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Cover design by Rachel Block

Right: A scene from The Flying Dutchman. Photo by Jeff Roffman.
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As the summer winds down, we are thrilled to send you this season preview issue of Opera Cues. We hope you’ll keep it for reference, because in it you’ll find details about our exciting plans for the entire 2018–19 season.

It seems barely believable that almost exactly one year ago, Hurricane Harvey floodwaters inundated our beloved Wortham Theater Center and displaced us. If you are new to HGO, you may not know that last season went by in a whirlwind, as we built the HGO Resilience Theater in an exhibition hall at the George R. Brown Convention Center. We didn’t know it when we built it, but it would be our performance space for the entire season while the Wortham underwent extensive repairs.

It was a near-miracle that the 2017–18 season happened at all. The entire HGO family came together to ensure that we didn’t have to cancel a single performance. But the Wortham Theater Center is our artistic and creative home, and we are thrilled to return to it in time to open our 2018–19 season. We are marking our return with a big celebration—a one-night-only concert featuring Plácido Domingo, with special guest soprano Ana María Martínez and the HGO Orchestra on September 26. See our article on pp. 17–19 for details.

We have a fantastic 2018–19 season lined up for you.

It includes some of the most lush and beautiful music in all of opera, including Puccini’s deeply romantic La bohème and Catán’s magical Florencia en el Amazonas, which originated as an HGO commission. Bizet’s The Pearl Fishers is making its first HGO appearance by popular demand: Houston audiences will finally hear its famed duet sung live! Wagner’s gripping, ghostly tale The Flying Dutchman kicks off the season, and Mozart’s Don Giovanni returns in a thrilling new production. The season is capped with an exciting HGO world premiere from Tarik O’Regan and John Caird: The Phoenix, about the colorful life of Mozart librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. Find casting and other information about each of our operas on pp. 29–41; immediately following is a special introduction to The Phoenix.

We look forward to seeing you at the Wortham Theater Center in just a few short weeks.

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**NEWS & NOTES**

**Eun Sun Kim Named Principal Guest Conductor**

Conductor Eun Sun Kim has been named HGO’s principal guest conductor beginning with the 2019–20 season. She is the first person in more than 25 years to fill that role. She made her HGO debut with *La traviata*, opening not only the 2017–18 season but also the HGO Resilience Theater.

Kim will conduct at least one opera per season, beginning with R. Strauss’s *Salome*. The position will extend through four seasons.

“Eun Sun Kim seems to me a limitless talent at the outset of an important career,” said HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, “as her music-making is elegant, effortless, precise, and deep. Her incredible facility with languages and ability to communicate with singers, both supporting and challenging them, are all-too-rare qualities in a conductor.”

“I’m thrilled to join HGO as principal guest conductor,” said Kim. “Opera is by its very nature dramatic, but I’ll never forget my debut, conducting *La traviata* in the Houston convention center after the big flood last fall. Despite the extraordinary circumstances, it was impressive how HGO was able to create an environment where the orchestra and chorus and soloists were able to still perform at the highest level. To join such a team is an honor and a pleasure.”

**Bauer Family HSVS Scholarships Awarded**

Four members of the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio won scholarship awards on May 20 at the annual graduation recital. First place and a $3,000 scholarship went to Hannah Jones, a soprano from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; second place ($2,000) went to soprano Elisabeth Leone of Klein Oak High School; and third place ($1,000) was awarded to soprano Mallory Williams of Glenda Dawson High School. Baritone Sean Holshauser, who is homeschooled, took home a $500 encouragement award.

The purpose of the BFHSVS is to prepare students for vocal music study at the college/conservatory level. The program is administered by HGOco, and Nicole Asel, Barbara Clark, and Héctor Vásquez serve as voice faculty.

**Opportunities for Children Now Available!**

Looking for ways to expose your children to the joys of live opera? Make sure their teachers know about these opportunities. We can bring opera to their door, or they can bring the kids to the Wortham Theater Center for a magical musical experience.

It’s not too late to book a performance by Opera to Go!, HGO’s family-friendly touring company. Opera to Go! offers fully staged, 45-minute performances presented at schools, libraries, and community centers. As always, there are fall and spring tours, with performances available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

*Cinderella in Spain*, a bilingual take on the classic Cinderella story by Mary Carol Warwick and Kate Pogue, tours from September 24 through December 14. This hilarious adaptation is one of the most popular works in the history of Opera to Go! An adaptation of Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* by Kristine McIntyre will tour from January 28 through May 17. A small-town boy discovers that no potion from a quack doctor could impress his sweetheart more than a hearty dose of self-confidence in this beloved opera tale. Both of these productions are recommended for grades 2–8.

Each season, hundreds of school children receive their introduction to opera by experiencing it on the Wortham Theater stage. This year, students in grades 4–8 will see a shortened version of Puccini’s *La bohème* at Student Matinees (Nov. 1 and 6), while high school students enjoy the full-length opera on High School Night (Nov. 8).

Book performances online at at HGO.org/operatogo and HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

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Roderick Cox Wins Prestigious Conducting Grant

Roderick Cox, the rising conductor who will make his HGO debut leading *The Pearl Fishers* this season, has won the prestigious 2018 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award. The award is given each year to a conductor of exceptional promise 38 years of age or younger and comes with a $30,000 grant, the largest award given to young conductors in the United States. The grant may be used in various ways to further the recipient’s career.

Cox is currently the associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra and has also served as assistant conductor of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Alabama Symphony Youth Orchestra. HGO’s production of *The Pearl Fishers* will be his first foray into opera.

Happy Birthday, Prince Charles

When Prince Charles of England turned 70 years old on May 29, HGO Studio alumna Rachel Willis-Sørensen (2009–11) was on hand at Buckingham Palace to wish him well by performing two of Strauss’s *Four Last Songs*. Simon Russell Beale narrated and Esa-Pekka Salonen conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra for the event.

Willis-Sørensen was in England to perform the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Glyndebourne Festival, after which she sang Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, in the same production that will be seen in Houston in the coming season. She was last seen at HGO as Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan tutte* (2014).

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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

BY LAURA CHANDLER
Director of Publications
When HGO returns to the Wortham Theater Center in September, it will almost be like moving in for the first time. In 1987 when the center first opened, the company began its inaugural season with a production of Verdi’s Aida. Its grandeur makes it a fitting showpiece for special occasions, and HGO had also used it to open Jones Hall in 1966.

Maybe we could have reopened the Wortham with Aida this season—if only we’d known in advance that Harvey would come along and displace us for the entire 2017–18 season, and that we’d need something very special to mark our return.

But we came up with something that suits the occasion so much better than a production of Aida: Plácido Domingo, our Radames in 1987, is returning to Houston for a special homecoming concert. Joining him will be HGO audience favorite and Studio alumna Ana María Martínez; Patrick Summers will conduct the HGO Orchestra for this fabulous event, made possible by Margaret Alkek Williams.

Longtime subscribers will distinctly remember Domingo’s appearances at HGO over a 20-year period, beginning with his debut in the title role of Faust in 1967 and ending with Otello in 1989. After that, it was hard to get him back: besides keeping up a busy performance schedule, both as a singer and a conductor, he has been running opera companies and nurturing young artists through his Operalia competition, begun in 1993. Ana María Martínez won the Zarzuela Prize in the 1995 competition and has become a frequent collaborator with Domingo on international concert tours.

Celebrating our return to the Wortham with these artists, who have such a special connection to our company, will make for an evening we will remember just as vividly as we will always remember the storm one year ago.

When HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech thinks of the Monday after Hurricane Harvey struck, when he and the Alley Theatre’s Dean Gladden came downtown to check on the fates of their respective buildings, his most powerful memory is, naturally, the water:

The sheer amount of it—by then, it had even begun to recede a little.

The color of it under their flashlights—black as night.

The smell of it—“unholy, really nasty,” says Perryn. “I’ll never forget it.”
The basement was filled with it, the tunnel connecting the Wortham to the garage was filled with it, and it had entered both the Brown and Cullen theaters. There was water on both stages.

At the time, they didn’t understand just how toxic that water was, but it was so bad that when insurance adjustors saw it, they wouldn’t get anywhere near it. It took two weeks just to pump it out of the basement. And the most important thing? Anything it touched, unless it was metal or concrete, would have to be replaced.

But at every step of the recovery process—from the days immediately after the storm to the end of the season—we never lacked for generous supporters, who saw to it that we didn’t miss a note of music. We even added a production we hadn’t previously scheduled! Some of our donors thought it would be a good time to bring back the popular HGO commission *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, about the experiences of three generations of a Mexican-American family, divided by the border and straddling two cultures. It was more than timely, presented in May when the major headlines were focused on immigration.

But it was timely in another important way, because, at its core, it is about home. We are grateful and proud that Houston is our home. This is a city where people help others generously and selflessly—and sometimes even at their own peril, as we saw during the storm. We are also grateful for our Wortham Theater Center, a magical place where great art comes to life. We can’t wait to get back in and have the family back together in the place we call home!
Just over a year ago, the big headline at HGO was the announcement of Seeking the Human Spirit, one of the most ambitious projects in our 63-year history. With mainstage operas focused on spiritual questions, supported by innovative community programs meant to change lives outside of the opera house, we set out to explore what great art means for the soul of this city.

We were so excited to take our audience and our city on this journey. We announced the theme of the first year of Seeking the Human Spirit: sacrifice. Everything we had accomplished had been building up to this initiative, and we thought that nothing could slow us down.

And then Hurricane Harvey made its unannounced entry on our stage. The Wortham was flooded, we were without a home, and our future seemed uncertain. Would we have time to seek spiritual truths while we were struggling to keep our heads above water?

**AFTER THE STORM**

After Harvey, with the help of our Opera family and friends, we built the HGO Resilience Theater in a matter of days, relocated our offices, made alternative arrangements for rehearsal spaces, and refocused our fundraising efforts on meeting the greatest financial challenge this company has ever faced. With so much
to do, and with so much at stake, it seemed like the deep spiritual examination that is *Seeking the Human Spirit* might have to take a backseat to more immediate concerns.

But in October, when we opened our season on time with a critically acclaimed production of Verdi’s *La traviata*, we all exhaled for the first time in weeks. In this touching story about a strong woman’s sacrifice for love, Albina Shagimuratova broke our hearts as she sang Violetta. Many in our audience had recently made sacrifices of their own.

We paused. We looked around at the faces shining in the dark in the George R. Brown Convention Center, a building that had housed evacuees from the hurricane just days before. We thought of how far we had come together...and how much further we had to go. And that question came bubbling up to the surface: what does great art mean for the soul of this city?

And suddenly, Hurricane Harvey wasn’t just an obstacle to our spiritual journey—it was an important part of it.

Thriving even while we dealt with disaster required sacrifices from everyone in the HGO family. And more importantly, it provided the perfect context to experience how opera uplifts and brings alive the human spirit—precisely when we most need it.

**THE YEAR OF SACRIFICE**

For the year of Harvey, the theme of sacrifice was more apt then we ever could have imagined.

When we lost our costume shop, Head of Costumes Norma Cortez and our costume team immediately set up a workspace in our warehouse. Dotti Staker, our Wig and Makeup Department head, made our artists look incredible from a workspace in her own home. Our entire staff worked extra hours to ensure that we had a terrific season in spite of all obstacles. Our donors sacrificed more to protect and preserve HGO, and our wonderful audience members made sacrifices to make their time at HGO Resilience Theater as enjoyable as possible.

Those sacrifices paid off. Our three *Seeking the Human Spirit* operas were inspirational. *La traviata*, the classic story about a woman sacrificing her own happiness for someone else’s, healed our spirits when we were most in need of beautiful music. Our hearts were warmed by the story of a young girl’s holiday sacrifice in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s *The House without a Christmas Tree*. Our jaws dropped when Liudmyla Monastyrska and Jamie Barton gave radiant performances in Bellini’s *Norma*, in which a priestess is faced with a crisis that can only end in the ultimate sacrifice. It was a brilliant year of spiritual exploration, through opera, of sacrifice.

**OUTSIDE THE OPERA HOUSE**

We didn’t let Harvey stand in the way of our *Seeking the Human Spirit* community partnerships. Whether participating in the music therapy program with our partners at Houston Methodist, experiencing the connections between visual and performing arts with special tours at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, or experiencing live opera for the first time while rebuilding their lives through our partnership with The

—Anna Dragsbaek, CEO of The Women’s Home

—James W. Crownover, chairman of the HGO Board of Directors (2016–18)
Women’s Home—those who participated in the first year of Seeking the Human Spirit discovered new possibilities for seeking meaning through our art form.

We worked with The Jung Center to host lectures on Seeking the Human Spirit themes, and the iconic Rothko Chapel has been home to a number of community discussions. Houston high school students working with HGO and Sacred Sites Quest have been exploring the world and designing their own public art inspired by music, and next season promises to be even more enlightening than before. As we move into the second year of Seeking the Human Spirit, we’re exploring more community collaborations—to touch even more lives and have a deeper, longer-lasting impact.
THE YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION
Our Seeking the Human Spirit theme next season when we return to our beloved Wortham Theater Center is transformation. And we truly are going to be a company and a city transformed.

The Flying Dutchman, a haunting story about a cursed sailor on a transformative quest, will herald our return to the Wortham with a bang. The return of one of our most exciting commissions, Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas, is a magical tale of a love that transforms starring Houston favorite Ana María Martínez. The world premiere of Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix explores the life of Mozart’s librettist Lorenzo da Ponte as he transforms himself many times on a lifelong spiritual journey.

Seeking the Human Spirit continues for the second year in the fall with an even deeper bond between HGO and the community that we serve. We are so grateful to everyone who has been on this adventure with us—to everyone who has laughed with us and cried with us and cheered us on—even while making their own sacrifices. We can’t wait to go back home, and to see where this initiative takes us next.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, partnered with HGO by offering docent-led tours of the museum’s permanent collection, themed around Seeking the Human Spirit.

“Thank you Houston Grand Opera for playing ‘My Favorite Things.’ That awakened me, and I really wanted to join in and sing! It made my day!”
—A music therapy patient at Houston Methodist

“My family values personal and confidential service from people who genuinely care about us. That’s why my husband, Jim, founded Houston Trust Company in 1994 with close friends—to help families with investment management, to serve as the family office, and to be there for our grandchildren’s grandchildren.”

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Seeking the Human Spirit

Houston Grand Opera 2017–2023

Thank you to the following lead donors:

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Harlan and Dian Stai

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Claire Liu and Joseph Greenberg
Sara and Gabriel Loperena
OPERA America
Elizabeth Phillips
Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Sweeney
Margaret Alkek Williams

For information on providing leadership support for Seeking the Human Spirit, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
The popular HGO commission **Cruzar la Cara de la Luna** returned to end the 2017–18 season on an uplifting note.

In **Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon**, we meet Laurentino—an old man who looks to the migration of butterflies and recalls his life on both sides of the border. He sings of the home he left and the home he built, and everything he lost on the journey. His family learns of his hidden past, watching the butterflies with him as they join his song of love and longing.

The HGO family, in the middle of a time of upheaval and transformation, shared this moment of transcendent beauty on the last leg of our own voyage home.

This past spring, an enraptured audience joined us as we closed the HGO Resilience Theater with the return of **Cruzar**. It’s a deeply moving opera, and if you left the George R. Brown Convention Center trying to hide a few tears, don’t worry—you weren’t alone.

Since HGO premiered **Cruzar** in 2010, the heartwarming story of three generations of a Mexican-American family and the border that divides them has toured to a number of companies in the United States and internationally to the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France. Wherever it has traveled, it has struck a chord with audiences.

“Now more than ever, I feel blessed as an artist to present such a beautiful and unique story,” says mezzo-soprano Cecilia Duarte, who reprised the role of Renata, which she created for the premiere. “Being an immigrant myself, I am proud of working with HGO, which has been a ‘home away from home,’ in a production that involves opera and mariachi—the music of my country.”

Octavio Moreno, who created the role of Laurentino and reprised it this spring, says, “There are a lot of people who need their stories to be told, and having the responsibility and the opportunity to do so makes you feel important as an artist, because you carry the voice of those who can’t speak.”

It’s an unconventional opera. A mariachi ensemble—this time, Mariachi Los Camperos—plays onstage in place of a typical opera orchestra and the members occasionally sing, functioning as a chorus. **Cruzar** fit our unconventional space at the HGO Resilience Theater perfectly, and with its themes of home and family, it felt like a particularly poignant capstone for an opera season that showed us all that home isn’t always a place—it is the people you love.

Students from the mariachi group at Marshall Middle School performed in the foyer for the opening night, and hundreds of students attended the dress rehearsal. According to one teacher from Wharton Dual Language Academy, “We left many tears at the George R. Brown. As a daughter of immigrants, it touched my heart deeply.”

The triumphant return of the world’s first mariachi opera was made possible by our generous sponsors, including Bank of America, Novum Energy, Claudia and Roberto Contreras, Isabel and Ignacio Torras, Javier Aguilar, CitiQuest Properties, Lucinda and Javier Loya, LUCHO, Glen Rosenbaum, Telemundo Houston, Daniela and Manolo Sánchez, Habitat Construction, and William and Yolanda Knull. Thanks to all of our donors for helping to share this wonderful gift with the people of Houston.
GOco has grown substantially since 2007, when it was established as HGO's broad initiative to partner with the community to create and enjoy art. The staff has grown accordingly, and now, because a significant part of HGOco’s mission is to create new music, we are thrilled to welcome Damien Sneed as HGOco’s newly appointed composer in residence and music director. As a member of the HGO music staff, he will also serve as Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers’s cover conductor for mainstage productions. Dr. Sneed is a multi-genre artist, immersed in classical, jazz, gospel, pop, R&B, opera, and musical theater as a pianist, organist, conductor, composer, producer, arranger, and arts educator. He is the 2014 recipient of the prestigious Sphinx Medal of Excellence, which is presented annually to emerging artists of color in classical music. He has collaborated with a variety of artists including Wynton Marsalis, Lawrence Brownlee, Jessye Norman, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Denyce Graves, Diana Ross, Ashford & Simpson, and Phylicia Rashad, among many others.

As a composer, he recently collaborated with Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Lyric Unlimited program, on an original opera created by students in the Empower Youth! program. Sneed has been collaborating with HGO mainstage favorite Lawrence Brownlee (HGO’s Nadir in The Pearl Fishers this season) for several years for live performances and recordings such as the classical music concert series The Crypt Sessions at the Church of the Intercession in Harlem, New York, and their Spiritual Sketches album (2013). Sneed will work with HGOco on the development of a work that will celebrate African American contributions to the classical arts, targeted to high school students and young adults.

STORYBOOK OPERA

Over the last 18 months, HGOco has been developing a new storybook for our Storybook Opera program. The new book, The Armadillo’s Dream, is written by HGOco’s own Dennis Arrowsmith (touring programs manager) and generously underwritten by The Connie Kwan-Wong Foundation and CKW Luxe. In this fun and moving story, Sandy, an armadillo who lives on Buffalo Bayou, dreams of singing on the stage of Houston Grand Opera. Look for events and public readings beginning in the late fall of 2018.

OPERA TO GO!

As usual, Opera to Go!, HGOco’s touring company for children and families, will offer fall and spring tours of family-friendly works. Opera to Go! productions feature high-energy opera, presented at your school, library, or community center in a fully staged, 45-minute performance. Study guides are available for each tour.

In the fall, Opera to Go! presents the hilarious bilingual (English/Spanish) production Cinderella in Spain. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the work, which was commissioned and premiered by Opera to Go! Houston composer Mary Carol Warwick wrote the music to a libretto by Kate Pogue, an alumna of the HGO Studio. One of four works this team created for HGO, Cinderella in Spain is one of the most popular in the history of Opera to Go! In this version of the classic story, the king holds a fiesta to find a bride for his son, Prince Paulo, but havoc breaks out when two stepsisters crash the party. This doesn’t stop Paulo from falling
in love with a mysterious señorita—but can he find her with no other clue than the glass slipper she has left behind? The tour runs September 24–December 14, 2018. Visit HGO.org/cinderellainspain to book a performance.

In the spring, Opera to Go! will tour an English-language adaptation of Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*, with a libretto by Kristine McIntyre. The basic storyline of the Opera to Go! version follows Donizetti’s classic comic opera: a small-town boy discovers that no potion from a quack doctor could impress his sweetheart more than a hearty dose of self-confidence. The tour runs January 28–May 17, 2019. Visit HGO.org/theelixiroflove to secure your spot in the tour.

**OPERA ON THE WEB? YES!**

An exciting new venture into film this past season saw the release of the pilot episode from our new web-based series, *Star-cross’d*, in April—and there is more to come. Through our story-gathering efforts, two more episodes will be developed during the 2018–19 season for release in May and October 2019. The 18-minute pilot episode, “Boundless,” composed by Avner Dorman to a libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann, is inspired by a story originally told on *The Moth Radio Hour* by Houstonian Aryana Rose. Visit HGO.org/star-crossd to view “Boundless,” now available with both English and Spanish supertitles.

**AND THERE’S MORE...**

If you attended a performance at our temporary space, the HGO Resilience Theater, last season, you probably saw the bright blue HGOco table and yellow house display where we collected ideas and stories from opera attendees throughout the season. We loved meeting you and hearing your stories. We will continue our visibility during the 2018–19 season in the Wortham’s Grand Foyer, so please stop by to see us. Follow HGOco on Facebook to see what we’re up to throughout the year.
world premiere of The House without a Christmas Tree. In March, HGOco and WTTS (Writers in the Schools) presented a workshop for the Funders Network’s annual conference held at Hotel ZaZa. At the conference, BFHSVS senior Hannah Jones performed a song HGOco commissioned from local composer Emma Wine that was inspired by “After Harvey,” a poem by WTTS Youth Poet Laureate Rukmini Kalamangalam. In a recent survey of BFHSVS alumni (2000–18), one alum remarked, “I’ve had many wonderful teachers throughout my young career, but I can safely say I would not be where I am today without the resources and experiences BFHSVS provided almost 10 years ago.” We will welcome six new students to join the four returning seniors for monthly public masterclasses, weekly private voice lessons, and much more.  

Our temporary neighbors at Discovery Green—near the office and performance spaces we occupied last season while we were displaced—presented a unique installation during the winter titled Hello, Trees! HGOco commissioned University of Houston graduate student Austin Brake to create an interactive and responsive musical work, Harmony of Trees, that was presented one very chilly evening in February. Over 400 park visitors interacted with performers who sang from a menu of melodies set to variations of the theme Strength in Unity, featuring the 10 most spoken languages in Houston. You really have to see and hear it to appreciate it! Visit Brake’s website, asbrake.com (Chamber Works tab) for a video from the performance.  

HGOco was thrilled to join the Fort Bend County chapter of The Links, Inc., and Missouri City Middle School 6th grade music and theater students in a partnership that resulted in an Opera to Go! performance, a trip to see The House without a Christmas Tree, and a six-week, create-an-opera residency using the book The Watsons Go to Birmingham. Students presented their original opera at their annual Black History Month concert in February.  

Another six-week residency partnered HGOco teaching artists with teachers and students at Marshall Middle School, where students learned mariachi and operatic music that they presented in a concert for their parents in April. Then, the school’s mariachi band and chorus performed a concert just outside the Resilience Theater prior to the opening night performance of Cruzar la Cara de la Luna. Students later met with the members of Cruzar’s mariachi ensemble, Mariachi Los Camperos, for pictures and a Q&A.  

HGOco’s Song of Houston projects included culminating the Veterans Songbook initiative with a concert of selected works from the four-year program at Christ Church Cathedral on November 11. The concert included spoken word performances by participants in the Alley Theatre’s First Draft program in partnership with The Telling Project. A film project by Lynn Lane, I Am a Soldier, featured video portraits of Houston-area veterans premiered at the concert. Visit veteranssongbook.org to view the video and all archival materials.  

In addition, a production of Tom Cipullo’s opera Glory Denied, an opera about the longest-held prisoner of the Vietnam War, was presented in the 1940 Air Museum hangar building among the museum’s fleet of historical aircraft. The unusual venue, complete with the sounds of airplanes taking off at nearby Hobby Airport, enhanced the audience’s experience of this profoundly moving work.
JUST THE FACTS

GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR 2018–19 REPERTOIRE WITH DRAMATURG JEREMY JOHNSON AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS LAURA CHANDLER.

A scene from La bohème
Photo by Cory Weaver
WAGNER
THE FLYING DUTCHMAN
NEW PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

The Dutchman
Andrzej Dobber
Melody Moore
Kristinn Sigmundsson
Eric Cutler
Richard Trey Smagur †
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
Daland
Erik
Steersman
Mary
Leia Lensing ✩
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

Conductor
Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Director
Tomer Zvulun *
Set and Costume Designer
Jacob A. Climer *
Lighting Designer
Amith Chandrashaker *
Projection/Video Designer
S. Katy Tucker *
Associate Director
Brenna Corner *
Chorus Master
Richard Bado ✩
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Co-production by Houston Grand Opera,
The Atlanta Opera, and Cincinnati Opera

BROWN THEATER
Sung in German with projected English translation

OCT. 19 | OCT. 21 | OCT. 27 | OCT. 30 | NOV. 02

PRINCIPAL GUARANTOR: Harlan and Dian Stai
GRAND GUARANTORS: John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer
GRAND UNDERWRITERS: Mathilda Cochran; ConocoPhillips; Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth; Margaret Alkek Williams

* Company debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
What could be better than a ghost story and a love story wrapped into one? That’s Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, based on legends dating back at least to the 17th century.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1839, fleeing his creditors in Riga (now in Latvia, then in Russia), composer Richard Wagner and his wife, Minna, boarded a ship headed for London. The ship was caught in a violent storm and had to detour and take shelter on the Norwegian coast. Wagner later claimed that on the voyage, he had been reading Heinrich Heine’s 1833 *Aus den Memoiren des Herren von Schnabelewopski*, which included a tale about a ghostly ship doomed to sail the seas forever. Heine’s work became the primary source for *The Flying Dutchman*.

Ultimately, the Wagners arrived in Paris, where they hoped to find acceptance among the musical establishment. The Paris Opera bought Wagner’s prose scenario for *Dutchman* but offered the project to a French composer. Infuriated, Wagner revised the plot and began to compose his own opera. *The Flying Dutchman* premiered in Dresden in January 1843.

**THE STORY**

The Flying Dutchman has been condemned, along with his crew, to sail the seas endlessly until the faithful love of a woman frees him from the spell. Daland, a Norwegian sea captain, agrees to give his daughter Senta’s hand in marriage to the Dutchman in exchange for fabulous riches. Senta, entranced by the Dutchman, vows to break the curse with her faithful love. But Senta earlier promised her love to Erik, and when he learns of her plans to wed the Dutchman, he confronts her. The Dutchman, partially overhearing Erik’s entreaties, believes Senta has betrayed him and storms away. Senta must prove her love and faithfulness in order to free the Dutchman from his curse.

**SEEKING THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

*The Flying Dutchman* is one of three works associated with HGO’s six-year Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, which explores the ways music illuminates the big questions in life. The theme this year is transformation, which we experience through Senta’s celestial transfiguration and her selfless love for the Dutchman.

**FUN FACT**

Stories about ghost ships, popular when Wagner composed *The Flying Dutchman*, were fueled by “sightings” of phantom ships through the 19th and into the 20th centuries. These ships appeared to hover over the sea rather than sail upon it. Seeing a ghost ship was an omen of doom to superstitious sailors.

Of course, mariners didn’t actually see ghost ships, but they did see something. Most likely, they witnessed a phenomenon called Fata Morgana—a type of mirage that can occur when light is refracted by contrasting air temperatures (in this case, cooler near the water and warmer higher up). The refraction can fool the eye into thinking that a far-off object is floating above the water.

**ARTISTS**

The Dutchman will be portrayed by Polish baritone Andrzej Dobber, our spine-tingling Scarpia in *Tosca* (2015), alongside the Senta of American soprano Melody Moore, most recently seen at HGO as Dorabella in *Cosi fan tutte* (2014). Last seen at HGO in 2014 as Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*, Icelandic bass Kristinn Sigmundsson sings Daland, the father who is only too eager to give his daughter’s hand to the Dutchman in exchange for riches. Tenor Eric Cutler, last seen as Robert, Earl of Leicester, in *Mary Stuart* (2012), performs the role of Senta’s rejected suitor. Patrick Summers conducts; Tomer Zvulun makes his mainstage directorial debut.
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

PUCCINI
LA BOHÈME

BROWN THEATER
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Mimì
Nicole Heaston †
Nardus Williams * §
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

Rodolfo
Ivan Magri *
Yongzhao Yu §

Marcello
Michael Sumuel †
Thomas Glass † §
Harlan and Dan Stai Fellow

Musetta
Pureum Jo †
Yelena Dyachek §
Jill and Allyn Risley/Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer Fellow

Colline
Federico De Michielis †
Daniel Noyola * §
Beth Madison Fellow

Schaunard
Geoffrey Hahn * †
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Benoît/Alcindoro
Héctor Vásquez

Parpignol
Richard Trey Smagur †
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Conductor
James Lowe †

Director
John Caird

Set and Costume Designer
David Farley

Lighting Designer
Michael James Clark

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

Children’s Chorus Director
Karen Reeves

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

GUARANTORS: BBVA Compass; Houston Methodist

GRAND UNDERWRITER: PwC

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and the San Francisco Opera

* Company debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist § Alternate cast/date

OCT. 26 OCT. 28 M NOV. 03 NOV. 06 NOV. 10 NOV. 11 M S

Photo by Cory Weaver
John Caird’s stunning depiction of this timeless love story returns to HGO for the first time since its original production in 2012. The scene is set as an arrangement of canvases, suggesting that the audience is witnessing the tragedy through the memories of the character Marcello.

BACKGROUND
Giacomo Puccini wrote La bohème in 1896; it was his fourth opera, and it was the first that more fully explored the verismo style. Verismo comes from the Italian vero, meaning “true,” and the literary style of these libretti departs from Romanticism by telling stories of real, everyday people with ordinary problems. La bohème does just this through an intimate account of impoverished Parisian bohemians and their passionate relationships.

Puccini’s first three operas—Le villi (1884), Edgar (1889), and Manon Lescaut (1893)—still maintained literary aspects of 19th-century Romanticism such as royal heroes, mythical themes, or noble subjects, despite predominantly verismo musical elements.

THE STORY
It is Christmas Eve in the freezing garret of four poverty-stricken young bohemians: Rodolfo, a poet; Marcello, a painter; Colline, a philosopher; and Schaunard, a musician. In spite of the cold, they are in high spirits, but their landlord, Benoît, interrupts the festivities for past-due rent. The four friends manage to dodge his demands and they decide to take their holiday meal at the Café Momus in the Latin Quarter. They all depart except Rodolfo, who remains behind to finish some work. Mimì, a young neighbor who is obviously ill, knocks at the door—she needs a match for her candle—and Rodolfo falls instantly in love with her.

In the bustling Latin Quarter, the group runs into Marcello’s former lover Musetta. The two passionately reunite behind the back of her current suitor, Alcindoro—and stick him with the bill.

Despite their love, Rodolfo and Mimi are eventually driven apart by his jealousy and guilt over their living conditions, which have worsened her illness. Rodolfo and Marcello are working in their garret when Musetta enters with Mimi, whom she found lying in the street, weakened and fragile. Rodolfo stays with Mimi while the others go to buy needed items and to summon a doctor. The two reminisce about their love for a brief moment before the illness takes her from him for the last time.

FUN FACT
Another of the celebrated verismo composers, Ruggero Leoncavallo, was writing his own version of La bohème at the same time as Puccini, also based on Henri Murger’s novel and play about bohemian life. In Leoncavallo’s version, Rodolfo is a baritone and Marcello is a tenor. Though the two operas were a point of contention between the composers, Leoncavallo’s has all but faded from the repertoire while Puccini’s is one of the most-performed works in the canon.

THE ARTISTS
HGO Studio alumna Nicole Heaston, last at HGO as Adina in The Elixir of Love, returns in her role debut as Mimi. Opposite her, making his HGO debut in the role of Rodolfo, is Italian tenor Ivan Magrì, who recently made debuts at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and Deutsche Oper Berlin. Last here for Sweeney Todd, conductor and Studio alumnus James Lowe leads a cast that prominently includes fellow alums: Michael Sumuel as Marcello, Pureum Jo as Musetta, and Federico De Michelis as Colline. Sumuel makes his role debut as Marcello, having previously sung Schaunard at HGO in this production; this time around, the role of Schaunard is sung by incoming Studio artist Geoffrey Hahn.
FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

**CAST**
- Florencia: Ana María Martínez †
- Rosalba: Alicia Gianni †
- Arcadio: Joshua Guerrero *
- Riolobo: Norman Garrett *
- Paula: Nancy Fabiola Herrera *
- Alvaro: Thomas Glass †

**CREATIVE TEAM**
- Conductor: Patrick Summers
- Director: Francesca Zambello
- Set Designer: Robert Israel
- Costume Designer: Catherine Zuber
- Lighting Designer: Mark McCullough
- Projection/Video Designer: S. Katy Tucker
- Choreographer: Eric Sean Fogel
- Associate Director: E. Loren Meeker
- Chorus Master: Richard Bado †

**Performances**
- Jan. 18
- Jan. 20
- Jan. 26
- Jan. 30
- Feb. 03

BROWN THEATER

Sung in Spanish with projected English translation

Co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera Association, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, and Seattle Opera

PRINCIPAL GUARANTOR: Harlan and Dian Stai; The Wortham Foundation, Inc.
GUARANTOR: Claire Liu and Joseph Greenberg
GRAND UNDERWRITER: Chevron; Novum Energy

* Company debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
**Love transforms.**

Houston Grand Opera is proud to bring back Daniel Catán’s *Florencia en el Amazonas*, which received its world premiere at HGO in 1996 and was restaged at the Wortham in 2001 by popular demand. Catán’s lush musical style has been compared to Puccini and Debussy, and the gorgeous original production by Francesca Zambello is being rebuilt and enhanced with video projections.

**BACKGROUND**

*Florencia en el Amazonas* was the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by a U.S. opera company from a Latin composer. The late Daniel Catán (1949–2011) conceived *Florencia en el Amazonas* as an homage to Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez, whose works set the standard for magical realism, a literary genre in which everyday occurrences coexist with the fantastical. Librettist Marcela Fuentes-Berain, a protégé of García Márquez’s, did not base the story on a particular work but was inspired by García Márquez’s novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, a story of unrequited love.

**THE STORY**

The riverboat *El Dorado* is bound for the opera house in Manaus, Brazil, where the legendary opera diva Florencia Grimaldi is to make a triumphant return. Riolobo, a mystical character who assumes many forms, introduces the passengers: among them, the diva herself, traveling incognito.

Florencia’s secret reason for making the journey is to find her lover, Cristóbal, a naturalist who ventured off into the Amazon jungle years ago in search of the rare Emerald Muse butterfly, and who—she learns from the Capitán—seems to have vanished without a trace. A freak storm develops: as lightning flashes and the boat is engulfed in a downpour of pink rain, the passengers are forced to confront and resolve their deepest longings and fears. As the boat nears Manaus, it is discovered that no one may disembark because of a cholera epidemic. In despair at being unable to fulfill her search for Cristóbal, Florencia’s spirit drifts toward his in a mystical reunion.

**FUN FACT**

From the world premiere program: To get a feel for the sights and sounds of the river, the creative team took a ten-day tour of the 4,000-mile Amazon, guided by an Indian who became the inspiration for the Capitán character in the opera. He had learned to speak English from records purchased through an advertisement in the local paper, director Francesca Zambello said; however, the records were 78s and he played them at 33 1/3 rpm. “He thought English...was...supposed...to...be...spoken...like...this,” she said. To Zambello, the incident was a perfect García Márquezian moment—a little bizarre, a little humorous, yet undeniably real.

**SEEKING THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

Transformation is the theme this year for HGO’s *Seeking the Human Spirit* initiative, which includes the mainstage operas *The Flying Dutchman, Florencia en el Amazonas*, and *The Phoenix*. Magical realism sets the stage in *Florencia*, and this context allows us to experience an enchanting, otherworldly transformation born out of Florencia’s deep love for Cristóbal.

**ARTISTS**

Having sung Rosalba in HGO’s 2001 staging, soprano Ana María Martínez takes on the title role, which she sang “with stunning clarity” (*South Florida Classical Review*) for the first time at Florida Grand Opera this past spring. Another HGO favorite, former Studio soprano Alicia Gianni, sings Rosalba, a journalist who is working on a biography about Florencia, while tenor Joshua Guerrero makes his HGO debut as Rosalba’s lover, Arcadio. Baritone Norman Garrett makes his house debut as Riolobo, a character who symbolizes the spirit of the river. Patrick Summers conducts.
BIZET
THE PEARL FISHERS
HGO PREMIERE

BROWN THEATER
Sung in French with projected English translation

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Nadir
Leila
Zurga
Nourabad
Lawrence Brownlee
Andrea Carroll †
Mariusz Kwiecień
Federico De Michelis †

Conductor
Roderick Cox *

Director
E. Loren Meeker

Scenic and Costume Designer
Zandra Rhodes

Lighting Designer
Mark McCullough

Choreographer
Eric Sean Fogel

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

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Production designed by Zandra Rhodes for San Diego Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre.

GUARANTOR: Vinson & Elkins LLP

* Company debut † Former HGO Studio artist
Zandra Rhodes’s critically acclaimed design of *The Pearl Fishers* is a fantastical and imaginative portrait of 19th-century Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). The British fashion designer spent time on the Southeast Asian island for visual inspiration, and her designs blend traditional Sri Lankan style with her signature vibrancy, full of dazzlingly bright sets and costumes.

**BACKGROUND**
Composer Georges Bizet was only 24 years old when *The Pearl Fishers* premiered in Paris. He won the prestigious Prix de Rome at age 19, and the opera was born when the Théâtre Lyrique was charged with commissioning a work from a recent recipient of the grand prize. Its initial run of 18 performances charmed audiences and confounded critics, and the piece was never performed again in Bizet’s lifetime.

After Bizet’s death at the tragically young age of 37, his monumental *Carmen* became an international sensation and inspired opera houses to revisit *The Pearl Fishers*. Without modern conventions of respecting a work’s authenticity, however, opera impresarios reworked and threw out much of Bizet’s score. It wasn’t until the second half of the 20th century that musicologists pieced together Bizet’s intended music.

**THE STORY**
Zurga is elected the leader of the fishermen, but tensions rise when his long-lost friend Nadir returns. Years earlier, they had both fallen in love with the same beautiful woman—Leïla—but swore to forget her for friendship’s sake. In one of the most famous duets in the operatic repertoire, they now reaffirm their friendship to one another.

At the temple, Nourabad warns Leïla that death is the penalty if she breaks her vow of solitude. She tells him that she once protected a fugitive despite the threat of death. As soon as Nourabad leaves, Nadir comes to her. They are discovered together, and Zurga jealously sentences them both to death.

Preparations are made for Leïla and Nadir’s executions, but a fire—set by Zurga to create a diversion—breaks out in the camp. In the confusion, Zurga rushes in and frees them: he reveals that he was the fugitive whose life Leïla saved. As the lovers flee, Zurga remains to face the consequences of his actions.

**FUN FACT**
*The Pearl Fishers* was originally meant to take place in Mexico, but French imperialism under Napoleon III led to a seven-year military coup of the Mexican Republic by the French. So, not wanting to present an opera with Mexican protagonists, librettists Eugène Cormon and Michel Carré changed the setting to Ceylon. They disagreed on the ending, and they later admitted they would have worked harder on *The Pearl Fishers* had they fully understood the youthful Bizet’s extraordinary talent. Despite having what critics call a mediocre plot, the opera has made a modern renaissance, with more performances in the last 30 years than in its previous 125.

**THE ARTISTS**
Tenor Lawrence Brownlee and baritone Mariusz Kwiecień return to HGO as Nadir and Zurga. Brownlee was most recently at HGO as Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2017) and Kwiecień sang the title role in HGO’s 2006 *Don Giovanni*. HGO Studio alums Andrea Carroll (Maria in last season’s *West Side Story*) and Federico De Michelis (Colline in *La bohème*) sing the roles of Leïla and Nourabad. Roderick Cox makes his HGO debut leading the orchestra in Bizet’s exquisite work, and E. Loren Meeker directs.

Transcendent beauty.
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Don Giovanni: Ryan McKinny †
Leporello: Paolo Bordogna *
Donna Anna: Ailyn Pérez
Donna Elvira: Melody Moore
Don Ottavio: Ben Bliss *
Zerlina: Dorothy Gal †
The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow
Masetto: Daniel Noyola †
Beth Madison Fellow
Commendatore: Kristinn Sigmundsson

Conductor: Cristian Măcelaru
Director: Kasper Holten *
Set Designer: Es Devlin *
Costume Designer: Anja Vang Kragh *
Lighting Designer: Bruno Poet *
Video Designer: Luke Halls *
Original Choreographer: Signe Fabricius *
Associate Director: Amy Lane *
Revival Choreography: Anna-Marie Sullivan *
Chorister: Richard Bado †
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Gran Teatre del Liceu; and The Israeli Opera.

GRAND UNDERWRITER: Margaret Alkek Williams

* Company debut  † HGO Studio artist  ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* is back in a new HGO co-production that delves into the mind of the serial womanizer. Director Kasper Holten and his creative team, all making their HGO debuts, conceive of Giovanni as a powerfully magnetic man (how else could he have seduced more than 1,000 women in Spain alone?) but one whose arrogance and selfishness lead to dangerous mental instability. This concept informs all the characterizations in the opera. Visually, Giovanni’s changing state of mind—his mental world—is portrayed by the set and video projections, as seen in the production photo at left.

**BACKGROUND**

*Don Giovanni* (1787) is based on the famous fictional hedonist Don Juan, a legendary libertine from European folklore known for living purely for physical pleasure. The earliest written account of Don Juan was published in Spain in 1630. Many works have been inspired by the Don Juan story, but the best known version is undoubtedly Mozart’s opera, which was an expansion (and vast improvement upon) the story by Giovanni Bertati that Giuseppe Gazzani set as a one-act opera, *Don Giovanni Tenorio*.

Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, conceived this work as a *drama giocoso*—which means a drama with jokes. *Don Giovanni*, which begins with a seduction and a murder, is definitely a drama, but alongside the serious elements are moments of high comedy, often involving Leporello, Giovanni’s long-suffering servant. Leporello’s “Catalog Aria” in Act I, in which he reads Donna Elvira a list of the Don’s conquests, makes for one of the funniest scenes in all of opera.

**THE STORY**

Late at night, Don Giovanni sneaks into the home of the Commendatore, where he successfully seduces his daughter, Donna Anna. As he is trying to leave the house, the Commendatore confronts the intruder, and Giovanni kills him. Donna Anna and her fiancé, Don Ottavio, swear vengeance upon the murderer, and they join forces with Donna Elvira (one of Giovanni’s discarded lovers) to expose him as a predator and murderer. The Commendatore, however, exacts his own revenge. Giovanni hears the voice of the Commendatore warning of impending retribution and orders Leporello to invite the ghost to supper. The ghost of the Commendatore accepts Don Giovanni’s invitation and arrives to send him to hell.

**FUN FACT**

At the time of *Don Giovanni*’s premiere in 1787, trombones were used extensively in church music but infrequently in opera. In *Don Giovanni*, Mozart employs them late in the opera to accompany the appearance of the Commendatore when he warns Giovanni of impending judgment. An audience of that time would have associated the trombones with the highest authority and immediately understood that the trombone signals the Commendatore’s power to deliver judgment.

**THE ARTISTS**

Versatile bass-baritone and HGO audience favorite Ryan McKinny, a Studio alum last seen as Gunter in *Götterdämmerung* (2017), sings his first performances of the title role in *Don Giovanni*. Making his house debut as Leporello is Italian bass-baritone Paolo Bordogna, so well known for his comic roles that he made an all-buffo recording, *Tutto Buffo*. Ailyn Pérez, our radiant Countess from *The Marriage of Figaro* (2015), sings Donna Anna, and Melody Moore (Senta in the season-opening production of *The Flying Dutchman*), portrays the aggrieved lover Donna Elvira. Ben Bliss makes his HGO debut as Donna Anna’s fiancé Don Ottavio, and bass Kristinn Sigmundsson (Daland in *The Flying Dutchman*) brings gravitas to the role of the Commendatore. Cristian Măcelaru (*Madame Butterfly*, 2010) returns to conduct.

Seduction, passion, and guilt lead to a fateful end.
TARIK O’REGAN | JOHN CAIRD

THE PHOENIX

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Lorenzo da Ponte,* aged 83
Lorenzo da Ponte,* his son, aged 30
Maria Malibran,* a singer, aged about 30
Patrick Kelly,* Da Ponte’s friend, aged about 50
Faustina,* Da Ponte’s niece, aged about 35
Giulietta,* his other niece, aged about 25

Thomas Hampson,* Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2018–19
Luca Pisaroni
Rihab Chaieb *
Joseph Kaiser
Elizabeth Sutphen *
Lauren Snouffer ‡

Conductor Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

Director John Caird

Set and Costume Designer David Farley

Lighting Designer Michael James Clark

Choreographer/ Movement Director Tim Claydon

Chorus Master Richard Bado ‡
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

PRINCIPAL GUARANTOR: Harlan and Dian Stai
GUARANTORS: The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; OPERA America; Robin Angly and Miles Smith
GRAND UNDERWRITER: Connie and Byron Dyer
UNDERWRITER: Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Sweeney

Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera

* Company debut ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
HGO’s first mainstage commission for the Brown Theater in ten years, *The Phoenix* closes the 2018–19 season with the touching and fascinating story of the notable opera librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. But Da Ponte was more than that: a priest, poet, convicted adulterer, father, immigrant to America—the list goes on, and *The Phoenix* explores his captivating life.

**BACKGROUND**
Composer Tarik O’Regan makes his HGO debut with his first full-length operatic work. He has written extensively for chorus and orchestra, and his one-act opera *The Heart of Darkness* (based on the Joseph Conrad novel of the same name) premiered to great acclaim in 2011. Librettist and director John Caird has created past productions for HGO of *La bohème* (2012, 2018), *Don Carlos* (2012), and *Tosca* (2010, 2015). He was the librettist and director of HGO’s most recent mainstage Brown commission, *Brief Encounter* (2009).

**THE STORY**
The opera opens in 1832 New York at the final rehearsal of an autobiographical opera by Da Ponte with music by his son—also named Lorenzo da Ponte. Da Ponte’s opera unfolds in vignettes of his life: We see Da Ponte as a boy, born Emmanuele Conegliano, converting from Judaism to Catholicism and taking the name of the baptizing bishop, Lorenzo da Ponte. We learn that the bishop set him on his poetic course by giving him his first book, Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Da Ponte becomes a Catholic priest and moves to Venice, where he lives a life of debauchery and seduction. He is convicted of adultery and banished from Venice for 15 years. In Vienna, he is enlisted in the court of Emperor Joseph II and introduced to Mozart, and he becomes one of the most in-demand opera librettists of his day. But when Joseph II and Mozart die within two years of one another, Da Ponte is thrust back into poverty and must reinvent himself once again—in America, where he establishes the first opera company in New York.

All the performers comment on the incredible journey that brought Da Ponte—and through him, opera—to America.

**SEEKING THE HUMAN SPIRIT**
While *The Flying Dutchman* and *Florencia en el Amazonas* explore the theme of transformation as it relates to empathetic, spiritual, and romantic love, *The Phoenix* examines it through a unique lens: just as the mythological bird rises from its own ashes, so, too, is Lorenzo da Ponte transformed throughout his life.

From priesthood to debauchery to family man, from destitution to the Emperor’s librettist, from immigrant to grocer to the father of opera in America, Da Ponte’s life is a series of renewals. Yet in spite of his tumultuous existence, his love for art, poetry, and opera is the enduring constant. Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s masterful work asks the audience to examine what exactly it is that transforms us through the low and high points in life. Is it family? Is it love? Is it art?

**THE ARTISTS**
Legendary baritone and this season’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Thomas Hampson makes his long-anticipated HGO debut in the role of Da Ponte. Luca Pisaroni, Hampson’s real-life son-in-law, portrays Da Ponte’s son, Lorenzo. Rihab Chaieb makes her HGO debut as Maria Malibran and Joseph Kaiser returns as Patrick Kelly, two performers in Da Ponte’s opera who portray a range of characters from his life. Da Ponte’s nieces are portrayed by Elizabeth Sutphen in her HGO debut and HGO Studio alumna Lauren Snouffer, and Patrick Summers conducts O’Regan’s rhythmically pulsing and lyrically stunning score.
The Phoenix is a new American opera by a British-American composer Tarik O’Regan, who lives in Swaziland, whose English father is of Irish descent and whose mother is Algerian, and who spent a portion of his childhood in Morocco. Librettist and director John Caird is British, an honorary director of the Royal Shakespeare Company who is married to a Japanese woman, and in addition to his acclaimed career in operas and musicals is most creatively buoyed by directing Shakespeare in Japan and Scandinavia. The Phoenix stars the distinguished American baritone Thomas Hampson, who has lived most of his professional life in Vienna, and whose daughter is married to one of the great young international stars of opera—Italian bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni. Luca and his wife, Catherine, have dogs named Tristan (without Isolde) and Lenny (after Bernstein). Our prima donna is actually our prima donna, playing multiple roles—the emerging star Rihab Chaieb, who is Canadian-Tunisian. Opera is a uniquely international art.

Opera has an ever-present past. If you are an opera fan you probably have a favorite opera, or at least a favorite type, and it was likely written long ago. But there was also a time in your life when you hadn’t yet discovered a favorite. And since opera is a sweeping art encompassing a huge swath of history and musical styles, it can never be described as a single thing; it is many. Opera as we know it was a gift of 16th-century empires, born out of the vast wealth of the Venetian and Florentine republics. The greatest operas, then as now, connect human strength and frailty to larger mythical or political forces beyond human control, and music remains the art that binds opera together. This all makes opera fans very lucky indeed, because there is always something brilliantly new that is patiently waiting to be your favorite.

The unique quality of The Phoenix is that it combines so much operatic tradition into something new. It is a serious comedy about the spiritual meanderings of a 19th-century immigrant, Lorenzo da Ponte (1749–1838), a person quite unlike anyone else who ever arrived on American shores, for reasons delightfully brought to life in this new opera. We hope he would
be delighted to be the subject of HGO’s 66th world premiere since our founding in 1955, a number that compares favorably to the 65 world premieres of Milan’s fabled La Scala, though they’ve had a 177-year head start on us since their founding in 1778, placing the vast majority of their distinguished premieres in the 19th century.

If Da Ponte is remembered at all now by opera fans, it is because he wrote the texts for three supremely great operas, The Marriage of Figaro, Così fan tutte, and Don Giovanni, each composed by one of the few who’ve ever lived who matched his mind and wit—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Their works together are not only masterful operas; they are also essential monuments to the human spirit that have never been equaled. That HGO patrons will be able to experience our new production of Don Giovanni in the same repertory period as The Phoenix makes next spring the most exciting part of our season.

So, who was this Lorenzo da Ponte, this phoenix? His life was as colorful as any opera he wrote with Mozart. Born in the Jewish ghetto in Venice, he was forced by his father to become a Catholic priest to try to get his behavior under control, but the young man’s zest for life was untamable. After Mozart’s sadly premature death in 1791, Da Ponte tried to escape women and taxes while still seeking new adventures, but like his female characters of Don Giovanni, they relentlessly followed him everywhere. He spent some years in London before sailing for America in 1805, where for a while he was an unhappy and unwilling immigrant, lonely for the old world he had so poetically conquered. He worked for a time as a greengrocer in Pennsylvania. He eventually landed in New York City, where his former intellectual life started to resurrect itself. He became the first chair of Italian literature and linguistics at Columbia College, now University, before opening the first opera company in New York City, a half-century before the Metropolitan Opera was established in the 1880s.

But encased in his extraordinary life was his dazzling work. To take just a single aspect of his sublime libretti for Mozart that is often overlooked: they rhyme. Not just a portion of them, but every line, many filled with labyrinthine inner rhymes and double or triple entendres. The three operas, totaling about ten hours of music, have many characters and complex narratives, yet they all speak in thousands of delightfully rhyming couplets in every conceivable poetic meter. But even more amazingly, they all rhyme in character, not in the character of their author; their words beg to be sung and wouldn’t have enough life to stand alone as poetry without music.

Our opera-within-an-opera, The Phoenix, is a long-overdue telling of Da Ponte’s life through the medium he brought to maturity. The plot centers around the old Da Ponte in New York City in the 1830s directing an opera he has written (fictional, in this case) also called The Phoenix, through which the great playwright/poet remembers and reimagines his memories and the characters he created, trying to do what poets have always done: to work out in art what was so complicated in life. The opera is partially an homage to Mozart, who is a character in the opera, but, more relevantly, it invites us to reflect on the many issues Da Ponte faced because they hover over our country still: how to assimilate diverse spiritual traditions, how to appreciate the role of immigrants in an entirely immigrant nation, and how to love for real in life, because the obvious façade of theatrical performance was always more real than reality to a soul like Da Ponte’s.

British-American composer Tarik O’Regan is an impish Mozartian sort of man—ageless, boyish, precocious, serious, and gifted beyond reason. His first opera was as far from The Phoenix as it is possible to get, a thorny score based on Joseph Conrad’s searing Heart of Darkness, about racism and imperialism in the late 19th-century Congo. The Phoenix will be the polar opposite of this, as often happens with the prodigiously gifted; they don’t stay in one place.

American baritone Thomas Hampson makes his HGO debut at last, after years of our trying to find a vehicle to bring him here, alongside his real-life son-in-law and HGO veteran Luca Pisaroni. Together they bring both the old and young poet to life, and Luca plays Da Ponte’s son as well. Like Da Ponte, they have led polyglot lives, speaking multiple languages and moving easily among the world’s operatic capitals. Though they have done concerts and recordings together, this will be their first staged opera together. The Phoenix, following Da Ponte’s own journey, will begin in Italian and gradually move to English.

How is an opera about an 18th-century Italian librettist and poet relevant to a 21st-century American audience? The Phoenix is the story of a man who saw and wrote the world, and whose art was all about humanism and truth. Da Ponte was born of the Enlightenment and joyously danced straight through its heart, came exhausted and wary to the New World, and then indelibly made it better. These journeys are still happening. The old Da Ponte in The Phoenix looks back with humor and joy on a life that had many lives within it, and big lives like his remind us that we all share a single huge world. This opera is about his memories but also about much more: it is about how we all use memory to create a future. If there is a more relevant and moving subject for an opera, I have yet to encounter it.
Stephen King—not the King of horror!—is the King of voice teachers and is central to many budding and ongoing careers through his work at Rice University as well as the HGO Studio. The students he has taught over many years return to him for regular lessons. Perryn Leech asks him how he started and how he came to be so sought after...

PERRYN LEECH: Where were you brought up, and was it always a dream of yours to be a voice teacher?
STEPHEN KING: It certainly wasn’t in my mind as I grew up near Birmingham, Alabama! I was the eldest of five children. My grandfather was a farmer, but my dad went to college, became a CPA, and then developed into an entrepreneur, mainly in real estate. My mom was a teacher, although she stopped working when I was born and our family started to grow.

So teaching and hard work are in your genes, then! How was school growing up in central Alabama?
I enjoyed school, but there was no music program, so I was lucky my parents insisted that we get a well-rounded education. They made sure that all their children played sports and the piano, as well as another instrument. I played the trombone through high school and was in the school band. But I also was singing. There was no choir at school, but I was singing anything and everything!

Were you looking at singing as a long term career at that point?
No, I applied and got accepted to study biochemistry at Auburn. It was just far enough away from home, so off I went. In my second year, I became aware of the traveling singing group Auburn University Singers, and I auditioned and got in. I really enjoyed it, and it immediately went very well. I was taking voice lessons, and I started singing some classical and opera selections. I landed the role of Bob in The Old Maid and the Thief and then eventually sang Gianni Schicchi...way too young! I also met a brilliant piano major named Amy who would soon become my wife.

So it really was going well, then! Did you think about trying to transfer into a music program?
I decided to try to get into a graduate program when I left Auburn. I made a recording and sent off some cassette tapes. I sent one to Florida State University and was accepted on a full scholarship on the strength of that one tape! I never had a live audition. That would not happen in today’s world, so I was very fortunate.

Wow! That must have been some tape. I guess this was before the internet, so cassette tapes were the only way to apply.
I had a great time at FSU—Amy and I had gotten married and she moved with me to Tallahassee. She developed skills working as a paralegal. Her work helped support us in those early years of my schooling and getting singing experience. I had also started earning some money as a singer doing gigs, regional opera, and concerts, and was as busy as possible with my graduate work.

It sounds like your career as a singer was starting to take off.
It was, but I knew that I wanted to teach. It became a calling for me. Amy and I moved to Louisville, Kentucky, as there was a job opening at Georgetown College. At that point, I knew I was interested in the
voice and that I wanted to learn how to teach voice development. There were not many talented singers there, and I imagine they taught me a lot about what will not work! After four years, a position at the University of Kentucky’s School of Music became available and they hired me. I was there for 10 years and was fortunate to be able to teach some very talented young people who are still singing.

How did the move to Houston happen?
The singers I was training at the University of Kentucky were starting to have some success and were doing well in national competitions, including the Met finals. Norman Reinhardt was invited to HGO’s Eleanor McCollum finals, and he asked if I would come to Houston with him for the competition. I had never been to Houston and made a snap decision to go and see HGO and find out more about the young artists world. Norman didn’t win a prize but was invited to join the HGO Studio.

Clearly your students were starting to attract attention to your teaching methods for developing young voices. I met Diane Zola at the McCollum finals, and she asked if I would be interested in teaching for the Studio. [Zola was director of the HGO Studio at that time—ed.] Inquiries about working on other voice faculties were also beginning to happen. One of those schools was Rice. I agreed to teach for HGO, and, shortly after, Rice contacted me again about teaching there. The prospect of working with the HGO Studio was a major part of our decision and it just seemed like the perfect move to make.

And the rest is history! You must be very proud of the program you have built and the students you have taught at both the HGO Studio and at Rice. I am, and I still get great satisfaction in being part of helping young people reach their dream of singing opera on a professional level. I am teaching in Aspen, Ravinia, Santa Fe, and Los Angeles as well, but Houston is our home and we have raised our sons, Matt and Stewart, here. I am so grateful for the many relationships that continue with people I have taught. The journey through their careers is always fascinating and it informs what I do each day. The only difficult thing is finding time to schedule everyone. It has certainly been quite the journey from Birmingham to here...
Volunteer, gain new friendships, help HGO recover, learn more about opera, make a difference, and discover a new side of yourself!

Save the dates

SEPTEMBER 11, 2018
Visit a Guild board meeting. Guild members are always welcome at monthly board meetings. Find out more about Guild activities, suggest new programs, and meet board members who work with various programs.

OCTOBER 2, 2018 — OPERA NIGHT LIVE: La bohème
This informative presentation features an artist from one of the fall rep productions and performances by members of the HGO Studio. Everyone is welcome. Reservations recommended.

OCTOBER 6, 2018 — FALL AWARDS BRUNCH
Friends, fine food, and arias! The 28th annual Guild Fall Awards Brunch at the Briar Club Houston honors stellar volunteers and community supporters and features performances by HGO Studio artists.

OCTOBER 19 – NOVEMBER 11, 2018
Volunteer at the Opera Boutique, before and during the intermission of Flying Dutchman and La bohème. Be a cashier, assist customers with their purchases, or help to set up before performances. While on the job, workers receive a 10% discount on full-price items and a ticket to a dress rehearsal after two volunteer shifts.

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

Have fun… AS YOU HELP HGO

From right: Maura Ritchie, Jo Lyday, and Daisy Yu were among the guests at the picnic dinner before the HGO Miller Outdoor Theatre performance in May, which the Guild helps to underwrite with its fundraising activities.

Marcheta Leighton-Beasley and former Studio artist Zoie Reams at the Guild Hospitality Team party for the spring rep.

Let’s make beautiful music together!

For more information on Guild activities, visit hgoguild.org, email guild@hgo.org, or call 713-546-0269.
NEW FACES IN THE HGO STUDIO

Say hello to six new singers and one new pianist/coach in the HGO Studio! They join returning artists Yelena Dyachek, Thomas Glass, Jonathan Gmeinder, Blair Salter, and Richard Trey Smagur. For opportunities to hear Studio artists perform, see p. 51.

LINDSAY KATE BROWN
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow Mezzo-soprano

“I spent my really early years jammin’ out in the car with my dad and going to touring musicals with my mom,” says Lindsay Kate Brown. She joined choir and concert band as soon as she was old enough and majored in music education at Mansfield University in Pennsylvania. But her voice teacher told her she should consider singing opera—“And that’s just what I did!” she says. “The more I delved into the music, the more I felt connected to it. Opera became a way for me to move people and experience true emotions.”

She recently earned her artist diploma in opera studies at Rice University. Lindsay joins the HGO Studio—“a dream come true for me”—after winning third prize in HGO’s 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Next season, she is most excited about studying the role of Paula in Florencia en el Amazonas. “I wasn’t really familiar with Florencia until this year and the music is unbelievable; it is also my first opera in Spanish and I’m excited to dive into a new language!” she says.

When she has some well-earned free time next season, this “foodie-in-training” will be out exploring new restaurants.

DOROTHY GAL
The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow Soprano

Dorothy Gal, second-prize winner in HGO’s 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, grew up with music. She took piano and dance lessons from an early age, and each summer, her mom drove a four-hour daily roundtrip for three weeks so that Dorothy and her sister could participate in the Orlando Youth Opera’s summer productions. There, she got her first taste of opera: “I felt like my voice found a place that it belonged—where I belonged.”

In 2015, she was accepted into HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) and worked with Dr. Stephen King, the Studio’s director of vocal instruction. “In a matter of three lessons, he diagnosed all of my ‘young singer tendencies’ and equipped me with tools for developing my true instrument,” she says. She decided to continue studying with him as a graduate student at Rice, and during that time, she had her eye on the HGO Studio, perceiving that “this company truly supports and believes in all of their young artists. Feeling both challenged and protected at this stage is something not to be taken for granted. I realize how lucky I am to be part of this Studio and I am beyond grateful.”

Dorothy will make her mainstage debut as Zerlina in Don Giovanni.

GEOFFREY HAHN
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow Baritone

“Coming from a completely non-musical family, it’s somewhat of a puzzle how I became a singer,” says Geoffrey Hahn. He was around six years old when his mom signed him and his brother up for singing lessons. “We hated it,” he says flatly. “We were the only boys in a ‘studio’ teeming with girls.” But, over time, they came to enjoy singing and stuck with it.

Geoffrey’s musical journey eventually led him to the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange Program. “My musical spectrum was broadened beyond belief. I was having voice lessons at Juilliard, singing in a new all-male a cappella group at Columbia, performing in student-produced musicals, acting in Columbia-Barnard theater productions, and pursuing my degree in sustainable development. I was having so much fun that I knew I wanted to have a career in the arts.”

He went to Rice University for his graduate degree, where he studied with Dr. Stephen King—“a perfect fit in a teacher and mentor.” Knowing that Dr. King is also the director of vocal instruction for the HGO Studio, he resolved to stay in Houston if he was accepted in the Studio.

He especially looks forward to singing Schaunard in La bohème and continuing to explore the Houston restaurant scene.
LEIA LENSing
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/Catton J. Levy Fellow
Contralto

Leia Lensing won first prize and the Online Viewers’ Choice Award in HGO’s 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, and now joins the HGO Studio as its first-ever contralto.

Her interest in music began in middle-school choir, and a positive experience in a talent competition encouraged her to become more and more involved in music. She was not exposed to opera as a child and admits that she “didn’t always love it.” However, she was the projections operator for a production of The Magic Flute at University of Northern Iowa during her freshman year. “The next year, I joined the opera program and fell in love.”

Her experience at Concert of Arias confirmed the interest she’s had in the HGO Studio ever since she began seriously pursuing an opera career: “I immediately felt this overwhelming sense of support and honest interest for the wellbeing of every person in the program. That’s how I knew HGO was right for me.”

She is “super thrilled” about making her HGO debut as Mary in The Flying Dutchman. “Singing Wagner on a big stage with orchestra, I can’t imagine a more exciting way to begin my time at HGO!”

KYLE NAIG
Stephanie Larsen/Valerie and Miguel Miro-Quesada Fellow
Pianist/coach

Kyle Naig grew up playing piano and studied solo repertoire as a teenager, but he made an important discovery in high school: “I realized how much I love ensemble playing and working with singers in particular. I saw my first opera when I was 16 (Tosca) and had some vague idea that it would be cool to work in opera houses. Later in college at the University of Kansas I started playing for the Musical Theater Department and from there auditioned to play opera rehearsals and got hooked.”

He says it’s tough to pick what he’s most excited about in the season ahead. He’ll be working on La bohème and Don Giovanni for the first time and looks forward to both masterpieces. “I also can’t wait for Florencia en el Amazonas—I had the privilege of working on a production of Rappaccini’s Daughter a couple of years ago and I’m looking forward to playing and coaching another Daniel Catán opera.”

And in his spare time? “I love to run and fish and drink coffee, so you’ll probably find me doing some combination of that. Also, I’m a huge Oklahoma City Thunder fan, but I can probably put that aside for some Rockets games.”

NARDUS WILLIAMS
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow
Soprano

British soprano Nardus Williams spent time this summer in the English countryside, but she wasn’t relaxing very much. As a Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, she made her company debut as the Milliner in Der Rosenkavalier.

Nardus became interested in opera through her experience in choral music. “I was a chorister in a cathedral choir,” she explains. “From there, I explored different types of classical music, which eventually led me to opera. Getting to know the repertoire over time opened my eyes to the beauty of the art form, and helped me to realize what an amazing career this could be! To me, opera is the most immersive, vicarious, and cathartic of all the art forms.”

She says she was drawn to the HGO Studio because of “the caliber of the Studio’s alumni, the world-class faculty, and the unbelievable opportunities and facilities.” The opportunity she is most excited about next season is singing Mimì in selected performances of La bohème—“it’s such an iconic role.”

In her free time, she enjoys playing and watching tennis. She also enjoys reading and going to art galleries, and she has just begun learning how to knit—“we’ll see how that pans out!” she says.
**Who’s Got What It Takes?**

**This August,** we welcome seven new artists to the Houston Grand Opera Studio. It’s hard to believe that as they arrive, we’ll already be in the process of identifying potential artists for the 2019–20 Studio. Applications open on August 1, and by the time our new artists arrive, applications for next season will be pouring in from hopeful young singers and pianists. All applicants are considered both for HGO’s Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers and for membership in the Studio.

The process of applying to the HGO Studio can be daunting. Last season, 523 applicants were whittled down to the seven artists who successfully gained a place in the program. All applicants must be ready for this challenging process—and even more, for the immersive professional training experience offered by the Studio.

I recently asked one of our graduating artists how she would describe the HGO Studio. She used the word “rigorous,” which is an apt description. During the two or three years of a typical artist’s residence in the Studio, we try to offer as many opportunities and as much information as we can. Incoming artists must have working technique, honest artistic ideas, and unflappable musicianship to be ready to perform on the HGO stage during their first season. They must be open, passionate, and inquisitive, with a solid foundation in the nuts-and-bolts of their craft.

We select Studio artists by gathering as much information as we can about their talent and skills through the audition process. Unfortunately, we aren’t able to hear every applicant in a live audition, so we ask them to submit an audio clip. We assess their readiness for the audition process by listening carefully to the audio clip and poring over their resume and recommendation letters; then we decide which artists we’ll hear in person.

Over 200 singers are scheduled to audition live, along with around 15–20 pianists. We typically hear these auditions in Houston, New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles, and the artists come from all over the world—last year, artists applied from 23 countries. Singers typically perform one or two arias, and we look for qualities that make us excited. In the same way a singer on HGO’s stage makes you say “wow” when you’re a member of our audience, we want to find singers who can move us, even in an audition. We look for the most distinctive and gifted voices; beyond that, singers must demonstrate unique and honest dramatic ideas, an affinity for language and text, and technique that is developing in a healthy way. Pianists perform a half-hour audition, which includes singing and playing at the same time, sight-reading, following a conductor while playing, and a short interview.

Following these preliminary auditions, we start making lists. Those 15–18 singers who make our “short list” are invited to come to Houston in late January for the semifinals of the Eleanor McCollum Competition. Making these phone calls is one of the most gratifying moments in my job—it’s always fun to give great news to hopeful and talented young artists.

Once they arrive in Houston, a serious process begins: each of the semifinalists sings two auditions on consecutive days for a panel of HGO Studio and Artistic Department staff. After these auditions are completed, we select about eight finalists. These are the singers you see each year in our Concert of Arias. We have several days to prepare for the big night, and during that time the finalists have coachings with our music staff, perform another audition including a spoken theater monologue, interview for the Studio, and learn more about the company. Each year, some talented singers aren’t available for the competition due to other commitments, and we make arrangements to hear those singers on another date. After Concert of Arias is completed, we have finally identified our candidates, and we make the toughest decision of all: who will we invite to spend two to three years with us in the HGO Studio?

Our seven new artists should be congratulated on their success in this process. It’s a testament to their talent, artistry, work ethic, and determination that they will be joining us this season. Their artistry is most important—without art as their guiding principle, they would never have made it to the top.

To join us this year and to see the process through once again, mark your calendar for February 1—the 31st Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias.

—Brian Speck, HGO Studio Director
Brian Speck, Director  
Michael Heaston, Music Director  
Jamie Gelfand, Studio Manager  
Carlisle Floyd, Artistic Advisor  
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Edward Berkeley, Showcase Director  
Bradley Moore, Guest Coach  
Audrey Saint-Gil, Guest Coach  

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(Tara Faircloth, Adam Noble, and Melissa Noble) sponsored by Anonymous  
The HGO Studio also receives generous support from  
FROSCH, Mr. Jackson D. Hicks, Jerry and Sharyn Metcalf, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Reynolds.  
The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of the  

Texas Voice Center and RSM US, LLP.  
The Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) is generously underwritten by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wakefield, FROSCH, and the HGO Guild. Additional support for YAVA is provided by Mr. Patrick Carfizzi and Dr. David and Mrs. Norine Gill.  

Additional support for the Houston Grand Opera Studio is provided by the following funds within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.:  
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HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2018–19  

Lindsay Kate Brown  
mezzo-soprano  
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow

Yelena Dyachek  
soprano  
Jill and Allyn Risley/Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer Fellow

Dorothy Gal  
soprano  
The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow

Thomas Glass  
baritone  
Harlan and Dian Stai Felllow

Jonathan Gmeinder  
pianist/coach  
Bill and Melinda Brunger/ Lynn and Henry Gissel/ Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow

Leia Lensing  
contralto  
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/ Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

Kyle Naig  
pianist/coach  
Stephanie Larsen/Valerie and Miguel Miro-Quesada Fellow

Daniel Noyola  
baritone  
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Blair Salter  
pianist/coach  
Dr. Saúl and Ursula Balagura/ Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow

Richard Trey Smagur  
tenor  
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Nardus Williams  
soprano  
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

**SAVE THE DATE**

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

**NOV. 15 & 18 | HGO STUDIO RECITAL SERIES**

Hear HGO Studio artists perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive, November 15 (7:30 p.m.) and November 18 (5 p.m.).

**DEC. 9 & 11 | STUDIO SHOWCASE**

The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform a program of opera scenes in Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater on Dec. 9 (2:30 p.m.) and Dec. 11 (8 p.m.). Free to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.
HGOco is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HGOco’s many projects, it offers programs for children ranging from Storybook Opera (Pre-K–Grade 2) to Opera Camps for students of various ages and interests.

When touring programs manager Dennis Arrowsmith was searching for material to use with HGOco’s Opera to Go! touring program, he came across a story that piqued his interest. It wasn’t right for Opera to Go!, but it started him out on a journey that has now resulted in a children’s book, The Armadillo’s Dream, generously underwritten by the Connie Kwan-Wong Foundation. The book will be released this November and will enter the repertoire of another HGOco program, Storybook Opera. “It will become one of our five opera-themed storybooks, where a singing storyteller brings a picture book to life” for students in pre-K through second grade, Dennis says. He answers some questions about the inspiration and creation of The Armadillo’s Dream.

What inspired you to write the book? I found the tale online, but I thought it would be hard to make it work for Opera to Go! I decided it would be tricky to have a full opera with a main character who can’t sing (although Rusalka manages for one act!). I don’t think there can be too many stories out there with unlikely heroes who encourage people to follow their dreams.

This story is based on a Bolivian folk tale, correct? How does your story compare with it? It’s very similar. My version follows the same structure for the first half, with the armadillo meeting three musically inclined animals, but I have relocated it to the banks of the Buffalo Bayou in Houston, altered the ending, and written it in rhyming couplets. I decided to name the armadillo Sandy in honor of the late Sandra Bernhard, the founding director of HGOco. However, I had no idea just how meaningful the story would turn out to be, as I completed the text months before Hurricane Harvey came, Buffalo Bayou overflowed, and our lives were turned upside down.

What did you like best about the actual writing of the book? What were the challenges? It was fun to craft a story about places that I care so much about. I love to ride my bike along Buffalo Bayou and I have logged many hours in the Wortham Center over the past 15 years. Luckily there wasn’t a firm deadline for completion, so I could write little bits here and there. Most of it was in the shower—I would jump out, dictate a line into my phone, and then towel off. I decided to use rhyming couplets, which is helpful in that it provides a structure for the text, but it also adds a challenge in the necessity to be concise and also to devise clever rhymes. Not that much rhymes with “opera,” as it turns out!

Tell me a bit about the illustrator, Eduard Hakobyan. How did you find him? He was selected by the publisher, which I recently discovered is the standard in the industry. Communication was challenging as he lives overseas, but I’m very happy with the end result.
What was it like to see the final proofs?
When I held the first prototype in my hands, I nearly cried. It was truly like holding a child for the first time. I've been able to share it with my family and friends and can't wait for it to debut officially.

What do you hope readers take away from it?
I think it's a sweet story about the power of determination and resilience. I hope readers are moved and inspired by the armadillo's journey. And maybe families who have never come to the opera might join us for our return to the Wortham.

What did YOU take away from the experience?
I never imagined myself as a published author. I am very proud of the book and thankful that this company allows me to flex my artistic muscles in different directions. I'm hopeful to write on a larger scale sometime in the future, maybe an Opera to Go! libretto. I also find myself slightly more obsessed with all things armadillo.

Cool Fun in the Summertime

Every summer, scores of children and young people hone their music skills in HGO Opera Camps, one of the many programs of HGOco. The Art of Opera, a two-week camp for high school students, culminates with a staged performance at the Heinen Theatre on the central campus of Houston Community College. This year, participants rehearsed and staged Robin Hood, a musical adaptation of the familiar story by Ben Moore and Kelly Rourke.

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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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The Powell Foundation

THE POWELL FOUNDATION

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA’S longstanding partnership with The Powell Foundation makes it possible for thousands of Houston-area students to enjoy the magic of live opera each year.

Founded in 1967 by Houston-based attorney, businessman, and investor Ben H. Powell and his wife, Kitty King Powell, The Powell Foundation has been improving the lives of Texans for over 50 years through charitable work in the fields of public education, conservation, human services, and the arts. Mrs. Powell believed in the importance and impact of the performing arts, especially for young people. Her outstanding generosity to our city’s cultural institutions, including HGO, Houston Symphony, and Houston Ballet, lives on through her legacy.

When Hurricane Harvey closed the Wortham Theater Center for an entire year and created the greatest financial challenge in HGO’s history, The Powell Foundation honored Mrs. Powell’s legacy by being among the first of our supporters to make a leadership contribution to HGO’s recovery. In addition to ensuring that HGOco could continue to inspire and delight students with programs like Opera to Go!, The Powell Foundation helped secure the company’s future at a most critical time.

CHRISTOPHER V. BACON

HGO IS HONORED to welcome Christopher V. Bacon to the HGO Board of Directors.

As an attorney with Vinson & Elkins, Chris spends much of his time trying cases before juries or arguing cases on appeal. He also spends significant time providing pro bono legal services to community and arts organizations in Houston, including HGO. While Chris only recently assumed the role of general counsel and secretary for the HGO Board, he has been helping HGO negotiate collective bargaining agreements for the last 20 years.

Describing that experience, Chris notes, “One of the wonderful things about HGO is that it has usually enjoyed a good relationship with its unions, which always makes the negotiation process a positive one. As we saw this last season, there is mutual respect between Patrick and Perryn and the musicians, singers, and technical crews.”

Chris’s partner is Craig Miller, an HGO Trustee and vice president/wealth advisor for Frost Brokerage Services. Chris and Craig have been HGO subscribers for over 20 years. They are members of our Laureate Society and HGO’s Overture, the company’s LGBT-friendly initiative to build community and a love for opera. We are thrilled to have Chris and Craig as members of the HGO family.
The home of hosts Marcia and Alfredo Vilas set the scene for one of the most festive end-of-season cast parties to date! Poolside mariachi, authentic Mexican cuisine, tequila by Tequila Ley .925, and spirited company were all part of the fiesta honoring the artistic team and Houston return of Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, the world’s first mariachi opera. Guests partied into the wee hours of the morning—until the very last mariachi note faded away.

**Power of Place:**
*Aboriginal Paintings from Australia’s Central Desert*
Through Saturday, September 8th, 2018

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Image © the artist and Booker-Lowe Gallery.
Star-crossed love and turf rumbles were set aside on April 20 at the cast party celebrating the artists of *West Side Story*. From the street food–inspired buffet hosted by Vinson & Elkins LLP, Glen Rosenbaum, and Brenda Harvey-Traylor to the Sharks and Jets color-themed décor, the opening night celebration paid homage to the Leonard Bernstein classic and the artists who brought it to life.
PATRONS CIRCLE RECITAL
MAY 7, 2018

Just one day after her final performance as Maria in West Side Story, soprano Andrea Carroll, accompanied by outgoing Associate Music Director Bradley Moore, took the stage and our hearts again at the 2018 Patrons Circle Recital, dazzling over 300 HGO Patrons with many of her repertoire favorites. The recital was followed by dinner at the Corinthian. The much-anticipated annual Patron event features a different guest star each year.

FIRST ANNUAL PATRON FAMILY FUN DAY
MARCH 3, 2018

Young and young-at-heart opera lovers gathered at The Waterworks at Buffalo Bayou Park in early spring for HGO’s first-ever Patron Family Fun Day. Underwritten by the Sara and Gabriel Loperena family, the morning included breakfast treats, opera-themed crafts, and a lively performance of Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers by HGOco’s Opera to Go!
The Impresarios Circle is Houston Grand Opera’s premier donor recognition society. These vanguard supporters who provide annual support of at least $100,000 are instrumental to HGO’s success. For information, please contact Greg Robertson, chief advancement officer, at 713-546-0274.

Robin Angly, Chairman

**JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE**

HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. They partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools to bring HGOco programs to economically disadvantaged students. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO’s Founders Council. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they also support Concert of Arias and HGO’s mainstage productions.

**THE ANCHORAGE FOUNDATION**

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

**ROBIN ANGLY AND MILES SMITH**

HGO subscribers Robin and Miles joined the Founders Council in 2010. The company is honored to have Robin on the HGO Board of Directors and as a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. The couple is very familiar with the view from the HGO stage as well—both are former singers in the HGO Chorus. Robin and Miles have been donors to HGO special events, the Young Artists Vocal Academy, and HGO’s Ring cycle.

**DENISE AND PHILIP BAHR**

Denise and Philip have supported the Opera since 1996, underwriting special events and mainstage productions. They have a special love for the HGO Studio, where opera’s rising stars have benefited from their support since 2000. Denise, currently an HGO Trustee, is a former member of the HGO Board of Directors, and the Opera has been privileged to have Philip’s participation on the board since 1998. The Opera was honored to have the couple chair the 2010 Opera Ball.

**JANICE BARROW**

Jan’s relationship with HGO extends back to the early 1980s, when she and her late husband, Dr. Thomas Barrow, first became subscribers. Jan is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society and the Founders Council, contributing to HGO’s main stage and special events. She is also supports the HGO Studio, having underwritten several rising opera stars over the past 20 years. Jan’s late husband, Tom, former chairman of the HGO Board of Directors, was instrumental in the concept and construction of the Wortham Center. A lifelong lover of music, Jan is past president of the Houston Symphony and has a special affinity for Puccini and Wagner.

**BBVA COMPASS**

HGO is privileged to partner with BBVA Compass, a U.S. subsidiary of BBVA, a Spain-based global financial services group founded in 1857. BBVA Compass, committed to financial education, diversity, and the arts, was a lead corporate sponsor of HGO’s Ring cycle and also supports the NEXUS Initiative, HGO’s affordability program.

**THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.**

The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and Margaret Root Brown and George R. and Alice Pratt Brown, has been a treasured partner of HGO since 1984. Based in Houston, the Foundation distributes funds principally for education, community service, and the arts, especially the visual and performing arts. HGO is tremendously grateful for The Brown Foundation’s leadership support, which has been critical to the company’s unprecedented growth and success in recent years.

**ZANE AND BRADY CARRUTH**

Brady is the chief executive officer and president of Saratoga Financial Group and is a trustee of The Wortham Foundation, Inc. Zane is the President of Carson Marketing, LLC, with over 25 years of marketing experience. HGO subscribers since the 2012–13 season, Zane and Brady are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence and served as the chairmen of the 2017 Opera Ball. HGO is proud to have Zane on the HGO Board of Directors. She also serves on the Marketing and Communications Committee. Last year, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, The World’s First Tooth Fairy... Ever.
ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO
Anne and Albert have been subscribers and supporters of HGO for the past two decades. While serving as president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation, Albert finds time for numerous cultural causes. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and was the co-chair of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera. Over the years, the Chaoes have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco's Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

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

BOB AND JANE CIZIK
Longtime HGO supporters Bob and Jane Cizik are passionate about Houston’s world-class performing arts organizations. As co-chair of the campaign to build the Wortham Theater Center, Bob has been pivotal to HGO’s history, and the Ciziks have contributed generously to HGO’s recovery efforts following Hurricane Harvey. Bob was president of Cooper Industries, a manufacturer of machinery for the oil and natural gas industry until his retirement in 1996. The Ciziks are also major supporters of UTHealth, the University of Houston, The Women’s Home, Harvard University, and a number of organizations in health, education, the environment, and the arts.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including the 2017–18 season-opening production, Verdi’s La traviata. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, is chairman of the HGO Board of Directors.

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 repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO’s innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, the world’s first mariachi opera. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from the Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

JIM AND MOLLY CROWNOVER
Jim Crowover was the chairman of the HGO Board of Directors 2016–18. He has been a member of the board since 1987 and has served on the Executive, Governance, Development, and Finance Committees. He and his wife, Molly, have been HGO subscribers for 30 years and are members of HGO’s Laureate Society and Impresarios Circle. In 1998, Jim retired from a 30-year career with McKinsey & Company, Inc., and currently serves on the boards of Chemtura Corporation, Weingarten Realty, Republic Services, Inc., and FTI Consulting. Jim also serves and supports the Houston Ballet, Rice University, the Houston Zoo, United Way Houston, Project Grad Houston, and a number of other organizations.

THE CULLEN FOUNDATION
For more than three decades, The Cullen Foundation has been a vital member of the HGO family. Established in 1947, the Foundation has more than a half-century history of giving generously to education, health care, and the arts in Texas, primarily in the Greater Houston area. The Opera is very grateful for the Foundation’s longstanding leadership support of HGO’s mainstage season and our family-friendly Holiday Opera Series.

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s mainstage season for nearly 30 years. The Trust was established from assets of The Cullen Foundation to specifically benefit Texas performing arts institutions, particularly those within the Greater Houston area. In recent years, The Cullen Trust has provided lead support for memorable productions including HGO’s Holiday Opera Series.

DRS. LIZ GRIMM AND JACK ROTH
HGO subscribers since the 2013–14 season, Liz and Jack have both committed themselves to cancer research and patient care through their work at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Jack is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the HGO Studio Committee. Liz and Jack were generous underwriters of HGO’s historic, first-ever Ring cycle and are lead supporters of HGO’s upcoming German repertoire, including last season’s Elektra. Additionally, Liz and Jack chaired the 2018 Opera Ball on April 14, 2018.
THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

HGO is thrilled to have The Hearst Foundations’ longstanding support of HGOco, our community collaboration and arts education initiative. Founded in 1945 by William Randolph Hearst, The Hearst Foundations are national philanthropic resources for organizations working in the fields of culture, education, health, and social services. The Hearst Foundations make it possible for HGO to bring the power of world-class music to young people all over Texas through our Student Performance Series and our popular touring ensemble for children and families, Opera to Go!

HOUSTON ENDOWMENT, INC.

HGO is grateful for the longtime leadership support of the Houston Endowment, a private foundation established in 1937 by Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones to improve the quality of life for all Houstonians. Houston Endowment recently supported an expansion of our Opera to Go! program that allows for free performances in underserved communities, schools, and other venues. The Endowment made a historic $5 million grant to HGO in 2007 to help us launch NEXUS, our affordability program.

HOUSTON 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 over 50 named funds, both unrestricted and restricted, and annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Thomas Rushing, Senior Chairman Janet L. Carrig, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors.

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGOco’s arts education programs, helping more than one million Houston-area students experience the magic of live opera through Opera to Go!, the Student Performance Series, and Storybook Opera. A Section 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $400 million to the youth of Texas since 1932. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the world’s largest livestock show and rodeo, with more than 2.6 million attendees in 2017.

HOUSTON METHODIST

This year, Houston Grand Opera celebrates 10 seasons of partnering with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM). The only center of its kind in the country, CPAM comprises a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed on performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO’s special events, young professionals program, and mainstage productions. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Barbara Bass and Dr. Mauro Ferrari, president and CEO, Houston Methodist Research Institute, serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION

Based in Liberty, Texas, the Humphreys Foundation has been a major underwriter of HGO’s mainstage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable mainstage productions.

DONNA KAPLAN AND RICHARD LYDECKER

Richard Lydecker has been an HGO subscriber and supporter for more than three decades. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Richard has great passion for opera, especially Wagner, and he and Donna were underwriters for HGO’s Ring cycle. They are also special events sponsors, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.

NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER

Nancy and Rich became HGO subscribers during the 2000–01 season. Rich is co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Kinder Morgan, and Nancy is a focused philanthropist whose work has positively impacted communities throughout Houston and beyond. Rich and Nancy established the Kinder Foundation in 1997 to provide impactful gifts to projects dedicated to urban green space, education, and quality-of-life issues in the Greater Houston area. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, mainstage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

CLAIRE LIU AND JOSEPH GREENBERG

Claire and Joe have subscribed to HGO for many seasons and are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Claire serves on the HGO Board of Directors and is chair of the Finance Committee. She is newly retired from LyondellBasell Industries where she led the corporate finance team and was formerly a managing director with Bank of America. Joe is founder, president, and CEO of Alta Resources, L.L.C., a private company involved in the development of shale oil and gas resources in North America. Claire and Joe support many organizations, with particular emphasis on educational organizations including YES Prep and Teach for America. An avid runner, Claire has completed a marathon in all 50 states.

BETH MADISON

This season marks Beth’s 23rd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council. She was the honoree at the 2017 Concert of Arias. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and mainstage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.
and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, LP. The Morgans support HGOco, the Houston Grand Opera Company, and Janice McNair Foundation provides leadership support to Houston-area organizations supporting educational opportunities for youth. The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97).

**M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION**

The M.D. Anderson Foundation has provided general operating support to HGO for more than 30 years. The Foundation was established in 1936 by Monroe Dunaway Anderson, whose company, Anderson, Clayton and Co., was the world’s largest cotton merchant. While the Foundation started the Texas Medical Center and was instrumental in bringing to it one of the premier cancer centers in the world, the Foundation’s trustees also looked to improve the wellness of communities through the arts. HGO is privileged to have such a longstanding and committed partner as the M.D. Anderson Foundation in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.

**THE MELLON FOUNDATION**

Established in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the humanities, arts, higher education, and cultural heritage. The driving force behind so many of HGO’s new commissions, The Mellon Foundation’s longstanding support of HGO helps us tell relevant new stories and add to the operatic repertoire by developing new works like José “Pepe” Martínez and Leonard Foglia’s *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, Carlisle Floyd’s *The Prince of Players*, and Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s *The Phoenix*.

**MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD**

The Miller Theatre Advisory Board (MTAB), appointed by Houston’s mayor and confirmed by the City Council, acts as a steward of public and private funds to provide professional-caliber performances free to the public at the Miller Outdoor Theatre for the cultural enrichment of Houston’s diverse communities and visitors to the city. HGO’s partnership with MTAB extends over six decades, making great opera accessible to thousands of Houstonians each year through live mainstage and Opera to Go! performances at Miller Theatre. June Deadrick is an HGO trustee representing the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

**SARA AND BILL MORGAN**

Sara and Bill have been supporting HGO since 2002. Sara is a co-founder of the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, where she currently serves on the board. Bill is a co-founder of the Kinder Morgan companies and the retired vice chairman and president of Kinder Morgan, Inc., and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, LP. The Morgans support HGOco, HGO’s special events, and mainstage productions, including the Holiday Opera Series. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on the HGO Board of Directors and as a member and past chair of the HGOco Committee.

**FRANI NEELY**

Franci is among the opera’s strongest friends and advocates, having been a subscriber since the 1983–84 season and one of the first members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Franci is a senior member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the Special Events Committee. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.

**THE POWELL FOUNDATION**

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

**JILL AND ALLYN RISLEY**

Allyn and Jill Risley have been HGO subscribers since 2003, and Allyn joined the HGO Board of Directors in the 2015–16 season. Allyn is chairman of Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT) North America and former general manager of Liquefied Natural Gas at ConocoPhillips, and HGO is honored to have his leadership and expertise on the Development and HGO Studio Committees. Jill owns the Laghiappe Shoppe, a Houston-based dealership in French antiques. The Risleys are generous members of HGO’s Impressarios Circle, and they also support Allyn’s alma mater, Kansas University, where Allyn serves on the School of Engineering advisory board.
**IMPRESARIOS CIRCLE, CONTINUED**

**SCHLUMBERGER**
Schlumberger is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly 20 years. Schlumberger’s leadership gift was integral to launching HGO’s ongoing affordability program, the NEXUS Initiative, in 2007—since then, NEXUS has made great opera accessible to more than 275,000 people. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters. Fred Dyen, Cameron Group HR director, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

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

**DIAN AND HARLAN STAI**
Harlan, a member of the HGO Board of Directors, and Dian are charter members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and their leadership support includes mainstage productions, the HGO Studio, the HGO Endowment, and special events. The Stais have also sponsored HGO Studio artists and they host annual recitals featuring HGO Studio artists at Mansefeldt, their renowned Fredericksburg ranch. HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.

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

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

**VINSON & ELKINS LLP**
HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. For more than 100 years, V&E has been deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and mainstage productions, including last season’s *West Side Story*. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Mark R. Spradling and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

**MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS**
Margaret, a longtime singer, possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera, supporting HGO for over 30 years. Currently, Margaret continues her parents’ legacy as chairman of their foundation, where her son Charles A. Williams serves as president. HGO is humbled by Margaret’s incredible generosity and dedication to the company, both as an individual donor and through her family’s foundation. She has endowed the Margaret Alkek Williams Chair, held by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, and is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball.

**THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.**
In the 1980s, the Wortham Foundation contributed $20 million to lead the capital campaign for the Wortham Theater Center, guided by businessman Gus S. Wortham’s early recognition of the vital role of the arts in making Houston an appealing place to live and work. During their lifetimes, Gus and his wife, Lyndall, were dedicated to improving the lives of Houstonians. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support. This leadership support has been vital to HGO’s growth and commitment to excellence.

**LYNN WYATT**
Lynn’s generosity touches every aspect of HGO. She is a Lifetime Trustee of HGO and serves as the vice chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. She serves on the Governance Committee and chaired HGO’s Golden Jubilee Gala in 2005. Oscar Wyatt endowed The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund in 2010, honoring Lynn’s service to the company and dedication to bringing the world’s best operatic artists to HGO, and she was the honoree at the 2010 Opera Ball. Lynn and Oscar have been lead supporters of a number of HGO productions and programs, including the multiyear company-wide initiative *Seeking the Human Spirit.*
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Jennifer Wijangco, director of development, at 713-546-0704 or jwijangco@hgo.org.
Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the Opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

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OCTOBER

1–3

**Cinderella in Spain:** HGOco and Opera to Go! present a hilarious, bilingual adaptation of the Cinderella story by Mary Carol Warwick and Kate Pogue at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 11 a.m. daily. Free. *Cinderella in Spain* tours from Sept. 24 through Dec. 12. To book a performance at your school, library, or community center, visit HGO.org/OperaToGo or call 713-546-0231.

2

**Opera Night Live:** the HGO Guild invites you to the United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about *La bohème* from a special guest. Free. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or visit hgoguild.org.

6

**28th Annual Fall Awards Brunch:** the HGO Guild honors stellar volunteers and supporters at the Briar Club, 2603 Timmons Ln., 11:30 a.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or visit hgoguild.org.

19, 21m, 27, 30, Nov. 2

Performances of *Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman.* Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater.

19

**Opening Night Dinner:** HGO celebrates the opening of the 2018–19 season following the performance of *The Flying Dutchman,* Ballroom at Bayou Place. For more information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

21

**Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *The Flying Dutchman* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

28

**Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *La bohème* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

NOVEMBER

1 & 6

**Student Matinees:** HGOco hosts groups of students in grades 4-8 and their chaperones at performances of *Puccini’s La bohème.* School groups only: reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

8

**High School Night:** HGOco hosts high school students and their chaperones at a full-length performance of *Puccini’s La bohème.* School groups only. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater, 7 p.m. Visit HGO.org/StudentPerformances to reserve.

15 & 18

**HGO Studio Recital Series:** Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 18 at 5 p.m.

21

**Holiday Tree Lighting** at the Wortham Theater Center, noon.

DECEMBER

9 & 11

**Studio Showcase:** The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform in a program of opera scenes, Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater, on Dec. 9 (2:30 p.m.) and Dec. 11 (8 p.m.). Free to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.

JANUARY

6

**January 6:** HGOco presents the *Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Winter Recital.* Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. 2 p.m. Free.

8

**Opera Night Live:** the HGO Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about *Florencia en el Amazonas* from a special guest. Free. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or visit hgoguild.org.

20

**Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *Puccini’s La bohème* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

25, 27m, Feb. 2, 5, 8

Performances of *Bizet’s The Pearl Fishers.* Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of *Opening Nights for Young Professionals* at the Jan. 25 performance only.

27

**Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *The Pearl Fishers* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

31–Feb. 2

HGOco and Opera to Go! present an engaging 45-minute adaptation of *Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love.* Heinen Theatre, Houston Community College Central campus. Two performances daily: 9:30 and 11 a.m. *The Elixir of Love* tours to schools, libraries, and community centers Jan. 28–May 17. Book a performance at HGO.org/OperaToGo or by calling 713-546-0231.

FEBRUARY

1

**Concert of Arias:** the 31st Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater. Champagne reception at 6 p.m., competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.
15 & 16
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 13–15
Spring Break at Discovery Green: HGOco presents activities and performances at Discovery Green, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

APRIL 2
Opera Night Live: the HGO Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about Don Giovanni from a special guest. Free. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or visit hgoguild.org.

6
Spring Event: the HGO Guild holds its annual fundraiser at the Houston Racquet Club, 10709 Memorial Dr. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or visit hgoguild.org.

13
Opera Ball 2019: The Revaire, 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

20, 27, 30, May 3, 5
Performances of Mozart’s Don Giovanni. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 20 performance only.

26, 28m, May 4, 7, 10
Performances of the world premiere of Tarik O'Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 26 performance only.

28
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about The Phoenix immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

MAY 2 & 5
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 2 at 7:30 p.m. and May 5 at 5 p.m.

5
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Don Giovanni immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

19
HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital. Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University. 5 p.m. Free.

29
HGO Association Annual Meeting and Reception: Wortham Theater Center, 5–7 p.m. Open to members of the HGO Board of Directors, HGO Trustees, and donors. Call 713-546-0217 for information.

JUNE 3–7
Opera Camps: HGOco presents Create a Singer geared for students in rising grades 4–9, and Sing! Move! Play! for children entering K–2. Wortham Theater Center.*

4
HGO Guild Volunteer Gathering: Find out how you can use your talents to help HGO through volunteering with the Guild. United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.

10–14
Opera Camp: HGOco presents Create an Opera for students in rising grades 3–8.*

10–21
Opera Camp: HGOco presents Art of Opera for students in rising grades 9–12. This two-week camp culminates in a fully staged production.*

*For information on Opera Camps, visit HGO.org/community-programs

2018–19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS
All meetings will take place in the Houston First 2nd Floor Board Room at the Partnership Tower, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Houston, TX 77010.

Oct. 15, 2018 9 a.m.–noon
Dec. 5, 2018 9 a.m.–noon
Mar. 8, 2019 9 a.m.–noon
May 17, 2019 9 a.m.–noon
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: 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 713-228-6737. You can also email customercare@hgo.org. Throughout the season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. During performance runs, the Center is open until 6 p.m., and on performance days, it is open until curtain time. 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 mini-package 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 the performance begins. Non-subscription single tickets may be exchanged with a service fee of $10 per ticket. When exchanged for tickets of greater value, the customer will be responsible for the difference; no refunds will be made. No exchanges are permitted after the performance has begun.

LOST OR MISPLACED TICKETS
There is no charge for replacing lost tickets. Call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-6737 to request replacement tickets. They will be reprinted and held at the Will Call window for your performance.

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 713-228-6737 for full details.

Descriptive services for persons with vision loss are available with 48-hour advance reservations. Please call 713-980-8662 for details.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES
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 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.

If you have a state-issued disability permit and need valet parking, you may purchase special passes by contacting the Customer Care Center. Parking spots for disabled ticket holders are also available in the Theater District Garage on a first-come, first-served basis.

Parking in the Theater District Parking Garage is $12 on weekends and after 5 p.m. on weekdays. Clearance for trucks and vans is 6’8”.

The recommended entrances for the Theater District Garage are on Prairie or Texas between Bagby and Smith. The recommended entrances for the Alley Theatre Garage are on Smith or Louisiana between Texas and Prairie.
DIRECTIONS

VIA I-10

Traveling East
Smith exit
RIGHT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #8

Traveling West
San Jacinto / Main exit
LEFT on San Jacinto Street
RIGHT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #8

VIA US-59

Traveling North
Take Louisiana / Brazos exit;
follow Louisiana Street
LEFT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District Garage, entrance #8

Traveling South
Take I-10 West to the San Jacinto / Main exit (see I-10 directions)

VIA 290
Take 290 inbound to I-10 East
(see I-10 directions)

VIA I-45

Traveling North
Houston Avenue / Memorial Drive exit
RIGHT on Memorial Drive feeder;
cross Bagby Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #1

Traveling South
Take the I-10 split (to Beaumont), bear LEFT; Exit Milam Street
RIGHT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #8

VIA 225
Loop 610 West to I-45 North
(see I-45 directions)

VIA MEMORIAL DRIVE
Memorial turns into Texas Avenue
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #6

VIA ALLEN PARKWAY
Parkway turns into Dallas Street
LEFT on Bagby Street
RIGHT on Rusk Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #1

VIA 288
Take I-45 North (see I-45 directions)

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Out of consideration for other patrons and for the performers, late arrivals will be seated at intermission.

Children aged five years and older who are capable of sitting quietly through a minimum of three hours are welcome at HGO performances when accompanied by an adult. Should a child become restless, our ushers will direct adult and child to an area where they may watch the performance together on closed-circuit television until the child is able to be calm and quiet. Adult and child will be welcome to resume their seats at the next intermission.

Out of consideration for other patrons and for the performers, anyone of any age whose behavior is noisy or disruptive may be asked to leave the performance by house management or HGO staff.

Cameras, recording devices, cellular telephones, pagers, beeping watches, and recording devices may not be used during the performance inside the hall. Cameras and recording devices may be confiscated by an usher or HGO staff member.

Complimentary cough suppressants are available at Houston Grand Opera performances. Visit the Customer Care booth in the Grand Foyer.

Food and beverages are allowed in the lobby area only. Bottled water may be taken into the theater.

Smoking is prohibited in the Wortham Theater Center.

For your safety inside the auditorium, please remain seated until the house lights are turned on.

In case of illness during a performance, ask an usher to contact the EMT on call.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Backstage Security at the Wortham Theater Center: 832-487-7033

Wortham Theater Center lost-and-found: 832-487-7004
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
MANAGEMENT & STAFF

PATRICK SUMMERS, Artistic and Music Director *
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

GREGORY S. ROBERTSON
Chief Advancement Officer *

RICHARD BADO
Director of Artistic Operations/Chorus Master *
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

MOLLY DILL
Producing Director *

DEBORAH HIRSCH
Senior Director of Development *

BRIAN SPECK
Director of HGO Studio

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Director of HGOco

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Nicole Axel, Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Voice Faculty
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Meredith Morse, Operations Administrator
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Joel Goodloe, Company Manager
Carolyn Hall, Associate Company Manager
Daniel James, Music Administrator/Artistic Media Manager
Jeremy Johnson, Dramaturg
Kirill Kuzmin, Assistant Conductor
Mark C. Lear, Associate Artistic Administrator *
Geoffrey Loff, Assistant Conductor
Aspen McArthur, Music Librarian
Peter Pasztor, Principal Coach *
Karen Reeves, Children’s Chorus Director *
Damien Sneed, HGOco Music Director/Composer in Residence and HGO Cover Conductor

TECHNICAL/PRODUCTION
Philip Alfano, Lighting Associate *
Ciara Ayala, Assistant Stage Manager
Katrina Bachus, Assistant Director
Kristen E. Burke, Production Manager *
Katherine M. Carter, Assistant Director
Michael James Clark, Lighting Supervisor *
Andrew Cloud, Properties Associate *
Norma Cortez, Head of Costumes *
Esmeralda De Leon, Costume Coordinator
Meg Edwards, Assistant Stage Manager
Joseph Farley, Assistant Technical Director/HGOco Technical Director
Vince Ferraro, Master Electrician
Paul Gibson, Assistant Master Electrician/
Lighting Board Programmer
Andreas Hager, Assistant Director
Ed Hamala, Assistant Carpenter, Head Flyman
Eduardo Hawkins, Head Soundman *
Joshua Horowitz, Assistant Director
John Howard, Assistant Head of Properties
Clair Hummel, Costume Coordinator
Nara Lesser, Costume Technician
Rachel Lucas, Assistant Stage Manager
Judy Malone-Stein, Wardrobe Coordinator
Melissa McClung, Technical and Production Administrator
Brant McNamara, Technical Assistant/Driver
Megan, Properties Design Director *
Mercedes Ramirez, Draper *
Kaley Smith, Assistant Stage Manager
Dotti Staker, Wig and Makeup Department Head *
Christopher Staub, Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Manager *
Caitlin Stoddard, Assistant Stage Manager
Pauly Lea Tran, Costume Technician
Myrna Vallejo, Costume Shop Supervisor *
Sean Waldron, Head of Properties *
Annie Wheeler, Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Manager
Miranda Wilson, Assistant Stage Manager
Richard Worley, Head Carpenter
Mo Zhou, Assistant Director *

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA STUDIO
Jamie Gelfand, Studio Manager

* denotes 10 or more years of service
HGO SPECIAL EVENTS
2018|19

HGO & PLÁCIDO—COMING HOME!
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018
7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN AND PRESENTING UNDERWRITER
Margaret Alkek Williams

7:00 P.M.  Plácido Domingo Concert

Post-performance Celebration Dinner with Plácido Domingo
The Post Oak
Black Tie

OPENING NIGHT DINNER CELEBRATION
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2018 | 7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMEN  Anne and Albert Chao
HONOREES  Molly and Jim Crownover

7:00 P.M.  Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman

Post-performance Celebration Dinner
The Ballroom at Bayou Place
Black Tie

CONCERT OF ARIAS
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2019 | 6:00 P.M.

CHAIRMEN  Elizabeth and Richard Husseini

6:00 P.M.  Champagne Reception
7:00 P.M.  Vocal Competition

Post-performance Celebration Dinner in the Grand Foyer
Wortham Theater Center
Black Tie

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA BALL
CIÉLITO LINDO

OPERA BALL
SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019 | 7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMEN  Marcia and Alfredo Vilas
The Revaire
White Tie

HGO.ORG/SPECIAL EVENTS
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Director of Special Events
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