

A Bold New Season Announced for Houston Grand Opera

HGO's 2022–23 Season Features Seven Operas Including a New Staging of a Rare Masterpiece, Two U.S. Premiere Productions, the Return of a Celebrated Mariachi Opera, and Classic Audience Favorites

*The company presents a new production of **The Wreckers**; the U.S. premieres of productions of **Werther** and **Salome**; the return of HGO-commissioned world premiere **El Milagro del Recuerdo**; and three audience-favorite co-productions, **La traviata**, **The Marriage of Figaro**, and **Tosca***

HOUSTON—March 1, 2022—**Houston Grand Opera** (HGO) is proud to announce its 2022–23 season, featuring a new production of Dame Ethel Smyth's rarely-performed masterpiece *The Wreckers*, the triumphant return of HGO-commissioned mariachi opera *El Milagro del Recuerdo*, the U.S. premieres of Opéra National de Paris and Royal Opera House's production of *Werther* and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía of Valencia's production of *Salome*, and beloved HGO classics *La traviata*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Tosca*.

"There is so much to look forward to next season," says HGO General Director and CEO **Khori Dastoor**. "These operas share universal human stories that allow us to access our own deepest emotions. Whether they're about the pressure to conform, the need to speak up for what's right, the pain of loving someone we can't have, or the trials of being separated from our loved ones by economic, political, or societal forces, these incredible artworks have something to say to all of us. And, true to HGO, they will be staged by a diverse and globe-spanning group of the very best artists and creatives in all of opera. Now is the time to be bold—to respect what was and embrace what is next at HGO."

"I could not be more excited about this new era at HGO with Khori Dastoor leading the way. She brings with her such energy and vitality, and a wonderful fresh perspective on this artform," says HGO Artistic and Music Director **Patrick Summers**. "And I simply cannot wait to conduct this production of *The Wreckers*, an overlooked masterpiece from Dame Ethel Smyth that Dastoor has championed. Smyth is just one of the bold voices we'll be celebrating during the thrilling season ahead."

HGO opens the season on October 21, 2022, with Verdi's *La traviata*, in a co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Canadian Opera Company. *La traviata* is one of the world's most beloved—and performed—operas. The HGO revival features Grammy Award-winning soprano **Angel Blue** making her company debut as the doomed courtesan Violetta and leading tenor **Bryan Hymel** singing the role of her lover Alfredo. Celebrated baritone **Andrei Kymach** makes his HGO debut as Alfredo's father Giorgio Germont. Acclaimed director **Arin Arbus** returns to HGO, and conductor **Matthew Aucoin** makes his company debut.

Next, HGO presents an original production of *The Wreckers*, prolific composer and activist Dame Ethel Smyth's 1906 opera, in an English translation by Amanda Holden. *The Wreckers* takes place on the Cornish coast in the late 1700s, in a village whose people survive by plundering ships that wreck along its rocky shores. But as the townspeople discover, someone is warning the ships of the danger, and they are hungry to find the traitor. The new production stars Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano **Sasha Cooke** as Thirza alongside three HGO Studio alumni: tenor **Norman Reinhardt** as Mark, soprano **Mané**

Galoyan as Avis, and baritone **Reginald Smith, Jr.** as Pascoe. Directed by long-time HGO collaborator **Louisa Muller**, the production is a rare chance to experience Smyth's masterpiece, which has never been seen in the U.S. in a full production from a major opera company. *The Wreckers* will be conducted by HGO Artistic Director and Music Director **Patrick Summers**.

For its 2022 holiday production, HGO brings back the beloved *El Milagro del Recuerdo (The Miracle of Remembering)*, which had its world premiere at HGO in 2019. This Houston-born celebration of family, tradition, and mariachi is composed by **Javier Martínez** and shares the touching, yet heartbreaking, story of Laurentino, a bracero worker who returns from the United States to Mexico to spend Christmastime with his family, and his wife Renata, who together face a life-changing decision. Mezzo-soprano and frequent HGO collaborator **Cecilia Duarte** reprises the role of Renata for this revival, with HGO Studio alumnus and acclaimed bass-baritone **Federico De Michelis** as Laurentino. Librettist **Leonard Foglia** directs this holiday production, and **Benjamin Manis** conducts.

HGO's winter repertoire includes Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Massenet's *Werther*. Full of bright colors and costumes, Tony Award-winning director **Michael Grandage**'s vibrant production of *The Marriage of Figaro* is led by bass **Nahuel Di Pierro** in his company debut as the titular Figaro, a working-class man looking forward to marrying the beautiful Susanna, despite the meddling of a married Count who would rather have the beauty for himself. The role of Susanna is performed by soprano **Elena Villalón** in her first return to the company after completing her training with the HGO Studio, with bass-baritone **Adam Plachetka** as the Count, soprano and HGO Studio alumna **Nicole Heaston** as his wife, and soprano and HGO Studio alumna **Lauren Snouffer** as Cherubino. **Ian Rutherford** returns to HGO to direct the revival of this acclaimed production, with HGO Artistic and Music Director **Patrick Summers** conducting.

For the first time since 1979, HGO will present *Werther*, a rarely performed psychological drama from composer Jules Massenet that represents the pinnacle of romantic French grand opera. Tenor **Matthew Polenzani** performs as Werther, the young poet who obsessively pursues the taken Charlotte, portrayed by Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano **Isabel Leonard**. Both lead artists are making their anticipated HGO debuts. French director **Benoît Jacquot** makes his HGO debut with this co-production from Opéra National de Paris and Royal Opera House. World-renowned conductor and Grammy Award winner **Robert Spano** conducts.

The 2022-23 season culminates with HGO's spring repertoire, *Tosca* and *Salome*. Puccini's *Tosca* is one of the world's most beloved operas. Directed by frequent HGO collaborator **John Caird**, this riveting production is led by soprano **Tamara Wilson**, an HGO studio alumna who is now one of the most recognizable voices in opera, in her role debut as Tosca. Star tenor **Jonathan Tetelman** makes his company debut as the heroine's beloved Cavaradossi, with Grammy-nominated baritone **Rod Gilfry** returning to HGO as the villain Scarpia. **Benjamin Manis** conducts the opera, a co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Strauss's psychodrama *Salome* closes the season. The production is a loose, one-act retelling of the biblical story of King Herod and John the Baptist, based on the scandalous play by Oscar Wilde. Soprano **Amanda Majeski** makes her HGO and role debut performing as Herod's stepdaughter, the titular Salome, alongside three Houston favorites and HGO Studio alumni: bass-baritone **Ryan McKinny** as Jokanaan, tenor **Chad Shelton** as Herod, and mezzo-soprano **Denyce Graves** as Herodias. Director **Francisco Negrin** makes his HGO debut with the U.S. premiere of this production from the Palau de les

Arts Reina Sofía of Valencia. HGO Principal Guest Conductor **Eun Sun Kim**, who has gained worldwide acclaim since making her U.S. debut with HGO in 2017, takes the podium.

Four mainstage operas—*The Wreckers*, *El Milagro del Recuerdo*, *Werther*, and *Salome*—will be featured as part of *Seeking the Human Spirit*, HGO's six-year multidisciplinary initiative designed to highlight the universal spiritual themes raised in opera and to enable a wider segment of the Houston community to experience opera's beauty, emotional power, and potential to heal. The initiative, which began in the fall of 2017, concludes during the 2022–23 season. The final season's theme, Spirit, focuses on community and connections between people and places. A capstone project will reflect the themes from previous seasons through a series of new chamber works by: **Zach Redler, José E. Hernandez, Jocelyn C. Chambers, Shih-Hui Chen, Brent Michael Davids, and Egemen Kesikli.**

HGO is excited to announce **Amanda Majeski** as this season's Lynn Wyatt Great Artist recipient. The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund is an endowed fund dedicated to bringing the world's best artists to HGO and was established in 2010 by Oscar Wyatt in honor of Lynn Wyatt's many years of philanthropy and service to the company. Past recipients include Ana María Martínez, Eun Sun Kim, John Caird, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Jane Glover, and Joyce DiDonato.

In February 2023, HGO continues its commitment to hopeful young singers from across the globe with the 35th annual *Concert of Arias*, the live final round of the Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. The highly anticipated competition is held annually to identify candidates for HGO's internationally acclaimed young artist training program, the HGO Studio. The live event is the final stage of the competition that brings young singers from all over the world to Houston.

For the 2022-23 school year, teachers and community leaders can look forward to booking performances of **Kamala Sankaram** and **David Johnston's** 45-minute family opera *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers*, a popular HGO-commissioned world premiere from 2017. Inspired by Indian and Chinese mythology and the Bollywood style, the 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.

The brainchild of renowned tenor **Lawrence Brownlee**, HGO's *Giving Voice* is a special concert series that celebrates diversity in opera artists while seeking to attract diverse audiences to the artform. Now a popular company tradition entering its fourth year, *Giving Voice* will once again lift up voices that too often aren't given equal staging in the world of opera. This year's *Giving Voice* concert date and details are still to be announced.

This season, HGO continues to encourage younger audiences to experience the art form through several opportunities, including its popular Opening Nights for Young Professionals (ONYP) subscription series. Subscriptions start as low as \$180 for seven operas and include exclusive season extras. In addition to ONYP, HGO offers two affordable ticket initiatives: the Pay Your Age program and the NEXUS ticket-underwriting program. Launched just six years ago, the Pay Your Age program gives those 24 and under the opportunity to pay the price of their age for a single ticket. The multiyear NEXUS initiative provides a limited number of \$15 tickets for first-time operagoers and students to all HGO performances. Both the ONYP subscription series and the affordable ticket initiatives have made opera more accessible to new audiences in the greater Houston area and beyond.

HGO's mainstage season will comprise **40 mainstage, 3 student, and 3 free performances** of seven productions. Subscriptions to the 2022–23 season are now available at [HGO.org](https://www.hgo.org). Single tickets will be available later this summer. Additional details of the upcoming Houston Grand Opera productions are provided below, and more information is available at the company's website: [HGO.org](https://www.hgo.org). All repertoire, dates, pricing, productions, and casting are subject to change without notice.

PHOTOS: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pgvikez5cwrrwvf/AAAPHjfZmPCC6sTRtCfJFS_ya?dl=0

About Houston Grand Opera

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. HGO was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year in the 2019 International Opera Awards, and the only American company to be nominated twice. In fulfilling its mission to advance the operatic art, to serve the Houston community, and to be a global leader in the future of opera, HGO has led the field in commissioning and producing new works (72 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO's pioneering Community and Learning initiative has served as a model for other arts organizations.

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

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

Media Contact: Delicia Harvey, Elmore PR, 713-524-0661; delicia@elmorepr.com

Media Contact: Natalie Barron, Houston Grand Opera, 713-546-0240;
nbarron@houstongrandopera.org

[HGO.org](https://www.hgo.org)

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

twitter.com/hougrandopera

#



Houston Grand Opera: 2022-23 Season

* Company debut

** HGO Studio artist

Former HGO Studio artist

† Alternate cast

Verdi: *La traviata*

Performance Dates: October 21, 23m, 29, November 1, 2 (High School Night Performance)†, 4m (Student Matinee)†, 4, 6m, 8m (Student Matinee)†, 2022

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

CAST

Violetta Valéry: Angel Blue *

Cecilia Violetta López * †

Alfredo Germont: Bryan Hymel

Ricardo Garcia ** †

Giorgio Germont: Andrei Kymach *

Anthony Clark Evans * †

Flora Bervoix: Emily Treigle **

Gastone, Vicomte de Letourières: Eric Taylor **

Baron Douphol: Navasard Hakobyan * **

Marquese d'Obigny: TBA

Doctor Grenvil: Cory McGee **

Annina: TBA

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Matthew Aucoin *

TBA †

Director: Arin Arbus

Set Designer: Riccardo Hernandez

Costume and Puppet Designer: Cait O'Connor

Lighting Designer: Marcus Doshi

Projections Designer: Christopher Ash

Choreographer: Austin McCormick

Chorus Master: Richard Bado, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair* #

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Canadian Opera Company

SPONSORS

PREMIER GUARANTOR

The Wortham Foundation, Inc.

GUARANTOR

The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation
Margaret Alkek Williams

GRAND UNDERWRITER

ConocoPhillips
Connie Dyer

Dame Ethel Smyth: *The Wreckers***Libretto by Henry Brewster, English translation by Amanda Holden**

Performance Dates: October 28, 30m, November 5, 9, 11, 2022

*Sung in English with projected English translations***CAST**

Thirza: Sasha Cooke
Mark: Norman Reinhardt #
Avis: Mané Galoyan #
Pascoe: Reginald Smith, Jr. #
Lawrence: Daniel Belcher #
Tallan: Paul Groves
Jack: TBA
Harvey: Luke Sutliff **

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Patrick Summers, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair*
Director: Louisa Muller
Set and Costume Designer: Christopher Oram
Lighting Designer: Marcus Doshi
Chorus Master: Richard Bado, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair #*

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

*An original HGO production***SPONSORS****PREMIER GUARANTOR**

Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.
Dian and Harlan Stai

GUARANTOR

Robin Angly and Miles Smith

Javier Martínez | Leonard Foglia: *El Milagro del Recuerdo (The Miracle of Remembering)*

Performance Dates: December 8, 9, 10, 11m, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18m, 2022

Sung in Spanish with projected English translations

CAST

Laurentino: Federico De Michelis #

Renata: Cecilia Duarte

Chucho: Miguel De Aranda

Lupita: Vanessa Alonzo

Father Matías: Rafael Moras

Aba: Héctor Vásquez

Josefina: Claudia Chapa

A Woman: Vanessa Becerra

Mariachi: Vincent Pequeño

Mariachi: William Carlton Galvez

Mariachi: Israel Alcalá

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Benjamin Manis

Director: Leonard Foglia

Set Designer: Neil Patel

Costume Designer: Gregory Gale

Lighting Designer: Ken Billington

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra

A Co-Production of Houston Grand Opera, Arizona Opera, and San Diego Opera

SPONSORS

GUARANTOR

The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation

GRAND UNDERWRITER

Bank of America

Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro*

Performance Dates: January 13, 15m, 20, 26, 28, 2023

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

CAST

Figaro: Nahuel di Pierro *

Susanna: Elena Villalón #

Countess Almaviva: Nicole Heaston #

Count Almaviva: Adam Plachetka
Cherubino: Lauren Snouffer #
Doctor Bartolo: Patrick Carfizzi
Marcellina: Marie Lenormand #
Don Basilio: Steven Cole
Barbarina: TBA
Don Curzio: Eric Taylor **
Antonio: Navasard Hakobyan **

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Patrick Summers, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair*
Original Director: Michael Grandage
Revival Director: Ian Rutherford
Set and Costume Designer: Christopher Oram
Original Lighting Designer: Paule Constable
Associate Lighting Designer: Michael James Clark
Choreographer: Ben Wright
Chorus Master: Richard Bado, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair #*

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera

SPONSORS

PREMIER GUARANTOR

The Wortham Foundation, Inc.

GUARANTOR

The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation

GRAND UNDERWRITER

Connie Dyer

Massenet: *Werther*

Performance Dates: January 27, 29m, February 4, 8, 10, 2023

Sung in French with projected English translations

CAST

Werther: Matthew Polenzani *
Charlotte: Isabel Leonard *

Albert: Sean Michael Plumb *
Sophie: Jasmine Habersham *
The Bailiff: Patrick Carfizzi
Schmidt: Ricardo Garcia **
Johann: Cory McGee **
Käthchen: Emily Treigle **
Brühlmann: Luke Sutliff **

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Robert Spano
Director: Benoît Jacquot *
Set and Lighting Designer: Charles Edwards
Costume Designer: Christian Gasc *
Children Preparation: Karen Reeves

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Children's Chorus

A co-production of Opéra National de Paris and Royal Opera House

SPONSOR

PREMIER GUARANTOR

Dian and Harlan Stai

Puccini: *Tosca*

Performance Dates: April 21, 23m, 29, May 2, 5, 2023
Sung in Italian with projected English translations

CAST

Floria Tosca: Tamara Wilson #
Mario Cavaradossi: Jonathan Tetelman *
Baron Scarpia: Rod Gilfry
Sacristan: Samuel Ramey
Angelotti: Daniel Noyola #
Spoletta: Matthew Grills *
Sciarrone: Luke Sutliff **
Jailer: Cory McGee **

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Benjamin Manis
Director: John Caird
Set and Costume Designer: Bunny Christie
Original Lighting Designer: Duane Schuler
Associate Lighting Designer: Michael James Clark
Chorus Master: Richard Bado, *Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair* #
Children's Chorus Director: Karen Reeves

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra, Chorus, and Children's Chorus

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago

SPONSORS

PREMIER GUARANTOR

The Wortham Foundation, Inc.

GUARANTOR

Margaret Alkek Williams
The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation

GRAND UNDERWRITER

Connie Dyer
Vinson & Elkins

Strauss: *Salome*

Performance Dates: April 28, 30m, May 6, 10, 12, 2023

Sung in German with projected English translations

CAST

Salome: Amanda Majeski *
Jokanaan: Ryan McKinny #
Herod: Chad Shelton #
Herodias: Denyce Graves #
Narraboth: Eric Taylor **
Page of Herodias: TBA
First Jew: Matthew Grills *
Second Jew: Rafael Moras
Third Jew: Ricardo Garcia **
Fourth Jew: Christopher Bozeka #
Fifth Jew: Cory McGee **
First Soldier: Daniel Noyola #
Second Soldier: TBA
First Nazarene: TBA
Second Nazarene: Navasard Hakobyan **
A Slave: TBA
A Cappadocian: Luke Sutliff **

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Eun Sun Kim
Director: Francisco Negrin *

Associate Director: Angela Kleopatra Saroglou *
Set and Costume Designer: Louis Désiré *
Lighting Designer: Bruno Poet
Projection/Video Designer: Joan Rodón *

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra

A production of Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía of Valencia

SPONSORS

PREMIER GUARANTOR

Dian and Harlan Stai

GUARANTOR

Donna Kaplan and Richard A. Lydecker
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth

