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The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation’s primary goal is to increase literacy rates among people of all ages in Houston. The foundation is dedicated to raising awareness of the value of literacy and to mobilizing available area resources. The Show’s support will help expand the connect4literacy.org system, connecting volunteers to Houston’s literacy programs.
A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

We are thrilled to continue our holiday opera tradition in HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown! Welcome to the world premiere performances of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s *The House without a Christmas Tree*.

Ricky and Royce have created a gorgeous operatic telling of the story by Gail Rock that gave rise to a popular TV holiday special of the same name. The special, which first aired in 1972, was an important part of family holiday viewing in the United States for many years. The story of a small-town Nebraska girl whose father refuses to allow a Christmas tree in the house clearly struck a chord.

Maybe that’s because we have a mental snapshot of what the holidays should look like, and for many people, a Christmas tree is an essential part of the picture. Even more than that, though, *The House without a Christmas Tree* shows what it means to break a cycle of behavior because it hurts someone else. The characters in this story truly grow, and that’s why *The House without a Christmas Tree* is included not only in our Holiday Opera Series but is also a part of our *Seeking the Human Spirit* initiative, which is themed around sacrifice this year.

We welcome back several HGO Studio alumni favorites: Lauren Snouffer as young Addie, Daniel Belcher as her father, Heidi Stober as the grown-up Addie and two other roles, and Megan Mikailovna Samarin as Addie’s best friend. Both Heidi and Megan triumphed in HGO’s *Julius Caesar* this fall, as Cleopatra and Sextus, respectively. The splendid Patricia Schuman, who performed the title role in our 2001 *Florencia en el Amazonas*, sings Addie’s sympathetic Grandma. Our Juvenile Chorus under Karen Reeves, our wonderful, longtime Children’s Chorus director, includes several members of our Bauer Family High School Voice Studio, two of whom (Maximillian Macias and Elisabeth Leone) also sing the roles of two of Addie’s pals.

Director James Robinson and his design team have created a production that captures the opera’s innocence and hope, and our own Bradley Moore conducts. What better way to usher in the holiday season?

We hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

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Dear Opera Patron:

On behalf of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s world premiere production of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s *The House without a Christmas Tree*. We are delighted that you have joined us for this enchanting new holiday opera.

Adapted from Gail Rock’s original story and the beloved 1972 television movie of the same name, the latest installment of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series is an uplifting story about the sacrifices we make for the love of our families and our communities.

We established The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation in 1988 to address needs in the fields of education, the environment, neighborhood renewal, character development, religion, basic human needs, medicine, and the cultural arts. In 2007, the Foundation directed its primary efforts to the support of medical research in breast and pancreatic cancer, Type 1 diabetes, and the neurosciences. Today, the Foundation is focused squarely on powerful and measurable impact related to education (McNair Scholars), future business leaders (McNair Centers for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise), medical research (McNair Medical Institute), and civic engagement. We remain dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations by creating lasting, positive change.

The Foundation is honored to serve as Grand Guarantor of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series, a multi-year initiative that establishes opera as a family tradition for the entire community.

Thank you for joining us for this exciting world premiere, and we hope that *The House without a Christmas Tree* puts you and your family in the holiday spirit!

Sincerely,

Janice and Robert McNair
The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation
**NEWS & NOTES**

**“Brünnhilde” Helps Astros Celebrate World Series Win**

HGO’s famous art car, Brünnhilde, who retired after winning second prize in this year’s annual Art Car Parade and appearing in the Houston Pride Parade, graciously came out of retirement to celebrate the Astros’ World Series win.

On November 3, she joined the lineup for the championship parade downtown, and although the Astros themselves were deservedly the stars of the show, Brünnhilde, like all true divas, managed to get her share of attention. Wearing an Astros’ cap (sassily cocked sideways) instead of her Viking horns, she was a darling of the media, showing up repeatedly in news coverage and on social media.

Megan, HGO’s properties design director, designed the piece. Brünnhilde the art car was inspired by the heroine of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle, who, with her traditional Viking horns and long, blonde braids, is a universally recognizable symbol for opera. Brünnhilde was built in 2008 and won first prize in the Art Car Parade when she debuted.

She was designed so that a singer could perch in her open mouth and provide a voice—this time Lisa Harris did the honors.

**Sour Grapes but Sweet, Sweet Sound**

Our friends at LA Opera were the ones to issue the challenge: If the LA Dodgers won the world series, some of our artists would sing Randy Newman’s “I Love LA” in homage and post the video on social media. If we won, their artists would sing—of course!—“Deep in the Heart of Texas” for us.

When the Astros won, two artists from LA Opera’s Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program made good on the bet: Theo Hoffman (an alum of our Young Artists Vocal Academy) and Brian Michael Moore. They made their way through the song with feigned distaste, but ended appropriately with “Houston Strong!” Their rendition sounded very sweet to us.

To get in on the fun and see the video for yourself, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**Young Singer Search**

Current high school sophomores and juniors who are interested in pursuing vocal music at the college level are encouraged to audition for HGO’s Bauer Family High School Voice Studio class of 2018–19. An audition tour will take place during March and April, and finalists will be chosen in May 2018. For more information, please visit HGO.org/community-programs.
For information on providing leadership support for *Seeking the Human Spirit*, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.

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ON A QUEST: TEENAGERS SEEK THE HUMAN SPIRIT

BY LAURA CHANDLER
Director of Publications
IT’S DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE an existing organization that is more in tune with HGO’s Seeking the Human Spirit initiative than Sacred Sites Quest, founded seven years ago and directed by artist Reginald Adams. Now, Sacred Sites Quest (SSQ) is teaming up with HGO to provide a unique experience for high school students that may very well change their lives.

SSQ provides opportunities each year for high-school students to take a summer trip abroad, where they explore another country’s culture and sacred sites and complete a service project. In the months before the trip, they prepare through a series of meet-ups. In recent years, SSQ participants have traveled to France and Ecuador.

In the partnership between HGO and SSQ, the trip will be to Italy—the birthplace of opera. In keeping with HGO’s Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, the idea is to explore the ways in which art opens doors to spirituality and vice versa. The goals, common to both HGO and SSQ, are to “create cultural warriors, young people who can be peer-to-peer advocates, who understand the role of art, who’ve traveled, who have visited sacred spaces,” says HGO Assistant Artistic Director Paul Hopper, who is HGO’s liaison with SSQ.

The preparation for the trip is well underway. Participants had an impressive itinerary for their first meet-up. They began with a backstage tour of HGO’s new space—the HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown—led by HGO’s technical director, Paul Spittle. Then they made a stop on the second floor of the George R. Brown to view a labyrinth mosaic that had been a commission by Reginald Adams, and after that, to a real labyrinth in Freedmen’s Town in Houston’s Fourth Ward. Here, they walked the labyrinth and did maintenance on

**SSQ participants walk the labyrinth and perform maintenance at the Freedmen’s Town site.**
it; i.e., they pulled lots of weeds. The labyrinth was built two
years ago by an SSQ group on the former site of the prayer
garden of Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church. The bricks
that form the borders of the labyrinth’s path came from the
church, giving the historic building a new life, Adams notes.

In another meet-up, the participants, many of whom
had never experienced opera, attended the High School
Night performance of HGO’s La traviata. Participants have
also visited the Rothko Chapel and the labyrinth on the St.
Thomas campus. They will soon meet at the home of the
HGO Studio’s Italian instructor, Enrica Gray, for a foray into
Italian culture that includes an introduction to the language
and authentic food.

The trip to Italy will include visits to Rome, where students
will visit the Vatican and, of course, see the Sistine Chapel;
to Milan, where they will tour the La Scala opera house; to
Florence’s art museums; and finally to Pesaro, home of the
Rossini Festival, which will be in progress at the time of their
visit. The service project, an essential component of all SSQ
tours, will be done in Pesaro, and will consist of creating a
labyrinth in Parco Miralfiore and a mural at a local high school.

While there is a small financial commitment from the
students and their families, the project’s raison d’être is to
provide an experience that would otherwise be out of reach
for them, so HGO has set a fundraising goal to cover the cost.

If you would like to help, please contact Kelly Finn at
713-546-0265.
ABOUT SSQ AND THE LABYRINTH

SSQ DIRECTOR Reginald “Reg” Adams says that the concept for the organization began seven years ago with Rice University’s Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance.

Adams, an artist known primarily for his murals and mosaics, was asked to sit on Boniuk’s board of directors, and it was felt that the Institute needed to reach people with a message of religious tolerance while they are still young and open.

The idea of an annual “scavenger hunt” was born, with SSQ taking groups of students to visit a spectrum of sacred spaces in and around Houston, including churches, synagogues, temples, prayer gardens, and mosques—often to experience worship in progress. The capstone project was always a work of art, typically a mural, that reflected their experiences.

While the program is no longer a part of the Boniuk Institute, Adams had been so inspired by his experience with it that he kept it going on his own. Having done public art projects internationally, he couldn’t help but think about the impact a trip abroad would have on program participants. So, with Schlumberger as a primary sponsor, Adams added an international trip to the program. The first Quest with an international tour went to France, where participants learned first-hand about French culture and, as their service project, built a labyrinth on the grounds of the Notre-Dame de Fourvière Basilica in Lyon, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The experience was “unbelievable,” says Adams, and Schlumberger was so impressed that it sponsored another trip, this time to Ecuador, where participants built a labyrinth directly on the equator.

Interest in the program runs very high, and there are always more students interested than can be accommodated. It is the job of Robin Owens to oversee the selection process, making sure it is “transparent and fair,” she says. She is sold on the program in part because of its impact on her son Harold, who, having participated, is now a youth counselor for SSQ.

Although the program is “so much more than a trip,” Owens says that one of the main selection goals is to choose students who have not yet been able to travel abroad. “There’s a global society we can be part of, if we so choose,” she says.

WHY A LABYRINTH?
Adams explains that a labyrinth—the simplest kind is a spiral—is not to be confused with a maze. Labyrinths are archetypes that have been found in nearly every culture, he says, and all true labyrinths are unicursal, meaning that there is only one path, with no dead ends or branching, like mazes typically have. If you stay on a labyrinth’s path, you will reach the center—your goal. People who walk a labyrinth often say that it brings about a spiritual experience.

Adams believes this happens because “we are encoded” with the spiral. He clarifies that he is speaking of the Fibonacci sequence, which is found repeatedly in nature, including in the structures that make up our bodies. “We are the labyrinth,” Adams says, “and the path becomes a metaphor for life—if we follow the path, we find our own center. It’s a tool for people to reflect on their own life journeys.”

He believes in the power of the labyrinth because of “the transformations I’ve seen in people who walk the labyrinth and in the area around the labyrinth. The United Nations is looking into designating the area in Freedmen’s Town as a world heritage site, and the presence of the labyrinth is one of the main factors.

“I have done more than 250 public art projects, and no one has ever told me one of my projects changed their life until now. I want to create work that changes people’s lives, and the labyrinth has been the best tool to do that.”
Addie’s father is a stuffy, serious man. He hates when Addie leaves a mess around the house and always seems to be in a grumpy mood. When Addie asks if they can have a Christmas tree this year, he plays a trick on her and refuses to buy a tree. We learn that James never really dealt with the loss of his wife and he often takes his anger out on Addie. When Addie makes a sacrifice so that a less fortunate family can have a tree, James has a change of heart. He learns that even though his wife died years ago, her spirit lives on in their daughter Addie.
Grandma Mills lives with Addie and her father in Clear River, Nebraska. The house belongs to Grandma and she has helped raise Addie since her mother died. When James gets mad at Addie, Grandma stands by Addie’s side and comforts her. She explains to Addie that ever since her mother died there’s been a hole in her dad’s heart that feels a lot bigger during the holidays. Right before Addie was born, her mother and father put up a Christmas tree together, and the sight of a tree in the house is just too much for him to handle.

Soprano Heidi Stober plays the three roles of Addie’s schoolteacher Miss Thompson, her late mother Helen, as well as the grown-up version of Addie—she’s now a writer in New York City and goes by Adelaide. The opera opens in 1982 when Adelaide is about the age her mother was when she died. She reflects on a particularly special Christmas 20 years ago in Nebraska. The same singer plays the spirit of her mother who visits James in a dream one night, as well as Addie’s teacher. Together they represent different motherly figures in Addie’s life.
Carla Mae is Addie’s best friend. They often go sledding together and gossip about their crushes from school. While Addie dreams of a fancy life in Paris, Carla imagines a life on a farm in the woods with a boy named Delmer Doakes from school. Carla playfully teases Addie about Billy Wild—she knows Billy likes Addie and thinks Addie may like him back! When Carla asks Addie why they don’t have their Christmas tree up, Carla shares that her father would never dream of not having a tree.
Addie and Billy have a playful relationship—even though they like each other they often get in snowball fights and tease each other at school. When Miss Thompson’s class arranges a gift exchange at school, Billy embarrasses Addie in front of the entire class by giving her a heart-shaped necklace. Mortified, Addie yells at Billy and storms off. But later, when Addie really needs a helping hand, Billy is there for her.

Gloria is a fellow student of Addie’s in Miss Thompson’s class. She plays the cow in the school’s annual Christmas pageant! When the class decides to send their Christmas tree home with one of the students, it’s down to the two who don’t have a tree—Gloria and Addie. Gloria’s family doesn’t have a tree because they’re less fortunate than her classmates and can’t afford to buy a tree. Addie remembers this and makes a sacrifice so the Cott family can enjoy the holidays just like the rest of the class.

Sandbeach Dreamings: Australian Aboriginal Paintings from Lockhart River

Just in time for the holidays … vibrant paintings from Australia’s far northeastern coast evoke both native landscapes and ancient cultures, as well as their creators’ “movement through time” to the modern world.
MY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STORY, *The House without a Christmas Tree*, would never have been written but for a mouse.

In the summer of 1972 my friend, Oscar-nominated screenwriter Eleanor Perry, invited me to join her at the house she had rented for the season in the Hamptons on New York’s Long Island. I had just left my job as a newspaper editor and film critic and was looking forward to a bit of vacation before I started life as a freelance writer.

As we arrived to open the house for the summer, I noticed a tiny, gray field mouse sitting on the kitchen stove.

Having grown up in a small Nebraska town in farm country, this was old hat to me. I mentioned the mouse and said we would have to set a trap and catch him. Eleanor, however, was a big city gal from an upscale suburb, and she was horrified. I don’t think she had ever seen a live mouse before. She marched right out of the house and called the landlord to cancel her lease. She then called a TV producer friend, whom she had invited to join us for the weekend, and told him that she had to rescind her invitation because we were going back to New York City.

The producer, Alan Shayne, whom I had never met, suggested that instead we join him and his friend in their country home in Connecticut. We drove from Long Island to their beautiful house in the woods and settled in for the July weekend.

As we sat around the pool, Alan remarked that he wanted to find an idea for a Christmas special to pitch to CBS-TV for the coming season. We all chatted about our own holiday memories, and I told them how I had always longed for a Christmas tree at our house when I was a kid, and how one Christmas I finally got one. It made my father very angry and caused a family crisis. Alan immediately said, “That’s a Christmas special!”

I couldn’t imagine that anyone would be interested in a small-town family in 1940s Nebraska, but he insisted I write it down. I knocked out the 22-page story that afternoon and brought it to the group. When they read it, they were all in tears. I was astonished. Alan said, “I can sell this to CBS, and Eleanor can write the teleplay!”

He did sell it to CBS, and Eleanor wrote the teleplay. The first day I visited the set, I felt I had traveled back 20 years in a time machine. There was my childhood home recreated in amazing

GAIL ROCK DESCRIBES HOW HER AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STORY EVOLVED INTO AN OPERA.
detail. When Lisa Lucas, the young actress playing Addie, entered in costume, I just stared and said, “It’s me!” Later, watching the great actors Jason Robards and Mildred Natwick portray my father and grandmother was an extraordinary, moving experience.

The show won an Emmy, and Random House approached me to adapt it as a children’s book. CBS then asked me to write three more holiday specials based on the same characters. Those three specials also became books for young readers. All these years later, they’re now e-books. The House without a Christmas Tree became a perennial holiday event on CBS for years, later aired many times on the Disney Channel and was released as a home video.

Forty-three years later, Houston Grand Opera entered the story. In 2015, the Opera was looking for a new Christmas production, and Artistic Director Patrick Summers mentioned The House without a Christmas Tree as a favorite story of his Indiana childhood. He received an enthusiastic response from composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist Royce Vavrek for the project. The next step was to enlist the detective skills of Ann Owens, formerly HGO’s executive director, who tracks down and licenses properties for the Opera. Ann began searching the internet.

By coincidence, in 2014 I had driven from my home in California to my hometown of Valley, Nebraska, for the town’s sesquicentennial celebration. I brought a carload of my books, which I donated to the library to raise funds with a book signing. It made the local papers and the internet, and that is how Ann tracked me to my hometown and the local librarian, Claire Bushong. Claire put us together, and here we are. I was thrilled to entrust my story to a company with the superb reputation of Houston Grand Opera and the highly regarded team of Gordon and Vavrek.

I owe that little mouse a big thank you. If any of his distant descendants are currently enjoying the hospitality of the hidden crannies of HGO’s Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown, I hope they will pause in their duties this evening to listen and enjoy the beauty that their country cousin set in motion on Long Island so long ago. Bravo!
IT'S NOT EASY to interview several people all at once—but it is a lot of fun, especially when there’s as much candor and laughter as there were when I interviewed members of the juvenile chorus for The House without a Christmas Tree.

The chorus, with 12 members in all, comprises mostly high school juniors and seniors, and most are members of HGO’s Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHSVS). This is the first time HGO has ever used a “juvenile” chorus, i.e., singers too mature to be called a children’s chorus and yet not to be confused with HGO’s adult chorus. In the opera, they portray the friends and classmates of the opera’s protagonist, Addie Mills.

For most of them, being in an opera is very different from anything they’ve ever done. Aidan Leake and Antonio Teodoro, who are not members of the BFHSVS, say that their music teachers encouraged them to audition. They both say they were surprised to be selected and are enjoying the experience.

Members of the BFHSVS were all given the opportunity to be part of the juvenile chorus. Most were able to accept, but some could not, due to commitments with their schools. The demands of The House without a Christmas Tree are significant, considering the rehearsal time and 10 performances that occur simultaneously with semester finals and holiday preparations. Those who were able to accept this opportunity have had to sacrifice others, like participating in All-State competitions, school musicals, and Christmas concerts. BFHSVS member Solomon Alkaheem had to forfeit being in his school’s madrigal ensemble.

Still, the consensus is that it’s worth it. For high school students who want to enter college/conservatory vocal music programs—and the BFHSVS was established specifically to prepare them for the requisite auditions—the key is to stand out from the crowd. BFHSVS member Emily Hansen says that she discussed her decision about whether to participate in the juvenile chorus with HGO’s director Carleen Graham, who oversees the BFHSVS. “She said
having this kind of thing on your resume sets you apart from everyone else, especially sopranos, because there are so many of us,” says Emily.

And there are other benefits: “I think the experience of being able to work with real artists in this field, the conductor and director, is probably something that will carry us through our musical careers and that we’ll use for the rest of our lives,” adds Alina Dong.

There are challenges, too. In the show, these young singers who are mostly in their late teens will be portraying characters 12–13 years old. “I don’t look like a 12 or 13 year old!” says Elisabeth, who is tall.

Riley Vagis thinks it’s difficult to “reverse” their sound; “Our teachers have been trying to get us to sound adult-ish and now we’re being told, ‘we want you to sound immature.’ That’s new.”

It’s also a bit of a challenge for singers who are training for solo careers to blend in with other singers, as choristers must do. Still, Christian Mathews points out, “Most of us are still part of a school choir, still working through the transition between a choir sound and a solo sound and adding our own personality to it.”

The biggest challenge of all? “Not crying!” Riley says. The others laugh knowingly. To be sure, there are some very poignant moments in this opera.

“It’s such a lovely story—we get to touch lives and share this beautiful message with so many people, especially after Harvey. There’s still joy to be had. It’s an honor to be able to tell this story,” says Emily. (“Ten times!” chimes in Antonio.)

Everyone has an idea by this point what they think their favorite moments will be. Elisabeth, who has a solo role as Gloria Cott, says, “It’s a small part, but it’s beautiful music and I get to dress up as a cow!”

Others think singing the beautiful song “Promise Me,” which they had been rehearsing just before the interview, will be their favorite moment. Others just like the idea of the Christmas tree and falling snow.

For some, maybe for all of them, the final performance and the last bow will be a favorite moment, but one that’s also bittersweet. If they hadn’t been involved in The House without a Christmas Tree, they would have seen each other only once a month for masterclasses—most of their other work is done one-on-one with BFHSVS faculty—and they have bonded. “It will be hard after that last bow, to realize it’ll be a whole month before we see each other again,” says Christian.

“Saying goodbye will be very hard,” agrees Emily. “We’ve become close friends. I didn’t come into HSVS expecting to make friends, but I have. I love you guys.”

They may be young, but they’ve already discovered the sense of family that comes when people create something beautiful together.

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HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

THE HOUSE WITHOUT A CHRISTMAS TREE

Based on *The House without a Christmas Tree*, a book by Gail Rock

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon

Libretto by Royce Vavrek

A Chamber Opera in One Act

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

Sung in English with Projected Text

Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera

NOV. 30 | DEC. 02 | DEC. 05m | DEC. 03m | DEC. 06 | DEC. 08 | DEC. 10m | DEC. 14 | DEC. 16m | DEC. 17m

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

*Sung in English with Projected Text*

Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera

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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)

Adelaide Mills/ Miss Thompson/ Helen Mills  
“Addie” Mills  Grandma Mills  Carla Mae  Billy Wild  Gloria Cott  James Addison  Mills III (“Dad”)

Heidi Stober †
Patricia Schuman
Megan Mikailovna Samarin †
Maximillian Macias *
Elisabeth Leone *
Daniel Belcher †

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Bradley Moore  Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair  
Director: James Robinson  
Set Designer: Allen Moyer  
Costume Designer: James Schuette  
Lighting Designer: Christopher Akerlind  
Sound Designer: Andrew Harper  
Juvenile Chorus Director: Karen Reeves  
Musical Preparation: Kirill Kuzmin †  
Jonathan Gmeinder †  Bill and Melinda Brunger/ Lynn and Henry Gissel/ Ms. Marianne Koh Fellow  
Stage Manager: Christopher Staub  
Assistant Director: Omer Ben Seadia  
Supertitles by: Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by: Jeremy Johnson  Blair Salter †  Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow

The copyright to the book entitled The House without a Christmas Tree is owned by Gail Rock.

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  
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Shweiki Media, Printer, Opera Cues

* HGO debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
SYNOPSIS
By Royce Vavrek

The performance lasts approximately 1 hour, 20 minutes, with no intermissions.

PROLOGUE
It is the holiday season. Adelaide Mills, a writer living in New York, happens upon a Christmas-themed department store window that transports her back to her hometown in Nebraska and a special Christmas 20 years before.

SCENE 1
In Adelaide’s memory, her younger self, Addie, tries on an angel costume that Grandma is making for her to wear in a Christmas pageant. After the costume has been fitted, Addie and her best friend, Carla Mae, decorate hard-boiled eggs to represent boys they “hate.” Carla Mae suddenly asks why the Mills’s Christmas tree hasn’t been put up yet. Addie makes up an excuse—she is embarrassed that her father won’t allow a Christmas tree in the house. Sensing an awkward moment, Grandma tells the girls to put on their snowsuits and play outside, where a snowball fight breaks out between the boys and the girls.

SCENE 2
Addie has decided to ask Dad one more time if they can have a Christmas tree, so at Grandma’s suggestion, she waits until after dinner. Dad replies that Addie doesn’t need a tree, but they make a bet: if Addie can drink a glass “full” of water, he’ll get a tree. When Addie does it, he told her she drank the glass “empty” and thus lost the bet. Addie is enraged and Grandma scolds him for his cruel trick. Grandma points out that it isn’t Addie’s fault he is still grieving the loss of his wife, Addie’s mother.

SCENE 3
At school, preparations for Christmas are in high gear. Miss Thompson, the teacher, announces a gift exchange and the children practice singing carols. Later, the children come caroling at the Mills home. Grandma is touched, but Dad doesn’t react at all.

SCENE 4
Addie and Carla Mae are doing homework in Addie’s room. They fantasize about their future and discuss what they want for Christmas.

SCENE 5
In the school gift exchange, Addie is embarrassed to receive a heart pendant from Billy Wild. Miss Thompson doesn’t want to leave the class Christmas tree in the room over the vacation, so she decides to give it to someone whose family has no tree. Addie and another girl, Gloria Cott, are the only ones without a tree, so Miss Thompson devises an impromptu contest to determine a winner. Addie wins, and Carla Mae helps her get the tree home.

SCENE 6
Grandma and Addie decorate the tree. At night, when he thinks he is alone, Dad turns on the Christmas tree lights and remembers his last Christmas with his wife. Addie sneaks out of her room to watch him. When Addie comes down the stairs, Dad explodes and tells her she must get the tree out of his house. Grandma tells him again that his grief is not Addie’s fault and that he will drive her away.

SCENE 7
Grandma tries to comfort Addie, who still doesn’t understand the true reason for her father’s anger. She reaches Addie. When Grandma and Dad have gone to sleep, Addie slips out of the house and lugs the tree to Gloria Cott’s house. She rings the doorbell and runs away.

SCENE 8
In the morning, Dad asks Addie where the tree is. Addie replies that she took it to the Cott’s front yard. Dad seems to be having second thoughts.

SCENE 9
Addie and her schoolmates get ready for the annual Christmas pageant. Gloria, dressed as a cow, thanks Addie for the tree. Addie is wearing the heart pendant from Billy Wild, who notices. They wish each other good luck before going onstage for the pageant.

SCENE 10
When Addie, Grandma, and Dad return from the pageant, Addie sees a huge, beautiful, undecorated pine tree in the living room. The house now looks like Christmas. Grandma has brought in the old ornaments, and Dad crowns the tree with a star made by his wife.

EPILOGUE
Back in New York, the grown-up Adelaide smiles at her recollections from 20 years ago, and we see her Christmas tree, topped with her mother’s star.
I WAS HONORED to be asked by Patrick Summers to create one of the holiday operas for Houston Grand Opera’s series. While I was looking for an idea, Patrick called one day to tell me of a TV movie he saw when he was little and asked me to watch it and read the book. I liked it right away. I was moved by the way the little girl, Addie, is asked to grow up. In a world that often turns its back on grief, this story stares it squarely in the face and gives it the power to heal and augment everything, to bless. I asked Royce Vavrek to watch and read it and he felt the same way, and went a step further in personalizing it and making it somewhat about his childhood in Alberta, Canada.

I felt a kind of freedom in thinking kids might see this opera with their parents. It made me want to make it very transparent and understandable, full of love, and full of Christmas. Here I am, one more Jewish composer adding to the Christmas canon. But what a joy it was writing it, with Royce’s witty, singular, kids’-world libretto. I even got to create a new setting of a Christmas carol!

I can’t help feeling like we are doing a PARTICULAR service doing it in Houston this Christmas. It seems, I hope, that a little Christmas cheer might be welcome after all that has happened here. It is an honor to do what I do for a living—to be HEARD!—and it is humbling to try and think of it as service. I want to bring a little light, a Christmas candle, if you will, to Houston this year, and this is it. This is my third opera for HGO. I am grateful to be so welcomed into this community.

Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, and all good things, whatever you celebrate. May our country, like Addie’s, grow and learn from its own mistakes. May peace reign upon the world.

—Ricky Ian Gordon, composer

EVERY PROJECT I WRITE inevitably contains autobiographic elements, but perhaps none so much as The House without a Christmas Tree. When I read Gail Rock’s novel, I was immediately struck by how similar the fictional town of Clear River, Nebraska, was to my hometown of Sexsmith in western Alberta, Canada, a small town of around 1,500 people in the ’80s and ’90s where I attended St. Mary’s Catholic School. The book also spoke to me as I, too, lost a parent—in my case my father, who took his own life when I was in my mid-20s. I know all too well how grief creates a lens, a prism through which we see and experience the world, a grief that often cycles around and becomes amplified at this time of year. Christmas has always been a very important holiday in my family, and as a precocious young boy I took it upon myself to volunteer my siblings and cousins to perform in an annual family concert in my paternal grandparents’ basement after turkey dinner and presents—one of my earliest opportunities as a producer/writer/performer/ringmaster. Twenty-five or so years later, like Adelaide, I now live in New York City, a long way away from the canola, barley, and wheat fields of my childhood, and I write for a living...and I get to write with geniuses like Ricky Ian Gordon, a man whose music I’ve loved forever. I wrote the libretto for this opera with my niece and nephews in mind (and in heart)—Gunnar, Lydia, Jacob, and Reid—a quartet of curious and imaginative personalities with whom I am lucky to get to spend Christmas every year. With this opera, I am hoping to instill in them a love of music and theater, something that their late grandfather, Andy Vavrek, valued immensely.

My sincerest thanks go out to everyone at Houston Grand Opera, particularly Patrick and Perryn for giving me the wonderful opportunity to tell this story, and to Ricky, who has changed my life in a million ways through our collaboration. I wish everyone the merriest of Christmases as you gather ’round your Christmas trees!

—Royce Vavrek, librettist
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Chavdar Parashkevov †
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Christian Mathews
Antonio Teodoro
Riley Vagis
Mallory Williams

* HGO Orchestra core musician † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production † HGO Studio artist
WHO'S WHO

RICKY IAN GORDON
Composer
American composer Ricky Ian Gordon has composed two previous operas for HGO: *A Coffin in Egypt*, written for Frederica von Stade (2014, with libretto by Leonard Foglia, also performed at The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Opera Philadelphia, Chicago Opera Theatre, and Lincoln Center), and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1996, with Jean Claude van Itallie). Gordon’s catalog also includes *Morning Star* (libretto by William Hoffman) for the Cincinnati Opera, with a new version set to premiere in March 2018 for On Site Opera; *27* (libretto by Royce Vavrek) for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and also performed in a new choral version commissioned by Master Voices at City Center in New York; *Rappahannock County* (libretto by Mark Campbell), for the Harrison Opera House; *Sycamore Trees* (libretto by composer) for The Signature Theatre; *The Grapes of Wrath* (libretto by Michael Korie), premiered by the Minnesota Opera in 2007 and a new version premiered by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2017; *Green Sneakers: for Baritone, String Quartet, and Empty Chair* (libretto by the composer), a theatrical song cycle premiered by the Miami String Quartet; the song cycle *Orpheus and Euridice* for Lincoln Center; *My Life with Albertine* (with Richard Nelson), for Playwright’s Horizons; *Night Flight to San Francisco and Antarctica* (for Renée Fleming), both set to text from Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America; Dream True* (with Tina Landau) for the Vineyard Theatre; *States of Independence* (also with Landau) for the American Music Theatre Festival; and *Only Heaven* for Encompass Opera.

ROYCE VAVREK
Librettist
Royce Vavrek is a Grande Prairie, Canada–born, Brooklyn-based librettist and lyricist whose opera *Angel’s Bone* with composer Du Yun was awarded the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music. He made his HGO debut in 2015 with HGOco’s world premiere of *O Columbia* (composer Gregory Spears). He is also known for his diverse collaborations with composers Ricky Ian Gordon (*27*); David T. Little (Dog Days, *Am I Born, JFK*); Missy Mazzoli (*Song from the Uproar, Breaking the Waves*); Joshua Schmidt (*Midwestern Gothic*); Paola Prestini (*Yoani, The Hubble Cantata*); Matt Marks (*A Song for Wade [This is Not That Song], Strip Mall*); Ellen Reid (*Knoxville: Summer of 2015*); Mikael Karlsson (*Diana Vreeland*); and Marisa Michelson (*Naamah’s Ark*). Vavrek is co-artistic director of The Coterie, an opera-theater company founded with Tony-nominated soprano Lauren Worsham. The company is currently developing a series of short films that will operatically adapt Aaron Teel’s novella-in-flash *Shampoo Horns* into six installments, each composed by a different composer, a project supported by the Canada Council for the Arts’ New Chapter program. He holds a BFA in filmmaking and creative writing from Concordia University, Montreal, and an MFA from the Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program at New York University. He is an alumnus of American Lyric Theater’s Composer Librettist Development Program.

BRADLEY MOORE
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair Conductor
Conductor, coach, and pianist Bradley Moore is HGO’s associate music director and serves as music director for both the HGO Studio and HGOco. He conducted performances of HGO’s season-opening production of *La traviata*; HGOco’s world premiere of *Some Light Emerges* (2017); *The Little Prince* (2015); and performances of *The Elixir of Love* (2016), *Tosca* (2015–16), and *The Magic Flute* (2014–15). He also serves as pianist for HGO’s Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He recently conducted *The Cunning Little Vixen, Dead Man Walking*, and *The Crucible* at the Miami Music Festival; he has conducted *Madame Butterfly* at the Castleton Festival and *The Barber of Seville* at Opera Colorado and has worked on the music staffs of the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Paris Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and Los Angeles Opera, among others. Moore recently performed in recital with Jamie Barton at the Toronto Summer Music Festival. He and Barton have appeared at Carnegie Hall, Frankfurt Opera, the Kennedy Center, and other venues and have joined Angela Meade in recital at the U.S. Supreme Court. He has collaborated with Renée Fleming and Susan Graham at Carnegie Hall and on several national tours, and enjoys partnerships with Christine Goerke, Alice Coote, Eric Cutler, Eric Owens, and clarinetist Julian Bliss. TV appearances include performing live on *A Prairie Home Companion* with Renée Fleming and Yo-Yo Ma.
JAMES ROBINSON
Director
James Robinson’s work has been seen at HGO in the production of Julius Caesar seen earlier this season, which debuted at HGO in 2003; Nixon in China last season; The Abduction from the Seraglio (2017, 2008, 2002); the world premiere of Catán’s Salísipuedes (2004); and Lucia di Lammermoor (2003). Robinson is artistic director at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has mounted productions including Unsuk Chin’s Alice in Wonderland (American premiere), Peter Ash’s The Golden Ticket (world premiere), John Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles (also presented at the Wexford Festival), and John Adams’s The Death of Klinghoffer. Robinson has directed new productions for San Francisco Opera (Norma, Il trittico, and The Elixir of Love); the Canadian Opera Company (Norma, Elektra, and Nixon in China); the Santa Fe Opera (Capriccio, Così fan tutte, and The Rake’s Progress); and New York City Opera (La bohème, Hansel and Gretel, and Il viaggio a Reims). His work has also been seen at the Australian Opera, the Washington National Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Seattle Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera, the Dallas Opera, the Minnesota Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater. Recent highlights include Vanessa for Santa Fe Opera, The Elixir of Love for Canadian Opera Company, and the critically acclaimed 2013 world premiere of Terence Blanchard’s Champion for the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, which he later directed at Washington National Opera.

ALLEN MOYER
Set Designer
Allen Moyer’s work was most recently seen at HGO last season in Nixon in China and in The Abduction from the Seraglio (also in 2008 and 2002). Other work at HGO includes La bohème (2008, 2002) and the world premiere of Catán’s Salísipuedes (2004). Recent opera credits include Vanessa and The Daughter of the Regiment for the Santa Fe Opera, Emmeline and the world premiere of Jack Perla’s Shalimar the Clown for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Die Fledermaus for Canadian Opera Company and English National Opera, Orfeo ed Euridice for the Metropolitan Opera, and many productions for San Francisco Opera, Scottish Opera, Washington National Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Welsh National Opera, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Wexford Festival, Seattle Opera, and New York City Opera, including Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson’s The Mother of Us All, Il trittico, Il viaggio a Reims, and La bohème (broadcast on Live from Lincoln Center). Broadway credits include The Lyons, Lysistrata Jones, the musical Grey Gardens (Tony/Drama Desk/Outer Critic’s Circle nominations and the 2006 Hewes Award from the American Theater Wing). After Miss Julie, The Little Dog Laughed, Twelve Angry Men (including the national tour), and The Constant Wife. Moyer is the recipient of a 2006 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence.

JAMES SCHUETTE
Costume Designer
James Schuette’s work has previously been seen at HGO in Julius Caesar (2017, 2003), last season’s Nixon in China, and La bohème (2008, 2002), all with director James Robinson. His recent work as a set and/or costume designer includes Champion at Washington National Opera; Vanessa at the Santa Fe Opera; The Grapes of Wrath, Shalimar the Clown, 27, Ariadne on Naxos, and Emmeline at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Dolores Claiborne at San Francisco Opera; Macbeth at Glimmerglass Opera; and Norma at L.A. Opera. His work has also been seen at American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Classic Stage, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Signature Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Trinity Repertory Theatre, UCLA’s Royce Hall, Wexner Center, Yale Repertory Theatre, Boston Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Seattle Opera, New York City Opera, Washington National Opera, and internationally. Recent projects include Alcina at Washington National Opera; upcoming projects include Regina at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

CHRISTOPHER AKERLIND
Lighting Designer
Christopher Akerlind returns to HGO where his work was previously seen in Julius Caesar and Tosca, both in 2003. His frequent collaborations with James Robinson, Allen Moyer, and James Schuette include The Grapes of Wrath, Shalimar the Clown, Emmeline, and The Death of Klinghoffer at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has been resident lighting designer for 21 seasons, as well as Dolores Claiborne for San Francisco Opera and Vanessa and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen for the Santa Fe Opera. Other work includes productions at Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Dallas Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Los Angeles Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera,
the Nisei Opera, Opéra National de Bordeaux, Seattle Opera, Hamburg State Opera, La Scala, and the Wexford Festival. Akerlind is a two-time Tony Award winner, for his work in Paula Vogel’s play Indecent (2017) and in the musical The Light in the Piazza (2005). Other work on Broadway includes Rocky the Musical, The Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, 110 in the Shade, Awake and Sing!, and Seven Guitars. Additional honors include three Drama Desk Awards, an Outer Critic’s Circle Award, an Obie for Sustained Excellence, and the Michael Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration.

ANDREW HARPER
Sound Designer
Andrew Harper is an independent sound designer, 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 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.

KAREN REEVES
Juvenile Chorus Director
Karen Reeves has prepared the Houston Grand Opera Children’s Chorus and child soloists since 1991, for such operas as Otello, Carmen, La bohème, Dead Man Walking, Tosca, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Hansel and Gretel, and The Little Prince. She was a member of the Houston Grand Opera Chorus for 13 seasons, and during the 1999–2000 season, she became the founding director of the High School Voice Studio, HGO’s year-long intensive program for high school students preparing for further vocal music study. She received her bachelor of music degree from Southwestern University and her master of music degree from Rice University. She taught on the voice faculty at Houston Baptist University, and for more than 20 years she taught in the voice department of Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as an artist consultant. She has served as a grant evaluator for the Texas Commission on the Arts music and opera advisory panel. She is the Opera Program administrator at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

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 (Texas) 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 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).

LAUREN SNOUFFER
Soprano—Addie Mills
HGO Studio alumna Lauren Snouffer (2011–13) performs regularly at HGO, most recently as Carrie in Carousel (2016). Other roles include Cherubino in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); Ellie May Chipley in Show Boat (2013); and Elvira in The Italian Girl in Algiers, Thibault in Don Carlos, Lucia in The Rape of Lucretia, and Rosina in performances of The Barber of Seville, all in 2012. This season, she performs the title role in Lu lu in a new production at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago conducted by Juan Pablo Izquierdo and directed by Mariane Clément, reprises her acclaimed portrayal of Agnès in George Benjamin’s Written on Skin for Opera Philadelphia’s new production, creates a principal soprano role in Andrew Norman’s A Trip to the Moon presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and directed by Yuval Sharon, and returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago in a new production of Orphée et Eurydice directed and choreographed by John Neumeier under the baton of...
Harry Bicket. She also sings Mozart heroines in concert, including Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with Stefano Montanari conducting the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* with Krzysztof Urbański and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Additional concert performances include Mozart’s *Requiem* with the Cleveland Orchestra, and Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and Mahler’s Fourth Symphony with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

**DANIEL BELCHER**  
Baritone—James Addison Mills III ("Dad")  
Grammy Award–winning baritone Daniel Belcher, an HGO Studio alumnus (1997–99), has appeared at HGO as Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (2012), the title role in *Billy Budd* (2008), Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (2005), Papageno in *The Magic Flute* (2004), Schaunard in *La bohème* (2002), John Brooke in *Little Women* (2000 and world premiere in 1998), and the title role in *Orfeo* (1999), among others. With a repertoire of more than 70 roles, Belcher has championed roles from the Baroque to those composed expressly for him. He came to international attention in 2004 creating the role of Prior Walter in Péter Eötvös’s *Angels in America* for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Most recently, he created the roles of Lord Bellingham in Lori Laitman’s *The Scarlet Letter* at Opera Colorado (recording released by Naxos), Brian Castner in Jeremy Howard Beck’s *The Long Walk* with Opera Saratoga, and Robert Kennedy in Robin de Raaff’s *Waiting for Miss Monroe* for his debut at the Netherlands Opera and Holland Festival. Earlier this season, he returned to Opera Philadelphia as Inspector Kildare in the world premiere of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell’s *Elizabeth Cree* and Utah Opera as Gabriel von Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. This season, he also debuts as the Street Singer and Tiger Brown in *The Threepenny Opera* at Boston Lyric Opera and as the Captain in Hans Werner Henze’s *The Bassarids* for his first performances in Madrid.

**PATRICIA SCHUMAN**  
Soprano—Grandma Mills  
Patricia Schuman made her HGO debut in 2001 as the title role in *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Recently, she sang Carlotta to the Eugene O’Neill of her husband, David Pittsinger, in
the world premiere of Jeanine Tesori and Tony Kushner’s *Blizzard on Marblehead Neck* at the Glimmerglass Festival; performed Estelle Oglethorpe in John Musto’s *Later the Same Evening*; and sang the Duchess of Argyll in Thomas Adès’s *Powder Her Face* and the Mother in the world premiere of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves*, both with Opera Philadelphia. She began her career in Mozartean roles, singing Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Metropolitan Opera with James Levine conducting; Ilia in *Idomeneo* at La Scala with Riccardo Muti; and Ilia and Pamina at Vienna State Opera under the baton of Nikolaus Harnoncourt. She made her debut at the Salzburg Festival as Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito* and has repeated the role at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Glyndebourne; Madrid; and Lyon. As her repertoire expanded, she sang Alice Ford in *Falstaff* at Covent Garden with Bernard Haitink conducting, Rezia in Weber’s *Oberon* with Marc Minkowski at the Flemish Opera, the title role in Schumann’s *Genoveva* with the Edinburgh Festival and Opera North, Blanche in Poulenc’s *Les dialogues des Carmélites* with Rome Opera and Seattle Opera, Madeleine in Strauss’s *Capriccio* in Toulouse, and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Pittsburgh Opera.

**HEIDI STOBER**

Soprano—Miss Thompson/Helen Mills/Adelaide Mills

HGO Studio alumna Heidi Stober (2004–06) sang Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar* at HGO earlier this season and has also performed Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* (2016), Musetta in *La bohème* (2012), Atalanta in *Xerxes* (2010), Blonde in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2008), Drusilla in *The Coronation of Poppea* (2006), Norina in performances of *Don Pasquale* (2006), and many others. She joined the Studio after winning first prize in HGO’s 2004 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. She enjoys a longstanding relationship with Deutsche Oper Berlin, appearing in a variety of leading roles including Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Susanna, Adina in a new production of *The Elixir of Love*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Susanna, Adina in a new production of *The Elixir of Love*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and Princess Ninette in Robert Carsen’s new production of *L’amour des trois oranges*. Recent highlights include Norina in Laurent Pelly’s production of *Don Pasquale* at San Francisco Opera conducted by Giuseppe Finzi, Ricky Ian Gordon’s 27 with the Collegiate Chorale at New York City

“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.”
Center, and Adina for the Vienna State Opera. For the Metropolitan Opera, she has performed Gretel, Pamina, and Oscar. This season’s engagements include Micaëla, Oscar, and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni for Deutsche Oper Berlin; Handel’s Esther with Music of the Baroque in Chicago; and Adina for Semperoper Dresden.

MEGAN MIKAIOVNA SAMARIN  
Mezzo-soprano—Carla Mae  
Recent HGO Studio alumna Megan Mikailovna Samarin (2014–17) has been seen at HGO as Sextus in Julius Caesar earlier this season and Second Secretary in Nixon in China (2017); Siebel in Faust, Lady Meresvale/Mistress Revels in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players, and Third Wóod Nymph in Rusalka (2016); and Olga in Eugene Onegin, Lady Columbia in the HGOco world premiere of Gregory Spears and Royce Vavrek’s O Columbia, Johanna in Sweeney Todd, and Second Lady in The Magic Flute (2015). She was a finalist in HGO’s 2014 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and is an alumn of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy. Additional highlights include her Glimmerglass Festival debut as Marzia in the American premiere of Vivaldi’s Cato in Utica, as well as La Marchande in Les manuelles de Tirésias in her Wolf Trap Opera debut. This past summer, she sang Baroness Aspasia in Rossini’s La pietra del paragone as well as Son in Philip Glass’s The Juniper Tree at Wolf Trap Opera. Later this season, she will make her debut with the Houston ensemble Mercury in “Loving Clara Schumann,” a theatrical multimedia project incorporating the music of both Robert and Clara Schumann.

MAXIMILLIAN MACIAS  
Tenor—Billy Wild  
Maximillian Macias is a member of HGO’s 2017–18 Bauer Family High School Voice Studio and is making his HGO debut. He is a junior at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, where he is a member of the HSPVA Chorale and Chamber Singers. He has participated in choir since seventh grade and began taking private voice instruction as a freshman. He attends All-State Choir Camps at Baylor University and the University of Texas–San Antonio each summer and in 2017 was the first-chair Tenor 2 in the Texas All-State Mixed Choir. He won second place in the 2017 Schmidt Youth Vocal Competition at Baylor University.

His recent theatrical credits include Urinetown the Musical (Ensemble), Into the Woods (Cinderella’s Prince), and Fiddler on the Roof (Mendel).

ELISABETH LEONE  
Soprano—Gloria Cott  
Elisabeth Leone, a member of HGO’s 2017–18 Bauer Family High School Voice Studio, is making her HGO debut. The Klein Oak High School senior is a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, French Honor Society, and National Honor Society. She has previously performed in The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Olive’s Mom, Chorus) and Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (Chorus) and was the soprano soloist in Saint Saëns’s Oratorio de Noël. She won first place in the 2017 Greater Houston NATS Competition and fourth place in the 2016 Southwestern Sarofim Vocal Competition in Georgetown, Texas. In Klein ISD vocal contests, she has earned excellent solo ratings each year (2015–17) and won the Outstanding Solo Performance Award in 2016.
EMILY N. WELLS
A NEW STAGE

BY PERRYN LEECH
Managing Director
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

Emily Wells tells why becoming the HGOco programs manager was just the right career move for her. She joined the team in 2016 after relocating from Florida with her husband and young daughter.
PERRYN LEECH: I can’t believe that it has already been a year since you joined HGO! Can you tell me a little about where you grew up?
EMILY WELLS: It seems incredible to me as well! I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, and have a sister who is six years older. My father was a CFO in industry and my mother a homemaker. They were short-term foster parents before I was born, and my mom always knew she wanted to adopt.

Did you realize that there were a lot of short-term visitors in your family?
I didn’t until I was a bit older. My father was moved within the same company, and before we moved briefly to Toronto, my parents permanently adopted my brother. He is three years older than I and is Korean–American.

Were you old enough to fully understand this change in the family order?
Not really, and it didn’t matter anyway, as my brother and I did everything—and learned everything—together. We learned to swim, ride bikes, and just generally tear around as brothers and sisters do! My dad’s company moved us again, this time to Rhode Island, and we had to get used to another new environment. I was enrolled in a Montessori school and found it came very easily to me. My parents gave us a very loving and structured life. I wanted to learn the violin at the age of four and was writing in cursive by the time I started first grade. I loved music and reading and had a very active mind. With dressing up and make believe, I already had a very important creative outlet.

You were quite the child prodigy then?
I didn’t say I was any good! I just loved it all, adding piano, singing, and figure skating. I loved the performance aspect of skating but in the end I focused on music as the brutal early-morning start times for training made the figure skating become a lot less fun! By the time I got to junior high, I was so busy with my music that skating seemed the right thing to let go.

It sounds like your life was very busy. When did you start to realize that you wanted to use your artistic side in the future and maybe have a career in the arts?
I guess it was when I was at high school. I had a new drama teacher and everything was very disorganized, so I just kind of got it into order. I think of myself as highly organized and I was able to add some structure to the department that had been missing up to that point. That was the first time I thought that maybe theater could be a career for me.

Oh, you were “that” student! Were you pleased with how that structure worked out?
I think it worked well. But in my junior year, I auditioned for All-State Choir and as we drove back, the car I was in lost control and I shattered my pelvis. I was in recovery for over two months, so this was not a good time for me.

That is an understatement! What a terrible thing to happen—and especially at such an important point in your schooling.
As I recuperated and caught up on my schoolwork, I basically shut down the performing side of my life. I took a pragmatic look at what I would like to do if the theater side of my life didn’t work out. I loved languages as well, so I started looking at liberal arts colleges with strong language and theater programs.

Had you decided which direction you were headed and what you would study?
I decided that I wanted to go to Washington University in St. Louis. I
continued French and started learning Russian, but I quickly learned that I really did not enjoy it and spent more time in the theater department. My sister was at Berkeley studying music production and my brother was at Kansas City Art Institute studying industrial design and sculpture. It was in my junior year that I was asked to stage-manage *The Seagull*, and I loved it. From that moment on, I started to work on the directing and production side of things. When I graduated, I got my Actors Equity card and started to freelance and ended up on a children’s theater tour based in New York.

**That must have been somewhat of a shock, to suddenly be stage-managing in New York!**

It was, but I was really enjoying it and it suited my organizing and creative skill set very well. One of the jobs I had was a limited Broadway run of *Elektra* with actress Zoë Wanamaker. It was amazing. The production stage manager on that show became a true friend and mentor to me and then suggested that I join him on a national tour of *The Buddy Holly Story*. When he left the tour, I was asked to take over, so I was a production stage manager of a touring Broadway show at the age of 24!

**That’s amazing—it seems like you have always been an overachiever!**

That’s what my grad school mentor said! Touring is tough work but I enjoyed it very much—and managed to see all but five states! When the tour ended, I returned to New York and worked on and off Broadway on new plays and musicals. After a few years, the hard freelance life left me wanting a break and a return to more creative work. I started to look at doing a post-graduate degree and found the perfect school at the University of Memphis, which offered an MFA in directing. It fit all of my goals for a graduate program, and I was happy to get in. I fell in love with the city of Memphis.

**It sounds like you needed a fresh start at that time.**

I certainly did, but it wasn’t easy sailing. Between my first and second year, it was discovered that I had two heart defects that had gone undiagnosed. I had to have a stent put in and make some lifestyle adjustments. Now, I raise awareness and volunteer as a patient advocate, fundraiser, and peer counselor.
Did you stay in Memphis after you graduated?
I stayed a year in Memphis and worked freelance again, directing, teaching, and working at the Memphis Orpheum Theatre, where all the touring shows are performed. I needed to keep my health insurance, though, and took a resident stage-managing job in Portland, Oregon, visiting my last five states on the way. I loved Portland, but I found it to be a very difficult artistic community to break into.

So did you end up having to move again to find work?
I did, but not until after I met and married a former production manager from Cirque de Soleil. We bonded over our love of travel and the outdoors. Chris and I got married in 2014 and then moved to Florida a year later when he was offered a job as general manager of a new venue. The work was tough. I slowly began to find opportunities, but it was clear there were some issues with fit. We started to wonder if Florida was going to be a long-term thing for us. And then I got pregnant…

That must have been great news, but maybe just not the perfect timing?
It was great news and changed everything. Our daughter was born in 2016, and shortly after that, we knew we were going to move. We were deciding whether it was back to New York or maybe nearer to family. And then I saw the posting for the job here at HGOco, and it looked like the perfect fit for the wide range of skills I have acquired through my life and freelance career. My brother and his family live in Houston as well, so it really felt like it was meant to be. I was thrilled when I got the job and joined the company, and it’s wonderful to have family nearby.

It is amazing how sometimes the perfect opportunity comes up at the perfect time.
This job is the second “kismet” move of my life. Our transition to Houston was made complete when Chris was hired as director of event technology for the new Marriott Marquis in downtown just days after I was hired at HGO. We of course didn’t realize at that time that we would be working so close together—the George R. Brown and the Marriott are linked buildings!

We are glad you have found the Houston arts community easier to break into!
Thank you. I am inspired every day by the work I get to do with HGOco—no two days are alike when new operas are involved. HGOco listens to—and shares—the stories of Houston. I look forward to finding more of them to share in this powerfully strong and creative city. ■
FREE PERFORMANCES

Opera to Go! presents four FREE performances of Kamala Sankaram and David Johnston’s *Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers*, a world premiere opera inspired by Indian and Chinese mythology and the Bollywood style. This hilarious fable demonstrates the power of teamwork as a monkey prince and his brainy sister outwit a hungry crocodile and escape from the City of Tigers.

**February 2 and 3, 2018  |  9:30 and 11 a.m. daily**

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Reservations are mandatory for weekday performances as seating is limited. Please call 713-546-0231.

COME CAMPING WITH US!

HGOco is proud to bring a comprehensive month of opera and music filled experiences to children of all ages. In June of 2018 we will host four camps: **Vocal Arts** camp for singers with unchanged voices in grades 4–9, **Create an Opera** camp for artistic and creative students in grades 3–6, **Art of Opera** camp for middle and high school students who wish to perform or learn production skills—and, this year we will launch **b’Opera**, an opera experience for babies and their caregivers. Learn more at HGO.org/community-programs.

**Create an Opera** campers perform their own version of Pandora’s Box.

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.

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**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:

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Anchorage Foundation of Texas  
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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.

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**HGOco COMPANY COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**
HGO STUDIO FACULTY & STAFF

Brian Speck, Director
Bradley Moore, Music Director
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Jeremy Johnson, Studio Manager
Carlisle Floyd, Artistic Advisor
Stephen King, Director of Vocal Instruction
Sponsored by Jill and Allyn Risley and James J. Drach Endowment Fund
Patrick Summers, Conducting Instructor and Coach
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Richard Bado, Head of Music Staff
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Peter Pasztor, Resident Coach
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Jr. Endowed Chair
Kirill Kuzmin, Resident Coach
Geoffrey Loff, Resident Coach
Tara Faircloth, Drama Coach
Omer Ben Seadia, Drama Coach
Adam Noble, Movement Instructor
Melissa Noble, Movement Instructor

Christa Gaug, German Instructor
Sponsored by John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer
Elena McGee, Russian Instructor
Enrica Vagliani Gray, Italian Instructor
Sponsored by Marsha Montemayor
Julie Muller, English Instructor
Nicole Uhlig, French Instructor
David Paul, Showcase Director
Sponsored by Marcheta Leighton-Beasley
Edward Berkeley, Guest Acting Instructor
John Churchwell, Guest Coach, and Pierre Vallet, Guest Coach
Sponsored by Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer
Kathleen Kelly, Guest Coach

Drama and Movement Faculty
(Tara Faircloth, Adam Noble, Melissa Noble, and Edward Berkeley) sponsored by Anonymous

The HGO Studio also receives generous support from Frosh International Travel,
Mr. Jackson D. Hicks, Jerry and Sharyn Metcalf, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Reynolds.

The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of the Texas Voice Center and RSM US, LLP.

The Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) is generously underwritten by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wakefield, Frosh International Travel, and the HGO Guild. Additional support for YAVA is provided by Mr. Patrick Carfizzi and Dr. David and Mrs. Norine Gill.

Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.

Additional support for Houston Grand Opera Studio is provided by the following funds within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.:

- The Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation Endowment Fund
- Thomas Capshaw Endowment Fund
- Carol Lynn Lay Fletcher Endowment Fund
- William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Charlotte Howe Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Elva Lobit Opera Endowment Fund
- Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment Fund
- Erin Gregory Neale Endowment Fund
- Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil–Quaker State Company) Fund
- Mary C. Gayler Snook Endowment Fund
- Tenneco, Inc. Endowment Fund

HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2017–18

Yelevna 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

Jonathan Gmeinder, pianist/coach
Bill and Melinda Bruenger/ 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 Ann Chao/ Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

CONCERT OF ARIAS
Join us for the exciting final round in the 30th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. A Champagne reception begins the festivities of this gala evening at 6 p.m., with the competition to follow at 7 p.m. at Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. The evening concludes with a festive Celebration Dinner at Hotel Zaza. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org

STUDIO RECITAL SERIES
Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

Don’t miss these opportunities to hear HGO Studio artists! Purchase tickets to the events listed here online at HGO.org/schedule/tickets/calendar or by telephone at 713-228-OPERA (6737).

FEB. 01

FEB. 23 & 24
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. Manolo Sánchez, BBVA Compass’s chairman, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

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 chairmen 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.

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.

Robin Angly, Chairman
CORPORATE SECRETARY, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, IMPRESARIOS CIRCLE, memorable productions including HGO’s Holiday Opera Series.

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 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 Impresarios 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.

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.

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as senior chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.

THE CULLEN FOUNDATION

For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGOco’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.

The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead 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.

HUGO LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGOco’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.

THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION

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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 are chairmen of the upcoming 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 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 special events 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

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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.

JANICE AND ROBERT MCNAIR
Janice and Bob 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.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. Mellon Foundation–supported projects include the 2019 world premiere of Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix and HGOco’s Song of Houston initiative.

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 HGOco, 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.
Committee. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOoco Committee and generously supports HGOoco initiatives as a guarantor.

**CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELLO**
Cynthia and Tony are deeply committed to improving the lives of Houstonians through their support of health care and the arts. Tony is the chief executive officer of Nabors Industries, the world’s largest land-based drilling contractor.

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.

**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 Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters. Fred Dyen, Cameron Group HR director, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

**SCHLUMBERGER**
Schlumberger, Ltd., 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 Mansfieldt, 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.

**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 $4,000 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.
PATRONS SOCIETY, CONTINUED

PATRONS CIRCLE—$5,000 OR MORE
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Mrs. Susan Saurage-Altenloeh
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Bill Arning and Mark McHaley
Mr. Paul R. Aruffo and Dr. Eva Salmeron
Dr. and Mrs. Roy Aruffo
Paul and Maida Asofsky
Christopher Bacon and Craig Miller
Ms. Catherine Bohannon and
Mr. Matt Hennessy
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan W. Bagley
Gilbert Baker
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Baker
Ms. Thu Nhu Barrus
Mr. William Bartlett
Dr. Barbara Lee Bass and
Mr. Richard S. Marshall
Dr. James A. Belli and Dr. Patricia Eifel
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Drs. Robert S. and Nancy Benjamin
Dr. and Mrs. Joel M. Berman
Jorge Bernal and Andrea Maher
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Mr. and Mrs. Stanley C. Beyer
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Blickel
Ms. Larissa Bither
Mr. Wirt Blaffer and Ms. Nina Delano
Mrs. Thomas W. Blake
Kenneth Bloom and Sheila Swartzman
Dr. Jenny L. Bohannon
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Thomas and Sally Bolam
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For information regarding charitable estate gift planning and how it might positively impact you, your loved ones, and Houston Grand Opera, please contact Richard Buffetto, director of major gifts and legacy giving, at 713-546-0216 or visit HGO.org/laureatesociety.
The Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc., is a separate nonprofit organization that invests contributions to earn income for the benefit of Houston Grand Opera Association. The Endowment Board works with Paul Comstock Partners, independent investment counsel, to engage professional investment managers.

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- The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund

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- James J. Drach Endowed Fund
- Fondren Foundation Fund for Educational Programs

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- Guyla Pircher Harris Project
- Spring Opera Festival Fund (Shell Lubricants, formerly Pennzoil — Quaker State Company)

### CONCERT OF ARIAS

- Eleanor Searle McCollum Endowment Fund

HGO.org
**CALENDAR 2017-18**

**NOVEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30, Dec. 2, 3m, 6, 8, 10m, 14, 16m, 17m</td>
<td>World premiere performances of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek's <em>The House without a Christmas Tree</em>. HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown.</td>
</tr>
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**DECEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Behind the Music:</em>, an intimate conversation about <em>The House without a Christmas Tree</em> immediately following the performance. Free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Student Matinee</em>: HGOco hosts groups of students in grades 4–8 and their chaperones at a performance of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s <em>The House without a Christmas Tree</em>. School groups only: reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JANUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Opera Night Live</em>: the HGO Guild invites you to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about <em>The Barber of Seville</em> from a special guest. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or <a href="mailto:guild@hgo.org">guild@hgo.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19, 21m, 27, 31, Feb. 2</td>
<td>Performances of <em>R. Strauss’s Elektra</em>. HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>Behind the Music</em>: an intimate conversation about <em>Elektra</em> immediately following the performance. Free.</td>
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</table>

**FEBRUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Concert of Arias</em>: the 30th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Champagne reception at 6 p.m., competition at 7 p.m. at Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. Celebration Dinner to follow at Hotel ZaZa. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or <a href="mailto:brogers@hgo.org">brogers@hgo.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>HGOco and Opera to Go! present the world premiere of Kamala Sankaram and David Johnston’s <em>Monkey &amp; Francine in the City of Tigers</em>. Heinen Theatre at Houston Community College, central campus, 9:30 and 11 a.m. daily. <em>Monkey &amp; Francine</em> tours from Jan. 29 through May 18. Book a performance at HGO.org/OperaToGo or by calling 713-546-0231.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HGOco presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a masterclass with HGO Studio artists Zoie Reams and Thomas Glass. 2 p.m. The public is invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at <a href="mailto:amagallon@hgo.org">amagallon@hgo.org</a> for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 &amp; 24</td>
<td>HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**MARCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HGOco presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a masterclass with HGO Head of Music Staff Richard Bado. 2 p.m. The public is invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at <a href="mailto:amagallon@hgo.org">amagallon@hgo.org</a> for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &amp; 11</td>
<td><em>Studio Showcase</em>: The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform a program of opera scenes. Moores Opera House, University of Houston. Free to season subscribers; non-subscribers may purchase tickets at HGO.org.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Opera Night Live</em>: the HGO Guild invites you to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about <em>West Side Story</em> from a special guest. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or <a href="mailto:guild@hgo.org">guild@hgo.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><em>Opera Ball 2018</em>: 7 p.m. Followed by the <em>Encore Party</em>. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or <a href="mailto:brogers@hgo.org">brogers@hgo.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20, 22m, 28m, 28, May 1, 3, 4, 6m</td>
<td>Performances of <em>Bernstein’s West Side Story</em>. Special intermission reception for members of <em>Opening Nights for Young Professionals</em> at the April 20 performance only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Behind the Music</em>: an intimate conversation about <em>West Side Story</em> immediately following the performance. Free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>HGOco invites lifelong learners to attend an <em>Opera Up Close</em> exploration of <em>Bellini’s Norma</em>. The $25 ticket includes dinner and a workshop (5:30 p.m.) and a ticket to the dress rehearsal (7:30 p.m.). Visit HGO.org/community-programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27, 29m, May 5, 8, 11</td>
<td>Performances of <em>Bellini’s Norma</em>. Special intermission reception for members of <em>Opening Nights for Young Professionals</em> at the April 27 performance only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For information and to purchase tickets for all Houston Grand Opera events, call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7323) unless otherwise noted. For information about HGOco events, please call 713-546-0230, email HGOco@hgo.org, or visit HGO.org/community-programs.
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Norma immediately following the performance. Free.

MAY 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. Free.

ORDER YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON!
CALL 713-228-OPERA (6737) OR 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372). OR ORDER ONLINE AT HGO.ORG.

2017 | 18

R. Strauss
ELEKTRA
Jan. 19 | 21m | 27 | 31 | Feb. 2
Elektra Christine Goerke
Chrysothemis Tamara Wilson
Klytaemnestra Michaela Martens *
Orest Greer Grimsley *
Aegisth Chad Shelton *

Conductor Patrick Summers
Set and Costume Designer John Macfarlane
Production David McVicar
Revival Director Nick Sandys *

Grand Guarantors—Mr. John G. Turner and Mr. Jerry G. Fischer
Grand Underwriter—Chevron

Choral Design: The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Rossini
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE
Jan. 26 | 28m | Feb. 3 | 8 | 10
Figaro Lucas Meachem *
Count Almaviva David Portillo
Rosina Sofía Selowsky *
Don Basilio Eric Owens *

Doctor Bartolo Peixin Chen *
Berta Yelena Dyachek *
Conductor Emily Senturia
Director Joan Font

Choral Design: The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Leonard Bernstein
Stephen Sondheim
WEST SIDE STORY
Apr. 20 | 22m | 28m | 28 | May 1 | 3 | 4 | 6m
Maria Andrea Carroll *
Tony Norman
Anita Alicia Gianni *

Riff Brian Vu *
Conductor Timothy Myers
Director Francesca Zambello

Choreographer Julio Monge *
Set Designer Peter J. Davison
Costume Designer Jessica Jahn

Lighting Designer Mark McCullough
Associate Director Eric Sean Fogel *
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra

Grand Guarantors—Houston Grand Opera Endowment
Guarantor—BBVA Compass
Grand Underwriters—Vinson & Elkins; Margaret Alkek Williams

Bellini
NORMA
Apr. 27 | 29m | May 5 | 8 | 11
Norma Liudmyla Monastyrska
Oroveso Peixin Chen *

Conductor Patrick Summers
Costume Designer Jessica Jahn
Choral Design: The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Grand Guarantors—Houston Grand Opera Endowment
Guarantor—BBVA Compass
Grand Underwriters—Vinson & Elkins; Margaret Alkek Williams


Premier Guarantor—Houston Grand Opera Endowment
Guarantor—BBVA Compass
Grand Underwriters—Vinson & Elkins; Margaret Alkek Williams

* HGO debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
Lend your voice...

...to the chorus of volunteers who help Houston Grand Opera. Whether for a few hours or a longer commitment, during your time as a HGO Guild volunteer you will learn more about this classical music form, meet people involved in productions, and share your experience with new opera-loving friends.

Save the dates

January 10, 2018
Opera Night Live
Free! With Joan Font, director, and Xevi Dorca, associate director and choreographer of *The Barber of Seville*. Guests are welcome with reservations.

February 4–28, 2018
Artist in Residence
Schedule an informal, informative, and entertaining presentation by a member of the HGO Studio, sponsored by the Guild.

March 24, 2018
HGO Guild Spring Event
An evening of fun you will not want to miss!

April 4, 2018
Opera Night Live
Free! With a member of the artistic team from *West Side Story*. Guests are welcome with reservations.

April 13–28, 2018
Artist in Residence
Schedule an informal, informative, and entertaining presentation by a member of the HGO Studio, sponsored by the Guild.

Have fun... as you help HGO

(Right) HGO Guild Volunteer of the Year Fred Gott with HGO Studio soprano Mané Galoyan and Imelda Gott at Libiamo! A Toast to Guild Volunteers, September 30.

(Far right) Patricia and Jess Carnes, past co-presidents of the Guild, at the awards celebration.

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
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Producing Director *

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Jami Howard, Assistant to the Music and Artistic Director

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Debbie Loper, Payroll Administrator *
Tanya Lovetro, Director of Finance *
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Andi Russell, Graphic Designer

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Barbara Clark, Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Voice Faculty
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Stacey Michael, Operations Manager
Hector Vásquez, Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Voice Faculty
Emily N. Wells, Programs Manager

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Paul Hopper, Assistant Artistic Director
Daniel James, Music Administrator/Artistic Media Manager
Lindsey Kirgan, Artistic & Rehearsal Coordinator
Kirill Kuzmin, Assistant Conductor
Mark C. Lear, Associate Artistic Administrator *
Geoffrey Loff, Assistant Conductor
Aspen McArthur, Music Librarian
Lisa Oswald, Company Manager
Peter Pasztor, Principal Coach *
Karen Reeves, Juvenile Chorus Director *

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Katrina Bachus, Assistant Director
Kristen E. Burke, Production Stage Manager *
Michael Clark, Lighting Supervisor *
Andrew Cloud, Properties Associate *
Norma Cortez, Head of Costumes *
Esmeralda De Leon, Costume Coordinator
Meg Edwards, Assistant Stage Manager/
Assistant Director
Joseph Farley, Assistant Technical Director/
HGOCO Technical Director
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Paul Gibson, Assistant Master Electrician/
Lighting Board Programmer
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Omer Ben Seadia, Assistant Director
Paul Spittle, Technical and Safety Director
Dotti Staker, Wig and Makeup Department Head *
Christopher Staub, Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Manager *
Phillip Taylor, Technical Assistant/Driver
Paula Lea Tran, Costume Technician
Taylor Twohy, Assistant to the Producing Director
Myrna Vallejo, Costume Shop Supervisor *
Sean Waldron, Head of Properties *
Annie Wheeler, Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Manager
Miranda Wilson, Assistant Stage Manager
Richard Worley, Head Carpenter
Mo Zhou, Assistant Director *

* denotes 10 or more years of service

HGO.org 63
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA OFFERS a wealth of services to enhance your opera experience.

ONLINE
HGO.org is the main information hub for everything Houston Grand Opera! The website provides in-depth information about the operas, performers, and events to enhance your experience. Make sure to interact with us on social media, too. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

CUSTOMER CARE CENTER
To purchase or exchange tickets, to make a donation, or for performance information, contact the Customer Care Team at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (7372). 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.

EXCHANGING YOUR TICKETS
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.

LOST OR MISPLACED TICKETS
There is no charge for replacing lost tickets. More than 24 hours prior to the performance: call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372) to request replacement tickets. They will be reprinted and held at the Will Call window for your performance. Within 24 hours of the performance, go to the Box Office Manager’s window. The Box Office Manager will access your account and reprint your tickets free of charge.

PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES
Seating
Wheelchair and companion seating is available in all sections of the theater and at all ticket prices. These seats can be purchased at HGO.org, or by calling Customer Care at 713-228-OPERA (6737).

Listening Devices
FM assisted listening devices, generously provided by the Houston First Corporation, are available for use free of charge at every performance. You may reserve a device in advance by calling Customer Care at 713-228-OPERA (6737), or ask an usher at the performance.

Descriptive Services
For those with vision impairment, audio descriptive services are available with a 48-hour advance reservation. Please call Customer Care at 713-228-OPERA (6737) to reserve service.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES
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.

PARKING
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.
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2018

6 PM | Champagne Reception
7 PM | Vocal competition at Stude Concert Hall, Rice University
POST-PERFORMANCE | Celebration Dinner at Hotel Zaza

Black Tie Attire
Tickets from $600 | Tables from $6,000

Where Passion Blossoms!

Concert of Arias brings the best young opera singers to Houston for this annual competition. Each year, hundreds of singers from across the globe audition for the HGO Studio, one of the world’s most prestigious young artist programs. Finalists come to Houston to sing in an unforgettable live finals concert filled with anticipation and passion, followed by an elegant dinner with the budding artists.

SAVE A SPOT ON YOUR DANCE CARD FOR FRED AND GINGER!

OPERA BALL
SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018
Elizabeth Grimm and Jack Roth, Chairmen
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Restrictions apply. Not available in all areas. Services and features vary based upon service level. Actual speeds vary and are not guaranteed. XFINITY xFi is available to XFINITY Internet service customers with a compatible XFINITY Gateway. Limited to home WiFi network. Does not apply to XFINITY WiFi hotspots. © 2017 Comcast. All rights reserved. FLY204909-0007