along with me. It was amazing.”

And, Zybura points out, music is even better when it is shared with family and friends. At the performance on the third day, “the audience got to share that unique experience with the patients. It gives them something to connect about. It goes beyond the challenges of being in the hospital.”

About the mini-residency overall, Jonathan says, “One of the most surprising things we saw was people who were non-communicative when we came in, who appeared sad and detached from the situation. It was amazing to see the change over the course of the three days, or a half hour, or even a single exercise.”

“This was our pilot,” says Townsend. “We thought it went phenomenally well, and we look forward to working with HGO to offer these throughout the year.”

Seeking the Human Spirit is HGO’s six-year multidisciplinary initiative to highlight the universal spiritual themes raised in opera and to expand and deepen Houstonians’ connections to opera and to art. The initiative includes work with partner organizations including Houston Methodist and CPAM to enhance and enrich the community’s experience of music.
Hurricane Harvey threw some major obstacles in our path, with floodwaters closing our beloved Wortham Theater Center for the entire season and costing the company an estimated $12.2 million over the next three seasons.

Now, at long last, our homecoming is just over the horizon. Like Brünnhilde awakening from her enchanted sleep and singing, “Hail to you, sun!” at the finale of Wagner’s Siegfried, it will be a moment of triumph and joy.

And just like the famous Valkyrie, we have our own heroes to thank for getting us back on our feet. When we do return to the Wortham, it will be filled with the memories of an adventurous and enlightening season—and of the incredible generosity of our supporters.

HGO Board Chairman Jim Crownover and his wife, Molly, led the charge with a generous gift to the Harvey Recovery Fund.
Fund, and others quickly followed in their footsteps. Nearly every member of the HGO Board of Directors has made a significant contribution above and beyond their regular support to help the company recover.

“No one could have imagined the scale of the damage at the Wortham. It was beyond belief,” says HGO Board member Allyn Risley, who along with his wife, Jill, made a special gift to HGO’s Harvey recovery efforts. “It seemed like a very important one-time event in the life of HGO and we had to help.”

Allyn, like so many others, let us know how impressed he was with the rapid creation of the HGO Resilience Theater.

“We were moved by the way the company kept business going, keeping the same wonderful performances and converting the space in the George R. Brown. I can’t say enough to give recognition for what HGO has achieved, and we’re just happy to be a part of the supporting cast.”

Louise Chapman first came to HGO in 1987 for the opera that opened the Wortham Theater Center, Verdi’s Aida, starring Mirella Freni and Plácido Domingo. She has been supporting HGO ever since and made a generous gift for our Harvey recovery funds.

“When I saw firsthand the spirit of Perryn and all the HGO staff as they rallied to make sure we had a season,” says Louise. “I was so impressed that the Resilience Theater works as well as it does, and it’s really remarkable that HGO could pull that off on such short notice.”

“I saw firsthand the spirit of Perryn and all the HGO staff as they rallied to make sure we had a season,” says HGO Board member Terrilyn Neale, who made her largest single contribution to the company after Hurricane Harvey. “I thank the Lord that Perryn was our man on the scene. His background makes him uniquely qualified to say, ‘Here’s how we’re going to handle this disaster.’ And he did it.”

Terrilyn has been an integral part of HGO’s history, having been involved in the fundraising for its construction through her work with the Wortham Theater Foundation. “I have a very motherly feeling toward the Wortham,” she says. “The building turned 30 years old in May 2017, and it looks pretty good. We’ve got to take care of it. That’s our home theater, and that’s where we should be, with all of the staff and artists back together. I’ll be really delighted to get back home.”

Many trustees and patrons have made special Harvey gifts in addition to their regular support. Longtime supporters Bob and Jane Cizik are passionate about HGO, as Bob was the co-chair of the campaign to build the Wortham. They gave very generously to the Harvey Recovery Fund.

Corporate partners like Shell, ConocoPhillips, Schlumberger, Gilbane, Vinson and Elkins, United Airlines, and Texas Mutual have all pitched in, and we have already received generous support from the Texas Commission on the Arts, the M.D. Anderson Foundation, the McGovern Foundation, the John M. O’Quinn Foundation, the Anchorage Foundation, the Clayton Fund, the Stedman West Foundation, and the Vivian L. Smith Foundation. Other supporters have been coming forward as they assess the needs of many organizations. Bauer Family High School Voice Studio member Alina Dong and her classmates from Clear Lake High School’s A-Hope Club became our youngest Harvey heroes when they organized a benefit concert for HGO on March 10.

Support didn’t come only from our heroes here in Houston. The wider opera community reached out to us immediately after the storm to let us know they had our backs. The Dallas Opera Chorus took up a collection from its members and made a donation to our HGO Chorus, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis held a fundraiser for the Theater District Harvey Relief Fund. On November 26, 2017, our friends at San Francisco Opera held a benefit concert to support HGO. Mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade was joined by other opera stars, singing selections from classics like Rigoletto and Madame Butterfly to raise money for the Hurricane Harvey Recovery Fund.

Last September, HGO Head of Costumes Norma Cortez received a contribution collected by her counterpart at the Metropolitan Opera, Elissa Ibetti, to help rebuild our costume shop. Norma says, “Wonderful moments like these make us stronger by showing us that we are not alone!”

The adage “the show must go on” has been uttered this year more than ever before. But HGO and our wonderful supporters did more than just persevere: we stood together and made a spectacular season that we will always remember.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being our heroes and sending gifts of all sizes to help secure our future.

To join the Harvey heroes by making a special gift to HGO’s recovery efforts, please visit HGO.org/Harvey.
AT 20 YEARS OLD, JULIO MONGE moved from the island of Puerto Rico to the island of Manhattan just as legendary choreographers Bob Fosse, Michael Bennett, and Mikhail Baryshnikov were revolutionizing the world of dance. Making his Broadway debut in Jerome Robbins’ Broadway in 1989, Monge (MONG-heh) began a decade-long working relationship with another of those legends, Jerome Robbins. Now, Monge is charged with bringing Robbins’s iconic West Side Story choreography to life for the first production at a major American opera house.

HGO’s Laura Chandler and Paul Hopper recently sat down with Monge to discuss what it was like to work with Jerome Robbins, as well as what West Side Story means to the actor-singer-dancer and Puerto Rico native.
What was it like working with Jerome Robbins? Robbins had been absent from Broadway for 20 years and Jerome Robbins' Broadway was his comeback. I developed a great relationship with him. He took me in as a young, raw, green talent. I'm glad I was a little naïve about it—I think if I knew exactly what I was getting into, I would've been too intimidated. He didn't tolerate weakness—you learned when you're dancing for Mr. Robbins, you're going to be dancing at your best.

He was notoriously a difficult personality. Did you ever see that side of him?
Of course. But I got the tamest part of that, because he turned 70 that year. He knew what he wanted. He knew that you could do it, so he pushed you. And so, if that's difficult, he was really, really difficult. But what you got in return was working with the best. He tapped in to something emotionally, staging stories that went beyond anybody's style, anybody's theories—60 years later, we're here celebrating West Side Story.

How does West Side Story fit into the broader history of Puerto Rican representation on Broadway?
Puerto Ricans have always been here dancing, singing, and playing music. A lot of times, we don't get credit. But we were a part of the jazz movement in New York City, we were a part of the hip-hop movement in New York City, we were a part of the mambo movement in New York City, we've always been there collaborating with African-Americans and other musicians and other artists. And West Side Story is quintessentially a New York product. I feel like I'm a part of it not only because I love that kind of work, but because being Puerto Rican, I just saw my people up there. They were so respectful of the culture by choosing Chita Rivera for Anita. And then they chose Rita Moreno as Anita for the movie and she made history by becoming the first Latina to win an Academy Award. When I came to audition for Robbins and we met for the first time, I felt like we were old friends. I understood his work by then already. I knew who he was. Maybe he saw that spirit in me. And of course, I can dance a mean mambo. He was very impressed with my mambo.

Speaking of mambo, Jerome Robbins was known for fusing different styles and influences that reflected an increasingly diverse American population.
Robbins was always ahead of his time. When he did Fancy Free (1944), he was bringing to ballet a very daring idea of using contemporary movements from the streets of New York and soldiers coming out of those battleships and intermingling with the culture of the city. That was very new, because ballet was usually about grand, mythological themes—he brought it down to the streets. And then in West Side, he sort of takes that to the highest level.

How does West Side Story fit into the broader history of Puerto Rican representation on Broadway?
Puerto Ricans have always been here dancing, singing, and playing music... we were a part of the jazz movement in New York City, we were a part of the hip-hop movement in New York City, we were a part of the mambo movement in New York City...

How has Latin representation on Broadway changed throughout your career, and what does that mean to you as an individual?
[At the time of West Side Story's premiere,] most Latin performers changed their names, except Chita Rivera, but she was such a phenomenon that her name could've been Dumbo the Elephant and she would've still been a star. It was not popular for Latinos to come out and be proud and have a big presence in the mainstream theatrical scene. That happened slowly. There was a big movement in the 1960s when Latin-American performers and artists were welcomed into the mainstream because of people like Joseph Papp, who was at the Public Theater and founded what's now called Shakespeare in the Park. He brought in Raul Julia and other Latino performers to do Shakespeare.

Then, for some reason, that momentum started dwindling in the 1980s. We lost that Latin presence. But I think that's connected to the different political parties and changes in the economic conditions.

In the 1990s, I was a part of two major productions that were Latin-themed. One of them was Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1995). Lincoln Center produced it and Graciela Daniele directed. It was an 80 percent Latino cast and we were nominated for Best Musical. But it was not a very friendly terrain for us. Nobody was impressed. I think a lot of good artists in New York recognized that it was a really lovely piece of art, but we closed quickly, and nobody cared. Thenos have been too intimidated. He didn't tolerate weakness—you learned when you're dancing for Mr. Robbins, you're going to be dancing at your best.

And then right after that, you get the Latin boom of Ricky Martin, J-Lo, Enrique Iglesias. That was a huge change in the psyche of the culture, which then set the stage for Lin-Manuel Miranda to come in with In the Heights. I always say that Lin-Manuel created In the Heights on our shoulders, on the shoulders of the generations that were here trying those Latin productions, not always successfully, but setting the pace. After In the Heights, everybody has become more open to Latino casts and themes. We're becoming a larger presence by the numbers. We're about to see if the theater, mainstream theater especially, catches up with that reality.
So, the progress comes and goes, and it’s not even. I’ve been in New York for 30 years and I’ve seen it in different shapes. I can tell you, though, as an actor, I am now getting beautiful roles. New voices are popping up like Quiara Alegría Hudes, José Rivera, Nilo Cruz. I’m lucky that I’m singing and dancing and acting these beautiful roles for my age.

Julio, that is such a beautiful manifesto about the importance of visibility and diverse representation in the performing arts. What does it mean for a young person to see someone that looks like them ascending to high-profile creative and artistic positions? Back in my day, there was not much incentive for Latino or Hispanic kids to go to college or a conservatory to study acting. That was very rare because you didn’t see the incentive, you didn’t see yourself up there. I remember that it would be myself and two other Latinos, or maybe nobody else, in the audition room for years. The ones that were there were just very courageous and just loved acting and dancing so much that they had to be a part of it—not because the business was open to them. The Latino actors now, the young ones in their 30s and 20s—beautiful. And a lot of them are working. So it’s changed to the positive.

How did the Latin American community view West Side Story at its premiere, and has that perception changed today?
A dear friend of mine, he’s 88, he was a writer and director. He tells me that when the show went up, there were riots. But I think there were riots because the situation was so believable that gang members just started fighting with one another. It rubbed a lot of people the wrong way because of what they called stereotypical representation.

Was that due to the casting or the musical language?
The themes. The gang members and the fighting and killing. Even though it does carry some stereotypical ideas, it was not too far from the reality of the times. There were a lot of gangs that had Puerto Ricans in them just as there were Irish, black, Asian. It’s just that the creators of West Side Story happened to pick the one theme that was exciting to them theatrically. Casting actors like Rita Moreno as Anita in the film helped. That’s an incredible role—talk about strength and sense of self. Maria is also a strong heroine. She faces everybody in the gang and says, “Stop this.” That’s not a stereotypical take on a Puerto Rican. There’s an honesty to the piece that made the characters classic.

And how do younger audiences view the piece today?
Well, the other day, I spoke to a colleague who’s younger. He’s in his 30s. He said he has issues with the piece but he didn’t follow that up with anything, so that was the end of the conversation. I think he’s just repeating what somebody else said. Last year, Sondheim was a guest speaker at an event I happened to be at and everybody was talking about how deep the piece is about race, it’s about intolerance and this and that, and Sondheim stopped everybody cold like he usually does. He said, “This piece is not about any of that. This is not about race. This piece is about theater!” We just did West Side Story at Carnegie Hall with a mixed cast and nobody cared, which is a testament to the fact that it’s more than a show about race. It’s all human inventiveness and human talent and the human bodies singing the story. There are some great themes: Romeo and Juliet, star-crossed lovers, intolerance, yes, prejudice, totally. But it’s a piece everybody wants to sing, everybody wants to play, everybody wants to dance.

Cultural appreciation versus cultural appropriation—do these phrases resonate with you when working on West Side Story in 2018?
I think that when you have the group of women in the scene where they do “America,” and Anita has to say to the men, “Get over it. Get over your Puerto Rican thing. Let’s move on.” This is where we are now. This is where I want to be, that’s a very daring and a very beautiful representation of our women. That is my aunt. That is my mother. The ownership that these characters express in this new land, the thirst for the future—that, I think, is a very daring element in the show, but also a very strong representation of how Puerto Rican women will stand up to their men.

And of women more broadly.
And of women. I worked with a director who hates “America” because she thinks it exploits women—the whole idea of skirts and heels and kicking their legs. And she said, “All I see is crotch, crotch, crotch.” And I said to her, “Well, all I see is craft, craft, craft,” because to dance that number is really hard. And it’s part of that tradition of the Americana female dancer, her skills, and her legs, and her speed, which is also a statement of what the American woman is. She takes on the shape of her body. And she’s not afraid of expressing the power of her body, the power of her curves, the power of her legs, the power of her physicality and using it in an athletic and artistic way. That’s what I see when I see “America.” You not only have a fierce, wonderful role, but you have to be a fierce, wonderful performer to be able to handle it.
STORY IN A NUTSHELL
Maria and Tony fall helplessly in love at a school dance, but their love is doomed: Maria’s brother is leader of the Sharks—a street gang—and Tony is one of their hated enemies, the Jets. Maria and Tony’s love only intensifies the hostilities between the two groups, and their story ends in tragedy, with everyone reflecting on the senselessness of it all. A full synopsis can be found on p. 37.

THE CREATION OF WEST SIDE STORY
West Side Story was created by some of the most legendary figures in music theater. Composer Leonard Bernstein and choreographer-director Jerome Robbins, born within two months of each other in 1918, had already made important careers for themselves when they began working on West Side Story, which premiered on Broadway in 1957. They had met in 1943 and had collaborated brilliantly on the ballet Fancy Free and its musical theater counterpart, On the Town. Arthur Laurents, who wrote the book for West Side Story, was a playwright and screenwriter who had met with some success. Stephen Sondheim wrote the lyrics; he was making his Broadway debut.

The idea to create a modern-day Romeo and Juliet came from Robbins; he first approached Bernstein and Laurents about collaborating with him on the project in 1947. It was originally titled East Side Story, and the romance was to be between an Italian Catholic boy and a Jewish girl who had survived the Holocaust and immigrated to the United States. Laurents wrote a first draft, but no one was satisfied with it: it seemed to rehash themes that had been explored in other works. All three men moved on to other projects.

In 1955, they found themselves working together again on a different project and decided to revisit their idea, bringing in a young Stephen Sondheim to write the lyrics. By this time, teen street gangs and their turf wars had become front page news, and this gave the team the focus they needed. The action would be brought to the West Side. The “Romeo” of West Side Story would be Tony, a white boy who has left his gang, the Jets, but remains best friends with the gang’s leader. “Juliet” would be Maria, a new arrival from Puerto Rico whose brother is a member of a rival gang, the Sharks.

The creators were well aware that West Side Story would be controversial. The serious themes, the ground-breaking music, the extended dance scenes—all were new for American musical theater. Stephen Sondheim has said that he wanted the lyrics to include “a serious four-letter obscenity” in “Gee, Officer Krupke,” but the producers weren’t having it. Sondheim credits Leonard Bernstein with coming up with the clever sound-alike that is actually used, and calls it the “best lyric line in the show.”

Jerome Robbins was an adherent of method acting, and decided to separate the actors portraying the Sharks and the Jets. They rehearsed separately and were not to socialize with each other, but that was effective only to a point: the original Anita, Chita Rivera, married a “Jet” (Tony Mordente) and they had what she calls a “Shark-Jet daughter.”

Rivera and Mordente were married in 1957 and divorced in 1966; but the partnership between Bernstein and Robbins was much more lasting. Dance critic Laura Jacobs writes in Vanity Fair (“Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, and the Road to West Side Story,” February 2018) that because Robbins was so difficult to work with, sometimes Bernstein would vow to “never, never work with [him] again as long as I live”—long pause of silence—“for a while.” And so their artistic collaboration continued. “Until the end of their lives,” Jacobs writes, “Lenny and Jerry’s respect for each other, their mutual support, never wavered.”
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

THE LEGENDARY CHALLENGES OF BELLINI’S NORMA, PLUS A FEW CHATS WITH FAMOUS SINGERS

BY PATRICK SUMMERS
Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
The International Swimming Federation has a formula to calculate the degree of difficulty of competitive dives, each addressing different specifics: the approach, the entry into the water, the positioning, the number of somersaults and twists, and the overall height. Judges factor in the degree of difficulty when evaluating the diver’s execution.

Operatic roles have degrees of difficulty as well, if not in the same formalized way. An operatic role is first conjured from the ether of a composer’s mind, for it is the composer who creates the role’s demands and decides the dramatic structure of an opera. Actors in a play, working with a probing director, can decide their own emphasis and timing separate from the author, varying it with each rehearsal and performance, but an operatic artist has to ascend another level with the addition of yet another element: music.

And what soaring and searing music Vincenzo Bellini created for Norma, like some thrillingly neurotic machine fueled by melody, and one of the most famously challenging title roles of the bel canto age. What is bel canto beyond the easily translated “beautiful singing”? Besides referring literally to the era itself—roughly 1815–50, the years of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and early Verdi—bel canto has more figurative glimpses that include other disciplines, the works of Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Chopin, and later Liszt and Dickens. It became the kernel of operetta of all nations; it lingered in Rachmaninoff and Jerome Kern, and one hears its last nostalgic vestiges in Ivor Novello, Noel Coward, Giancarlo Menotti, Richard Rodgers, and in the musical prose of playwrights Eugene O’Neill and Tennessee Williams. Bel canto is characterized by a controlled and stylized melding of words and music, poetry and prose, action, reaction, and reflection, a wide range of notes and dynamics, and elongated lines of spinning melody that create a full spectrum of the human singing voice. Its leading exemplars were Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini, and their respective summits were William Tell, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Norma.

Bellini’s Norma shares many characteristics with the harrowing title character of Euripides’s play Medea. She was a mythical priestess of Colchis, now Armenia, which was the destination of the Argonauts and their leader, Jason, to whom Medea bore two sons. In retaliation for his rejecting her upon his return to Greece, she kills their children. The literary daughter of Medea was Velléda, a virgin soothsayer in Gaul (present day France and Belgium, and the setting of Bellini’s opera), thrillingly created by Chateaubriand in his 1809 novel The Martyrs. These two related women were brought together in 1831 by the French playwright Alexandre Soumet in his Norma, on which Bellini’s opera is directly based and which also premiered in 1831. Norma has hosted a virtual royal family of grand sopranos in its 187 years: Pasta, Grisi, Lehmann, Lind, Raisa, Muzio, Ponselle, Sutherland, Gencer, Caballé, Sills, Scotto, Bumby, Vaness, Verrett, Bartoli, and Radvanovsky are among the lucky luminaries. The rare-voiced Liudmyla Monastyrska now joins them.

It takes very special gifts to perform this role, as the varied careers of these remarkable ladies illustrate. The first Norma, Giuditta Pasta, called the role “encyclopedic,” and she set the stage for the lore of its demands by premiering a dizzying range herself: she was Donizetti’s Anna Bolena and also created the title role in La sonnambula, roles with precipitously high degrees of difficulty that would not, at least in 2018, be thought compatible in one artist. The first Adalgisa, Giulia Grisi, was even more versatile. When Norma premiered in London, Pasta was indisposed, so Grisi moved up to the title part, and she sang it many more times, including at the opening of the Academy of Music in New York City 23 years later. She also, incredibly, created the title role in Rossini’s Semiramide and was Donizetti’s first Norina in Don Pasquale. It is inconceivable that any opera house today would have the combined imagination and courage to cast the same artist as Norina, Adalgisa, and Semiramida, and even more impossible to imagine a critical culture accepting it.
The bel canto resurgence in the late 20th century can be credited to two major artists who fortuitously found each other in the lean post–World War II years: soprano Maria Callas and conductor Tullio Serafin. It was Maestro Serafin who heard in Callas a propensity for bel canto singing at a time when Callas, then in her mid-20s, was focused on Wagner and Madama Butterfly. Serafin ignited her lifelong passion for the bel canto repertoire; with him she absorbed Bellini’s diaphanous Puritani in under a week, a week in which she also sang two performances of Brünnhilde in Wagner’s Die Walküre. She learned from Serafin, as she described many times, how to go beneath the surface of the words and the deceptive simplicity of bel canto vocal writing. She melded declamation to singing, and thus drama to music, and she inspired generations of interest in bel canto right up to this day. Callas herself did not possess what might be called a traditionally “beautiful” voice, but she had the single vital quality that bel canto demands: distinction. One sung word from Maria Callas and there is no mistaking her for anyone else, yet each of her roles had a distinctive and diverse set of colors. She was a vocal chameleon.

Carol Vaness sang her first Norma in Houston in 1996. Reflecting on it, she told me that at the time, she didn’t fully understand why the elders of the industry told her it was the ultimate thing she could do in her career—“until a moment came in performance in Houston when I turned to Pollione and sang, ‘In mia man alfin tu sei’ (At last you are in my hands), and I got it. Boy, did I get it! In an instant I realized how inexplicably fabulous an opera it is.” Pressing further, Carol said, “It isn’t musically overwhelming…It is perfectly proportioned, just perfect, and it allows and demands that an actress live within every emotion instead of having it tower over you.” I’ve rarely heard Bellini described more perfectly.

Stretching back a little further into HGO’s history, I had a delightful chat with Renata Scotto, who remembered her Houston Norma performances with enormous fondness. “It was a very special moment in my career, a highlight. I had sung enough bel canto to know what I was doing; by that point I had performed almost all of Bellini’s other operas. Vocally, Norma was not the most difficult role I performed. But dramatically, to really understand every word she sings, and most importantly, every idea and motivation behind every word; well…that is what makes Norma such a challenge. It is the greatest opera of the bel canto because she is such a brave and strong woman, not just a Greek tragedienne, but a deep and romantic woman. Bellini loved her so much and you can hear this in her character.” I mentioned to Renata that I had recently listened to the legendary broadcast performance made in Houston of Norma, and she said she occasionally listens to it as well: “It is a beautiful memory.” Then she added with a little twinkle in her voice, “And I was OK in it, wasn’t I, Patrick?”

It is worth taking a moment to contemplate how miraculously it actually is. Singers are unique among musicians in that they can’t see their instrument without the help of a doctor, and can’t feel it unless it is unhealthy in some way. The vocal cords consist of two small vibrating membranes that sit horizontally within the flexible and vertical larynx. Preternaturally gifted singers make a sympathetic vibration that they also cannot see or feel, for it is nothing but spinning air, and it resonates out of them to wrap effortlessly around a hall without amplification. Singing recalls a primal spiritual expression set in motion an incalculably long time ago, learned by simply mimicking creatures here millennia before us—birds.

Let’s take our last plunge into Norma with a prodigiously versatile singer who stared down every degree of difficulty. Lilli Lehmann (1848–1929) sang an astounding 170 leading roles, and even now a fraction of that number would be considered a lifetime’s work. It was Lehmann who said that singing all three Brünnhildes in Wagner’s Ring, nearly eight hours of very heavy singing, was less taxing than a single performance Bellini’s Norma. I put the question to another Norma veteran, Christine Goerke, Houston Grand Opera’s recent radiant Brünnhilde and Elektra. With her typical Long Island brevity she said, “I’m with Lilli.”
STORY IN A NUTSHELL
It is 50 BCE: Rome has invaded Gaul, and the Druids are trying to decide whether to mount a rebellion against their conquerors. The high priest advocates war, but his daughter, Norma, the high priestess, speaks out for peace: she has fallen in love with the enemy—the Roman proconsul, Pollione—and has borne two children with him. But Pollione has a wandering eye, and when Norma discovers his attentions have turned to a rival, she is finally ready to declare war. A human sacrifice is required and Norma has the power to choose the victim. Who will it be? (A full synopsis appears on p. 54.)

NORMA IN CONTEXT
Norma premiered on December 26, 1831, at La Scala in Milan. It was the eighth of ten operas by Vincenzo Bellini, who was 30 years old at the time of the premiere and would die only four years later. Norma was not well received at first (Bellini himself called the premiere a fiasco), but quickly surged in popularity. Within only a couple of years, it had been performed in several Italian cities and in London and Vienna, and its first performance in the United States—in New Orleans—occurred in 1836.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR
Norma’s first-act aria “Casta diva” (Chaste goddess), in which Norma offers a prayer for peace, is the most famous music in the opera. Interestingly, the original Norma, Giuditta Pasta, didn’t like the aria at first and balked at singing it. Bellini persuaded her to work on the aria for a week, and that did the trick—she realized she had been wrong and asked Bellini’s forgiveness.

Another musical highlight is the trio that ends Act I: “Oh! Di qual sei tu vittima” (Oh! You are the victim of deception), in which Norma calls out Pollione for his betrayal, Pollione affirms his love for Adalgisa, and Adalgisa vows to reunite Pollione with Norma and their children. The duets between Norma and Adalgisa are exquisite, including “Mira, o Norma” (See, O Norma) in Act II, and composer Giuseppe Verdi was a great admirer of the second-act Norma-Pollione duet “In mia man alfin tu sei” (At last you are in my hands).

WHO WERE THE DRUIDS?
The Druids were the intellectual caste of the Celts, who lived in a large area that included but was not limited to Britain, Ireland, France, and Spain. They inhabited Gaul (present-day France) during the time of the Roman invasion of 58–51 BCE, led by Julius Caesar. Caesar tried to justify the wars as defensive, but most scholars believe he undertook the invasion only to promote his career. Caesar wrote extensively about the Gallic Wars, but many believe his depictions of the Gauls and the Druids were tainted by his desire to justify the invasion.

For example, Caesar claimed the Druids practiced human sacrifice, writing that the victims were often those who had been found guilty of theft or other crimes, but that innocent people were sometimes executed if there was no other available sacrifice. Caesar mentions victims being burned alive in a large wooden structure now called a wooden man. It is clear that Norma was influenced by the thinking of the time; however, many scholars believe there is no evidence apart from propaganda to support the Druids’ involvement in human sacrifice.

For a detailed portrayal of the Druids, we recommend Peter Berresford Ellis’s book A Brief History of the Druids, first published in 1994.
WEST SIDE STORY

Based on a Conception of Jerome Robbins

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by Arthur Laurents

Entire Original Production Directed and Choreographed by Jerome Robbins

Music by Leonard Bernstein

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

Sung in English with projected English text

Originally Produced on Broadway by Robert E. Griffith and Harold S. Prince
By Arrangement with Roger L. Stevens

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for Houston Grand Opera.

United Airlines is the official airline of Houston Grand Opera.

Tenenbaum Jewelers is the preferred jeweler of Houston Grand Opera.

The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
CAST

Maria Andrea Carroll ‡
Tony Norman Reinhardt ‡
Anita Gabrielle McClinton *

THE JETS
Riff (The Leader) Brian Vu *
Action Connor McRory *
A-Rab PJ Palmer *
Baby John Christopher Tipps *
Big Deal Tucker Breder *
Diesel Randy Castillo *
Snowboy Ben Delony
Gee-Tar Rob Flebbe *

THE SHARKS
Bernardo DJ Petrosino *
(The Leader) Dominic Peckonis *
Chino Donald Sayre
Pepe Emilio Ramos *
Indio Taylor Simmons *
Luis Steven Paul Blandino *
Anxious Joshua De Alba
Nibbles

THEIR GIRLS
Graziella Melissa Hunter McCann *
Velma Megan Morgan *
Minnie Maureen Kelley *
Clarice Rachel Mengden *
Pauline Emily Roy-Sayre
Anybodys Kelsey Kincaid-Gibbs

THEIR GIRLS
Rosalia Zoie Reams †
(The Leader) The Evans Family/John G. Turner
Consuelo Amanda Castro *
Francisca Tempestt Perrin *
Teresita Tasha Heggem *
Estella Alissa LaVergne *

THE ADULTS
Doc Jack Young *
Schrank David Matranga
Krupke Thomas Glass †
Glad Hand Fong Chau *

THEIR GIRLS
Rosalia Zoie Reams †
(The Leader) The Evans Family/John G. Turner

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor Timothy Myers
Director Francesca Zambello
Choreographer Julio Monge *
Set Designer Peter J. Davison
Costume Designer Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer Mark McCullough
Sound Designer Andrew Harper
Associate Director Eric Sean Fogel *
Associate to the Charles Quiggin *
Set Designer
Dance Captain Melissa Hunter McCann *

Musical Preparation Geoffrey Loff ‡
Richard Bado ‡
Sarah and Ernest Butler
Chorus Master Chair
Kirill Kuzmin ‡
Blair Salter †
Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/
Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow
Peter Walsh †
Nancy and Ted Haywood/
Stephanie Larsen Fellow
Dialogue Coach Jim Johnson
Assistant Director Katrina Bachus
Stage Manager Christopher Staub
Supertitles by Kelly Rourke *

* HGO debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by Jeremy Johnson

WEST SIDE STORY is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, New York, NY. Tel: 212-541-4684. Fax: 212-397-4684. www.mtishows.com

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.

Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E., Local USA-829.

Orchestral musicians are represented by the Houston Professional Musicians Association, Local #65-699, American Federation of Musicians.

Stage crew personnel provided by I.A.T.S.E., Local #51.

Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

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Power of Place:
Aboriginal Paintings from Australia’s Central Desert
Saturday, April 21st through Friday, June 29th

Helen Nampijinpa Robertson, Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming), 30” x 48”
“Two households, both alike in dignity...” Thus begins Shakespeare’s tale of Romeo and Juliet, in which we see “ancient grudge break to new mutiny.” When Arthur Laurents first conceived a modern, musical version of the play, he imagined a rivalry between Catholic and Jewish communities on the Lower East Side; only later did he and his collaborators move the story uptown, pitting a gang of native New Yorkers against those more recently arrived.

Although America is a country of immigrants, we continue to struggle with issues around immigration and migration, which makes West Side Story an important tale for today. (As Sondheim’s lyric neatly put it, “Nobody knows in America / Puerto Rico’s in America.”) The creators of West Side Story, although well intentioned, didn’t get everything right; later critics have pointed out lapses into stereotype. (This is true in so many “period pieces” that we put on the stage today, and as always, I look forward to the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about some of the thorny issues presented by the piece, both with my colleagues and with our audience members.)

Lapses aside, by putting the tragic cost of two warring tribes center stage, the authors made an important statement about the human tendency to organize ourselves into factions. Especially with the rise of social media, we have all become more tribal in our outlook. I think the story of two warring “tribes” challenges all of us to look at how we define and marginalize “the other.” Perhaps we find it easy to engage with people of different cultural backgrounds. But what about differences in education? Religion? Resources? Politics?

Leonard Bernstein scrawled an “out and out plea for racial tolerance” across the first page of his copy of Romeo and Juliet. As we approach this piece in 2018, in the midst of a world refugee crisis, I hope we can make that plea reverberate in a new way. I also hope we can challenge ourselves to think broadly about ways in which we arbitrarily dismiss the experiences and opinions of those who are not like us.

—Francesca Zambello, director

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes, including one intermission.

**ACT I**

On New York’s urban landscape, two gangs are at war over the same turf—the Sharks, led by Bernardo, and the Jets, led by Riff. When a fight breaks out, Riff and the Jets decide the issue should be settled once and for all with a rumble.

Later that evening, both gangs are present at a school dance. When Tony, a Jet, sees Bernardo’s beautiful sister, Maria, the chemistry between them is so palpable that it almost sets off another fight. Riff challenges Bernardo to the rumble, and he readily agrees to meet after the dance for a “war council” at Doc’s drugstore, where Tony works.

Tony finds Maria after the dance and they swear their love. At the war council, Tony does what he can to ensure that the rumble the next evening will be fair, but as the time grows close, Maria is still worried and asks Tony to put a stop to the fight. But Tony’s efforts only make Bernardo angrier: Riff and Bernardo pull knives and Bernardo kills Riff. In response, Tony kills Bernardo. The police arrive, and everyone scatters.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**

Both the police and Chino—a Shark member whom Maria is expected to marry—are looking for Tony. Tony decides to ask Doc for money so he and Maria can run away together, and Maria will meet him at the drugstore. Their plan goes awry when the police hold Maria for questioning. Anita goes to the drugstore to tell Tony that Maria has been delayed, but when members of the Jets harass and attack her, she lashes back by saying Chino has killed Maria.

When Tony hears this, he runs out into the streets, calling for Chino to come and get him, too. To Tony’s astonishment, Maria appears and they run toward each other. Chino steps out of the shadows and shoots Tony.

**HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

This is HGO’s first production of West Side Story and the first in any major American opera house.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ORCHESTRA

Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey †, Assistant Concertmaster
Anabel Detrick *, Acting Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor *, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Hae-a Lee-Barnes *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *

VIOLA
Eliseo Rene Salazar †, Principal
Lorento Golofeev †, Assistant Principal
Gayle Garcia-Shepard †
Erica C. Lawson †
Suzanne LeFevre †
Dawson White †

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Erika Johnson *
Ariana Nelson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steven Wiggs *

DOUBLE BASS
Dennis Whittaker *, Principal
Erik Gronfor *
Assistant Principal
Carla Clark *

FLUTE
Seth Morris †, Principal
Christina Medawar *, Acting Principal
Melissa Suhr
Monica Daniel-Barker

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal

CLARINET
Sean Krissman *, Principal
Eric Chi *
Molly Mayfield

SAXOPHONE
Paul Harris
Scott Plugge
Graham Tobin

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal

FRRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston *, Principal
Kimberly Penrod Minson *
Spencer Park †

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo †, Principal
Dominic Derasse, Acting Principal
Randal Adams *
Charles Geyer

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén *, Principal
Mark Holley *
Kyle Gordon †

TUBA
Mark Barton †, Principal

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman †, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter
Craig Hauschmidt

GUITAR
Michael Wheeler

PIANO/CELESTA
Blair Salter ‡
Dr. Saúl and Ursula Balagura/Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

* HGO Orchestra core musician  † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production  ‡ HGO Studio artist
LEONARD BERNSTEIN
Composer
Leonard Bernstein (1918–90) was one of the first American conductors to win wide international acclaim. He became music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1958, and from then until 1969, he led more concerts with the orchestra than any previous conductor. He composed the one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti* in 1952; its sequel, the opera *A Quiet Place*, received its world premiere at Houston Grand Opera in 1983, presented as a double-bill with *Trouble in Tahiti*. For the Broadway stage, Bernstein collaborated with Betty Comden and Adolph Green on *On the Town* (1944) and *Wonderful Town* (1953). In collaboration with Richard Wilbur, Lillian Hellman, and others he wrote *Candide* (1956). Other versions of *Candide* were written in association with Hugh Wheeler, Stephen Sondheim, et al. In 1957 he again collaborated with Jerome Robbins, Stephen Sondheim, and Arthur Laurents on the landmark musical *West Side Story*, also made into an Academy Award–winning film. In 1976, Bernstein and Alan Jay Lerner wrote *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*. Bernstein's multiple honors included the 1990 Praemium Imperiale, an international prize created by the Japan Arts Association and awarded for lifetime achievement in the arts. Bernstein used the $100,000 prize to establish The Bernstein Education Through the Arts (BETA) Fund, Inc., before his death on October 14, 1990.

STEPHEN SONDHEIM
Lyricist

ARTHUR LAURENTS
Book
An award-winning playwright, screenwriter, librettist, director, and producer, Arthur Laurents has been responsible for creating the librettos of many Broadway shows including *Gypsy*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Do I Hear A Waltz?, Hallelujah, Baby!, and Nick & Nora*. He wrote the screenplays for *The Snake Pit*, *Anna Lucasta*, *Anastasia*, *Bonjour Tristesse*, *The Way We Were*, and *The Turning Point*. He also wrote the plays *Home Of The Brave*, *The Time of the Cuckoo*, and *A Clearing of the Woods*. He directed *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Gypsy*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Birds of Paradise*, and *Nick & Nora*.

JEROME ROBBINS
Original Director and Choreographer
Jerome Robbins (1918–98) is world renowned for his work as a choreographer of more than 60 ballets as well as his work as a director and choreographer in theater, movies, and television. His first ballet, *Fancy Free* (1944) for American Ballet Theatre, still in many repertoires, will celebrate its 75th birthday next year. He joined New York City Ballet in 1949, became an associate artistic director with George Balanchine, and created numerous ballets for the company. Besides *West Side Story*, some of his Broadway shows include *On the Town*, *Billion Dollar Baby*, *High Button Shoes*, *The King and I*, *Gypsy*, *Peter Pan*, *Miss Liberty*, *Call Me Madam*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. In 1989, *Jerome Robbins’ Broadway* won six Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Director. Robbins directed for television and film as well, with his co-direction and choreography of *West Side Story* winning him two Academy Awards. Robbins’s other awards and citations include five Donaldson Awards, two Emmy Awards, the Screen Directors’ Guild Award, and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. Robbins was a 1981 Kennedy Center Honors recipient, was awarded the Chevalier dans l’Ordre National de la Legion d’Honneur, was an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and was awarded a National Medal of Arts as well as the Governor’s Arts Awards by the New York State Council on the Arts.
TIMOTHY MYERS
Conductor

Timothy Myers conducted HGOco’s world premiere of O Columbia (2015) and the world premiere of A Coffin in Egypt (2014) and also served as music director for the HGOco world premieres of The Memory Stone (2013) and New Arrivals (2012). Noteworthy recent engagements have included concerts with the North Carolina Symphony and Baltimore Symphony, Adams’s Doctor Atomic and R. Strauss’s Capriccio with Curtis Opera Theatre, a Lyric Opera of Chicago debut conducting the Rising Stars Concert, and the workshop of Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s commission for the Metropolitan Opera, Intimate Apparel. In 2016, Myers made his European debut with a highly acclaimed production of Barber’s Vanessa at Wexford Festival Opera, where he returned earlier this season to lead a new production of Jacopo Foroni’s rediscovered Margherita, the first performances since its 1848 premiere. Also in the 2017–18 season, Myers made his house debut with Florida Grand Opera leading his first Salome; will conduct Samson et Dalila in concert for his return as a guest conductor at North Carolina Opera; and will lead Sweeney Todd at Atlanta Opera. With the close of the 2016–17 season, Myers concluded his nearly decade-long tenure as the artistic and music director of North Carolina Opera, where he raised performance standards and forged collaborations with multiple local and national organizations. Repertoire highlights from his tenure include Das Rheingold, Act II of Tristan und Isolde and Act I of Die Walküre, Eugene Onegin, and Rusalka.

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO
Director

Francesca Zambello has been the general director of the Glimmerglass Festival since 2010 and artistic director of Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center since 2012. She made her American directorial debut at Houston Grand Opera with a production of Fidelio in 1984, and she has since directed many operas at HGO. Her 1985 production of Fauré has been seen multiple times at HGO, most recently in 2016. Others include Show Boat (2013), the world premiere of The Little Prince (2003) and revivals (2004, 2015), Of Mice and Men (2002); the world premiere and subsequent revival of Florencia en el Amazonas (1996, 2001); Prince Igor (2001); Billy Budd and Madame Butterfly (1998); and many others. Zambello has worked with over 50 major opera companies and her work has also been seen at many of the world’s major festivals. Her most recent opera projects have included the Ring cycle and Aida for the San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera, and Porgy and Bess and Show Boat for commercial DVD release. Musical and theater projects include developing Voigt Lessons with Terrence McNally and Deborah Voigt, Rebecca for Vienna’s Raimund Theater, Stuttgart’s Palladium Theater (presented by Stage Entertainment), and in St. Gallen, Switzerland; Napoleon in the West End; The Little Mermaid for Disney on Broadway; the musical of The Little House on the Prairie for national tour; The Master Butchers at the Guthrie Theater; and Aladdin in Disneyland. Film works have included Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors for BBC Television; a new film of The Little Prince for the BBC, Sony, and PBS; and West Side Story for the floating stage in Bregenz.

JULIO MONGE
Choreographer

Julio Monge is an actor, choreographer, and director. His performance credits on Broadway include On Your Feet, Jerome Robbins’ Broadway, Lincoln Center’s Twelfth Night, Man of La Mancha, Fosse, Victor/Victoria, and Paul Simon’s The Capeman. Choreography works include West Side Story: The Somewhere Project, celebrating Carnegie Hall’s 125th anniversary; and Tony Kushner’s translation of Mother Courage and Her Children, starring Meryl Streep, and the musical Radiant Baby, both directed by George C. Wolfe. Other choreography credits include The Threepenny Opera at Williamstown Theater Festival, starring Betty Buckley; José Rivera’s premiere of References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot, starring Rosie Pérez; and the revival of Pablo Cabrera’s La verdadera historia de Pedro Navaja in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Directing credits include Putting Out by Laura E. Bray at New York Venus Theater Festival and Hedwig and the Angry Inch (also producer and translator) at the Gay and Lesbian Theater Festival in Puerto Rico (Best Production Award 2010). During 2018–19, he will be resetting Jerome Robbins’s original West Side Story choreography for Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, Glimmerglass Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Atlanta Opera.

PETER J. DAVISON
Set Designer

Peter J. Davison’s work has been seen at HGO in Show Boat (2013) and Der Rosenkavalier (1995). Opera credits include The Marriage of Figaro in Vienna; Die Gezeichneten, Falstaff, and Die schweigumme Frau in Zurich; Capriccio in Berlin and Turin; Der Rosenkavalier, Carmen, and Mary Stuart at English National Opera; Anna Bolena with
Moby-Dick at Minnesota Opera; and for Lyric Opera of Chicago, National Opera; New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, and San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, with Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, L.A. Opera (2013), and productions (now UK Theatre Awards) for Florence, Stuarda (St. Gallen, Switzerland), and the U.K. tour of Jesus Christ Superstar. Future engagements include San Francisco Opera’s Ring cycle revival; Norma at Opera National de Chile; and The Cunning Little Vixen and West Side Story at the Glimmerglass Festival.

ANDREW HARPER
Sound Designer

Andrew Harper is an independent sound designer, producer/engineer, and consultant for theater, opera, ballet, educational programs, and special events. Recently, for Houston Grand Opera, he designed the sound for the world premieres of The House without a Christmas Tree (2017), It’s a Wonderful Life (2016) and A Coffin in Egypt (2014), as well as for Carousel (2016), Sweeney Todd (2015), and A Little Night Music (2014). Harper has designed sound for many seasons for Houston’s Theatre Under the Stars. Some recent favorites include Dreamgirls, The Rocky Horror Show, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying, In the Heights, Million Dollar Quartet, and Heathers. Additionally, Harper also serves as a sound design consultant for the Houston Ballet, amplifying last season’s Cacti and most recently Mayerling. For Generations Theatre, he worked on Sweeney Todd, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, and Spring Awakening.

ERIC SEAN FOGEL
Associate Director

Nationally, he has created new productions for Atlantic Theatre II, Opera North, and performed world premieres include The Lion, Unicorn and Me with WNO/Kennedy Center, Artus-Excalibur at Theatre St. Gallen, and Princess Butterfly in XSBN, China. Fogel has also created new productions for Atlantic Theatre II, Opera Bordeaux, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theatre, Dallas Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, and Lyric Opera of Chicago in New Amsterdam, production engineer, and consultant for theater, opera, ballet, educational programs, and special events. Recently, for Houston Grand Opera, he designed the sound for the world premieres of The House without a Christmas Tree (2017), It’s a Wonderful Life (2016) and A Coffin in Egypt (2014), as well as for Carousel (2016), Sweeney Todd (2015), and A Little Night Music (2014). Harper has designed sound for many seasons for Houston’s Theatre Under the Stars. Some recent favorites include Dreamgirls, The Rocky Horror Show, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying, In the Heights, Million Dollar Quartet, and Heathers. Additionally, Harper also serves as a sound design consultant for the Houston Ballet, amplifying last season’s Cacti and most recently Mayerling. For Generations Theatre, he worked on Sweeney Todd, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, and Spring Awakening.

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Mark McCullough’s work has been seen at HGO in the world premiere of A Christmas Carol (2014) and Show Boat (2013). He has lit productions for the Vienna State Opera (Macbeth), Bolshoi Theatre (La traviata), the Metropolitan Opera (The Marriage of Figaro), the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing (The Tales of Hoffmann), La Scala (Cyrano de Bergerac), Madrid’s Teatro Real (Luisa Miller), Strasbourg’s Opéra National du Rhin (The Beggar’s Opera), the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (The Queen of Spades), Opera North (Eugene Onegin), and productions with Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, L.A. Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Canadian Opera Company, New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, and San Francisco Opera including the full Ring cycle directed by Francesca Zambello. Broadway credits include Outside Mullingar, Jesus Christ Superstar (revival), After Ms. Julie, and The American Plan. International theater credits include Whistle Down the Wind (Aldwych Theatre, London); Der Besuch Der Alten Dame (Ronacher Theatre, Vienna); Artus (St. Gallen, Switzerland); Rebecca (St. Gallen, Switzerland and the Palladium Theatre, Stuttgart); and the U.K. tour of Jesus Christ Superstar. Future engagements include San Francisco Opera’s Ring cycle revival; Norma at Opera National de Chile; and The Cunning Little Vixen and West Side Story at the Glimmerglass Festival.

ERIC SEAN FOGEL
Associate Director

Eric Sean Fogel is making his HGO debut. This season, his work can be seen in Candide at L.A. Opera and Washington National Opera (WNO)/Kennedy Center, West Side Story with the National Symphony Orchestra/Kennedy Center, The Cunning Little Vixen at the Glimmerglass Festival, and Norma at the Metropolitan Opera. Fogel has enjoyed an eight-year collaboration with Francesca Zambello and the Glimmerglass Festival, having choreographed over 15 operas and acting as associate director for the world premieres of Odyssey, Wilde Tales, and Robin Hood. Other world premieres include The Lion, Unicorn and Me with WNO/Kennedy Center, Artus-Excalibur at Theatre St. Gallen, and Princess Butterfly in XSBN, China. Fogel has also created new productions for Atlantic Theatre II, Opera Bordeaux, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theatre, Dallas Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of

Bavarian State Opera; Katya Kabanova in New Zealand; Mitridate, re di Ponto, in Salzburg; Manon Lescaut in Australia; The Rake’s Progress, The Marriage of Figaro, and Cyrano de Bergerac for the Metropolitan Opera; The Queen of Spades with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Guillaume Tell for Paris Opera (Bastille); Fidelio, Die Walküre, Porgy and Bess, Salome, and La forza del destino for Washington National Opera; La bohème at Royal Albert Hall; La rondine at La Fenice; Cyrano de Bergerac at La Scala; world premiere of Heart of a Soldier for San Francisco Opera; La traviata at the Bolshoi Theatre; and many others. In theater, he has worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre in London, in the West End, and on Broadway. He was nominated for Tony, Drama Desk, and Olivier Awards for Medea and won Best Designer in the TMA Awards (now UK Theatre Awards) for Medea and St. Joan. He received Olivier nominations for Le Cid and St. Joan.

JESSICA JAHN
Costume Designer

Jessica Jahn’s costume designs are also seen in HGO’s concurrent production of Norma, which has previously been seen at San Francisco Opera and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. A selection of the Brooklyn-based designer’s past credits includes The Crucible for the Glimmerglass Festival; Maria Stuarda for Seattle Opera, a production that was seen in Houston in 2012; Monodramas and Moses in Egypt for New York City Opera; Dead Man Walking for Washington National Opera; Anna Bolena for Lyric Opera of Chicago; The Manchurian Candidate at Minnesota Opera; and Moby-Dick for Utah Opera and Pittsburgh Opera.

MARK MCCULLOUGH
Lighting Designer

Mark McCullough's work has been seen at HGO in the world premiere of A Christmas Carol (2014) and Show Boat (2013). He has lit productions for the Vienna State Opera (Macbeth), Bolshoi Theatre (La traviata), the Metropolitan Opera (The Marriage of Figaro), the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing (The Tales of Hoffmann), La Scala (Cyrano de Bergerac), Madrid’s Teatro Real (Luisa Miller), Strasbourg’s Opéra National du Rhin (The Beggar’s Opera), the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (The Queen of Spades), Opera North (Eugene Onegin), and productions with Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, L.A. Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Canadian Opera Company, New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, and San Francisco Opera including the full Ring cycle directed by Francesca Zambello. Broadway credits include Outside Mullingar, Jesus Christ Superstar (revival), After Ms. Julie, and The American Plan. International theater credits include Whistle Down the Wind (Aldwych Theatre, London); Der Besuch Der Alten Dame (Ronacher Theatre, Vienna); Artus (St. Gallen, Switzerland); Rebecca (St. Gallen, Switzerland and the Palladium Theatre, Stuttgart); and the U.K. tour of Jesus Christ Superstar. Future engagements include San Francisco Opera’s Ring cycle revival; Norma at Opera National de Chile; and The Cunning Little Vixen and West Side Story at the Glimmerglass Festival.

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CHARLES QUIGGIN
Associate to the Set Designer
Charles Quiggin is making his HGO debut. Notable credits as an assistant/associate designer include The Boy from Oz (Sydney), Whistle Down the Wind (West End), and Jesus Christ Superstar (U.K. tour, Broadway, film), all with director Gale Edwards. For the Royal National Theatre, his work includes Copenhagen, The History Boys, Aristocrats, and Afterlife. For Disney, credits include Aladdin (California Adventure and Broadway), Mary Poppins (West End, Broadway, and tour), Tarzan (Broadway and Germany), and Aida (Munich and German tour). Opera and musical credits include Macbeth (La Scala), William Tell (Vienna State Opera and Paris Opera, Bastille), The Queen of Spades (Royal Opera, London), Porgy and Bess (Washington National Opera), and Katya Kabanova and La rondine (La Fenice). As designer, Quiggin’s work includes set and costume designs for Company, Cabaret, and A Chorus Line (Royal Academy of Music, London); Les Misérables (Denmark tour); Is There Life After High School? (Time Out Critics Choice); The House of Bernarda Alba, The Wild Party and Rent (Bridewell Theatre, London).

DENISE TARRANT
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Concertmaster
Texas native Denise Tarrant started her professional violin career at the age of 16 with the Midland-Odessa Symphony. Afterward she studied at the University of Houston, Rice University, Trinity University (London), and the Royal College of Music (London). She became HGO’s concertmaster under the baton of Patrick Summers in 1999. Highlights of her work at HGO include the world premieres of Ricky Ian Gordon’s The House without a Christmas Tree (2017), Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life (2016), Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree (2000) and Tod Machover’s Resurrection (1999), as well as Floyd’s Of Mice and Men (2002) and Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas (2001), all of which have been released on CD. She further performed in the world premieres of Carlisle
Floyd’s *Prince of Players* (2016); André Previn’s *Brief Encounter* (2009); Heggie’s *Three Decembers* (2008) and *The End of the Affair* (2004); Mark Adamo’s *Lysistrata* (2005); Catán’s *Salsipuedes* (2004); and Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* (2003). She performed onstage as the solo violinist in *Julius Caesar* earlier this season and also when the production debuted in 2003. She has been concertmaster of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1988 and has been featured as a violin soloist in numerous Houston Ballet productions including Stanton Welch’s *Maninyas* (Ross Edward’s Violin Concerto), *Clear* (Bach’s Concerto for Violin and Oboe), *The Four Seasons* (Vivaldi), and Natalie Weir’s *Steppenwolf* (Bruch Violin Concerto).

**ANDREA CARROLL**  
**Soprano—Maria**  
Andrea Carroll, an alumna of the HGO Studio (2012–14), is a 2017–18 ensemble member of the Vienna State Opera. Her roles at HGO include Woglinde in *Götterdämmerung* (2017) and *Das Rheingold* (2014); Mary Hatch Bailey in the world premiere of *It’s a Wonderful Life* and Julie Jordan in *Carousel* (2016); and Anne Egerman in *A Little Night Music* (2014), among others. She won first prize and the Audience Choice Award in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. At the Vienna State Opera this season, she performs the roles of Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and Adina in *The Elixir of Love*, among others. She was also a Vienna State Opera ensemble member in 2015–16, singing over 25 roles, including Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*. She has also performed Micaëla in *Carmen* with Opera San Antonio, Gilda with Palm Beach Opera, Mélisande in Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Garsington Opera, and a concert of Mozart arias with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles. She made her house debut with Washington National Opera as Rosalba in *Florencia en el Amazonas*, sang Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Seattle Opera, and returned to Utah Opera to sing Leïla in *The Pearl Fishers*, a role she will reprise at HGO next season.

“My family values Texas ownership, personal service, and long-term investment. In 1994, we joined with others to create Houston Trust Company—to help families and businesses like ours provide a secure financial foundation for the next generation to build on.”
NORMAN REINHARDT
Tenor—Tony
HGO Studio alumnus Norman Reinhardt (2003–06) has been seen at HGO as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* (2015), Ferrando in *Cosi fan tutte* and Cassio in *Otello* (both in 2014), Jacquino in *Fidelio* (2011), Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2009), Bénédict in *Béatrice et Bénédict* (2008), and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* (2006), among others. As a member of the ensemble at Oper Leipzig, he extended his repertoire to include Alfredo in *La traviata*, Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Tom Rakewell in *The Rake’s Progress*, and Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, all of which he performed under Ulf Schirmer. In particular, Tamino has brought considerable critical acclaim leading to a debut at the Bregenz Festival in David Pountney’s production under Patrick Summers (released on DVD by Unitel). Reinhardt made his debut at the Salzburg Whitsunt Festival and at the Salzburg Festival as Tony in *West Side Story* alongside Cecilia Bartoli and conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. He sang his first Pollione in *Norma* alongside Bartoli at both the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. Current season highlights include role debuts as Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* at Semperoper Dresden and as Robert, Earl of Leicester, in *Maria Stuarda* at Theater an der Wien and a rare performance of Donizetti’s *Maria di Rohan* with Washington Concert Opera under Antony Walker.

GABRIELLE MCCLINTON
Anita
Gabrielle McClinton is making her HGO debut. She has been performing *Annie* (understudy for Velma Kelly) on Broadway in the musical *Chicago* and will return to that show after HGO’s *West Side Story* run. McClinton understudied the role of the Leading Player in the 2013 Tony Award–winning musical *Pippin*. After covering the role for almost a year, she took over the role of the Leading Player for the first national Broadway touring company. Other roles include Whatsername in the first national Broadway tour of *Green Day’s American Idiot*, Molly in *Peter and the Starcatcher* at South Coast Repertory, and other roles at theaters including the Alliance, the St. Louis Muny, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has performed in many readings and workshops in New York City under the direction of Jeff Calhoun, Charles Randolph Wright, Chris Messina, Joe Ricci, and Josh Rhodes. She has also guest starred on *The Mentalist* and has had roles in the films *Fun Size* and *Won’t Back Down*, starring Viola Davis and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Originally from Los Angeles, California, she made the move east to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where she earned her BFA in music theater/acting from Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. She now resides in New York City.

BRIAN VU
Baritone—Riff
Brian Vu is making his HGO debut in the role of Riff, which he will reprise with the Glimmerglass Festival. Previously with Glimmerglass, he has performed Schuanaud in *La bohème*, The Happy Prince in *Wilde Tales*, and Jazz Trio Baritone in *Trouble in Tahiti*; he also participated in productions of *Sweeney Todd* and *Candide*. As an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera, he has performed selections as Ramiro in *L’heure espagnole*. A recent graduate of the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program, Vu has performed Baron Douphol in *La traviata*, Second Nazarene in *Salome*, Berardo in *Riccardo Primo*, Hannah Before in *As One*, Calvin Griffith in *The Summer King*, John Brooke in *Little Women*, Leo Stein in 27, and Fiorello and Figaro (student matinee) in *The Barber of Seville*, all with Pittsburgh Opera. Vu made his Carnegie Hall debut singing Mitch Leigh’s hit song from *Man of La Mancha*, “The Impossible Dream,” with the composer in attendance. He has been an apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera, young artist with the Glimmerglass Festival, vocal fellow with Marilyn Horne’s Music Academy of the West, and a member of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio. Future engagements include debuts with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Atlanta Opera, and San Diego Opera.

DJ PETROSINO
Bernardo
DJ Petrosino has performed in four productions of *West Side Story*, but this is his role debut as Bernardo. He performed on tour in *Cabaret*; other credits include *La Cage aux Folles* and *West Side Story* with the Signature Theatre; *Saturday Night Fever* at the Merry Go Round Playhouse; *A Chorus Line* at the Engeman Theatre; *Saturday Night Fever* and *Mamma Mia!* at the Ogunquit Playhouse/Gateways Playhouse; *The Donkey Show* at American Repertory Theatre; *West Side Story* with Harbor Lights Theatre Co.; *Tommy*, *The 39 Steps*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Cats* with the White Plains Performing Arts Center; *Young Frankenstein*, *The Buddy Holly Story*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* at the Arizona Broadway Theatre; *West Side Story* at the Palace Theatre; *Zanna, Don’t!* with Speakeasy Stage Co.; *9 to 5* with the Beef and Boards Dinner Theatre; and *Christmas Show* with the American Music Theatre.
CONNOR MCRORY
Action
Connor McRory is making his Houston Grand Opera debut. His past credits include Finding Neverland (first national tour), Irving Berlin’s White Christmas (tour), Trip of Love (Off-Broadway), and regionally at Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, The MUNY in St. Louis, Maine State Music Theatre, and others. McRory earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in musical theater at Pennsylvania State University.

ZOIE REAMS
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow Mezzo-soprano—Rosalia
Second-year HGO Studio artist Zoie Reams won second prize in HGO’s 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Her roles at HGO include Third Maidservant in Elektra, Flora Bervoix in La traviata, Third Secretary in Nixon in China, the alto Winged Angel in the world premiere of It’s a Wonderful Life, and Cece in the HGOco world premiere of Some Light Emerges. She won first place in the Emerging Artist category of the 2015 Classical Singer competition and second place in the Gulf Coast Region in the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Past roles include Béatrice in Béatrice et Bénédict, Mrs. Lovett in Sweeney Todd, and Katisha in The Mikado. She performed Tituba in The Crucible with Glimmerglass Festival Opera and Clarice in Rossini’s La pietra del paragone with Wolf Trap Opera. This summer, she will return to Wolf Trap as Maddalena in Rigoletto.

PJ PALMER
A-Rab
PJ Palmer is making his HGO debut. He previously portrayed A-Rab in West Side Story at North Shore Music Theatre, Casa Mañana, and the Fireside Theatre. Other musical theater credits include Elf: The Musical (national tour); Thoroughly Modern Millie (Goodspeed Opera House); Oliver! (Paper Mill Playhouse); Young Frankenstein and Singin’ in the Rain (MUNY); Mamma Mia! (Maine State Music Theatre); Mary Poppins and Grease (Kansas City Starlight Theatre); The Wizard of Oz, Peter Pan, and Elf: The Musical (Fulton Opera House); A Chorus Line (Westchester Broadway Theatre); The Music Man and Joseph
(Stages St. Louis); A Chorus Line (John Engeman Theatre); and Newsies (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina).

**CHRISTOPHER TIPPS**

**Baby John**

Christopher Tipps is making his Houston Grand Opera debut. He recently appeared in Memphis at Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS). He was also in TUTS productions of Pippin and Sleeping Beauty and her Winter Knight. Other Credits include Mamma Mia! as Eddie aboard the Allure of the Seas Royal Caribbean cruise ship, and performing as a member of the ensemble in Hello Dolly! at Riverside Theatre, Vero Beach, Florida.

**RANDY CASTILLO**

**Diesel**

Randy Castillo is making his Houston Grand Opera debut. He was recently an ensemble member in national tours of An American in Paris. He is a former soloist with Compañia Nacional de Danza, Dresden Ballet, and Opéra Ballet de Lyon. He has worked with mentors Nacho Duato, William Forsythe, Lar Lubovitch, Jiří Kylián, and Benjamin Millipied. He is a graduate of the Juilliard School.

**KELSEY KINCAID-GIBBS**

**Anybodys**

Kelsey Kincaid-Gibbs danced in HGO's productions of Eugene Onegin (2015, soloist), Nixon in China (2017, corps), and La traviata (2017, the Matador), working with choreographers Serge Bennathan, Sean Curran, and Austin McCormick, respectively. She began dancing at age three with the Art Park Dancers in Deer Park, Texas; she went on to train at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and performed pre-professionally with the Bay Area Houston Ballet and Theater under the direction of Lynette Mason Gregg. Her professional career began in 2013 when she joined Hope Stone Dance, and she is still with the company, directed by Jane Weiner. She has also performed with the Houston-based companies Frame Dance Productions, Chapman Dance, and Karen Stokes Dance, among others.

**JACK YOUNG**

**Doc**

Jack Young serves as artistic director of Houston Shakespeare Festival and head of the University of Houston's MFA Professional Actor Training Program. Favorite roles performed include Bernard in there is a happiness that morning is, Matt Friedman in Talley's Folly, Warren in Four Places, Richard in Time Stands Still, Shylock in The Merchant of Venice, and the title roles in Macbeth and Richard III. Among the 175 productions he has directed are The Taming of the Shrew, A Lie of the Mind, Arcadia, Comedy of Errors, Three Sisters, Richard III, As You Like It, Hostages, Metamorphoses, Hamlet, God's Man in Texas, and King Lear. A certified fight director/fight teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors, he is the sword safety instructor for the Houston Ballet. Over Labor Day weekend, he will teach in the Texas Stage Combat Intensive here in Houston.

**DAVID MATRANGA**

**Lieutenant Schrank**

David Matranga has previously been seen at HGO as Hunter Bledsoe opposite Frederica von Stade in the world premiere of A Coffin in Egypt (2014) and in subsequent stagings of the opera in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, and at Lincoln Center. Other HGO roles include Steve Baker/Max in Show Boat (2013) and Bell Boy/Frosch in outdoor performances of Die Fledermaus (2014). Houston audiences most recently saw him in the Alley Theatre's production of The Great Society. Theater credits include The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, Straight White Men, Marie Antoinette, Failure: A Love Story, and Dollhouse (all at Stage Repertory Theatre); You Can't Take It with You and The Hollow (Alley Theatre); Miss Julie and Uncle Vanya (Classical Theatre Company); Pride and Prejudice (Dallas Theatre Center), and King Stag (Yale Repertory Theater). Film and television work includes Be Not Afraid, Occupy Texas, The Last Patriot, Law & Order, All My Children, and As The World Turns.

**TUCKER BREDER**

**Big Deal**

Tucker Breder is making his HGO debut. Regionally, he made his principal debut as the Tin Man in Syracuse Stage's new circus-inspired production of The Wizard of Oz led by Donna Drake and 2 Ring Circus. Other regional credits include Candide (principal ensemble) at L.A. Opera starring Kelsey Grammer and Christine Ebersole; Oklahoma! (Mike, Dream Curly cover) and The Siege of Calais (ensemble) at the Glimmerglass Festival; and Mary Poppins (ensemble) at Syracuse Stage. Breder was an acting apprentice at Barrington Stage Co. In 2017, he was awarded the Emerging Talent Award in the Lotte Lenya Competition by the Kurt Weill Foundation. In summer 2018, he will reprise the role of Big Deal in Glimmerglass's West Side Story and
perform in the chorus of *Silent Night*. In the coming year, he expects to complete his bachelor of fine arts degree in musical theater at Syracuse University.

**BEN DELONY**

Snowboy

A native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Ben Delony began his dance training with Madalyn Montegudo and Marianne Hebert, Baton Rouge Ballet Theater, and summer intensives at Ballet Austin and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago before matriculating through the ballet department at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. By the time he earned his bachelor's degree in performance, he had danced numerous featured roles in works by choreographers including Agnes DeMille, Twyla Tharp, George Balanchine, Frederick Ashton, and Joshua Bergasse. He spent seasons with Ballet Memphis and Ballet Nouveau Colorado before becoming a freelance artist, and maintains a strong connection with Houston Grand Opera, where he has danced regularly since 2013. Regional theater credits include the Arvada Center Theater, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Central City Opera, and Boston Early Music Festival. He lives in New York City, where he is a dancer at the Metropolitan Opera and a multi-disciplinary dance instructor.

**AMANDA CASTRO**

Consuelo

Amanda Castro is making her HGO debut. A graduate of California Institute of the Arts, Castro studied under Glen Eddy (Nederlands Dans Theater), Andre Tyson (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater), and Colin Connor (director of Limón Dance Company). Principal dancer of Urban Bush Women for four years, Castro won New York City's 2016 Run the Night competition and placed second in 2017 with her collaborative trio Soles of Duende, which recently participated in the 2018 Women in Dance Leadership Conference as invited artists. Castro has danced in Jared Grimes’s *42nd Street* pre-production workshop in Chicago and performed with Jason Bernard, Ayodele Casel and Andrew Nemr. She also assisted choreographer Nick Kenkel for his work in BC Beat, has been featured as a model/movement specialist in New York Fashion Week, and danced at Radio City Music Hall for the Ellie Awards. She recently finished *In the Heights* at Geva Theater in Rochester, New York.

**TEMPESTT PERRIN**

Francisca

Tempestt Perrin is a native Houstonian now based in New York City. She is making her HGO debut. She graduated from Sam Houston State University with a degree in dance performance; her training also includes intensives with Debbie Allen and Joffrey Ballet, and Broadway Dance Center. Under the direction of renowned tap dancer Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, Perrin performs in New York as one of “The Sophisticated Ladies” at the world-famous Cotton Club. She is the 2018 “New Face of Pink” hair model for Luster’s Pink hair products. Her previous credits include *In the Heights* and *Dreamgirls*.

**TASHA HEGGEM**

Teresita

Tasha Heggem's regional credits include *My Fair Lady* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *The Producers* (Theatre by the Sea); *Peter Pan, Singin' In The Rain*, and *A Fireside Christmas* (Fireside Theatre); *West Side Story* (Oslo New Theatre); and *Die Csárdásfürstin* (Norwegian National Opera). She has also danced with Julia Ehrstrand and Dancers, Saul Ulerio + The Human Institution, Caston & Company, Oslo Danse Ensemble, Subjazz, and Riksteatret. She earned her bachelor of arts degree from the National Academy of the Arts, Norway.

**DOMINIC PECIKONIS**

Chino

Dominic Pecikonis is making his HGO debut. Previous credits include *A Chorus Line* (Paul) with Uptown Players, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Too Many Girls* with Lyric Stage, *Sleeping Beauty* with Stages Repertory Theatre, *Sweet Charity* with Watertower Theatre, and *West Side Story, Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* with Garland Summer Musicals. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in musical theater from Sam Houston State University.

**THOMAS GLASS**

Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow

Officer Krupke

First-year HGO Studio Stai Fellow Thomas Glass, from Edina, Minnesota, won third prize in HGO’s 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He made his HGO mainstage debut.
as Baron Douphol in *La traviata* and also sang Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville*. Last season, he was a member of Minnesota Opera’s Resident Artist Program, performing Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Gustave in the world premiere of *Dinner at Eight*, and Schaunard in *La bohème*, and covering Mercutio in *Romeo, Donner* in *Das Rheingold*, and Dan Packard in *Dinner at Eight*. For Wolf Trap Opera, he sang Joseph in *The Ghosts of Versailles* and Brageron in Gassmann’s *L’opera seria*, also covering the roles of Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* and Schaunard. He joined San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program this past summer. He returns to Wolf Trap Opera this summer as Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*.

**FONG CHAU**

**Glad Hand**

Native Houstonian Fong Chau is making his HGO debut. He was most recently seen in *Promises, Promises* (ensemble) with Bayou City Concert Musicals (BCCM). Previous stage credits are *Bells Are Ringing* (ensemble) with BCCM; *Mack and Mabel* (Freddy) with Stages Repertory Theatre; *Chicago* (Fred Casely) with Bayou City Theatrics; *Les Misérables* (Bishop) with Stageworks Theater; *Young Frankenstein* (dancer) with Standing Room Only Productions; *Auntie Mame* (Ito) with Stages Repertory Theatre; *Rent* (ensemble) with Eklektix Theatre; *Wait until Dark* (Sam Hendrix) with Texas Repertory Theatre; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Bun Foo) and *Ondine* (Mathos) with Sam Houston State University; *A Chorus Line* (Greg) with 1960 Playhouse; *TEXAS Outdoor Musical Drama* (dancer) at Palo Duro Canyon; *Cabaret* (dancer) and *The Medium* (Toby) with West Texas A&M University.

**MELISSA HUNTER MCCANN**

**Graziella/Dance Captain**

Melissa Hunter McCann is making her HGO debut. Recent credits include the first national tour of *Finding Neverland* (Swing/Dance Captain), the 2016 Tony Awards, *West Side Story* (Carnegie Hall), *Paint Your Wagon* (New York City Center Encores!), and *The Nine Fathers of Ariel* (new musical workshop).

**MEGAN MORGAN**

**Velma**

Megan Morgan is making her HGO debut. She most recently performed in *Broadway Bares* to raise funds for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. After graduating with a bachelor of fine arts degree in dance from the University of North Texas, she moved to New York to continue her training at the Paul Taylor School and later became one of the founding members of the Silva Dance Company. Her work has been seen in Off-Broadway productions in New York such as *Spot on the Wall* and *The Tonganoxie Project*. She has performed in many regional productions, some of which include *West Side Story*, *Sweet Charity*, *Crazy for You*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. In addition to *Broadway Bares*, she has also danced in other philanthropic productions such as *Night of Broadway Stars* at Lincoln Center benefiting Covenant House.

**DONALD SAYRE**

**Pepe**

Donald Sayre has been seen previously at HGO as a dancer in *Nixon in China* and *La traviata* (2017). He danced professionally with Uptown Dance Company for three seasons and worked with such choreographers as Chet Walker, Krissey Richmond, Tina Bohnstedt, Priscilla Nathan Murphy, Adrian Ciobanu, Jennifer Mabus, Seán Curran, and Austin McCormick. His work with companies includes Beaumont Civic Ballet, Kingwood Dance Theater, Allegro Ballet, Bones and Memory Dance, Hope Stone, and Houston Grand Opera. Sayre received his BFA in dance from Belhaven University in 2013. He is also a licensed massage therapist. He works closely with METdance, Masters Upper Level Dance Company, and Massage Therapy Houston.

**EMILIO RAMOS**

**Indio**

Emilio Ramos is making his HGO debut. On Broadway, he performed in the 2015 Lincoln Center revival of *The King and I*. Off-Broadway, he performed in *West Side Story* as part of Carnegie Hall’s *Somewhere Project*. In national tours, he has performed Chino in *West Side Story* and Ritchie Valens in *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*. He has performed in regional theater productions of *Mary Poppins*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, and *Cats*.

**ROB FLEBBE**

**Gee-tar**

Rob Flebbe was last seen at HGO as a supernumerary in *Götterdämmerung*; he is now making his HGO debut in a named role. He appeared in *West Side Story* as Snowboy in a U.S. national tour and served as assistant choreographer to the Opera Grand Rapids production in 2006. His New York credits include *Jeffrey* and *The Ritz* at Lincoln Center and *War*...
and Peace at the Metropolitan Opera. He appeared in The Radio City Christmas Spectacular in Nashville. In Houston, he was seen at TUTS as Lewis in Pippin and in eight previous TUTS productions. He has also performed and choreographed for Stages Repertory Theatre, Main Street Theater, and Unity Theater. He has appeared in cabarets for TOSOS II in New York, and Bayou City Concert Musicals and Caring Cabaret Events in Houston. He has served as choreographer for the University of Houston and Howard Payne University.

MAUREEN KELLEY
Minnie
Maureen Kelley is making her HGO debut. Regional theater credits include White Christmas (Ogunquit Playhouse), Rock of Ages (regional premiere, The Gateway Playhouse), 42nd Street (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina), Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (Ruth, The Fireside), The Producers (Arizona Broadway Theatre), Promises, Promises (Bayou City Concert Musicals), and Mack and Mabel (Broward Stage Door). She holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in dance from the University of Michigan.

RACHEL MENGDEN
Clarice
Rachel Mengden, a Houston native, is making her HGO debut. She is a classically trained, full-time dancer finishing her fourth year as a full scholarship recipient in the Dr. Kesten Mentoring Program at the Sarasota Cuban Ballet School. Dancing for over 15 years, she has trained under many world-renowned teachers, such as Ramona de Saa and Ana Julia Bermudez de Castro of the National Ballet of Cuba, Carlos dos Santos, Ariel Serrano, Wilmian Hernandez, José Carreño, Peter Franc (former soloist with Houston Ballet), Duncan Cooper, and Lexi Johnson. She has also trained under vocal coaches Michelle McCord and Krista Benson.

EMILY ROY-SAYRE
Pauline
Louisiana native Emily Roy-Sayre has been seen at HGO as a dancer in Nixon in China (2017). She graduated from Belhaven University in 2013 with a BFA in dance and emphasis in modern dance technique. In her hometown of Baton Rouge, she danced professionally and choreographed for Of Moving An Oratorio by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Sunday, April 22, 2018 4:00 PM St. Paul’s United Methodist Church Featuring: Tom Jaber, Conductor Mark Diamond, Baritone, Elijah Duke Kim, Tenor Andrea Jaber, Mezzo-Soprano Bryan Anderson, Organist The Great Organ of St. Paul’s Information HoustonMasterworks.org Office@houstonmasterworks.org Performing Great Choral Music for A Great Community

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Colors, Louisiana’s leading contemporary company, and taught throughout the city. Her work in Louisiana ranged from dancing on the runway for Avenue Rouge Runway Fashion Show to an extreme aerial harness performance for the Louisiana Blues Festival. Since moving to Texas in 2014, Roy-Sayre has danced for Uptown Dance Company, The Pilot Dance Project, and Frame Dance Productions.

**TAYLOR SIMMONS**

**Luis**
Taylor Simmons is making his Houston Grand Opera debut. His credits include the national tour of Peter Pan 360. Favorite regional credits include The Music Man (Theatre By the Sea); Peter and the Starcatcher, Peter Pan, Our Town, and Into the Woods (freeFall Theatre), State Fair (Sierra Repertory Theatre), West Side Story (San Diego Musical Theatre), The Music Man (Musical Theatre West), Hello, Dolly! (3-D Theatricals) and Fiddler on the Roof (Encore Dinner Theatre). Simmons has also performed across Europe and Japan with The Young Americans.

**STEVEN PAUL BLANDINO**

**Anxious**
Steven Paul Blandino is making his HGO debut. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in commercial dance with a focus in choreography at Pace University. His recent credits include: Newsies, Mamma Mia!, and Shrek (Tuacahn Center for the Arts); Carnegie Hall’s Take the Stage; Johnson & Johnson: Save the Children, New York Musical Festival; Ludo’s Broken Bride (choreographer); Rebel Rebel: The Many Lives of David Bowie; Burlesque to Broadway; and many more.

**JOSHUA DE ALBA**

**Nibbles**
Joshua De Alba was seen previously as a dancer in HGO’s Nixon in China and La traviata (both in 2017). A native of Orlando, Florida, De Alba trained as a musician before discovering dance. He began working as a dancer and teacher in central Florida and beyond, eventually deciding to pursue an education in theater and dance from Northwestern State University. De Alba spent his time there developing as a choreographer and presented two concert works that were selected to be performed at the Kennedy Center for the American Dance Festival. Upon graduating, De Alba relocated to Houston to work with local dance theater company Open Dance Project. He is currently a company member at both Hope Stone, Inc., and NobleMotion Dance.

**ALISSA LAVERGNE**

**Estella**
Alissa LaVergne is making her HGO debut. She recently moved back to Houston from New York City where she was a Rockette in the Christmas Spectacular for eight years at Radio City Music Hall. While a Rockette, she appeared in the Tony Awards, Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, Rockefeller Christmas Tree Lighting, Celebrity Apprentice, and numerous other television performances. She was also a swing in The New York Spectacular. She was last seen in Houston performing at the Hobby Center with Theatre Under The Stars in productions of A Chorus Line (Sheila), The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (Beatrice), Mary Poppins, Spamalot, White Christmas, Guys and Dolls, Hello, Dolly!, and Oliver!

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NORMA

An Opera in Two Acts | Music by Vincenzo Bellini | Libretto by Felice Romani

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

A co-production of San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, and Gran Teatre del Liceu.

APR. 27 | APR. 29m | MAY 05 | MAY 08 | MAY 11

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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Oroveso  Peixin Chen †
Pollione  Chad Shelton †
Flavio  Yongzhao Yu †
         Albert and Anne Chao/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow
Norma  Liudmyla Monastyrska
Adalgisa  Jamie Barton †
Clotilde  Yelena Dyachek †
         Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn
         Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor  Patrick Summers
         Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Director  Kevin Newbury
Set Designer  David Korins *
Costume Designer  Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer  Duane Schuler
Chorus Master  Richard Bado †
         Sarah and Ernest Butler
         Chorus Master Chair
Musical Preparation  Peter Pasztor †
         Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Jr.
         Endowed Chair
         Bradley Moore
         Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
         Jonathan Gmeinder †
         Bill and Melinda Brunger/
         Lynn and Henry Gissel/
         Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow
Banda Conductor  Geoffrey Loff †
Stage Manager  Kristen E. Burke
Assistant Director  Meg Edwards
Supertitles by  Scott Heumann,
         adapted by Daniel James

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by  Meredith Morse

Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of
Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.
Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists,
I.A.T.S.E., Local USA-829.
Orchestral musicians are represented by the Houston Professional Musicians Association, Local #65-699,
American Federation of Musicians.
Stage crew personnel provided by I.A.T.S.E., Local #51.
Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.
This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

SPECIAL CREDITS

Blazek & Vetterling LLP—Houston, Auditors
Apurva Thekdi, M.D., Consulting Physician
and Otolaryngologist
Quan Law Group, PLLC
Immigration and Visa Attorneys

Vinson & Elkins LLP, Attorneys of Record
Shweiki Media, Printer, Opera Cues

* HGO debut    † HGO Studio artist    ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
SYNOPSIS

The performance will last approximately 3 hours.

SETTING
Gaul during the Roman occupation around 50 B.C.E.

ACT I
Led by the high priest Oroveso, the Druids meet at their temple to pray for revenge upon their conquerors, the Romans. After the Druids have left the temple, Pollione, proconsul of the Roman forces, arrives. He tells his aide, Flavio, that he has fallen in love with the young priestess Adalgisa and that he intends to abandon Norma—the high priestess and Oroveso’s daughter—with whom he has two children. When the Druids return, Norma prays for peace. Wishing to protect Pollione, she tells the Druids that fighting the Romans is futile; however, she promises to declare war against the Romans if the gods demand it.

After the rites are completed, Adalgisa remains in the deserted grove to ask the gods to help her put aside her romantic feelings for Pollione and remain true to her vows. Pollione finds Adalgisa in the grove and begs her to abandon her life as a priestess and come with him to Rome, where he has been ordered to return the next day. Overcome by her love for him, Adalgisa agrees.

Norma tells her confidante Clotilde, who cares for her children in secret, that she is afraid Pollione will leave her. Hearing Adalgisa approach, Clotilde hides the children. Adalgisa tells Norma that she has fallen in love. She asks Norma to forgive her and release her from her vows, and Norma is about to do so when Pollione appears. It becomes immediately clear to Norma that Pollione is the man Adalgisa loves. When Adalgisa learns that Norma and Pollione were lovers, she swears she would rather die than separate them.

INTERMISSION

ACT II
Norma tries to kill her children to prevent them from living in disgrace without a father, but she can’t bring herself to do it. Instead she implores Adalgisa to return to Rome with Pollione and raise the children as her own. The young priestess refuses, insisting she will go to Pollione and persuade him to return to Norma and the children.

Oroveso and the Druid men gather at the temple for morning prayer and to secretly plan an attack on the Romans, but Oroveso learns that a new, more violent proconsul will replace Pollione in command. Oroveso counsels his followers to feign submission and patiently wait for their chance to rebel.

Norma anxiously awaits the outcome of Adalgisa’s mission. On learning that she has failed to sway Pollione, she sounds the signal for war. A sacrificial victim is required, and Pollione, who has been captured trying to abduct Adalgisa, is brought in. Alone with Pollione, Norma promises to grant his freedom if he will leave Adalgisa. When he refuses, she threatens to kill him. Norma then summons her followers and informs them that one of the priestesses has broken her vows and must be sacrificed—but when she confesses that she is speaking of herself, Pollione is deeply moved and asks to share her fate. Norma begs Oroveso to care for their children and prepares to die with her lover.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY
HGO first presented Bellini’s Norma during the 1978–79 season (with Renata Scotto as Norma, Tatyana Troyanos as Adalgisa, and Paul Plishka as Oroveso). It was subsequently performed in seasons 1986–87 (with Ghena Dimitrova as Norma) and 1995–96 (with Carol Vaness as Norma and Susanne Mentzer as Adalgisa).
VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor *, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Second Violin
Hae-a Lee-Barnes *
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Kana Kimura
Mila Neal
Maria Lin
Andres Gonzales
Rachel Shepard
Hannah Watson
Fiona Lofthouse

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Erika Johnson *
Assistant Principal
Arian Nelson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steven Wiggs *
Steve Estes

DOUBLE BASS
Dennis Whittaker *, Principal
Erik Gronfor *
Assistant Principal
Carla Clark *
Deborah Dunham

FLUTE
Seth Morris †, Principal
Christina Medawar *
Acting Principal
Monica Daniel-Barker

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *
Principal
Spring Hill

CLARINET
Sean Krissman *, Principal
Eric Chi *

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Nathan Koch

FRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston *, Principal
Kimberly Penrod Minson *
Spencer Park *
Gavin Reed

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo †, Principal
Dominic Derassee,
Acting Principal
Randal Adams *

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén *, Principal
Mark Holley *
Kyle Gordon *

TUBA
Mark Barton *, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman*, Principal

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll

BANDA
Melissa Suhr, flute
Rebecca Powell, piccolo
James Johnson, clarinet
Roman Cisneros, clarinet
Kevin McIntyre, horn
James Wilson, horn
Daniel Egan, trumpet
Samuel Huss, trumpet
Gerardo Mata, trumpet
Ryan Rongone, trombone
Bradley Snyder, bass trombone
Steve Curtis, tuba
Karen Slotter, percussion

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
CHORUS

Richard Bado, Chorus Master
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Christopher Abide
Ofelia Adame
Geordie Alexander
Debra Alons
Sydney E. Anderson
Dennis Arrowsmith
G. Leslie Biffle
Brennan Blankenship
Andrew Briggs
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Esteban Cordero
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Robert Dee
Callie Jo Denbigh
Justin Dunkle
Ashly Evans
Peter Farley
Ami Figg
Stewart D. Gaitan

Brian M. Gibbs
Suzanne Gregory
Nancy Hall
Douglas E. Henshaw
Frankie Hickman
Julie Hoeltzel
Jon Janacek
Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Wesley Landry
Katie Loff
Miles Robert Lutterbie
Lindsay Lymer
Keenan Manceaux
Neal Martinez
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Jeff Monette
Laura Elizabeth Patterson
Miguel Pedroza

Cristino Perez
Nicholas Rathgeb
Kendall Reimer
Jessica S. Richards
Priscilla Salisbury
Christina Scanlan
Valerie Serice
Paul Joseph Serna
Brian Shircliffe
Kade I. Smith
Haley Stage
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
John Stevens
Lauren Stocker
Naonobu Sugitani
Lauren Henderson-Turner
Denise Ward
John Weinel
Jennifer Wright
Patrick Wright

SUPERNUMERARIES

Troy Faldyn
Cris Skelton
Miguel Stonecipher
Cylis Wilson

CHILDREN
Max Madof
Rustam Yusifov
WHO'S WHO

PATRICK SUMMERS
(UNITED STATES)

Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Conductor

Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company's music director since 1998. He has conducted more than 60 operas at HGO and has been responsible for many important artistic advances, including the development of the HGO Orchestra. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company's first-ever complete cycle of Wagner's Ring and its first performances of the Verdi Requiem; collaborating on the world premieres of André Previn's Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis's The Refuge, Jake Heggie's It's a Wonderful Life, The End of the Affair, and Three Decembers, Carlisle Floyd's Cold Sassy Tree and Prince of Players, and Tod Machover's Resurrection; leading the American premiere of Weinberg's Holocaust opera The Passenger, both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers has enjoyed a long association with San Francisco Opera and was honored in 2015 with the company's highest honor, the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes collaborating with André Previn on the 1998 world premiere of A Streetcar Named Desire and conducting several of the performances, and conducting Jake Heggie's Moby-Dick, which was recorded and telecast on PBS's Great Performances. Earlier this season at HGO, he conducted Handel's Julius Caesar and R. Strauss's Elektra.

KEVIN NEWBURY
(UNITED STATES)

Director

Kevin Newbury is a theater, opera, and film director based in New York City. Previously for HGO, he directed Mary Stuart (2012), The Magic Flute (2008), and the HGOoco world premiere of O Columbia (2015). He has directed over 60 original productions and his work has been presented by many opera companies, festivals, and symphonies including the Park Avenue Armory, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Minnesota Opera, the San Francisco Symphony, L’Opéra de Montreal, the Prototype Festival, Bard Summerscape, Portland Opera, Opera Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Seattle Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, the Virginia Arts Festival, the Wexford Festival, Center Theatre Group, and American Repertory Theatre, among many others. Recent world premiere highlights include Gregory Spears/Greg Pierce's Fellow Travelers (Cincinnati Opera, Prototype Festival/NYC, Lyric Opera of Chicago); Mason Bates/Mark Campbell's The Revolution of Steve Jobs (Santa Fe Opera, upcoming: Seattle Opera and San Francisco Opera); Todd Almond's Kansas City Choir Boy (starring Courtney Love, NYC, Boston, L.A., and Miami); Kevin Puts/Mark Campbell's The Manchurian Candidate and Douglas J. Cuomo/John Patrick Shanley's Doubt (Minnesota Opera); and Jimmy López/Nilo Cruz's Bel Canto (Lyric Opera of Chicago, broadcast on PBS's Great Performances). Theater includes Candy and Dorothy (GLAAD Media Award). Films include Monsura Is Waiting, Stag, and Epiphany V, which have played at over 40 festivals and won several awards.

DAVID KORINS
(UNITED STATES)

Set Designer

David Korins is making his HGO debut. His work has been seen on Broadway in Hamilton (Tony nomination), Dear Evan Hansen, War Paint (Tony nomination), Motown, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Annie, An Evening with Patti Lupone and Mandy Patinkin, Godspell, The Pee-wee Herman Show, Lombardi, and Passing Strange. Opera credits include Norma (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company), and the world premieres of Bel Canto (Lyric Opera Theater), Mary Magdalene (San Francisco Opera) and Oscar (Santa Fe Opera). He earned an Emmy Award for his designs for Grease: Live! He has created designs for concerts featuring Andrea Bocelli, Bruno Mars, Lady Gaga, Kanye West, Sia, and Mariah Carey. He also does hospitality, event, and experience design.

JESSICA JAHN
(UNITED STATES)

Costume Designer

For information about Jessica Jahn, please see p. 41.
RICHARD BADO
(UNITED STATES)
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Chorus Master
Richard Bado has been HGO’s chorus master for 30 seasons and recently returned as head of music staff, a position he held from 1991 to 2005. An alumnus of the HGO Studio (1984–85), Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading HGO’s acclaimed production of Show Boat (5th Ave Theatre, Seattle); and Ragtime (Manhattan Theatre Club); and The Importance of Being Earnest on Broadway. Upcoming productions include Candide (Santa Fe Opera), Lucia di Lammermoor (Opera Philadelphia and Vienna State Opera) and Falstaff (Teatro Real). Schuler is a founding partner of Schuler Shook, the theater planning and architectural lighting design firm responsible for designs and renovations for Seattle’s Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York.

DUANE SCHULER
(UNITED STATES)
Lighting Designer
Duane Schuler’s work encompasses opera, ballet, and theater. For HGO, he has lit numerous productions since 1973, most recently Tosca (2015), Cosi fan tutte (2014), Don Giovanni (2013), Fidelio (2011), and Ariadne auf Naxos (2011). His lighting designs for the Metropolitan Opera include this season’s Cendrillon, Luisa Miller, and Thais, as well as 26 other productions since 1995. He has designed more than 140 productions at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, including this season’s Faust, last season’s Norma, and the world premiere of Jimmy López’s Bel Canto. His work has also been seen at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; La Scala; the Salzburg Festival; Paris Opera; Glyndebourne Opera; Seattle Opera; San Francisco Opera; and many others. Theater credits include House and Garden, Last Dance, and A Picasso (Manhattan Theatre Club); Ragtime and Holiday Inn (5th Ave Theatre, Seattle); and The Importance of Being Earnest on Broadway. Upcoming productions include Candide (Santa Fe Opera), Lucia di Lammermoor (Opera Philadelphia and Vienna State Opera) and Falstaff (Teatro Real). Schuler is a founding partner of Schuler Shook, the theater planning and architectural lighting design firm responsible for designs and renovations for Seattle’s Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York.

LIUDMYLA MONASTYRSKA
(UKRAINE)
Soprano—Norma
Liudmyla Monastyrska has opened two seasons for HGO, both times in the title roles: in Tosca (2015) and Aida (2013). She is singing her first North American performances as Norma. Other highlights this season include her company debut with the L.A. Opera as Abigaille in Nabucco, a return to the Deutsche Oper Berlin for Tosca and Abigaille, and the title role in a new production of Manon Lescaut with Gran Teatre del Liceu. Future engagements include singing the title role in Plácido Domingo’s Aida: The Stadium World Tour. Recent performances include engagements with the Opéra National de Paris singing the title roles in Tosca and Aida (new production); with the Metropolitan Opera singing the title role in Aida with Marco Armiliato, Abigaille with James Levine and Plácido Domingo, SANTUZZA in Cavalleria rusticana with conductor Fabio Luisi, and Tosca with Joseph Colaneri; with Deutsche Oper Berlin in her role debut as Elisabeth de Valois in Don Carlo, in the title role of Tosca, and Abigaille; and with the Bavarian State Opera in her role debut as Abigaille. She also sang the role of Abigaille with Plácido Domingo at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, made her debut with the Vienna State Opera singing the title role in Aida under conductor Simone Young, and performed Lady Macbeth in Verdi’s Macbeth at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and on a Japanese tour with the company under the baton of Sir Antonio Pappano. Also with the Royal Opera, she performed Nabucco with Nicólà Luisiotti and Aida at La Scala. She has sung the Verdi Requiem at Rome’s Accademia di Santa Cecilia as well as with the Cleveland Orchestra.

DENISE TARRANT (UNITED STATES)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Concertmaster
For information on Denise Tarrant, please see p. 42.
JAMIE BARTON
(UNITED STATES)
Mezzo-soprano—Adalgisa
HGO Studio alumna Jamie Barton (2007–09) is a Grammy Award nominee and the winner of the 2017 Beverly Sills Artist Award, the 2015 Richard Tucker Award, and both the Main and Song Prizes at the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. She appears regularly at HGO, most recently in Wagner’s Ring cycle as Waltraute/Second Norn in Gotterdammerung (2017) and as Fricka in Das Rheingold (2014) and Die Walküre (2015). In the 2017–18 season, she appears in recital with Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax, debuts at the Teatro Real Madrid as Léonor de Guzman in La favorite, and returns to many of America’s most-loved opera houses: to sing Adalgisa at the Metropolitan Opera; Eboli in Don Carlo at Washington National Opera; and Fricka, Waltraute, and Second Norn at San Francisco Opera. Orchestral debuts include Handel’s Messiah with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Bernstein’s Jeremiah Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra, and Mahler’s Rückert-Lieder with the Oulu Symphony Orchestra in Finland. Following a Verdi Requiem with her hometown orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Barton embarks on a recital tour with pianist Kathleen Kelly, including the world premiere of Iain Bell’s Of You, commissioned by Carnegie Hall. Last season, she released her debut solo album, All Who Wander, featuring songs by Mahler, Dvořák, and Sibelius. Future seasons include returns to San Francisco Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

PEIXIN CHEN (CHINA)
Bass—Oroveso
HGO Studio alumnus Peixin Chen (2012–15) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as Doctor Bartolo in this season’s The Barber of Seville and as the bass soloist in the Verdi Requiem (2017). Other HGO roles include Doctor Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); Sarastro in outdoor performances of The Magic Flute (2015); Montano in Otello, Second SS Guard in The Passenger, and Usher in Rigoletto (2014); Ferrando in Il trovatore (2013); and Customs House Guard in La bohème (2012–13). He entered the Studio after winning third prize in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. In the current season, he makes his Opera Philadelphia debut as Sarastro in the acclaimed production of The Magic Flute co-directed by Suzanne Andrade and Barrie Kosky, with full-scale animation created by Paul Barritt; takes to the stage of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Sparafucile in Rigoletto directed by David Gately, and debuts at the Bard Music Festival as the Old Patriarch in Dvořák’s Dmitrij conducted by Leon Botstein in a new production directed by Anne Bogart. Last season, he joined the Metropolitan Opera for productions of Aida and Salome, made his Detroit Symphony Orchestra debut with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony led by Leonard Slatkin, having also sung this work with Andrés Orozco-Estrada and the Houston Symphony; and joined Edo de Waart for staged performances of The Marriage of Figaro with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

CHAD SHELTON
(UNITED STATES)
Tenor—Pollione
HGO Studio alumnus Chad Shelton (1997–2000) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as Aegisth in Elektra (2018), Mao Tse-tung in Nixon in China (2017), Cavaradossi in performances of Tosca (2015–16); Charles II in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); Froh in Das Rheingold and Fredrik Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014); and Alfredo in La traviata (2012), among many others. His engagements next season include reprising Pollione in Norma with Utah Opera and North Carolina Opera, Don José in Carmen on tour in Japan as a guest artist of the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy Opera Project for a second time, and returns to the roles of Roderigo in Otello at the Metropolitan Opera and Charles II in Prince of Players with Florentine Opera (for commercial release). Recent performances of him include a return to the Grand Théâtre de Genève for his first performances of Sir Edgar Aubry in Der Vampyr, Don José in Carmen with Austin Opera, his Metropolitan Opera debut as Roderigo in a new production of Otello, and his first performances of Erik in The Flying Dutchman with Boston Lyric Opera. He has joined the Opéra National de Lorraine numerous times, including for the title role in Idomeneo, Giasone in Medea, Don José, Jack in The Importance of Being Earnest, Lysander in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Guido Bardi in Eine florentinische Traagödie, Lechmere in Owen Wingrave, Tamino in The Magic Flute, and the title role in Candide.

YELENA DYACHEK
(UKRAINE/UNITED STATES)
Soprano—Clotilde
Second-year HGO Studio artist Yelena Dyacheck sang Annina in La traviata and Berta in The Barber of Seville at HGO this season. She won the Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow Soprano—Clotilde
Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, and shortly thereafter, she was named a Grand Prize Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Last season at HGO, she sang First Secretary in *Nixon in China* and Dominique de Menil in the HGOco world premiere of *Some Light Emerges*. Other previous roles include the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*, the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and Madama Cortese in *Il viaggio a Reims* at USC’s Thornton School of Music; Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* with the Aspen Opera Center and the Merola Opera Program; and Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* with the Aspen Opera Center. This summer, she will join Wolf Trap Opera as Elettra in *Idomeneo*.

YONGZHAO YU (CHINA)
*Albert and Anne Chao/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow*
**Tenor—Flavio**

Third-year HGO Studio artist Yongzhao Yu won the Audience Choice Award and the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in HGO’s 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He began this season singing Alfredo in selected performances of *La traviata*, and last season he performed the tenor Winged Angel in HGO’s world premiere of *It’s a Wonderful Life*. In concert, he has appeared at the Grand Theatre of the Suzhou Culture and Arts Center and in Shanghai. Other roles include Flavio in *Norma* with the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, Naulz in *Visitors on the Icy Mountain* with the Shanghai Grand Theater, and Alfredo in *La traviata* at both the Shanghai Oriental Art Center and the Aspen Opera Center. Upcoming engagements include a return to the NCPA as Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*. 
THE MANY-FACETED MUSICAL LIFE OF RICHARD BROWN

BY PERRYN LEECH
Managing Director
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair
**PERRYN LEECH:** Tell me a little about your childhood.

RICHARD BROWN: I was born in Philadelphia and was an only child. My dad was a public school music teacher but we also had a family business, which was a music store and dance studio. Mom would run that while dad was teaching, and then he would come home after school and help in the shop. It was a real mom and pop business.

So music was clearly part of your life! What instruments did you play?

I started at the age of seven and a half playing the accordion—not exactly a conventional choice for someone at that age! I watched Lawrence Welk on TV and loved his program; that was where I first saw the accordion. Looking back, I didn’t really like it that much.

Although you were playing it, you weren’t really connecting to it? What did you move on to?

The Philadelphia public schools had amazing music programs and, especially, really good summer programs. So when I was about twelve and a half, I did a summer program and played the drums for the first time—and immediately knew this was something I loved. I also immediately got my own set of drums and started to have lessons at the music school.

So when you went to high school, you played drums?

Absolutely—we had a great school band and I loved playing in it. I also knew that I needed a better teacher, so every Friday night my dad would drive me about an hour to my teacher. We had found Fred Hinger, who was the principal timpanist in the Philadelphia Orchestra, and by this point I knew that this was what I wanted to do. I then got a scholarship from the Philadelphia Board of Education to go to a great music school—Temple University in Philly—where I earned my BA.

What was your goal at this point, in terms of playing as a career?

It seemed to me that I only had two choices at that time. I could teach music in public school or I could join the army. There was an opening in the army band in Washington, D.C., and I auditioned and got offered the place. So I joined the army! I had a wonderful yet very hard three years in the army and truly learned how to be a professional. In 1972, an opportunity came up at the Houston Symphony, and I auditioned for the position and won it. I moved, but honestly found it difficult to settle here at first. But I did, and for eight years I was in the Houston Symphony and also worked as an adjunct professor at Rice.

**RICHARD BROWN** is the orchestra personnel manager for Houston Grand Opera (or fixer, for short) and is responsible for making sure that the right player is in the right chair for whatever HGO is playing in a given performance. He regularly plays as principal percussionist in the HGO Orchestra and is also the founder of the orchestra that takes his name—at some time or other, most of us have danced to his group at a gala or other event. Richard talked to Perryn Leech about his musical career and the wide-ranging positions he has held.
You had something that many musicians strive for—the security of a full-time job and additional teaching at a very good school. I did, but I was a little tired of classical playing as well. I decided that I wanted to go to New York, so I left to become a freelancer. I had some wonderful years playing in various Broadway shows as well as playing as an extra player in the New York Phil and Orchestra of St. Luke’s and doing studio work. It wasn’t easy to break into New York, but it was a great time. I also did some interesting other work including playing with Ann-Margret in Las Vegas, and that relationship would go on for some 15 years—we also played in Houston with Ann-Margret. Then I had a call from Larry Livingston at Rice and he asked if I was interested in coming back to teach.

How did you keep that all going? There were cheap flights and somehow, I managed to make it work, but that was 35 years ago, and I just did it! My son was living here, so there was an extra incentive to be in Houston when I could. Eventually, HGO decided to found an orchestra to play some performances. I was approached to help with that. I then came on board in the personnel manager position after the company toured to Egypt as part of the performances of *Show Boat*. I have now been doing that job for a long time and have seen the orchestra change a lot since Patrick Summers was appointed as music director. Together we have built a very strong orchestra for HGO and we also work closely with our colleagues at the Ballet to try to attract the very best core players we can. When we started, Patrick told me that it would take ten years to build the orchestra we wanted, and I think the *Ring* cycle operas proved we have done that.

You have a lot to be proud of, but I know you are also proud of the work you have done with the Grand Teton Music Festival and the Richard Brown Orchestra. I am very proud. We have a truly wonderful time in the Tetons, and that festival has developed into a major music festival. It is inspiring to work with another amazing conductor in Donald Runnicles, and we now are like a second family of players who look forward to seeing each other every year and making music together. The Richard Brown Orchestra is something I love to do as well. We do about 30 events a year, playing anything from old, big band standards to modern pop and dance music. We normally play galas and parties, and they are always fun!

You play an amazing variety of music and styles, and it all started from a small boy finding music in his life and starting to play the accordion! I have enjoyed being able to not just do one thing and have worked with some amazingly talented people in all of those fields. I retire from Rice this year and will travel a little more, but I am certainly not ready to stop yet. It has been a great adventure for sure.

Clockwise from upper left: Richard in elementary school with his first-choice instrument, the accordion; finding his niche playing drums in junior high school; playing with the U.S. Army Band in Washington, D.C.; playing for a television show at Kennedy Center celebrating Bob Hope’s 75th birthday; the Richard Brown Orchestra (photo by D. Jones Photography). Richard is third from left in front.
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

THE SPRING REPERTORY PERIOD is a time when the HGO Studio looks to the future, as we bid good wishes and a bright future to our graduating artists. This year we have a large group of soon-to-be alumni who are bound for exciting careers. Mané Galoyan, Zoie Reams, Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, Yongzhao Yu, Sol Jin, Anthony Robin Schneider, and Peter Walsh hold a special place in our hearts, and we’re proud of their strong performances at HGO and the incredible growth we’ve seen in each of them.

This year’s Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias was held at Rice University’s Stude Concert Hall, and we couldn’t have asked for a better space to hear the great talents who rose to the top in this year’s competition. For the second year, the program was livestreamed, and we had a significant increase in viewers selected four winners: contralto Leia Lensing (1st prize), mezzo-soprano Dorothy Gal (2nd prize), soprano Lindsay Kate Brown (3rd prize), and soprano Liv Redpath (Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award and Audience Choice Award).

Seven new artists have been awarded positions in the 2018–19 HGO Studio. I’m pleased that four singers who participated in Concert of Arias will join us, including our three top prize winners—Leia Lensing, Dorothy Gal, and Lindsay Kate Brown, as well as baritone Geoffrey Hahn. Leia hails from Iowa, where she is currently completing her master’s degree at the University of Northern Iowa. Dorothy is originally from Florida, Lindsay from New York, and Geoffrey from California, so we’ve got all regions of the United States covered! For Dorothy, Lindsay, and Geoffrey, the move to HGO isn’t far, as they are all currently finishing degrees at Rice University. Joining these four singers are soprano Nardus Williams, who moves to Houston after completing her master’s degree at the Royal College of Music in London, and bass-baritone Daniel Noyola, who is originally from Mexico and currently studies at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. We are happy to welcome a new pianist to the program, as well: Kyle Naig, an alum of the University of Kansas, comes to HGO after several successful years as a free-lance pianist/coach, most recently at Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and the Glimmerglass Festival.

If you’re traveling this summer, be sure to catch our current and future Studio artists’ performances, all over the world:

• Santa Fe Opera: Daniel Noyola (apprentice artist and cover for Mustafà in L’italiana in Algeri), Anthony Robin Schneider (apprentice artist/Truffaldino in Ariadne auf Naxos, Grand Inquisitor in Candide), Sol Jin (Yamadori in Madame Butterfly), Leia Lensing (apprentice artist)
• Wolf Trap Opera (Vienna, VA): Yelena Dyachek (Elettra in Idomeneo), Mané Galoyan (Gilda in Rigoletto), Zoie Reams (Maddalena in Rigoletto), Richard Trey Smagur (Tybalt in Roméo et Juliette), Thomas Glass (Mercutio in Roméo et Juliette); Blair Salter, coaching fellow
• Cincinnati Opera: Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen (Ottone in L’incoronazione di Poppea)
• National Centre for the Performing Arts (Beijing, China): Yongzhao Yu (Roméo in Roméo et Juliette)
• Des Moines Metro Opera: Dorothy Gal (1st Wood Sprite, Rusalka), Lindsay Kate Brown (cover for Ježibaba in Rusalka)
• Central City Opera: Peter Walsh, pianist/coach
• Glimmerglass Opera: Kyle Naig, apprentice pianist/coach
• Glyndebourne Festival: Nardus Williams (Jerwood Young Artist)
• Cincinnati Opera: Peter Walsh, pianist/coach
• Glimmerglass Opera: Kyle Naig, apprentice pianist/coach

As we wind down this season, don’t forget to join HGO at Miller Outdoor Theatre (May 18 and 19) or Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion (May 23) for encore performances of The Barber of Seville, this time featuring Studio artists Sol Jin (Figaro), Richard Trey Smagur (Count Almaviva), Anthony Robin Schneider (Don Basilio), and Yelena Dyachek (Berta) along with alums Sofia Selowsky (Rosina) and Peixia Chen (Don Bartolo).

—Brian Speck, HGO Studio Director

Concert of Arias winners Lindsay Kate Brown, Leia Lensing, Liv Redpath, and Dorothy Gal. Photo by Wilson Parish.
SAVE THE DATE

**HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2017-18**

- **Yelena Dyachek**, soprano
  - Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow
- **Mané Galoyan**, soprano
  - Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow
- **Thomas Glass**, baritone
  - Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow
- **Christa Gaug**, German Instructor
  - Sponsord by John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer
- **Jonathan Gmeinder**, pianist/coach
  - Bill and Melinda Brunker/Lynn and Henry Gissel/ Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow
- **Sol Jin**, baritone
  - Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow
- **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**, countertenor
  - Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
- **Zoie Reams**, mezzo-soprano
  - The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow
- **Blair Salter**, pianist/coach
  - Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow
- **Anthony Robin Schneider**, bass
  - Beth Madison/Frances Marzio Fellow
- **Richard Trey Smagur**, tenor
  - Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
- **Peter Walsh**, pianist/coach
  - Nancy and Ted Haywood/Stephanie Larsen Fellow
- **Yongzhao Yu**, tenor
  - Albert and Anne Chao/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

**MAY 10 & 13 | STUDIO RECITAL SERIES**

Hear HGO Studio artists in their final recital of the year in the intimate salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1406 Kirby Drive. May 10 (7:30 p.m.) and May 13 (5 p.m.). Purchase tickets through HGO.org or 713-228-6737.

**MAY 18 & 19 | THE BARBER OF SEVILLE**

**Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park**

HGO Studio artists and alumni are featured in FREE outdoor performances of *The Barber of Seville* at 8 p.m. See calendar on p. 94 for details.

**MAY 23 | THE BARBER OF SEVILLE**

**Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands**

HGO Studio artists and alumni are featured in an outdoor performance of *The Barber of Seville* at 8 p.m. FREE tickets available. See calendar on p. 94 for details.
HGOco is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HGOco’s many projects, the touring group Opera to Go! performs family-friendly works in schools, churches, and community venues. Each summer, HGOco also offers Opera Camps for students of various ages and interests.

**EPISODE ONE:**

“Boundless”

**NOW STREAMING**

Alma seeks personal fulfillment at a crossroads in her life and begins a relationship with an artistic soul 16 years her junior. When a shadow looms over their happy ending, Alma guides her lover, Luc, to his destiny. “Boundless” is based on a true story by Aryana Rose.

**THAT PLOT SYNOPSIS** sounds like an opera, doesn’t it? Now, it is, and it's streaming online! HGOco, the community engagement and education arm of Houston Grand Opera, ventures where few opera companies have gone with Star-cross’d, an innovative series that merges opera and film. The love stories for this web opera series will be short (15 minutes or so) and must have a connection with Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet.

Many of HGOco’s projects have centered on story collection and creating works that reflect the experiences of Houstonians, and “Boundless” is no different: it is based on the story of Houstonian Aryana Rose. Series producer and HGOco Programs Manager Emily Wells found her story in its original form, “I Can Die Now,” on a podcast by The Moth Radio Hour.
When composer Avner Dorman proposed the original concept for this project, HGOco appreciated this inventive approach to bringing opera to a 21st-century audience. Composed with a world-music feel, Dorman’s score, set to a libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann, weaves a narrative filled with magical realism. In the finished episode, a Bard aficionado will catch lines from the original text of *Romeo and Juliet.*

Merging two art forms has required attention to all aspects of the process. Since opera places an emphasis on sound, the singers’ performances were recorded at Sugar Hill Studios. This step gave the Junction Road, Inc., filmmakers more freedom on location. Interior shots were filmed at the home of Sean and Juli Rosenbaum, and all other filming took place at The Parador in Houston’s Museum District.

Additionally, opera singers are trained to perform in large venues, so a screen acting coach was engaged to help the artists adapt their performances for the camera. Every step of the way, the opera and film team made adjustments to work collaboratively in creating the pilot episode of *Star-cross’d: Boundless.* Watch the full film here: [HGO.org/star-crossd](http://HGO.org/star-crossd).

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**HGOco FUNDERS**

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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

**THE NEXUS INITIATIVE**
HGOco programs, including Student Performances and HGO’s performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, are supported through the NEXUS Initiative, which is made possible by:

**LEAD SUPPORTERS**
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BBVA Compass
The Brown Foundation, Inc.
The Wortham Foundation, Inc.
Nabors Industries
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Louise Chapman's first trip to the opera was in the mid-1970s, when the Metropolitan Opera’s production of Verdi’s *Aida* starring the legendary Leontyne Price came to Dallas. “It was definitely an ‘Oh, wow!’ experience,” she recalls.

In 1976, she and her husband, John, a South Texas agricultural businessman and philanthropist, traveled to New York to attend the Met’s production of Bellini’s *I puritani* starring Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti. “An incredible experience… it was so remarkable, so breathtaking, tears were running down my face,” she says.

Louise and John began coming to HGO in 1987, when the Wortham Theater Center opened with a production of Verdi’s *Aida* featuring Mirella Freni and Plácido Domingo that Louise found to be “stunning.”

The Chapmans remained HGO supporters for decades, and Louise increased her support when it was announced that HGO would be taking on Wagner’s *Ring*.

In 2017, Louise joined a group of 30 HGO Patrons on a special trip to experience opera at La Scala in Milan and the Arena in Verona. “I had never been to Verona, or to the opera house in Milan. That was a highlight of the trip for me.”

Originally from San Antonio, Louise has spent most of her life in Corpus Christi. Until John’s passing in 2008, the Chapmans gave back to the community through their generous support of the arts and education—a legacy that Louise proudly continues. The Association of Fundraising Professionals Coastal Bend Chapter named her Outstanding Philanthropist of 2017.

Louise is a member of the boards of the Corpus Christi Symphony, the Texas State Aquarium, and the Art Museum of South Texas, where she has served as a committee chair, secretary, and chairman of the board.

When she learned about HGO’s losses in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, Louise made a generous gift to secure the future of great opera in Houston. We’re deeply grateful to be one of the many arts and educational organizations to which Louise gives her support, and we’re thrilled to count her as a member of the HGO family.
Without your donation, your favorite opera would be over before the first act ended.

DONORS MAKE GREAT ART POSSIBLE.

Ticket sales cover only 25% of our annual costs. We rely on you for the rest. We’re counting on you—become an HGO donor today.

As an HGO donor, you will receive exclusive member benefits designed to enhance your opera experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Jennifer Wijangco, director of development, at 713-546-0704 or jwijangco@hgo.org.

MARQUIITA MASTERSOHN, LIBBIE MASTERSOHN, AND CATHERINE AND GEORGE MASTERSOHN PLAYED THE PERFECT HOSTS ON THE SATURDAY BEFORE THE CONCERT OF ARIAS, WELCOMING THE 13 TALENTED SEMIFINALISTS AND OVER 50 HGO STUDIO SUPPORTERS TO MARQUIITA’S RIVER OAKS HOME FOR A GLORIOUS MEXICAN FEAST AND PERFECT MARGARITAS. THE CONCERT OF ARIAS WELCOME PARTY HAS A LONGSTANDING TRADITION OF WELCOMING THE YOUNG ARTISTS TO HOUSTON WITH TEXAS-SIZED HOSPITALITY—AND THIS YEAR’S WAS NO DIFFERENT.

CONCERT OF ARIAS WELCOME PARTY JANUARY 27, 2018

Molly Crowner, Brian Speck, and Mariquita Masterson

Sol Jin, Dorothy Gal, Charlene Nickson, and Yelena Dyachek

Mariquita Masterson, Libbie Masterson, and Catherine and George Masterson played the perfect hosts on the Saturday before the Concert of Arias, welcoming the 13 talented semifinalists and over 50 HGO Studio supporters to Mariquita’s River Oaks home for a glorious Mexican feast and perfect margaritas. The Concert of Arias Welcome Party has a longstanding tradition of welcoming the young artists to Houston with Texas-sized hospitality—and this year’s was no different.
This year’s Concert of Arias, chaired by Rini and Edward Ziegler, honored Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. for their many years of generous support of HGO and the HGO Studio. Over 500 artists and patrons flowed into Stude Concert Hall at Rice University for the final round of the Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Studio alumna Tamara Wilson hosted the livestream on Facebook and YouTube.

Following the concert, guests migrated for dinner to Hotel ZaZa in the Museum District, transformed to a magical garden “where passion blossoms”—the evening’s theme—inspired by event chair Rini Ziegler’s passion flower illustrations. Concert of Arias supporters raised more than $620,000 to benefit the Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers and the HGO Studio’s ongoing efforts to identify, attract, and nurture young artists who have the potential for major careers in opera.
Guests celebrated post-concert at Hotel ZaZa
Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen
Dick Anderson and Michelle Beale with Richard Trey Smagar
Rini Ziegler
Sara and Gabriel Loperena

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Production underwriters John Turner and Jerry Fischer hosted the *Elektra* cast, creative team, and supporters in the Four Seasons ballroom following the opening of the bloody Strauss masterpiece. Often noted as the most formidable Elektra of our time, Christine Goerke arrived sans blood and showing her lighter side, toasting her Chrysothemis—and HGO Studio alumna—Tamara Wilson, Maestro Patrick Summers, and her entire HGO cast and family.
A real barber shop in the heart of Montrose set the stage for the opening night party celebrating the cast and creative team of *The Barber of Seville*. Patrons and artists noshed on Spanish tapas and sipped Champagne minis—chilled and presented in the barber sinks! The inaugural Young Patrons Circle-hosted cast party was underwritten by YPC leaders Sara and Gabriel Loperena, Drs. Ishwaria and Vivek Subbiah, and Carrie and Sverre Brandsberg-Dahl.
Young Patrons Circle members and current HGO Studio artists wined and dined at Roka Akor at the 10th Annual YPC Studio Dinner on February 20. One of the highlights of Young Patron membership, the Studio dinner offers behind-the-scenes access to the next generation of opera stars in a private dinner party setting.
MINGLE WITH OTHER YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OPERA LOVERS!

Join one of the largest young professional arts groups in the country, and connect with others interested in the cultural scene of Houston.

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OPENING NIGHTS

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<th>FRI</th>
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PRICING BY SECTION

- Balcony: $138
- Grand Tier: $264
- Orchestra: $312
- Loge: $630
- Orchestra Circle: $648
- Premium Orchestra: $1,428
The Impresarios Circle is Houston Grand Opera’s premier donor recognition society. These vanguard supporters who provide annual support of at least $100,000 are instrumental to HGO’s success. For information, please contact Greg Robertson, chief advancement officer, at 713-546-0274.

JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE
HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. They partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools to bring HGOco programs to economically disadvantaged students. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO’s Founders Council. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they also support Concert of Arias and HGO’s mainstage productions.

ROBIN ANGLY AND MILES SMITH
HGO subscribers Robin and Miles joined the Founders Council in 2010. The company is honored to have Robin on the HGO Board of Directors and as a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. The couple is very familiar with the view from the HGO stage as well—both are former singers in the HGO Chorus. Robin and Miles have been donors to HGO special events, the Young Artists Vocal Academy, and HGO’s Ring cycle.

DENISE AND PHILIP BAHR
Denise and Philip have supported the Opera since 1996, underwriting special events and mainstage productions. They have a special love for the HGO Studio, where opera’s rising stars have benefited from their support since 2000. Denise, currently an HGO Trustee, is a former member of the HGO Board of Directors, and the Opera has been privileged to have Philip’s participation on the board since 1998. The Opera was honored to have the couple chair the 2010 Opera Ball.

JANICE BARROW
Jan’s relationship with HGO extends back to the early 1980s, when she and her late husband, Dr. Thomas Barrow, first became subscribers. Jan is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society and the Founders Council, contributing to HGO’s main stage and special events. She is also supports the HGO Studio, having underwritten several rising opera stars over the past 20 years. Jan’s late husband, Tom, former chairman of the HGO Board of Directors, was instrumental in the concept and construction of the Wortham Center. A lifelong lover of music, Jan is past president of the Houston Symphony and has a special affinity for Puccini and Wagner.

BBVA Compass
HGO is privileged to partner with BBVA Compass, a U.S. subsidiary of BBVA, a Spain-based global financial services group founded in 1857. BBVA Compass, committed to financial education, diversity, and the arts, was a lead corporate sponsor of HGO’s Ring cycle and also supports the NEXUS Initiative, HGO’s affordability program.

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.
The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and Margaret Root Brown and George R. and Alice Pratt Brown, has been a treasured partner of HGO since 1984. Based in Houston, the Foundation distributes funds principally for education, community service, and the arts, especially the visual and performing arts. HGO is tremendously grateful for The Brown Foundation’s leadership support, which has been critical to the company’s unprecedented growth and success in recent years.

ZANE AND BRADY CARRUTH
Brady is the chief executive officer and president of Saratoga Financial Group and is a trustee of The Wortham Foundation, Inc. Zane is the President of Carson Marketing, LLC, with over 25 years of marketing experience. HGO subscribers since the 2012–13 season, Zane and Brady are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence and served as the chairman of the 2017 Opera Ball. HGO is proud to have Zane on the HGO Board of Directors. She also serves on the Marketing and Communications Committee. Earlier this year, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, The World’s First Tooth Fairy... Ever.

ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO
Anne and Albert have been subscribers and supporters of HGO for the past two decades. While serving as president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation, Albert finds time for numerous cultural causes. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and was the co-chair of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera. Over the years, the Chaos have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco’s Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.
LOUISE CHAPMAN
Louise Chapman of Corpus Christi, Texas, has been a longtime supporter of HGO, recently contributing generously to the company’s Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts. Louise’s late husband, John O. Chapman, was a south Texas agricultural businessman and philanthropist. In addition to HGO, the Chapmans have supported numerous organizations in health, education, and the arts, including Texas A & M University, the Corpus Christi Symphony, and the Art Museum of South Texas. Louise and HGO Trustee Connie Dyer have known each other since they were college roommates at The University of Texas.

BOB AND JANE CIZIK
Longtime HGO supporters Bob and Jane Cizik are passionate about Houston’s world-class performing arts organizations. As co-chair of the campaign to build the Wortham Theater Center, Bob has been pivotal to HGO’s history, and the Ciziks have contributed generously to HGO’s recovery efforts following Hurricane Harvey. Bob was president of Cooper Industries, a manufacturer of machinery for the oil and natural gas industry until his retirement in 1996. The Ciziks are also major supporters of UTHealth, the University of Houston, The Women’s Home, Harvard University, and a number of organizations in health, education, the environment, and the arts.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including the 2017–18 season-opening production, Verdi’s La traviata. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, will become chairman of the HGO Board of Directors in August 2018.

BOBBIE-VEE AND GERALD COONEY
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979 and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO’s innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna (2010, 2013), the world’s first mariachi opera. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from the Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

JIM AND MOLLY CROWNOVER
Jim Crownover is the chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. He has been a member of the board since 1987 and has served on the Executive, Governance, Development, and Finance Committees. He and his wife, Molly, have been HGO subscribers for 30 years and are members of HGO’s Laureate Society and Impressario Circle. In 1998, Jim retired from a 30-year career with McKinsey & Company, Inc., and currently serves on the boards of Chemtura Corporation, Weingarten Realty, Republic Services, Inc., and FTI Consulting. Jim also serves and supports the Houston Ballet, Rice University, the Houston Zoo, United Way Houston, Project Grad Houston, and a number of other organizations.

THE CULLEN FOUNDATION
For more than three decades, The Cullen Foundation has been a vital member of the HGO family. Established in 1947, the Foundation has more than a half-century history of giving generously to education, health care, and the arts in Texas, primarily in the Greater Houston area. The Opera is very grateful for the Foundation’s longstanding leadership support of HGO’s mainstage season and our family-friendly Holiday Opera Series.

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s mainstage season for nearly 30 years. The Trust was established from assets of The Cullen Foundation to specifically benefit Texas performing arts institutions, particularly those within the Greater Houston area. In recent years, The Cullen Trust has provided lead support for memorable productions including HGO’s Holiday Opera Series.

DRS. LIZ GRIMM AND JACK ROTH
HGO subscribers since the 2013–14 season, Liz and Jack have both committed themselves to cancer research and patient care through their work at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Jack is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the HGO Studio Committee. Liz and Jack were generous underwriters of HGO’s historic, first-ever Ring cycle and are lead supporters of HGO’s upcoming German repertoire, including this season’s Elektra. Additionally, Liz and Jack chaired the 2018 Opera Ball on April 14, 2018.

HOUSTON ENDOWMENT, INC.
HGO is grateful for the longtime leadership support of the Houston Endowment, a private foundation established in 1937 by Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones to improve the quality of life for all Houstonians. Houston Endowment recently supported an expansion of our Opera to Go! program that allows for free performances in underserved communities, schools, and other venues. The Endowment made a historic $5 million grant to HGO in 2007 to help us launch NEXUS, our affordability program.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOWMENT, INC.
Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the
Endowment contains over 50 named funds, both unrestricted and restricted, and annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Thomas Rushing, Senior Chairman Janet L. Carrig, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors.

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™
For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGO’s arts education programs, helping more than one million Houston-area students experience the magic of live opera through Opera to Go!, the Student Performance Series, and Storybook Opera. A Section 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $400 million to the youth of Texas since 1932. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the world’s largest livestock show and rodeo, with more than 2.6 million attendees in 2017.

HOUSTON METHODIST
This year, Houston Grand Opera celebrates 10 seasons of partnering with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM). The only center of its kind in the country, CPAM comprises a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed on performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO’s special events, young professionals program, and mainstage productions like this season’s The Barber of Seville. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Barbara Bass and Dr. Mauro Ferrari, president and CEO, Houston Methodist Research Institute, serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION
Based in Liberty, Texas, the Humphreys Foundation has been a major underwriter of HGO’s mainstage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable mainstage productions, such as last season’s The Abduction from the Seraglio.

DONNA KAPLAN AND RICHARD LYDECKER
Richard Lydecker has been an HGO subscriber and supporter for more than three decades. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Richard has great passion for opera, especially Wagner, and he and Donna were underwriters for HGO’s Ring cycle. They are also special events sponsors, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.

NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER
Nancy and Rich became HGO subscribers during the 2000–01 season. Rich is co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Kinder Morgan, and Nancy is a focused philanthropist whose work has positively impacted communities throughout Houston and beyond. Rich and Nancy established the Kinder Foundation in 1997 to provide impactful gifts to projects dedicated to urban green space, education, and quality-of-life issues in the Greater Houston area. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, mainstage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

CLAIRE LIU AND JOSEPH GREENBERG
Claire and Joe have subscribed to HGO for many seasons and are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Claire serves on the HGO Board of Directors and is chair of the Finance Committee. She is newly retired from LyondellBasell Industries where she led the corporate finance team and was formerly a managing director with Bank of America. Joe is founder, president, and CEO of Alta Resources, L.L.C., a private company involved in the development of shale oil and gas resources in North America. Claire and Joe support many organizations, with particular emphasis on educational organizations including YES Prep and Teach for America. An avid runner, Claire has completed a marathon in all 50 states.

BETH MADISON
This season marks Beth’s 22nd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council. She was the honoree at the 2017 Concert of Arias. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and mainstage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

JOAN prohibition
Janice and Robert McNair, longtime HGO subscribers, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob is chairman and CEO of The McNair Group, a financial and real estate firm, and owner of the Houston Texans. The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation provides leadership support to Houston-area organizations supporting educational opportunities for youth. The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97).

M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION
The M.D. Anderson Foundation has provided general operating support to HGO for more than 30 years. The Foundation was established in 1936 by Monroe Dunaway Anderson, whose company, Anderson, Clayton and Co., was the world’s largest cotton merchant. While the Foundation started the Texas Medical Center and was instrumental in bringing to it one of the premier cancer centers in the world, the Foundation’s trustees also looked to improve the wellness of communities through the arts. HGO is privileged to have such a longstanding and committed partner as the M.D. Anderson Foundation in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.
MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD

The Miller Theatre Advisory Board (MTAB), appointed by Houston’s mayor and confirmed by the City Council, acts as a steward of public and private funds to provide professional-caliber performances free to the public at the Miller Outdoor Theatre for the cultural enrichment of Houston’s diverse communities and visitors to the city. HGO’s partnership with MTAB extends back nearly six decades, making great opera accessible to thousands of Houstonians each year through live mainstage and Opera to Go! performances at Miller Theatre. June Deadrick is an HGO trustee representing the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

SARA AND BILL MORGAN

Sara and Bill have been supporting HGO since 2002. Sara is a co-founder of the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, where she currently serves on the board. Bill is a co-founder of the Kinder Morgan companies and the retired vice chairman and president of Kinder Morgan, Inc., and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, LP. The Morgans support HGO’so, HGO’s special events, and mainstage productions, including the Holiday Opera Series. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on the HGO Board of Directors and as a member and past chair of the HGOco Committee.

FRANCI NEELY

Franci is among the opera’s strongest friends and advocates, having been a subscriber since the 1983–84 season and one of the first members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Franci is a senior member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the Special Events Committee. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.

NOVUM ENERGY

Founded in 2011 in Panama, Novum Energy is an international physical oil supply and trading company committed to industry excellence in delivery standards and customer service. Founder and President Alfredo Vilas serves on the HGO Board of Directors and has over 20 years of experience and a passion for service to the community through cultural, recreational, and philanthropic work. Novum Energy has supported a number of HGO productions, including this season’s West Side Story and the mariachi operas Cruzar la Cara de la Luna and El Pasado Nunca Se Termina.

OPERA AMERICA

HGO is honored by our longstanding partnership with OPERA America, a New York based service organization that has been providing members with the resources and expertise to advance the art form of opera in North America since 1970. Current OPERA America–supported projects include the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative and the upcoming Song of Houston commission Home of my Ancestors. HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech is proud to serve on the board of OPERA America.

JILL AND ALLYN RISLEY

Allyn and Jill Risley have been HGO subscribers since 2003, and Allyn joined the HGO Board of Directors in the 2015–16 season. Allyn is chairman of Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT) North America and former general manager of Liquefied Natural Gas at ConocoPhillips, and HGO is honored to have his leadership and expertise on the Development and HGO Studio Committees. Jill owns the Lagniappe Shoppe, a Houston-based dealership in French antiques. The Risleys are generous members of HGO’s Impresarios Circle, and they also support Allyn’s alma mater, Kansas University, where Allyn serves on the School of Engineering advisory board.

SCHLUMBERGER

Schlumberger is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly 20 years. Schlumberger’s leadership gift was integral to launching HGO’s ongoing affordability program, the NEXUS Initiative, in 2007—since then, NEXUS has made great opera accessible to more than 250,000 people. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters. Fred Dyen, Cameron Group HR director, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

DIAN AND HARLAN STAI

Harlan, a member of the HGO Board of Directors, and Dian are charter members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and their leadership support includes mainstage productions, the HGO Studio, the HGO Endowment, and special events. The Stais have also sponsored HGO Studio artists and they host annual recitals featuring HGO Studio artists at Mansfeldt, their renowned Fredericksburg ranch. HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.

TENENBAUM JEWELERS

HGO is thrilled to count Tenenbaum Jewelers as the preferred jeweler of Houston Grand Opera. For 40 years, Tenenbaum has been Houston’s premier destination for unique, rare, and collectible estate jewelry with styles ranging from antique to vintage to contemporary. Owners Tony Bradfield and Kevin Black are familiar faces at HGO performances, recitals, and events. From donating fabulous one-of-a-kind auction items to generously supporting our mainstage opera season and special events, the Tenenbaum team helps HGO sparkle and shine.

JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER

John and Jerry, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, travel around the world to experience the best that opera has to offer. HGO subscribers and donors for over a decade, the couple’s leadership support of Wagner’s Ring cycle (2014–17) was the largest gift ever made to HGO for a single production. John, a shareholder at Turner Industries Group, is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and past chair of the HGO Studio Committee. Jerry is a board member of Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. In recent years, John and Jerry have supported HGO mainstage productions, the HGO Studio, and special
events. They are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and John is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society.

**VINSON & ELKINS LLP**

HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. For more than 100 years, V&E has been deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and mainstage productions, including this season’s *West Side Story*. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Mark R. Spradling and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

**MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS**

Margaret, a longtime singer, possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera, supporting HGO for over 30 years. Currently, Margaret continues her parents’ legacy as chairman of their foundation, where her son Charles A. Williams serves as president. HGO is humbled by Margaret’s incredible generosity and dedication to the company, both as an individual donor and through her family’s foundation. She has endowed the Margaret Alkek Williams Chair, held by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, and is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball.

**THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.**

In the 1980s, the Wortham Foundation contributed $20 million to lead the capital campaign for the Wortham Theater Center, guided by businessman Gus S. Wortham’s early recognition of the vital role of the arts in making Houston an appealing place to live and work. During their lifetimes, Gus and his wife, Lyndall, were dedicated to improving the lives of Houstonians. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support. This leadership support has been vital to HGO’s growth and commitment to excellence.

**LYNN WYATT**

Lynn’s generosity touches every aspect of HGO. She is a Lifetime Trustee of HGO and serves as the vice chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. She serves on the Governance Committee and chaired HGO’s Golden Jubilee Gala in 2005. Oscar Wyatt endowed The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund in 2010, honoring Lynn’s service to the company and dedication to bringing the world’s best operatic artists to HGO, and she was the honoree at the 2010 Opera Ball. Lynn and Oscar have been lead supporters of a number of HGO productions and programs, including the multiyear company-wide initiative *Seeking the Human Spirit*. 
Members of Houston Grand Opera's Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

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Have fun... as you help HGO

From left: HGO Studio tenor Richard Trey Smagur, center, celebrates with Guild volunteers Andrea and Alex DiBagno at the Guild Buddies party for the alternate cast of *La traviata*.

Former HGO Studio soprano Sofia Selowsky and HGO Guild Hospitality Team member Gwyneth Campbell at the Guild’s Hospitality Team cast party for *The Barber of Seville* and *Elektra*.

Let’s make beautiful music together!

For more information on Guild activities, visit hgoguild.org, email guild@hgo.org, or call 713-546-0269.

Thanks to our supportive HGO Guild members. Underwriter: Penny Prater; Sustaining Members: Richard Merrill and Thea Fabio.

SAVE THE DATES

April 20–May 6, 2018
HGO Resilience Theater
Volunteer at the George R. Brown Convention Center to help opera-goers find their way to the HGO Resilience Theater before performances.

May 8, 2018
Guild Board Meeting
Find out more about Guild activities, suggest new programs, and meet board members who work with various programs.

May 18, 2018
Dinner and Opera at Miller Outdoor Theatre
Join the Guild for a box dinner at a condo near Hermann Park before the performance, then walk over to the theater where your reserved seat is waiting.

June 5, 2018
Volunteer Gathering
Learn more about the many opportunities to volunteer with the HGO Guild. Join us for a light supper and a presentation by one of the HGO staff.
APRIL
20, 22m, 28, May 1, 3, 4, 6m
Performances of Bernstein’s West Side Story. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 20 performance only.

22
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about West Side Story immediately following the performance. Free.

27, 29m, May 5, 8, 11
Performances of Bellini’s Norma. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 27 performance only.

29
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Norma immediately following the performance. Free.

MAY
2–4
Opera to Go! presents Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers. Miller Outdoor Theatre. 11 a.m. daily. Free.

6
HGOco presents the members of the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a masterclass with mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton. 2 p.m. The public is invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at amagellon@hgo.org for info.

10 & 13
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 10 at 7:30 p.m. and May 13 at 5 p.m.

20
HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital, Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University. 6 p.m. Free.

30
HGO Association Annual Meeting and Reception: 5–7 p.m. Open to members of the HGO Board of Directors, HGO Trustees, and donors. Call 713-546-0217 for information.

JUNE
4–8
Opera Camp: Create an Opera. Campers collaborate to write, design, build, and perform their own musical masterpiece. For singers and non-singers entering grades 3–8. *

5
HGO Guild Volunteer Gathering: Find out how you can use your talents to help HGO by volunteering with the Guild. United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.

11–15
Opera Camp: Create a Singer (formerly called Opera Experience). Campers develop healthy singing technique and hone their music theory skills while preparing for a final performance of group and solo repertoire. Boys' voices must be unchanged. For students entering grades 4–9. *

11–22
Opera Camp: Art of Opera. Campers enhance their vocal and dramatic skills by rehearsing and performing a fully staged opera or musical production. This exciting two-week camp fills quickly: register early to guarantee a spot! For students entering grades 9–12. *

18–22
Opera Camp: Sing! Move! Play! A half day packed full of singing, storytime, movement, and lots of fun! Inspired by opera's greatest hits—engaging ways to develop language, social, and physical skills. For children entering K–2. *

* For information or to register, visit HGO.org/community-programs

SEE YOU AT THE PARKS!
Join HGO for The Barber of Seville, featuring current and past artists of the HGO Studio. This is the production seen this winter on the main stage, as adapted for outdoor venues!

MAY 18–19, 8 P.M.
Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park FREE tickets for covered seating may be picked up the day of the performance from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Miller Outdoor Theatre Box Office. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

MAY 23, 8 P.M.

Conductor
Geoffrey Loff †
Original Director
Joan Font
Revival Director
Andreas Hager
Set and Costume Designer
Joan Guíllén
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To purchase or exchange tickets, to make a donation, or for performance information, contact the Customer Care Team at 713-228-6737. You can also email customercare@hgo.org for assistance.

Throughout the opera season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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Season subscribers may exchange their tickets for a different performance of the same opera without fee, subject to availability. Exchanges can be made by phone until 24 hours before the performance begins. Non-subscription single tickets may be exchanged with a service fee of $10 per ticket. When exchanged for tickets of greater value, the customer will be responsible for the difference; no refunds will be made. No exchanges are permitted after the performance has begun.

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A number of food and beverage options are available in the lobby, including sandwiches, pasta, light bites, and desserts. To save time, pre-order your intermission food when you arrive and it will be on a reserved table when you return.

Season subscribers in the Founders Box, Premium Orchestra, and Loge Boxes may dine in the Founders Salon. Reservations are required, and meals must be ordered in advance. To take advantage of this subscriber-only benefit, call Elegant Events and Catering at 713-533-9318.

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Valet parking is a benefit of membership for Patrons Circle and National Patron donors; the valet station is located at Partnership Tower (701 Avenida de las Americas). If you would like information about membership at this level, please contact a member of HGO’s Development staff at 713-546-0704, or email us at donorservices@hgo.org.

Convenient parking is available at the Avenida North Garage located at 1815 Rusk Street, directly across from our new venue. A sky bridge connects the parking garage to the GRB, and there will be clear signage to direct you to the theater.
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