QUICK-START GUIDE TO THE OPERA
In celebration of *Rigoletto*, we have curated a special selection of jewelry

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**TENENBAUM JEWELERS**
Welcome to the beginning of HGO’s 2019–20 season.

We are especially excited about this season because every opera is either a new production of a well-known work, like our season-opener, Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, or has never before been seen at HGO, like Handel’s *Saul*, which completes our fall repertory.

We welcome back the fearless Brian Mulligan for his role debut as Rigoletto, the tormented jester in the court of the Duke of Mantua. HGO Studio alumnus Arturo Chacón-Cruz portrays the Duke, one of his signature roles, and alumna Mané Galoyan returns to the role of Rigoletto’s innocent daughter, Gilda, who has fallen helplessly and tragically in love with the Duke. The new production is by Tomer Zvulun, director of last season’s thrilling *The Flying Dutchman*, who adroitly brings *Rigoletto* into a framework for the 21st century. We welcome Zvulun back along with rising conductor Jordan de Souza, who is making his HGO conducting debut.

*Saul* was conceived as an oratorio and, as such, it is rarely staged. This imaginative production by Barrie Kosky finds all the explosive drama in it. Inspired by the events of the first book of Samuel in the Bible, *Saul* begins when the Israeli shepherd David slays Goliath, a fearsome giant who has been threatening the Israelites. As in the Bible’s account, David is praised as a hero by his people, provoking King Saul to murderous jealousy and fueling his descent into madness. We are delighted to present two much-lauded performers from the production’s debut at Glyndebourne—Christopher Purves in the title role and Paul Appleby in his HGO debut as Saul’s son Jonathan—and HGO Studio alumnus Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, who brings his stunning countertenor to the role of David. HGO Studio alumna Pureum Jo, as Merab, and Canadian soprano Andriana Chuchman, as Michal, will be rounding out our all-star cast. We also welcome Donna Stirrup, who is returning to HGO as stage director.

Please enjoy the performances and join us again in December for our world premiere holiday opera—Javier Martínez and Leonard Foglia’s *El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering*. Although it is the prequel to HGO’s beloved mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, it stands beautifully on its own as a narrative—and best of all, it promises to bring mariachi and magic to the holiday season.

Perryn Leech
Managing Director
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Editor
Daniel Renfrow

Designers
Rachel Block
Andi Russell

Contributors
Shina Bharadwaja
Jessica Jahn
Jeremy Johnson
Perryn Leech
Alisa Magallón
Hadia Mawlawi
Brian Speck
Patrick Summers

Advertising
Matt Ross/Ventures Marketing 713-417-6857

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From left: Shelitha Smadic, Maureen Phillips, Tom Williams, Leah Bennett, Donnie Roberts, Susan Wedelich, Katie Slater

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Aspen Summer Program to be Led by Patrick Summers and Renée Fleming

HGO’s Patrick Summers and the eminent soprano Renée Fleming have been named the co-artistic directors of the Aspen Music Festival’s restructured opera program, Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS, beginning in 2020. Together they will produce two operas per festival, teach privately, and most importantly develop a broad and innovative future curriculum. Summers said of the appointment, “Opera is rapidly transforming, and the young artists are the future of this great art form. Helping the stars of tomorrow bring their dreams to life, whether it is directing, conducting, managing, or creating, is an absolute thrill.” Aspen Opera Theater is but one part of the vast Aspen Music Festival, founded in 1949 and held annually from early July to late August. Four hundred concerts are produced each year with talented music students who come from all over the world to train in their beloved craft while being inspired by the beauty of the Colorado mountains.

Summers to Conduct First American Opera in Israel

This December, HGO’s Patrick Summers will make a guest appearance on the podium at the New Israeli Opera when he conducts Jake Heggie’s Dead Man Walking. This special engagement will mark the first time an American opera has been produced in Israel, prompting Summers to comment that the rarity of the cultural experience made the experience something “vital to my life experience as a human, not just as a musician.”

Summers led the opera’s San Francisco world premiere in 2000 with Susan Graham and the Houston Grand Opera premiere in 2010 with Joyce DiDonato. He has long championed Heggie’s work, having led the premieres of six Heggie operas including three in Houston: The End of the Affair, Three Decembers, and It’s a Wonderful Life, a conductor/composer relationship that is rare in modern classical music.

HGO Remembers a Theatrical Giant

Harold “Hal” Prince (1928-2019)

There is a tradition in the theatre the public rarely sees: the ghost light, which is an electric lamp illuminated at center stage in off-hours or whenever the theater is empty. It has an obvious practical purpose for safety, but the ghost light also abounds in theatrical lore, the most common being that it shines to appease the polite ghosts that haunt all theaters or is a simple show of respect to our departed colleagues. More than anything, the ghost light has a singular and hopeful beauty, standing alone in a place of so many expectations.

Hal Prince was unquestionably a giant, one of the greatest theatrical directors and producers we will ever know. His imagination and ambition utterly changed the way post-WWII America viewed itself. His range was extraordinary. His style was bold grandeur, and he believed deeply in what the theater could and should say and the questions it should ask. He and composer Stephen Sondheim met in the most theatrical of ways: at the opening night of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s South Pacific on February 2, 1949. In 1957, Prince hired the young Sondheim for his Broadway debut as lyricist for Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story. Subsequently, they spent years in Midtown diners dreaming of how they were going to shake up the world. Their theatrical relationship resulted in the game-changing Sondheim musicals of the 1970s: Company, A Little Night Music, Pacific Overtures, Follies, and Sweeney Todd. Hal’s Houston Grand Opera productions immediately followed that time and all fell within the booming 1980s: the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Willie Stark, followed by Evita, Candide, Sweeney Todd, and finally his then-controversial Madame Butterfly in the 1989–90 season, in which Cio-Cio-San wears western clothing in defiance of her community and in sad loyalty to the man who abandoned her.

A theater man to his core, he loved everything about it, whether triumph or flop. He was an old-fashioned romantic, one of America’s great dreamers, and someone who today might be in danger of getting lost in our more transactional age, as he wasn’t fueled by practicalities. The ghost light shines for those extraordinary artists like Hal. I will now imagine that at some deep and silent time of night his broad smile will be caught by the glow of the ghost light, because he has just been struck by his next big idea.

—Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

This December, HGO’s Patrick Summers will make a guest appearance on the podium at the New Israeli Opera when he conducts Jake Heggie’s Dead Man Walking. This special engagement will mark the first time an American opera has been produced in Israel, prompting Summers to comment that the rarity of the cultural experience made the experience something “vital to my life experience as a human, not just as a musician.”

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FOREWORD BY DON GEORGE

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We believe that, by supporting the arts, we are demonstrating our commitment to the quality of life in Houston. Creating and maintaining a high quality of life is central to a community’s viability, contributing to the health, happiness, education, and success of the people here. As in all the communities where we live and work, BBVA is committed to making a positive impact through its contributions to arts and culture.

As a key supporter of Houston Grand Opera’s NEXUS Affordability Initiative, we help make world-class performing arts affordable for thousands of Houston families every year through ticket underwriting, the Student Performance Series, and free public performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. We’re proud to help make opera available to everyone in our community.

Thank you for joining us. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Best Regards,

Javier Rodríguez Soler
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Dear Opera Patron,

As supporters of Houston Grand Opera’s exciting 2019–20 season, Houston Methodist is delighted to welcome you to the Wortham Theater Center for two breathtaking new productions: Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Handel’s *Saul*.

Houston Methodist is proud to be the official health care provider of HGO. Through our Center for Performing Arts Medicine, we offer a comprehensive program tailored to meet the specific needs of performing artists including the incredible singers you’ll enjoy on stage tonight.

Houston Methodist is celebrating its centennial this year. For the last 100 years we’ve served the Houston region—and beyond. What began as a small 30-bed hospital is now a leading academic medical center in the Texas Medical Center, seven community hospitals, eight free-standing emergency care centers, and more.

We’re honored to be a key partner in HGO’s multi-year *Seeking the Human Spirit* initiative, a program that partners our health care providers with HGO to teach artists and musicians how to explore the power of art to heal. We’re also helping grow Houston’s next generation of arts supporters through our sponsorship of HGO’s Young Professionals programs.

Thank you for joining us and for sharing our passion for opera!

Sincerely,

**Marc L. Boom, M.D.**
President
Chief Executive Officer
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OUT OF CHARACTER WITH

CHRISTOPHER PURVES

BY DANIEL RENFROW
Editorial Manager
Leading British baritone Christopher Purves, who last appeared on the Wortham stage as Pasha Selim in The Abduction from the Seraglio and as Alberich in Göttterdammerung in 2017, marks his triumphant return to HGO this fall in the title role of Barrie Kosky’s lauded production of Handel’s Saul; a role he originated in the 2015 Glyndebourne Festival to much acclaim. The role is emotionally and physically demanding and requires the talents of an experienced opera singer able to constantly push himself out of his comfort zone.

When asked what advice he would give to young opera singers eager to eventually reach his level of expertise, Purves responded in a jocular tone. “I would say, just wait until I finish my career, and then you can have a good career yourself,” he laughed, sounding very much like the character he brings to life onstage at HGO this fall. “I would say, watch. Invent. Use your imagination. Don’t take anything for granted. Keep questioning.”

Purves shared more thoughts with Daniel Renfrow in a late-summer phone interview conducted while the opera star was in Slovenia.

**DANIEL RENFROW: What made you decide to become an opera singer?**

**CHRISTOPHER PURVES:** I’m the fourth son of four boys. So, I’m the little one. I’m the baby of the family. And I found that the only way I could get our parents’ attention was to make a little noise. That was my preferred way. And I think it’s quite a natural path, or it felt like a natural path for me, to go from being the shouting last son to actually being paid to be loud. And I went to a British choir school, so I learned how to sing. I learned how to read music. I learned how to interpret a composer’s ideas and thoughts.

**You’ve performed quite a bit of Handel. What do you enjoy most about his works?**

Most of the Handel I sing is a great challenge. It’s a vocal challenge. It’s an interpretive challenge. And some of the stuff I sing requires me to sing like the tenor, then two seconds later, I’m singing right at the bottom of my voice. It’s like Handel gives you a blank canvas; I think he gives instructions, and then says to you, right, show us what you can do with this. Now, what does it mean to you? Make it personal. It’s not just a question of coming up with ornamentation or repeating a section. It’s a whole gamut of what you take from—what does this mean to you? How did it touch you? How did it make you feel? What do you think the words really mean? And for me, it’s so exciting. You can invent.

**You originated the role of Saul in Barrie Kosky’s production of the opera. What was your experience like working with Kosky and working on that production in general?**

It was the best time of my life. Really, it was just incredible. It was all imagination. It was all about taking what Barrie gave to me. It was an extraordinary, extraordinary company. We had six weeks of rehearsal. And in those six weeks, we charted a character. We charted a path for the character to maximize what Handel and Jennens, the librettist, had given us. I think that what we came up with was about as good as it can get—it wasn’t just about notes. It wasn’t just about standing in the right position. It was inventing this whole character, this whole descent into madness, this whole route from avenging king to the total desperation and the knowledge of this whole character. You know he’s going to die at the end, but you don’t know how he’s going to get there, and you don’t know the twists and turns. I think in order to invent something, in order to put an oratorio on stage, you have to have license. And I think he gave us that license to invent in a most colossal way.

**Do you have a favorite moment in the production?**

I think my favorite moment is when I’m at my sort of wit’s end, in a way; when I’m down to my shorts. I’m absolutely helpless and hopeless. There’s a line, “Where are my old supports?” He has no one on stage. It’s just me. And it’s pitiful, it’s so sad, but there’s also an intense, a really sort of courageous path that Saul tries to find—I try to find as well. It’s often pitiful, yet also courageous. It’s the realization that I’m going to have to do something rather extraordinary in order to solve this particular problem for myself.
WHERE STARS ARE BORN

HGO STUDIO IS A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND OPERA’S FUTURE

BY SHINA BHARADWAJA
Development Communications Manager
Pursuing a career as an opera singer, coach, or conductor is no easy feat, and it takes incredible resources to train the best of the best. Your support of HGO helps us provide the best training in the world for the next generation of great artists who will thrill audiences for years to come. Young singers of all ages from every corner of the globe dream of coming to Houston to study because of the continued support HGO receives. They know that once they get here, they are on the path to tremendous careers.

And what better example could there be than superstar mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, a former HGO Studio artist? Before she was the 2018 Olivier Award winner for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, before she won multiple Grammy Awards, before The New Yorker dubbed her “perhaps the most potent female singer of her generation,” Joyce was a singer from Kansas waiting tables to pay her rent. When she joined the HGO Studio in 1996, the Company’s internationally recognized young artist training program, a star was born.

“The entire two years I was in the HGO Studio brought one learning moment after the next,” shared Joyce. “It was intensive language instruction, weekly voice lessons, coaching on all kinds of things. What shaped me most was standing side by side with the great artists of the day singing at HGO. Watching the greats at their craft was one of the best things that could have happened to me.”

But HGO’s commitment to developing young artists doesn’t end with the Studio. HGO is currently the only opera company in the world providing professional vocal training to students as young as elementary school all the way through college.

HGO’s Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHSVS) offers year-long customized vocal training for a set of talented high school juniors and seniors planning to study voice at the collegiate level. From one-on-one lessons and masterclasses with HGO mainstage artists to invaluable performance opportunities and behind-the-scenes access to rehearsals and workshops, BFHSVS students become fully immersed in the Company for the year or two they spend with HGO. The 2017–18 BFHSVS class was given the opportunity to perform in HGO’s world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon’s The House Without a Christmas Tree.

“My greatest experience as part of the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio was The House Without a Christmas Tree,” raved recent graduate Sean Holshauser. “It was such an amazing experience to get to work alongside these incredible professional singers, some of whom I have looked up to for a very long time.”

While many major opera companies offer post-graduate training and programs for young students, HGO noticed a gap in training at the collegiate level. With the help of supporters, HGO launched the Young Artist Vocal Academy (YAVA) in 2011 to help bridge the gap between academia and the professional environment for college-level singers. A summer residency at HGO for approximately 16 artists, YAVA not only focuses on vocal training with HGO’s artistic staff but introduces young singers to other keys to success in the opera business, such as building a resume, securing an agent, and understanding the finances of the industry.

Current HGO Studio artist Elena Villalón was first introduced to HGO as a YAVA participant in 2017, and the experience was a turning point for her early career.

“YAVA was instrumental in my growth and development,” said Villalón. “It was extremely helpful for professionals to share advice about every aspect of both the artistic and business sides of opera. In an academic environment, and especially at the undergraduate level, such opportunities to receive that kind of knowledge are rare, if not nonexistent.”

Just like Joyce, Elena, and Sean, the future stars of opera are finding their voices today in Houston, and they couldn’t do it without your support.

With such fiercely loyal and generous supporters who rally around this company no matter what...when I come here, it feels like family!
—JOYCE DIDONATO

With soulful interpretations of the music of Handel, Purcell, Monteverdi, and others, In War & Peace—Harmony Through Music will be a highlight of the season. The one-night-only concert event starts at 7 p.m. on November 6, 2019, at the Cullen Theater. Following the concert will be an elegant gala dinner on the Brown Stage benefiting Houston Grand Opera. To purchase tickets or a table, contact Brooke Rogers at brogers@hgo.org or 713-546-0271. For concert-only tickets visit HGO.org/JoyceD.

Joyce DiDonato would like to thank The Pure Land Foundation for its generous support. She would also like to thank Five Arts Foundation as recommended by Helen Berggruen, Susan and John Singer, Helen and Peter Bing, The Howard and Sarah D. Solomon Foundation and Marnie and Kern Wildenthal for their additional support.
Otto Dix's *Pragerstrasse* (1920) was one of many paintings used as inspiration for Jessica Jahn's Rigoletto costumes.
CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH

IN OUR RIGOLETTO, THE PAST IS VERY MUCH THE PRESENT.

BY JESSICA JAHN
Rigoletto Costume Designer

RIGOLETTO is an inherently difficult piece. Twisted within the story are ideas and images of brutality, misogyny, and rage. From the very first raise of the curtain, people are treated as social and emotional fodder—lives are upended for the sake of entertainment, and cruelty is presented as the norm. The social structure in the piece, one of the elites holding power over the underprivileged without consequence, is an uncomfortable one to look at head on. The treatment of women and the callous use of their bodies as tools for male pleasure is unnerving and infuriating, and the exasperated fury presented as revenge is frightening—and in the end ultimately destructive in the extreme. There is not even a righteous moral at its conclusion. As the final tragedy unfolds, the persecutors are left to continue on unaffected.

How does one begin creating such a distasteful world in which to tell such a horrible tragedy? In a world that has made so much social progress, this would seem a daunting task. However, we as a production team recognized that, in actuality, this is the perfect time and place in our history to tell such a story. When we look at our nation’s current stories of extreme excess, callousness in the face of human need, and overt misogyny in our leadership, it seems that the issues presented to us by Verdi haven’t changed. Time and time again, we are shown examples of the privileged class—mostly men—taking advantage of those around them with little consequence. We continually are fed stories of selfishness and greed triumphing over charity, and we see all around us that empathy seems to be losing the battle over purposeful cruelty as people are turning their backs on the most basic of human needs for understanding and care. As such, it appears that we don’t have to stretch far to be able to touch the themes created in this opera.

What then does that mean for us, both as creatives and as audience members? How can we make sure we stay actively engaged by putting a mirror up to ourselves in recognition of these similarities? While we as a team knew we were not interested in setting our story in the present, we also knew how important it was to provide a platform that would reflect both the world of Verdi and the world of today. It didn’t take long for us to recognize that the cultural upheaval and zealous nationalism during the beginning of Mussolini’s control of Italy in the 1920s and ’30s would be the ideal setting for this opera. We felt that setting the opera during this time period would provide historical context while also allowing us a look at our own future.

After conceiving of the idea of placing our Rigoletto after the First World War, and after having seen the initial images of Erhard Rom’s set, I was struck by the visual and social connections to the art movements of that time, many of which grew out of a direct reaction to the war. Erhard’s beautifully stark and minimalist aesthetic evoked the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico,
and iconic images by artists like Henri Magritte, Max Ernst, and Otto Dix seemed uncannily accurate to the complexity of the story. Even though they are not Italian artists, they provided insight to the social structure of Europe at a time when it was dealing with the aftermath of the first “modern” war and all its resulting horrors. Many of the surrealist artists from this period seemed to have an uncanny visual relationship to our story, and we quickly recognized we could draw from them an iconographic archetype that represented the underlying dramaturgy of Rigoletto.

These surrealists, through images wrought with contrast and dichotomy, provided us with a perspective on the period that is both beautiful and grotesque. The breadth of their work presents us with the abstraction, vulgarity, and dystopian identity that we feel is essential to the story: opulence against extreme loss, the wholesome against the vulgar. By using the paintings as guides for tone, clothing shape, and color, we can give a sense of heightened realism to match the music and libretto. This concept can also provide the platform needed to create a sense of timelessness and help make the story more relevant to a modern audience without the need to put everyone in contemporary dress.

Once we had landed on our aesthetic universe, I went about shaping our characters, twisting time period and pushing visual boundaries. By giving respectful nods to the genius of fashion designers such as John Galliano, Jean Paul Gautier, and Alexander McQueen—other artists skilled in the contrast of beauty and the grotesque—I was able to additionally incorporate visual cues for a modern audience. This is something that, while not always necessary in a design, sometimes helps to convince the viewer that what one is seeing is real. We are immersed and fully involved in the universe created and can be drawn into the emotional arc of the story presented. This style of pushing the surrealist Dix aesthetic—creating tension, color, abstraction, and a sense of heightened realism—helps to make the storytelling more dynamic. Using this framework, we continued to add and use inspiration from these designers and from others like them who are also so good at extrapolating the feeling of the extravagance of this period. The world we created should
feel both sumptuous and grotesque all at once so that we leave the audience visually and emotionally satiated.

This aesthetic and creative direction also helped us shape two of the harder-to-represent characters in this story: Sparafucile and Maddalena. At times, their characters seem almost superfluous, like unwelcome visitors from another libretto. However, once immersed in the world of marrying “beauty” and “beast,” the early 20th century world of vaudeville, sideshow, and circus seemed additionally relevant. Where else, aside from the surrealist art movement we already explored, could you find such an overt acknowledgement of the objectification of the human form and the exploitation of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised? Now presented as carneys, a subsection of outliers and outsiders, the two characters can more distinctly be the dichotomy to the Duke and his court. It rounds out the world of Rigoletto as well; though they do not know each other directly, the three characters are part of the same community of underdogs.

This coarse, garish theatricality and crass showmanship is present in other ways as well. In this story, no one is as they seem at first glance, or even to each other. Even our title character is cloaked in an irrational disguise, hiding who he is from those closest to him. The continuing display of dishonesty and masquerade for entertainment’s sake, or worse, to take advantage of another, makes it difficult to interpret the rationale of any of the characters. The idea of masks, then, both literally and figuratively, are present throughout the work and through our visual aesthetic. From the masks presented to the courtiers at the party that are then used for the kidnapping of Gilda to the grotesque makeup of Rigoletto, the horrifying environment onstage starts to be revealed as the layers of disguises come off. Some of these changes are made in front of the audience a vista, and some are inferred as we realize that money and excess can have the power to hide our inconvenient true selves. We can physically follow Rigoletto and Gilda’s journey as their illusions of the world fall one by one.

By not shying away from the vulgar and cruel nature of the piece, and by exposing it for the difficult piece that it is, both because of purposeful storytelling on Verdi’s part and because of inherent biases of the period in which it was written, we can help the audience reassess the work’s relevance to ourselves today. By not allowing the harder parts of the opera to be covered in the cloak of humor or in visual beauty only for beauty’s sake, we can hold a mirror to ourselves and take stock of where we are today as a nation and as a people.

Left and below: Before any fabric was cut by HGO’s costume shop, Rigoletto costume designer Jessica Jahn fleshed out her ideas through costume sketches of each of the main characters in the production.
Whether your commitment is long or short, any amount of time you spend volunteering as an HGO Guild member will allow you to further educate yourself about opera and its beautiful history. As you assist HGO in introducing opera to our varied audiences, you’ll also get the opportunity to make new opera-loving friends and to meet some of the faces behind our productions.

Save the dates

**OCTOBER 18 – NOVEMBER 8, 2019: Boutique**
Volunteer to help customers choose the latest in opera accessories and jewelry while earning a special discount and dress rehearsal tickets. Can’t volunteer? The boutique has great gift ideas. Why not get an early start on holiday shopping?

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019: Student Performance**
Volunteer to help HG0co as a High School Night greeter. HG0co is the education and community outreach arm of HGO and is tasked with helping the opera build future audiences through community engagement and collaboration.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020: Opera Night Live!**
Enjoy in-depth interviews of this season’s artists as they discuss La favorite. HGO Guild provides this educational event free to the community.

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

Have fun as you help HGO!
Show your skills in merchandising, retail sales, cashiering, and teamwork! The HGO Boutique’s proceeds are used to fund many of HGO’s opera programs. The Boutique is run by HGO Guild volunteers. Call for more information!
The Village Communities offer luxury independent living, assisted living and memory care located in Houston’s most desired neighborhoods. Discover an exceptional lifestyle that offers culinary cuisine, enriching programs, concierge services and signature amenities. The Village distinctive lifestyle is centered around you and the life you deserve.

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RIGOLETTO

An Opera in Three Acts | Music by Giuseppe Verdi | Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER
The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, including two intermissions.
A co-production with Atlanta Opera and The Dallas Opera.
Scenery originally created for Wolf Trap Opera.

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for 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.
After hunchbacked court jester Rigoletto mocks the courtiers of the licentious Duke of Mantua, one of them curses both the Duke and Rigoletto. The courtiers plan revenge on Rigoletto by kidnapping who they think is his mistress, but who actually is Gilda, his daughter. Gilda has fallen in love with the Duke, who professed to be a poor student when they met each other. When the courtiers bring her to the Duke, she realizes she has been betrayed. Rigoletto demands her release, and they leave the court together.

Rigoletto brings Gilda to the tavern of Sparafucile, an assassin he has hired to kill the Duke, and forces her to watch the Duke flirt with the assassin’s sister, Maddalena, to try to rid her of her lingering love for the Duke. Rigoletto tells Gilda to disguise herself as a boy and that the two of them will run away once the Duke has been killed. But Maddalena has fallen for the Duke and convinces her brother to kill the next man to walk into the tavern as a substitute. Gilda overhears this; she enters the tavern while still in disguise to sacrifice herself in the Duke’s place and is fatally wounded. When Rigoletto returns, Sparafucile wraps Gilda’s body and gives it to Rigoletto for the rest of his payment. Gloating over his success in having the Duke killed, Rigoletto then makes the heartbreaking discovery.

A full synopsis appears on p. 33.

STORY IN A NUTSHELL

THE PAST AS PRESENT

Although Rigoletto was originally set in 16th century Italy, our production of the opera is set in Italy between the world wars, during a time when fascism was on the rise across Europe and Mussolini was cementing his authoritarian grip on the Italian people. By setting the opera during a time when misogyny, abuse of power, and the disenfranchisement of the underprivileged by the elites were the norm, we hope to hold up a mirror to the chaotic world of today.

To read more about the setting of our Rigoletto, head to page 25.

FUN FACT

The opera is based on Victor Hugo’s 1832 play, Le roi s’amuse (The King Amuses Himself), a play about treachery in the court of King François I of France (1515–1547). The play was banned in France after just one performance. The censors who governed Venice, where Rigoletto was to be premiered in 1851, had an equally scandalized reaction to Verdi’s proposed opera. They feared its portrayal of a lecherous king would cause significant problems in an already turbulent political atmosphere, while the Italian Risorgimento movement was slowly—and with great adversity—unifying the peninsula into the Italy we know today. The censors would not allow the opera to proceed unless Verdi changed the tenor’s rank from king to duke and moved the setting to Mantua, a dukedom that no longer existed.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The Duke has been given some devilishly charming music to sing, but perhaps most recognizable is his third act aria “La donna è mobile” (Woman is fickle). The jaunty tune is sung in Sparafucile’s tavern as the Duke scoffs at a life of monogamy. Characteristic of the classist misogyny highlighted in Tomer Zvulun’s production, the melody is a constant reminder of the Duke’s privilege and chauvinism, reappearing as snippets of the theme throughout the final act.

The famous aria has appeared in everything from a Super Bowl commercial for Doritos to an ad for Scrubbing Bubbles featuring a very animated, operatically trained bubble. Indeed, the unmistakable aria always seems to work its way into the public’s ears.
CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

The Duke of Mantua
Borsa
Countess Ceprano
Rigoletto
Marullo

Conductor: Jordan de Souza *
Director: Tomer Zvulun
Associate Director: Stephanie Havey *
Set Designer: Erhard Rom *
Costume Designer: Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel
Movement Director: Melissa Noble *
Fight Director: Adam Noble

Count Ceprano
Count Monterone
Sparafucile
Gilda
Giovanna
Page
Usher
Maddalena

Conductor: Ben Manis * (OCT. 30)
Director: Tomer Zvulun
Associate Director: Andreas Hager
Set Designer: Erhard Rom *
Costume Designer: Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel
Movement Director: Melissa Noble *
Fight Director: Adam Noble

Count Ceprano: Arturo Chacón-Cruz †
Count Monterone: Richard Trey Smagur †
Sparafucile: Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
Gilda: Richard Trey Smagur †
Giovanna: Dorothy Gal †
Page: Brian Mulligan

Maddalena: Geoffrey Hahn †
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

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CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Jordan de Souza *
Director: Tomer Zvulun
Associate Director: Stephanie Havey *
Set Designer: Erhard Rom *
Costume Designer: Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer: Robert Wierzel
Movement Director: Melissa Noble *
Fight Director: Adam Noble

Chorus Master: Richard Bado †
Musical Preparation: Geoffrey Loff †
Stage Manager: Annie Wheeler
Assistant Director: Andreas Hager
Supertitles by: Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Jeremy Johnson

Chorus Master: Sarah and Ernest Butler
Musical Preparation: Alex Munger †
Stage Manager: Annie Wheeler
Assistant Director: Andreas Hager
Supertitles by: Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Jeremy Johnson

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by Meredith Morse.
Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.
Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE, 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 IATSE, Local #51.
Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.
This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

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

**ACT I**
At the ducal court of Mantua, a ball is in progress. The licentious Duke of Mantua openly pursues Countess Ceprano, much to her husband’s mortification. Further humiliated by the duke’s jester, Rigoletto, the furious Count Ceprano enlists the help of the courtiers in exacting revenge upon Rigoletto. They need no encouragement, for Rigoletto has many enemies. He has been seen in the company of a young woman, and in this his enemies recognize an opportunity for reprisal. Count Monterone arrives, demanding revenge upon the Duke, who has dishonored his daughter. Rigoletto cruelly mocks him, and Monterone curses both the Duke and his jester.

Later that night, Rigoletto agonizes over the curse. The assassin Sparafucile approaches him, cryptically offering to rid the tormented jester of his rival. Unnerved, Rigoletto turns down the offer and sends Sparafucile away.

Rigoletto returns home to his daughter Gilda, whom he keeps hidden from the world, only allowing her out to attend church. She does not know her father’s position in the court and doesn’t even know his name. The spying Duke overhears their conversation and is surprised to learn that the girl he admired in church and followed home is his own jester’s daughter. As soon as Rigoletto leaves, the Duke, posing as a poor student named Gualtier Maldè, charms Gilda. Their meeting is cut short by noises from the street, and Gilda, fearing the return of her father, sends the Duke away. Gilda sings dreamily of her student lover while the courtiers gather outside to abduct the woman they presume to be Rigoletto’s mistress. When Rigoletto returns, the courtiers fool him into thinking they are abducting Countess Ceprano and ask for his help. Rigoletto discovers too late that he has helped the courtiers kidnap his own Gilda. He blames Monterone’s curse.

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**ACT II**
At the palace, the Duke laments Gilda’s sudden disappearance, until the courtiers bring news that they have abducted Rigoletto’s mistress for his pleasure. Elated, the Duke cannot wait to reveal his true identity to Gilda. Rigoletto enters, searching for his daughter, only to learn that she is with the Duke in his chambers. He demands, entreats, and finally begs the courtiers to have pity. A disheveled Gilda suddenly appears and rushes into her father’s arms. Rigoletto is devastated and furiously rebuffs her pleas that he forgive the Duke. Monterone appears, bemoaning the ineffectiveness of his curse, while Rigoletto swears vengeance on the Duke.

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**INTERMISSION**

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**ACT III**
On a stormy night, Rigoletto drags Gilda to a remote inn owned by the assassin Sparafucile. He forces her to watch as the Duke seduces Sparafucile’s sister, Maddalena. Rigoletto sends the heartbroken Gilda away, and then hires Sparafucile to kill the Duke. Maddalena, however, has taken a fancy to the Duke and begs her brother to spare him; Sparafucile agrees, provided that another victim can be found. Gilda, who has returned in disguise, resolves to sacrifice herself to save the Duke’s life.

Rigoletto returns at midnight as arranged. Sparafucile gives him a sack containing the body and disappears. When Rigoletto hears the Duke singing in the distance, he realizes he has been duped. Ripping open the sack, he discovers Gilda, who begs for forgiveness with her last breath. Monterone’s curse has been fulfilled.

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**HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY**
HGO Orchestra

Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant, Concertmaster *
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Rasa Kalesnykaite, Acting Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor, Principal Second Violin *
Carrie Kauk, Assistant Principal Second Violin *
Hae-a Lee-Barnes *
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Zubaida Azezi
Mae Bariff
Oleg Chelpanov
Andres Gonzales
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Mila Neal
Rachel Shepard

VIOLA
Eliseo Rene Salazar, Principal *
Lorento Golofeev, Assistant Principal *
Gayle Garcia-Shepard *
Erika C. Lawson *
Suzanne LeFevre †
Dawson White *
Elizabeth Charles
Meredith Harris
Yvonne Smith

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

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

TRUMPET
Tetsuya Lawson, Principal *
Randal Adams *

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén, Principal *
Mark Holley *
Ben Osborne

TUBA
Mark Barton, Principal *

HARP
Joan Eidman, Principal †

TIMPANI
Alison Chang, Principal *

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown, Principal *

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

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

CLARINET
Sean Krissman, Principal *
Eric Chi *

FLUTE
Henry Williford, Acting Principal *
Rebecca Powell Garfield

BASSOON
Amanda Swain, Principal *
Michael Allard *

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert, Principal *
Mayu Isom *

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.

* HGO Orchestra core musician † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
**HGO Chorus**

Richard Bado, Chorus Master  
_Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair_

Nathan Abbott  
Geordie Alexander  
Dennis Arrowsmith  
Stephen Ash  
Zachary Barba  
G. Leslie Biffle  
Andrew Briggs  
Christopher Childress  
Patrick Contreras  
Esteban Cordero  
Robert Dee  
Justin Dunkle  
Peter Farley  
Don Figg

Brian M. Gibbs  
Austin Hoeltzel  
Jon Janacek  
James Jennings  
Joe Key  
Wesley Landry  
Alejandro Magallón  
Neal Martinez  
Jeff Monette  
Cristino Perez  
Geoffrey Peterson  
Nicholas Rathgeb  
Brian David Shircliffe  
John Weinel

**Supernumeraries**

Sophie Adickes  
Amy K. Barnes  
Larissa Bither  
Kacee Dugas  
Luke Fedell  
Alan Kim  
Amanda Marie Parker  
Anna Pruitt  
Miguel Stonecipher  
Sarah Warren  
Anna Maria Ward  
John Watkins

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**SPECIAL CREDITS**

Blazek & Vetterling LLP—Houston, Auditors  
Apurva Thekdi, M.D., Consulting Physician and Otolaryngologist  
Quan Law Group, PLLC, Immigration and Visa Attorneys  
Vinson & Elkins LLP, Attorneys of Record  
Shweiki Media, Printer, _Opera Cues_

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Who’s Who

JORDAN DE SOUZA (CANADA)
CONDUCTOR
Canadian conductor Jordan de Souza, who marks his HGO conducting debut with this production, is currently Erster Kapellmeister of the Komische Oper Berlin. Following a collaboration with director Barrie Kosky in a new production of Pelléas et Mélisande in 2017, he joined forces with him again in the 2018–19 season in new productions of Candide and La bohème. This season, in addition to conducting Don Giovanni and La traviata, he will collaborate with Kosky again in Berlin in his new production of Weinberg’s Frühlingsstürme and with Kirill Serebrennikov in Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress. Another highlight of the 2019–20 season includes a debut at the Staatsoper Hannover in La bohème. Also in Hannover, he will conduct Zemlinsky’s Lyric Symphony, Debussy’s La Mer, and Ravel’s Menuet Antique. Later in the season he makes his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the final of the Glyndebourne Cup. Future seasons will see him make debuts at Barcelona’s Gran Teatre del Liceu and Deutsche Oper Berlin. Recent performances at Rice include Holst’s The Planets, Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6, and the Prokofiev Sinfonia Concertante. Manis returned to the Aspen Music Festival for the third consecutive summer in 2019, and will appear in Aspen again next summer as the winner of the Aspen Conducting Prize. Before moving to Houston, Manis studied cello and conducting at the Colburn School, where he conducted outreach concerts in public schools across Los Angeles and performed Lutoslawski’s Cello Concerto as soloist with conductor Robert Spano. Manis hails from Chicago and has attended the Pierre Monteux School and the International Conducting Workshop and Festival in Sofia, Bulgaria.

BEN MANIS (UNITED STATES)
CONDUCTOR (OCT. 30)
Conductor Benjamin Manis joins HGO as resident conductor for the 2019–20 season. In May of 2019, he completed his Master of Music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where he studied with Larry Rachleff. Manis has served as cover conductor for the St. Louis and Dallas Symphonies, working with conductors David Robertson and Stéphane Denève, and was winner of the 2019 Solti Foundation US Career Assistance Award. Recent performances at Rice include Holst’s The Planets, Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6, and the Prokofiev Sinfonia Concertante. Manis returned to the Aspen Music Festival for the third consecutive summer in 2019, and will appear

TOMER ZVULUN (UNITED STATES)
DIRECTOR
Tomer Zvulun, the general and artistic director of the Atlanta Opera since 2013, was last seen at HGO as the director of 2018’s The Flying Dutchman. His work has been presented by prestigious opera houses in Europe, South and Central America, Israel, and the US, including The Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, Seattle Opera, Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Minnesota Opera, Montreal Opera, Teatro Colón, and Israeli Opera. His work has also been presented at the Wexford Festival Opera and The Glimmerglass Festival, as well as at leading educational institutes and universities like The Juilliard School, Indiana University, and Boston University. Upcoming projects include a new Salome at the Atlanta Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City; revivals of his acclaimed production of Eugene Onegin with Montreal Opera, Seattle Opera, and Palm Beach Opera; Silent Night at Utah Opera; and Madame Butterfly and Glory Denied at the Atlanta Opera. He is currently working on developing a world premiere based on Anne Frank’s diary and Sensorium Ex, a world premiere based on a story about artificial intelligence. Zvulun has directed over 15 new productions in his home company in Atlanta including Dead Man Walking, The Flying Dutchman, Soldier Songs, Silent Night, Maria de Buenos Aires, La bohème, Madame Butterfly, Lucia di Lammermoor, The Magic Flute, and Eugene Onegin.
Audrey, Le Nozze, The Magic Flute, i Capuleti e i Montecchi, don Pasquale, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, La Cenerentola, The Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro, La Cenerentola, and La Bohème have been performed at the San Francisco Opera (with both San Francisco Opera and Santa Fe Opera). Other companies include Seattle Opera, Opera de Montreal, Pittsburgh Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Arizona Opera, Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha, New York City Opera, North Carolina Opera, and Hawaii Opera Theatre; as well as a new production of La rondine for The Curtis Institute of Music, Tosca for the Lyrique-en-mer International Festival de Belle-Ile, The Crucible for Opera Santa Barbara, Shining Bov for Tulsa Opera, Il matrimonio segreto for Carnegie Mellon University, Rigoletto for Syracuse Opera, Falstaff for Resonance Works Pittsburgh, and Gluck’s Armide for OperaNeo. She also has been a member of the staging staff at San Francisco Opera and Santa Fe Opera. Upcoming engagements include Seattle Opera, Opera de Montreal, a new production of Norma for Boston Lyric Opera, La traviata with Hawaii Opera Theatre, and a return to the Pittsburgh Opera for Norma and Florencia en el Amazonas. Other professional engagements include Central City Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Sarasota Opera, Virginia Opera, and Nashville Opera.

**STEPHANIE HAYEY (UNITED STATES)**

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

Winner of the Adelaide Bishop award for artistic quality and winner of the Opera America Director-Designer Showcase, Stephanie HayeY, who is making her HGO debut in this production of Rigoletto, has staged productions for Pittsburgh Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Arizona Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera Omaha, New York City Opera, North Carolina Opera, and Hawaii Opera Theatre; as well as a new productions of La rondine for The Curtis Institute of Music, Tosca for the Lyrique-en-mer International Festival de Belle-Ile, The Crucible for Opera Santa Barbara, Shining Bov for Tulsa Opera, Il matrimonio segreto for Carnegie Mellon University, Rigoletto for Syracuse Opera, Falstaff for Resonance Works Pittsburgh, and Gluck’s Armide for OperaNeo. She also has been a member of the staging staff at San Francisco Opera and Santa Fe Opera. Upcoming engagements include Seattle Opera, Opera de Montreal, a new production of Norma for Boston Lyric Opera, La traviata with Hawaii Opera Theatre, and a return to the Pittsburgh Opera for Norma and Florencia en el Amazonas. Other professional engagements include Central City Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Sarasota Opera, Virginia Opera, and Nashville Opera.

**ERHARD ROM (UNITED STATES)**

**SET DESIGNER**

Erhard Rom, who is making his HGO debut with this production of Rigoletto, has designed settings for more than 200 productions around the globe. In 2015, he was named as a finalist in the International Opera Awards in London. He has collaborated with many of the world’s leading directors and companies including San Francisco Opera (Susannah, Lucia di Lammermoor, Nixon in China), Royal Swedish Opera (Nixon in China), Seattle Opera (Semele, La bohème, Eugene Onegin), Washington National Opera (Silent Night), Wexford Festival (Silent Night), Vancouver Opera (Dead Man Walking, Otello), Glimmerglass Festival (A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck, Later the Same Evening, Silent Night), Opera Theatre of St. Louis (Faust, Jane Eyre, Carmen), and Minnesota Opera (The Shining, Dead Man Walking, Rusalka, Romeo and Juliet). Other companies include Boston Lyric Opera, Montreal Opera, Atlanta Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre Center, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and Merrimack Repertory Theatre among many others. During the 2019–20 season, his set designs will be featured in various opera productions including La bohème and Eugene Onegin with Seattle Opera, Silent Night with Utah Opera, Don Giovanni and Samson and Delilah with Washington National Opera, and The Shining with Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

**JESSICA JAHN (UNITED STATES)**

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Jessica Jahn’s costumes were last seen at HGO in 2018 for West Side Story and Norma, the latter of which had previously been seen at San Francisco Opera and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. She made her HGO debut in Mary Stuart in 2012. Later this season, her costumes will appear in HGO’s production of La favorite. A selection of the Brooklyn-based designer’s past credits includes The Crucible for Glimmerglass Festival; Gloria: A Life with Daryl Roth Theatre; Once On This Island with Paper Mill Playhouse; Norma with Canadian Opera Company; Mary Stuart for Seattle Opera; Monodramas and Moses in Egypt for New York City Opera; Dead Man Walking for Washington National Opera; Anna Bolena and Norma for Lyric Opera of Chicago; The Manchurian Candidate at Minnesota Opera; and Moby Dick for Utah Opera and Pittsburgh Opera. In 2020, her designs will be seen in the Chicago premiere of Blue at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Jahn is an adjunct costume design professor with Brandeis University’s Theatre Arts Department.

**ROBERT WIERZEL (UNITED STATES)**

**LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Robert Wierzel has worked with artists from diverse disciplines and backgrounds in opera, theatre, dance, and contemporary music on stages throughout the country and abroad. His work has been seen previously at HGO in Frida in 1993 and in Mother of Three Sons in 1992. His New York Broadway productions include Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill, the musical FELA! (Tony Award nomination), and David Copperfield’s debut Dreams and Nightmares. Wierzel has designed productions with opera companies in New York, Paris, Tokyo, Norway, Toronto, Vancouver, Boston, Seattle, San Diego, Houston, Dallas, Washington D.C., Virginia, Atlanta, and Chicago, as well as numerous productions (30 seasons) with Glimmerglass Festival. Wierzel’s dance work includes 33 years with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company. He has designed at regional theaters across the country including A.C.T.; Shakespeare Theatre (Washington DC), Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Guthrie Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, The Old Globe, Asolo Repertory Theatre, and the Mark Taper Forum, among many others. Wierzel is a creative partner at Spark Design Collaborative and is on the faculty of NYU Tisch School of the Arts.
Richard Bado, an alumnus of the HGO Studio (1984–85), is director of artistic operations and chorus master at HGO. Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading HGO’s acclaimed production of Show Boat at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, he has conducted at La Scala, Opéra National de Paris, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, Tulsa Opera, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, and Wolf Trap Opera. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey, Jamie Barton, Ryan McKinny, and Nathan Gunn. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University; he also studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. For 12 years, he was the director of the opera studies program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. He has served on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Dolora Zajick Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, the International Vocal School in Moscow, and the Texas Music Festival. He received HGO’s Silver Rose Award in 2013 in celebration of his 25th year as chorus master.

Texas native Denise Tarrant began 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 Ricky Ian Gordon’s The House without a Christmas Tree (2017), Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life (2016), Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree (2000) and Tod Machover’s Resurrection (1999), as well as Floyd’s Of Mice and Men (2002) and Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas (2001), all of which have been released on CD. She further performed in the world premieres of Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix (2019); Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); André Previn’s Brief Encounter (2009); Heggie’s Three Decembers (2008) and The
Baritone Brian Mulligan, who is equally renowned as an interpreter of classic works by Verdi, Wagner, and Strauss as well as some of the most challenging 20th and 21st century operas, makes a role debut in the title role in Rigoletto in this production. Previous roles at HGO include Marcello in La bohème (2008), and Emperor Overall in Der Kaiser von Atlantis (2006). His operatic season in 2018–19 included a role debut as Mandryka in Arabella at San Francisco Opera, conducted by Marc Albrecht; Zurga in The Pearl Fishers with Zurich Opera; and double debuts with Dutch National Opera, first as Sharpless in Madame Butterfly and then as Golaud in a new production of Pelléas et Mélisande. During the 2018–19 season he also recorded Guglielmo in Puccini’s Le Villi for Opera Rara and performed the work in concert in London under the baton of Sir Mark Elder. Other recent roles include Gunther and Donner in the Francesca Zambello production of the Ring Cycle at the San Francisco Opera; Count di Luna in David Bösch’s new production of Il trovatore; Paolo in Simon Boccanegra at the Metropolitan Opera; and Sharpless in Madame Butterfly, Valentin in Faust, and Yeletsky in Pique Dame with Zürich Opera. Later this season, he returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago for its presentation of Wagner’s Ring Cycle, singing Donner and Gunther in Das Rheingold and Götterdämmerung, respectively.

Baritone Joshua Jeremiah makes his HGO debut in the title role of Rigoletto for the high school night performances of this production. The 2018–19 season saw his debut with Minnesota Opera as Horstmayer in Silent Night, the title role in Rigoletto with the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, Carmina Burana with the Westmoreland Symphony, Scarpia in Tosca with the Reading Symphony Orchestra, Father in Chunky in Heat with Experiments in Opera, and Dancăre in Carmen with the Bar Harbor Music Festival. His 2019–20 season includes Melchior in Amahl and the Night Visitors with On Site Opera, Lionel in The Maid of Orleans with New Orleans Opera, Carmina Burana with the Fort Wayne Symphony, Amonasro in Aida with Opera Tampa, and Verdi’s Requiem with the Reading Symphony Orchestra. Past credits include Silvio in Pagliacci with New Orleans Opera, The Man in Persona in his LA Opera debut, covering Alberich in Das Rheingold with Arizona Opera, Aaron Greenspan in Morning Star with On Site Opera, Brahms’ Ein Deutsches Requiem with Smith College, When Adonis Calls with Asheville Lyric Opera, and Marcello in La bohème with the Pittsburgh Festival.

Former HGO Studio artist (2011–14) Scott Quinn was last seen at HGO as Villiers, Duke of Buckingham in Prince of Players in 2016. Past HGO credits include Tamino in The Magic Flute and Adolfo Pirelli in Sweeney Todd in 2015; Alfredo in Die Fledermaus and Edmondo/Lamplighter in Manon Lescaut in 2006. Other credits at HGO include Pinkerton in performances of Madame Butterfly (2004–05); Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet, Alpheus in Lysistrata, High Priest of Neptune in Idomeneo, and Ruiz in Il trovatore (all in 2005). His recent roles include Faust in La damnation de Faust with Teatro Colón; Rafael Ruiz in El gato montés with LA Opera; Rodolfo in Luisa Miller with Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; the title role of The Tales of Hoffmann at Teatro di San Carlo in Naples; Alfredo Germont in La traviata with the Arena di Verona, the Royal Opera House Muscat, Bolshoi Opera, Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, and Bavarian State Opera; and The Duke of Mantua in Rigoletto with Hamburg State Opera, the Budapest Summer Festival, Teatro di San Carlo, LA Opera, and Arena di Verona. The 2019–20 season will see him performing the role of Ismaele in Nabucco with Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Don José in Carmen with the Tampere Opera, and Alfredo Germont in La traviata with Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville. Recent collaborations with star directors Sofia Coppola (La traviata) and Woody Allen (Gianni Schicchi) resulted in international acclaim and sold-out performances in Los Angeles, Valencia, and Rome.
Mané Galoyan 
(ARMENIA)

Soprano—Gilda

Former HGO Studio artist (2015–18) Mané Galoyan was the first prize winner in the 27th Eleanor McCollum Competition and Concert of Arias and has won awards at numerous international competitions including Third Prize in the XV International Tchaikovsky Competition and Fourth Prize in the 6th International Vocal Competition China in Ningbo. She has appeared at HGO as the Confidante in Elektra (2018); Violetta Valéry in performances of La traviata (2017); Adina in performances of The Elixir of Love (2016–17); and as the Forest Bird in Siegfried, Margaret Hughes in the world premiere of Prince of Players, the Kitchen Girl in Rusalka, and Lucy in the HGOco world premiere of After the Storm (all in 2016). Other past roles include Gilda in Rigoletto with Kentucky Opera and Wolf Trap Opera, where she also played Smorfoisa in Florian Leopold Gassmann’s L’opera seria; and Violetta in La traviata with Glyndebourne On Tour. Galoyan’s extensive concert performances include Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater, Schubert’s Mass in G and Mass in C, Vivaldi’s Gloria, and Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass, all with the Armenian National Chamber Orchestra, as well as the Fauré Requiem with the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra. This season, Galoyan makes her Metropolitan Opera debut as Prilepa/Chlòe in Pique Dame, debuts with Hawaii Opera Theatre as the Countess in Le nozze di Figaro, and performs the role of Giannetta and covers Adina in L’elisir d’amore with Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Elizabeth Sutphen
(UNITED STATES)

Soprano—Gilda

(Oct. 30)

Soprano Elizabeth Sutphen returns to HGO as Gilda during the production’s high school night performance after last appearing at HGO as Faustina in the world premiere of Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix during the 2018–19 season. Sutphen recently made her debut at Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier. She looks forward to the 2019–20 season with a return to Oper Frankfurt, where she was a former member of their Opera Studio, in her first Rossini heroine role of Lisetta in a new production of La gazetta and as the charming Philine in Thomas’s Mignon. 2019–20 also sees her house debut at The Dallas Opera as the Heavenly Voice in Don Carlo, her debut with the Tiroler Festspiele in Bach’s Christmas Oratorio, and La Folie in Rameau’s Platée with Des Moines Metro Opera. Her 2018 season saw her back at Oper Frankfurt as Zerbinetta in Brigitte Fassbaender’s production of Ariadne auf Naxos, as Atalanta in Handel’s Xeres, and Zerbinetta in a new production Ariadne directed by Michel Fau and conducted by Evan Roger with the Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse. An alumna of the Juilliard School, Sutphen has also made professional debuts on the concert stage, including with Orchestre Nationale de Lille, the Vienna Boys Choir, and with Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

David Shipley
(UNITED KINGDOM)

Bass—Sparafucile

David Shipley is a recent graduate of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; where his roles included Arthur and Officer III in The Lighthouse; Captain in Eugene Onegin; Sciarrone in Tosca; Guccio in Gianni Schicchi; and High Priest of Baal in Nabucco. Other roles at the Royal Opera House include Second Armed Man in The Magic Flute, Antinoo in Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria, Zuniga in Carmen, Dr. Grenvil in La traviata, and the Nightwatchman in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. Elsewhere, Shipley has performed as a soloist with such ensembles as the London Symphony Orchestra, the Monteverdi Choir, and the Classical Opera Company; with conductors Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Andrew Davis, and Sir Mark Elder; and at venues including Paris’s Salle Pleyel, Barcelona’s L’Auditori, the Kölner Philharmonie, Kings Place, the Cadogan Hall, the Barbican, Christ Church Spitalfields, and the Royal Albert Hall. In the 2019–20 season, he returns to Scottish Opera as Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and performs Colline in La
bohème with Grange Park Opera. Engagements in the 2018–19 season included his house debuts at Scottish Opera as Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Theatre de Champs-Elysées as Truffaldino in Ariadne auf Naxos, and Grange Park Opera as the Monk in Don Carlo.

First-year HGO Studio artist Nicholas Newton is an alumnus of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (2016) and won third prize in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Notable performances include the roles of Count Ceprano in Rigoletto and Capulet (cover) in Roméo et Juliette with Wolf Trap Opera, Achilla in Julius Caesar at Rice University, and L’arbre and Le fauteuil in L’enfant et les sortilèges at Aspen Music Festival. Newton was a national semifinalist in the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the first-place winner of the 2018 Virginia & Susan Hawk Competition. In summer 2019, he sang Monterone in Rigoletto with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he will also portray the Second Soldier in Salome.

Second-year HGO Studio artist Daniel Noyola made his company

RICHARD TREY SMAGUR
(UNITED STATES)
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
TENOR—BORSA
Third-year HGO Studio artist Richard Trey Smagur, an alum of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (2012), was a Grand Finals winner in the 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. His roles at HGO include the Steersman in The Flying Dutchman, Parpignol in La bohème, Gastone de Letortières in La traviata, Young Servant in Elektra, and Count Almaviva in outdoor performances of The Barber of Seville. Other appearances include Tsarevich Gvidon in The Golden Cockerel at Santa Fe Opera and Tybalt in Roméo et Juliette at Wolf Trap Opera. In summer 2016, he was a fellow at Steans Music Institute and sang Monterone in Rigoletto with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he will also portray the Second Soldier in Salome.

ZOEI REAMS
(UNITED STATES)
MEZZO-SOPRANO—MADDALENA
Former HGO Studio artist (2016–18) Zoei Reams, who won second prize in HGO’s 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, holds a Master of Music degree from Louisiana State University. She was most recently seen at HGO as Rosalia in West Side Story and Third Maid servant in Elektra (both 2018); Flora Bervoix in La traviata, Third Secretary in Nixon in China, and Cece in the HGOco world premiere of Some Light Emerges (all in 2017); and as the alto Winged Angel in the world premiere of It’s a Wonderful Life (2016). Past roles include Flora in La traviata with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Suzuki in Madame Butterfly at Opera Columbus, Marget in Wozzeck at Des Moines Metro Opera, Maddalena in Rigoletto and Clarice in La pieta del paragone with Wolf Trap Opera, Tituba in Ward’s The Crucible at the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Sandmännchen in Hänsel und Gretel with Opera Louisiane. She has also portrayed Béatrice in Béatrice et Bénédict, Mrs. Lovett in Sweeney Todd, and Katisha in The Mikado. In the 2019–20 season, she will sing Maddalena in Rigoletto at Opera San Antonio, Jan Arnold in Everest, and Georgia Davenport in Freedom Ride with Chicago Opera Theater. She will also perform the title role in Marian’s Song with HGOco later this season. On the concert stage this year, she will perform the Messiah with Washington National Cathedral.

GEORGE HAHN
(UNITED STATES)
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
BARITONE—MARULLO
Second-year HGO Studio artist Geoffrey Hahn made his HGO mainstage debut as Schaunard in La bohème last fall after singing Fiorello in outdoor performances of The Barber of Seville in spring 2018. Hahn earned his master of music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and graduated with a degree in sustainable development from the Columbia–Juilliard Exchange Program in New York City. He performed Sam in Trouble in Tahiti, Gideon March in Little Women, and Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Rice University; Billy in Carousel at Columbia University; and Dancaïre in Carmen and Guglielmo in Così fan tutte with the Aspen Music Festival. This summer, he sang the role of Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm in The Magic Flute at Des Moines Metro Opera, Maddalena in Butterfly at Opera Columbus, Marget in Wozzeck at Des Moines Metro Opera, Maddalena in Rigoletto and Clarice in La pieta del paragone with Wolf Trap Opera, Tituba in Ward’s The Crucible at the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Sandmännchen in Hänsel und Gretel with Opera Louisiane. She has also portrayed Béatrice in Béatrice et Bénédict, Mrs. Lovett in Sweeney Todd, and Katisha in The Mikado. In the 2019–20 season, she will sing Maddalena in Rigoletto at Opera San Antonio, Jan Arnold in Everest, and Georgia Davenport in Freedom Ride with Chicago Opera Theater. She will also perform the title role in Marian’s Song with HGOco later this season. On the concert stage this year, she will perform the Messiah with Washington National Cathedral.

NICHOLAS NEWTON
(UNITED STATES)
Dr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood/ Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer/ Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow
BASS—COUNT MONTERONE
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Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
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BASS—COUNT MONTERONE
First-year HGO Studio artist Nicholas Newton is an alumnus of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (2016) and won third prize in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Notable performances include the roles of Count Ceprano in Rigoletto and Capulet (cover) in Roméo et Juliette with Wolf Trap Opera, Achilla in Julius Caesar at Rice University, and L’arbre and Le fauteuil in L’enfant et les sortilèges at Aspen Music Festival. Newton was a national semifinalist in the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the first-place winner of the 2018 Virginia & Susan Hawk Competition. In summer 2019, he sang Monterone in Rigoletto with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he will also portray the Second Soldier in Salome.
debut as Colline in selected performances of La bohème and sang Masetto in Don Giovanni last season. He was previously a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. His honors include first prize in the 2015 Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota and third place in the 2016 Meistersinger Vocal Competition in Austria. His performance credits include the title roles in Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro, Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte, Colas in Bastien und Bastienne, and Papageno in The Magic Flute. He made his debut at Tri-Cities Opera as Mustafà in The Italian Girl in Algiers. This past summer, he joined Wolf Trap Opera for productions of Der Kaiser von Atlantis and L’île de Merlin. At HGO during the 2019–20 season, he will also sing Laurentino in El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering, and First Soldier in Salome.

DOROTHY GAL (UNITED STATES)
The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow
SOPRANO—COUNTESS CEPRANO
Second-year HGO Studio artist Dorothy Gal won second prize in HGO’s 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and made her HGO mainstage debut as Zerlina in Don Giovanni this past spring. She participated in Marilyn Horne’s The Song Continues workshop at Carnegie Hall, was a vocal fellow at Ravinia’s Steans Music Institute, a New Horizons Fellow at the Aspen Summer Music Festival, and is an alumna of Houston Grand Opera’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (2015). Roles include Amy in Little Women, Lauretta in Gianni Schicchi, Poussette in Manon, Sandrina in La finta giardiniera, and First Wood Sprite in Rusalka. This past summer, she sang the role of Anne Egerman in A Little Night Music at Aspen Music Festival. Her other HGO roles during the 2019–20 season include the Priestess in Aida and Papagena in The Magic Flute.

ELENA VILLALÓN (UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai Fellow
SOPRANO—PAGE
First-year HGO Studio artist Elena Villalón was named a winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the Audience Choice Award winner in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. She is a recent graduate of the Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music (CCM), has been a vocal fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, and is an alumna of HGO’s 2018 Young Artists Vocal Academy. Previous appearances at CCM include Adele in Die Fledermaus, Lucy in The Telephone, and Miss Wordsworth in Albert Herring. In summer 2019, she performed Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist and returned to the Tanglewood Music Center as a soprano fellow. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, she also performs Woman in selected performances of El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering and Inez in La favorite.

LINDSAY KATE BROWN (UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover/Lynn and Henry Gissel Fellow
MEZZO-SOPRANO—GIOVANNA
Second-year HGO Studio artist Lindsay Kate Brown won third prize in HGO’s 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. She earned an artist diploma in opera studies at Rice University, where she portrayed the roles of Cecilia March in Little Women, Zita in Gianni Schicchi and Cornelia in Julius Caesar. She made her professional debut with Tri-Cities Opera in 2014. In 2015, she won an encouragement award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. In the summer of 2018, she was a young artist at Des Moines Metro Opera, where she reprised the role of Ma Moss in Copland’s The Tender Land and covered the role of Ježibaba in Dvořák’s Rusalka. This past summer she sang the role of the Composer in Ariadne auf Naxos with Wolf Trap Opera. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, she will also perform Second Lady in The Magic Flute.

WILLIAM GUANBO SU (CHINA)
Anne and Albert Chao Fellow
BASS—USHER
First-year HGO Studio artist William Guanbo Su won second prize in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and was a Grand Finals Winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He has been a Gerdine Young Artist at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and a voice fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, where he played the principal role of Don Basilio in The Barber of Seville. Other opera roles include Pluton in Rameau’s Hippolyte et Aricie, Herr Reich in Nicolai’s The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Seneca in Monteverdi’s The Coronation of Poppea. He has studied German lieder at the Franz Schubert Institute in Vienna, and in 2017 won first prize in the Gerda Lissner Lieder Competition. During the summer of 2019, he sang Count Ceprano with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he also appears as Fifth Jew in Salome and Second Armored Man in The Magic Flute.
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**Beyond Time** Image © Coo-ee Gallery
BLENDING THE GENRES:
HANDEL’S THEATRICAL INNOVATION

BY JEREMY JOHNSON
Dramaturg
George Frideric Handel has confused many a casual classical music devotee. Was he a German composer? An Italian composer? An English composer? The truth is, he was a dazzlingly unique mix of all three. Born in 1685 in Halle, Germany, Handel grew up in the German polyphonic tradition of Protestant church music. He spent five formative years in Florence and Rome where his style was heavily influenced by the Italian Baroque. Then, in 1710, he moved to London where he would live out the rest of his life, becoming a naturalized British subject in 1727.

Handel is credited with the creation of the English oratorio, and his particular style combines elements of all three countries’ musical and cultural traditions. As an organist in Lutheran and Calvinist churches in Germany, Handel was charged with writing weekly cantatas and anthems that sparkled with choral polyphony. But it was in Italy that Handel learned about the solo voice, and the style and structure of the two large-scale Italian vocal forms: oratorio and opera.

The Italian Baroque oratorio had existed since the early 1600s, but it took a backseat to the much more popular Italian Baroque opera. While the early operas were about kings or gods, or were often based on Greek or Roman mythology, the early oratorios were based on Latin biblical texts. The word oratorio comes from the Latin verb orare, to orate, plead, or pray. Its sacred implication defined the Italian Baroque oratorio as a religious genre for the first part of the 17th century, and many of them were performed in the Catholic churches and cathedrals in Italy. By 1700, however, secular themes were woven into the Italian oratorio, and Handel’s first, in 1707, was about five of the Muses.

The more significant structural difference, however, between oratorio and opera was the chorus. The oratorio originated with a quartet of unnamed singers that represented the crowds, or who commented on the action like a Greek dramatic chorus. Over time, composers expanded the quartet into a larger and larger chorus. Italian opera, on the other hand, became characterized by its alternation between recitativo and the da capo aria, without any choruses; indeed, many Italian Baroque operas include almost nothing but arias with few, if any, duets, trios, or other ensembles. Giulio Cesare, for example, contains just two duets, while Alcina boasts a single trio; the rest of the numbers in each of these operas are solo arias. Handel, like some of the earliest Italian Baroque opera composers, might bookend his operas with choruses, but they are often sung by the soloists of the opera themselves, and not by a separate group of choristers. Consistently and throughout the plot, however, the dramatic adoption of the chorus was almost nonexistent in Italian Baroque opera.

By the time he moved to London, Handel had written two Italian oratorios and six Italian operas—some of which, interestingly, had arias in both Italian and in German, as they were first performed at the opera house in Hamburg. Once in London, Handel secured the opportunity to launch his career as a successful composer of Italian opera. He wrote five Italian operas in his first five years in London and an incredible thirty-six more over a twenty-year span after that. Toward the end of that output, however, the political and theological environment in London started to turn against Italian opera.

The English nation was unusually politically and theologically aware, the two being quite inseparable: opinionated religious and political debate dominated everyday life, while church sermons influenced every aspect of public policy and intellectualism. Early in the 18th century, “religious freethinking” was a hot topic of public debate, pitting the conservative-minded Protestants against the humanistic Deists. Many reformists in the Church of England saw religious freethinking as a form of heresy, culminating in ecclesiastical reprimands and trials of treason for the
more liberal-minded believers. Keep in mind, this is the same environment that spurred the mass migration of religious minorities from England to the Americas. The theater found itself in the middle of this debate. Public performances influenced private behavior and were therefore considered to be matters of public concern: the theater was seen as the foremost purveyor of vice and bad habits. Many influential writers even wanted all the theaters to be closed, as the Puritans had done to the Shakespearean theaters between 1642 and 1660. Though no closure occurred, a reform movement was championed for art to revitalize the nation’s morals. In order for art to be more than a vice-ridden, heretical pastime, it needed to be moral, serious, and instructive, with emotional subjects that brought the viewer closer to God and the Church of England. It certainly did not help Italian opera’s reputation that it came from a Catholic country.

Seeing the public appetite shifting toward religious art, Handel, the commercially minded entrepreneur, saw an opportunity for religious-themed opera. But the Blasphemy Act of 1605 had, for over a century, prohibited works based on scripture from appearing on the acted stage. Enter the English oratorio. In 1718, Handel introduced *Esther*, his first English oratorio, to the London public. The oratorio form allowed Handel to compose for dramatic subjects with religious themes without the performers “acting” the drama on the stage, and he cleverly introduced this genre in the vernacular. Exploiting the patriotism woven throughout the religious debate, the phrase “Oratorio in English” was the largest font size on the posters—the language was a chief selling point. Newburgh Hamilton, a writer and later one of Handel’s librettists, commented that “Mr. Handel had so happily here introduc’d *Oratorios*, a musical drama, whose subject must be Scriptural, and in which the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing *Air* of the Stage.” The solemnity of church music refers to the seriousness of style, the morality of subject, and the extensive employment of choral polyphony, while airs of the stage simply refers to the English word for the operatic *aria*. As Italian Baroque opera had been structured primarily with arias, Handel combined those with the anthem choruses of church music—on a sacred subject and in the English language—thereby introducing a brand-new genre of musical form.

After *Esther*, Handel spent the next twenty years writing almost exclusively Italian opera: he wrote only three more oratorios during this time. But as his operas’ ticket sales dropped and the Christian defense against the “Notorious Infidels” raged on, his musical ventures reached an inflection point. In 1738, he began composing *Saul* to a libretto by Charles Jennens, a noted landowner, writer, and patron, famous for his public opposition to “freethinking Deism.” Jennens would go on to write at least three other known libretti for Handel, including the famous *Messiah*. When *Saul* premiered in 1739, it was met with enormous enthusiasm—and, surprisingly, not only from one side of the religious debate. Despite Jennens’ personal stance, the reflective nature of the libretto, along with the requisite distillation of the biblical story into musical text, meant that none of the words argued for or against a specific “side.” It was the best of both worlds: a sacred theme that aroused the noblest of religious thoughts in the audience, set to words that were theologically moderate enough to appeal to a wider public without serious objection. Indeed, Handel was a true entrepreneur.

If *Saul* is Handel’s compositional inflection point, we can clearly see the change in his output. After 1739, Handel wrote only two more Italian operas, one in each of the following two years, but he wrote at least fifteen more known English oratorios over the course of his career. He solidified his reputation in 18th century London as the preeminent composer of popular music, drawing sell-out crowds to each of his English oratorios in the 1740s and 1750s, and doing so with public acclaim from traditionalists and freethinkers alike. He created the musical genre of the English oratorio: blending the Italian aria, German choral polyphony, and the English language together with the cultural backdrop of intense religious debate. Handel designed the ideal musical experience for his audience, one that has gone on to inspire generations of musicians and audiences all over the world.
A CROSS THE four-and-a-half octave span of the human voice, the countertenor—a voice part highlighted in our production of Handel’s Saul by Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, who plays David—is the second highest for adult males. Countertenors have a range that sits between the male tenor and the female contralto, sharing some notes with both. They differ from a nearly extinct type of voice, the sopranist: a male capable of singing fully in the female soprano range. Technically, there is no such thing as a “male soprano” any more than there is a “female bass.” The singing voice has no known relationship to sexuality and is physiologically related to gender, but not to gender’s accompanying gamut of identities. The castrati reigned for nearly two centuries at the beginnings of opera and were by far its biggest stars. Scholarly books abound, but one of the greatest readings about the era of the castrati is to be found in fiction, from Anne Rice, in her gorgeous pre-vampire novel, Cry to Heaven.

If one combines all of the repertoire written for sopranist (like Sesto in Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito) with that for countertenor, there is a vast amount of music, much of it unknown, and all of it conceived for preadolescent males so gifted at singing that they were castrated to prevent their voices from descending. The range of their voices was higher the younger they underwent the procedure, so the ability to identify the right time for the alteration was considered an art of its own. Castration, considered needlessly barbarous to us now, was in its time thought no more unusual than circumcision, and was similarly sanctioned by religious authorities. Opera audiences in the 18th century did not yell “bravo” to express their pleasure, they screamed, “evviva il cotello!” (“Long live the knife!”).

The last known castrato, Alessandro Moreschi, was born in 1858 and lived until 1922, and thus is the only of his voice type preserved on recording. The great Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini’s fascination with the Broadway legend Ethel Merman, who he heard several times in her famous debut musical Girl Crazy, by the Gershwins, was based on what he considered her similarity to Moreschi’s voice. The Merman hallmarks were all qualities of the great countertenors: unique timbre, long phrases, and clear words.

Today’s countertenors reach their success in more organic ways than their physically altered colleagues. They sing in a reinforced falsetto, about an octave higher than their modal speaking voices, which tend to be a natural baritone. Vocal range (how high and how low) and vocal resonance (how loud and how soft) are, like climate and weather, two related issues that are distinctively separate. Countertenors have discovered where their most natural resonance lies, which may or may not be where the natural range of their voice is.

The modern countertenor exists because of the early music movement, a recent phenomenon that would have been unheard of a century ago, when audiences had little interest in music outside their own time. Thanks to the numerous scholarly pioneers of the early music movement, musicians are able to bring very old music to new life on instruments both ancient and modern, and sublime works like Handel’s Saul are being rediscovered. Most thrillingly, great young stars like countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen can give voice to music written for their colleagues centuries ago, but whose voices were silenced by time. They live on.
SAUL

An Oratorio in Three Acts  |  Music by George Frideric Handel  |  Libretto by Charles Jennens
Sung in English with projected English titles

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER
The performance lasts approximately 3 hours, including one intermission.
This Glyndebourne Festival Opera production was originally performed at the Glyndebourne Festival in 2015.

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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
THE ORATORIO OPENS WITH A CHORUS OF ISRAELITES THANKING GOD FOR DAVID’S VICTORY AGAINST THE GIANT GOLIATH. SAUL, THE KING OF ISRAEL, OFFERS HIS DAUGHTER MERAB TO DAVID IN MARRIAGE. MERAB DOES NOT LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT BECAUSE OF DAVID’S LOWER SOCIAL POSITION, BUT HER SISTER MICHAL IS IN LOVE WITH HIM. JONATHAN, SAUL’S SON AND HIS FUTURE HEIR, SWears HIS DEVOTION TO DAVID. SAUL, OVERCOME WITH JEALOUSY AT DAVID’S NEWFOUND GLORY, AS THE ISRAELITES CONTINUE TO PRAISE DAVID, ORDERS JONATHAN TO KILL HIM.

JONATHAN PLEADS WITH HIS FATHER TO SPARE DAVID’S LIFE, AND HE RELUCTANTLY AGREES DESPITE HIS UNRELenting ANGER AND JEALOUSy TOWARD DAVID. SAUL SUMMONS DAVID TO HIS COURT, BUT DAVID DOES NOT COME. SAUL SEeks ASSISTANCE FROM THE WITCH OF ENDOR TO SPEAK WITH THE DECEASED SAMUEL, THE FORMER KING OF ISRAEL, EVEN THOUGH MAGIC AND NECROMANCY HAS BEEN OUTLAWED IN ISRAEL. THE GHOST OF SAMUEL COMES FORTH AND REMINDS SAUL OF HIS DISOBEDIENCE UNDER SAMUEL. HE THEN PREDICTS SAUL’S DEATH, THE DEATH OF HIS SONS, AND THE DEFEAT OF HIS ARMY IN THE NEXT DAY’S BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES.


A FULL SYNOPSIS APPEARS ON P. 51.

FUN FACT

In Protestant London of the 1700s, religious texts—defined as any sacred text taken directly from or simply inspired by the Bible—were not allowed to be presented onstage as an opera. In order to write operas on religious texts, Handel labeled them as “oratorios.” That classification came with the genre’s structural requirement to include large, long, and complex choral numbers, giving Handel an opportunity to showcase his incredible choral writing, an opportunity not available with Italian opera seria, which did not make use of choruses.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ENGLISH ORATORIO, HEAD TO P. 44.
CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Michal Andriana Chuchman
Abner/High Priest/Doeg/Amalekite Keith Jameson
Saul/Ghost of Samuel Christopher Purves
David Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen
Jonathan Paul Appleby *
Merab Pureum Jo ‡
Witch of Endor Chad Shelton ‡

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor Patrick Summers  
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Original Director Barrie Kosky *
Revival Director Donna Stirrup
Set and Costume Designer Katrin Lea Tag *
Original Lighting Designer Joachim Klein *
Associate Lighting Designer David Manion *
Original Choreographer Otto Pichler *
Revival Choreographer Merry Holden *
Chorus Master Richard Bado ‡  
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Musical Preparation Kirill Kuzmin ‡  
Kyle Naig †  
Ms. Kathleen R. Cross/Stephanie Larsen/Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Miro-Quesada/Richard M. Stout Fellow
Blair Salter †

Organ Soloist Ken Cowan *

Continuo Ensemble Patrick Summers, harpsichord  
Kirill Kuzmin, harpsichord ‡  
Barrett Sills, cello
Michael Leopold, theorbo
Kyle Naig, organ and carillon †

Dialect Coach Jim Johnson
Stage Manager Kristen Burke
Assistant Director Kaley Smith
Supertitles by Jeremy Johnson

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by Meredith Morse.
Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.
Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE, 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 IATSE, Local #51.
Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.
This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

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

PART I
The Israelites give thanks to God and sing praises to David for his victory over Goliath, the Philistine giant. David is welcomed by Saul, King of Israel, his son Jonathan, his two daughters Michal and Merab, and Abner, his commander-in-chief. Jonathan swears eternal friendship to David. Saul offers David Merab’s hand in marriage, but she scorns his humble origins. Her sister Michal, however, is in love with David. The women of Israel offer further tributes to David, which makes Saul furiously jealous and fearful for his crown. After he leaves, Jonathan reproaches the women for their rash words and urges David to soothe Saul by playing his harp.

Abner returns to report Saul’s madness. Saul reappears venting his anger and attempts to kill David, who manages to escape unharmed. Saul commands Jonathan to destroy David, while Merab comments on her father’s capricious behavior. Jonathan feels torn between his conflicting loyalties to David and to his father. The High Priest and the Israelites pray for David’s safety.

The people of Israel ponder the destructive power of jealousy. Jonathan confesses to David that Saul has ordered him to kill him, but that he will never harm David. He tells David that Saul has given his daughter Merab to another man, but David is undisturbed, since he loves Michal. Jonathan urges David to escape. Saul arrives and asks Jonathan if he has obeyed his command to kill David, and Jonathan pleads with his father to spare his friend. Saul seemingly relents, asking Jonathan to summon David back to court. Jonathan welcomes David back, while Saul feigns friendship, offering David Michal’s hand and appointing him commander of the Israelite army. David promises loyalty. Saul voices his secret hope that David will be slain by the Philistines. Michal and David declare their love for one another. The chorus praises David’s virtue.

PART II
Upon his return from battle, David tells Michal of Saul’s anger, treachery, and attempt to kill him. Michal urges him to escape. Doeg, Saul’s messenger, arrives to arrest David, but David once again evades capture. Merab, who has softened toward David, expresses her fear for his safety and her faith that Jonathan will save him. At the Feast of the New Moon, Saul declares his intention to destroy David. He questions Jonathan about David’s absence and reproaches him siding with his enemy. When Jonathan defends David, Saul flies into a rage and attempts to murder his own son. The Israelites warn of the dire consequences of Saul’s anger.

In disguise, Saul goes to consult the Witch of Endor, whose magic he had previously outlawed. The Witch complies with Saul’s request to conjure the ghost of Samuel. The ghost of Samuel tells Saul that Israel will be defeated by the Philistines, and Saul and his sons killed, after which the kingdom will pass to David. After the battle, David questions an Amalekite about its outcome and learns of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan and the defeat of the Israelites. David and Merab mourn the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. The High Priest urges the Israelites to celebrate the return of David, and the people extol David and entreat him to lead them into battle and redress the defeat of their nation.

Synopsis originally produced by Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

INTERMISSION
HGO Orchestra

Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

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

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

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

FLUTE
Henry Williford, Acting Principal *
Rebecca Powell Garfield *

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert, Principal *
Mayu Isom *

CLARINET
Sean Krissman, Principal *
Eric Chi *

BASSOON
Amanda Swain, Principal *
Michael Allard *

FRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston, Principal *
Kimberly Penrod Minson, Second Horn *
Spencer Park *

TRUMPET
Tetsuya Lawson, Principal *
Randal Adams *
Gerardo Mata *

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén, Principal *
Mark Holley *
Ben Osborne *

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

VIOLENE
Eliseo Rene Salazar, Principal *
Lorento Golofeev, Assistant Principal *
Gayle Garcia-Shepard *
Erika C. Lawson *
Suzanne LeFevre *
Dawson White *
Yvonne Smith *

VIOLA
Eliseo Rene Salazar, Principal *
Lorento Golofeev, Assistant Principal *
Gayle Garcia-Shepard *
Erika C. Lawson *
Suzanne LeFevre *
Dawson White *
Yvonne Smith *

VIOLENE
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Anabel Detrick *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *

At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.

* HGO Orchestra core musician  † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production  ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
HGO Chorus

Richard Bado, Chorus Master
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Justin Dunkle
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Ashly Evans
Peter Farley
Dallas Gray
Suzanne Gregory
Frankie Hickman
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Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
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Katie Loff
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Kathleen Manley
Heath Martin
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Cristino Perez
Geoffrey Peterson
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Nicholas Rathgeb
Gabrielle Reed
Kendall Reimer
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Kathleen Ruhleder
Johnny Salvesen
Christina Scanlan
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
John Weinel
Jennifer Wright

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Who’s Who

PATRICK SUMMERS (UNITED STATES)
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
CONDUCTOR

Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company’s first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s Ring and its first performances of the Verdi Requiem; collaborating on the world premieres of Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix, André Previn’s Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis’s The Refuge, Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life, The End of the Affair, and Three Decembers, Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree and Prince of Players, and Tod Machover’s Resurrection; leading the American premiere of Weinberg’s Holocaust opera The Passenger, both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinney, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers has enjoyed a long association with San Francisco Opera (SFO) and was honored in 2015 with the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes conducting Jake Heggie’s Moby-Dick, which was recorded and telecast on PBS's Great Performances. In 2017, he was awarded an honorary doctor of music degree by Indiana University. He was recently named artistic director of the Aspen Music Festival’s opera program alongside Renée Fleming. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he conducts Saul and Aida. Other engagements include conducting Dead Man Walking at the Israeli Opera and Carmen at Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona.

BARRIE KOSKY (AUSTRALIA)
ORIGINAL DIRECTOR

Australian director Barrie Kosky has been an intendant and artistic director of the Komische Oper Berlin since 2012. His productions for Komische Oper Berlin include La bohème, Semele, Pelléas et Mélisande, The Fair at Sorochintsï, Candide, Fiddler on the Roof, Die Perlen der Cleopatra, Moses und Aron, The Magic Flute, Rusalka, Le Grand Macabre, West Side Story, Eugene Onegin, The Takes of Hoffmann, Ball im Savoy, Rigoletto and La Belle Hélène. Productions elsewhere include Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg at the Bayreuth Festival; The Nose at Opera Australia; Carmen at the Royal Opera, Frankfurt; Saul at Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Eugene Onegin, Die Gezeichneten, Macbeth, and La fanciulla del West at Oper Zürich; and Agrippina, The Fiery Angel, and Die schwäbische Frau at Bavarian State Opera. He has been artistic director of Gilgul Theatre Company, artistic director of the 1996 Adelaide Festival, and co-director of Vienna Schauspielhaus (2001–5). His many awards include an Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production for Castor et Pollux (English National Opera), Best Director at the 2014 International Opera Awards, Best Opera House (Komische Oper Berlin) at the 2015 International Opera Awards, and a 2016 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre for Saul (also nominated for a 2016 International Opera Award and winner of six Helpmann Awards).

DONNA STIRRUP (UNITED KINGDOM)
REVIVAL DIRECTOR

Donna Stirrup made her HGO debut in 2016 as revival director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera’s Rusalka. She has directed revivals of Saul for Glyndebourne Festival and Tour and for the Adelaide Festival in 2017. She has also directed revivals of English National Opera’s Katya Kabanova at Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; Rodelinda at English National Opera and the Bolshoi in Moscow; Tosca at English National Opera; Thebans at Theater Bonn; On the Town at English National Opera and Teatrul du Châtelet; and Glyndebourne Festival Opera’s The Miserly Knight/Gianni Schicchi at the Festival de Opéra, Tenerife. She directed the 2017 UK premiere of Philip Glass’ The Juniper Tree at the Richmond Festival, the world premiere of Oliver Tarney’s St. Mark Passion for St. Endellion Easter Festival 2019, The Damnation of Faust for St. Endellion Festival 2018, The Turn of the Screw for Barnes Festival 2019, English National Opera’s contributions to the Royal Shakespeare Company/BBC Shakespeare Live!, English National Opera’s Peter Grimes, and Glyndebourne Festival Opera’s The Magic Flute at the Royal Albert Hall. Later this year, she will direct the revival of Saul at Téâtre du Châtelet. Her work as a staff director at English National Opera includes Iolanthe, The Mastersingers of Nuremberg, The Girl of the Golden West, The Tales of Hoffmann, The Magic Flute, Carmen, Dr. Atomic, Two Boys, Jenůfa, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Peter Grimes. Assistant director work at Glyndebourne Festival Opera
includes *Hamlet*, *Billy Budd*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *The Magic Flute*, and, at the Royal Opera House, *Anna Nicole* and *Gloriana*.

**KATRIN LEA TAG**  
*GERMANY*  
**SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER**

Designer Katrin Lea Tag makes her HGO debut in this production. Tag has worked closely with Director Barrie Kosky; credits with him include *L’Orfeo; The Coronation of Poppea; Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria; The Fair at Sorochintsi* and *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Komische Oper Berlin; *Castor et Pollux* at Komische Oper Berlin, English National Opera, and in Lille and Dijon; *Saul* at Glyndebourne Festival Opera; *Duke Bluebeard’s Castle and Dido and Aeneas* with Frankfurt Opera and Edinburgh Festival; *Carmen* with Frankfurt Opera; and *Armide* with Dutch National Opera. Her other opera designs include sets for *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Berlin State Opera, directed by Hans Neuenfels; sets and costumes for *Jeptha* with Dutch National Opera and Paris Opera, directed by Claus Guth; *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* for Graz Opera, directed by Nadja Loschky; and costumes for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Der Freischütz* with Berlin State Opera, directed by Michael Thalheimer.

**JOACHIM KLEIN**  
*GERMANY*  
**ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Joachim Klein, who makes his HGO debut in this production, has been the lighting supervisor and resident lighting designer at Frankfurt Opera since 1994, while also working on projects in Germany and elsewhere worldwide. In 2013, he became the head of lighting at Frankfurt Opera, where his recent designs include *Król Roger, La Forza del Destino, I Puritani, Tri Sestry, Aus einem Totenhaus, Der Mieter, Rinaldo*, and *Capriccio*. His latest engagements elsewhere include *Agrippina* (Munich), *Carmen* (London), *Rodelinda* (Madrid, Lyon, and Barcelona), *Un ballo in maschera* and *The Fiery Angel* (Munich), *Saul* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), *Dido and Aeneas/Bluebeard’s Castle* (Edinburgh and LA Opera), *La traviata* (Graz Opera, London, Vienna, and Seattle Opera), and *Salome* (Salzburg and Oslo). He has worked with renowned directors like Benedict Andrews, Vincent Boussard, Johannes Erath, Achim Freyer, Brigitte Fassbender, Claus Guth, Stefan Herheim, David Hermann, Ted Huffman, Peter Konwitschny, Barrie Kosky, Tobias Kratzer, Harry Kupfer, Christof Loy, David McVicar, and Álex Ollé.
SAUL
FALL 2019

David Manion (United Kingdom)
Associate Lighting Designer

David Manion became the head of lighting at the New Theatre Oxford in 1999 before moving to Glyndebourne Opera House in 2003. As associate lighting designer, David has worked on many shows for Glyndebourne and other opera houses, most notably: Turn of the Screw at the Tenerife Opera House in the Canary Islands; Falstaff for Glyndebourne On Tour; La Cenerentola for Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Glyndebourne On Tour; Turn of the Screw for Glyndebourne On Tour; Die Entführung for Glyndebourne On Tour; Saul for Glyndebourne On Tour; Saul at the Adelaide Festival; Turn of the Screw for Dallas Opera; Hamlet for Glyndebourne On Tour; The Barber of Seville for Glyndebourne On Tour; Hamlet at the Adelaide Festival; and Billy Budd for San Francisco Opera. As a lighting designer, Manion has designed lighting for Vladimir Jurowski’s farewell concert at Glyndebourne, Macbeth at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and Snow Q for the Brighton Art Project.

Otto Pichler (Austria)
Original Choreographer

Austrian choreographer and director Otto Pichler, who makes his HGO debut in this production, has worked as a freelance choreographer since 2001 for directors including Nicolas Brieger, Günter Krämer, David Mouchtar-Samorai, Bernd Mottl, Christof Loy, Stathis Livathinos, and Barrie Kosky. He has worked at opera houses including Paris Opéra (Der Ring des Nibelungen); Semperoper Dresden (Penthesilea, Die Fledermaus); Dutch National Opera (La forza del destino); Cologne Opera (War and Peace, Turandot); Hanover State Opera (Fiddler on the Roof, My Fair Lady); Wiesbaden State Theatre (Orfeo ed Euridice); La Monnaie Brussels (Aida); Salzburg Festival (Mitridate, re di Ponto, Orphée aux enfers) and Royal Opera, Covent Garden (The Nose, Carmen, La forza del destino). Previous credits with Kosky include Saul for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; The Fiery Angel for Bavarian State Opera; Das Rheingold in Hanover; Carmen for Frankfurt Opera; and Candid, Fiddler on the Roof, Orpheus, Kiss Me, Kate, Ball im Savoy, La Belle Hélène, and West Side Story (which he also co-directed) for Komische Oper Berlin. Upcoming productions with Barrie Kosky include The Bassetards for Komische Oper Berlin and Fürst Igor for Paris Opera. Pichler’s credits as director include Hello Dolly!, Jekyll and Hyde, Jesus Christ Superstar, and The Gypsy Princess.

Merry Holden (United Kingdom)
Revival Choreographer

Merry Holden, who makes her HGO debut in this production of Saul, has worked extensively as a dancer in the UK and internationally with leading opera companies in productions including Orphée aux enfers with Salzburg Festival; Candide with Opera National de Lorraine; Medea, Parsifal, and Turandot with English National Opera; Robert le diable, Eugene Onegin, and Carmen with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; and The Fairy Queen, Vanessa, and Saul with Glyndebourne Festival and Tour. In 2015, she became the revival choreographer for Saul in the Glyndebourne On Tour production of the oratorio. She has since remounted the choreography in Australia as part of the Adelaide Festival, in the summer of 2018 at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and will be doing so next year at the Théâtre du Châtelet. Her live music and performance history includes Stunning at Windmill Theatre London, The Merchant of Venice at Almeida Theatre, Betrayal with I Fagiolini on their London and UK tour, Whiteout with Barrowland Ballet at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and Nutcracker! with New Adventures at Sadler’s Wells and on their UK tour. Holden has extensive film and music video experience including credits with Range Rover, Pet Shop Boys, Feder, and Gola.

Richard Bado (United States)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Chorus Master

For information about Richard Bado, please see p. 38.

Denise Tarrant (United States)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Concertmaster

For information about Denise Tarrant, please see p. 38.

Christopher Purves (United Kingdom)
Baritone—Saul/Ghost of Samuel

Baritone Christopher Purves returns to HGO in the title role of this production of Saul after last appearing on the Wortham stage as Pasha Selim in The Abduction from the Seraglio and Alberich in Götterdämmerung in 2017. Past credits at HGO include Alberich in Das Rheingold in 2014 and Captain Balstrode in Peter Grimes in 2010. Purves originated the role of Saul to much acclaim in Barrie Kosky’s original Glyndebourne Festival Opera production of the oratorio. Highlights this season for Purves, formerly a member of the experimental
rock group Harvey and the Wallbangers, include a return to the title role in Kosky’s Saul at Théâtre du Châtelet, a house debut with LA Opera performing the role of Golaud in Pelléas et Mélisande, and the title role in a concert performance of Bluebeard’s Castle with Opera North. Recent operatic highlights have included returning to Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Méphistophélès in Richard Jones’s staging of La Damnation de Faust and Golaud in Stefan Herheim’s new production of Pelléas et Mélisande; Creon in Enescu’s Oedipe for Dutch National Opera; and Herzog Antoniotto Adorno/ Capitaneo di giustizia for Barrie Kosky’s production of Die Gezeichneten at Opernhaus Zurich, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski. On the concert platform, recent highlights include a critically acclaimed Alberich in Das Rheingold with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert, and the Peasant in Schoenberg’s Gurrelieder with Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms.

ARYEH NUSSBAUM COHEN (UNITED STATES)
COUNTERTENOR—DAVID

Countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen was the first countertenor in the history of the HGO Studio, where he was a member during the 2017–18 season. The first prize-winner of the 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias has appeared at HGO as Second Maidservant in Elektra in 2018 and as Nirenus in Julius Caesar in 2017. In addition to the present production of Saul, highlights of his 2019–20 season include performing the role of Tamerlano in Bajazet with Portland Opera as well as a role in Handel’s Rinaldo at the Glimmerglass Festival. On the concert stage, he sings Handel’s Messiah with the San Francisco Symphony, Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms with the Buffalo Philharmonic, and presents thematic programs “Orphean Enchantments” with American Bach Soloists and “Bach Goes Greek” with Ars Lyrica Houston. Last season, he joined San Francisco Opera’s Adler Fellowship program and made a mainstage debut as Medoro in Handel’s Orlando. He sang Handel’s Saul with Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra; Handel’s Agrippina in staged performances with Ars Lyrica Houston, conducted by Matthew Dirst; Bach’s Christmas Oratorio with Matthew Dirst and the Portland Baroque Orchestra; and gave the world premiere of a ballet by Yuri Possokhov with San Francisco Ballet. Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen earned a bachelor’s degree in history from Princeton University and received academic certificates in vocal performance and Judaic studies.
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ANDRIANA CHUCHMAN
(CANADA)

Soprano—Michal

Soprano Andriana Chuchman makes a role debut as Michal in this production of Saul. Chuchman previously appeared at HGO as Pat Nixon in Nixon in China in 2017. Chuchman makes two other important role debuts this season: Giulietta in I Capuleti e i Montecchi at Opera Omaha, and Gilda in Rigoletto at Opera San Antonio. She also returns to the Hamburg State Opera and makes her debut at the 2020 Salzburg Whitsun Festival in performances of the title role in Orpheé et Eurydice. Her concert appearances include performances of Handel’s Messiah with both the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and the Rhode Island Philharmonic. Chuchman’s recent opera engagements have included Adina in The Elixir of Love, Miranda in The Enchanted Island, Gretel in Hansel and Gretel, Valencienne in The Merry Widow at the Metropolitan Opera, the title role in a new production of Orphée et Eurydice, Zerlina in Don Giovanni, Yum-Yum in The Mikado, Valencienne at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Mary in Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life at the San Francisco Opera, Micaëla in La tragédie de Carmen at the San Diego Opera, and Lauretta in Gianni Schicchi at LA Opera. In concert, Chuchman has appeared in Lincoln Center’s White Lights Festival in staged performances of Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater; in her native Canada, Chuchman recently sang the premiere of Larysa Kuzmenko’s Golden Harvest with the Winnipeg Symphony.

PUREUM JO
(KOREA)

Soprano—Merab

Soprano Pureum Jo, an alumna of HGO Studio (2014–16), makes a role debut as Merab in this production of Saul. She last appeared at HGO as Musetta in La bohème in 2018. Previous roles at HGO include Miss Frayne in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players and Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); The Rose in The Little Prince, Pamina in alt. cast and outdoor performances of The Magic Flute and Papagena in mainstage performances, and Becca in the HGOco world premiere of O Columbia (all in 2015). Recent engagements include her first season with Glyndebourne Festival Opera for their production of Giulio Cesare, joining the roster of Lyric Opera of Chicago for Orphée et Eurydice, and her San Francisco Opera debut as Dai Yu in the world premiere of Bright Sheng’s Dream of the Red Chamber. Additionally, she returned to the Sarasota Orchestra for an evening of Mozart concert arias with Music Director Anu Tali, sang Micaëla in Carmen with Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and made her role debut as Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro with Opera Naples and Music Director Ramon Tebar. An accomplished concert soloist and recitalist, Jo has appeared in recital with HGO, Alice Tully Hall, and the Aspen Music Festival.

PAUL APPLEBY
(UNITED STATES)

Tenor Paul Appleby makes his HGO debut as Jonathan in this production of Saul. Appleby’s 2019–20 season includes a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Vanya Kudrjas in Katya Kabanova, a debut with Teatro Real as Tamino in The Magic Flute, and his Russian debut as Tom Rakewell in The Rake’s Progress with the Stanislavsky Music Theatre. His concert appearances include Mozart’s Mass in C Minor with the Cleveland Orchestra, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the San Diego Symphony, Mendelssohn’s Elijah with the Indianapolis Symphony, Schumann’s Dichterliebe with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and works by Britten and Schubert with the Santa Fe Chamber Music Society. A frequent guest artist at the Metropolitan Opera, Appleby has appeared as Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, as Belmonte in The Abduction from the Seraglio, and as David in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. Past operatic roles include the title role in Pelléas et Mélisande at the Metropolitan Opera and at Dutch National Opera; Joe Cannon in the world premiere of Girls of the Golden West at the Dutch National Opera and San Francisco Opera; and Tom Rakewell in The Rake’s Progress at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Oper Frankfurt, The Metropolitan Opera, and at Dutch National Opera. Appleby recently appeared in Bernstein’s Songfest with conductor Marin Alsop and The Juilliard Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

KEITH JAMESON
(UNITED STATES)

Tenor Keith Jameson makes his return to HGO in this production of Saul after last appearing on the Wortham stage as the Gamekeeper in Rusalka and Don Basilio in The Marriage of Figaro in 2016. This season, Jameson returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Don Basilio The Marriage of Figaro, and also returns to HGO later in the season as the First Jew in Strauss’ Salome. Last season, he was Uncle Billy in It’s a Wonderful Life with the San Francisco Opera, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Bardolfo in Falstaff. He also performed the role of Don Basilio for Cincinnati Opera and returned to Matsumoto, Japan, to perform Monsieur Triquet in Eugene Onegin. Past performances include Thisbe and Flute in A...
Midsummer Night’s Dream with Teatro Massimo di Palermo; Pong in Turandot, Basilio, Flute/Thisbe, and Beppe in I Pagliacci, and Goro in Madame Butterfly with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Gherardo in Gianni Schicchi and Old Man/Teapot/Frog in L’enfant et les sortileges with Japan’s Veroza Company; Valletto in The Coronation of Poppea and Pietro in the North American premiere of Schreker’s Die Gezeichneten with LA Opera; and the Novice in Billy Budd and Gherardo in Gianni Schicchi at the Metropolitan Opera.

**CHAD SHELTON (UNITED STATES)**

**TENOR—WITCH OF ENDOR**

HGO Studio alumnus Chad Shelton (1997–2000) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as Patrick Kelly and a variety of other roles in The Phoenix (2019); Pollione in Norma and Aegisth in Elektra (both in 2018); Mao Tse-tung in Nixon in China (2017); Cavaradossi in performances of Tosca (2015–16); Charles II in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); Froh in Das Rheingold and Fredrik Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014); and Alfredo in La traviata (2012), among many others. Last season, in addition to The Phoenix at HGO, his performances included Pollione with North Carolina Opera, Don José in Carmen on tour in Japan for a second time as a guest artist of the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy Opera Project, Roderigo in Otello at the Metropolitan Opera, and Charles II in Prince of Players with Florentine Opera (recorded for commercial release). Recent performances include a return to the Grand Théâtre de Genève for his first performances of Sir Edgar Aubry in Der Vampyr, Don José in Carmen with Austin Opera, his Metropolitan Opera debut as Roderigo in a new production of Otello, and his first Erik in The Flying Dutchman with Boston Lyric Opera. Later this season, he returns to HGO to perform the role of Herod in Salome.

**KEN COWAN (UNITED STATES)**

**ORGAN SOLOIST**

Organist Ken Cowan maintains a rigorous performing schedule that takes him to major concert venues in America, Canada, Europe, and Asia. Recent feature performances have included appearances at Verizon Hall in Philadelphia with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonie, Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, Vienna Konzerthaus, Maison Symphonique in Montreal, St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, and Walt Disney Concert Hall. In addition, Cowan has been a featured artist in recent years at national conventions of the American Guild of Organists in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Houston. He has performed at many regional conventions of the AGO and has been featured at several conventions of the Organ Historical Society and the Royal Canadian College of Organists. In 2012, Cowan joined the keyboard faculty of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, where he is a professor of Organ and head of the organ program. He is additionally the organist and artist-in-residence at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston. Numerous critically acclaimed compact disc recordings by Cowan are available including his most recent release, Dynamic Duo, featuring Cowan and Bradley Welch.
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HGO Lighting Supervisor Michael James Clark, who designs and helps others realize their lighting and projection dreams here at the Opera, is one of the longest-serving members of our technical team. In addition, he is acknowledged as one of the finest opera lighting supervisors in the nation. I talked to him recently about his opera journey and about how he ended up here in Texas lighting productions on the Wortham stage.

BY PERRYN LEECH
Managing Director, Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair
MICHAEL: Tell me a bit about where you were born and how you grew up.
PERRYN LEECH: I was born in Goleta, California, just north of Santa Barbara. When I was about three or four, we moved to Thousand Oaks in the northwestern part of Los Angeles. I was an only child and went through public school there.

Were your parents involved in theater?
My father worked in the film industry as a grip. My mom had done some performing when she was in school. She never pursued anything professionally but was always a patron. We regularly attended musicals and plays locally and occasionally went down to LA to see shows at the Ahmanson.

Is that how you became interested in theater?
I was initially more interested in music than in theater. From the end of grade school through my first year of college, I was primarily focused on being a percussionist. I played in the orchestra, the pit for school musicals, and in the marching band’s drumline. My first experience working in the theater was in the orchestra pit. I loved Stephen Sondheim musicals. For a percussionist, his shows were the most fun to play. In high school, we did a lot of the staples of musical theater like *Guys and Dolls* and *South Pacific.*

A lot of my extended family play instruments, so that was a big part of holiday celebrations. My grandmother had an organ in her house, and we would sing hymns during the holidays.

What did you do after high school?
I attended Moorpark College near home for three years. I studied music there for about a year. The training there was meant for someone who wanted to be a studio musician, and it quickly became clear that it wasn’t for me. I remembered having such good times playing in pit orchestras in high school, and when I decided not to pursue music, I went to check out the theater program. I took every class they offered.

So, were you performing?
Not really. I took costume design, scenic design, and worked in the scene shop. I wasn’t a very good carpenter, and the instructor running that program suggested that I try lighting. I started running follow spot and hanging and focusing lighting instruments. I really loved that in theatrical lighting, you can keep one foot firmly planted in aesthetics and the other in the nuts and bolts of technical theater. That spoke to my personality. I attended Moorpark for three years and ended up lighting a couple of productions there.

In terms of your personality, I see the artistic side, but you don’t come across as a performer.
I was also working at a movie theater during this time, too. I really enjoyed working there and did a lot of work with Warner Brothers for their promotions. I was also really into photography and was getting into visual expression and painting.

What came after Moorpark and the movie theater?
A few of my teachers there told me I was pretty good at lighting design and suggested that I further my training. I did an online search for good theater schools and I came across University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA). I applied and they reached out to schedule an interview. They asked me to bring a portfolio, which I didn’t have, so I panicked for about a month and took photos of projects I had done and put them into a comically large portfolio. I was the last interview of the day with Norman Coates, who was running the lighting program at that time. We talked and walked around the design and production facilities. When we got back to his office he said, “We’ll see you in the fall!”

What did you study at North Carolina?
Lighting design. There are two tracks at UNCSA: stage electrics and lighting design. In the first two years, everyone takes all the same courses, and after the second year, you split off into your separate tracks. Because I transferred in, I only did three years there and after my first year I chose the design track. They don’t have a graduate program for lighting, so undergraduates are lighting productions their whole time there. You hit the ground running and are thrown into full-on productions, which is great. My first real experience with opera was there. I assisted on a few operas and lighted one before I graduated. The production I designed was *Idomeneo.*

Is this what prompted your love of opera?
Yes, being involved in the operas started to get me hooked. At UNCSA, the operas are performed in the largest venue and have the largest budgets, so I was starting to grasp working on a larger scale and was learning that opera is a different beast. Originally, I was assigned to work on operas because I could read music, so I could follow the score and track spots.

I had been spending my summers at home in Los Angeles doing some gigs and internships at small theater companies there. I made it a point to always do student rush tickets at LA Opera whenever I was home. I fell in love with the scale and aesthetic of opera.

So what happened after school?
I had gotten to know Pam Knourek, one of the costumes professors at UNCSA, who at the time was the head of costumes at Santa Fe Opera. Many professional companies come out to UNCSA for job fairs each year and Pam connected me with Santa Fe staff. I ended up getting into the Santa Fe Apprenticeship program for lighting. It was summer of 2006 and it was their
50th anniversary season. They do a presentation of apprentice scenes at the end of the summer, so I ended up being the lighting supervisor for that project. This was only a few years after I decided I didn’t want to be a musician!

**Was that a daunting thing?**
I really enjoyed it. I was terrified, but it was a good kind of scary. Scary and exciting.

After the summer was over, I headed back to LA and started to pick up jobs running follow spots and doing load ins. I was starting to get noticed and then had a serious setback when I broke my leg while I was roller skating. This was right before I was meant to start a gig with Celebrity Cruises, but I had to pull out of the contract. It was definitely a low moment.

I bet—there is nothing worse when you are a freelancer and need a healthy body to be able to work. So what did you do? I was on bedrest for about 3 months. I then got a call to go back to Santa Fe as a lighting supervisor for the next summer, so all wasn’t lost.

**And after that summer you were recruited to HGO to join our lighting team?**
Yes—and I remember the first time that we talked and coming off the phone not quite believing that a person who was still pretty green was being recruited to such an established company.

**So what were the differences?**
Santa Fe is an amazing energy and there is a huge army of apprentices, so the focus and lighting sessions are very loud and lots of things are going on at once. It’s an organized chaos. When I got to HGO, I was working with a union workforce as a supervisor for the first time and things were much slower and methodical. The electrics team were very seasoned and took their time to do things that were much quicker in Santa Fe. Both companies have extraordinary artists as visiting lighting designers, but at HGO I was able to support their vision in a better way. And working with great designers helped me grow in that area as well.

**Do you prefer to design or make other people’s work possible?**
The great thing about my HGO position is that I get to do both! I am now lighting a show or sometimes two each season, but I am also getting the opportunity to continue learning from other masters in the field. I love having that variety, and each year I get to do great projects both at HGO and in other theaters around the world. I am lucky that I have been working with Philip Alfano now for a long time and we have a shorthand and a very good way of working quickly and efficiently. Video projection is also part of my department’s remit, and as that plays a larger part in the designs of shows now, that has been another truly interesting growth in my skill set and knowledge.

**It has been quite the journey, but we are thrilled to have you here and delighted that we have a designer of such quality on our team. Thank you!**
A 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 engage in programming that illuminates opera’s beauty, emotional power, and the potential to heal. Four mainstage operas—*Saul*, *El Milagro del Recuerdo*, *La favorite*, and *The Magic Flute*—are further explored within the theme of identity.

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS:**

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For information on providing leadership support for *Seeking the Human Spirit*, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
SEEKING THE HUMAN SPIRIT EXPLORES IDENTITY IN 2019–20 SEASON

Houston Grand Opera’s six-year initiative, Seeking the Human Spirit (STHS), continues its third year in the 2019–20 season with the theme of Identity, explored through the lens of culture, spirituality, mental health, and technology. The initiative continues to develop partnerships with new organizations and deepen collaborations with ongoing partners. HGO operas this season reflecting the identity theme are Handel’s Saul, Javier Martínez and Leonard Foglia’s El Milagro del Recuerdo, Donizetti’s La favorite, and Mozart’s The Magic Flute.

» SEPTEMBER

A new adult learning course for ages 55+, Exploring Your Creative Identity, began in September. This eight-week course provided participants with opportunities to discover and cultivate a variety of creative practices while collectively producing an original work of art based on this year’s STHS theme.

» OCTOBER

On October 10, a panel discussion, How Identity Ages, was hosted by the Holocaust Museum Houston. HGOco’s director, Carleen Graham, moderated the panel alongside Dr. Matthias Henze, a professor of the Hebrew Bible and early Judaism who is the founding director of the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice University; Dr. Robert Curt Peterson, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Baylor College of Medicine and staff psychologist at the Menninger Clinic; and Juanita Rasmus, co-pastor of St. John’s United Methodist Church Downtown. Inspired by the title character in HGO’s fall production of Saul, the conversation delved into how aging affects identity, personal agency, and mental health.

» DECEMBER

In December, three events inspired by our new commission, El Milagro del Recuerdo, celebrate multicultural traditions around the holidays. Join us on December 11 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and on December 12 at MECA for two evenings of sacred music from the Americas while celebrating the Fiesta Guadalupana. This important religious feast draws over 35,000 people annually in Houston’s East End over the course of 36 hours. On December 14, we host our second holiday sing-along at Discovery Green, which will feature many holiday favorites.

» JANUARY

On January 16, we partner with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston for The Arts of Intimacy, an evening that explores the intersection of culture, faith, and identity in 14th century Spain, the setting of HGO’s winter production, La favorite. Houston’s poet laureate, Leslie Contreras-Schwartz, will share new works specially commissioned for the evening. Additionally, Dr. Maya Soifer-Irish, associate professor of history at Rice University, will give a presentation about the Iberian Peninsula during this period, and musicians of both Arab and Spanish heritage will perform a selection of songs designed to reflect Spain’s multiculturalism in the late 14th century.

» MARCH & APRIL

Due to the success of last season’s Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Songs on the Water, we will again collaborate to bring this popular offering back to Houston on March 28 and March 29.

We end the season with a dynamic collaboration inspired by a production of The Magic Flute. Partnering in this collaboration are the University of Houston’s Jack J. Valenti School of Communication, the media arts department at Houston Community College, The Art Institute of Houston, and Yates High School. As part of the collaboration, students will submit video shorts that look at how identity is formed through music and technology and how that impacts youth in the 21st century.

» ONGOING

In the private sphere, we continue into our third year of partnerships with two special programs. The first, with Houston Methodist Center for Performing Arts Medicine, involves the residents in the acute psychiatric short-term care unit of the hospital. As part of the program, HGOco teaching artists will work with the hospital’s music therapists to integrate song into recovery and self-care. The second partnership, The Courage to Search, done in partnership with the Women’s Home and the Institute of Spirituality and Health at the Texas Medical Center, is a 14-week spiritual exploration program that supports women in addiction recovery. For the program, HGO facilitates an empathy workshop, lunch time recital, and a Q&A by a mainstage or HGO Studio artist. The participants also get to attend a mainstage opera performance.

We will also continue our work this season with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. Last season, HGOco participated in a Theater District-wide initiative and a partnership with Da Camera on a 14-week residency at the Harris County Youth Village in Seabrook for the I Am My Future program. HGOco teaching artists were also at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center for sixteen, 90-minute workshops that cultivated self-awareness, impulse control, and empathy through music and storytelling.

For information about these and other Seeking the Human Spirit programs, visit HGO.org/STHS.
Coaching Is Integral to the HGO Studio Experience

This fall opera season is a particularly busy time for the HGO Studio artists, as all eleven members are involved in these productions. Eight of the nine singers appear in the cast of Rigoletto, including our three first-year singers, who’ve just started to settle in at HGO: Nicholas Newton (Monterone), Elena Villalón (Page) and William Guanbo Su (Usher). Joining them in the cast are returning singers Dorothy Gal (Countess Ceprano), Lindsay Kate Brown (Giovanna), Richard Trey Smagur (Borsa), Geoffrey Hahn (Marullo), and Daniel Noyola (Count Ceprano). Five singers are studying roles in Saul, including Leia Lensing (David study). Second-year pianist Kyle Naig serves on the music staff for Saul, and Alex Munger joins his fellow first-year artists through coaching Rigoletto.

Of course, with these important roles entrusted to our Studio artists, much preparation is required, and that’s where HGO’s full staff of pianist/coaches comes in. Much of the day-to-day activity of the HGO Studio is dominated by “coachings”—one-on-one sessions in which singers focus on every detail of the score with an expert coach at the piano. The past two months have been a flurry of musical coachings with these important members of HGO’s staff; most Studio singers spend a minimum of five to seven hours per week coaching, sometimes significantly more.

Learning an opera score is no small task. On a basic level, singers must learn and memorize pitches, rhythms, and text (and, in the case of Rigoletto, translate text). Advanced preparation includes the development of linguistic and musical style, which ultimately brings the work of art to life. Our two fall productions are different in so many ways, and many of the singers are working on both operas. Verdi and Handel require different approaches; if a singer performed Handel in the style of Verdi, it might seem inelegant and lack the expressive qualities intended by the composer. Similarly, singing Verdi in a style more suited to Handel might yield too light a touch, insufficient in the powerful vocal qualities intended by the composer. As a result, our pianist/coaches must attend to “coachings” in an inspired and honest way, without “micromanaging” or manipulating their own voice and technique.

Although our Studio singers do not appear in Saul, they’ve learned and prepared the major roles, benefiting from time in the rehearsal room to observe the cast and thoroughly understand the piece. The growth they experience through this process holds great value for their career, and the information gathered will affect their preparation of other Handel roles in the future. The work they have done with coaches to prepare for Rigoletto will inform much of their future work in Italian repertoire, in addition to producing the extraordinary performances you’ll witness from them this season. Keep in mind the hours it takes each singer to get to this level—it will bring you a whole new level of appreciation for what you see and hear on the HGO stage and a better understanding of what happens each day in the HGO Studio.

—Brian Speck, HGO Studio Director
HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2019–20

Lindsay Kate Brown
mezzo-soprano
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover/
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Dorothy Gal
soprano
The Evans Family/Mr. and
Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow

Geoffrey Hahn
baritone
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and
Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Leia Lensing
mezzo-soprano
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/
Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

Alex Munger
pianist/coach
Dr. Saul and Ursula
Balagaru/Mr. Troy Yates Fellow

Kyle Naig
pianist/coach
Ms. Kathleen R. Cross/Stephanie
Larsen/Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Miro-
Quesada/Richard M. Stout Fellow

Nicholas Newton
bass-baritone
Dr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood/
Kathleen Moore and Steven
Homer/Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow

Daniel Noyola
bass
Beth Madison Fellow

Richard Trey Smagur
tenor
Michelle Beale and
Dick Anderson Fellow

William Guanbo Su
bass
Anne and Albert Chao Fellow

Elena Villalón
soprano
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Philip Leh, Acting Coach
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Melissa Noble, Movement
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Christa Gaug, German Instructor

Enrica Vagliani Gray, Italian
Instructor
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Brian Connelly, Piano Instructor
Robert Kearley, Showcase Director
Sponsored by Marcheta and
John Beasley
Margo Garrett, Guest Coach
Kathleen Kelly, Guest Coach
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The HGO Studio receives
generous support from
Mr. Patrick Carfizzi, Brenda
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HGO thanks Magnolia Houston
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Every year, HGOco interacts with over 80,000 individuals through our unique learning programs, which use creativity as a platform to enrich the lives of our community. Many of these experiences involve hands-on learning with HGO-trained teaching artists. The term “teaching artist” may not be familiar to everyone. However, the concept has been a tried and true idea in the education and community programming for arts organizations over the past three decades.

At HGO, we use the definition of teaching artist from one of the pioneers in this field, Eric Booth, an actor, businessman, author, and educator. Booth describes the teaching artist as “a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills, curiosities, and sensibilities of an educator, who can effectively engage a wide range of people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts.” Booth’s definition is a broad concept that is intended to leave room for interpretation. Within these generous guidelines, HGOco has developed an impressive roster of 11 artists chosen carefully and trained to best serve our community: Alyssa Anderson, Stephen Ash, Jorge Belonni, Sandy Campbell, Blas Canedo Gonzalez, Julia Fox, Elizabeth Gautsche, Julie Hoeltzel, Chelsea Lerner, Alejandro Magallón, Geoffrey Peterson, and Chabrelle Williams.

The primary goal of HGOco’s teaching artists is to positively and creatively enhance a participant’s experience with a work of art through an interactive process, bringing the participant closer to the art. Through these artists, HGOco is wielding creativity to lend improvement to the quality of life of our community by helping people embrace obstacles and find fulfillment in the routine practices of their daily lives.

Our highly skilled teaching artists all have operatic backgrounds and actively perform in HGO productions, local theaters, and independent projects throughout Houston and the rest of the nation. For HGOco, they perform some of our most meaningful community and school interactions.

Opera Residencies provide the most in-depth learning of all of HGOco’s learning programs. Using arts integration techniques to bridge the gap between disciplined artistic learning and core curriculum subjects, teaching artists work with students to synthesize a concept or idea before helping them write original songs or create an original opera. Spending six weeks or more in a school, community center, or even juvenile probation centers, teaching artists provide consistent learning and relationship building through the arts. With four of the artists fluent in both Spanish and English, we provide diverse access by offering programs in both languages. This season, teaching artists will be working with Harris County Juvenile Detention Center, Harris County Youth Village, multiple school districts, and multiple refugee services providers.

Beyond residencies, teaching artists provide instruction to adults and children alike in projects like our creative aging programs, summer camps, Storybook Opera program, career day presentations, student performance preparations, Seeking the Human Spirit programs, and Sing! Move! Play! classes.

Opera singers have such focused training in their years of study that they tend to have a steep learning curve when beginning to explore the field of teaching artist work. HGOco hosts training days for the artists on an ongoing basis, where they receive high-quality training from experts in the fields of education and music. This summer, teaching artists met with Karine Parker, executive and program director of Texan-French Alliance for the Arts/Be the Peace—Be the Hope and Dr. Kiana Williams, assistant professor of music and choir director at Texas State University. Parker presented on the topic of social-emotional learning (SEL), an important set of skills that help people understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Dr. Williams shared her research and findings on the topic of successfully teaching urban youth. It is with these practices that HGO will bring our in-depth, arts-integrated learning to the diverse students in Houston this year.

—Alisa Magallón, HGOco Senior Education Manager

HGOco is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HGOco’s many projects, it offers programs for children ranging from Storybook Opera to Opera Camps for students of various ages and interests. For more information, go to HGO.org/hgoco.
Creative Identity the Focus of Recent Adult Learning Course

HGOco recently completed its new eight-week adult learning course, Exploring Your Creative Identity, for ages 55+. This pilot course, part of the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, provided participants opportunities to explore a variety of activities including singing, creative writing, song composition, improvisatory acting, and expressive movement. A final presentation of their original work took place prior to the final dress rehearsal of Saul.

The course, led by HGOco Senior Education Manager Alisa Magallón, also included sessions with Houston performing artists Marcela Descalzi, Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton, and Karen Stokes.

Course creator Alisa Magallón acknowledged the role of this new offering, saying “It’s important to acknowledge the artist that lives inside each and every one of us. While most of us are able to identify art that we respond to positively, it sometimes is much more challenging to acknowledge that we are all capable of making meaningful art. For empty nesters, persons in retirement, or ones who have a flexible schedule, art making while being part of an engaging social group can greatly add to one’s quality of life. This course rounds out an inclusive offering of programs designed to invite all ages to create art and music with Houston Grand Opera.”

—Hadia Mawlawi, HGOco Community Initiatives Manager

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

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

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This season, HGO celebrates four decades of incredible partnership with ConocoPhillips, one of our longest standing corporate supporters. From our far-reaching arts education programs to the cherished tradition of sponsoring HGO’s season-opening production—including Verdi’s Rigoletto—ConocoPhillips has been with HGO every step of the way.

In 2007, ConocoPhillips established the innovative New Initiatives program, which helped the company launch HGOco, our arts education and community collaboration arm. HGOco now serves as a national model for how an arts company serves its community, involving over 100,000 Houstonians in opera each season through a wide range of programs and performances outside of the Wortham. From providing K-12 educational programs that connect arts to math and science, to creating new operas with quintessential community partners such as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and NASA, ConocoPhillips’ support makes it possible for HGO to tell our local community’s story through words and music.

ConocoPhillips is one of the world’s largest energy companies, operating in 17 countries with over 10,800 employees. The company is committed to the well-being of the communities in which they operate, touching lives through charitable giving, employee volunteerism, and civic leadership.

Houston wouldn’t be the international destination for arts and culture it is today without ConocoPhillips’ vision and investment in HGO, The Alley Theatre, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony, Society for the Performing Arts, and Theatre Under the Stars.

Kelly Rose (pictured), ConocoPhillips senior vice president and general counsel, serves on HGO’s Board of Directors. Kelly and her husband, David, a HGO Vanguard Committee member, have been HGO subscribers and supporters since 1995.

“When HGO’s local reach goes beyond offering world-class mainstage operas,” said Kelly Rose. “ConocoPhillips applauds HGO’s efforts as their exceptional educational programs exemplify the importance of art and cultural awareness to our vibrant city.”

We couldn’t have said it any better, and we certainly couldn’t do any of it without ConocoPhillips.

In the magical place where the worlds of blueberry farming and world-class opera intersect, you will find Sid Moorhead—one of the newest members of HGO’s Board of Directors and the owner of Moorhead’s Blueberry Farm in Conroe, Texas.

When did you first get involved with HGO?
My college roommate was an HGO supernumerary when the Wortham first opened. We used to sneak into the Founders Boxes to see rehearsals! I’ve been subscribing ever since.

What does blueberry farming have in common with opera?
In both, I meet a lot of wonderful people. From May to July, visitors from all over Texas and beyond come to the farm to pick their own berries, and I love hearing their stories. It’s the same with opera—HGO introduces you to so many interesting people!

When you first became an HGO Trustee in 2014, you were looking to become more socially involved. How has that worked out?
I now have to decline invitations, because I just can’t do it all! I’ve gotten close to a lot of people through the HGO Patron trips. A lot of us are getting a table together at the dinner celebrating Joyce DiDonato’s In War & Peace concert—I can’t wait for that!

What are some of your favorite HGO memories?
Traveling with fellow HGO Patrons has been incredible. I took a dare and joined this summer’s Vienna trip, even though it was in the middle of blueberry harvest season! Luckily, my nephew took my place at the farm so I could enjoy Vienna—and everything was over the top. I also loved seeing Aida in the ruins of the Arena of Verona on HGO’s 2017 trip—that was the coolest.

What made you decide to join our Board of Directors?
It was quite an honor to be approached about Board service and to become involved with HGO behind the scenes. I’ve been on several committees in the past, but being on the Board has been very enlightening, and I’m more excited than ever to be part of HGO’s future.
WARREN AND RACHEL ELLSWORTH

As Young Trustees and chairs of our 2019 Opening Night Dinner celebration, Warren and Rachel Ellsworth share an incredible passion for the arts—and a touching history with HGO! Warren is the medical director of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Program at Houston Methodist West Hospital, and Rachel is a colon and rectal surgeon at Houston Methodist.

We caught up with Warren, who also serves as a corporate Trustee on behalf of Houston Methodist and a member of HGO’s Studio committee.

How did you discover opera?
My father was an international opera singer. He trained at Juilliard and was one of Carlisle Floyd’s very first picks for the HGO Studio. And Terrylin Neale (HGO Board member) introduced my parents to each other! My mom was a teacher, and Terrylin asked my dad to sing for mom’s class. The rest is history.

So, you grew up in the business?
Yes—we traveled wherever my father’s career took us. Unfortunately, he passed away at an early age, shortly after his debut as Parsifal at La Scala. I was fourteen when we lost him, so opera offers a touchstone to my past and a way to connect with my father. That’s why it’s such an honor to serve on the HGO Studio committee and to support young singers in the program that means so much to my family.

Opera is in your blood! Did you ever think of becoming a singer?
I studied opera, classical voice, and orchestral conducting in college. But I didn’t have my father’s one-in-a-million voice. So, I went to medical school and found that plastic surgery was a great marriage between the artistic and the scientific. But I still sing around the house and in the shower.

How is opera a part of your family now?
For years I was so busy with medical school and work that I didn’t have a lot of time for the arts. But after I started my own practice, and introduced Rachel to HGO, opera became part of our family culture. We can’t wait for our kids (Isabel, three, and Warren V, nine months) to be old enough to come to HGO with us!
Opera Ball 2019, chaired by Marcia and Alfredo Vilas, and the ENCORE After Party, chaired by Lady Stephanie Kimbrell and Joshua Allison, welcomed over 550 guests for a grand fiesta inspired by Mexico’s vibrant culture. Guests arrived onto a pink carpet through a tower of marigolds by The Events Company. Once inside, a migration of monarch butterflies and a towering butterfly diva (created by Mandarin Design Lab) summoned guests to the cocktail reception featuring Tequila Ley .925 cocktails. A 20-foot-tall sombrero wall gave a nod to the inspired entertainment to come and played backdrop to selfies and the silent auction. The fiesta continued with a flavorful feast from A Fare Extraordinaire. The sounds of Mexico were center stage throughout the evening and included a performance of “Bésame Mucho” by soprano Ailyn Pérez and music by two-time Grammy Award-winning band Mariachi Los Camperos, last seen in HGO’s stirring mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. Los Camperos were joined onstage by local Latin music star Vanessa Alonzo, who appears this December in HGO’s holiday opera, *El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering*. Latin ensemble Las Catrinas, the Richard Brown Orchestra, and salsa sensation Tumbaka kept the dance floor full until the last paloma was served. One of the evening’s highlights was the Mariachi Los Camperos final performance of the night’s theme, “Cielito Lindo,” which brought gala chair Alfredo Vilas to the microphone and the crowd to their feet in a spirited sing-along followed by a confetti streamer explosion.

Marcia and Alfredo Vilas, Opera Ball Chairmen

Houston Grand Opera, along with Marcia and Alfredo Vilas, thanks everyone who supported Opera Ball 2019.
Photos by Jenny Antill, Priscilla Dickson, and Wilson Parish

Mariachi Los Camperos

Tom Ajamie’s guests toast to the fiesta

Ishwaria Subbiah and Emily Bivona

Perryn Leech with Sara and Gabriel Loperena

Myrtle Jones and Shawntell McWilliams

Alejandra and Hector Torres

Joshua Allison and Lady Stephanie Kimbrell

Ishwaria Subbiah

Perryn Leech

Tom Ajamie’s guests toast to the fiesta

Dian and Harlan Stai

Margaret Alkek Williams and Patrick Summers

Kevin Black, Hallie Vanderhider, Fady Armanious, Christina Stith, Marguerite Swartz, Whitney and Jim Crane

HCO.org 73
Marcia Vilas with auction chair Monica Fulton
Louis Borrego and Tami Hiraoka
Anne and Albert Chao
Alfredo Vilas sings with Vanessa Alonzo and Mariachi Los Camperos
Monarch Diva
Christopher and Kendall Hanno with Kirby and David Lodholz
Zane and Brady Carruth
Robert and Kellie Collier
Becca Cason Thrash, Ceron, Diane Lokey Farb
Kristina and Paul Somerville

Photos by Jenny Antill, Priscilla Dickson, and Wilson Parish
MUCHAS GRACIAS

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 OPERA BALL FRIENDS!

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Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Vilas,
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My Urban Invites
HGO's ONYP group celebrated the end of summer with a unique happy hour event saluting opera and our four-legged friends. On Tuesday, September 10, current and prospective ONYP subscribers gathered at Bungalow Heights to mix and mingle and look ahead to HGO’s exciting 2019–20 season. In partnership with the Houston SPCA, the happy hour offered our first joint initiative—Pupperas! Named after opera’s most memorable characters and dressed in “bone-a-fido” opera costumes, all pups and kitties were available for adoption. Guests were also invited to bring their own furry friends to the dog and cat-friendly venue. As guests sipped on refreshing cocktails, they were serenaded by singer Cecilia Duarte and pianist Blair Salter with a tail-wagging tune from HGO’s upcoming mariachi world premiere, El Milagro del Recuerdo. There may have been a few divas and divos in the mixed canine and feline crowd, but they all came together to make purrfect music for a worthy cause.
Young Patrons Circle members gathered in the elegant Heights home of Young Trustees Katherine Thomasson and Michael Talbot to kick off the 2019–20 season with pizzazz. HGO Studio Music Director Michael Heaston gave a thrilling sneak preview of the season while guests enjoyed wine, light bites, and lively conversation. This exclusive event provides an intimate, musical setting for Young Patrons to reconnect after the summer and celebrate the upcoming season.
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. Additionally, Judy is the chair of the HGOco Committee and Dick serves as vice chair of the HGO Finance Committee. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they also support Concert of Arias and HGO’s mainstage productions.

THE ANCHORAGE FOUNDATION
Many Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds experience opera for the first time during HGO’s free public performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, an annual tradition made possible by the longstanding generosity of The Anchorage Foundation. The Foundation has been improving the quality of life in Houston for four decades, and made a generous contribution to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery fund. Marc Melcher is president of The Anchorage Foundation, and his family has been involved with HGO for over 25 years.

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.

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 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.

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.
The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and Margarett 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. The Brown Foundation was among the lead contributors to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

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. In 2016, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, The World’s First Tooth Fairy...Ever.

THE IMPRESARIOS CIRCLE
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
ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO
Anne and Albert have been subscribers and supporters of HGO for the past two decades. While serving as president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation, Albert finds time for numerous cultural causes. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and was the co-chair of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera. Over the years, the Chaos have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco's Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

LOUISE CHAPMAN
Louise Chapman of Corpus Christi, Texas, a longtime supporter of HGO, recently joined the HGO Board of Directors. Louise’s late husband, John O. Chapman, was a south Texas agricultural businessman and philanthropist. In addition to HGO, the Chapmans have supported numerous organizations in health, education, and the arts, including Texas A & M University, the Corpus Christi Symphony, and the Art Museum of South Texas. Louise and HGO Trustee Connie Dyer have known each other since they were college roommates at The University of Texas.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 40 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including the 2019–20 season-opening production, Verdi’s Rigoletto. 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. Kelly Rose, general counsel and SVP, serves on the HGO Board of Directors. Janet Langford Carrig, chair of the HGO Board of Directors, is a recent retiree from ConocoPhillips and represented the company within the opera family for many years.

JIM AND MOLLY CROWNover
Jim Crownover was the chairman of the HGO Board of Directors 2016–18. 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.

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 Family and 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 Family and Holiday Opera Series, and made a leadership contribution to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery fund.

THE ELKINS FOUNDATION
Established by Margaret Weiss Elkins and James A. Elkins Jr. in 1956, The Elkins Foundation enriches our community by supporting a wide variety of educational, healthcare, cultural, community, and religious organizations. We are honored that Jenny Elkins and her family have been part of the HGO family for more than 15 years.

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 last season’s Elektra. Additionally, Liz and Jack chaired the 2018 Opera Ball on April 14, 2018.
Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the Endowment contains over 50 named funds, both unrestricted and restricted, and annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Thomas Rushing, Senior Chairman Janet Langford Carrig, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors.

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 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $475 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 2.4 million attendees in 2019.

For over ten years, Houston Grand Opera has partnered with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO. Houston Methodist’s Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) is the only center of its kind in the country, comprising a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed upon performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO’s special events and mainstage productions, is a major community partner on Seeking the Human Spirit, and is the presenter of HGO’s young professional programs. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Warren Ellsworth and Dr. Apurva Thekdi serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

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.

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 Impresarios Circle. 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 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 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.

This season marks Beth’s 23rd 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 HGO Studio Committee, 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.

**THE ROBERT AND JANICE MCNAIR FOUNDATION**

Janice and the late Bob McNair, longtime HGO subscribers, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob was senior chairman of McNair Interests, 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 Family and Holiday Opera Series. Bob was 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 in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.

**THE MELLON FOUNDATION**

Established in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the humanities, arts, higher education, and cultural heritage. The driving force behind so many of HGO’s new commissions, The Mellon Foundation’s longstanding support of HGO helps us tell relevant new stories and add to the operatic repertoire by developing new works, like Javier Martínez and Leonard Foglia’s *El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering*.

**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 over 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.

**SID MOORHEAD**

Sid Moorhead is the owner of Moorhead’s Blueberry Farm in Conroe, Texas, a family business that started as his father’s hobby over 40 years ago. After working for several years as a computer analyst, Sid left the corporate world to run the farm. He’s been an opera lover since he was in college, and he joined the Opera as an HGO Trustee in 2014. Now a member of the HGO Board of Directors, Sid enjoys traveling to experience opera around the world on our HGO Patron trips. We’re thrilled to have Sid as a valued member of our HGO family.

**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.

**NOVUM ENERGY**

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

**THE POWELL FOUNDATION**

Founded in 1967 by Houston-based attorney Ben H. Powell and his wife, Kitty King Powell, The Powell Foundation improves the lives of residents of Harris, Travis, and Walker counties through charitable work in the fields of education, conservation,
human services, and the arts. In addition to its longstanding support of HGOco’s impactful student programs, The Powell Foundation was among the lead contributors to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

**SCHLUMBERGER**

Schlumberger is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly 20 years. Schlumberger’s leadership gift was integral to launching HGO’s ongoing affordability program, the NEXUS Initiative, in 2007—since then, NEXUS has made great opera accessible to more than 275,000 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.

**SHELL**

Shell is a leader in the Houston arts community, supporting HGO for over 40 years. Shell’s leadership support makes opera more accessible to everyone through the NEXUS Initiative for Affordability and inspires young minds with STEM-aligned arts education opportunities like our annual Opera Camps. Shell was also a major supporter of HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery. HGO is honored to have De la Rey Venter, executive vice president of integrated gas ventures, represent Shell on our board of directors, as well as HGO Trustee Christos Angelides, external relations general manager of integrated gas ventures.

**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 Mansefeldt, their renowned Fredericksburg ranch. HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.

**TENENBAUM JEWELERS**

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

**JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER**

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

**WINSON & ELKINS LLP**

HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins LLP 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 *Aida*. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Chris Bacon 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, and she generously chaired the 2018 Hurricane Harvey benefit Concert *HGO and Plácido: Coming Home!*
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. The Wortham Foundation’s support of HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery helped to bring the company back home, and we are deeply grateful.

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 as vice-chair of HGO’s 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 Circle support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the Opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes Patrons. For information on joining the Patrons Circle, please call David Krohn at 713-980-8685.
Houston Grand Opera appreciates all individuals who contribute to the company’s success. Support in any amount is received most gratefully. Our donors share a dedication to supporting the arts in our community, and the generosity of these individuals makes it possible for HGO to sustain world-class opera in the Houston area. For information on becoming a Houston Grand Opera donor, please call Kelly Nicholls at 713-980-8688.

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OCTOBER 18-NOVEMBER 1
Performances of Verdi’s Rigoletto. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the October 18 performance only.

OCTOBER 18

OCTOBER 20
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Rigoletto immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

OCTOBER 25-NOVEMBER 8
Performances of Handel’s Saul. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the October 25 performance only.

OCTOBER 27
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Saul immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

OCTOBER 30
High School Night: HGOco hosts high school students at a full-length performance of Verdi’s Rigoletto. School groups only. Brown Theater, 7 p.m. Visit HGO.org/StudentPerformances to reserve.

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 6
Joyce DiDonato stars in In War & Peace—Harmony Through Music. Concert begins at 7 p.m. in the Cullen Theater. Dinner follows at 9 p.m. on the Brown Theater stage. Sara Morgan, chair. For more info, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 6 & 8
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. 7:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 8

DECEMBER 9-11
Student Matinees: HGOco hosts groups of students in grades 4-8 and their chaperones at performances of Javier Martinez and Leonard Foglia’s El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering. School groups only: reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

DECEMBER 11-12
Fiesta Guadalupana: Two evenings of sacred music from the Americas to celebrate the Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day. December 11 at 9 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. December 12 at 6 p.m. at MECA. Free and open to the public. HGO.org/STHS.

DECEMBER 14
Carols on the Green: Join HGO at Discovery Green for a holiday sing-along at 7 p.m.
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You can purchase tickets and make exchanges in person at the HGO Box Office, located in the Wortham Theater Center at 550 Prairie. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If there is a performance on Saturday or Sunday, the Box Office will be open from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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EL MILAGRO DEL RECUERDO
THE MIRACLE OF REMEMBERING

DEC. 5–22 | Sung in Spanish with projected English translation

Holiday Traditions, Family, and Mariachi

*El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering*, a world premiere by Javier Martínez and Leonard Foglia, comes to the Cullen Theater this holiday season. A prequel to the mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, the opera brings audiences back to where it all began—Michoacán, Mexico. Set during Christmas, the opera lovingly explores the themes of traditions and familial bonds while its characters deal with life-changing decisions and dream of something more.

*El Milagro del Recuerdo* is the second mariachi opera to be fully commissioned by Houston Grand Opera and only the third mariachi opera ever to be written. The first two, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (HGO) and *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina* (co-created with the Lyric Opera of Chicago), were both composed by José “Pepe” Martínez, Javier’s father, with libretti also by Leonard Foglia.

*El Milagro* revisits four characters from *Cruzar*: Laurentino, his wife, Renata, and his married friends, Chucho and Lupita. In *Cruzar*, Chucho convinces Laurentino to join the United States’ bracero program, which provided a legal way for Mexicans to find temporary work in the U.S. Renata’s subsequent isolation from being so long apart from her husband leads her to venture across the desert to join Laurentino in the U.S., with tragic results. *El Milagro* imagines the last Christmas Laurentino and Renata spent together before her fateful journey.

Cecelia Duarte and Vanessa Alonzo sing the roles of Renata and Lupita, the characters they created in the world premiere of *Cruzar*, and Miguel de Aranda appears as Chucho, the character he performed in HGO’s 2018 production of the earlier opera. The opera will be conducted by HGO Studio alumnus David Hanlon, who also served as music director in the world premieres of the first two mariachi operas.

To purchase tickets, call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-6737 or visit HGO.org.
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**HOUSTON SYMPHONY**

The Houston Symphony provides admission to concerts for elementary and middle school students, teacher training and supplemental classroom materials. These programs serve more than 50,000 students from 22 Houston-area school districts.

**AFA**

The AFA (formerly the American Festival for the Arts) Year-Round Programming and Summer Music Conservatory partners with schools to offer music education programs for youth in the Houston area. The Scholarship Enrichment Fund provides assistance and transportation support to applicants in all AFA programs.

**BARBARA BUSH HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION**

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.
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