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Cover designed by Pattima Singhalaka.
This page: Jeffrey Allison and Norman Reinhardt in *The Little Prince*, 2004.
Photo by Brett Coomer.
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A Message  
from the Artistic & Music Director and the Managing Director

Welcome to the Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater as we continue our series of family-friendly holiday operas.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s book Le Petit Prince is so universally beloved that it has been translated into 253 languages and dialects, making it the third most widely translated book in the world. It was adapted for the stage for the first time in 1963 and there have been literally hundreds of stage works based upon it since then, including musical versions.

So why did HGO commission the opera you are about to see, which premiered here in 2003 and was brought back for encore performances in 2004?

Because we felt that there was still much to be “said” about The Little Prince—a gem of human wisdom, perfect for the holidays—through our art form. Rachel Portman’s ethereal score, Nicholas Wright’s insightful libretto, and Francesca Zambello’s brilliant production add up to a Little Prince that captures the great heart of the story. This production has been seen as far away as South Korea and Lithuania!

Two delightful singers—Andy Jones and Cohle H. Smith, both born in the 21st century—share the role of the Little Prince in their HGO debuts. We welcome back director Ellen Douglas Schlaefer, who has been involved with the production since its very beginning. HGO Head of Music Staff Bradley Moore fills the podium along with HGO Studio alumna Emily Senturia, now a member of our music staff, who conducts three performances. Studio alumnus Joshua Hopkins reprises the Pilot, which he sang at HGO in 2004, with first-year Studio baritone Ben Edquist singing the Pilot for two performances (plus three Student Matinees) and his fellow Studio artists taking on most of the other roles. The Little Prince is truly an HGO family event—our holiday gift to you.

So, from our family to yours, we wish you a joyful holiday season. We hope The Little Prince makes it all the brighter.

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Dear Opera Patron:

On behalf of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, welcome to the Houston Grand Opera’s *The Little Prince*. We are thrilled to welcome you to the second opera in HGO’s Holiday Opera Series. Adapted from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s cherished tale, Rachel Portman and Nicholas Wright’s *The Little Prince* is a story about the power of friendship.

The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation was established in 1998 as a 501(c)3 private foundation. In 2008, the Foundation established the McNair Medical Institute and began recruiting scientists and physician-scholars to conduct cutting-edge medical research across the Texas Medical Center in breast and pancreatic cancer, Type 1 diabetes, and the neurosciences.

In 2015, the Foundation began establishing McNair Centers for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise, which seek to inspire and prepare a new generation of entrepreneurs, innovators, and job creators.

The Foundation is thrilled to serve as Grand Guarantor of the HGO’s Holiday Opera Series, a multi-year initiative that establishes HGO as a holiday favorite for heartwarming, family-friendly works.

Thank you for joining us in the continuation of this wonderful holiday opera tradition. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

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Scholarship recipients are currently attending more than 100 Texas colleges and universities, with awards worth nearly $40 million!

Just this year, more than 2,100 students are attending college on Show scholarships!
Seven high school seniors selected to participate in HGO’s High School Voice Studio (HSVS) have been hard at work since September preparing to study vocal music at the college/conservatory level. The year-long intensive program is designed to help participants develop repertoire and improve technique and to mentor them through the college auditions process.

Members receive weekly private voice lessons and vocal coaching from HGO staff and receive stipends to help with audition costs, college application fees, and related expenses. HGO also pays for professional video recordings of each singer, to be used for pre-screenings at colleges and universities.

Participants learn how a major opera company works by observing rehearsals; participating in master classes with such singers as Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Jamie Barton, Patrick Carfizzi, and Michael Sumuel; and attending the full season of main-stage performances at HGO.

A winter recital and a graduation recital, the latter of which is adjudicated, provide valuable performance experience. All are welcome to attend High School Voice Studio recitals—admission is free and no tickets are required.

Auditions for the 2016–17 HSVS class will be held next April. Prospective members must be high school seniors during the 2016–17 school year.

A special thank you to the Ruth and Ted Bauer Family Foundation for its leadership support of HSVS.

For more information, please visit HGO.org/community-programs.

HSVS WINTER RECITAL
JAN 3, 2016
6 p.m.
Wortham Theater Center
Rehearsal Room 3

HSVS GRADUATION RECITAL
MAY 15, 2016
6 p.m.
Duncan Recital Hall at Rice University

After the success of this fall’s world premiere of O Columbia, HGOco is busily gearing up for the next chamber opera in this three-year, three-opera series: The Root of the Wind Is Water, which will premiere in Houston and Galveston in May 2016. Composed by HGO Studio alumnus David Hanlon to a libretto by acclaimed writer Stephanie Fleischmann, the opera (which takes its name from an Emily Dickinson poem) explores resilience, loss, and the power of place through the story of a Galvestonian who refuses to leave her home as a massive hurricane approaches. Developed through historical research and interviews with residents of Galveston and Houston, The Root of the Wind Is Water mines the impact of the Great Storm of 1900 and Hurricane Ike in 2008 on the Gulf Coast region, investigating how natural disasters reshape our psychic terrain.

The Root of the Wind Is Water premieres in Houston on May 12 and 13 in the Cullen Theater and in Galveston on May 15 at the Galveston Opera House. Tickets will go on sale in early 2016. Learn more online at HGO.org/root.
Welcome to the Powerhouse.

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April 26 2016
This is no ordinary prince. The Little Prince comes from Asteroid B-612, a tiny planet no larger than a house. He keeps busy by cleaning his three small volcanoes and keeping the baobab trees away until one day—he sees a Rose. He loves the Rose deeply, but she is vain and demanding, so he sets off to explore the universe! On his travels, he meets a number of colorful and often puzzling characters. He realizes that all he wants in life is to love his precious Rose, and that the search for answers can be more important than the answers themselves.

"I have not much time. I have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand."

THE PILOT

Our narrator throughout The Little Prince is the Pilot, who is looking back on his chance encounter with the Prince six years earlier. The two meet after the Pilot’s plane crash lands in the Sahara Desert. Even though he is an adult and the Little Prince is a child, the Pilot realizes they share the same outlook on life. The character of the Pilot is based on Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of the original The Little Prince. He was a pilot, too, and doodled pictures of his imaginary prince for years before he finally wrote the book—his doodles ended up becoming the illustrations!

“Grownups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.”

COME ALONG

with the Little Prince!

HGO Dramaturg Paul Hopper traces the Little Prince’s journey. Read along together, and let him introduce you to all the characters the Prince meets along the way!

All quotations are from the book Le Petit Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

THE LITTLE PRINCE

All photos by Brett Coomer
This is no ordinary prince. The Little Prince comes from Asteroid B-612, a tiny planet no larger than a house. He keeps busy by cleaning his three small volcanoes and keeping the baobab trees away until one day—he sees a Rose. He loves the Rose deeply, but she is vain and demanding, so he sets off to explore the universe! On his travels, he meets a number of colorful and often puzzling characters. He realizes that all he wants in life is to love his precious Rose, and that the search for answers can be more important than the answers themselves.

"I have not much time. I have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand."

Our narrator throughout The Little Prince is the Pilot, who is looking back on his chance encounter with the Prince six years earlier. The two meet after the Pilot’s plane crash lands in the Sahara Desert. Even though he is an adult and the Little Prince is a child, the Pilot realizes they share the same outlook on life. The character of the Pilot is based on Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of the original The Little Prince. He was a pilot, too, and doodled pictures of his imaginary prince for years before he finally wrote the book—his doodles ended up becoming the illustrations!

"Grownups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them."

On Asteroid B-612 there grows a Rose of exquisite beauty. When she emerges from her bud the first time the Prince falls in love with her. Unfortunately, she is as moody as she is beautiful, and the Prince abandons her to begin his voyage. As the Prince grows in wisdom, he learns to love the Rose simply for her essence. Many believe the character of the Rose is based on Saint-Exupéry’s wife, Consuelo.

"I ought to have judged her on acts and not on words…but I was too young to know how to love."

THE BAOBAB TREES

The towering baobab trees are pesky weeds that can easily take over an entire planet if they’re not spotted early. The prince diligently watches for the first sign of them on his planet and yanks them out to protect his home. The baobab trees remind us that while some daily tasks may seem insignificant now, they cannot be ignored.

"Sometimes there is no harm in putting off a piece of work until another day. But when it is a matter of baobabs, that always means a catastrophe."

THE ROSE

On Asteroid B-612 there grows a Rose of exquisite beauty. When she emerges from her bud the first time the Prince falls in love with her. Unfortunately, she is as moody as she is beautiful, and the Prince abandons her to begin his voyage. As the Prince grows in wisdom, he learns to love the Rose simply for her essence. Many believe the character of the Rose is based on Saint-Exupéry’s wife, Consuelo.

"I ought to have judged her on acts and not on words…but I was too young to know how to love."
THE KING
The first person the Prince meets when he takes off on his interplanetary tour is the King. The King thinks that all men are his subjects—even though he is the only one on his planet, with no one to rule. Sometimes politicians, monarchs, and CEOs who make the biggest deal about their power end up being the lousiest leaders.

“Ah! Here is a subject,” exclaimed the King, when he saw the Little Prince coming.

THE VAIN (CONCEITED) MAN
Next the Prince meets the Vain Man, who thrives on being admired by others. He lives for the sound of applause, and it doesn’t matter to him whether he did anything to deserve praise. After meeting this man, the Prince can’t help but say, “Grown-ups are certainly very strange.”

“But the conceited man did not hear him. Conceited people never hear anything but praise.”

THE DRUNKARD
The third planet is inhabited by a man caught in a vicious cycle. When the Little Prince meets him, he is surrounded by empty bottles. When the Little Prince questions him, the Drunkard says he is drinking to forget that he is ashamed of drinking. The Drunkard illustrates the twisted logic that people use to justify their actions.

“Why are you drinking?” demanded the Little Prince, “So that I may forget.”

THE BUSINESSMAN
Arriving on the fourth planet, the Little Prince meets the Businessman, who spends all his time counting his riches. He even believes he owns the stars, just because he has written down their numbers. Like the Drunkard, the Businessman’s thinking is twisted: he explains to the Prince that the purpose of owning lots of stars is so he can buy more of them. The Prince realizes his few possessions are worth more than any amount of money.

“As for me, I am concerned with matters of consequence. There is no time for idle dreaming in my life.”

THE LAMPLIGHTER
The Lamplighter lights a street lamp every night and puts it out in the morning, but because his planet is spinning faster every year, he is always busy. The Little Prince respects this man, who would seem ridiculous to the King or the Businessman, because he is concerned with something other than himself.

“That is a beautiful occupation. And since it is beautiful, it is truly useful.”

THE SNAKE
Even though the Snake speaks in riddles, he is the easiest to understand of all the creatures in the story. When the Snake offers the Little Prince a trip home whenever he needs it, the Prince refuses because he knows the Snake is speaking about death. The Prince later realizes that his few possessions are worth more than any amount of money.

“Whomever I touch, I send back to the earth from whence he came.”

THE FOX
The Little Prince encounters the Fox at a time of sadness; he misses his home and his Rose. The Fox says that the Prince must tame him in order to become his friend—by taming, he means to slowly establish a relationship by learning from each other. When it’s done right, having a true companionship with another living being is the true reward.

“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”
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“That is a beautiful occupation. And since it is beautiful, it is truly useful.”

THE SNAKE

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“Whomever I touch, I send back to the earth from whence he came.”

THE FOX

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“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”
Nathaniel Irvin already envisioned a career on Broadway when he landed the role of the Little Prince for its world premiere. The Minnesota native had sung professionally with the Guthrie Theater and the Minnesota Orchestra, and his “backyard musicals”—shows he directed, designed, and starred in, with some help from his mother—had attracted audiences of up to 600. He graduated this past spring from the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music with a BFA in musical theater and immediately moved to the Big Apple, to start auditioning and to make his dreams come true.

Looking back on his experience in Houston, Nathaniel—he went by the nickname Nate back in 2003—remembers the fun he had and the lifelong friendships he made.

He made many friends among the children's chorus, and, in fact, a romance blossomed between Nate and one of the members, Stephanie Styles. Stephanie's name will be familiar to Houstonians: the Episcopal High School graduate and Tommy Tune Award winner was recently in Houston starring in the national Broadway tour of Newsies. She's still “one of my closest friends,” Nathaniel says. “I just took the train to Boston to spend a day and a half with Stephanie and her mother, and I saw Stephanie in Newsies twice. It was wonderful.”

He also became close to Teddy Tahu Rhodes and Marie Lenormand, who played the Pilot and the Fox, respectively, in the world premiere, and has stayed in touch with both. “My favorite moment of the show is when Teddy would come up behind me, and he’d put his hands over my chest, and he would sing, ‘I’ll miss your laugh. It’s like a well of water in the desert.’ And that memory of that moment—especially on closing night—is still so vivid.”

Nathaniel continues, “There are so many things about the book that have made more sense to me as I got older. The long-term impact is that it’s helped me deal with change and accept things as they are. I’ve always been against tattoos, but if I were to get one, it would be a tattoo over my heart that says in French ‘One sees clearly only with the heart’—words sung by the Fox in her touching scene with the Little Prince.

HGO chose Nathaniel from hundreds of children who auditioned for the role nationally, but for the 2004 reprise, the company was able to look closer to home: two Houston boys who had sung in the children’s chorus in the world premiere were chosen to share the role. They shared not only the role but the same first name, so they were known at HGO as “the two Jeffreys.” Soon after their performances in Houston, they alternated in the role at Boston Lyric Opera.

Jeffrey Allison says that after The Little Prince he was sure he wanted a career in opera. That led him to Saint Louis and Webster University, which had a program that seemed right for him. But after a year and a half, “things weren’t falling into place very well,” he says. One
of his professors suggested he take an aptitude test. Pursuing music had seemed so natural that he hadn't thought of doing anything else.

But he took the test, and to his great surprise, it showed a strong aptitude for a career in healthcare. He decided to try a semester as a biology major to see if he liked it. "That click I was looking for that I seemed to lose in music was there again. I felt very purposeful. I came to the understanding after many sleepless nights and lots of coffee that I don't have to pursue a career in music in order to enjoy it."

As a result of this new revelation, he headed to Saint Louis University to study biological science with a minor in biochemistry. He's a part-time EMT and discovered he really likes emergency medicine. And his new dream? To practice emergency and battlefield medicine as a medical officer in the U.S. Navy.

"It's always a good story to tell people that I went from musical theater and classical performance to biochemistry. It's fun to watch their faces," he says with a chuckle. He currently remains connected with his musical self as a member of his university's all-male a cappella group.

Jeffrey Walter—Jeffrey Allison's cohort in 2004—does seem to have found his home in music—in opera, as a matter of fact.

"I had been singing since age six, but The Little Prince really changed my world, just to be with people who loved doing this, too," he says.

Even more than the feeling of being in a group of people who were all working toward a common goal and all completely absorbed with what they were doing, it was the music of The Little Prince that made him fall in love with the idea of singing as a career. "It clicked, and I knew that this was what I wanted to do. I listened to the music constantly and sang the Little Prince's aria for my audition. I felt so much relief when I found out I had been cast, because I really, really wanted it."

His memories of his experiences at HGO are all good ones. Even though his flying harness got caught on the curtain in one performance and he had to sing a couple of his lines from offstage, he still says that the flying—soaring above the audience while singing—"was just a blast."

He is currently a junior at the University of Maryland majoring in vocal performance. "I dabbled a little bit in musical theater, but I just really love opera," he says. "This isn't an easy road, but there's nothing else I really want to do."
CONCERT OF ARIAS
28th Annual Eleanor McColum Competition for Young Singers

7 p.m. – Vocal Competition
Post-performance Celebration Dinner in the Grand Foyer

8 p.m. – Celebration Dinner in the Grand Foyer

Attire: Black Tie
THE ORCHESTRA’S ROLE
Orchestral musicians have an important role to play: along with the singers, they are creating a “sound world” for the opera. The orchestra can let you know when something scary is about to happen or when a character on stage is feeling excited or sad.

The conductor leads the whole performance, and that’s why the conductor is often called “maestro”—an Italian word that means master or teacher. The orchestra and singers get their cues from the conductor, who also determines how quickly or slowly the music is performed, how loud or soft. The conductor also makes sure the players don’t drown out their fellow players—or the singers.

Opera orchestras vary a great deal in the number of musicians and the kinds of instruments, depending upon the sound world the composer has created. There will be 26 musicians in the orchestra pit for The Little Prince, including two percussionists, who play everything from timpani (kettle drums) to a guiro (a gourd-shaped instrument) and even a manual typewriter! In this opera, the composer, Rachel Portman, used certain instruments for certain characters: listen for the harp and flute (and sometimes clarinet) when the Little Prince is singing, a solo violin for the Rose, and an instrument called the celesta for the Snake. It looks something like a piano but makes quite a different sound. See if you can identify it!

Come down to the orchestra pit before the opera to take a look and say hello.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS
THE LITTLE PRINCE

An Opera in Two Acts
Based upon the Book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Music by Rachel Portman
Libretto by Nicholas Wright

Production by Francesca Zambello
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in English with projected text

PRINCIPALS
The Little Prince Andy Jones * (Dec. 4, 6m, 9m, 11, 13m, 16, 18, 20m)
Cohle H. Smith * (Dec. 8m, 9, 15m, 17, 19)
The Pilot Joshua Hopkins ‡
Ben Edquist † (Dec. 8m, 9m, 15m, 17, 19)
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community
Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow

ENSEMBLE (also appearing as stars, baobabs, lamplighters, roses, and hunters)
The Rose Pureum Jo †
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis/Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow
The King Federico De Michellis †
Beth Madison Fellow
The Vain Man/The Snake John Kapusta *
The Drunkard/The Lamplighter Chris Bozeka *†
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
The Businessman Samuel Schultz
The Fox Sofia Selowsky †
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow
The Water D’Ana Lombard †
Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow

Commissioned through a generous gift made by Kathryn and David Berg in memory of Larry Pfeffer.
Production made possible by a challenge grant from The Edgar Foster Daniels Foundation.
A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Skylight Opera Theatre, Tulsa Opera, and Boston Lyric Opera and
the Wang Center for the Performing Arts.
Premiered by Houston Grand Opera in May 2003.
Produced in association with St. Rose Music Publishers.
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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and Theater
District Improvement, Inc., and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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

Conductor
Bradley Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Emily Senturia ‡ (December 9, 11, 13m)

Production
Francesca Zambello

Director
Ellen Douglas Schlaefer

Set and Costume Designer
Maria Bjørnson

Original Lighting Designer
Rick Fisher

Lighting Realizer
Michael James Clark

Set Realizer
Adrian Linford

Costume Realizer
Sue Willmington

Children’s Chorus Director
Karen Reeves

Musical Preparation
Geoffrey Loff †
Lynn Guggolz/Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow
Kirill Kuzmin †
Joan Hacken Bitar, M.D./Bill and Melinda Brunger Fellow
Sahar Nouri †
Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

Stage Manager
Kristen E. Burke

Assistant Director
Katrina Bachus

Supertitles by
Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles cued by
Catherine Schaefer


Drops painted by Red Ark Performance Limited.

Costumes, hats, and headdresses by Houston Grand Opera Costume Shop.

Additional costumes constructed by Carelli Costumes.

Additional hats and headdresses by Rodney Gordon, Inc.

Selected properties by Mark A. Jircik Exhibits Fabricators, Inc., Houston, Texas.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry translated from the French by Richard Howard.

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
SYNOPSIS

THE LITTLE PRINCE

THE PERFORMANCE LASTS APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS AND 10 MINUTES, INCLUDING ONE INTERMISSION.

PROLOGUE

The Pilot explains that, when he was six years old, he saw a picture of a wild beast being eaten by a boa constrictor. This inspired him to draw a picture of his own, showing the snake digesting its prey. But the grownups he showed it to discouraged him from drawing and told him to concentrate on conventional subjects. Now he is a pilot, flying far above the earth among the stars.

ACT I

The stars sing to each other, and a group of stars above the Sahara sees a sandstorm forcing the Pilot’s airplane to the ground. The Pilot is reflecting on the danger he is in, when a curious little boy—the Little Prince—appears. He asks the Pilot to draw him a sheep. Intrigued, the Pilot tries to learn more about him.

Gradually, the Little Prince tells his story. He explains that he comes from a tiny planet, Asteroid B-612, which is in danger of being taken over by enormous baobab trees. That is why he wanted a sheep in the first place: he hopes it will eat the baobab sprouts. He is worried, however, that the sheep will also eat flowers, as there is a special flower—a Rose—that the Little Prince wants very much to protect. The Pilot promises to draw a muzzle for the sheep so that it can’t eat the flower.

The Pilot describes the Little Prince nurturing his Rose and waiting for her to come into bloom. When he learns that her greatest fear is of catching a chill, he hastens to find a dome. She rebukes him sharply: placing her under a glass is not the way to please her. She urges him to seek wisdom in the worlds around him, and then return to her.

A flock of birds takes the Little Prince on his journey. He visits the planets of a King, a Vain Man, a Drunkard, a Businessman, and a Lamplighter. The Little Prince is bewildered by the behavior of all these grownups, except the Lamplighter, whom he respects—by tending his lamp, he is doing something useful. The Little Prince thinks anxiously about his beloved flower, whom he has left alone and defenseless. Determined to continue his travels, however, he flies on to the Planet Earth.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

The Little Prince arrives on Earth and meets a Snake, who cryptically claims that with one touch, he can send him back to the place from which he came. “I’ll help you find your way back home,” the Snake promises.

The Little Prince continues exploring Earth and finds a rose garden. He is distressed to see so many beautiful flowers, because he thought his Rose was the only one of her kind. Fox hunters appear with their guns. Once they have gone, their quarry comes out of hiding. The Little Prince asks the Fox to play with him. But the Fox refuses, saying, “I’ve not been tamed.” The Little Prince learns what “taming” means. “Tamers care for what they’ve tamed. You’ll always be responsible for your Rose,” the Fox explains. The Prince realizes that his Rose is, after all, unique, because of his love for her.

He has finished recounting his adventures, and the Pilot reminds him that it’s been eight days since his plane crash and they are running out of water. They set off in search of a well, and are refreshed and saved by the water they find. But the Little Prince’s visit to Earth is coming to an end. He tells the Pilot to go back to his plane and return the next night. Filled with dread, the Pilot leaves.

When he comes back, he finds the Little Prince making an agreement with the Snake. The Prince tells the Pilot that it is time for him to return to his planet. He reassures him that he is not about to die, and that his body is just a shell: “Anything essential is invisible to the eye.” The Snake strikes and the Little Prince disappears, leaving the Pilot alone in the desert. The Pilot addresses the audience: “Wait a while beneath a star, and if a child arrives with golden hair, who laughs and disappears, make sure you tell me he’s returned.”

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY

The Little Prince made its world premiere at HGO in 2003 with Nathaniel Irvin as the Little Prince and Teddy Tahu Rhodes as the Pilot. The opera was remounted during the holidays as a part of HGO’s 50th anniversary season (2004–05) with Jeffrey Allison and Jeffrey E. Walter sharing the role of the Little Prince and Joshua Hopkins as the Pilot.

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

PATRICK SUMMERS, ARTISTIC AND MUSIC DIRECTOR — Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

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

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Sarah Ludvig †, Chavdar Parashkevov *
Anabel Ramirez †, Mary Reed †, Linda Sanders †, Oleg Sulyga †
Sylvia VerMeulen *, Melissa Williams †

DOUBLE BASS
Eliseo Rene Salazar *, Principal
Lorenzo Golofeev *, Assistant Principal
Mary Fulghum †, Gayle Garcia-Shepard *
Erika Lawson †, Suzanne LeFevre †

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

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

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

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Conrad Cornelison †

FRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston *, Principal
Kimberly Penrod Minson †

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams †

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

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

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THE LITTLE PRINCE

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Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of 233 donors – from HGO subscribers to global opera lovers to local Houston activists – we raised $261,995 in 24 hours for our #AllinForHGO campaign.

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PHOTO BY LYNN LANE
RACHEL PORTMAN (UNITED KINGDOM)
Composer
Rachel Portman’s The Little Prince has been seen at HGO twice previously: it received its world premiere in 2003 and was staged again in 2004. Born in West Sussex, England, Rachel Portman began composing at age 14 and studied music at Oxford University. She gained experience writing music for drama in BBC and Channel 4 films including Mike Leigh’s Four Days in July and Jim Henson’s Storyteller series. Her extensive film work includes scores for Never Let Me Go, The Joy Luck Club, Benny and June, and The Manchurian Candidate. She won an Academy Award for her score for Emma and Academy Award nominations for Chocolat and The Cider House Rules. She has also written a musical of Little House on the Prairie and a dramatic choral symphony commissioned for the BBC Proms concerts titled The Water Diviner. She was appointed an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2010 New Year Honors.

NICHOLAS WRIGHT (UNITED KINGDOM)
Librettist
The Little Prince, which received its world premiere at HGO in 2003, represents playwright Nicholas Wright’s first work in opera; he later wrote the libretto for the opera Man on the Moon for British television. His plays include Treetops and One Fine Day (Riverside Studios); The Gorky Brigade (Royal Court); The Crimes of Vautrin (Joint Stock); The Custum of the Country and The Desert Air (Royal Shakespeare Company); Cressida (Almeida Theatre at the Albery); Rattigan’s Nijinsky (Chichester); The Last of the Duchess (Hampstead); and Travelling Light, Mrs. Klein, Vincent in Brixton, and The Reporter (National Theatre). He also adapted His Dark Materials for the stage and wrote versions of Naked, Lulu, John Gabriel Borkman, Three Sisters, and Thérèse Raquin. His adaptation of Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela’s A Human Being Died That Night was produced at Hampstead Theatre in 2013 and 2014 and at Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2015, and his adaptation of Pat Barker’s Regeneration was produced in Northampton and on tour in 2014.

BRADLEY MOORE (UNITED STATES)
Conductor
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Conductor, coach, and pianist Bradley Moore is HGO’s head of music staff and music director for the HGO Studio. Last season at HGO, he conducted performances of The Magic Flute and served as the pianist for the 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He conducted Madame Butterfly at the Castleton Festival at the invitation of Lorin Maazel and is the founding music director of the Fire Island Opera Festival. He conducted The Barber of Seville at Opera Colorado and has worked as assistant conductor, backstage conductor, and coach at the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Opéra National de Paris, Canadian Opera Company, and Los Angeles Opera, among others. As a recital partner, Moore appears this season with Jamie Barton at the Kennedy Center and other venues, and joins Barton and Angela Meade in recital at the U.S. Supreme Court. He has collaborated with Renée Fleming and Susan Graham at Carnegie Hall and on several national tours, and enjoys partnerships with Christine Goerke, Alice Coote, Eric Cutler, Eric Owens, and clarinetist Julian Bliss. He has performed live on A Prairie Home Companion with Renée Fleming and Yo-Yo Ma, and with Joshua Bell on CBS Sunday Morning News and Late Night with Conan O’Brien. He has performed as keyboard soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the San Francisco Ballet, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, among others.

EMILY SENTURIA (UNITED STATES)
Conductor (Dec. 9, 11, 13m)
HGO Studio alumna Emily Senturia joined the company’s music staff this season as assistant chorus master/assistant conductor. In previous seasons at HGO she conducted performances of The Magic Flute and coached Cost fan tutte, Sweeney Todd, Aida, Rigoletto, Carmen, and A Little Night Music. This past summer, Senturia joined the music staff of Wolf Trap Opera, coaching and playing in the orchestra of The Ghosts of Versailles. Originally from San Francisco, Senturia has trained as a coach at Wolf Trap, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Royal Academy of Music, and has worked on productions at Atlanta Opera, West Edge Opera, and Virginia Opera. Prior to her focus on opera, she studied orchestral conducting at Indiana University and Boston University, and violin at Rice University.

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO (UNITED STATES)
Production
Opera and theater director Francesca Zambello has created a number of productions for HGO since her company debut with Fidelio (1984), which was also her American directing debut. HGO audiences have seen her work in Show Boat (2013); Of Mice and Men (2002); Florencia en el Amazonas (2001, 1996); Faust (2007, 1997, 1999, 1985); Madame Butterfly (2004, 1998); Of Mice and Men (2002); Prince Igor (2001); Billy Budd (1998); Street Scene (1994); and others. She has served as the general director of The Glimmerglass Festival since 2010 and as artistic director of Washington National Opera since 2012. She also served as the artistic advisor to the San Francisco Opera (2005–11) and as the artistic director of the Skylight Theater (1987–92). She takes a special interest in new music theater works, innovative productions, and in producing theater and opera for wider audiences. Recent projects include Wagner’s Ring cycle for the San Francisco...
Opera, which will also be seen at Washington National Opera; Porgy and Bess and Show Boat for commercial DVD release; Voigt Lessons with Terrence McNally and Deborah Voight; Rebecca for Vienna’s Raimund Theater, Stuttgart’s Palladium Theater, and in St. Gallen, Switzerland; Napoleon in the West End; The Little Mermaid for Disney on Broadway; the musical The Master Butchers at The Guthrie Theater; and Aladdin in Disneyland. Zambello’s numerous honors include being named a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government, receiving the Russian Federation’s medal for Service to Culture, and winning three Olivier Awards.

ELLEN DOUGLAS SCHLAEFER (UNITED STATES) 
Revival Director
Ellen Douglas Schlaefer made her HGO directing debut in 2004 as stage director of the revival of The Little Prince. Other directing credits include Tosca for The Dallas Opera; La bohème and Don Giovanni for Lyric Opera of Kansas City; La bohème for Michigan Opera Theatre; Faust for Washington National Opera; Roméo et Juliette and La bohème with the National Symphony Orchestra/Wolf Trap Opera; Fidelio and La traviata with Cleveland Opera; Aida, The Ballad of Baby Doe, La traviata, Il tabarro, Porgy and Bess, and Salome for Connecticut Opera; The Marriage of Figaro and Carmen with Green Mountain Opera Festival; The Face on the Barroom Floor for Santa Fe Opera; and The Magic Flute for Houston Ebony Opera Guild. Schlaefer’s work in other genres includes the plays Doubt, The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?, In the Next Room, or The vibrator Play; all for Trustus Theatre; I Am My Own Wife, You Can’t Take It with You, The Sisters Rosensweig, and Grace and Glorie for Workshop Theatre of South Carolina; Sweeney Todd for the Princeton Festival; and The King and I, Oklahoma!, South Pacific, and A Chorus Line for Artpark & Co. in New York. Schlaefer is associate professor and director of opera studies for the University of South Carolina. She is founder and general director for FBN Productions, Inc., Opera for Kids, an educational touring company bringing opera to children since 1996.

RICK FISHER (UNITED STATES) 
Original Lighting Designer
Rick Fisher made his HGO debut in 2003 designing lighting for the world premiere of The Little Prince; his work has also been seen at HGO in last season’s Sweeney Todd. He has won two Olivier Awards for best lighting design and two Tony Awards: for An Inspector Calls and Billy Elliot the Musical. His work in opera includes The Daughter of the Regiment, Rigoletto, Salome, the world premiere of Theo Morrison’s Oscar, La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein, The Pearl Fishers, La bohème, The Last Savage, Wozzeck, Albert Herring, Billy Budd, Madame Butterfly, and Peter Grimes (Santa Fe Opera); Falstaff and Salome (Japan); Porgy and Bess (Regent’s Park, London); Falstaff and Albert Herring (Los Angeles Opera); The Abduction from the Seraglio and Maometto (Garsington Opera); Radamisto and Turandot (English National Opera); The Tsarina’s Slippers and Wozzeck (Royal Opera, Covent Garden); and The Fiery Angel and Turandot (Bolshoi Opera). Work in theater includes The Audience (Broadway and London); Peter Pan (Regent’s Park, London); The Merchant of Venice (Almeida, London); Billy Elliot the Musical (the Netherlands, also London, Australia, Broadway); The King and I and Sweeney Todd (Théâtre du Châtelet); Galileo (Royal Shakespeare Company/Birmingham); An Inspector Calls (London, Broadway); Jerry Springer the Opera (National Theatre and West End); and Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake.

MICHAEL JAMES CLARK (UNITED STATES) 
Lighting Realizer
Michael James Clark is the lighting supervisor for HGO. Earlier this season, he served as lighting designer for the HGO co-world premiere of Gregory Spears and Royce Vavrek’s O Columbia and the HGO Studio’s annual scenes program, Studio Showcase. He has designed lighting at HGO for numerous productions, including Otello, Die Fledermaus, Aida, La bohème, Il trovatore, La traviata, The Rape of Lucretia, The Marriage of Figaro, and the world premiere of Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon, and outdoor productions of The Magic Flute, Die Fledermaus, La bohème, Madame Butterfly, Tosca, and Rigoletto. He has also frequently designed lighting for Concert of Arias. In addition to his work at HGO,
Clark was a member of the lighting department at The Santa Fe Opera for seven seasons. For Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, he lit Stephen Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music* and *The Coronation of Poppea*. He holds a bachelor’s degree in lighting design from North Carolina School of the Arts.

**KAREN REEVES (UNITED STATES)**  
Children’s Chorus Director  
Karen Reeves has prepared the Houston Grand Opera Children’s Chorus and child soloists since 1991, for such operas as *Otello*, *Carmen*, *La bohème*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Tosca*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Hansel and Gretel*. She directed the children’s chorus for *The Little Prince’s* world premiere at HGO in 2003 and its revival in 2004. She was a member of the Houston Grand Opera Chorus for 13 seasons, and during the 1999–2000 season, she became the founding director of the High School Voice Studio, HGO’s year-long intensive program for high school seniors preparing for further vocal music study. She received her bachelor of music degree from Southwestern University and her master of music degree from Rice University. She taught on the voice faculty at Houston Baptist University, and for more than 20 years she taught in the voice department of Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as an artist consultant. She has served as a grant evaluator for the Texas Commission on the Arts music and opera advisory panel. She is the administrator for the opera program of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

**ANDY JONES (UNITED STATES)**  
Treble – *The Little Prince* (Dec. 4, 6m, 9m, 11, 13m, 16, 18, 20m)  
Andy Jones is a native Houstonian and a fifth grader at Poe Elementary School. He has enjoyed singing with his school’s choir since the third grade and has participated in after-school programs with Main Street Theater. Andy is a Cub Scout who enjoys WWII history, swimming, reading, computer gaming, camping, and traveling.
COHLE H. SMITH (UNITED STATES)
Treble—The Little Prince (Dec. 8m, 9m, 15m, 17m, 19m)

Cohle Smith is a seventh grader at Timberwood Middle School, where he is a member of the tenor/bass choir. He made his theater debut in A Disney Double Bill: 101 Dalmatians & The Aristocats with Centre Stage in Kingwood. He now takes a variety of classes with Christian Youth Theater Houston, with which group he has performed in student versions of Mulan (Chi Fu) and Seussical (Wilber Wickersham), and in Beauty and the Beast (Baker and ensemble). Cohle aspires to take Broadway by storm.

JOSHUA HOPKINS (CANADA)
Baritone—The Pilot

Chosen by Opera News as one of 25 artists poised for major careers, HGO Studio alumnus Joshua Hopkins has performed regularly with HGO, including Marcello in La bohème, Junius in The Rape of Lucretia, and in Beauty and the Beast (Baker and ensemble). Hopkins aspires to take Broadway by storm.

HERRING, Rice University in May. His opera roles include Sid in Albert Concert of Arias. He received his master of music degree from and was a finalist in the 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition and participated in HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy in 2013. Ben Edquist is a first-year artist with the HGO Studio. He

BEN EDQUIST (UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow Baritone—The Pilot (Dec. 8m, 9m, 15m, 17m, 19m)

Ben Edquist is a first-year artist with the HGO Studio. He participated in HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy in 2013 and was a finalist in the 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He received his master of music degree from Rice University in May. His opera roles include Sid in Albert Herring, Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro, Charlie in Jake Heggie’s Three Decembers, and Guglielmo in Così fan tutte. Earlier this season at HGO, he sang Sir Walter Raleigh/Astronaut in the world premiere of O Columbia, the Captain in Eugene Onegin, and Sciarone in Tosca. Later this season he will perform the leading role of Edward Kynaston in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players and Jigger Craigin in Carousel.

JOHN KAPUSTA (UNITED STATES)
Tenor—The Vain Man/The Snake

New York native John Kapusta, a specialist in character tenor roles, is making his HGO debut. He recently made his Carnegie Hall debut as Lord Cecil in Roberto Devereux with the Opera Orchestra of New York (Eve Queler, conductor) and last season made his company debut with Washington National Opera as the Vain Man/Snake in The Little Prince. Other recent appearances include the Dance Master in Ariadne auf Naxos (directed by Francesca Zambello and conducted by George Manahan) at the Glimmerglass Festival. Other roles include Don Eusebio in Opportunity Makes the Thief, Monostatos in The Magic Flute, and Sellem in The Rake’s Progress. He was a national semifinalist in the 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

SOFIA SELOWSKY (UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow Mezzo-soprano—The Fox

Second-year HGO Studio artist Sofia Selowsky won third prize in HGO’s 2014 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and sang Suzuki in Madame Butterfly at HGO last season. She earned her master’s degree at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music (CCM) and has performed as a Gerdine Young Artist at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival. Other previous roles include Mère Jeanne in Dialogues of the Carmelites, Lazuli in L’Étoile, Véronique in Bizet’s Le docteur Miracle, and Cecilia March in the European premiere of Mark Adamo’s Little Women. She sang Despina in Così fan tutte with the Aspen Music Festival this past summer. Later this season at HGO, she will sing Second Wood Nymph in Rusalka and Nell Gwynn in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players. She recently made her Houston Symphony debut in Schumann’s The Pilgrimage of the Rose, conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

SAMUEL SCHULTZ (UNITED STATES)
Baritone—The Businessman

Wisconsin native Samuel Schultz made his HGO debut in 2011 as the Wigmaker in Ariadne auf Naxos and since then has performed Counsel for the Plaintiff in Trial by Jury. Mr. Lindquist in A Little Night Music, Morales in Carmen, and Dr. Falke in Die Fledermaus. He will be featured on the world premiere recording of Gettysburg by William Bolcom. He made his Houston Symphony debut
singing Ravel’s *Don Quixote* and *L’heure espagnole* (Ramiro). He sang *La Cenerentola* (Dandini) with Baltimore Concert Opera and *The Rape of Lucretia* (Junius) with Aspen Music Festival. He covered the role of Howie in the world premiere of *Champion* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and sang Berio’s rarely-performed *Coro* at the Lucerne Festival under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Schultz is an alumnus of the United States Senate Page Program and has sung for the United States Congress. He is a graduate of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

**PUREUM JO (KOREA)**

Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis/
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow
Soprano—The Rose
Second-year HGO Studio artist Pureum Jo sang Papagena in *The Magic Flute* and Pamina in performances of that opera last season at HGO, and this past September she sang Becca in the world premiere of *O Columbia*. She has performed the title role in *Matsukaze* (Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Lincoln Center Festival); Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (The Chautauqua Institution); and Micaela in *Carmen* (Aspen Music Festival). She has also performed in the Marilyn Horne Foundation’s recital series *The Song Continues*, in Juilliard’s *Wednesdays at One* series, and with New York City’s Voices of Ascension. This past summer, she sang Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* with the Aspen Music Festival. Later this season, she will appear as Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Miss Frayne in *Prince of Players*.

**FEDERICO DE MICHELIS (ARGENTINA)**

Beth Madison Fellow
Bass-baritone—The King
Born in Buenos Aires, first-year HGO Studio artist Federico De Michelis won third prize in the 2015 Eleanor McCallum Competition Concert of Arias. He was previously a member of the Opera Studio of Teatro Argentino de La Plata, where he performed Antonio in *Il viaggio a Reims*, El Hombre Mayor in Gerardo Gandini’s contemporary opera *Ciudad Ausente*, Johann in *Werther*, Narrator from Nino Rota’s *I due timidi*, Don Alfonso in *Cosi fan tutte*, Phitone in *Il ballo dell’ingrate*, and Tempo from *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria*. Earlier this season at HGO, he sang performances of Angelotti in *Tosca* and Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*. Later this season, he will perform Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Thomas Betterton in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players*. 
WHO’S WHO

CHRIS BOZEKA (UNITED STATES)
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr.
Fellow
Tenor—The Drunkard/The Lamplighter
Chris Bozeka, a first-year artist with the HGO Studio, won second prize in the 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He is making his HGO debut. He earned his master’s degree at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music (CCM), where he appeared as Nemorino in The Elixir of Love, Ernesto in Don Pasquale, and the Narrator in Owen Wingrave. Bozeka was a winner at the 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions–Ohio District. This past summer as an artist with the San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program, he appeared as Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi. Later this season at HGO, he will sing Don Curzio in The Marriage of Figaro, Huntsman in Rusalka, and Male Emilia in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players.

D’ANA LOMBARD (UNITED STATES)
Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow
Soprano—The Water
D’Ana Lombard joined the HGO Studio last season after winning first prize in the 2014 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Her roles at HGO last season included First Lady in The Magic Flute and Kate Pinkerton in Madame Butterfly. The New York native was a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at Los Angeles Opera for two seasons. With L.A. Opera, she covered Alice in Falstaff and the title role of Thaïs and sang Alisa in Lucia di Lammermoor. This past summer, she sang Rosina in The Ghosts of Versailles with Wolf Trap Opera and Eva in the world premiere of Jack Perla’s An American Dream with Seattle Opera. Later this season at HGO, she will sing First Wood Nymph in Rusalka.

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Ana María Martínez, soprano, HGO Studio Alum

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HERRING DESIGN
HGO brings in a huge range of artists to work with us—singers, conductors, directors, and designers—and one person is in charge of making sure we have contracted their services legally and correctly. How did HGO Associate Artistic Administrator Mark Lear get to where he is today?

Perryn Leech: What was your family background, Mark?

Mark Lear: My dad was a minister and my mother was a homemaker in Dickinson, Texas. I have a much older half brother and sister as well, but I was essentially the only child growing up in our household. My first instrument at age four or five was the melodica; I did small chores and saved up to buy it. My parents encouraged me to take up piano in the second grade and I had a wonderful teacher, Evelyne Krieg. We ended up buying an upright piano as well and I used to play that and sing when I was in elementary school.

So music was something that you got into early and were passionate about.

Absolutely! When I went to middle school I joined the band and played the oboe and my best friend played the French horn and we were band nerds together. I always loved school, and the scholarly aspect of academics and music was a very good fit for me. I learned to be self-mocking and that actually meant that I wasn’t given a hard time or bullied.

Someone who learned how not to be bullied using humor? You must have been very funny!

I also started to win competitions so I was seen as being good enough to earn respect from my peers. When I got to high school, I made it through regional and area competitions and then was in the Texas All State Orchestra for all four
years. There is a huge convention in San Antonio that is one of the main events where universities start to look for young players to recruit.

**Had there been any opera in your life by this point?**

My last year of high school was the first time I really became aware of opera, I guess, and I was awestruck by Leontyne Price in particular but I didn’t really know very much about it. I was unsure at this point what I wanted to pursue, but I was also very interested in biology and decided that I wanted to try to follow both avenues if I could.

**A very unusual combination of disciplines. How did that work?**

I was accepted at University of Rochester to study biochemistry and also at the University’s Eastman School of Music to pursue oboe, and over the next five years I was able to get degrees in both. Early on at Eastman, I was assigned to play in *Così fan tutte* and was fascinated by it. I started to collect opera recordings and bought more and more as I could afford them. When I left college, I was working in a biochemistry lab during the day and trying to continue my musical journey by working as a freelance oboe player. There was enough work that I was able to get a reasonable number of gigs on top of my “real” job in the lab.

**Had you started attending live performances by this point?**

Once I could afford it, I got a subscription in the nosebleed seats. This was when I really started to see opera for all that it is, with huge sets and wonderful singing and some of the best music in the whole...
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I could barely afford the seats but it was a perfect release. I was enjoying the structure of the job in the lab but I wanted to continue my oboe studies more intensely so I decided to pursue a master's degree in music.

Of course, because two degrees weren't enough!

I applied to SMU in Dallas. I was accepted and found that I loved being back into studying music full time and adding some freelance oboe work on the side. At the beginning of my second year in Dallas, I won an audition to become principal oboist of The Dallas Opera on a one-year interim contract, while finishing my master's degree. I was eventually awarded the job permanently and played three seasons with the orchestra. But the school bug bit again—being a student has always been one of my favorite things.

So, on to degree number four?

Yes. I became fascinated with the study of law, which was entirely new to me, and went on to earn a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin, passing the bar exam the summer after graduation.

Once you had your law degree, what happened?

I started at a law firm in Dallas and very quickly realized that it wasn't what I expected it to be and that I really didn't
Enjoy it at all. So I came back home to Dickinson to figure out what was next.

Four degrees, but you clearly loved music and opera. What brought you to HGO?

I saw a job opening for a grant writer—and it just looked like a new challenge that I might be good at and enjoy. I applied and got the job and came to work at HGO. Within a few years of coming to HGO, I had moved into my present position in artistic administration. I love the contractual aspect of doing the job and I also love the methodical and precise nature of the work. It’s kind of like what attracted me to biochemistry and law in terms of things needing to be done in a certain order and having to be done properly and not rushed. I like that. Doing that sort of work in an environment immersed in music and art on a daily basis means that I have finally found my perfect niche!

You have been at the company for almost 17 years now and you have built up close friendships with a number of singers and especially Studio artists.

I love being part of the casting process and I have friends coming back every season. Our team has such a wide knowledge of singers that it is wonderful to put together our ideal casts and then try to get them to come. Sometimes we have to make compromises when our first choices are not available, but artists love working for HGO, so if they are free they don’t need much persuading.

Your partnership with Diane Zola [HGO’s director of artistic administration] is obviously very important to you.

It is, because we have become firm friends as well as work colleagues. I think that we complement each other really well. Diane is very experienced—she knows so many people throughout the industry and is very good with the personal touches that make the singers feel welcome when they are here. I focus on making sure that all the details (and the budget) are taken care of, so the partnership works very well, I think.

I love studying and have also worked in a lot of professions in my life, but I can honestly say that the job I have now is the best fit for me—I have responsibility and I get to challenge my brain a lot. I am very proud of the work that we do at HGO, and I get to work with some of the best opera talent anywhere in the world in a supportive and almost family environment. I am very happy to have found HGO.
Houston Grand Opera Studio

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The Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) is generously written by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wakefield and the HGO Guild. Additional support for YAVA is provided by Mr. Patrick Carlini, Dr. David and Mrs. Norine Gill, and Gwyneth Campbell.
Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.

HGO Studio Artists 2015–16

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Beth Madison Fellow
Ben Edquist, baritone
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CONCERT OF ARIAS
FEB. 4, 2016
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Concert of Arias—the final round of the Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers—is the single most important fundraiser for the HGO Studio. The evening begins with a 6 p.m. champagne reception, followed by the competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.


HOLIDAY ISSUE 2015

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HGOco is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HGOco’s many projects, the touring group Opera to Go! performs family-friendly works in schools, churches, and community venues. Each year, HGOco also offers student performances (for school groups only) of a popular opera.

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Opera to Go! eagerly anticipates Houston Grand Opera’s 58th world premiere this winter—Mark Buller and Charles Anthony Silvestri’s The Puffed-Up Prima Donna.

This comedy explores how collaboration can counteract bullying through the story of a fictitious group of opera singers struggling with artistic differences. As they prepare to celebrate a wedding, will the overbearing Prima Donna ruin everything or is she simply misunderstood? Please join us for free performances at the historic Heinen Theatre January 28, 29, and 30, at 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. daily. The Puffed-Up Prima Donna is available for touring from January 25 through May 20, 2016. For more information or to book performances for your school, library, or community center, please visit HGO.org/operatogo or call 713-546-0231.

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THE NEXUS INITIATIVE

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

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OPERA TO GO! HEADS WEST

Opera to Go! recently continued its annual partnership with Midland Opera Theater to bring The Velveteen Rabbit to over 7,000 students in the Midland–Odessa region. During one week in November, the artists performed The Velveteen Rabbit for 32 local schools and presented a recital of popular opera arias and ensembles for the public. This year the ladies of Opera to Go! were especially delighted to wear some jewels generously loaned by Diamonds of Midland for the evening concert. We look forward to continuing the tradition and revisiting the prairie dogs out west next season!

COMING TO THE HEINEN THEATRE AND TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU...

Opera to Go! eagerly anticipates Houston Grand Opera’s 58th world premiere this winter—Mark Buller and Charles Anthony Silvestri’s The Puffed-Up Prima Donna.

This comedy explores how collaboration can counteract bullying through the story of a fictitious group of opera singers struggling with artistic differences. As they prepare to celebrate a wedding, will the overbearing Prima Donna ruin everything or is she simply misunderstood? Please join us for free performances at the historic Heinen Theatre January 28, 29, and 30, at 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. daily. The Puffed-Up Prima Donna is available for touring from January 25 through May 20, 2016. For more information or to book performances for your school, library, or community center, please visit HGO.org/operatogo or call 713-546-0231.

The Velveteen Rabbit in performance at Miller Outdoor Theatre.

Photo by Lynn Lane

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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 main-stage productions, including this season's Tosca and Rusalka.

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 main-stage 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.

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

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

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over thirty years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to main-stage productions, including the 2015-16 season-opening production, Puccini's Tosca. 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, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.
bobbie-vee and gerald cooney
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979 and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO's innovative commission Crucar la Cara de la Luna (2010, 2013), 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 board of directors.

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 main-stage season.

the cullen trust for the performing arts
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO's main-stage season for nearly 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 of Carmen, A Christmas Carol, and the 2015–16 production of The Little Prince.

marianne and david duthu
Marianne and David have been HGO subscribers since 1991 and members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence since 2009. David is a member of the HGO Board of Directors. The couple chaired Concert of Arias in 2011, an event they have generously supported for many years, and were the event’s honorees in 2013. David, an engineer, is the founder of Texas Energy Engineers, Inc./CCRD Partners Consulting Engineers. Marianne is retired from Vopak North America, a chemical storage company. When not working or attending opera, they love to collect art and to restore rare vehicles.

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 Janet L. Carrig, Senior Chairman Terrylin Neale, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors. This season, HGO is thrilled to have HGOE as the premier guarantor of Siegfried.

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 special events and main-stage productions such as Aida (2013–14), The Magic Flute (2014–15), and this season’s The Marriage of Figaro. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. C. Richard Stasney, founder of CPAM, 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 main-stage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable main-stage productions such as last season’s Così fan tutte and 2014’s Rigoletto.

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, main-stage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

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 are underwriters for HGO’s Ring cycle. He is also a special events sponsor, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.
BETH MADISON
This season marks Beth’s 21st 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. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events and, last season, Die Walküre. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

JANICE AND ROBERT MCMNAR
Janice and Bob McNair, longtime HGO subscribers, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob is chairman and CEO of The McNair Group, a financial and real estate firm, and owner of the Houston Texans. The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation provides leadership support to Houston-area organizations supporting educational opportunities for youth. The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO’s 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.

MEDISTAR
Medistar is a full-service real estate development company that specializes in the design, development, financing, and construction of hospitals, long-term acute care facilities, cancer centers, integrated medical plazas, medical office buildings, and other medical facilities for the health care industry. The company is led by founder Monzer Hourani, an internationally renowned engineer whose innovations of many building techniques and concepts have had a great impact on the U.S. construction industry. Medistar joined the HGO family as a Grand Guarantor of Wagner’s Ring cycle (2014–17).

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. Upcoming Mellon Foundation–supported projects include the world premiere of Prince of Players by legendary American composer Carlisle Floyd, as well as HGOco’s Song of Houston initiative.

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

BRUCIE AND ANDREW MOORE
Brucie and Andy have been a treasured part of the Opera family for more than 20 years. Subscribers since the 1998–99 season, Brucie and Andy are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Brucie has served on the HGO Board of Directors since 2013. She is also a lifetime member of the board of governors of Leadership Corpus Christi, a board member of the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, principal underwriter for the Corpus Christi Area Youth Orchestra, and board president of Harbor Playhouse. Andy was the 2012 winner of HGO’s Singing with the Houston Idols and regularly performs in musical theater productions.

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 HGO’s special events and main-stage productions, including HGO’s new holiday opera series, with It’s a Wonderful Life in the 2016–17 season. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on its board of directors and as a member and past chair of the HGOco Committee.

FRANCI 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 member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.
CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELLO
Cynthia and Tony are deeply committed to improving the lives of Houstonians through their support of health care and the arts. Tony is the chief executive officer of Nabors Industries, the world’s largest land-based drilling contractor. Cynthia, a community leader, currently serves on the HGO Board of Directors and Special Events Committee, and chairs the HGOco Committee. HGO is grateful for the Petrellos’ support of HGOco and the main stage, underwriting this season’s Prince of Players. The Petrellos also support HGOco programs for children, including the Student Performance Series and Opera to Go!

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 main-stage 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 Mansefieldt, 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.

SCHLUMBERGER
Schlumberger, Ltd., 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 200,000 people. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters. Dan Domeracki, vice president of government and industry relations, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION
HGO is privileged to count Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) among its newest corporate supporters. Oxy is an international oil and gas exploration and production company with operations in the United States, Middle East, and Latin America. HGO is grateful for Oxy’s leadership support of HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative that brings performances to over 100,000 students, families, and teachers each season. HGO is thrilled to have Marcia Backus, a long-term HGO supporter and senior vice president and general counsel at Oxy, serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

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.

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. 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.

SCHLUMBERGER
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JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER
John and Jerry, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, travel around the world to experience the best that opera has to offer. HGO subscribers and donors for over a decade, the couple’s leadership support of Wagner’s Ring cycle (2014–17) was the largest gift ever made to HGO for a single production. John, a shareholder at Turner Industries Group, is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and is also 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 main-stage productions and special events. They are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and John is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society.

VINSON & ELKINS LLP
HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. V&E is deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and main-stage productions, including this season’s Rusalka. 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.

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Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $4,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.
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DECEMBER

4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

• Performances of Rachel Portman and Nicholas Wright’s The Little Prince. Wortham Theater Center’s Cullen Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the December 4 performance only.

6

• Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about The Little Prince immediately following the performance.

8, 9, 15

• Student Matinees: HGoco hosts groups of students in grades 4–8 and their chaperones at performances of Rachel Portman and Nicholas Wright’s The Little Prince. School groups only: reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

20

• Onstage Sweets & Treats: Join us for a special celebration on stage after the December 20 performance of The Little Prince. Buy tickets online at HGO.org.

JANUARY

3

• HGoco presents the High School Voice Studio Winter Recital at the Wortham Theater Center, Rehearsal Room 3, 6 p.m. Free.

7

• Opera Night Live. The Marriage of Figaro: the HGoco Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about the opera from a special guest. 7 p.m. Contact event chair Dr. Alice Gates at 713-522-1178 for information.

22, 24, 30, FEB. 3, 5, 7

• Performances of Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the January 22 performance only.

FEBRUARY

4

• Concert of Arias: the 28th Annual Eleanor McCollium Competition for Young Singers. Wortham Theater 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 Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

MARCH

5, 11, 13

• World premiere performances of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players. Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater.

13

• Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Prince of Players immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

16, 17, 18

• Spring Break at Discovery Green: HGoco presents activities and performances at Discovery Green, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

18 & 20

• Recital at Rienzi: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of MFAH, at 1406 Kirby Drive. March 18 at 7:30 p.m. and March 20 at 5 p.m.

APRIL

2

• Spring Event: the HGoco Guild holds its annual fundraiser at the Houston Racquet Club, 10709 Memorial Dr. 6:30 p.m. Contact Gerry Aitken at 281-242-4466 for information.

6

• Opera Night Live: the HGoco Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about Carousel from a special guest. 7 p.m. Contact event chair Dr. Alice Gates at 713-522-1178 for information.

9

• Opera Ball 2016: Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

13

• Professional Development Workshop: HGoco presents a workshop for educators on Siegfried. Wortham Theater Center, 4:30 p.m.

16, 20, 23, 28, MAY 1

• Performances of Wagner’s Siegfried. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 16 performance only.

22, 24, 27, 29, 30, MAY 6, 7

• Performances of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Carousel. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 22 performance only.

24

• Veterans Songbook Showcase: songs from HGoco’s Veterans Songbook project will be performed in the Brown Alcove before the performance of Carousel, 1:15 p.m.

• Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Carousel immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.
Subscriptions and single tickets for HGO’s 2015-16 season are now available. Call 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372), or order online at HGO.org.

**THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO**

Mozart

Jan. 22 | 24m | 30 | Feb. 3 | 5 | 7m

*Figaro*
Adam Plachetka *

Heidi Stober ‡

Marcella A. Martinez †

Jill Grove ‡

Kyle Pliss *

Maida Paulus *

Chicago Opera Theatre and Chorus

Conductor
Richard Paul Fink ‡

Vodník,
Brian Jagde *

Prince
Ana María Martínez *

Susanna Asphalt,*

Suzanne Streb *

Albergue de Valturión

Original Lighting Designer
Paule Constable

Movement Director
Ben Wright *

Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡

The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Grand Underwriter—PaC

**Dvořák**

**RUSALKA**

Jan. 29 | 31m | Feb. 6 | 9 | 12

*Rusalka*
Ana Maria Martinez †

Brian Jagde *

Jiri Vodnik,

a water sprite

Richard Paul Fink ‡

Guarantor—Winson & Ellis LLP

Grand Underwriter—Edward and Frances Bing Fund

Conductor
Harry Bicket *

Production
Molly Stil

Revival Director
Donna Stinup *

Set and Costume Designer
Rae Smith *

**Wagner**

SIEGFRIED

Apr. 16 | 20 | 23 | 28 | May 1m

*Siegfried*

Jay Hunter Morris

Wanderer

Iain Paterson

Brunnhilde

Marjorie Goeke

Mime

Rodel Rosel

Conductor
Patrick Summers

Alberich

Christopher Purves

Wotan

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Fafner

Andrea Silvestrelli

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**Non-subscription WORLD PREMIERE**

Mar. 5 | 11 | 13m

Edward Kynaston

Ben Edquist †

Margaret Hughes

Mane Galoyan ‡

Charles II

Chad Shelton ‡

Sir Charles Sedley

Joseph Evans

Willers, Duke of Buckingham

Scott Quinn ‡

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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Patricia Summers Marguerite Alonzo Williams Chair

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Out of Character: ANDY JONES & COHLE H. SMITH

I HEARD THAT WE’LL BE FLYING

What was it like to audition for The Little Prince?

Andy Jones: I’m ten, and I was the youngest one at the tryouts. I was like, “I’m not going to make it.” But then I heard I was called back. So then I thought, “Okay, maybe there’s the slightest chance I can make it.” Because I was looking around at everyone at the auditions, and I thought they sounded really great. I mean, what are the chances?

Cohle Smith: We subscribe to Houston Grand Opera, so we get emails and things. So we found out they were auditioning for the children’s chorus. So I auditioned, and then I got called back for the role of the Prince. All the people who got called back were amazing. And I got so nervous. But I just did my best, and here I am.

How did you feel when you found out you were chosen to perform the role of the Little Prince?

CS: We were at the beach eating dinner. And my grandparents were there, too. And my mom had already known about it, but she didn’t tell us until the dinner. And she started reading the email, and I screamed so loud! All the waitresses came over to me, and they’re like, “Are you hurt?” And I said, “No, I just got into Houston Grand Opera.” And my grandma started crying.

AJ: I cried, too. After the auditions, it was two months, no reply. Three months, no reply. Four months—“You’ve been selected for the Little Prince.” Oh, my gosh!

Well, it’s a very big deal. How have you been preparing for the role?

AJ: Emily and Brad [Emily Senturia and Bradley Moore from HGO’s music staff] are really fun to work with, and I’ve been learning a lot from the practices.

CS: We’ve been practicing a lot. It’s been a lot of work, doing this. Emily and Brad are both really cool people. And Emily is a really good piano player, and she helps us. She can read music. I can kind of read music, but not as well. But she’s helped us memorize it—if we mess up, we start over. And we just kind of do it and do it and do it until we have it memorized.

Have you read the book, The Little Prince?

AJ: I only have like ten pages left, but I stopped when I heard our class was trying to arrange with the principal to come see the opera. Our principal is an opera fanatic. So he’s all into it, and maybe the whole fifth grade’s coming. It’s the
next read-aloud book for our class, so I’m pretty excited, because our teacher used to be my acting teacher. She can make funny voices. It’s really fun.

CS: My parents read the book to me when I was a young kid. I don’t really remember reading it when I was little, but I know that they read it to me. But when I got in the show, I started reading it to understand the story a little bit better.

What do you think the story is about?

AJ: Really, the story, in my opinion, it’s just the Little Prince and the Pilot—they’re so good together. And the Little Prince wants to know more about everything. And he is a young boy with a very creative imagination.

CS: The Pilot is becoming his close friend, and the Little Prince is teaching the Pilot a very valuable lesson here. And the Prince wants to know why his Rose is so special, but the answer is right in front of him—he spent the time to work on [their relationship]. That’s why his Rose is special to him.

What do you think is going to be the most fun about performing this opera?

AJ: Everything. The music’s really good. The practices have been really fun. We joke around and work a lot. It’s really fun, learning all the music, putting it all together—it’s sort of like putting together a puzzle.

CS: I like lighting in shows, and I love it whenever the lights change or they flash or anything. The lighting in this show goes with the story just perfectly. I’m looking forward to seeing tech and everything come together.

I know it’s hard to tell right now, but do you have dreams of going on to a performance career of some kind?

CS: I’ve always wanted to be on Broadway, since I was a little kid. And I was like, “Oh gosh, this might be my big break.” Grandma was like, “Cohle, Cohle, come on. Get it together. You’re going to be on Broadway, and I’m going to move to New York with you, and I’m going to see every single show that you ever do.” I was like, “Okay, calm down. Calm down. I’m only twelve.” My grandma’s so supportive.

AJ: I would like doing musicals and more operas. I’m definitely going to stay with the acting, singing, and dancing stuff. It really brings out the side of you that expresses yourself in different ways. It feels like stepping into someone who’s made up’s shoes, and living their life.

What’s your favorite moment in the entire opera?

CS: I think my favorite scene is probably the scene with the Vain Man, when he’s playing the kazoo and dancing around.

AJ: We laughed for hours over that! I like the scene with the Lamplighter, and I like our aria, and the flying. It’s all very good. I like it all.

CS: I’m really looking forward to the flying. During the part where we’re going to different planets, I heard that we’ll be flying. 😃
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