



HoustonGrandOpera

Houston Grand Opera Appoints Maureen Zoltek as Music Director of the HGO Studio

Zoltek joins the leadership of the company's prestigious emerging artist training program

HOUSTON – July 11 – Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is proud to announce Dr. Maureen Zoltek as the incoming Music Director of the HGO Studio, the company's prestigious training program for the next generation of opera artists. When she assumes the position in September 2022, Zoltek will occupy the Mr. & Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair.

As the HGO Studio Music Director, Zoltek will work closely with HGO Studio Director Brian Speck to lead the program, which supports the artistic development of the most talented young artists of the field. In addition to nurturing the gifts of these artists, Zoltek will serve as a member of the company's casting committee and oversee programming for the HGO Studio's popular recital series.

Zoltek was selected for the position from a competitive pool of candidates for her diverse experience, expertise, and musical artistry, gained during a career working with leading vocalists, instrumentalists, orchestras, and opera companies across North America. She brings with her a strong track record of providing outstanding mentorship for artists on the cusp of major careers in opera.

"Our young artist program is known for being one of the most distinguished in the world, and it will continue to grow with talent like Maureen joining the team," states Khori Dastoor, HGO General Director and CEO. "Her knowledge of the established repertoire, devotion to new works, impeccable record of accomplishment in supporting emerging and early career artists, and passion for music-making at the highest level will be a tremendous asset to HGO in the years ahead."

Zoltek will join HGO from San Francisco Opera, where she serves as assistant conductor, vocal coach, and orchestral keyboardist, as well as the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, where she is a member of the Vocal Institute Faculty. An active proponent of new works, Zoltek has served on the music staff for the world premieres of Mark Adamo's *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, John Adams's *Girls of the Golden West*, and Bright Sheng's *Dream of the Red Chamber*. This summer, Zoltek will serve on John Adam's *Antony and Cleopatra*, an upcoming world premiere at San Francisco Opera.

"Maureen's deep and wide-ranging experience in the industry and her commitment to emerging artists will make her an invaluable resource for our HGO Studio team and the entire organization," says HGO Studio Director Brian Speck. "Artists compete to join the program because it provides personalized, intensive training that prepares them to perform at the highest levels, alongside the best in the business. Under Maureen's exceptional mentorship, our HGO Studio artists will be positioned for success on stages across the world."

Zoltek completed her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Manhattan School of Music and holds a master's degree in piano performance and musicology from Roosevelt University, in addition to a bachelor's degree in piano performance from DePaul University.

“I am inspired by the HGO Studio’s legacy of excellence, and am privileged to now be a part of its leadership,” says Zoltek. “I look forward to working with and nurturing the exceptional talents of the Studio Artists, and to giving them my unwavering, enthusiastic support and guidance as they navigate a career in this most incredible art form.”

The HGO Studio was established in 1977 to provide comprehensive career development as well as the highest quality training and a wide range of performance opportunities for young artists in the industry. The program is distinguished from many other young artist programs by the level of integration between HGO Studio members and mainstage artists and production teams. Since the program’s inception, HGO Studio artists have been granted major performance opportunities, working alongside such renowned singers as Joyce DiDonato, Lawrence Brownlee, Christine Goerke, Jamie Barton, and Ryan McKinny, as well as renowned conductors, directors, and designers.

To learn more about the HGO Studio, visit HGO.org/Studio.

About Houston Grand Opera

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

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

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

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