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Welcome, and thank you for coming to celebrate with us as we begin our 60th Anniversary Season.

We couldn’t begin on a more exciting note.

Dramatic tenor Simon O’Neill, this year’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist, appears with us twice this season in iconic roles. First, he takes the title role in our season-opening production of Verdi’s Otello, and then he returns in the spring in one of his signature roles: Siegmund in Die Walküre. Simon was mentored in the role of the Moor of Venice by one of the world’s definitive Otellos—Plácido Domingo, who sang it at HGO during the 1988–89 season. We can’t wait to experience this searing and beautiful opera again with Simon and the rest of a top-notch cast that includes soprano Ailyn Pérez and baritone Marco Vratogna in their HGO debuts. We also welcome back Otello director John Cox, who commands his craft with extraordinary intelligence and inventiveness.

Mozart’s Così fan tutte could almost be described as two operas in one—on the one hand an almost bawdy comedy and on the other a more serious look at human relationships and the nature of love. It is sophisticated comedy rather than farce, and the loose ends are not neatly tied up for us by the end of the opera. Instead, Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, leave us at the final curtain with some unanswered questions, just as in life. It’s this humanity that makes the opera all the more engaging. Così fan tutte is in the hands of the distinguished Mozartean director Harry Silverstein and a marvelous ensemble cast. We welcome them all.

As we enter the final months of our capital campaign, Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera, we want to thank all of our loyal supporters for bringing us within reach of our $165 million goal. We are almost there! To help us make it to our goal by the December 31 deadline, we have set aside Tuesday, December 2, as Giving Tuesday. (Details about Giving Tuesday may be found on pp. 28–29.) There is no better time to consider making a gift to HGO that will ensure the quality of our work for future generations.

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

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In this adaptation of Shakespeare’s famed play, the Moorish general Otello is cruelly manipulated by his ensign, Iago, who convinces him that his wife, Desdemona, has been unfaithful. Although she is innocent, Otello is driven to jealous rage with fatal consequences.

Internationally acclaimed tenor and HGO favorite Simon O’Neill sings the highly demanding title role after his first staged performances of Otello last summer in Sydney. Soprano Ailyn Pérez, a rising superstar and the 2012 Richard Tucker Award winner, sings Desdemona, and baritone Marco Vratogna makes his exciting HGO debut as Iago. HGO Music and Artistic Director Patrick Summers conducts.

Since 1978, ConocoPhillips has strengthened the arts in Houston by providing lead support for HGO’s student and community arts programs as well as stunning main-stage productions like the one you are about to experience. Thank you for attending this performance of Otello and we look forward to joining you for an unforgettable landmark season at HGO.

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Dear Opera Patron:

Welcome to Houston Grand Opera for tonight’s performance of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Fayez Sarofim & Co. is proud to support HGO once again in its 60th Anniversary Season, a diverse and exciting lineup showcasing the finest artists from around the world. Our firm has supported HGO for nearly forty years, most recently through the Fayez Sarofim & Co. Friday Night Subscription Series.

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We are thrilled to partner with HGO, one of the nation’s leading performing arts companies, right here in Houston. Thank you for joining us for this performance. We hope you enjoy *Così fan tutte*!

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Claude Monet, *The Ice Floes (Les Glaçons)* (detail), 1880, oil on canvas, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont.

*MFA The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*
When HGO commissioned the world’s first mariachi opera in 2010, no one knew how it would be received. But *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon* was a hit, both in Houston and in its 2011 tour to Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France. Four years and several successful *Cruzar* tours later, a new mariachi opera from the creators of *Cruzar* is coming to Houston.

*El Pasado Nunca Se Termina/The Past Is Never Finished*, an opera by José “Pepe” Martínez and Leonard Foglia featuring the internationally renowned Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, will be performed May 13, 16, and 17, 2015, in the Wortham Theater Center after it makes its March 2015 world premiere at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

*El Pasado Nunca Se Termina* is not a sequel to *Cruzar*. Set on a Mexican hacienda in 1910, just prior to the Mexican Revolution, the story traces how the country’s cultural conflicts and nationalistic struggles shape one family across generations. It will be sung in Spanish and English with projected translations.

Says HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, “Mariachi songs, like Italian opera, seem to well up from long national traditions of storytelling and family, and both traditions connect directly to the heart.” Adds HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech, “HGO is very proud to have commissioned the first mariachi opera, and we are delighted that *Cruzar*’s widespread appeal has led to the commissioning of *El Pasado.*”

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*El Pasado Nunca Se Termina is not part of HGO’s subscription season. Tickets may be purchased at HGO.org.*
Seth Allyn Morris, principal flutist, won first prize in the Young Artist competition at the National Flute Association’s annual conference in August, held this year in Chicago. The competition is for outstanding flutists up to thirty years old. Seth won a cash award and will perform a full recital at next year’s conference in Washington, D.C.

Our new principal clarinetist, Sean Krissman, won a spot as a Global Fellow at Music Academy of the West this past summer. He was one of ten instrumentalists chosen to inaugurate a new program, which allows the musicians to study and perform with the New York Philharmonic under a partnership between the orchestra and the Music Academy of the West.

HGO Studio alumna Rachel Willis-Sørensen, who sings Fiordiligi in our Così fan tutte this fall, won first prize in Plácido Domingo’s prestigious Operalia competition in Los Angeles August 30. And that’s not all: she was also awarded the Birgit Nilsson Prize, awarded for Wagner/Strauss repertoire (Rachel sang “Dich, teure Halle” from Tannhäuser) as well as the Pepita Embil Domingo Zarzuela Prize. Congratulations, Rachel!
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For information on providing leadership support for the Ring, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 2, 2014. No, it isn’t Black Friday or Cyber Monday—even better. December 2 marks “Giving Tuesday” and HGO is launching its first-ever Day of Giving. Inspired by the grateful spirit of the holiday season and the recent success of online crowdfunding campaigns, HGO is asking everyone in Houston (and beyond) to join together on December 2 to see how much love our city can show for great opera in 24 hours.

Giving Tuesday campaigns have been very successful at universities and social service nonprofits as a way of promoting an organization’s mission to a wide audience, engaging new donors, and allowing current supporters to do a little something extra for the nonprofits that mean the most to them. For HGO, our Day of Giving has special significance, as it marks the final push for Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera.

The largest performing arts fundraising effort in Houston’s history, Inspiring Performance closes on December 31, 2014, less than a month after HGO’s Day of Giving. After seven years of breaking fundraising records, HGO is on the cusp of surpassing our ambitious campaign goal of raising $165 million by December 31. We hope that the Day of Giving will inspire people who believe in the power of great music to help push HGO over the finish line.

BY KELLY FINN
HGO DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
Giving Tuesday campaigns inspire gifts of all sizes. HGO has approached several major donors to help provide matching funds to encourage individual donors to act. We understand that many of our loyal annual donors traditionally make their gift at a certain time of the year. We are asking our regular donors for a special contribution in addition to one’s annual contribution. Whether it is $50 or $5,000, extra holiday generosity will go a long way and help HGO make history through *Inspiring Performance*.

Additionally, HGO hopes to be one of the first national performing arts organizations to establish a Giving Tuesday campaign. Until now, giving days have been most popular with health, social service, and higher education nonprofits, organizations that already have large bases of annual donors. Arts organizations tend to have relatively smaller numbers of donors, which is why HGO hopes our Day of Giving will help us attract new donors and grow our footprint.

HGO has enlisted special “brand ambassadors,” some of whom you might recognize, to help spread excitement about our Day of Giving in creative ways. From midnight to midnight, we have a variety of fun surprises planned, all meant to encourage gifts from as many people as possible.

Since its quiet launch on August 1, 2007, HGO has taken *Inspiring Performance* one thrilling day at a time. We have been grateful for each and every one of the 2,708 days of the campaign’s duration, from September 17, 2012, when the campaign entered its exhilarating public phase during a packed free concert at the Wortham, to December 10, 2013, when we reached the 6,000 donor mark, to October 24, 2014, the opening night of HGO’s historic sixtieth anniversary season.

*Inspiring Performance* has enabled HGO to realize extraordinary artistic milestones such as producing the company’s first *Ring* cycle, which continues in spring 2015 with the spellbinding *Die Walküre*, and launching HGO’s Holiday Opera Series in the Cullen Theater, which begins in December 2014 with the world premiere of Iain Bell and Simon Callow’s *A Christmas Carol*.

HGOco continues to involve art in the lives of Houstonians of all ages in new and innovative ways. From the newest *Song of Houston* opera highlighting Houston’s space exploration community (premiering in fall 2015) to *The Pastry Prince*, a new *Opera to Go!* production for grades
2–8 celebrating the birth of opera in Italy, HGOco leads the way in making opera relevant to our community.

The HGO Studio and Young Artists Vocal Academy continue to swell in talent and produce the next generation of great opera singers. HGO’s NEXUS Initiative has now allowed over 175,000 Houstonians to experience the magic of opera for free or at reduced ticket prices. And the HGO Endowment has experienced record growth, with $28 million pledged in deferred legacy gifts and nearly $16 million raised in direct Endowment giving.

Though each one of the 2,708 days of the campaign has been vitally important to our company, we’re hoping December 2 will stand out as a day to remember. Stay tuned at HGO.org/givingtuesday for more updates as we near this exciting day!

Based on Mr. Gaille’s course at Rice University’s Graduate School of Business, “the book on how energy companies grow by acquiring international concessions.”

- BISNOW Magazine
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HGO’s Carmen, 2014. Photo by Lynn Lane.

$164 million as of 10-1-14
By the late 1880s, the preeminence of Italian opera was waning. Its symbolic patron saint, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), was retired—his early-1870s Aida and Requiem being two fittingly grand endings to a great career—and opera was increasingly dominated by the French Jules Massenet and the revolutionary Saxon Richard Wagner.

Wagner’s theatrical ideal was found in Eddaic, Norse, and Germanic epic literature, combined with the formal mythologies of the Ancient Greek playwrights Euripides and Aeschylus. But Verdi’s lifelong muse was unquestionably William Shakespeare (1564–1616), whose many plays Verdi read throughout his life in various Italian translations. Verdi’s publisher, Giulio Ricordi, knew that to lure him out of retirement, he would have to find both the right librettist and the right Shakespearean idea.

With the Wagnerian revolution reaching its peak when the Bayreuth Festival opened in 1876, Verdi was considered by most of the young intelligentsia to be old fashioned, which left the composer uncharacteristically embittered at the idea that he couldn’t keep up with trends. Concurrently the public speculated about projects that might lure Verdi out of his self-imposed exile. Otello would have seemed like a strange choice, given the popularity throughout the nineteenth century of Gioacchino Rossini’s 1816 Otello—a beautiful and satisfying opera, if one is willing to forego anything resembling Shakespeare’s play. In Rossini’s version, Otello, Iago, and Rodrigo are all tenors, and there are three other smaller, though difficult, tenor roles besides, making it a peculiarly high-maintenance opera to rehearse and perform. Rossini’s opera, too, had a famous “willow song” and an iconic and searing final death scene, though poor Rossini was forced by one theater to write a happy ending in which Otello forgives Desdemona and they embrace to joyous music.

A FATEFUL PARTNERSHIP

Eventually, the resourceful Ricordi found the right man to help Italy’s preeminent national figure write a new opera. In Arrigo Boito, at last, Verdi found a brilliant literary collaborator worthy of his own theatrical gifts. Boito (1842–1918)
Angels
Verdi’s Otello
was a renaissance man, younger than Verdi, with a rich palette of talents that appealed to Verdi, as Boito was a poet, novelist, librettist, and already an accomplished composer himself. His 1868 Mefistofele enjoyed huge success with the public, as it occasionally does still. But their work together was marked with some bumps, one of which nearly derailed Otello completely. Boito inadvertently announced his collaboration with Verdi without the composer’s permission, a fact made worse by a reporter misstating that Boito thought he should write the score as well. Fortunately for operatic history, the misunderstanding was cleared up, their relationship repaired, and together they wrote two of the greatest operas in the repertoire, both based on Shakespeare: Otello and Falstaff.

How does one condense a long and dense play like Otello? Shakespeare’s dazzling language plays the same dramatic role on the spoken stage that music must play in an opera, and the strength of his verbal music is so great that actual music can easily suffer under its weight. Playgoing in Shakespeare’s day was nearly always in the late afternoon, in natural light, so the language had to set the scene, weather, and time of day, leaving the rest to the playgoer’s imagination. To translate a play to the operatic stage, most of the words must naturally be cut—and in the void left by their absence, music must assume the dramaturgical role. Boito removed 90 percent of Shakespeare’s text, most notably removing entirely the first act, set in Venice, leaving the drama to be played out on the geographically vulnerable island of Cyprus.

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC: ACT I
Verdi’s Otello has no prelude or overture, instead it detonates with a thunderous chord, (for those who enjoy musical analysis, the chord is a rarity for Verdi, a dominant-11th built over a low C natural), that plunges the action headlong into a raging storm, foreshadowing the emotional tempest to follow. General Otello is shortly to arrive as the island’s new governor, but is engaged in an offshore battle with the Turks. A threeneedle drone, played on an organ, is heard through the entirety of the first scene, for hundreds of measures, a highly unusual effect that creates a subtle tension.

The tremendous musical energy of the opening scene leads us quickly to the entrance of the title character, one of the most thrilling in opera, which manages in a few sentences to establish Otello’s character, and the religious world in which the drama will play out:

Esultate!
L’orgoglio musulmano sepolto è in mar, nostra e del cielo è gloria!
Dopo l’armi lo vinse l’uragano.

(Rejoice! Muslim pride is buried in the sea, and our glory is from heaven! After our weapons, the hurricane vanquished it.)

ACT II
The opera’s second act is dominated by various ensembles that follow Boito’s largest contribution to Otello: the villainous Iago’s Credo. Credo is a Latin word meaning “I believe,” and instantly
Better AnGels brings to mind the Nicene Creed, a Christian liturgical text adopted in A.D. 325 and still in wide use, which begins “I believe in one God.” Otello’s libretto, like Shakespeare’s play, is filled with Christian imagery: words like “angel,” “devil,” “heaven,” and “God” are dotted through the text, and the cynical Credo reminds us that Iago is a villain who deeply believes that virtue is weakness and an afterlife pure nonsense. Verdi sets Iago’s Credo with fortissimo octaves and great cynical orchestral laughter. In the early gestation of Otello’s composition, Verdi called the project Iago, as the prevailing style of the time was to rename famous titles when they were translated into a different medium, something quite foreign to us today in which name recognition is everything.

Act II of Otello also contains two extraordinary ensembles: the only quartet in the work, and one in which nearly an entire act of Shakespeare is condensed and a huge amount of action performed simultaneously, something clearly impossible in the spoken theater. The act closes with the title character having fully accepted Iago’s poisonous lies. Consumed with jealousy, Otello joins with Iago in a duet unmatched for its electrifying power; the orchestra blazes with dangerous rage.

ACT III
In this score already packed with thrilling music, Act III of Otello includes opera’s last grandly scaled concertato, a frozen moment in which there is no action, allowing each character to simultaneously express his or her feelings in interweaving musical lines. As an example from an opera seen more

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Desdemona grows alarmed as Otello becomes increasingly angry. Otello, Los Angeles Opera, 2008.
frequently at HGO, La traviata contains a famous concertato in the scene at Flora's party, as the guests express their feelings about Alfredo's humiliating treatment of Violetta. Otello's concertato, the greatest and most extended in Verdi, is similar in structure to that of La traviata, focused as it is on the anguished public accusation of an innocent woman by her lover. It has no conclusion—it is cut off by the title character, dismissing everyone as he curses the doomed but innocent Desdemona.

ACT IV
The most sublime moments of this opera are in its fourth and final act, set in Desdemona's bedroom at night. For the first time in the opera, there are no stringed instruments for an extended period; instead, gentle low-lying woodwinds converse with a plaintive solo English horn. Desdemona, aware that she is approaching her final violent hours, sings the Willow Song, a ballad of rejection set to music of tender sadness. In ancient literature, willow trees were symbolic of the scorned and heartbroken woman, so Shakespeare's audiences would have recognized the reference and understood the tragedy it foretells. After Desdemona bids a heart-wrenching farewell to her servant Emilia, Iago's wife, she is left alone to pray the Ave Maria, perhaps the most ravishing few moments Verdi ever penned, set for strings only, without contrabasses, which give the prayer an ethereal and transparent quality. Desdemona repeats one sentence of the prayer twice—“at the hour of death”—and the violins and violas quietly climb to the top of their registers, as if carrying her words higher. As the translucent and peaceful chords fade away, we hear a single, quiet E-natural from the contrabasses, the lowest it can play: Otello has entered his wife's bedroom to
take her innocent life. It is menacing and harrowing no matter how many times one hears it.

Verdi’s *Otello* is the operatic art at its most consummate and moving. It is a relative rarity on stages now, mostly because of the vocal and dramatic demands of the title character. But rarity makes us appreciate the extraordinary combination of the gifted men who created it, it being an utterly unique synthesis of Verdi with his artistic soul mate, William Shakespeare. No other opera based on the Bard offers so truthful a translation of a play in music drama, prompting this memorably truthful statement from George Bernard Shaw: “Instead of *Otello* being an Italian opera written in the style of Shakespeare, *Othello* is a play written by Shakespeare in the style of an Italian opera.”

*Otello* is opera at its greatest. 

In President Abraham Lincoln’s first inaugural address, on March 4, 1861, he closed with a phrase that has become an indelible part of American historical lore: “The mystic chords of memory…will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.” That Lincoln was an avid reader of Shakespeare is well documented, but it is rare for so direct a reference to show up in one of his speeches. “Better angels” is from the final moments of Shakespeare’s *Othello*: Gratiano, mourning the death of Desdemona, expresses gratitude that her father had not lived to see the tragedy: “Did he live now this sight would make him do a desperate turn, Yea, curse his better angel from his side.” Lincoln, in one of history’s tragic ironies, would later be murdered by a renowned Shakespearean actor-turned-radical.

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Così fan tutte: PUTTING LOVE TO THE TEST

BY CARL CUNNINGHAM

Così fan tutte is Mozart’s gentlest, most refined opera, certainly among his comedies. It was composed during the fall and winter holiday season of 1789–90, the moment when Mozart’s artistic talent had reached its zenith. But it was also the moment just after his material fortunes had peaked and he was falling into debt. And, unhappily, it also coincided with the depletion, due to military conflicts with the Turks, of Austrian imperial treasuries that supported the arts.

The premiere took place January 26, 1790, in Vienna’s Burgtheater, but Emperor Joseph II, who had commissioned it, died after the fifth performance. Theaters were closed for public mourning and there were no further performances until the following summer. Adding to the list of collateral misfortunes, Mozart himself died the following year. Because the nineteenth-century public held less tolerant views toward the opera’s frivolous treatment of infidelity, there were many changes in the storyline and even to the title, which is difficult to translate accurately but is often rendered as “All women are like that” or “Thus do all women.”

Unlike Mozart’s other two collaborations with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, The Marriage of Figaro and Don Giovanni, the plot of Così fan tutte is not derived from pre-existing source material. It has been alleged that the Emperor himself proposed the scenario, based on a story he had heard about two young, real-life Viennese fellows who wanted to test their girlfriends’ fidelity through a game of partner-swapping. However, that plot situation had been woven through operas and other comic entertainments for centuries, including a libretto Giovanni Battista Casti had provided for a comic opera by Mozart’s rival Antonio Salieri titled La grotta di Trofonio (Trofonio’s cave). The premiere of Salieri’s opera took place just five years ahead of Così fan tutte in the same Viennese theater where Mozart’s version of the story was staged.

In shaping his libretto, Da Ponte drew upon many stock characters from eighteenth-century comedy, including Don Alfonso, the cynical old man who sets out to shatter Ferrando and Guglielmo’s trust in their fiancées’ fidelity, and Despina, the streetwise chambermaid who places a higher value on Alfonso’s gold coin than loyalty to her smitten mistresses, Fiordiligi and Dorabella. The disguises—soldiers turned into “Albanians” and Despina masquerading as “Doctor Mesmer” with a magnet to remove fake poisons and reverse feigned death-throes—are also taken from the grab-bag of Italian commedia dell’arte.

Nevertheless, farcical elements were not allowed to rule the course of the plot as it unfolded in the hands of Da Ponte and Mozart. Alfonso is not to be compared with the buffoonish old men of other eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century operas, such as Uberto in Pergolesi’s La serva padrona, Bartolo in Rossini’s The Barber of Seville, or the title character in Donizetti’s Don Pasquale. Alfonso is an intelligent, adroit skeptic who proves his point about lovers’ inconstancy. Thus, Così fan tutte has become more probing than the typical comedy, dealing with serious affairs of the heart at that very moment when young people are about to pledge their lifelong loyalty to one another.

“Te lo credo, gioia bella, Ma la prova io far non vo’.”

I believe you, my fair one, But I won’t put it to the test.

—Ferrando and Guglielmo in Così fan tutte
It is also a beautifully structured piece, balanced and shaped as carefully as an exquisitely faceted diamond. The plot adheres to the three Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action, involving a single plot that unfolds in one location over a twenty-four-hour period. These ancient classical Greek precepts had successively governed the structure of much Italian drama in the sixteenth century, French theater from the seventeenth century onward, and plays of classically oriented English writers in the eighteenth century.

Da Ponte and Mozart also confined the cast to just six players, equally divided between men and women whose voice ranges covered the spectrum from soprano to bass. The opera is neatly divided into two acts, with sixteen scenes in the first, eighteen in the second. Each act ends with a lengthy, elaborate finale whose structure gradually gains size and momentum through an unbroken succession of separate arias and ensembles, until it finally sweeps up the entire cast in a race to the curtain.

True to the tradition of eighteenth-century comic opera, the first act ends in a state of total confusion, with the women appalled by the advances of two “Albanians” (their own fiancés in disguise) barely after those same soldier-boyfriends have supposedly marched off to war. The second-act finale involves the sudden unraveling of the plot, as the women prepare to sign marriage contracts with the wrong partners—only to have their faithlessness exposed when the soldiers reappear without their disguises.

Ensemble singing is the lifeblood of Così fan tutte and the musical score is studded with gorgeous vocal duets and trios, elaborate quartets, quintets, and sextets throughout the opera. But solo arias maintain an important place and are given a balanced distribution among the cast members. There are eleven of them—one for each of the six singers in Act I, and another five for the quartet of lovers and Despina in Act II.

There are two “rage” arias, a genre inherited from baroque operatic tradition, whereby singers could vent their wrath over some offense they have suffered. Dorabella rages at being abandoned by her departed soldier in “Smanie implacabili” (Implacable desires), while Fiordiligi’s “Come scoglio” (Like a rock) heroically proclaims her steadfast love for her absent military man, in fending off the initial flirtations from the disguised “Albanians.”

“Come scoglio” and Fiordiligi’s second-act aria, “Per pietà” (In pity’s name), as well as Ferrando’s last-ditch effort to win her affection, “Tradito, schernito” (Betrayed and scorned), are all preceded by full-orchestral accompanied recitatives (accompagnato),
as opposed to the skeletal instrumental accompaniment for all other dry recitatives (secco). They are also more florid, serious arias. By those devices, Mozart elevated the emotional intensity of this couple’s newly found romantic attachment.

By use of a strict vocal canon (round song) during the solemn marriage vows for all the mismatched lovers except Guglielmo, who refuses to join in, Mozart also underlined the seriousness of the pledge they are taking. When the ruse is suddenly exposed, the men forgive the faithless women: Don Alfonso tells them to “embrace each other and say no more.” Forgiveness, then, is the answer to marital happiness—but what is the question? The audience is left to ponder the nature of human love as the final curtain comes down.

Carl R. Cunningham was performing arts critic of the former Houston Post for twenty-nine seasons and has been a program annotator and commentator for several of the city’s leading performing arts organizations since then. He also served on the music faculties of two Houston area universities for over twenty years.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS
Otello

A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts
Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Arrigo Boito
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in Italian with Projected English Translation

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

Montano       Peixin Chen †
The Evans Family/Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow
Cassio        Norman Reinhardt ‡
Iago          Marco Vratogna *
Roderigo      Kevin Ray ‡
              Sponsored by Bill and Melinda Brunger/Mrs. William H. Guggolz Jr.
Otello        Simon O’Neill
              Lynn Wyatt Great Artist
Desdemona     Ailyn Pérez *
Emilia        Victoria Livengood
Herald        Thomas Richards †
              Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow
Lodovico      Morris Robinson

A production of Los Angeles Opera, Teatro Regio di Parma, and Opéra de Monte-Carlo
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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and
Theater District Improvement, Inc., and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Otello, Los Angeles Opera, 2008
CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor            Patrick Summers
                     Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Director             John Cox
Associate Director   Bruno Ravella
Set and Costume Designer  Johan Engels
Lighting Designer    Michael James Clark
Fight Director       Leraldo Anzaldúa
Chorus Master        Richard Bado ‡
                     The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Children’s Chorus Director  Karen Reeves
Musical Preparation  Peter Pasztor ‡
                     Craig Kier
                     Bradley Moore *
                     Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
                     Patrick Harvey ‡
                     Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair
                     Christopher Turbessi †
                     Ms. Marianne Kahl/Joan Hacken Bittar, M.D., Fellow
Stage Manager        Kristen E. Burke
Assistant Director   Katrina Bachus
Surtitles by         Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Mena Mark Hanna

* Houston Grand Opera debut
† Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
‡ Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Surtitles cued by    Sahar Nouri †
                     Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund/
                     John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
A seaport in Cyprus at the end of the fifteenth century

The historic struggle between Christian and Muslim navies for control of the eastern Mediterranean is now between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Turks, its principal objective the island of Cyprus, currently occupied by Venice. The commander of the Venetian fleet is Otello, who is also the governor of Cyprus. Unusually, Otello is a Moor, a Muslim who has converted to Christianity, married a noble Venetian, and risen to the highest rank in the Venetian armed forces.

**ACT I**

Otello, having defeated the Turkish fleet, must conquer a ferocious storm before reaching port. The Cypriot people and the Venetian garrison join in hailing this double victory, and glorify Otello. The people and the sailors light a bonfire in celebration while Otello withdraws to be reunited with his wife, Desdemona.

Present is Iago, Otello’s ensign. He is at heart a bitter racist and wills Otello’s downfall. Despite his apparent devotion to his master, Iago hates Otello because he has promoted Cassio to captain instead of him. Roderigo, a Venetian nobleman, is in love with Desdemona; Iago offers to help him to woo her away from her husband. When the wine begins to flow, he next shames the young Cassio into drinking too much. Cassio is very close to Otello, having acted as his go-between in the courtship of Desdemona. In his drunken state, Cassio assaults Roderigo and a brawl ensues in which he wounds Montano, a fellow officer. Otello appears and restores order, but demotes and dismisses Cassio.

The people depart, leaving Otello alone with Desdemona. They explore the nature and quality of their profound love for one another. It is clear that for Otello, this amounts to a form of worship.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**

Iago convinces the miserable Cassio that the way back to Otello’s favor is through Desdemona, who is shortly expected here in the garden. Alone, Iago expounds his belief in the supremacy of evil and in his destiny to perpetrate it. Death comes as the end; there is nothing beyond it.

Cassio engages Desdemona in conversation just as Otello arrives. Iago pretends to be suspicious of their encounter, then to dismiss such thoughts. Desdemona is greeted by an adoring group of islanders and their children bringing flowers and gifts. They obviously revere and love her. By warning Otello against jealousy, Iago succeeds in planting the germ of doubt in Otello’s mind, so that when Desdemona pleads Cassio’s case he is uncommonly harsh with her and shows signs of stress. She tries to comfort him with the handkerchief he had given her as a token of his love. He snatches it impatiently and throws it down. When Emilia, her companion, retrieves it, Iago demands it from her. She, although his wife, mistrusts his motive and refuses his demand, but in the end he forces it from her.

After the women have departed, Iago starts on Otello in earnest. He pretends to have heard Cassio having an erotic dream about Desdemona and even introduces the handkerchief strategy—saying he saw the handkerchief in Cassio’s hand—only minutes after Otello has handled it himself. Such is the vulnerability of Otello to the idea of female dishonor.

Iago has snared Otello. They join in an oath of vengeance that invokes the whole of creation, the very same cosmic reach Otello had earlier ascribed to his love for Desdemona.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT III**

A herald announces the arrival of a ship bringing an ambassador from Venice. Iago must work quickly to achieve his evil purpose. Otello demands proof positive of Desdemona's infidelity, which Iago promises he shall have from Cassio himself. Desdemona appears and once more makes a plea for Cassio’s forgiveness. Otello again shows signs of stress and asks her to soothe his brow—with the handkerchief he gave her, the one stolen earlier by Iago. He describes its rare, magic power and warns her against ever losing it, before dismissing her crudely.

Alone, Otello complains to God that he could have borne any other disgrace but this, to lose the haven of his soul’s repose. If she is truly guilty, death is the only punishment. But he must have the final proof.

Iago brings Cassio and they converse frivolously about Cassio’s mistress, Bianca. Otello watches, just out of earshot; he observes their humorous banter and assumes they are laughing about Desdemona. Cassio describes finding a mysterious handkerchief in his quarters and shows it to Iago, who makes sure that Otello sees it also. This is all the proof he needs.

Meanwhile Lodovico, the ambassador, and his party have disembarked and are about to arrive. Otello and Iago agree to kill both Desdemona and Cassio this very night. Lodovico brings an order from the doge recalling Otello to Venice. His successor as governor of Cyprus is to be Cassio. Enraged and humiliated, Otello assaults Desdemona in front of the entire assembly, while Iago continues his relentless plotting. The meeting breaks up in disorder and Otello falls down in a fit of apoplexy. Outside, the people continue to acclaim their hero; inside, it is Iago who is triumphant.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT IV**

It is night. Desdemona awaits Otello as Emilia prepares her for bed. She recalls a song sung by her mother’s maid about a young girl who loved too well.

Otello enters, finding Desdemona asleep. He kisses her and she wakes up. He tells her he is going to kill her and why. Her protestations of innocence fall on deaf ears. Emilia returns with the news that Cassio has killed Roderigo. She finds the expiring Desdemona and raises the alarm. She, Cassio, and Montano expose the villainy of Iago, who flees with guards in pursuit. Otello stabs himself and dies, kissing Desdemona for the last time.

—John Cox

**HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

*Otello* was most recently staged at HGO during the 1988–89 season with Plácido Domingo as Otello (Denyce Graves, an HGO Studio artist at the time, sang Emilia); before that, it was staged during seasons 1979–80, starring Jon Vickers; 1975–76, with Jon Andrew as Otello, Evelyn Lear as Desdemona, and Sherrill Milnes as Iago; and 1963–64, starring James McCraken.
Otello lasts approximately 3 hours, including two intermissions. The opening night performance (October 24), which begins at 7 p.m., will end at approximately 10 p.m. Performances beginning at 7:30 p.m. will end at approximately 10:30 p.m. Performances beginning at 2 p.m. will end at approximately 5 p.m.

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.

Otello
Houston Grand Opera Chorus
Richard Bado, Chorus Master—The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Patrick Harvey, Assistant Chorus Master—Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair

Ofelia Adame
Geordie Alexander
Debra Alons
Dennis Arrowsmith
Alyssa Barnes
Christopher Besch
G. Leslie Biffle
Brennan Blankenship
Charles Brown
Zachary Bryant
Eileen Buerkert
Cristina Carucci
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Esteban Cordero
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Ann Scott Davis
Robert Dee
Anthony Kyle Dixon
Ashley Duplechien
Lazar Estrada
Ashly Evans
Cecilia Felix
Donald Figg
Ami Figg
Julia Fox
Brian M. Gibbs
Laurelle Gowing
Joshua Green
Megan Gryga
Steven Hale
Nancy L. Hall
Sarah Jane Hardin
Douglas E. Henshaw
Frankie Hickman
Sasha Holloway
Stephen Hudson
James R. Jennings
Joy Jonstone
Esther M. Kelly
Joe Key
Rebecca Kier
Kirsten Koerner
Wesley Landry
Miles Robert Lutterbie
Sarah Lysiak
Alejandro Magallón
Keenan Manceaux
Antonio Martinez
Neal Martinez
Byron J. Mayes
Katherine McDaniel
Jeff Monette
Stacia Morgan
Jammieca Mott
Mollie Harmon Osborne
Laura Elizabeth Patterson
Cristino Perez
Patrick Perez
Ardeen Pierre
Juan T. Polanco
Steven Ponder
Said Henry Pressley
Teresa Procter
Daniel Prunaru
Jessica S. Richards
Emily Louise Robinson
Elisabeth Rosenberg
Stephanie Sanchez
Michael J. Sawyer
Paul Joseph Serna
Jacquelyn Silva
Maria Annette Khoobyar
Leigh Tomlinson
Logan Walsh
John Weinel
James M. Winslow
Jennifer Wright

Houston Grand Opera Children’s Chorus
Karen Reeves, Children’s Chorus Director

Sonya Azencott
Sofia Irene Botti
Katherine Butler
Landry Crawford
Sam Dill
Brisa Gawlikowski
Maria Dunn Gelves
Isabella Godfrey
Clara Sophie Haymon
Emilia Marie Haymon
Maggie Henneman
Jacqueline Hickman
Philip Hultén
Anneliese Kelly
Olivia Manning
Kathryn McIntyre
Brandon Pentecost
Matilda Smolij

Supernumeraries

Jeff Dorman
Luke Fedell
Alexander P. Garza
Brian Hues
Darnea Steven Olson
Nick Reid
Andrew Runk
Lenvi Tennessee
Jonathan Teverbaugh
Scott Thornton
G. Matthew Williams
Tristien Marcellous Winfree
Who’s Who

Patrick Summers (United States)
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Conductor

HGO Appearances: HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers has conducted more than fifty operas at HGO since joining the company in 1998.

About the Artist: Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. He has been responsible for many of HGO’s important artistic advances, including the development of the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra. At HGO, he has conducted the world premieres of André Previn’s Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis’s The Refuge, Jake Heggie’s The End of the Affair and Three Decembers, and Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree; Verdi’s Don Carlos, La traviata, Nabucco, Rigoletto, Il trovatore, Simon Boccanegra, Falstaff, and A Masked Ball; Puccini’s La bohème, Madame Butterfly, Manon Lescaut, and Tosca; Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte, The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, The Abduction from the Seraglio, and Idomeneo; Donizetti’s Mary Stuart, The Elixir of Love, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Don Pasquale; Lehár’s The Merry Widow; Handel’s Julius Caesar; Rossini’s The Barber of Seville; Strauss’s Ariadne auf Naxos; Britten’s Billy Budd, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Turn of the Screw, and Peter Grimes; and Wagner’s Das Rheingold, Tristan and Isolde, and Lohengrin. He has also led HGO’s Show Boat and the American premiere of Weinberg’s The Passenger (at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival). He conducts regularly at the Metropolitan Opera and is principal guest conductor for San Francisco Opera. This season, besides his work at HGO, he conducts Anna Bolena at Lyric Opera of Chicago and The Marriage of Figaro at San Francisco Opera. At HGO, he conducts the concurrent performances of Cosi fan tutte as well as Die Walküre this spring.

Johan Engels (South Africa)
Set and Costume Designer


About the Artist: Johan Engels studied fine arts and design at the University of Pretoria and has designed extensively for opera, ballet, and theater. With director David Pountney, he has collaborated on The Magic Flute (Bregenz Festival); Pelléas et Mélisande, Lulu, and Khovanshchina (Welsh National Opera); The Passenger (Bregenz, English National Opera, Warsaw, and Chicago in 2015); Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, and Gianni Schicchi (Lyon); Maskarade (Bregenz; Royal Opera, Covent Garden); Osud (Vienna State Opera); Turandot (Salzburg Festival); and L’Amore dei tre re, Zemlinsky’s Der Kreidekrei, and Agrippina (Zurich), among others. Current and recent work includes Parsifal (Chicago); Mathis der Maler (Theater an der Wien); Faust (Paris National Opera); and Thaïs (Gothenburg, Helsinki, Seville, Valencia, Los Angeles). Other productions include The Elixir of Love (Los Angeles, Washington, Geneva, Madrid, Graz); Cinderella (Zurich Ballet); Ballet to Beethoven’s Fifth (Vienna State Ballet); Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet (Opera North); and Otello (Parma, Monte Carlo, Los Angeles). He has also designed costumes for Vienna’s New Year’s Day Concert several times. New productions include the Ring cycle (Lyric Opera of Chicago, 2016–2020) directed by David Pountney; The Great Gatsby (Semperoper) with director Keith Warner; Twelfth Night (Japan) directed by John Caird; and Orpheus ed Euridice (Scottish Opera) with director/choreographer Ashley Page.

John Cox (United Kingdom)
Director

HGO Appearances: Ariadne auf Naxos (2011); Der Rosenkavalier (1989, 1979, 1975); Tancredi (1977); and Arabella (1977); Studio Showcase (2012).

About the Artist: John Cox, born in Bristol, is a graduate of Oxford University. He directed plays, opera, and television before being appointed director of productions at Glyndebourne, where he directed acclaimed productions of operas by Mozart, Rossini, and Haydn; a celebrated Rake’s Progress designed by David Hockney; and a notable group of Strauss works: Ariadne auf Naxos, Capriccio, Intermezzo, Die schweigsame Frau, Der Rosenkavalier, and Arabella. After his Glyndebourne tenure, he was the general administrator and artistic director of Scottish Opera, followed by several years as the principal stage director at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where his productions included Guillaume Tell, Capriccio, Il viaggio a Reims, Eugene Onegin, and, again with Hockney, Die Frau ohne Schatten. As a freelance director, he has been active worldwide in houses as large as La Scala and The Metropolitan Opera and as small as Drottningholm and Monte Carlo; in places as far apart as Tehran and Honolulu; in standard repertoire and in such rarities as Pizzetti’s Murder in the Cathedral (Turin) and Barber’s Vanessa (Strasbourg and Los Angeles). He has also enjoyed longstanding relationships with the opera companies of Monte Carlo, San Francisco, Sydney, and most recently with Garsington Opera. Recent productions include a revival of The Rake’s Progress for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Così fan tutte for the Royal Academy of Music in London, Ariadne auf Naxos for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Capriccio for Opera Australia, and a revival of Fidelio for Garsington.

Michael James Clark (United States)
Lighting Designer

HGO Appearances: As lighting designer, Die Fledermaus (2014, 2013); Aida (2013); La bohème (2013, 2012); Il trovatore (2013); La traviata and The Rape of Lucretia (2012); The Marriage of Figaro (2011); Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon (2010); as well as outdoor productions of Madame Butterfly (2011), Tosca (2010), and Rigoletto (2009). As lighting realizer, Mary Stuart (2012), The Queen of Spades (2010), and The Elixir of Love (2009). As associate lighting

**About the Artist:** In addition to his work at HGO, Michael James Clark was a member of the lighting department at The Santa Fe Opera for seven seasons. For Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, he lit Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music and The Coronation of Poppea. He holds a bachelor’s degree in lighting design from North Carolina School of the Arts. Later this season, he will be the lighting realizer for The Magic Flute.

**Bruno Ravella (Italy)**

**Associate Director**

**HGO Appearances:** Ariadne auf Naxos (2011); The Elixir of Love (2009).

**About the Artist:** Bruno Ravella studied in France before moving to London in 1991. He has directed La traviata and Falstaff (Ifford Arts); Julius Caesar (Standêté Moutier, Switzerland); Charpentier’s La descente d’Orphée aux enfers and Blow’s Venus and Adonis (Les Arts Florissants, Paris); La descente d’Orphée aux enfers (Glyndebourne Jerwood Project); Dove’s Mansfield Park (nominated for Best Opera Production at the 2014 Offies—Off West End Theatre Awards); The Marriage of Figaro, La clemenza di Tito, and The Elixir of Love (Hampstead Garden Opera); Carmen (Riverside Opera); and Hansel and Gretel (Freightliners City Farm Opera). Ravella has revived the McVicar production of Faust (Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and Palau de les arts, Valencia); Hytnyer’s Così fan tutte (Palau de les arts); Carsen’s The Coronation of Poppea and Rinaldo (Glyndebourne Festival and Glyndebourne on Tour); and McVicar’s La traviata (Opéra de Genève). He has also worked with Scottish Opera, Garsington Opera, the Royal Albert Hall, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Komische Oper Berlin, Leipzig Opera, Angers-Nantes Opéra (France), Opéra de Monte Carlo, and Teatro Regio Parma (Italy). Future projects include directing Intermezzo for Garsington Opera (2015) and La traviata for the launch of Opera Patagonia, Argentina (2014). Ravella has been nominated for the Independent Opera Director Fellowship 2015 (U.K.).

**Leraldo Anzaldúa (United States)**

**Fight Director**


**About the Artist:** Leraldo Anzaldúa is a Houston-based actor, director, and fight director. He is certified with the Society of American Fight Directors as a teacher of stage combat. As an actor and fight director, he has worked at the Alley Theatre in Venus in Fur, A Few Good Men, The Mountaintop, Peter Pan, Treasure Island, Hitchcock Blonde, Wait until Dark, Black Comedy, Equus, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. He has also worked with the Houston Shakespeare Festival, Theatre Under the Stars, Stages Repertory Theatre, Mildred’s Umbrella, Ensemble Theatre, Opera in the Heights, and Catastrophic Theatre. He has done voice-over work in the video game Starship Troopers: Mobile Infantry and in anime for A.D. Vision Studios/Sentai Filmworks. Internationally, he has done voice-over work and motion capture performance in Tokyo, Japan, for the CG film Starship Troopers: Invasion (Sony Pictures). He has also worked in Stockholm and Uppsala, Sweden, as a motion-capture fight director and performer. He is currently an anime voice-over director for Sentai Filmworks.

**Richard Bado (United States)**

**The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair**

**Chorus Master**


**About the Artist:** A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Richard Bado has conducted at La Scala, Opéra National de Paris, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, the Tulsa Opera, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, Wolf Trap Opera, and Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, he appeared last season in a recital tour with Renée Fleming. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey, and Nathan Gunn and has appeared on A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor. He 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. He is 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, and the International Vocal School in Moscow and has served on the music staffs of the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, the Bolshoi Opera Young Artist Program, Opera Australia, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chautauqua Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera.
Karen Reeves (United States)
Children’s Chorus Director

About the Artist: Native Texan Karen Reeves has prepared the Houston Grand Opera Children’s Chorus and child soloists since 1991. She received her bachelor of music degree from Southwestern University and her master of music degree from Rice University. She taught on the voice faculty at Houston Baptist University, and for more than twenty years she taught in the voice department of Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as an artist consultant. She has served as a grant evaluator for the Texas Commission on the Arts music and opera advisory panel. She is the administrator for the opera studies program of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

Simon O’Neill (New Zealand)

Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2014–15
Tenor—Otello

HGO Appearances: Florestan in Fidelio (2011); title role of Lohengrin (2009).

About the Artist: Simon O’Neill made his first staged performances as Otello at Opera Australia last summer. He is a principal artist with the Metropolitan Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; La Scala; and both the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals. He is well known for his portrayals of Siegmund in Die Walküre, which he will sing at HGO this spring. He has performed the role to wide critical acclaim at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, with Antonio Pappano; La Scala (house debut, 2010) and Berlin with Daniel Barenboim; at the Metropolitan Opera with Donald Runnicles; and again at the Met under Fabio Luisi in the Lepage Ring; and also for his house debut at the Bavarian State Opera with Kent Nagano. Notable debuts include the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as Jeník in The Bartered Bride with Sir Charles Mackerras; the Salzburg Festival in The Magic Flute with Riccardo Muti; the Metropolitan Opera as the Gran Sacerdote in Idomeneo with James Levine; Opera Australia as Sergei in Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk with Sir Richard Armstrong; the Bayreuth
Festival in the title role of *Lohengrin* with Andris Nelsons and a return as Parsifal with Lawrence Renes with the San Francisco Opera; and the Vienna State Opera in the title role of *Parsifal* with Christian Thielemann. Future engagements include the Verdi Requiem and gala concerts in Mumbai, Erik in *The Flying Dutchman* at the Ravinia Festival, and *Fidelio* at the Hamburg State Opera.

**Ailyn Pérez (United States)**  
Soprano—Desdemona  
Houston Grand Opera Debut

**About the Artist:** Ailyn Pérez won both the 2012 Richard Tucker Award (the only Hispanic recipient in the award’s thirty-five-year history) and the fifteenth annual Plácido Domingo Award. Last season, she performed Violetta in *La traviata* at the Hamburg State Opera opposite her husband and frequent co-star, tenor Stephen Costello (Ferrando in HGO’s concurrent performances of *Così fan tutte*), and then sang the role at Oviedo Opera and the Bavarian State Opera. Pérez and Costello then reunited to perform *La traviata* at San Francisco Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Also at Covent Garden last season Pérez appeared in the title role of Massenet’s *Manon* in Laurent Pelly’s celebrated treatment and made her role debut as Liu in *Turandot*. On the concert stage, she performed in a star-studded Richard Tucker Music Foundation gala event at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall with fellow Tucker Award–winners including Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, and Costello, who won the award in 2009. Pérez’s debut duo CD *Love Duets* (Warner Classics), with Costello and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Patrick Summers, was released earlier this year. This season and beyond, she will make her Metropolitan Opera debut as Micaela (*Carmen*) and perform Mimi in *La bohème* at La Scala. She also will sing Norina in *Don Pasquale* and Violetta at the Liceu in Barcelona and embark on a U.S. recital tour for *Love Duets* with Costello.

**Marco Vratogna (Italy)**  
Baritone—Iago  
Houston Grand Opera Debut

**About the Artist:** Born in La Spezia, Marco Vratogna began his musical studies at the Puccini Conservatory and made his operatic debut in the role of Stankar in *Stiffelio* at Teatro Verdi in Trieste. Since then, he has performed on the world’s greatest stages, including the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Scarpia in *Tosca*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Paolo Albiani in *Simon Boccanegra*), the Metropolitan Opera (Iago in *Otello*);
Scala (Scarpia, Ezio in Attila); San Francisco Opera (Amonasro and the title role in Rigoletto); the Vienna State Opera (Scarpia, Carlo Gérard in Andrea Chénier); and La Fenice (Scarpia, Paolo Albiani), among many others. He made his debut in the title role of Macbeth under the baton of Massimo de Bernart at Teatro Comunale in Modena, where he subsequently returned for a recital and a concert celebrating Luciano Pavarotti’s career with Leone Magiera. His repertoire also includes Count di Luna in Il trovatore, Tonio in Pagliacci, Alfio in Cavalleria rusticana, Jack Rance in La fanciulla del West, Germont in La traviata, Renato in A Masked Ball, and the title roles of Macbeth and Nabucco.

Recent and future engagements include Iago in Barcelona and Turin, Scarpia at the Sferisterio Festival in Macerata and Vienna State Opera, Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci at La Scala, and Simon Boccanegra and Tosca in Dresden.

### Norman Reinhardt (United States) Tenor—Cassio

**HGO Appearances:** Jaquino in Fidelio (2011); Lysander in A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2009); Benedict in Beatrice and Benedict (2008); Ernesto in Don Pasquale and Lucano in The Coronation of Poppea (2006); Meleagros in Lysistrata and Arbace in Idomeneo (2005); The Drunkard/The Lamplighter in The Little Prince and the Emperor in Turandot (2004), among others. HGO Studio artist (2003–06).

**About the Artist:** Recent engagements for Norman Reinhardt include his role debut as Tom Rakewell in The Rake’s Progress and Tamino in The Magic Flute for Oper Leipzig, and Tamino at the Bregenz Festival. Highlights in the 2014–15 season include Arturo in La straniera (Theater an der Wien); Verdi’s Requiem in Lisbon, and Tom Rakewell for Utah Opera. Other roles include Alfredo in La traviata (Opéra National de Lille), Chevalier des Grieux in Manon (Theater Basel), Belmonte in The Abduction from the Seraglio (Garsington Opera), Kudryas in Katya Kabanova (Theater Basel), Fritz in La grande-duchesse de Gérolstein (Theater Basel opposite Anne Sofie von Otter), Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi, First Tenor in Weill’s Die sieben Todsünden (Central City Opera), and an acclaimed Essex in Britten’s rarely performed Gloriana (Narodni Divalo in Prague). From 2009 to 2012, Reinhardt held a house contract at Oper Leipzig, where his roles included Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Ferrando in Così fan tutte, Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, Lensky in Eugene Onegin, and Alfredo in La traviata, among others.
Who’s Who

Otello

Victoria Livengood (United States)
Mezzo-soprano—Emilia

HGO Appearances: Giovanna in Rigoletto and Old Woman in The Passenger at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival (2014); Lampito in Lysistrata (2005).

About the Artist: During the 2014–15 season, Victoria Livengood returns to Los Angeles Opera for Woman in a Hat in John Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles, Florida Grand Opera as the Mother in The Consul, and Atlanta Opera as Marcellina in The Marriage of Figaro. Last season, she returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Herodias in Salome and reprised Eunice in André Previn’s A Streetcar Named Desire in her debut with Los Angeles Opera. Other engagements include the Marquise in The Daughter of the Regiment with the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Washington National Opera, and the Teatro Municipal de Santiago; Klytämnestra in Elektra with the Festival de Opera de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Taipei National Symphony Orchestra; Eunice with the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Marcellina with Washington National Opera and Hawaii Opera Theatre; Herodias and Madame Larina in Eugene Onegin at the Metropolitan Opera; Mrs. Doc in Bernstein’s A Quiet Place with New York City Opera; Sarelda in John Musto’s The Inspector with Boston Lyric Opera; and numerous others.

Morris Robinson (United States)
Bass—Lodovico

HGO Appearances: Joe in Show Boat and Commendatore in Don Giovanni (2013).

About the Artist: A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Morris Robinson made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Fidelio. He has since appeared there as Sarastro in The Magic Flute, Ferrando in Il trovatore, the King in Aida, and in roles in Nabucco, Tannhäuser, and new productions of Les Troyens and Salome. He has also appeared at the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Vancouver Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Australia, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. His many roles include Osmyn in The Abduction from the Seraglio, Ramfis in Aida, Zaccaria in Nabucco, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos, Timur in Turandot, the Bonze in Madama Butterfly, Padre Guardiano in La forza del destino, Ferrando in Il trovatore, and Fasolt in Das Rheingold. This season, he returns to Opera Philadelphia as the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos and to the Atlanta Opera in Rigoletto. He returns to HGO later this season to perform Sarastro in The Magic Flute.

Kevin Ray (United States)
Tenor—Roderigo

Sponsored by Bill and Melinda Brunger/Mrs. William H. Guggolz Jr.


About the Artist: This season, Kevin Ray joins his alma mater, the Curtis Institute of Music, as a guest artist in his first performances of Bacchus in Ariadne auf Naxos in association with Opera Philadelphia and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Recent engagements include his first performances of the title role of Peter Grimes with Chautauqua Opera as well as Don José in Carmen with Wolf Trap Opera and the Lyrique-en-Mer/Festival de Belle-Île. While a Santa Fe apprentice artist, he created the role of the Second Clubman in the world premiere of Paul Moravec’s The Letter. Also with the company, he sang the role of the Poet in Menotti’s The Last Savage, covered the Drum Major in Wozzeck, and performed scenes of the title role of Idomeneo. On the concert stage, he has joined the Philadelphia Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and the Sunriver Music Festival for Beethoven’s
Symphony No. 9. He returns to HGO later this season to sing two performances of The Narrator in the world premiere of Iain Bell and Simon Callow’s *A Christmas Carol* and to perform Priest/Man in Armor in *The Magic Flute* and Beadle Bamford in *Sweeney Todd*.

**Peixin Chen (China)**

*The Evans Family/Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow*

**Bass—Montano**


**About the Artist:** Peixin Chen graduated from Beijing’s Central Conservatory of Music, where he made his opera debut as Publio in *La clemenza di Tito* and performed Sarastro in *The Magic Flute.* With the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, he has sung the King in Lalo’s *Le roi d’Ys* conducted by Michel Plasson, the Emperor in *La bohème*, Baron Douphol in *La traviata* under the baton of Lorin Maazel, and Zuniga in *Carmen*. His most recent roles there were Angelotti in Giancarlo del Monaco’s new production of *Tosca*, Don Magnifico in Rossini’s *Cinderella*, Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*. He has also sung Don Basilio with the Merola Program of San Francisco Opera. Chen made his Washington National Opera debut last season as Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*. Later this season at HGO, he will sing the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly* and Sarastro in student performances of *The Magic Flute*.

**Thomas Richards**

*(United States)*

*Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow*

**Bass-baritone—Herald**


**About the Artist:** A native of Burnsville, Minnesota, Thomas Richards was named a winner of the 2013 Grand Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He earned his master of music degree at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music (CCM), where his roles included Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Father Trulove in *The Rake’s Progress*, and Frank Maurrant in *Street Scene*. Recently, he performed Colline in *La bohème* at the Central City Opera Festival and sang Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the Merola Opera Program. For the 2014 Glimmerglass Festival, he sang the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly*, Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Orville Mason in *An American Tragedy*. Later this season at HGO, he will perform the Imperial Commissioner in *Madame Butterfly* and Priest/Man in Armor in *The Magic Flute.*
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

Così fan tutte

A dramma giocoso in Two Acts
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in Italian with Projected English Translation

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

<table>
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<th>Role</th>
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<td>Fiordiligi</td>
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<td>Dorabella</td>
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<td>Despina</td>
<td>Nuccia Focile</td>
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United Airlines is the official airline of Houston Grand Opera.
The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and Theater District Improvement, Inc., and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor
Patrick Summers
* Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

Production
Gören Järvefelt

Director
Harry Silverstein

Set and Costume Designer
Carl Friedrich Oberle

Lighting Designer
Duane Schuler

Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡
† The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Musical Preparation
Gerardo Felisatti *
Emily Senturia †
† Beth Madison Fellow

Bradley Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Patrick Harvey ‡
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair

Sahar Nouri †
Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

Stage Manager
Christopher Staub

Assistant Director
Susan Li

Surtitles by
Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Mena Mark Hanna

* Houston Grand Opera debut
† Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
‡ Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Surtitles cued by
Catherine Schaefer

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes and for possible future broadcast.
ACT I
Two young soldiers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, extol the virtues of their fiancées, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella. When their old friend Don Alfonso claims that all women are fickle and wagers that their ladies would not remain faithful if put to the test, the young officers take up the bet.

Gazing fondly at lockets containing portraits of their betrothed, the sisters sing of their happiness. But Don Alfonso breaks the news that Ferrando and Guglielmo are to march away with their regiment immediately, and the couples bid a sorrowful farewell, pledging eternal fidelity.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella’s worldly maid, Despina, shares Don Alfonso’s lack of faith in love’s constancy. Don Alfonso finds Despina quite bribable as an accomplice in his plot. He introduces two “Albanians”—Ferrando and Guglielmo so skillfully disguised that Despina doesn’t recognize them—and tells her the young men have come to court her mistresses. The sisters are shocked to find two strangers in their home and order them to leave.

Continuing the ruse, the “Albanians” pretend to drink poison because of the ladies’ heartlessness. Don Alfonso produces a doctor, who is none other than Despina in disguise. She magically revives them with a huge magnet, and the men demand a kiss from the ladies to complete their cure. The sisters refuse.

INTERMISSION

ACT II
Despina encourages her mistresses to have some fun with the exotic Albanians. The sisters decide that a little innocent conversation won’t hurt.

Dorabella chooses Fiordiligi’s fiancé, Guglielmo, while the disguised Ferrando strolls off with Fiordiligi. Guglielmo, alone with Dorabella, offers her a heart-shaped necklace, which she immediately accepts in exchange for Ferrando’s portrait. Fiordiligi, however, rejects her Albanian.

Fiordiligi reluctantly admits a strong attraction to her new suitor. She resolves to remain faithful to her fiancé, however, and disguises herself as a man, planning to join Guglielmo on the battlefield. But Ferrando enters, still disguised, and begins making such loving declarations that Fiordiligi finally yields to his embrace.

The two young men confront each other, caught in their own trap.

Don Alfonso arranges a phony marriage ceremony in which Dorabella is to marry Guglielmo and Fiordiligi is to marry Ferrando. At the marriage banquet, Don Alfonso brings in a notary (once again, Despina in disguise), but no sooner are the contracts signed than the sound of military music announces the return of Ferrando and Guglielmo. Panic-stricken, the sisters push the Albanians out of the room. Returning as themselves, Ferrando and Guglielmo react indignantly to the signed marriage contracts, and the sisters are forced to admit they have been faithless. The couples are chastened and wiser for their experience, realizing that forgiveness is the true measure of love.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Così fan tutte was last performed at HGO during the 2000–01 season, with Christine Goerke, Joyce DiDonato, Nathan Gunn, and Richard Croft in the roles of the young lovers. Previously it was performed during seasons 1990–91 (with Karita Mattila as Fiordiligi) and 1987–88 (our inaugural season in the Wortham Theater Center, with Mattila as Fiordiligi and Gösta Winbergh as Ferrando). It was also performed several seasons by Texas Opera Theater, HGO’s former touring arm.

Così fan tutte lasts approximately 3 hours and 10 minutes with one intermission.

Performances beginning at 7:30 p.m. will end at approximately 10:40 p.m.

Performances beginning at 2 p.m. will end at approximately 5:10 p.m.

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.
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Erica Robinson *, Principal, Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal, Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Hae-a Lee *
Sarah Ludwig *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Anabel Ramirez *
Mary Reed *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Wilmot *

VIOLA
Eliseo Rene Salazar *, Principal
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal, Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Hae-a Lee *
Sarah Ludwig *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Anabel Ramirez *
Mary Reed *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Wilmot *

FLUTE
Seth Allyn Morris *, Principal
Christina Medawar *

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal
Robin Hough *

CLARINET
Sean Krissman *, Principal
Nathan Koch

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Scott Strong †

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams *

VIOLA
Eliseo Rene Salazar *, Principal
Lorento Golofeev *, Assistant Principal
Mary Fulgham *
Gayle Garcia-Shepard *
Erika C. Lawson *
Suzanne LeFevre †
Elizabeth Golofeev

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Louis-Marie Fardet *, Assistant Principal
Erika Johnson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steven Wiggs *

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

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén †, Principal
Mark Holley †

BASS TROMBONE
Ilan Morgenstern †

TUBA
Mark Barton †, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman †, Principal

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

* HGO Orchestra core musician
† HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production

Chair: Terrylin G. Neale
Thursday, March 19, 2015
Wortham Theater Center

Join us for a special concert featuring international opera star Joyce DiDonato with Patrick Summers leading the HGO Orchestra and HGO Studio artists. The concert will be followed by an intimate on-stage dinner benefiting the Houston Grand Opera Endowment.

7:30 p.m. – Concert, Cullen Theater
Post-concert – Celebration dinner, Brown Theater

For tickets or information visit HGO.org or call Clare Greene at 713-546-0277

Please note gala dinner tickets include a ticket to the performance. Concert-only tickets may be purchased by visiting HGO.org.
Join the Laureate Society!

Including HGO in your will or as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or insurance policy, you become a partner with HGO in perpetuating the art form we love, ensuring its vibrant good health for future generations. As a member of the Laureate Society, your legacy gift helps ensure opera forever in Houston.

For more information, please contact Richard Buffett at 713.546.0216 or rbuffett@hgo.org. Also visit HGO.org/LaureateSociety.
Who’s Who

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

PATRICK SUMMERS (UNITED STATES)

Conductor

For information about Patrick Summers, please see p. 47.

CARL-FRIEDRICH OBERLE (GERMANY)

Set and Costume Designer


About the Artist: Carl-Friedrich Oberle has designed sets and costumes for numerous companies in Europe, the United States, and Australia, and has also been a consultant at the Loeb Drama Center at Harvard University. A sampling of his work includes The Magic Flute, The Coronation of Poppea, La clemenza di Tito, Idomeneo, and Der Rosenkavalier at Opera Australia; Elektra, Intermezzo, Die schweigsame Frau, and Daphne at The Santa Fe Opera; and the Ring cycle, A Masked Ball, La traviata, and Billy Budd at Welsh National Opera. Other work includes Parsifal (State Opera of South Australia, Amsterdam); The Magic Flute, Hansel and Gretel, The Return of Ulysses, and La bohème (Gelsenkirchen): Dialogues of the Carmelites, Tannhäuser, Salome, and A Masked Ball (Royal Opera House, Stockholm); Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, The Abduction from the Seraglio, and The Marriage of Figaro (Drottningholm Palace Theater); Tartuffe, Luisa Miller, La traviata, Der Rosenkavalier, and Ghosts (Wiesbaden State Theater); Janáček’s Cunning Little Vixen (Munich); and Bluebeard’s Castle (Bremen), among many others. He recently designed a Ring cycle for Leipzig Opera: Das Rheingold and Die Walküre have already opened, with Siegfried to follow in 2015 and Götterdämmerung in 2016.

GÖRAN JÄRVEFELT (SWEDEN)

Production


About the Artist: Göran Järvefelt (1947–89) was one of Sweden’s most successful directors, known particularly for his Mozart productions at Sweden’s Drottningholm Palace Theater. In 1980, he accepted a commission from Houston Grand Opera to create new productions of the trilogy of Mozart–Da Ponte operas: The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, and Così fan tutte. Working with German designer Carl-Friedrich Oberle, the director created a unit set that was capable of serving all three productions with a minimal number of changes. Don Giovanni was the first to premiere, in 1986, and the other two operas were presented in 1988. All three were revived in the spring of 1991 for HGO’s Mozart Festival, which was dedicated to the memory of Mr. Järvefelt. He directed at Welsh National Opera, Komische Oper Berlin, Geneva Opera, The Santa Fe Opera, Stockholm Opera, Vancouver Opera, Stuttgart Opera, Opera Australia, and the Royal Opera of Sweden.

HARRY SILVERSTEIN (UNITED STATES)

Director


About the Artist: Harry Silverstein has directed over ninety productions for forty companies on four continents. He is the artistic heir to the late director Göran Järvefelt, and directs his productions at leading opera houses around the world. His many Mozart credits include Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte at The Dallas Opera; Idomeneo at Opera Northern Ireland; The Marriage of Figaro, Così fan tutte, and The Abduction from the Seraglio for the Ravinia Festival; and The Marriage of Figaro for Opera Pacific. In contemporary opera, Silverstein has directed three Philip Glass operas: The Making of the Representative for Planet Eight (European premiere, English National Opera); Akhnaten (English National Opera and New York City Opera); and Satyagraha (San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera). He has also directed La traviata and Carmen at Lyric Opera of Chicago; La bohème at San Francisco Opera; and Madame Butterfly for Victoria State Opera in Melbourne, Australia, and Auckland Opera in New Zealand. His numerous credits at The Dallas Opera include Rigoletto and Lucia di Lammermoor. Recently he directed Rigoletto for San Francisco Opera, which was simulcast to AT&T Park, and The Magic Flute for San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Washington National Opera, where it was simulcast at Nationals Park.

DUANE SCHULER (UNITED STATES)

Lighting Designer

HGO Appearances: Don Giovanni (2013, 1986); Fidelio (2011); Ariadne auf Naxos (2011, 1993); Tosca (2010); Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci (2008); A Masked Ball (2007); Manon Lescaut (2006); Boris Godunov and Falstaff (2005); and Nabucco, Tristan and Isolde, and Cold Sassy Tree (2000), among others.

About the Artist: Duane Schuler’s work encompasses opera, ballet, and theater. His work for the Metropolitan Opera includes the world premieres of The Great Gatsby and The First Emperor and twenty-three other productions. He has designed more than 130 productions at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, including its new Ring cycle and last season’s Parsifal and The Sound of Music. Theater credits include House and Garden, Last Dance, A Picasso (Manhattan Theatre Club); The Royal Family (Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles) and The Importance of Being Earnest on Broadway. Among his many ballet credits are Swan Lake, The Snow Maiden, and Pillar of Fire for the American Ballet Theatre and The Nutcracker for Houston Ballet. Recent highlights include La fanciulla del West at Opéra National de
Stephen Costello (United States)
Tenor—Ferrando
About the Artist: Philadelphia-born tenor Stephen Costello came to national attention in 2007 when, at age twenty-six, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut on the company’s season-opening night. Two years later Costello won the prestigious Richard Tucker Award, and he has since appeared at many of the world’s most important opera houses and music festivals. This season, he returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Alfredo in La traviata and Camille in The Merry Widow, sings Alfredo at the Vienna State Opera, returns to the San Francisco Opera as Michele in the world premiere of Marco Tutino and Fabio Ceresa’s La ciociara, and appears in recital at London’s Wigmore Hall. Last season, he made his Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera debuts as Greenhorn (Ishmael) in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s Dream, a role he created for the opera’s world premiere in 2010 at The Dallas Opera. The San Francisco Opera presentation was televised nationwide on PBS’s Great Performances. Opposite his wife, soprano Ailyn Pérez (Desdemona in our concurrent performances of Otello), Costello recorded the CD Love Duets for Warner Classics with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Patrick Summers. Costello’s future engagements include returns to the Metropolitan Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Vienna State Opera; The Dallas Opera; Canadian Opera Company; Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Teatro Real Madrid.

Jacques Imbrailo (South Africa)
Baritone—Guglielmo
About the Artist: Winner of the Audience Prize at the 2007 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, Jacques Imbrailo was a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists program at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (2006–08), where he sang the title role of Owen Wingrave, Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Moralè in Carmen, and Marullo in Rigoletto, among others. He won great critical praise in the title role of Michael Grandage’s production of Billy Budd (Imbrailo’s Glyndebourne Festival debut), and other recent highlights include Pelléas in Pelléas et Mélisande (Essen Opera); Tarquinius in The Rape of Lucretia (Florence and Houston); Aeneas in Dido and Aeneas (Opera di Roma); Count Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro (Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Welsh National Opera; Opéra de Lille); the leading baritone role in Judith Weir’s Miss Fortune (Royal Opera); Figaro in The Barber of Seville (Welsh National Opera); Malatesta in Don Pasquale (Royal Opera); Guglielmo in Così fan tutte (Opera Colorado, Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Opera North); Schaunard in La bohème (Royal Opera); and a reprise of Billy Budd (Netherlands Opera). Later this season, he returns to Welsh National Opera to sing Papageno in The Magic Flute and Pelléas in a new David Pountney production of Pelléas et Mélisande.

Rachel Willis-Sørensen (United States)
Soprano—Fiordiligi
HGO Appearances: Donna Anna in Don Giovanni (2013); Kate Pinkerton in Madame Butterfly (2011, 2010); Alisa in Lucia di Lammermoor (2011); and Mascha in The Queen of Spades (2010). First prize in HGO’s 2009 Eleanor McCallum Competition Concert of Arias. HGO Studio artist (2009–11).
About the Artist: Soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen recently won first prize, the Birgit Nilsson Prize, and the Pepita Embil Domingo Zarzuela Prize at the 2014 Operaalia competition in Los Angeles. Recent engagements include her debut at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as Countess Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro under music director Antonio Pappano and a return to the Royal Opera as Gutrune in Götterdämmerung, as well as her Santa Fe Opera debut as the First Lady in The Magic Flute. As a member of the ensemble at the Dresden Semperoper, Willis-Sørensen has sung the title role in The Merry Widow, Fiordiligi, Vitellia in La clemenza di Tito, Elettra in Idomeneo, and Diemut in Feuersnott. Recent concert performances include Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 with the Dresden Staatskapelle (Myung-Whun Chung) and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with both the Accademia Santa Cecilia (Antonio Pappano) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (Leonard Slatkin). This season her plans include Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus), Fiordiligi, Mimi (La bohème) and the Countess for the Dresden Semperoper and her Metropolitan Opera debut as the Countess. Future engagements include house debuts at the Vienna State Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and San Francisco Opera.
Melody Moore (United States)
Soprano—Dorabella
HGO Appearances: Title role in concert performance of Carmen, Freia in Das Rheingold, and Marta in The Passenger at HGO and at the Merola Center Festival (2014); Julie LaVerne in Show Boat (2013).

About the Artist: Melody Moore has appeared at the San Francisco Opera in the title role of Tosca, Susan Rescorla in Heart of a Soldier, Mimi in La bohème, the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro, and the First Lady in The Magic Flute; English National Opera as Mimi and as Marguerite in Faust; New York City Opera as Rita Clayton in the New York premiere of Stephen Schwartz’s Seance on a Wet Afternoon and as Régine Saint Laurent in Rufus Wainwright’s Prima Donna; LA Opera as the Countess and in productions of Der Zwerg and Der zerbrochene Krug; Opéra de Bordeaux as Pamina in The Magic Flute; Glimmerglass Festival as Senta in The Flying Dutchman; Madison Opera as Tosca and the Countess; The Atlanta Opera and Opera Colorado as Elvira in Don Giovanni; Hawaii Opera Theater as Marguerite; New Orleans Opera in the title role of Manon Lescaut; Opera Cleveland as Mimi; New York City Opera in the title role in Suor Angelica; Opera Santa Barbara as Alice Ford in Falstaff and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra as Anna in Don Giovanni. This season includes house debuts with the Washington National Opera in the title role of Catania’s Florencia en el Amazonas and Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Tosca; she also returns to Hawaii Opera as Senta and the Glimmerglass Festival as Lady Macbeth in Verdi’s Macbeth.

Alessandro Corbelli (Italy)
Bass-baritone—Don Alfonso
HGO Appearances: Dr. Dulcamara in The Elixir of Love (2009); Leporello in Don Giovanni (1999); and Dandini in La Cenerentola (1995).

About the Artist: Alessandro Corbelli, born in Turin, is a specialist in the bel canto and Mozart baritone repertoire. He has sung in all the major opera houses including La Scala (Così fan tutte, The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, La Cenerentola, Le Comte Ory, Lodoiska, Fedora); the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (L’Italiana in Algeri, La Cenerentola, Così fan tutte, Don Pasquale, Il turco in Italia, The Daughter of the Regiment, The Barber of Seville, Adriana Lecouvreur); Paris Opera (La Cenerentola, The Italian Girl in Algiers, Così fan tutte, Madame Butterfly, Gianni Schicchi, The Daughter of the Regiment); and the Vienna State Opera (Così fan tutte, The Marriage of Figaro, I puritani, and La Cenerentola). Since his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1997 as Dandini in La Cenerentola, he has returned regularly for The Italian Girl in Algiers, The Elixir of Love, Gianni Schicchi, and La Cenerentola (Don Magnifico). During recent seasons, he has sung Don Magnifico with LA Opera, Dr. Bartolo in The Barber of Seville in San Francisco and Chicago, the title role of Gianni Schicchi at the Teatro Regio in Turin, and Geronio in a new production of Il turco in Italia at the 2014 Aix-en-Provence Festival. During the 2014–15 season, he performs in The Barber of Seville at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and at LA Opera; and sings Michonnet in Adriana Lecouvreur at the Paris Opera.

Nuccia Focile (Italy)
Soprano—Despina

About the Artist: Nuccia Focile was born in Militello, Sicily, and studied with Elio Battaglia at the Turin Conservatory. Her repertoire includes Nannetta in Falstaff, Violetta in La traviata, Oscar in A Masked Ball, Giulietta in I Capuleti e i Montecchi, Servilia in La clemenza di Tito, Drusilla in The Coronation of Poppea, Norina in Don Pasquale, Ascanio in Lo frate ‘nnammorato, Ila in Idomeneo, Musetta and Mimi in La bohème, Giulia in La scala di seta, Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro, Tatiana in Eugene Onegin, Juliet in both Gounod’s and Bellini’s settings of the Romeo and Juliet story, Pamina in The Magic Flute, Micaela in Carmen, Liu in Turandot, Amelia in Simon Boccanegra, the title role in Katya Kabanova, Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni, Elisabetta in Don Carlo, and Nedda in Pagliacci. She has appeared with many of the world’s leading opera houses including the Welsh National Opera; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Metropolitan Opera; Bavarian State Opera; La Scala; Paris Opera; Teatro Colon; Opera Philadelphia; Hamburg State Opera; Teatro Massimo Palermo; Théâtre du Châtelet; Opéra de Lille; Opéra de Nancy; New Israeli Opera; The Dallas Opera; La Fenice; Seattle Opera; Opéra de Monte Carlo; Deutsche Oper Berlin; Saito Kinen Orchestra; Teatro Comunale di Bologna; and the Academy of St. Cecilia. Focile won the Artist of the Year competition in Seattle for her portrayal of Elle in La voix humaine in 2013.
It is perhaps not well known outside the administrative staff and some key HGO family members with extensive knowledge of the company, but HGO has a comprehensive archive of important documents and artifacts. HGO has a history of producing great works and a longstanding tradition for presenting new commissions, and thankfully, much of the company’s wonderful history has been recorded and preserved for posterity.

The Genevieve P. Demme Archives and Resource Center was established in 1989 and named for Genevieve Demme, who had been a historian for HGO for many years previously. Ava Jean Mears was appointed as the first director and the first archivist was Lee Pecht. Pecht was succeeded by James Lloyd, and Brian

Managing Director
Perryn Leech continues his season-long profile series on Houston Grand Opera’s unsung heroes—the people behind the scenes who nevertheless play an integral role in the company’s day-to-day work.
Mitchell, the third full-time archivist, joined the company in 2000.

Perryn Leech: So, Brian, how did you come to HGO—and was it the call of opera that proved important?

Brian Mitchell: It certainly wasn’t opera—I had never been to one before! I spent time in the Air Force between 1984 and 1988, and once I left the service, I was involved in lots of different things. I then took a position at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Ohio and was curating its archive materials. I had been doing that for a few years when I saw an advertisement for the job at HGO and thought that it was a natural progression and good fit for my skills. I applied and got the job, but relocating to Texas and living in Houston was certainly very different from life in Ohio!

When I saw my first opera performance, it really blew me away. Experiencing opera for the first time was totally new but so exciting to me. I was absolutely mesmerized by the combination of theater, music, and singing.

When you got to HGO, was the job of archivist for an opera company what you expected it to be?

I would say yes and no. In the early days there was less for the archivist to do and we were saving very little electronically. Over the last few years I have built up the electronic archive and tried to keep pace with the different ways that have been developed to save materials. Of course, when you are storing much of your archive in paper records, it is much more difficult to quickly locate and find specific items than in an electronic file that allows you to utilize word search functions and the like. I certainly think that the Resource Center has a more extensive reach and ability to provide a wider range of services now than when I first arrived.

How do you see your role within the company now, and has it continued to develop?

I get great satisfaction and take a lot of pride in the fact that I get to be the central information hub for the entire organization. Certainly every day is different and I love the fact that people drop in and ask me all kinds of questions about what or when HGO did something, and I can help them confirm a wide range of details about what they need to know.

For instance, the recording archive can be very useful, and HGO Studio artists in particular love to hear recordings of old HGO performances. We have an extensive library of the standard items that we are legally required to keep, but we also have developed more and more areas and invested in saving valuable resources that I believe are really useful to the company.

Are the archives utilized mainly by staff and artists from within the company?
Yes, but there are also plenty of requests that I get from outside as well, and I welcome the opportunity for visitors to come in and listen to archive recordings in the building. The current union contracts that are in place prevent me from giving out copies to individuals, but they get great joy in hearing some of the past performances they remember so fondly.

You have also “branched out” a little and allowed yourself to actually become a performer as well though, right?

Yes, in 2002 I was backstage during the season and the artistic staff was looking for supernumeraries. Sue Elliot, who worked at HGO at the time, said I should get involved and encouraged me to go for it. Ever since then it is something I have tried to do whenever I can make it work with my schedule. It can make for long days and weekends on top of my full time work as archivist. I am obviously a glutton for punishment, though, as when I am not employed as a super I am often still working on the show as a chaperone for the HGO Children’s Chorus [also known as “the kid wrangler” in HGO-speak!]

What do you enjoy most about combining the very different worlds of the quiet archivist and the more outgoing side of being a super?

When working in the archive I typically get a small number of visitors in any given day and they are in need of my help finding something or doing research of some kind. I have my team of archives volunteers—the “ArchAngels”—who come in and volunteer their time and help with copying and other jobs, but I spend the majority of time on my own.

When you are a super you get to be a part of a performing company, and that is a totally different feeling of making something magical happen each night for that particular audience. It’s great to be able to experience both sides of the curtain and to contribute in both areas. And I really enjoy the opportunity to dress up and play a different character on stage!

We are proud to have an established and comprehensive archive of HGO’s history preserved in the Genevieve P. Demme Archives and Resource Center. Through Brian’s work and that of the archivists before him, we have a strong recorded legacy to share with the next generation of staff, artists, and wider HGO family.
His name is Bradley Moore, but friends call him Brad. He came to Houston in August, sleeves rolled up, to become HGO’s new head of music staff and music director for the HGO Studio.

The son of a church musician and pastor who grew up mostly in Little Rock, Arkansas, Brad played piano in church and listened to Pavarotti recordings at home. He thought he'd be a concert pianist and probably a professor of piano. He earned extra money by playing for voice lessons, and he studied accompanying along with piano throughout his undergraduate work at the University of Maryland. He is coming to Houston from the Metropolitan...
Opera, where he was a pianist, coach, and assistant conductor.

He first came to the Met’s attention when he was twenty years old—he is forty-three now—and playing for a soprano in the Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions. The Met’s artistic administrator, Jonathan Friend, began to give the soprano some comments during the feedback portion, and told her to go find her pianist and bring him back. “He asked me to write Ken Noda at the Met and see about coming to New York and joining the music staff,” says Brad, who responded that he thought he should finish his undergraduate work first. The experience did prompt him to begin attending operas: “I’d never seen opera growing up in Arkansas.”

His journey took him next to London to “study piano and do the competition circuit” and then to Yale for graduate school. Toward the end of his graduate work, he learned that the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program was looking for a pianist. He auditioned and landed a spot in the program.

Early on, Brad’s assignments as a member of the program included playing rehearsals for the Met’s Millennium Gala and for a production of Così fan tutte. Both were conducted by HGO Artistic Director Patrick Summers—at the time, HGO’s music director—who became a mentor. Brad remembers that one day he was having a “little crisis” about which direction he should pursue in his career. His dream by that point had become conducting, but there were several other paths to consider. “Patrick said, ‘Always remember that you get to choose,’ ” Brad recalls. “I thought that was profound advice, and I’ve come back to it many times.”

As Brad continued his career, it seemed as if every step he took led naturally to the next: after he completed his tenure in the Lindemann program, he worked part-time for the Met while freelancing for other companies. At LA Opera under Kent Nagano, he impressed the maestro so much that he was asked to assist him in engagements at Paris Opera and the Salzburg Festival. “Suddenly, I had a European career, literally overnight,” he says. “Once I started doing that, I think I became of more interest to the Met, and they started to use me more often on bigger productions. I started getting invited to play recitals.” (He has performed in recital with Renée Fleming and Susan Graham, among other luminaries.) At the same time, Paris Opera began hiring Brad to come and assist other conductors besides Nagano. At Paris Opera, Brad met Alexander Neef, who later became general director of Canadian Opera Company; on Neef’s first day on the job, he called Brad to work as an assistant conductor.

After about a decade of this nomadic, albeit exciting, life, Brad was ready for a change. He was invited to apply for a position at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music, but mulled it over for some time before sending in his CV electronically. The moment he hit send, his email dinged with what Brad assumed was an auto-response. It was an email from Patrick Summers saying, “Would you please give me a call? I’d like to talk to you about something”—a job, as it turned out.

It seemed like a good fit to Brad: he had already worked with Summers,
Chorus Master Richard Bado, and a number of HGO Studio alumni—among them Jamie Barton, with whom he regularly appears in recital. He was happy to consider moving to Houston: his mother spent a good part of her childhood here and he recalls having a lot of fun when, as a college student at home on break in Little Rock, he came to visit a pal in Houston. The position itself attracted him because it allows him to do many things, whereas the Met is more compartmentalized. Working with the HGO Studio artists is a big draw as is the opportunity to do some conducting: he will conduct the Miller Outdoor Theatre performances of The Magic Flute this spring.

He hopes also that he will be able to continue the Fire Island Opera Festival in New York, which he co-founded two years ago with actor-director Edwin Cahill. The artistic philosophy of the festival is quite in keeping with HGO’s: its goal is to commission one-act American operas and perform them alongside revivals of forgotten works. Performances are given in late August.

He remembers the transition to HGO as a “crazy” time. He was proud to be invited by Lorin Maazel to prepare the cast and orchestra of Madame Butterfly for July performances at the renowned conductor’s Castleton Festival. When Maazel became ill and unable to conduct, Brad took the podium in his place. The eighty-four-year-old maestro passed away during the run.

Brad was in Houston only a few weeks later. HGO supporters Bill and Sara Morgan gave him a place to stay while he looked for an apartment and learned music for Weill’s The Protagonist for the Fire Island Festival. “I feel like I aged about five years during the last six months,” he says.

“I have never had an office job,” he continues. “I’ve been telling everybody that I’ve skipped all the steps. I skipped middle management entirely and moved on to the senior management team. I was away in Fire Island, and I thought, ‘You know, you didn’t even set the auto reply on your email. You have to think about these things now.’ ”

But he already possesses the “increasingly rare set of skills required by this position: musical, linguistic, philosophic, visionary, supportive, and always with a sense of humor and humility,” says Patrick Summers. “Those are rare combinations in life, and most especially in art. He is wonderfully ready for this unique post and will become a part of the legacy of artists who have contributed mightily to the success of the company: Jean Mallandaine, Richard Bado, Kathleen Kelly, and Eric Melear. I’m incredibly honored and excited to work with Brad as my closest musical colleague in the company.”

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“At HGO our donors are part of a special family. One of the greatest privileges of membership is often my fellow members themselves!”

– Helen Shaffer, Chair
HGO Patrons Committee

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The creative process is a mysterious thing. Creativity is often described as something magical and effortless, and the popular consciousness envisions the artist as a lone, scraggly-haired genius, divorced from all worldly considerations and waiting for one of those elusive lightbulb-above-the-head moments.

Strange, therefore, that one of the key tools of creation—at least these days—is the workshop, a word that in itself evokes toil, sweat, and even commerce. Workshops have long been standard practice in the development of new plays and musical theater works, and have more recently become part of the creation process for opera. Workshops offer an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together in one place to experience and discuss a new work at critical points in its development. In an age when so much work—even that of a creative and collaborative nature—takes place electronically, the experience of simply sharing time, space, and purpose for even a few days is priceless.

A successful workshop involves several key elements.

- It requires a dedicated period of time and a workspace and environment conducive to collaboration.
- The workshop team should include the composer and librettist, members of the commissioning company, and the director and conductor. Musicians,
actors, and/or audience members may also be invited to take part.
• Clear goals should be determined. Strong facilitation is required to keep the group focused on the task at hand.
• Perhaps the most important element of all is flexibility. Regardless of how much advance planning or structure is put in place before the workshop begins, it’s important to retain enough agility to turn on a dime should something unexpected emerge that needs exploration. Workshopping is definitely an art in itself.

With those elements in mind, HGOco set out to workshop O Columbia, the first of HGOco’s new three-year series of Song of Houston chamber operas. O Columbia began life as an idea submitted to HGO by composer Gregory Spears and librettist Royce Vavrek in response to a national commission call-out for stories resonant with contemporary life in Houston. Their proposal, centered on the Columbia space shuttle accident of 2003, was chosen by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers and the HGO selection committee from more than a hundred submissions. Once the selection was made, Spears and Vavrek flew to Houston for an intensive series of meetings with HGO staff as well as field interviews related to the opera’s theme, including an afternoon of conversations with NASA scientists and astronauts at the Johnson Space Center.

In early September, they returned to HGO with an extended team—including the stage director, conductor, and music advisor—for a five-day workshop focused on the libretto, or text, of the work. A cast of Houston-based actors joined the creative and producing teams to give life to the libretto through a series of sessions in which the text was read, discussed, improvised on, rearranged/rewritten, and read and discussed again. It was an invigorating, invaluable opportunity for all involved to see the material taking shape and to share and discuss their reactions, continuing a dialogue about the broader structure, scope, and purpose of the piece. The session culminated in a reading and feedback session with project supporters, including members of the NASA community whose initial interviews influenced the text of the work.

When the group meets again this spring, it will have a whole new element to explore: the music, which will be workshopped in another five-day session that will include singers, among them members of the HGO Studio.

It’s hard to predict what twists and turns the development of O Columbia will take between now and its premiere in October 2015, but that’s the beauty of workshops. What we do know is that the choices represented in the completed work will be the product of true collaboration and exploration of the craft of contemporary opera-making. ©
Houston Grand Opera’s 2014–15 season is just around the corner! Watch these pages for information about all things HGOco—from touring programs by Opera to Go!, to High School Voice Studio activities, to exciting community engagement programs, and more.

**HGOco COMMISSION CELEBRATES SHIP CHANNEL CENTENNIAL**

Mark your calendar for the maiden voyage of *On this Muddy Water: Voices from the Houston Ship Channel*, a song cycle for voices and chamber ensemble commissioned by HGOco in celebration of the Ship Channel’s centennial. Composer D. J. Sparr and writer Janine Joseph combed through hours of oral histories collected through the Working the Port project conducted by the Houston Arts Alliance Folklife and Traditional Arts Program to create a unique portrait of the men and women who live and work along one of Houston’s most vibrant—and often overlooked—economic hubs.

The premiere performance will take place on Wednesday, December 10 at 5:30 p.m. in the Tudor Gallery of the Julia Ideson Library, adjacent to the Houston Arts Alliance exhibition *Stories of a Workforce: Celebrating the Centennial of the Houston Ship Channel*. A reception will follow. Subsequent performances are scheduled for December 17, January 7, and January 21. Visit HGO.org/HGOco for more information.

**OPERA TO GO! KICKS OFF TOUR WITH FREE PERFORMANCES**

Opera to Go! presented two free performances of Mary Carol Warwick and Kate Pogue’s *Cinderella in Spain* at Miller Outdoor Theatre September 25 and 26. These performances were a great kickoff to OTG’s tour of the bilingual opera, an HGO commission that has been a favorite since its 1998 premiere. You can experience this high-energy opera at your school, library, or community center in a fully staged, 45-minute performance. The tour continues through December 19; performances may be booked on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. For more information, please visit HGO.org/operatogo.
WELCOME, HSVS CLASS OF 2015!

Seven high school seniors embarked on a year-long intensive training program in vocal music this fall through HGO’s High School Voice Studio (HSVSt). The purpose of the program is to prepare gifted young singers for college/conservatory auditions. The program is led by HSVS voice instructor Dr. Jason Lester and is managed by HGO choral director and Opera to Go! artist Wesley Landry; Karen Reeves, director of the HGO Children’s Chorus and the founder of HSVS, acts as advisor. Members of the HSVS are selected by audition and will be featured in recitals in January and May. Watch the HGOco page for details.

From left: Charlie Reader, Clear Lake H.S.; Shilpa Sadagopan, Emily Wolfe, and Tyler Resto, all from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; Abigail Jones, homeschool; Austin Ingalls, Pearland H.S.; and Cullen King, James E. Taylor H.S.

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THE NEXUS INITIATIVE

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

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BBVA Compass
Once again, we started our HGO Studio season off with a bang. Just as we did last season, we brought the Studio artists in from their summer activities in mid-August and put them right to work on Studio Showcase, our annual program of opera scenes. They did a fabulous job, as you can no doubt tell from the photos.

Studio Showcase also gave them the opportunity to work closely with Bradley Moore, HGO’s new head of music staff and music director for the HGO Studio. Bradley and guest director James Robinson did an incredible job of helping the Studio artists become a cohesive group and turn in wonderful performances. A now-traditional retreat at the ranch of Susan and C. Richard “Dick” Stasney, along with some pampering from the marvelous HGO Guild Studio Buddies, also helped get the 2014–15 HGO Studio off to a good start.

We look forward to a wonderful season and hope to see you at many HGO Studio performances this season (“Save the Dates” on the facing page).

Laura Canning, Director

From top: Pureum Jo, Sofia Selowsky, and D’Ana Lombard perform a scene from Così fan tutte; Morgan Pearse and Peixin Chen in Don Pasquale; Thomas Richards and Megan Samarin in Luisa Miller; Thomas Richards and Sofia Selowsky in Sweeney Todd; pianist Sahar Nouri; Pureum Jo and Reginald Smith Jr. in Les pêcheurs de perles. Photos by Lynn Lane.
HGO Studio Faculty & Staff

Laura Canning, Director
Bradley Moore, Music Director
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Amra Catovic, Studio Administrator
Carlisle Floyd, Artistic Advisor
Stephen King, Director of Vocal Instruction
The Harold Block and Janet Sims/Jill and Allyn Risley Chair
Patrick Summers, Conducting Instructor and Coach
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Patrick Harvey, Resident Coach
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair
Peter Pasztor, Resident Coach
Tara Faircloth, Drama Coach
Brian Connelly, Piano Instructor
Sponsored by Ursula and Saul Balagura
Timothy Hester, Piano Instructor
Sponsored by Joan Hacken Bitar, M.D.
Jordan de Souza, Vocal Coach
Gerardo Felisatti, Vocal Coach
David Hanlon, Vocal Coach
Laurie Rogers, Vocal Coach
Dr. Irene Spiegelman, German Diction Coach
Christa Gaug, German Instructor
Sponsored by Robert L. Turner in honor of John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer

Enrica Vagliani Gray, Italian Instructor
Sponsored by Marsha L. Montemayor
Jonathan Ludwig, Russian Instructor
Julie Muller, English Instructor
Nicole Uhlig, French Instructor
Sponsored by Jennifer Sickler
Deborah Birnbaum, Guest Coach
John Fisher, Guest Coach
James J. Drach Endowed Chair
Myra Huang, Guest Coach
Laura Lee Blanton Studio Award through the Scurluck Foundation
Eric Melear, Guest Coach
Kevin Murphy, Guest Coach
James Robinson, Showcase Director
Pierre Vallet, Guest Coach
Evans Family Endowed Chair

The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of McGladrey, LLP.
The Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wakefield, Mr. Patrick Carfizzi, Dr. David and Mrs. Norine Gill, and the HGO Guild.
Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.

HGO Studio Artists 2014–15

PEIXIN CHEN, bass
The Evans Family/Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow

PUREUM J0, soprano
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis/Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

D’ANA LOMBARD, soprano
Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow

SAHAR NOURI, pianist/coach
Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

MORGAN PEARSE, baritone
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

THOMAS RICHARDS, bass-baritone
Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow

MEGAN SAMARIN, mezzo-soprano
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

SOFIA SELOWSKY, mezzo-soprano
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow

EMILY SENTURIA, conductor/pianist
Beth Madison Fellow

REGINALD SMITH JR., baritone
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow

CHRISTOPHER TURBESSEI, pianist/coach
Ms. Marianne Kah/Joan Hacken Bitar, M.D., Fellow

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SAVE THE DATES

RECITALS AT RIENZI
December 6 and 7, 2014
March 13 and 14, 2015
May 7 and 10, 2015
Recitals are held at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. Single tickets and recital packages available through HGO.org or 713-228-OPERA (6737). Call 713-639-7800 for information.

CONCERT OF ARIAS
February 5, 2015
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center.
The evening begins with a 6 p.m. champagne reception, followed by the competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.
JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE
HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. To demonstrate their belief, they partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools on a three-year initiative to bring HGOco programs Opera to Go!, Storybook Opera, and Opera Camp: Create an Opera to students who might not otherwise be exposed to opera. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Beyond their support of general operations and HGOco, the Opera is grateful for the couple’s generous contributions to Concert of Arias (2012–15) and HGO’s main stage, including last season’s Aida and Rigoletto and this season’s Otello and Madame Butterfly—three out of four by Verdi, one of their favorite composers.

ROBIN ANGLY AND MILES SMITH
HGO subscribers since the 2005–06 season, 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’s great passion for music has led to their engagement with other local organizations: they serve on the board of Ars Lyrica Houston and are benefactors of the Soma International Foundation. Robin is additionally on the boards of Inprint and Da Camera. Robin and Miles have been donors to HGO special events and the Young Artists Vocal Academy, and most recently supported HGO’s main-stage production of Das Rheingold and The Passenger at Lincoln Center Festival. They are chairing the 2015 Opera Ball.

DENISE AND PHILIP BAHR
This season marks Denise and Philip’s twentieth as HGO subscribers. The couple has supported the Opera since 1996, underwriting special events and main-stage productions (most recently Il trovatore in 2012–13). Denise and Philip have a special love for the HGO Studio, where opera’s rising stars have benefited from their support since 2000. Denise, currently an HGO trustee, is a former member of the HGO Board of Directors, and the Opera has been privileged to have Philip’s participation on the board since 1998. Beyond serving as champions of HGO, Denise and Philip have a deep commitment to music that extends to their support of University of Houston Moores School Society, Houston Symphony, and Houston Ballet. The Opera was honored to have the couple chair the 2010 Opera Ball.

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

HGO is privileged to partner with BBVA Compass, a Sunbelt-based financial institution that operates 684 branches, including 352 in Texas, 89 in Alabama, 78 in Arizona, 62 in California, 45 in Florida, 38 in Colorado, and 20 in New Mexico. BBVA Compass is committed to financial education, diversity and inclusion, and supporting the arts in its communities. The bank is the U.S. subsidiary of BBVA, a Spain-based global financial services group founded in 1857, and is a well-known champion of Spanish art. BBVA Compass was a lead corporate sponsor of HGO’s Ring (created by the Spanish production team La Fura dels Baus) and also supports the NEXUS Initiative, HGO’s affordability program. David Powell, BBVA Compass’s co-head of the U.S. corporate and investment banking business and head of global clients and investment banking, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

Pat and Daniel Breen

Pat and Dan realize the importance of supporting HGO’s main-stage work, having sponsored many of the company’s most cherished productions over the past two decades. They have generously provided leadership support to HGO’s Inspiring Performance campaign. Pat is one of the most dedicated members of the HGO Board of Directors, having first joined in 1987, and currently serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. Dan is owner of the investment firm Breeco Investments. They have six sons—Daniel, John, Thomas, Brian, Patrick, and Michael—and many beloved grandchildren.

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 throughout Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera, which has been critical to the company’s unprecedented growth and success in recent years.

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 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 main-stage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

ConocoPhillips

ConocoPhillips is a global, independent energy exploration and production company that operates multinationally but calls Houston home. For over thirty years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to main-stage productions, including the 2014–15 season-opening production, Verdi’s Otello. In 2009, the company gave a major multiyear grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. HGO is fortunate to have Janet L. Kelly, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, serve on the HGO Board of Directors and also as chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.
BOBBIE-VEE AND GERALD COONEY
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979, and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertory, including Aida, La bohème, Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. In the 2010–11 season, the Cooneys helped make possible the CD recording of HGO's innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, the world's first mariachi opera, and in 2013, they supported Cruzar's return to the Wortham Center. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the board of directors.

FRANCHISE CRANE
Franci is among the opera’s strongest friends and advocates, having been a subscriber since the 1983–84 season and one of the first members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Franci is a member of the HGO Board of Directors, and serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor. Franci is a Phi Kappa Kappa graduate of the University of Texas and a graduate with high honors of the University of Texas School of Law. She was a partner of the law firm Susman Godfrey, where she earned a reputation as one of Texas’s finest litigators.

THE CULLEN FOUNDATION
For more than three decades, The Cullen Foundation has been a vital member of the HGO family. Established in 1947, the Foundation has over a half-century history of giving generously to education, healthcare, 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 main-stage season.

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s main-stage season for nearly thirty 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 of The Barber of Seville (2011–12), Tristan and Isolde (2012–13), and Carmen (2013–14).

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOWMENT, INC.
Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the Endowment contains fifty-four named funds, both unrestricted and restricted to specific purposes, such as HGOco. HGOE 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 Janet L. Kelly, Senior Chairman Terrylin Neale, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors. This season, HGO is thrilled to have HGOE as the premier guarantor of A Christmas Carol.

HOUSTON METHODIST
This year, Houston Grand Opera celebrates nine seasons of partnering with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM). The only center of its kind in the country, CPAM is comprised of a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed on performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO special events and main-stage productions such as La traviata (2011–12), La bohème (2012–13), Aida (2013–14), and this season’s The Magic Flute. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. C. Richard Stasney, founder of CPAM, and Dr. Mauro Ferrari serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.
THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION

Based in Liberty, Texas, the Humphreys Foundation has been a major underwriter of HGO’s main-stage 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 main-stage productions such as last season’s Rigoletto, 2013’s Show Boat, and the world’s first mariachi opera, Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, in 2010 and 2013.

NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER

HGO first welcomed Nancy and Rich to the Opera family when they became 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. Rich and Nancy’s passion for enhancing Houston life has led to their involvement with numerous nonprofit institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rice University’s Kinder Institute for Urban Research; DePelchin Children’s Center Foundation; Discovery Green Conservancy; and MD Anderson Cancer Center. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, main-stage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

BETH MADISON

This season marks Beth’s twentieth as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004, first though her company, Madison Benefits Group, and later as an individual donor. Immediate past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, Beth shows no signs of scaling down her involvement—she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council, supporting HGO special events and, last season, three operas on HGO’s main stage: The Passenger, A Coffin in Egypt, and Das Rheingold. Beth has received several distinctions for her robust community service, including induction into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and a 2010 President’s Medallion from the University of Houston. In 2014, Governor Rick Perry appointed her to the University of Houston System Board of Regents. Beth was named a 2014 Woman of Distinction Ambassador by ABC13.

M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION

The M.D. Anderson Foundation has provided general operating support to HGO for more than thirty years. Based in Houston, the M.D. Anderson Foundation was established in 1936 by Tennessee-born, Houston-transplanted cotton mogul 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 the communities through the arts. HGO is privileged to have such a longstanding and committed partner as the M.D. Anderson Foundation in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.
MEDISTAR
HGO is delighted to count Medistar Corporation among its newest corporate supporters. Medistar is a full-service real estate development company that specializes in the design, development, financing, and construction of hospitals, long-term acute care facilities, cancer centers, integrated medical plazas, medical office buildings, and other medical facilities for the health care industry. The company is led by founder Monzer Hourani, an internationally renowned engineer whose innovations of many building techniques and concepts have had a great impact on the U.S. construction industry. Medistar joined the HGO family as a Grand Guarantor of the company's production of Wagner's Ring cycle (2014–17).

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. This strategy is well aligned with a company like HGO, with a strong record of commissioning and producing innovative original work. Last season’s main-stage productions of Weinberg’s The Passenger and the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Leonard Foglia’s A Coffin in Egypt would not have been possible without the Mellon Foundation’s leadership investment. Upcoming Mellon Foundation–supported projects include the world premieres of this season’s holiday opera, A Christmas Carol, and Prince of Players (2015–16) by legendary American composer Carlisle Floyd, as well as Our City, the latest series of Houston-based chamber operas from HGOco.

MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD
The Miller Theatre Advisory Board (MTAB), appointed by Houston’s mayor and confirmed by the City Council, acts as a steward of public and private funds to provide professional-caliber performances free to the public at the Miller Outdoor Theatre for the cultural enrichment of Houston’s diverse communities and visitors to the city. HGO’s partnership with MTAB extends back nearly six decades, making great opera accessible to thousands of Houstonians each year through live main-stage and Opera to Go! performances at Miller Theatre. HGO is tremendously grateful to MTAB for providing the Opera’s second home for so many years, and looks forward to the bright future of this longstanding partnership. June Deadrick (left) is a new HGO trustee representing the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

BRUCIE AND ANDREW MOORE
Brucie and Andy have been a treasured part of the Opera family for more than twenty years. The couple resides in Goliad, Texas, where they own Rock On M Ranch, LLC. Subscribers since the 1998–99 season, Brucie and Andrew are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, supporting special events, general operations, and main-stage productions. HGO has had the honor of Brucie’s service on the HGO Board of Directors since 2013. In addition to her board participation, she is also a lifetime member of the board of governors of Leadership Corpus Christi, a board member of the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, principal underwriter for the Corpus Christi Area Youth Orchestra, and board president of Harbor Playhouse, also in Corpus Christi. Andy, an accomplished performer, was the 2012 winner of HGO’s Singing with the Houston Idols and recently performed in productions of Les Misérables and Shrek the Musical. Brucie and Andy were recently honored by Harbor Playhouse as Philanthropists of the Year.
SARA AND BILL MORGAN

HGO subscribers for over fifteen years, Sara and Bill have been supporting HGO since 2002. Sara is no stranger to the Houston arts community—she 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, L.P. In addition to their support of HGO special events, the Morgans’ contributions to HGO’s main stage in recent years (*Dead Man Walking*, 2010–11; *The Rape of Lucretia*, 2011–12; and *The Passenger* at the Lincoln Center Festival, 2013–14) have helped the company to reach new heights. The couple will support HGO’s new holiday opera series with *It’s a Wonderful Life* in the 2016–17 season. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on its board of directors, and as a member and past chair of the HGOco Committee.

CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELLO

Cherished members of the HGO family, Cynthia and Tony are deeply committed to improving the lives of Houstonians through their support of health care and the arts. Tony is the chief executive officer of Nabors Industries, the world’s largest land-based drilling contractor. Cynthia, a community leader and HGO Board member since 2003, currently serves on the Opera’s Special Events and HGOco Committees, the latter of which she is chair. HGO is immeasurably grateful for the Petrellos’ support of HGOco and the main stage, underwriting this season’s *A Christmas Carol*. The Petrellos also support HGOco programs for children, including the Student Performance Series and Opera to Go!

SCHLUMBERGER

Schlumberger, Ltd., is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly twenty 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 150,000 people. As the world’s leading supplier of technology, integrated project management, and information solutions to customers working in the oil and gas industry, Schlumberger is a global business, but the company also proactively engages with the local communities where its employees live and work. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters, and thrilled to have Dan Domeracki, vice president of government and industry relations, serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

DIAN AND HARLAN STAI

In the twenty-six years since they first joined the Houston Grand Opera family, Dian and Harlan have left no part of the company untouched by their warmth and generosity. 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 runs the gamut from main-stage productions to 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. Their support of HGO’s main stage includes *Tosca* (2009–10), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2010–11), *Madame Butterfly* (2010–11), *La traviata* (2011–12), *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (2012–13), and *A Coffin in Egypt* (2013–14). HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.
JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER

John and Jerry, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, travel around the world to experience the best that opera has to offer. HGO subscribers and donors for over a decade, the couple shares a passion for Wagner that led them to support the Ring cycle (2014–17) with 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, in addition to serving on the boards of the American Friends of Covent Garden and the Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation. He is also chair of the HGO Studio Committee. Jerry is a board member of Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. Prior to their instrumental contribution to HGO’s Ring, in recent years John and Jerry have supported HGO main-stage productions and special events. They are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and John is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society.

VINSON & ELKINS LLP

HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. Headquartered in Houston with approximately 700 lawyers in fifteen offices worldwide, V&E is 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 main-stage productions, including last season’s monumental The Passenger. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: Mark R. Spradling (general counsel and secretary, vice chair—Audit Committee) and Glen A. Rosenbaum (chairman emeritus).

MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS

A jewel of the Houston community, Margaret has been a treasured friend of HGO for over thirty years. A longtime singer, she possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera. 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. Recent main-stage productions Margaret has supported include The Barber of Seville (2011–12), La bohème (2012–13), Show Boat (2012–13), Aida (2013–14), and Carmen (2013–14). A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball.

THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.

The Wortham Foundation’s relationship with HGO dates back more than thirty years. In the 1980s, the 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 by serving on many civic, cultural, and philanthropic boards. Lyndall’s love for the arts and Gus’s involvement in city beautification and expansion have lived on through the philanthropic giving of the Wortham Foundation. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support.
Houston Grand Opera and Mrs. Margaret Alkek Williams, chairman, sincerely thank all of the individuals and companies who supported the 2014 Opera Ball.
**FLEURS DE L’OPÉRA**

It was an elegant evening of enchantment and celebration in the Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center on April 5, 2014. Hosted by Houston Grand Opera Ball Chairman Margaret Alkek Williams, the gala theme paid tribute to “flowers of the opera,” complete with sumptuous décor, a French-themed menu, and champagne provided by Perrier-Jouët. Entertainment included two numbers performed by dancers from HGO’s production of *Carmen* and two exceptional arias sung by Grammy Award–winning soprano Ana María Martínez.
Thank you to all the 2014 Opera Ball Supporters

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HGO is thrilled that HCC Insurance Holdings, Inc., has joined as a new corporate partner for the 2014–15 season.

Founded in 1974 and headquartered in Houston, HCC Insurance Holdings is a leading specialty insurer with offices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Ireland, transacting business in approximately 180 countries. HCC underwrites more than 100 classes of specialty insurance, including property and casualty, accident, and professional liability. HCC products and capabilities set the standard for the industry, and many of the company’s almost 2,000 employees are industry-leading experts.

Chris Williams is chief executive officer of HCC Insurance Holdings, Inc. Prior to HCC, he served as national director of Life, Accident & Health of Willis. Chris brings almost forty years of insurance industry experience to his leadership role at HCC.

Chris serves as a trustee of the HGO Association on behalf of HCC. Chris and his wife, Kris, own Wattle Creek Winery in Sonoma County, and generously donate wine for many of HGO’s special events. Kris is also active with the Opera and serves as a member of HGO’s Special Events Committee.
Board Member Spotlight

Jack Roth and Elizabeth Grimm

HGO is incredibly fortunate to have the support of Dr. Jack Roth and Dr. Elizabeth Grimm, who have dedicated their entire professional lives to improving the health of others. Since 1986, Jack has been professor and chair of the Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center (UTMDACC) in Houston. He serves as founding director of the W. M. Keck Center for Innovative Cancer Therapies, a group of more than fifty scientists and clinicians worldwide who share research ideas and findings with the common goal of curing cancer. Liz is deputy division head for research affairs at UTMDACC’s Division of Cancer Medicine, where she is also a professor in the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology—Research. In 2013, she was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The couple’s artistic interests include a shared love of Wagner, a passion that compelled them to join the HGO family as subscribers and donors in 2013, when the company embarked on Houston’s first-ever production of Wagner’s epic Ring cycle.
DONNA PEARSON CHAPMAN

HGO is fortunate to count Donna Pearson Chapman as one of the newest members of the Opera’s board of directors. Donna is owner and president of Josey Oil Company, an active producer of oil and gas on the Gulf Coast. As a philanthropist, she focuses her energies on medical, educational, and arts-related causes.

Donna is chairman emeritus of the American Hospital Paris Foundation and currently serves on its board of governors. In addition to her involvement with HGO’s board, she serves on the board of the Houston Symphony, The Bridges of Understanding (an organization dedicated to improving relations with the Middle East), the National Wildlife Museum of Art, and the advisory board of the University of Texas College of Arts and Humanities.

Besides her many professional and philanthropic activities, Donna is a devoted wife and mother. Along with her boundless passion for music, Donna is a champion of the visual arts. She earned her Certificat des Lettres from the Sorbonne in Paris and founded Neuhoff Galleries in Dallas, Texas, a gallery specializing in French Post-Impressionist paintings and sculpture.
Stargazing... up close

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Ryan McKinny
Bass-baritone, Houston Grand Opera Studio alum

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The Demon Barber expects you on March 28, 2015, at the Houston Racquet Club.

For more information about Bloody Good Fun, or to donate to the silent auction or volunteer, visit hgoguild.org or call 713/523-8396.

Bloody Good Fun on the Bayou is a major fundraiser for the HGO Guild, whose members provide financial support to the opera’s nationally recognized educational and outreach programs, devote thousands of volunteer hours, and show Houston hospitality to guest artists. Join the Guild today and get an inside look at Houston Grand Opera by visiting hgoguild.org.
Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $4,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Deborah Hirsch at 713-546-0259.

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† Ten or more years of consecutive support
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Dr. Lawrence E. Carlton
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Mr. Craig M. Rowley
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Mr. Eric W. Steen Sr.
Miss Bonnie Sue Wooldridge

For information regarding charitable estate gift planning and how it might positively impact you, your loved ones, and Houston Grand Opera, please contact Richard Buffett, director of major gifts and legacy giving, at 713-546-0216 or visit HGO.org/laureatesociety.
The Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc., is a separate nonprofit organization that invests contributions to earn income for the benefit of Houston Grand Opera Association. The Endowment Board works with Paul Comstock Partners, independent investment counsel, to engage professional investment managers.

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**GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUNDS HELP SUPPORT OUR PRODUCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charles T. (Ted) Bauer Memorial Fund</td>
<td>General and Mrs. Maurice Hirsch Memorial Opera Fund</td>
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<td>Mary Frances Newton Bowers Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Elizabeth Reike and Wayne V. Jones Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Pat and Daniel A. Breen Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Kitty King Powell Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>The Brown Foundation Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Constantine S. Nicandros Endowment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Barbara M. Osborne Charitable Trust</td>
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<td>Douglas E. Colin Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil) — Quaker State Company Fund</td>
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<td>Dian and Harlan Stai Fund</td>
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<td>Dorothy Barton Thomas Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Bonnie Sue Wooldridge Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>The Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment Fund</td>
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**PRODUCTION FUNDS HELP CREATE NEW PRODUCTIONS AND REVIVE EXISTING ONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Edward and Frances Bing Fund</td>
<td>The Wagner Fund</td>
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**PRODUCTION FUNDS FOR PRINCIPAL ARTISTS**

<table>
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<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund</td>
<td>The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair: Denise Tarrant</td>
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<td>The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair: Richard Bado</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Jr. Endowed Chair: Patrick Harvey, Assistant Chorus Master/Assistant Conductor</td>
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<td>James A. Elkins Jr. Endowed Visiting Artist Fund</td>
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<td>Evans Family Endowed Chair: Pierre Vallet, Guest Coach</td>
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</tbody>
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**ELECTRONIC MEDIA FUNDS HELP HGO REACH AUDIENCES THROUGHOUT THE REGION, STATE, AND NATION**

<table>
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<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Ford Foundation Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>The Ruddell Endowment Fund</td>
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**HOUSTON GRAND OPERA STUDIO FUNDS HELP TRAIN AND DEVELOP SOME OF THE FINEST OPERA TALENT IN THE WORLD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fellowship Fund/ Houston Endowment, Inc.</td>
<td>Carol Lynn Lay Fletcher Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship Fund</td>
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<td>Charlotte Howe Memorial Scholarship Fund</td>
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<td>Elva Lobit Opera Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Erin Gregory Neale Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fellowship Fund</td>
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<td>Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil) — Quaker State Company Fund</td>
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<td>Mary C. Gayler Snook Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Tenneco, Inc. Endowment Fund</td>
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**EDUCATION FUNDS HELP HGO TOUCH THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

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<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence E. Carlton, M.D., Endowment Fund</td>
<td>David Clark Grant Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>Beth Crispin Endowment Fund</td>
<td>Houston Grand Opera Guild in memory of Ann Craft</td>
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<td>James J. Drach Endowment Fund</td>
<td>The Schissler Family Foundation Endowed Fund for Educational Programs</td>
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<td>Fondren Foundation Fund for Educational Programs</td>
<td>Guyla Pircher Harris Project</td>
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<td>Spring Opera Festival Fund (Shell Lubricants, formerly Pennzoil — Quaker State Company)</td>
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**OUTREACH FUNDS HELP HGO REACH A BROAD SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY**

<table>
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<td>Guyla Pircher Harris Project</td>
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**CONCERT OF ARIAS**

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<th>Fund Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eleanor Searle McCollum Endowment Fund</td>
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UPCOMING OPERAS

2014

WORLD PREMIERE

Iain Bell/Simon Callow

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Dec. 5, 7m, 9, 11, 14m, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21m

Premier Guarantor—Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.
Grand Guarantor—The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation
Grand Underwriters—The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PwC

The Narrator

Anthony Dean Griffey

Kevin Ray ‡ (Dec. 17, 20)

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Conductor
Warren Jones *
Director
Simon Callow *

Set and Costume Designer
Laura Hopkins *
Lighting Designer
Mark McCullough

2015

Puccini

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Jan. 23, 25m, 28, 31, Feb. 6, 8m

Grand Underwriter—Bobbie-Vee and Jerry Cooney

Cio-Cio-San

Ana Maria Martínez ‡
Pinkerton
Alexey Dolgov

Sharpless
Scott Hendricks ‡
Suzuki
Sofia Selovsky †
Goro
John Easterlin *

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Chorus Conductor
Giancarlo Guerrero *
Original Director
Michael Grandage
Revival Director
Louisa Muller

Set and Costume Designer
Christopher Oram
Original Lighting Designer
Neil Austin
Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡

THE RING

Wagner

DIE WALKÜRE

Apr. 18, 22, 25, 30, May 3m

Premier Guarantors—Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.; Medistar Corporation; Mr. John G. Turner and Mr. Jerry J. Fischer; Grand Guarantor—Robin Angly and Miles Smith; BBVA Compass; Mrs. Janica Barrow; Guarantors—The Brown Foundation; Chernov; Donna Kaplan and Richard A. Lydecker; Wil L. McLendon; Miss Catherine Jane Merchant; Elizabeth Phillips; Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Sweeney; John C. and Sheila R. Trewed; Bright van Wyl; The Vaughn Foundation; Grand Underwriters—Carlo Franciso Buck Foundation; Beth Madison; Dr. Jack A. Roth and Dr. Elizabeth Grimm

Brünnhilde
Christine Goerke
Wotan
Iain Paterson
Siegrinde
Karita Mattila

Siegfried
Simon O’Neill
Hunding
Ain Anger

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Conductor
Patrick Summers
Director
Carlus Padrissa

Sweeney Todd

Stephen Sondheim/Hugh Wheeler

SWEENEY TODD

Apr. 24, 26m, 29, May 2, 8, 9

Grand Underwriter—Brucie and Andrew Moore

Sweeney Todd
Nathan Gunn
Mrs. Lovett
Susan Bullock
Johanna
Megan Samarin †
Anthony Hope
Morgan Pearse †

Tobias Ragg
Nicholas Phan ‡
Judge Turpin
Jake Gardner
Beggar Woman
Cynthia Clayton

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Conductor
James Lowe ‡
Director
Lee Blakeley

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Mozart

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Jan. 30, Feb. 1m, 4, 7, 14

Guarantors—Houston Methodist; Vinson & Elkins LLP; The Wortham Foundation, Inc.
Grand Underwriters—Edward and Frances Bing Fund; Halliburton

Tamino
David Portillo *
Pamina
Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán

Monostatos
Aaron Pegram *
D’Ana Lombard †
Second Lady
Meghan Samarin †
Third Lady
Renée Tatum
Papageno
Pureum Jo †*

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Conductor
Robert Spano
Original Director
Sir Nicholas Hytner
Revival Director
Ian Rutherford
Set and Costume Designer
Bob Crowley *

Original Lighting Designer
Nick Chelton
Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡

EL PASADO NUNCA SE TERMINA

José “Pepe” Martínez/Leonard Foglia

THE PAST IS NEVER FINISHED

May 13, 16, 17m

Guarantor—Mr. and Mrs. Anthony G. Petrello
Grand Underwriter—Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai
Underwriters—Bank of America; The Humphreys Foundation

Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán

Music
José “Pepe” Martínez
Lyrics
Leonard Foglia

Director
Leonard Foglia
Music Projection/Set Designer
Elaine McCarthy
Costume Designer
Scott Marr

Please note: El Pasoado Nunca Se Termima is not part of our 2014–15 subscription series; tickets must be purchased separately.

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www.HGO.org
OCTOBER

24, 26m, NOV. 1, 4, 7
- Performances of Verdi’s *Otello*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the October 24 performance only.

24
- HGO’s Opening Night Dinner Celebration following the performance of *Otello*. Wortham Theater Center, Ray C. Fish Plaza. For more information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

26
- Behind the Music: An intimate conversation about *Otello* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

31, NOV. 2m, 8, 13, 15
- Performances of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the October 31 performance only.

NOVEMBER

2
- Behind the Music: An intimate conversation about *Così fan tutte* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

26
- Holiday Tree Lighting at the Wortham Theater Center, noon.

DECEMBER

6, 7
- HGO Studio Recital at Rienzi. Hear HGO Studio artists in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, MFAH’s decorative arts wing, 1406 Kirby Drive. December 6 at 7:30 p.m., December 7 at 5 p.m. Call 713-639-7800 for information.

5, 7m, 9, 11, 14m, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21m
- World premiere performances of Iain Bell and Simon Callow’s *A Christmas Carol*. Wortham Theater Center’s Cullen Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the December 5 performance only.

JANUARY

23, 25m, 28, 31, FEB. 6, 8m
- Performances of Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the January 23 performance only.

25

27
- HGOco presents a professional development workshop for teachers on *The Magic Flute*. Wortham Theater Center, 6 p.m.

30, FEB. 1m, 4, 7, 14
- Performances of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the January 30 performance only.

FEBRUARY

1

5
- Concert of Arias—27th Annual Eleanor McColm Competition for Young Singers. Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center. The evening begins with a 6 p.m. champagne reception, followed by the competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

10 & 13
- HGOco presents Student Matinee Performances of *The Magic Flute*, 10 a.m. For school groups only.

MARCH

13 & 14
- HGO Studio Recital at Rienzi. Hear HGO Studio artists in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, MFAH’s decorative arts wing, 1406 Kirby Drive, 7:30 p.m. Call 713-639-7800 for information.

19
- HGO 60th Anniversary Gala, featuring mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato. Wortham Theater Center, 7:30 p.m. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

APRIL

11
- *Opera Ball 2014*. Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

15
- HGOco presents a professional development workshop for teachers on *Die Walküre*. Wortham Theater Center, 5:30 p.m. (please note early start).

18, 22, 25, 30, MAY 3m
- Performances of Wagner’s *Die Walküre*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the April 18 performance only.

24, 26m, 29, MAY 2, 8, 9
- Performances of Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler’s *Sweeney Todd*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the April 24 performance only.

26
- Behind the Music: An intimate conversation about *Sweeney Todd* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.
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Assistant Stage Manager
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HGOco Technical Director
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Albert Pike, Master Electrician *
Mercedes Ramirez, Draper *
Maria Luisa Salinas, Costume Technician
Omer Ben Seadia, Assistant Director
Dotti Staker, Wig and Makeup Department Head *
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Assistant Stage Manager
Paul Lea Tran, Costume Technician
Myrna Vallejo, Costume Coordinator *
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Assistant Stage Manager

* denotes 10 or more years of service
Houston Grand Opera offers a wealth of services to enhance your opera experience.

Want to brush up on the opera before you attend? Need directions to the theater? This information and much more is available on our website where you can also purchase tickets and make a donation: www.HGO.org

HGO's Customer Care Center is another great resource. For performance information, to purchase or exchange tickets, or to make a donation to HGO, contact the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372). You can also e-mail customercare@hgo.org. Throughout the season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (or until curtain time on performance days). The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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.

**Brown and Cullen Alcoves**

The Wortham Theater Center's newly renovated alcoves were designed with your comfort in mind. Step inside one of these golden-hued spaces in the Grand Foyer, and you’ll find a calm place to reflect on the evening's performance over dinner or drinks.

**Exchanging Your Tickets**

Full-season and Opera-to-Order subscribers may exchange their tickets for a different performance of the same opera without fee, subject to availability. Exchanges can be made by phone until 24 hours before the performance begins; for exchanges within 24 hours of curtain time, please visit the Box Office in person. Non-subscription single tickets may be exchanged with a service fee of $10 per ticket. When exchanged for tickets of greater value, the customer will be responsible for the difference; no refunds will be made. No exchanges are permitted after the performance has begun.

**Lost or Misplaced Tickets**

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

**Patrons with Disabilities**

The Wortham Theater Center features wheelchair access to both theaters with a choice of seating locations and ticket prices. An FM assistive listening device, generously provided by the Houston First Corporation, is available for use free of charge at all performances. Please call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372) for full details.

**Descriptive Services** for persons with vision loss are available with 48-hour advance reservations. Please call 713-546-0203 for details.

**Food and Beverage Services**

To pre-order food and beverages at the Grand Foyer Café prior to the performance, call Aramark at 713-250-3650. Pre-order beverages for intermission at any of the lobby bars when you arrive at the theater. When you return at intermission, your beverages will be waiting for you.

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

**Parking**

Valet parking is a benefit of membership for Patrons Circle and National Patron donors; the valet station is located on Prairie Street. If you would like information about membership at this level, please contact a member of HGO's Development staff at 713-546-0704, or e-mail us at donorservices@hgo.org.
You were very young when you began your career. What were the influences that led you into opera?

A teacher at my senior school possessed an amazing collection of old acoustic opera records going back to the earliest days of sound recording. Knowledge acquired from listening to these from my early teens got me my first stage productions while a student at Oxford, and from there my first paid job as junior assistant director at Glyndebourne.

Had you done much directing in the United States when you first came to HGO to direct Der Rosenkavalier? What were your impressions of our company at that time (1975, just a few years into the tenure of former General Director David Gockley), and what do you remember about your early experiences here?

My American debut was Barber with the Washington Opera. It was the year of Watergate. I stayed at the Watergate Hotel, where my laundry was stolen from outside my room.

My impressions of the company in the early Gockley years were of ambitious aims and matching high artistic standards. Rosenkavalier was a co-production with the Netherlands Opera, so there was enough money for high-level casting, a classy production, and a generous rehearsal period. My regard for Gockley hit the maximum when he announced that he would not be arriving for the first two weeks of rehearsal. I refused to accept this, so Gockley cancelled his contract and re-cast, extremely well. Those were the days! My earliest memories are all positive. It was one of my favorite places to work. (Still is.) The parties were, for a European, unbelievably lavish and the wealthy part of the community seemed to be totally behind the opera. I also discovered an amazing new singer called Dolly Parton. I remember slipping away from a Tancredi performance just after the curtain went up one evening, taking in the Dolly concert and being back at the opera for the curtain calls. Magic!

It seems that many people think of productions mostly in terms of their “look.” Do you think that is true, and, if so, how do you feel about it? What would you like your productions to be remembered for?

The “look” is important in that the audience has to look at it sometimes for ages during periods of minimal physical action. However, it should always embody a credible environment for the events of the drama. The danger with the major, well-funded companies is that expenditure must be made apparent in order to attract further funding. With opera stars being so highly paid and tickets so expensive there is a danger of opera becoming another aspect of the luxury goods market, with fashion, both in casting and production values, overtaking artistic integrity as a priority. I would like my productions to be valued for clarity of narrative, honest portrayal of character, and accurate analysis of relationships.

Years ago, you told Rodney Milnes in an interview for Opera that you treat singers as actors. What did you mean?

Singers, like actors, must embrace the idea that they are onstage to serve the piece they are performing rather than a personal agenda of celebrity or career. Opera is to a greater or lesser extent an ensemble art, but it is always a dramatic art, even in the great solo scenes.

What are some of the qualities you appreciate most in singers?

Most of all, the ability to sing with dramatic meaning. Mere beauty and skill of vocalization are of no interest to me in the theater. The voice has to power a dramatic vehicle. With that as a given, I am particularly grateful for variety of facial expression, resourceful body language, and good comic timing. Additional skills, like doing cartwheels or sword swallowing are always gratefully considered. Above all...? The desire to rehearse!

How would singers who have worked with you describe you?

Michael Langdon, the eventual Baron Ochs in the 1975 Rosenkavalier, said at a public meeting, “If I ever work with John again, they can have the performances for nothing. But I’ll charge for the rehearsals.”

What do you consider to be your greatest achievement thus far?

Maintaining a good work/life balance.

Your career has taken you so many places—if you could have the choice to live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Greenwich, London. Same place, same house since 1962. That’s where.

Do you have a philosophy that guides your life?

That’s one for the deathbed!
Honoree: Mariquita Masterson
Chairs: Jana and John Scott Arnoldy

Thursday, February 5, 2015
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center

6 p.m. – Champagne reception
7 p.m. – Vocal competition
Post-concert – Celebration dinner

For tickets or information visit HGO.org/COA
or call Clare Greene at 713-546-0277
Metamorphosis, an Hermès story