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Opera Singer's Unlikely Story Featured at ERJCC April 23

*HGO guest artist Ryan Speedo Green and author Daniel Bergner to discuss Bergner's book
Sing for Your Life, A Story of Race, Music, and Family*

Houston, April 10, 2017— **Ryan Speedo Green** rose from a tough upbringing amid the urban wastelands of southeastern Virginia to win a nationwide competition hosted by New York's Metropolitan Opera. Today he is a rising star, performing in Europe's major opera houses and at the Met (Colline in *La bohème* 2016), where the *New York Times* declared him "a show stopper." A bass-baritone, Green will make his Houston Grand Opera (HGO) debut as Osmin in Mozart's comedy *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, April 28–May 12. **Daniel Bergner** is a contributing writer for the *New York Times Magazine* and the author of the novel *Moments of Favor* and four books of nonfiction. His writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, and the *New York Times Book Review*. His new book, *Sing for Your Life, A Story of Race, Music, and Family*, chronicles Green's unlikely, suspenseful, and powerfully emotional journey from solitary confinement to stardom.

The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (the J) in collaboration with Houston Grand Opera will present Bergner and Green in conversation with HGO Assistant Artistic Director Paul Hopper Sunday, April 23, at 4 p.m., at the J's Kaplan Theatre, 5601 S. Braeswood. The program is free and open to the public. RSVPs are requested by April 18 to mhassid@erjcchouston.org or 713-595-8162.

Born to poor parents and suffering a violent childhood, Green was placed in juvenile detention at the age of 12 as a last resort. Bergner takes readers on his path toward redemption, introducing us to an important and colorful cast of characters—including two teachers from his childhood who redirected his rage into music and his long-lost father—while shedding light on the enduring realities of race in America. *Publisher's Weekly's* starred review termed the book "gripping and inspiring" while Renée Fleming called it "absolutely riveting."

HGO Assistant Artistic Director Paul Hopper manages special artistic projects, assists in planning, and guides a variety of audiences in learning more about HGO and opera. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Houston, he previously held positions at the Santa Fe Opera and the Metropolitan Opera.

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About Houston Grand Opera

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has grown from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. HGO enjoys a reputation for commissioning and producing new works, including 63 world premieres and seven American premieres since 1973. In addition to producing and performing world-class opera, HGO contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards—the only opera company to have won all three honors.

Through HGOco, Houston Grand Opera creates opportunities for Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to create, participate in, and observe art. The NEXUS Initiative is HGO’s multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy world-class opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007 NEXUS has enabled more than 225,000 Houstonians to experience first-quality opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

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