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CONTENTS

THE PROGRAM

26 JAKE HEGGIE AND GENE SCHEER: IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE
33 WHO’S WHO: ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

FEATURES

18 CHARACTER REFERENCE
Meet the characters, both mortal and heavenly, in It’s a Wonderful Life.

20 SOMETHING IN COMMON
Composer Jake Heggie’s take on It’s a Wonderful Life diverges from the Frank Capra film, but both arose from the same impulse.

24 PIT STOP
See where the musicians of the HGO Orchestra are located—and come say hello!

40 UNSUNG HEROES:
Meet Thomas Hultén, principal trombonist for the HGO Orchestra.

DEPARTMENTS

6 Welcome
16 News & Notes
44 HGoco
45 HGO Studio
46 Impresarios Circle
50 HGO Donors
60 Calendar
63 Your HGO
64 Out of Character: Talise Trevigne

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Welcome to the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*, a continuation of our Holiday Opera Series.

Jake and Gene’s composer-librettist partnership has resulted in some of the most warmly received and most popular new operas of our time. *It’s a Wonderful Life* is HGO’s third world premiere of a Heggie-Scheer work, following the song cycle *Pieces of 9/11* in 2011 and the opera *Three Decembers* in 2008. (We also premiered Jake’s *The End of the Affair* in 2004, composed to a libretto by Heather McDonald.) Jake and Gene’s *Moby-Dick*, which premiered at the Dallas Opera, has been a huge hit and introduced them to soprano Talise Trevigne, who soared in that opera as Pip, went on to perform in *Pieces of 9/11*, and now creates the role of the angel Clara in *It’s a Wonderful Life*. We are delighted to collaborate with them once again, as well as with director Leonard Foglia, who has been a common thread throughout.

Although *It’s a Wonderful Life* is far from just a musical version of the Frank Capra film, it was inspired by the movie as well as the short story on which it was based, *The Greatest Gift* by Phillip Van Doren Stern. The characters are not drawn precisely as they are in the film, but they will be recognizable to anyone who has seen it, even though the angel Clarence has been changed into Clara. Our dream cast includes William Burden as George Bailey, a character that in its screen incarnation is ninth on the American Film Institute’s list of greatest movie heroes; HGO Studio alumni Andrea Carroll and Joshua Hopkins as George’s loving wife, Mary, and his war hero brother, Harry, respectively; Anthony Dean Griffey as the good-hearted but absent-minded Uncle Billy Bailey; and Rod Gilfry in his HGO debut as both the pharmacist Mr. Gower and the miserly Mr. Potter—the latter is sixth on the American Film Institute’s list of top screen villains. Interestingly enough, *It’s a Wonderful Life* is one of only two films with characters in the top ten of both heroes and villains.

At its core, this story is about the value of each person. It reveals that each one of us is an essential thread in the fabric of life and that the countless decisions we make every day touch other people in ways we cannot fathom. That’s one of the most uplifting messages we can think of—for the holidays or any time.

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Dear Opera Patron:

On behalf of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s world premiere production of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

We are thrilled to welcome you to the latest installment of HGO’s family-friendly Holiday Opera Series. Adapted from the same short story as one of America’s most beloved films, and from the film itself, *It’s a Wonderful Life* brings new life to a classic tale of sacrifice and redemption.

In 1988, we established The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation to support education, medical research, and community programs in Houston and beyond. In 2007, we established the McNair Medical Institute and turned our primary philanthropic focus toward targeted medical research through Houston’s Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Medical Center. Honoring the fruits of American entrepreneurship and free enterprise, in 2015 we began establishing McNair Centers for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise at colleges and universities in Houston and across the United States.

The Foundation is honored to serve as Grand Guarantor of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series, a multi-year initiative that establishes opera as a family tradition for the entire community.

Thank you for joining us for this exciting world premiere. We hope you enjoy the performance as much as we do.

Sincerely,

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Opera to Go! returns to the Heinen Theatre with free performances of a brand new bilingual chamber opera that combines music from Rossini’s The Barber of Seville with a witty libretto by Kristine McIntyre. This 45-minute show brings the world-famous Figaro to 1840s Texas, where he serves as a go-between and translator for the Spanish Rosina and American Almaviva. This production is perfect for the whole family and will tour to schools and communities Jan. 30–May 19, 2017.

See The Barber of Seville

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For more information, visit HGO.org/operatogo.

MUSICAL AMERICA HONORS ERIC OWENS

HGO Studio alumnus Eric Owens (1995–97), a bass-baritone, was named Musical America’s 2017 Vocalist of the Year. “I did not see this coming…it is mind-blowingly wonderful,” Owens said in a videotaped segment posted by his management at IMGartists.com.

In a tribute to him, critic Heidi Waleson of the Wall Street Journal wrote, “Owens communicates an unusually profound depth of feeling from the stage. Some of it stems from the richness of his instrument: The luxuriant bass timbre that resonates even in his speaking voice is matched by an electrifying upper register.” HGO audiences will remember Owens for his appearances as Ramfis in Aida (1999), Sarastro in The Magic Flute (1997), and Ari in the world premiere of Jackie O (1997), among others.
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George Bailey
George is a dreamer who yearns to break free from his small hometown and see the world beyond his fictional hometown of Bedford Falls, New York. But George is stuck in Bedford Falls running the family business, Bailey Building & Loan. When he first appears at the beginning of the opera, George is down on his luck and considering taking his own life on Christmas Eve. Through the help of the angel Clara, George goes on a journey to see what the world would have looked like if he had never existed.

Clara
*It’s a Wonderful Life* is told through the eyes of Clara, Angel Second Class. She’s eager to earn her wings and become an Angel First Class. As a test, she is assigned to help George Bailey in the darkest moment of his life. Clara explores George’s life, opening different doors for a glimpse into his childhood, as a young man, and the issues he faces as an adult. Through their journey together, Clara learns from George the most valuable lesson of all.

Mary Hatch
Mary is a smart, radiant woman who decides as a young girl that she will one day marry George Bailey. George and Mary reconnect at a high school dance and afterwards dream of living together in the old Granville House in town. They get married, move into their dream house, and have three children together. As George’s life beings to crumble, Mary lovingly stays by his side.

Mr. Potter
Bitter, miserly, and greedy, Mr. Potter is the wealthiest and most disliked man in town. He owns the bank in Bedford Falls and uses his power to try to own everything in the town, including Bailey Building & Loan. George is the only man standing in his way, but he is not the only one affected by Potter’s actions. Countless townspeople are pushed out of their jobs, forced to leave their homes, or taken advantage of by Mr. Potter.
The Children
As Clara travels through time, she gets a glimpse into George's childhood. She watches as young George and Harry go sledding with their friend Sam, and sees young George and Mary at Mr. Gower's Soda Fountain and Pharmacy. When Clara visits George and Mary as adults, she sees their children as well—Tommy, Janie, and the very littlest one: Zuzu.

Harry Bailey
George's younger brother, Harry, manages to live out every dream that George wished for as a child. A handsome adventurer, Harry leaves Bedford Falls to attend college and later travels the world while George stays in town to run the family business. When Clara looks back on their lives, she identifies a key moment in their childhood that forever altered both of their fates.

Uncle Billy Bailey
George and Harry's absent-minded but dearly loved uncle has spent his life helping to run the family business. Because of Uncle Billy's carelessness, Mr. Potter seizes an opportunity to seal the company's fate and get the building and loan for himself.

The Angels
Four First Class Angels serve as Clara's heavenly guides. They are wiser and more experienced than Clara, so they have already earned their wings. They help Clara by freezing time so she can look back through George's life to understand why he is in such despair. They offer advice and guide her toward her goal of becoming an Angel First Class.
CHOOSING JOY

A new opera by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer is inspired by Frank Capra’s 1946 film It’s a Wonderful Life and Philip Van Doren Stern’s story The Greatest Gift.

BY PATRICK SUMMERS
HGO Artistic and Music Director
B

orn in Florida, raised in Ohio, trained at UCLA and in Paris, and now residing in San Francisco, composer Jake Heggie also has deep ties to Texas: five of his six full-length operas have been commissioned here in the Lone Star State. Houston Grand Opera committed to his second opera, *The End of the Affair* (2004), before his first had been heard. His extraordinary debut work, *Dead Man Walking*, was a San Francisco Opera commission at the turn of the new century and has matured into the repertoire with 50 productions and hundreds of performances—a rare milestone for a modern opera. (HGO produced and recorded it in 2011.) His third opera, *Three Decembers*, was also an HGO commission that we premiered in 2008, and it, too, is often performed. His fourth and fifth operas were commissioned by our colleague company to the north, The Dallas Opera: *Moby-Dick* in 2010 and *Great Scott*, starring one of Houston Grand Opera’s most illustrious Studio alums, Joyce DiDonato, in 2015. *It's a Wonderful Life*, Jake’s sixth major opera, is an artistic homecoming.

Frank Capra was a major presence in the Golden Age of American cinema, the 1930s and ’40s, and his own story was as Capra-esque as any of his films. The poor Italian boy from a tiny Sicilian village who immigrated to the United States grew up to win three Academy Awards for Best Director: for *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), and *You Can't Take It with You* (1938). Capra was one of five major directors, along with John Ford, John Huston, William Wyler, and George Stevens, who voluntarily left their lucrative filmmaking careers to contribute their talents toward documenting World War II. Capra’s first post-war film was the nostalgically idealized and philosophical *It’s a Wonderful Life*, based on The Greatest Gift, a Christmas story written in 1943 by Philip Van Doren Stern. The film was a significant box office failure in 1946, though a modest critical success. *It's a Wonderful Life* became an American holiday phenomenon only in the 1970s due to a perfect alignment of lapsed film rights and the rise of cable television, which allowed a public wearied by the Watergate scandals and a generation sentimental for the post–World War II years to discover that *It’s a Wonderful Life* is also a wonderful movie.

In the noisy mélange of our 21st century, in which pop culture drowns out everything it can, Jake Heggie is both an anomaly and a groundbreaker. He is a populist in a field in which vestiges of old paradigms are zealously clung to, yet despite the odds he is breaking new ground and bringing opera back to the people. His operas are both accessible and progressive, a line successfully toed by only a very few composers throughout history, and he continues to prove that modern opera can be provocative, challenging, accessible, and embracing all at once.

On the conscious level, Jake is simply attracted to rich stories that he feels he can musically illuminate. But deeper patterns, most likely unconscious, have also emerged: each of his major characters, Sister Helen Prejean and the
doomed title character in *Dead Man Walking*, Sarah in *The End of the Affair*, Madeline Mitchell in *Three Decembers*, the entire crew aboard *Moby-Dick*'s Pequod, and the ardent and conflicted Arden Scott, the title character of *Great Scott*, are in search of themselves amidst spiritual crises. All are standing at a crossroads because of a profound *why* in their lives. And, very much like Capra, Jake is attracted to redemptive and transformative stories and characters about ordinary people who make a difference in spite of the challenges they face. To compose, he sublimates himself into the moment of a dramatic situation, like a gifted actor frozen in time, and listens to what comes to him. He describes his feeling of composition simply as a vibration to which he responds.

*It's a Wonderful Life* is a memory story, and in librettist Gene Scheer’s conception, realized so inventively by director Leonard Foglia and set designer Robert Brill, we are in an imagined world of angels, a mirrored infinity field of George’s earthly memories, each of which is tucked away behind a door. The operatic version of *It's a Wonderful Life* is purposefully not just the Capra film transferred to a live medium. It is a reimagining of the entire story for the 21st-century operatic stage, where music carries the narrative.

So, what will you *hear* in *It's a Wonderful Life*? Rhapsodic music of youthful love; the sounds of George’s brooding unease with life, the origin of which he doesn’t understand; music that recalls the dance bands of the 1930s and ‘40s as well as the joyous innocence of the earlier flapper era. You will hear patriotic elegies that echo those of the time; the supernatural and hyperkinetic world of the angels; and you will hear that most important of operatic characteristics—music that illuminates characters from within.

Even early in his career, Capra felt the impulse to embed messages in his films. In the early 1930s, he said, “My films must let every man, woman, and child know that God loves them, that I love them,” but war and the harshness of life changed him. In an interview in 1984, he said:

I don’t know if there is a God. But I do know that religion is responsible for an awful lot of deaths, war, and hate. So you get a little bit worried that religion is probably man-made. And yet deep down, within you, there is the matter of your own soul. What is that? When you’re dead, you weigh just the same as when you were alive. What have you lost? What is death? What is life? If you start anywhere, from any angle, you run into a stone wall.

Capra’s words could have come from Jake Heggie, for he also, in quieter moments, wonders what happens to our consciousness when we are no more.
For Jake, as it appears to have been for Capra, and as it certainly is for George Bailey in It’s a Wonderful Life, if there is a higher power at work, then the idea is so majestic and overwhelming that it can’t be articulated. In this opera, we are allowed our clearest glimpses of it through the presence of an angel who witnesses life’s simple intimacies: in the flower petals collected by a child; in the memories of a high school dance; in love, friendship, laughter, family; and most thankfully, in music.

A decade ago, long before the contemplation of this new opera, I picked up a used copy of a book about the Capra film, It’s a Wonderful Life: The Fiftieth Anniversary Scrapbook, by Jimmy Hawkins. He wrote sweetly of his memories playing Tommy Bailey, the young son of George Bailey, portrayed by Jimmy Stewart in the film. Later, I noticed it had a faded inscription, written in effortful but thoughtful handwriting, and I have come to cherish its anonymous words between siblings more than the book itself.

To my little brother: Dad loved this story, and now that he’s gone we really should see each other again. I know I’ve been tough to love, but if you can see your way to it, please call me. Joy is a choice we have to make, little guy.

Patrick Summers, artistic and music director of Houston Grand Opera, has conducted the world premieres of all six of Jake Heggie’s major operas.
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. In this case, the composer, Jake Heggie, was trying to create a soundscape that captures both the earthly and heavenly sides of the story.

You’ll hear a wide variety of percussion instruments, from tam-tams (a type of gong) to tom-toms (cylindrical drums). Bell-like sounds come from the glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, and crotales (small cymbals). There are also wood blocks, a triangle, maracas, and even a hotel desk bell and a bike horn! Listen for finger cymbals in a very special moment near the end of the opera. Listen also for the special effects made by the harp and the glissandos the pianist makes—both on the piano keys and on the strings inside the piano.

The conductor leads the whole performance, and that’s why the conductor is often called “maestro”—which means master or teacher. The orchestra musicians and the 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.

Come down to the orchestra pit before the opera to take a look and say hello.
Houston Grand Opera presents

IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE

An Opera in Two Acts
Based in part on the film It’s a Wonderful Life™ by permission of Paramount Licensing, Inc. and on The Greatest Gift, a story by Philip Van Doren Stern
Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Gene Scheer
Commissioned and co-produced by Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in English with Projected Text

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

Clara
Winged Angels, First Class
Talise Trevigne *
D’Ana Lombard ‡
Zoie Reams **†
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow
Yongzhao Yu ††
Albert and Anne Chao/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow
Federico De Michelis †
Beth Madison Fellow

George Bailey
Young George
Young Sam/Tommy
Young Mary/Janie
Young Harry
Mr. Gower/Mr. Potter
Harry Bailey
Uncle Billy Bailey
Mother Bailey
Mary Hatch
Ernie
Zuzu
William Burden
Stephen Thomas *
Levi Smith *
C. J. Friend *
Jack Townsend *
Rod Gilfry *
Joshua Hopkins ‡
Anthony Dean Griffey
Frankie Hickman
Andrea Carroll ‡
Heath Martin *
Elle Grace Graper *

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

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

Conductor: Patrick Summers
  *Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*
Director: Leonard Foglia
Set Designer: Robert Brill *
Costume Designer: David C. Woolard *
Lighting Designer: Brian Nason
Projection Designer: Elaine J. McCarthy
Sound Designer: Andrew Harper
Choreographer: Keturah Stickann
Chorus Director: Bradley Moore
  *Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair*
Musical Preparation: Peter Pasztor ‡
  Bradley Moore
  *Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair*
  Patrick Harvey ‡
  Richard Bado ‡
  *The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair*
  Peter Walsh †
  *Nancy and Ted Haywood/Stephanie Larsen Fellow*
Stage Manager: Christopher Staub
Assistant Director: Meg Edwards *
Supertitles by: Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles cued by: Mary Box and Catherine Schaefer (Dec. 6, 13)

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.
THE CREATORS SPEAK

Just after the remarkable 2010 premiere of Moby-Dick, my great friend and collaborator Patrick Summers invited me to participate in a project at Houston Grand Opera to create a family-friendly holiday piece. He said he was looking for a work that opera companies could produce in big or small houses—even alternative venues—while the Ballet was performing The Nutcracker. Having had only deeply gratifying experiences at HGO for more than a dozen years, I was immediately on board. I love the Houston arts community and cherish the great friendships we have forged over the years.

We considered beloved stories that return every Christmas. I sought a story that was innately operatic but had yet to be developed for the opera stage: one that demanded music. I don’t know when It’s a Wonderful Life actually came to mind, but I knew it was exactly the story I wanted to pursue: beloved characters, a journey filled with extraordinary transformation, a sense of wonder, magic and mystery, high stakes, and a potentially dark tragedy that motivates action. It is emotionally big enough to fill an opera house, and to me it makes sense for these characters to sing, not just speak. HGO said yes, and so did my incredible collaborator, the brilliant librettist Gene Scheer.

The challenge of the project is that this story exists only as a great movie. Director Frank Capra did use Philip Van Doren Stern’s short book The Greatest Gift as source material for his movie, but there is no novel in the library called It’s a Wonderful Life. Every reference we have is from the indelible, dearly loved movie. But you can’t put a movie onto the opera stage. So the big challenge was to find a way to reconceive the story as an opera. That meant lots of changes, cuts, and tough choices. One of the most obvious is that Clarence, the Angel of the movie, has become Clara, the Angel of the opera. Vocal casting is everything in opera, and this allows us to have a soprano voice (Clara) and a tenor voice (George Bailey) as our two leads instead of two male voices.

We also needed a visionary director and design team to create an entirely new visual landscape for It’s a Wonderful Life. Fortunately, the magical team that created the iconic production of Moby-Dick is reunited for this project. The music and soundscapes attempt to capture both the other-worldly side of the story (Clara is an angel from the heavens) and the earthly music of each decade we explore with George in Bedford Falls: from childhood games and a high school dance, to soaring love scenes, a wedding, the despair of the crash of 1929 and World War II, the threat of a suicide, and the extraordinary, transformative power of a community coming together to help.

What a great privilege to be back at HGO for the holidays, to share a new opera that reminds all of us what a wonderful life it truly is.

—Jake Heggie, composer

I was 14 years old when I first saw It’s a Wonderful Life. It was a Friday night in the middle of December (yes, I remember). Around midnight, I was manually turning the dial on our black and white TV set, going through the seven available stations, and I happened upon the movie, which was just beginning. I did not know the story. I had not heard of the film. By the end, like millions of others since its release, I was smiling giddily and sniffing through a flood of tears.

When Jake called me and suggested we take on an operatic adaptation of this classic movie, I thought about seeing the film for the first time. I knew that, for most people who would see the opera, the story is as well known as almost any tale from American folklore. The classic scenes, the lines and images of Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and the rest, are part of our shared consciousness, almost a kind of secular scripture. I knew that this deep familiarity would provide unique challenges.

Opera requires all source material to be reinvented in ways that bring music to the emotional center of the theatrical experience—the marrow of the matter. In order to make this happen for It’s a Wonderful Life, we would have to find ways to honor the spirit of the film while at the same time making cuts and boldly reimagining the story. It is a risky thing, taking on a beloved classic. Still, when Jake called, though I saw all of these challenges and more, I said, “I’m in!”

Honestly, the decision was not really that difficult. Having worked with Jake for so long, I knew instinctively that he would distill the time-honored themes of this story into inspired music, allowing the story to take on a new form, to be told and felt in a new way. And that is always...
How do you stage an American Classic?

Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, and I had been down this road before when we tackled Moby-Dick. During that process, every time it looked as if we might need to change a character or condense a story point from that extraordinary novel, we would get a bit skittish. One day I said, “This is the great American novel that nobody has actually read. We’ll be fine.” An exaggeration, of course, but only just.

It’s a Wonderful Life presents the opposite dilemma. Everyone has seen the film, and probably multiple times, thanks to its annual showing on television. Film is film and theater is theater. Put theater on film and, well, we know how that usually turns out. Put a film on stage, impossible. So what do you do?

In Moby-Dick, Jake and Gene made the decision to place the entire opera at sea. This necessitated telling the story, as well as building relationships, in a very different way from the novel. In It’s a Wonderful Life they made another equally significant decision. They chose to tell the story from the Angel’s point of view. The opera It’s a Wonderful Life takes place suspended somewhere between heaven and earth. An “existential sweet spot” is how Gene described it in the first draft of his libretto, where there are “doors and hatches that extend into infinity.” (“Infinity” is also the first word that Ahab sings in Moby-Dick. A theme seems to be emerging in our work together.) “The doors are portals,” he goes on to say, “portals through time and space that will be used to piece together George’s life.”

What Gene is describing is a place where anything can happen. And that place is the theater.

— Leonard Foglia, director

How do you stage an American Classic?

Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, and I had been down this road before when we tackled Moby-Dick. During that process, every time it looked as if we might need to change a character or condense a story point from that extraordinary novel, we would get a bit skittish. One day I said, “This is the goal when one adapts a classic. The idea is certainly not to improve on the source, but rather to illuminate the material and enable something that we all know and love to be loved again, as if for the first time.

“No one is a failure who has friends.” If you’ve seen the movie as many times as I have, you probably know in advance that this is the place where George will end his journey—but my hope is that our reimagining of Frank Capra’s classic movie into this opera will connect you anew to a sense of wonder. And if this is your first encounter with It’s a Wonderful Life, or you’ve only stumbled upon it once on TV at some half-remembered point along the way, I hope our opera allows you to feel this beautiful story in a way that is as meaningful as it was for me on that long-ago December night.

— Gene Scheer, librettist
SYNOPSIS

IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE

THE PERFORMANCE LASTS APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS AND 20 MINUTES, INCLUDING ONE INTERMISSION.

PLACE: The Heavens and Bedford Falls, New York
TIME: 1916–45

It is Christmas Eve 1945. In the Heavens, an Angel Second Class named Clara sits on a swing and counts. She has been waiting in this place 200 years for a chance to earn her wings and become an Angel First Class. Tonight, for the first time, she hears hundreds of prayers that no other angel can hear—prayers for a man named George Bailey in Bedford Falls, New York. This is George’s darkest hour as he stands on a bridge and contemplates jumping into the river below to end his life. Who is he? Why is he about to jump? Why can she hear these prayers? How can she help him?

Is it too late? Just before George jumps, the Angels stop time. They send Clara to Earth where she must learn about him, be his guardian angel, and try to save his life. But there’s no time to waste, for even the Angels can’t hold the clock for long.

Clara leaps off her swing and lands in a magical place of doorways and portals. This is where all of the days of George Bailey’s life meet. Door by door, step by step, Clara will walk with George from childhood to this precarious moment on the bridge. On her journey, she will see how one life can make a difference to a community and to the world. Together, Clara and George will learn what makes a wonderful life, and that no one is a failure who has friends.

CHAIRMEN: ZANE & BRADY CARRUTH
SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2017 AT 7 P.M.
WORTHAM THEATER CENTER
WHITE TIE ATTIRE
TICKETS FROM $1,500 | TABLES FROM $15,000

For more information, please email SpecialEvents@hgo.org or contact Clare Greene at 713-546-0277.
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

Hae-a Lee Barnes †
Miriam Belyatsky †
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Chavdar Parashkevov †
Anabel Ramirez *
Mary Reed †
Linda Sanders †
Oleg Sulyga †
Sylvia VerMeulen †
Melissa Williams †

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

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

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

FLUTE
Seth Allyn Morris *, Principal
Christina Medawar †

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal
Alison Chung †

CLARINET
Sean Krissman *, Principal
Eric Chi †

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Conrad Cornelson †

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

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams †

TROMBONE
Thomas Hulten *, Principal
Mark Holley †
Kyle Gordon †

Tuba
Mark Barton †

HARP
Joan Eidman *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Nancy Nelson *

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson †, Principal

PIANO
Patrick Harvey ‡

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown*

* HGO Orchestra core musician
† HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production
‡ Former HGO Studio artist
**Houston Grand Opera**

**CHORUS**

**RICHARD BADO, CHORUS MASTER—**  
*The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair*

**EMILY SENTURIA, ASSISTANT CHORUS MASTER**

Geordie Alexander  
Peter Farley  
Suzanne Gregory  
Frankie Hickman  
Julie Hoeltzel  
Jawan CM Jenkins

Joseph Leppek  
Katie Loff  
Miles Robert Lutterbie  
Kathleen Manley  
Heath Martin  
Said Henry Pressley

Lindsay Russell  
Priscilla Salisbury  
Kate Smith  
Taelon Stonecipher

**SUPERNUMERARY**

Brian Hues

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**CONCERT OF Arias**

**HOUSTON GRAND OPERA**  
29th ANNUAL ELEANOR MCCOLLUM COMPETITION FOR YOUNG SINGERS

**CHAIRMEN: JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE • HONORING BETH MADISON**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 PM</td>
<td>Champagne Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 PM</td>
<td>Vocal competition in the Cullen Theater</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Celebration dinner in the Grand Foyer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Black Tie Attire  
Tickets from $600  | Tables from $6,000

"This is a night all about finding those new performers for the future."

—Patrick Summers, HGO Artistic and Music Director

For more information, please email SpecialEvents@hgo.org or contact Clare Greene at 713-546-0277.
JAKE HEGGIE (UNITED STATES)
Composer

It's a Wonderful Life is the fourth work by Jake Heggie to be commissioned and premiered by HGO, following Pieces of 9/11 (with librettist Gene Scheer, 2011), Three Decembers (Scheer, 2008), and The End of the Affair (Heather McDonald, 2004). Other acclaimed operas by Heggie include Dead Man Walking (libretto by Terrence McNally, seen at HGO in 2011); Moby-Dick (Gene Scheer); Great Scott (Terrence McNally); and Out of Darkness, To Hell and Back, and The Radio Hour, all with Scheer. Heggie has also composed chamber, choral, and orchestral works as well as more than 250 art songs, many for today’s most loved singers, including Kiri Te Kanawa, Renée Fleming, Audra McDonald, Susan Graham, Joyce DiDonato, Jamie Barton, Sasha Cooke, Frederica von Stade, and Bryn Terfel. The operas have been produced extensively on five continents with major productions in San Francisco; New York; Dresden; Vienna; Washington, D.C.; Cape Town; Sydney; Adelaide; Montreal; Calgary; Los Angeles; Dallas; Seattle; Chicago; Dublin; Malmo; and Copenhagen. Dead Man Walking has received 50 international productions since its premiere, as well as two live recordings. Moby-Dick was telecast nationally as part of the 40th season of PBS’s Great Performances and released on DVD. Earlier this year, Heggie was awarded the Eddie Medora King prize by the University of Texas Butler School of Music. A mentor for Washington National Opera’s American Opera Initiative for three seasons, he is a frequent guest artist at universities, conservatories, and festivals.

GENE SCHEER (UNITED STATES)
Librettist

With the composer Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer collaborated on the critically acclaimed 2010 Dallas Opera world premiere Moby-Dick, starring Ben Heppner as Captain Ahab; Three Decembers (HGO), which starred Frederica von Stade; and the lyric drama To Hell and Back (Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra), which featured Patti LuPone. Other works by Scheer and Heggie include Camille Claudel: Into the Fire, a song cycle premiered by Joyce DiDonato and the Alexander String Quartet, and the song cycle Pieces of 9/11, which premiered at HGO in 2011. Scheer worked as librettist with Tobias Picker on An American Tragedy, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 2005. Their first opera, Thérèse Raquin, written for the Dallas Opera in 2001, was cited by Opera News as one of the ten best recordings of 2002. Other recent collaborations include the lyrics for Wynton Marsalis’s “It Never Goes Away,” featured in Congo Square; the Grammy-nominated oratorio August 4, 1964, with composer Steven Stucky; the opera Everest with composer Joby Talbot, premiered by the Dallas Opera in 2015; and the opera Cold Mountain with composer Jennifer Higdon, premiered by the Santa Fe Opera in 2015 (International Opera Award for Best World Premiere in 2015). Also a composer, Scheer has written a number of songs for singers such as Renée Fleming, Sylvia McNair, Stephanie Blythe, Jennifer Larmore, Denyce Graves, and Nathan Gunn. Scheer’s song “American Anthem,” sung by Norah Jones, was featured in Ken Burns’s Emmy Award–winning documentary The War.

PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN (UNITED STATES)
Author of The Greatest Gift

Philip Van Doren Stern was born in 1900 in Wilyalusing, Pennsylvania, and spent his boyhood in New Jersey. He resided in New York City for most of his adult life. He died in 1984, in Sarasota, Florida. He was a noted Civil War historian, author, biographer, book editor, and publisher. During World War II, he was general manager of Armed Services Editions, which provided 120 million free books specially selected and sized for the United States Armed Forces stationed throughout the world. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in Humanities as well as honorary doctorates from Rutgers University and Lincoln College. His work with the widest reach is The Greatest Gift, the short story on which It’s a Wonderful Life is based. The idea for the story came to him in a dream. After failing to find a publisher for the story, he privately printed 200 copies and sent them out as Christmas cards in 1943. One of those cards came to the attention of Hollywood, and eventually, Frank Capra, Jimmy Stewart, and Donna Reed made the movie that has become a beloved American classic. The powerful underlying idea, that one’s life and actions have deep, lasting, and rippling effects, is one that resonates with people from all walks of life.

PATRICK SUMMERS (UNITED STATES)
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Conductor

Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. He has conducted more than 60 operas at HGO and has been responsible for many important artistic advances, including the development of the HGO Orchestra. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company’s first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s Ring; collaborating on the world premieres of André Previn’s Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis’s The Refuge, Jake Heggie’s The End of the Affair and Three Decembers, Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree and Prince of Players, and Tod Machover’s Resurrection; leading the American premiere of Weinberg’s Holocaust opera The Passenger at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers is principal guest conductor for San Francisco Opera (SFO), where he was honored in 2015 with the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work...
with SFO includes collaborating with André Previn on the 1998 world premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and conducting several of the performances, and conducting Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Moby-Dick*, which was recorded and telecast on PBS’s *Great Performances.* This season at HGO, he also will conduct the Verdi Requiem and Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung.*

**LEONARD FOGLIA (UNITED STATES)**
**Director**

*It’s a Wonderful Life* is the third Jake Heggie world premiere opera Leonard Foglia has directed at HGO, following *Three Decembers* (2008) and *The End of the Affair* (2004), both of which have been seen in multiple cities. He also directed the world premieres of Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Moby-Dick* (Dallas Opera world premiere and a number of other companies including San Francisco Opera, where it was filmed for PBS’s *Great Performances*; Joby Talbot and Scheer’s *Everest* (Dallas Opera); and Jennifer Higdon and Scheer’s *Cold Mountain* (Santa Fe, Philadelphia). His production of Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* has been seen across the country, including at HGO in 2011. He directed Broadway productions of *Master Class* with Zoe Caldwell and Audra McDonald (West End with Patti LuPone), *Wait Until Dark* with Quentin Tarantino and Marisa Tomei, *On Golden Pond* with James Earl Jones, *The Gin Game* with Jones and Cicely Tyson, *Thurgood* with Laurence Fishburne (filmed for HBO), and *The People in the Picture*. As both director and librettist, he collaborated with the late José “Pepe” Martínez on *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina*, which was seen at HGO in 2015, and with Ricky Ian Gordon on the HGO commission *A Coffin in Egypt* (2014). Also with Martínez as composer, he wrote the book, co-wrote the lyrics, and directed HGO’s world premiere of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, which has since been seen at Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Diego Opera, Arizona Opera, and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

**ROBERT BRILL (UNITED STATES)**
**Set Designer**

Robert Brill is making his HGO debut. His designs have been seen at the Dallas Opera in the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Moby-Dick* and the world premiere of Joby Talbot and Scheer’s *Everest* in a double bill with Catalani’s *La Wally*. His other designs for opera include the world premieres of Jennifer Higdon and Scheer’s *Cold Mountain* (Santa Fe Opera), and Douglas J. Cuomo’s *Doubt* and Kevin Puts’s *The Manchurian Candidate* (both for Minnesota Opera); *Faust* (Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera); and *Wozzeck* (San Diego Opera). His designs for Broadway include the set and club design for the critically acclaimed revival of *Cabaret*, as well as *Jesus Christ Superstar, Assassins* (Tony nomination), *Guys and Dolls* (Tony nomination), *Design for Living, Buried Child*, and many others. His other credits include Disney’s *Frozen*, Christopher Plummer’s *A Word or Two*, and *Sinatra* (Radio City Music Hall); *On the Record* (Disney); *An American in Paris* (Boston Ballet); *A Clockwork Orange* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *The Laramie Project* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); and numerous productions for the La Jolla Playhouse, including the Flaming Lips musical *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*. Brill is a founding member of Sledgehammer Theatre, a recipient of the Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration, and professor of set design at the University of California San Diego.

**BRIAN NASON (UNITED STATES)**
**Lighting Designer**

At HGO, Brian Nason has lit the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Leonard Foglia’s *A Coffin in Egypt* and *A Little Night Music* (2014), *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (2013), *Dead Man Walking* (2011), and the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Three Decembers* (2008). His lighting for *Dead Man Walking* was also seen at New York City Opera, Opera Pacific, Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Baltimore Opera, and Austin Lyric Opera. Other opera credits include *Cold Mountain* (Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia); *The End of the Affair* (Madison Opera); and *West Side Story* (La Scala, Beirut, Japan). On Broadway, his credits include *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* with Chita Rivera; *Thurgood* with Laurence Fishburne; *On Golden Pond* with James Earl Jones; *Fortune’s Fool* with Alan Bates and Frank Langella; *Arthur Miller’s Broken Glass* (world premiere); *1776* directed by Scott Ellis; *A Month in the Country* with Helen Mirren (Outer Critics Circle nomination for Best Lighting Design); *Taller Than a Dwarf* with Matthew Broderick; *The Threepenny Opera* with Sting; and *Metamorphosis* with Mikhail Baryshnikov (Tony nomination). He has lit more than 70 productions Off-Broadway and has worked with The Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Baystreet Theater.

**DAVID C. WOOLARD (UNITED STATES)**
**Costume Designer**

David C. Woolard is making his HGO debut. He designs extensively for Broadway, including *Dames at Sea, Bronx Bombers, First Date, Lysistrata Jones, West Side Story*, Jane Fonda’s clothing for *33 Variations, Dividing the Estate, The Farnsworth Invention, Old Acquaintance, All Shook Up, The Rocky Horror Show* (2001 Tony nomination), *Voices in the Dark, The Who’s Tommy* (1993 Tony and Olivier Award nominations), *Bells Are Ringing, Wait Until Dark, The Young Man from Atlanta, Damn Yankees, and A Few Good Men*. In opera, his credits include the world premieres of Theodore Morrison’s *Oscar* and Jennifer Higdon and Gene Scheer’s *Cold Mountain* for the Santa Fe Opera, and *Everest* at the Dallas Opera, as well as *Madame Butterfly* for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He also designed costumes for *Hand to God* (Alley Theatre); *The Toxic Avenger, Bare*, and *The Orphans’ Home Cycle* (Hewes Award), all Off-Broadway; and *The Donkey Show* (American Repertory Theatre). He has also worked with the Old Globe Theater, Goodman Theatre, Arena Stage, Guthrie Theatre, and Seattle Repertory Theatre.
ELAINE J. MCCARTHY
(UNITED STATES)
Projection Designer

Elaine J. McCarthy's international career spans over 20 years in nearly every area of live performance. Her work has been seen at HGO previously in El Pasado Nunca Se Termina (2015) and Dead Man Walking (2011). Her opera credits also include the world premieres of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's Great Scott and Moby-Dick at the Dallas Opera, as well as Iolanta, La Wally/Everest, and Tristan und Isolde; the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon and Gene Scheer's Cold Mountain with Santa Fe Opera; Mazeppa with the Metropolitan Opera; Dead Man Walking with New York City Opera; War and Peace with the Metropolitan Opera and Kirov Opera; Tosca with Opera Festival of New Jersey; and Tan Dun and Peter Sellars's The Peony Pavilion at the Wiener Festwochen. Additional career highlights include Wicked, Spamalot, The People in the Picture, Assassins, Man of La Mancha, Into the Woods, Thurgood, and Judgment at Nuremberg (Broadway); and Notes From the Field, Frequency Hopping (set and projections), Distracted (set and projections), Fran’s Bed, Speaking in Tongues, The Stendhal Syndrome, and The Thing About Men (Off-Broadway). Concert appearances include Tan Dun's The Gate with the NHK Symphony and Don Byron’s Tunes and 'Toons at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and her work in dance includes Peter Buffett’s Spirit—A Journey in Dance Drums and Song and Chen Shi-Zheng’s Forgiveness at Asia Society/New York.

ANDREW HARPER (UNITED STATES)
Sound Designer

Andrew Harper is an independent sound designer and mixer for theater and opera. For HGO, he designed sound for last season's Carousel, Sweeney Todd (2015), A Little Night Music (2014), and Ricky Ian Gordon and Leonard Foglia’s A Coffin in Egypt, both for its world premiere and in subsequent performances at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Los Angeles. Harper is the sound designer for Theatre Under the Stars, TUTS Underground, and the summer Miller Outdoor Theatre series for Theatre Under the Stars. Highlights include How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, In The Heights, Million Dollar Quartet, Heathers, The Sweet Potato Queens (world premiere), Bonnie and Clyde, Smokey Joe's Café, First Date, and LMNOP. For Generations Theatre, he designed sound for Sweeney Todd, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, and Spring Awakening (U.S. regional premiere). Additionally, he designs for Houston-based theater companies and educational programs.

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To donate or for more information, visit HGO.org/Giving or contact Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704 or jwijangco@hgo.org.
KETURAH STICKANN (UNITED STATES)

Choreographer

Keturah Stickann was the choreographer and assistant director for the HGO commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon in its world premiere in 2010, on tour to Théâtre du Châtelet in 2011, and revival at HGO in 2013. Her recent credits include Seven Deadly Sins/ Pagliacci for the Virginia Opera, La traviata for Chautauqua Opera, Orpheus and Euridice for The Vermont Opera Project, Macbeth for Kentucky Opera, Il trovatore for Knoxville Opera, Madama Butterfly for Opera Colorado, and Don Quichotte for San Diego Opera. In collaboration with director Leonard Foglia, she was associate director/movement director for Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's Moby-Dick and assistant director of Ricky Ian Gordon and Leonard Foglia’s A Coffin in Egypt (world premiere at HGO in 2014) as well as Jennifer Higdon and Gene Scheer’s Cold Mountain. Other credits include Don Giovanni for the Janiec Opera Company, Flight for Opera Fayetteville, Rigoletto for Opera Memphis, and The Tales of Hoffmann and Manon for Knoxville Opera. Upcoming productions include Lucia di Lammermoor for Opera Colorado, The Elixir of Love for Opera Birmingham, and The Dialogues of the Carmelites for Rutgers University.

BRADLEY MOORE (UNITED STATES)

Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Chorus Director

Conductor, coach, and pianist Bradley Moore is HGO’s head of music staff and music director for the HGO Studio. Since joining HGO, he has conducted The Little Prince and performances of The Magic Flute, Tosca, and The Elixir of Love, and has served as pianist for the Concert of Arias. This season he will also conduct the world premiere of Laura Kaminsky and Mark Campbell/Kimberly Reed’s Some Light Emerges for HGOCoo. He recently conducted The Crucible at the Miami Music Festival; he has conducted Madame Butterfly at the Castleton Festival and 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 recently performed with Jamie Barton at the Toronto Summer Music Festival. He and Barton have appeared at Carnegie Hall, Opera Frankfurt, the Kennedy Center, and other venues and have joined soprano 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.

DENISE TARRANT (UNITED STATES)

concertmaster

Texas native Denise Tarrant started her professional violin career at the age of 16 with the Midland Odessa (Texas) Symphony. Afterward she studied in Houston at the University of Houston and Rice University and in London at Trinity University and the Royal College of Music. She became HGO’s concertmaster under the baton of Patrick Summers in 1999. Highlights of her work at HGO include the world premieres of Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree (2000) and Tod Machover’s Resurrection (1999), Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas (2001), and Carlisle Floyd’s Of Mice and Men (2002), all of which were released on CD by Albany Records, and the world premiere of Rachel Portman’s The Little Prince (2003). She further performed in the HGO world premieres of Jake Heggie’s The End of the Affair (2004) and Three Decembers (2008); Catán’s Salsipuedes (2004); Mark Adamo’s Lysistrata (2005); André Previn’s Brief Encounter (2009); and Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016). She performed onstage as the solo violinist in Julius Caesar in 2003. She has also been concertmaster of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1988 and has been featured as a violin soloist in numerous Houston Ballet productions.

WILLIAM BURDEN (UNITED STATES)

Tenor—George Bailey

William Burden has appeared at HGO previously in the title role in Faust (2007) and Nero in The Coronation of Poppea (2006). His repertoire also includes the title roles of Les contes d’Hoffmann, Pelléas et Mélisande, The Rake’s Progress, Roméo et Juliette, Béatrice et Bénédict, Candide, and Acis and Galatea; Loge in Das Rheingold, Laca in Jenůfa, Captain Vere in Billy Budd, Aschenbach in Death in Venice, Don Jose in Carmen, Pylade in Iphigénie en Tauride, Gerald in Lakmé, Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor, Nemorino in The Elixir of Love, Ferrando in Così fan tutte, Narraboth in Salome, and Lensky in Eugene Onegin. Also a supporter of new works, Burden created the roles of Peter in Mark Adamo’s The Gospel of Mary Magdalene and Dan Hill in Christopher Theofanidis’s Heart of a Soldier at San Francisco Opera, Frank Harris in Theodore Morrison’s Oscar at Santa Fe Opera, Gilbert Griffiths in Tobias Picker’s An American Tragedy at the Metropolitan Opera, Dodge in Daron Hagen’s Amelia at the Seattle Opera, Vice President Iglesias in Jimmy Lopez’s Bel Canto, and Niklas Sprink in Kevin Puts’s Pulitzer Prize–winning Silent Night at the Minnesota Opera. This season he returns to both the Dallas Opera as Peter Quint in The Turn of the Screw and the Glimmerglass Festival, where he will serve as the 2017 artist in residence and appear in Derrick Wang’s Scalia/Ginsburg.
Santa Barbara, Seattle Opera, and Utah Opera. Engagements took her to Washington National Opera, Opera Don Pasquale, Der Gilda, Musetta, Adina in The Barber of Seville during her residency she performed over 25 roles, including Mozart arias with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles. Last season, she joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera and performed Pelléas et Mélisande in 2014 and continues her portrayal in Götterdämmerung when HGO began its cycle of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s song cycle Pieces of 9/11 (2011). Later this season, she performs Leila in Les pêcheurs de perles at North Carolina Opera, and at Glimmerglass Opera she takes on the role of Bess in a new Francesca Zambello production of Porgy and Bess. Recent highlights include her role debut as Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly at North Carolina Opera, a role she also sang for Kentucky Opera, and the title role in Iris at Bard SummerScape Festival. Additionally, she was nominated for a 2016 Grammy for Best Solo Classical CD for her recording of Christopher Rouse’s masterpiece Kabir Padavali with Albany Symphony. Her discography includes a solo CD, At the Statue of Venus, written by Heggie and Glen Rosen, and she is featured on Heggie’s latest CD release, here/after, songs of lost voices, alongside Stephen Costello, Joyce DiDonato, and Nathan Gunn. The role of Pip in Heggie and Scheer’s Moby-Dick was written especially for her; after performing it in the world premiere at Dallas Opera in 2010, she reprised it at San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and Washington National Opera.

**ANDREA CARROLL (UNITED STATES)**
Soprano—Mary Hatch
HGO Studio alumna Andrea Carroll (2012–14) won first prize and the Audience Choice Award in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Her roles at HGO include Julie Jordan in Carousel last season, Anne Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014), Adele in performances of Die Fledermaus (2013–14), and Musetta in performances of La bohème (2012–13). She performed Woglinde in Das Rheingold when Heggie began its Ring cycle in 2014 and continues her portrayal in Götterdämmerung later this season. This season’s engagements also include Micaëla in Carmen with Opera San Antonio, Gilda in Rigoletto with Palm Beach Opera, and Mélisande in Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande with Garsington Opera. On the concert stage, she performs Mozart arias with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles. Last season, she joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera and during her residency she performed over 25 roles, including Gilda, Musetta, Adina in The Elixir of Love, Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier, Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro, Norina in Don Pasquale, and Papagena in The Magic Flute. Other recent engagements took her to Washington National Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Seattle Opera, and Utah Opera.

**TALISE TREVIGNE (UNITED STATES)**
Soprano—Clara
Talise Trevigne makes her HGO main-stage debut this season after previously performing in the HGOco world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s song cycle Pieces of 9/11 (2011). Later this season, she performs Leila in Les pêcheurs de perles at North Carolina Opera, and at Glimmerglass Opera she takes on the role of Bess in a new Francesca Zambello production of Porgy and Bess. Recent highlights include her role debut as Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly at North Carolina Opera, a role she also sang for Kentucky Opera, and the title role in Iris at Bard SummerScape Festival. Additionally, she was nominated for a 2016 Grammy for Best Solo Classical CD for her recording of Christopher Rouse’s masterpiece Kabir Padavali with Albany Symphony. Her discography includes a solo CD, At the Statue of Venus, written by Heggie and Glen Rosen, and she is featured on Heggie’s latest CD release, here/after, songs of lost voices, alongside Stephen Costello, Joyce DiDonato, and Nathan Gunn. The role of Pip in Heggie and Scheer’s Moby-Dick was written especially for her; after performing it in the world premiere at Dallas Opera in 2010, she reprised it at San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and Washington National Opera.

**ROD GILFRY (UNITED STATES)**
Baritone—Mr. Potter/Mr. Gower
Two-time Grammy nominee Rod Gilfry is making his HGO debut. He came to international attention when he created the role of Stanley Kowalski in the 1998 premiere of André Previn’s A Streetcar Named Desire at the San Francisco Opera, opposite Renée Fleming. Since then, he has created numerous roles in world premieres, his most recent being Walt Whitman in Matthew Aucoin’s Crossing (Boston) and the Narrator in David Lang’s one-man opera The Loser (Brooklyn Academy of Music). This season he returns to the Phoenix Symphony to sing Handel’s Messiah (with his daughter Carin Gilfry as alto soloist), will appear with the Los Angeles Master Chorale in Walt Disney Concert Hall as bass soloist in Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, and will sing his first Wotan in Das Rheingold at the Biwako Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Shiga, Japan, under the direction of Michael Hampe. In the summer of 2017, he will sing Claudius in the world premiere of Brett Dean’s Hamlet at the Glyndebourne Festival. Other future engagements include performances and a recording of Aucoin’s Crossing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a return to the Santa Fe Opera in a Strauss opera, and performances of Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte in Seoul. In addition to his full-time performance schedule, Gilfry is an associate professor of vocal arts at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.

**ANDREA CARROLL (UNITED STATES)**
Soprano—Clara
HGO Studio alumna Andrea Carroll (2012–14) won first prize and the Audience Choice Award in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Her roles at HGO include Julie Jordan in Carousel last season, Anne Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014), Adele in performances of Die Fledermaus (2013–14), and Musetta in performances of La bohème (2012–13). She performed Woglinde in Das Rheingold when Heggie began its Ring cycle in 2014 and continues her portrayal in Götterdämmerung later this season. This season’s engagements also include Micaëla in Carmen with Opera San Antonio, Gilda in Rigoletto with Palm Beach Opera, and Mélisande in Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande with Garsington Opera. On the concert stage, she performs Mozart arias with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles. Last season, she joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera and during her residency she performed over 25 roles, including Gilda, Musetta, Adina in The Elixir of Love, Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier, Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro, Norina in Don Pasquale, and Papagena in The Magic Flute. Other recent engagements took her to Washington National Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Seattle Opera, and Utah Opera.

**JOSHUA HOPKINS (CANADA)**
Baritone—Harry Bailey
Chosen by Opera News as one of 25 artists poised to become a major force in the coming decade, HGO Studio alumnus Joshua Hopkins (2003–05) appears regularly at HGO. Most recently, he sang Valentin in Faust and Count Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); The Pilot in The Little Prince (2015, 2004); Marcello in La bohème (2012, 2008); and Junius in The Rape of Lucretia (2012). Other engagements this season include returns to Washington National Opera as Count Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro conducted by James Gaffigan, and to the Canadian Opera Company as Papageno in The Magic Flute, conducted by Bernard Labadie; a role and house debut as the title character in Don Giovanni at Utah Opera; and a return to the Santa Fe Opera as Dr. Falke in a new production of Die Fledermaus. Recent appearances include his house debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago as Tadeusz in The Magic Flute following by a return engagement as Mercutio in Roméo et Juliette; Olivier in Capriccio at the Santa Fe Opera; the title role in The Barber of Seville at the Canadian Opera Company; and Count Almaviva with the Dallas Opera and the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.
La bohème

battu of James Conlon. This past August, she sang Mimì
in The Magic Flute (2016); and The Water in
Grimes all over the world, including in a new production of
and Men

performances of Angelotti in Tosca, Zaretsky in Eugene Onegin,
the King in The Little Prince, Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro,
and Thomas Betterton in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s
Prince of Players. 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 Ciudad Ausente, Johann
in Werther, Narrator in I due timidi, Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte,
Plutone in Il ballo dell’ingrate, and Tempo in Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria. Last summer, he sang Colline in La bohème at the Aspen Music Festival.

HEATH MARTIN (UNITED STATES)
Baritone—Ernie
Native Texan Heath Martin is making his HGO main-stage debut in a named role after performing as the peasant soloist in Eugene Onegin last season. He created the role of Paco/Papa in the HGOoco world premiere of Past the Checkpoints (2013) and sang the Father in Hansel and Gretel with Opera to Go! He is a member of the HGO Chorus. He earned degrees in music from Sam Houston State University (BM) and the University of Houston (MM). College roles include Papageno in The Magic Flute, Count Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro, the title role in Gianni Schicchi, Dapertutto in The Tales of Hoffmann, Maximilian in Candide, Clayton McAllister in Cold Sassy Tree, Belcore in The Elixir of Love, and Dr. Rappaccini in La hija de Rappaccini. His most recent performances include Baron Douphol in La traviata with Chautauqua Opera, Gasparo in Rita with Lone Star Lyric Theater Festival, Dr. Gregg in Gallantry with Opera Piccola, and Slook in La cambiale di matrimonio with Operativo Houston.

FRANKIE HICKMAN (UNITED STATES)
Mezzo-soprano—Mother Bailey
Frankie Hickman has been a member of the HGO Chorus for the past 14 years. She made her solo debut in 2013 as the Mother Superior in Show Boat. She trained in the young artist programs of Des Moines Metro Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, and Florida Grand Opera. She has sung with Opera in the Heights (Despina in Così fan tutte), Cincinnati Opera (Tisbe in Rossini’s Cinderella and Stéphano in Romeo and Juliet), and Florida Grand Opera (Rosette in Manon and Nireno in Julius Caesar). Her roles in musical theater include Aldonza in Man of La Mancha and Allison in Grand Night for Singing with Unity Theater, Cinderella in Into the Woods and Rhetta Cupp in Pump Boys and Dinettes at the Walton Arts Center, and Sarah Brown in Guys and Dolls and Anne Egerman in A Little Night Music at the Kernodle Theater in her hometown, Fayetteville, Arkansas. She teaches choir at Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School.

STEPHEN THOMAS (UNITED STATES)
Young George
Stephen Thomas, now making his HGO debut, is a 12-year-old home schooler who has been involved in community theater since moving to the Houston area four years ago. His most recent roles have been as a Barricade Boy/Ensemble member in Les Misérables with ImagineNation Theatre, and Templeton the Rat in Charlotte’s Web and Iago in a student version of Aladdin, both at Playhouse 1960. He has had minor roles in Sweeney Todd (Applause), and Oliver! and Annie (both with Mainstage Playhouse 1960), as well as others. He plays the violin, sings, and absolutely loves Legos.

C. J. FRIEND (UNITED STATES)
Young Mary/Janie
Sixth grader C. J. Friend is making her HGO debut. She is an honor student in her school’s gifted and talented program. She studies at TUTS’s Humphreys School of Musical Theatre and has also taken musical theater intensives in New York. She has performed with TUTS, Lone Star College, Playhouse 1960, Wildfish Theater, Cypress Academy of Performing Arts, and with three area high schools in Tommy Tune–nominated productions. Her favorite roles are Young Fiona in Shrek, Baby June in Gypsy, Gretl in The Sound of Music, Jojo in Seussical, and Flounder in The Little Mermaid.

ELLE GRACE GRAPER (UNITED STATES)
Zuzu
Elle Graper is seven years old and a fourth-year student at TUTS’s Humphreys School of Musical Theatre. She is making her HGO debut. She is a competitive dancer and singer and also enjoys reading, tumbling, acrobatics, and volunteering with The Birthday Party Project. Some of her favorite credits include The Rockettes Pre-show; iTheatrics Choreography DVDs, and several commercials. When Elle grows up, she wants to be a neonatologist and a Broadway performer.

LEVI SMITH (UNITED STATES)
Young Sam/Tommy
Now making his HGO debut, Levi Smith is a fourth grade homeschooler. He has worked primarily with Christian Youth Theater; most recently he portrayed Flounder in The Little Mermaid and Winthrop in The Music Man with Christian Community Theater. Other credits include Oompa Loompa in Willy Wonka, Simba in The Lion King, Servant in Annie, and Teaspoon in Beauty and the Beast. In his spare time, Levi takes musical theater, dance, and vocal classes. He also loves skateboarding, climbing, origami, and reading.

JACK TOWNSEND (UNITED STATES)
Young Harry
Jack Townsend is making his HGO debut. The native Houstonian and fifth grader at Crockett Elementary has been one of HGO’s most ardent fans since toddlerhood. His interests include karate, scouting, and playing violin, guitar, and trombone, and he is an active volunteer with a number of charitable organizations. He participates in HGO’s Opera Camp and has performed at Houston’s Ensemble Theatre. He hopes to attend the High School for Performing and Visual Arts and to continue acting professionally.
UNSUNG HEROES

THE ‘BONE MAN

HULTÉN
The HGO Orchestra is a brilliant and talented group of musical artists who are chosen from open auditions and come from all over the world. Many of them also play with the Houston Ballet Orchestra, which allows almost year-round employment. I spoke with HGO Principal Trombone Thomas Hultén about his unique journey from Katrineholm, Sweden, to Houston, Texas.

Perryn Leech: I feel that there is going to be an unusual story here! Let's start at the beginning in Sweden.

Thomas Hultén: Well, I certainly didn't see working in an opera orchestra in Texas in my future when I was growing up! Katrineholm is a small town in Sweden (population 20,000) and my parents were neither musically nor academically trained. My dad was a farmer and businessman and my mom was always working on some project or another. She has a very artistic side to her and among the things that she did for a time were artisan cheese making, quilt making, and rearing honey bees, and then she ended up making pictures from dyed wool and those have been very successful for her. She travels all over Sweden with her art and even had an exhibit here in Houston at one point.

So neither of your folks was actually a musician?

No, but music was taught in school so all school kids could learn an instrument if they wanted to. My dad played trumpet in his youth. So I learned trumpet at age 10 and my sister was a French horn player in school. I loved it immediately and there were so many opportunities to play. In this very small Swedish town there was an amateur orchestra, a big band, a choir, and a symphony, plus the churches were always looking for players as well. I started playing with the local Salvation Army Band at the age of 12!

That's amazing—I guess you must have been a natural. It's fantastic that you had all these opportunities in such a small place.

It is a small town, dark and cold in the winter, but it was fairly typical for towns to have all of these opportunities. Also in those days there were only two TV channels—and although they did have some amazing arts and music programming, there was a lot of time left for a kid to do other things, such as playing an instrument. By the time I was 14, I was playing every night and most weekends in one of the bands so my entire social life was based around my music. I got my first paid job at age 15 in the Casa Loma Big Band and earned the equivalent of about $20. I also got a summer job working for a stair lift company ($2 an hour) but I didn't really like it and I really did like making money as a musician. Through a musician friend I got the opportunity to go to Stockholm and was soon playing at a dinner restaurant and also playing at Drottningholm, the king's summer residence. I was earning proper money!

So you began your professional career at the age of 17?

No—there was another obstacle and that was the compulsory Swedish military service. I was drafted into the Swedish Army Band as principal trombone! I spent a year playing at the Royal Castle in Stockholm and at military events around the country. After fulfilling my duty, I auditioned for the School of Music at the University of Gothenburg and completed a master's degree. The trumpet professor had a British-style brass band and we were exposed to fantastic conductors from all over the world in addition to going on tour to countries including the United Kingdom and Japan.

Thomas inspires the next generation through HGOco activities.
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It sounds like you were as busy when you were in school as most freelancers are.

I kind of was, I guess! It was hard studying and playing so much, but as I looked forward to graduating I wanted to be a little more secure. A job opened up about an hour to the north and I auditioned and won the job at the age of 22. It overlapped with my last year at university and I can say that it nearly broke me! It was a great two years with that job but I did start to feel burned out with the volume of work, so in 1990 I moved again and that turned out really well. I was with friends and colleagues my own age and we were very busy but having fun. I was also lucky to meet my future wife.

It sounds like you had been too busy to be romantic until then! So how did that happen?

I had started at the Salvation Army Band again and I met a guy who said hello and that I should meet his daughter, who was studying microbiology.

What a strange but intriguing introduction!

It was—and I really wasn't interested until I went to the next Sunday meeting and there was this gorgeous vision playing the piano—really beautifully as well (for a microbiologist!). Tina was way out of my league but we started dating. She had done a two-month research project in 1994 during her doctoral studies at the Texas Medical Center in a place called Houston, Texas. When she got her Ph.D., she was invited for a postdoctoral
fellowship and since I wanted a chance to freelance and maybe play in a U.S. orchestra, we decided to give it a try. Once we were here, it turned out that we were expecting our first child.

So you had no proper paying jobs, no money, and your wife was pregnant. Yes, that’s about right. It was daunting, but almost immediately the floodgates opened and I was suddenly incredibly busy. I was freelancing, subbing for the ballet, opera, and symphony, so it was good work.

Our first son, Jakob, was born in 1998 and then David in 2001 and Philip in 2002. I was also playing a lot of jazz and big band, which had been a staple of the Swedish work, so I was enjoying the variety. I also started teaching and realized that the kids who were coming out of Rice and the University of Houston were really good and I would need to up my game if I wanted to keep busy. I practiced hard and eventually won the open audition for trombone in the Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet orchestras. It is a very nerve-wracking process as everyone is anonymous and plays behind a screen, so the fact that I held the position on a temporary basis meant nothing. I have done lots of blind auditions in the past but I really wanted to win this one.

Bringing up three boys and keeping them on the straight and narrow must have been a challenge.

Tina is a very driven woman and is having a wonderful career. She has advanced to being associate professor in pediatrics at the Baylor College of Medicine. We have had to balance the boys around both of our schedules but luckily hers tends to be more daytime and mine is of course centered around evenings and weekends, so it has worked with a lot of juggling. All the boys have the arts in them and were regular HGO Opera Camp attendees, and I will say that Jakob in particular has benefited from that. At the age of nine he didn’t like team sports much and was not involved in any after-school activities when he auditioned (against his will!) for the wonderful HGO Children’s Chorus and was cast in La bohème. He started to work with Children’s Chorus Director Karen Reeves and suddenly his whole life changed. He even started to learn Italian! That connection to the arts really changed his life. Jakob went to the High School of Performing and Visual Arts before going on to college to study theater, and David is at HSPVA now—we know that Philip wants to go there as well.

You have continued to be one of the busiest freelancers in Houston on top of your opera and ballet work, haven’t you?

Yes, it’s worked out that way and I love having some variety like playing big band with the Richard Brown Orchestra for instance. I work for River Oaks Chamber Orchestra on a regular basis as well and we have recently started the Houston Jazz Orchestra, which is growing quickly.

You are being unnecessarily modest as well—please tell me about your Grammy Award nominations!

Oh, yes—in 2008 I was approached by Robert Linder, a Houston legend who used to conduct the Gilbert and Sullivan shows, to be the featured artist on a CD, and I thought, “Why not?” We went into the studio and recorded the album Slide Side and then it ended up being nominated in five categories. It was a fun thing to do!

It has been a wonderful and interesting journey from Katrineholm, Sweden, to Houston, Texas, hasn’t it? Do you feel settled here?

We do, but we keep in touch with friends and family and try to make sure that we get back to Sweden on a regular basis so that we keep that connection. Tina is a wonderful cook as well, and that helps us to keep our Swedish roots, but Houston has been very good for the whole family and we enjoy being here very much.
HGOco is Houston Grand Opera’s broad initiative for connecting the company to the community. Its rich and varied programming includes Opera to Go!, a touring company that performs family-friendly operas in schools and community venues; Song of Houston, productions that bring the unique stories of Houstonians to the stage in original operatic works; and special performances of main-stage productions for school groups only, including matinees for grades 4–8 and High School Night for grades 9–12.

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Mark your calendar now for February 6, 2017—the day registration begins for HGOco’s popular summer Opera Camps. Register children early to secure their spots!

Choose from three camps:

OPERA EXPERIENCE—for students entering grades 4–9 in fall 2017
Campers focus on healthy singing in both solo and group settings.
Week 1: June 5–9
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Campers collaborate to write, design, build, and perform an original musical work based on a children’s story. Perfect for students with a variety of interests as well as non-singers.
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During the two-week session, campers develop vocal and dramatic skills by rehearsing and performing a fully staged opera appropriate for young voices. Each participant must have a recommendation from a choir director or voice teacher.
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Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow  

Sol Jin, baritone  
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow  

Kirill Kuzmin, pianist/coach  
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Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow  

Peter Walsh, pianist/coach  
Nancy and Ted Haywood/ Stephanie Larsen Fellow  

Yongzhao Yu, tenor  
Albert and Anne Chao/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow  

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

CONCERT OF ARIAS
The final round of the annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers—Concert of Arias—is the most important fundraiser for the HGO Studio. A champagne reception begins the festivities of this gala evening at 6 p.m., with the competition to follow at 7 p.m. After the competition, a Celebration Dinner will be held in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Clare Greene at 713-546-0277 or cgreene@hgo.org

STUDIO RECITALS
Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.
The Impresarios Circle is Houston Grand Opera’s premier donor recognition society. These vanguard supporters who provide annual support of at least $100,000 are instrumental to HGO’s success. For information, please contact Greg Robertson, chief advancement officer, at 713-546-0274.

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 the HGO 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 The Elixir of Love and Faust.

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. She also serves on the Development, Marketing and Communication, and HGO Studio Committees. 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.

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

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.
The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and 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.

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 also supports the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to main-stage productions, including the 2016–17 season-opening production, The Elixir of Love. 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.
innovative commission Cruzar 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 HGO 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, The Little Prince, and the 2016–17 production of It’s a Wonderful Life.

MARIANNE AND DAVID DUTHU
Marianne and David have been HGO subscribers since 1991 and members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence since 2009, and 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.

LIZ GRIMM AND JACK ROTH
HGO subscribers since the 2013–14 season, Liz and Jack became members of the HGO Founders Council the same season. Both committed themselves to cancer research and patient care and have contributed greatly to the work being done at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. In addition to donating to HGO special events, Liz and Jack are generous underwriters of HGO’s Ring cycle. HGO was pleased to welcome Jack as a member of the board of directors in 2014.

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 Götterdämmerung.

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™
For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGO’s arts education programs, helping more than one million Houston-area students experience the magic of live opera through Opera to Go!, the Student Performance Series, and Storybook Opera. A Section 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $400 million to the youth of Texas since 1932. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the world’s largest livestock show and rodeo, with more than 2.4 million attendees in 2016.

HOUSTON METHODIST
Houston Grand Opera has partnered with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM) for more than 10 seasons. 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, The Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro, and this season’s The Elixir of Love. 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, recently including The Little Prince and The Marriage of Figaro.

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.

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.

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

BETH MADISON
This season marks Beth's 22nd 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 main-stage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women's Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

JANICE AND ROBERT MCNAIR
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. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97). The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO's Holiday Opera Series.

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.

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. Mellon Foundation–supported projects include this season’s world premiere of It’s a Wonderful Life and 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.

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 the Holiday Opera Series, represented this season by It’s a Wonderful Life. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on the HGO 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 senior director of the HGO Board of Directors and previously served on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.
HGO is privileged to count Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) among its 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.

**CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELO**
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 is vice chair of the HGOco Committee. HGO is grateful for the Petrello’s support of HGOco and the main stage, underwriting this season’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*. The Petrellos also support HGOco programs for children, including the Student Performance Series and Opera to Go!

**SCHLUMBERGER**
Schlumberger, Ltd., is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly 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.

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

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

**JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER**
John and Jerry, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, travel around the world to experience the best that opera has to offer. HGO subscribers and donors for over a decade, the couple’s leadership support of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle 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 a member 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 *Nixon in China*. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Mark R. Spradling and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

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

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

**OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION**
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Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

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Mr. and Mrs. A. John Harper III
Mrs. Mollie E. McBride
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<td>Ruth and Ted Bauer Family Foundation †</td>
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<td>The Brown Foundation, Inc. †</td>
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<td>Alkek and Williams Foundation</td>
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<th>Grand Guarantors — $250,000 or more</th>
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<td>Anne and Albert Chao, Ting Tsung andWei Fong Chao Foundation</td>
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<td>The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation</td>
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<td>The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation †</td>
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<td>M.D. Anderson Foundation †</td>
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<td>City of Houston through Miller Theatre Advisory Board †</td>
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<td>Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation</td>
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<td>Houston Endowment Inc. †</td>
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<td>The Humphreys Foundation †</td>
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<td>National Endowment for the Arts</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai and Terrell Tone</td>
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<td>Owen Memorial Endowed Donor Advised Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene</td>
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<th>Grand Underwriters — $50,000 or more</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anchorage Foundation of Texas</td>
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<td>Carol Franc Buck Foundation</td>
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<td>Houston Grand Opera Guild †</td>
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<td>C. Howard Pieper Foundation</td>
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<th>Underwriters — $25,000 or more</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cockrell Family Fund</td>
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<td>Houston Saengerbund</td>
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<td>John P. McGovern Foundation †</td>
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<td>The Vaughn Foundation</td>
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<th>Sponsors — $10,000 or more</th>
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<td>Mary H. Cain Foundation</td>
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<td>Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation</td>
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<td>OPERA America</td>
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<td>The Powell Foundation †</td>
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<th>Members — $1,000 or more</th>
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<td>The Arts Federation</td>
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<td>Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation</td>
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<td>The Leon Jaworski Foundation †</td>
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<td>The Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund</td>
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<td>The Nathan J. Klein Fund</td>
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<td>Lilian Kaiser Lewis Foundation †</td>
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<td>William E. and Natoma Harvey Pyle Charitable Trust †</td>
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<td>Strake Foundation</td>
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* Contribution includes in-kind support
† Ten or more years of consecutive support
The Laureate Society comprises individuals who have helped ensure the future of Houston Grand Opera by remembering the Opera in their wills, retirement plans, trusts, or other types of estate plans. The Laureate Society does not require a minimum amount to become a member. Planned estate gifts to the Houston Grand Opera Endowment can be used to support general or specific Opera programs. Houston Grand Opera is deeply grateful to these individuals. Their generosity and foresight enable the Opera to maintain its growth and stability, thus enriching the lives of future generations.

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

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An endowed fund can be permanently established within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment through a direct contribution or via a planned gift such as a bequest. The fund can be designated for general purposes or specific interests. For a discussion on endowing a fund, please contact Richard Buffett, director of major gifts and legacy giving, at 713-546-0216. HGO acknowledges with deep gratitude the following endowed funds:

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- Carol Lynn Lay Fletcher Endowment Fund  
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- The Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment Fund

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- David Clark Grant Endowment Fund  
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**OUTREACH FUNDS HELP HGO REACH A BROAD SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY**

- Guyla Picher Harris Project  
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**CONCERT OF ARIAS**

- Eleanor Searle McCollum Endowment Fund
Let's Make Beautiful Music Together — Join the Guild!

Make Opera Friends!

**Opera Docents Program:** Spread the word about opera! Each year the Guild reaches thousands of Houston-area students and introduces them to this wonderful art form. Help us create a new generation of opera enthusiasts by working either in local schools with our HGOco team or volunteering with our High School Night program.

**Boutique:** Put those sales skills to use at the Opera Boutique in the Grand Foyer. Help customers choose the latest in opera accessories, while earning an extra discount and dress rehearsal tickets for yourself.

**Special Events:** Assist with creating and hosting opera events throughout the year, such as silent auctions, fall and spring Guild events, and more.

Meet Opera Friends!

**YAVA (Young Artists Vocal Academy):** Work with a program designed specifically for talented young singers at the undergraduate level and introduce them to the breadth of information they will need while they receive excellent instruction from HGO professionals. This week-long course gives budding artists intense training, an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and contacts at HGO that will last their whole career.

**Hospitality:** Join us in helping visiting artists of Houston Grand Opera feel welcome, host cast parties, and assist with transportation needs.

**Opera Night Live:** Enjoy in-depth interviews of this season’s artists, along with performances by members of the HGO Studio.

Save the Date!

**Opera Night Live: Nixon in China,** January 4, 2017. Don’t miss this special evening of interviews hosted by St. John Flynn, selections from the opera performed by HGO Studio artists, light bites, and camaraderie.

**Spring Event: Best Little Seraglio in Texas,** April 1, 2017. Join us for a night of adventure including performances by our incomparable HGO Studio artists, a seated dinner, after-dinner entertainment, and an exciting silent auction.

Visit us at hgoguild.org or Facebook for more information on joining the FUN!
## DECEMBER

2, 4m, 6, 8, 9, 11m, 13, 15, 17

- Performances of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life.* Wortham Theater Center’s Cullen Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Dec. 2 performance only.

4

- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *It’s a Wonderful Life* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

15

- **HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Winter Recital** at the Wortham Theater Center, 7 p.m. Free.

18

- **Professional Development Workshop:** HGOco presents a professional development workshop for teachers about *Nixon in China.* Join us for dinner, discussion, and a dress rehearsal. Wortham Theater Center, doors open at 5 p.m. For information, contact Kathleen Staten at kstaten@hgo.org.

20, 22m, 24, 26, 28

- Performances of John Adams and Alice Goodman’s *Nixon in China.* Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Jan. 20 performance only.

22

- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *Nixon in China* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

## JANUARY

4

- **Opera Night Live:** the HGO Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about *Nixon in China* from a special guest. 7 p.m. For information, call 713-546-0269 or email guild@hgo.org.

10, 12m, 15, 17, 18

- Performances of the *Verdi Requiem.* Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Feb. 10 performance only.

12

- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about the *Verdi Requiem* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

## FEBRUARY

3–4

- **HGOco and Opera to Go!** present a new, bilingual (English and Spanish) adaptation of Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville.* Heinen Theatre at Houston Community College, central campus, 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. daily. *The Barber of Seville* tours from Jan. 30 through May 19. Book a performance at HGO.org/OperaToGo or by calling 713-546-0231.

## MARCH

10 & 11

- **HGO Studio in Recital:** Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.

15–17

- **Spring Break at Discovery Green:** HGOco presents activities and performances at Discovery Green, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

16, 17

- World premiere performances of Laura Kaminsky and Mark Campbell/Kimberly Reed’s *Some Light Emerges.* Venue to be announced.

## APRIL

1

- **Best Little Seraglio in Texas:** the HGO Guild holds its annual Spring Event at the Houston Racquet Club, 10709 Memorial Dr. 6:30 p.m. Contact Gwyneth Campbell at 713-885-5024 for information.

5

- **Opera Night Live:** the HGO Guild invites you to the Wortham Theater Center to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about *The Abduction from the Seraglio* from a special guest. 7 p.m. For information, call 713-546-0269 or email guild@hgo.org.

8

- **Opera Ball 2017:** Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Claire Greene at 713-546-0277 or cgreene@hgo.org.

19

- **Professional Development Workshop:** HGOco presents a professional development workshop for teachers about *Götterdämmerung.* Join us for dinner, discussion, and a dress rehearsal. Wortham Theater Center, doors open at 5 p.m. For information, contact Kathleen Staten at kstaten@hgo.org.

22, 25, 29, May 4, 7m

- Performances of Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung.* Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 22 performance only.

28, 30m, May 6, 10, 12

- Performances of Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio.* Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 28 performance only.

30

- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *The Abduction from the Seraglio* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

For information on all Houston Grand Opera events, call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPERA (6737) or 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7323) unless otherwise noted. For information about HGOco events, please call 713-546-0230, email HGOco@hgo.org, or visit HGO.org/HGOco.
### MAY

- **7** Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about *Götterdämmerung* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.
- **11 & 14** 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. May 11 at 7:30 p.m. and May 14 at 5 p.m.

### 16/17 SEASON

**SINGLE TICKETS FOR HGO’S 2016–17 SEASON ARE NOW AVAILABLE. CALL 713-228-OPERA (6737) OR 800-62-OPERA (800-626-7372), OR ORDER ONLINE AT HGO.ORG.**

#### Verdi

- **REQUIEM**
  - Jan. 20 | 22m | 24 | 26 | 28
  - Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus
  - Projection Designer: Wendall K. Harrington
  - Conductor: Robert Spano
  - First Secretary: Yelena Dyachek *
  - Second Secretary: Megan Mikalichova
  - Samarín †
  - Michele Baile and Dick Anderson Fellow: Third Secretary: Zoë Reams †
  - The Evans Family: John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow

**Guarantor—Vinson & Elkins LLP**

#### Mozart

- **The ABDUCTION from the SERAGLIO**
  - Apr. 28 | 30m | May 6 | 10 | 12
  - Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus
  - Conductor: Thomas Rösner
  - First Secretary: Yelena Dyachek *
  - Second Secretary: Megan Mikalichova
  - Samarín †
  - Michele Baile and Dick Anderson Fellow: First Secretary: Jamie Barton †
  - The Evans Family: John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow

**Guarantor—Vinson & Elkins LLP**

- **Verdi**
  - **REQUIEM**
  - Feb. 10 | 12m | 15 | 17 | 18
  - Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus
  - Conductor: Robert Spano
  - First Secretary: Yelena Dyachek *
  - Second Secretary: Megan Mikalichova
  - Samarín †
  - Michele Baile and Dick Anderson Fellow: First Secretary: Konstanze
  - The Evans Family: John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow

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Brian Mitchell, Archivist *

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Wesley Landry, Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Manager
Jason Lester, Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Director of Vocal Studies
Stacey Michael, Operations Manager
Kathleen Staten, Education Manager
Emily N. Wells, Programs Manager

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Richard S. Brown, Orchestra Personnel Manager *
Lindsey Cavenagh, Artistic and Rehearsal Coordinator
Jamie Gelfand, Artistic and Rehearsal Coordinator
Carolyn Hall, Associate Company Manager
Patrick Harvey, Assistant Conductor
Paul Hopper, Dramaturg
Daniel James, Music Administrator
Mark C. Lear, Associate Artistic Administrator *

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Paul Hopper, Dramaturg
Daniel James, Music Administrator
Mark C. Lear, Associate Artistic Administrator *

* denotes 10 or more years of service
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

Houston Grand Opera offers a wealth of services to enhance your opera experience.

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

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

You can purchase tickets and make exchanges in person at the HGO Box Office, located in the Wortham Theater Center at 550 Prairie. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If there is a performance on Saturday or Sunday, the Box Office will be open from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

BROWN AND CULLEN ALCOVES

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

EXCHANGING YOUR TICKETS

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

LOST OR MISPLACED TICKETS

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

PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

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

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES

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

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

PARKING

Valet parking is a benefit of membership for Patrons Circle and National Patron donors; the valet station is located on Prairie Street. If you would like information about membership at this level, please contact a member of HGO’s Development staff at 713-546-0704, or e-mail us at donorservices@hgo.org.
Out of Character:  TALISE TREVIGNE

Talise Trevigne calls composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer the Golden Boys, and so they have been. Her “riveting” (New York Times) performance as the cabin boy Pip in their hit opera Moby-Dick, which premiered at the Dallas Opera in 2010, brought her career to a whole new level, and their song cycle Pieces of 9/11, commissioned and premiered by HGO in 2011 for the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, brought her to Houston audiences for the first time. Now she is back in another Heggie-Scheer collaboration—as the angel Clara in It’s a Wonderful Life. From her home in New York—where she lives with her husband, Jeff, and 12-year-old son, Sam—she spoke by telephone with HGO’s Laura Chandler shortly before rehearsals began.

Talise Trevigne with Jake Heggie, 2012

Jake Heggie has obviously been very important in your life. How did you meet?

I was in Dallas to audition for Jonathan Pell [then–artistic director of the Dallas Opera], and after the audition, he runs onto the stage and says, “When are you going back home to New York?” And I said, “Tomorrow.” He said, “Great. I need you to go to the Met to sing for Patrick Summers.” And at this point I’m completely confused, because I’m thinking—I’m trying to get a job in Dallas, and you’re sending me to the Met to sing for Patrick Summers. And at this point I said, “So what is this about? I’m completely confused, because I’m just trying to get a job in Dallas, and you’re sending me to the Met.” And he said, “Well, he’s part of our family. He was part of the Task Force 1 from the attacks on the twin towers. He’s a firefighter.” And I said, “Oh, my God. Can you just wait here for one second?” I said sure. And he comes back with the man that I had sat next to. He never expected to meet me. But to have all of his gear on and he sat down in the seat right next to the door and started to weep like a baby. And I got up and sat next to him, and I held his hands. I missed my stop. I rode with him all the way downtown and we never exchanged a word. He got off the train and went back to work, and I went on about my day.

Fast forward ten years later, and we’re preparing for Pieces of 9/11 in Houston, and I’m telling my story to the chief of Task Force 1. And he said, “Oh, my God. Can you just wait here for one second?” I said sure. And he comes back with the man that I had sat next to. He was part of Task Force 1 from Houston. We just hugged each other and cried. And so Houston and 9/11 are quite special to me—I would have never expected to meet that man again. He never expected to meet me. But to come full circle was very cathartic.

Will your son come to see you in It’s a Wonderful Life?

He will be my date for the big night. My husband has a big company conference opening night in Ohio, so Sam will come for opening night and then Jeff will join us later. He’s looking forward to it. He’s already picked out his suit and bow tie.

Let’s talk about Pieces of 9/11, because our HGO audiences will remember you from that. Were you living in New York at the time of the attacks on 9/11?

I was. I have a very specific connection with the attacks and with Pieces of 9/11. I actually witnessed the planes [strike the twin towers]. Thinking back on it, it seems very cinematic and unreal. About three days later, I was riding on a train going downtown to my voice lessons. A firefighter got on at 72nd Street, and he was still covered in soot and blood, and he was going back downtown. I imagined that maybe he had been uptown to be with family. He had all of his gear on and he sat down in the seat right next to the door and started to weep like a baby. And I got up and sat next to him, and I held his hands. I missed my stop. I rode with him all the way downtown and we never exchanged a word. He got off the train and went back to work, and I went on about my day.

I understand you were a little surprised when you found out how central Clara is to the opera.

I was. I’ve been watching It’s a Wonderful Life since I was probably six, and my husband and I and my son have watched it every year without fail. I knew that Clarence was important to the story, but when I saw the score, I said, “Um, the first 25 pages is me.” The music is stunning, as I expected. They’ve done such a great job with putting it together.

How did your involvement in It’s a Wonderful Life come about?

I remember getting a hint that Jake was writing another role for me. It was actually Gene Scheer who gave it away. He said, “Okay, listen. All I’m going to tell you is that you’re a girl.” And I said, “Ah, thank God! Do I get to wear heels?” And he said, “Well, I don’t know about that.” That was probably a couple of years before I knew that the opera was It’s a Wonderful Life. He told me, “Well, it was a boy, but surely we can make Clarence, Clara.”

So Jake is like an angel to me in many, many ways. I understand you were a little surprised when you found out how central Clara is to the opera.

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It must have been difficult for you to sing Pieces of 9/11, given your experience.

[At first] I didn’t want to do the piece but I did it for Jake, and in the end, it turned out to be something I needed to do. So Jake is like an angel to me in many, many ways.
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