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A scene from Götterdämmerung.
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Cover design by Pattima Singhalaka.<br>This page: A scene from *Aliko* in China, Canadian Opera Company. Photo by Michael Cooper.
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Welcome back from your summer travels—and into HGO’s rapidly approaching 2016–17 season.

Every season is unique in some way, and one important distinction in 2016–17 is that we are presenting three works by distinguished living American composers: It’s a Wonderful Life, Nixon in China, and Some Light Emerges.

The world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s It’s a Wonderful Life continues our series of holiday operas in the Cullen Theater. While just as heartwarming as the film and the short story that inspired it, it is much more than a musical version of the movie and is perfect family entertainment. John Adams and Alice Goodman’s Nixon in China returns to our stage this winter for its 30th anniversary: this HGO commission, which helped inaugurate the Wortham Theater Center in 1987, is now one of the most frequently performed contemporary operas. Some Light Emerges, a new work commissioned by HGOCO by composer Laura Kaminsky and librettists Mark Campbell and Kimberly Reed, represents our ongoing commitment to collaborate and connect with the entire Houston community. It explores the creation of Houston’s Rothko Chapel as part of Dominique de Menil’s unique vision and the extraordinary effect this secular but spiritual space has had on many.

Contemporary works are important to our company identity, but we are equally committed to favorite operas that have stood the test of time. Both of our fall operas fit that description—Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love and Gounod’s Faust—and our spring operas include Wagner’s Götterdämmerung, which brings our first-ever production of Wagner’s entire Ring cycle to a cataclysmic end, and Mozart’s tenderly comic The Abduction from the Seraglio.

We also present Verdi’s Requiem—a powerful, cathartic work for four soloists, orchestra, and an enormous chorus—which has been called an opera in disguise. It was the perfect piece to program alongside Nixon in China in the winter when Houston hosts Super Bowl LI. For a two-week period, all city-owned buildings, including the Wortham Theater Center, will be called into service for the events surrounding the big game on February 5. We could not logistically present two fully staged operas in tandem, so we seized this opportunity to showcase our superb HGO Orchestra and Chorus. It is not to be missed!

Find out more about everything this season has to offer in this 2016–17 preview issue of Opera Cues, and we look forward to seeing you this fall.
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While a chorus of that size is essential to achieve the high drama of Verdi’s Requiem—HGO Chorus Master Richard Bado promises “goosebumps upon goosebumps”—it also comes with a higher price tag, and that’s where you can help. Expenses will run at $2,500 per chorister, and during a 120-hour online campaign, September 26–30, you can support this specific need. We hope to raise $100,000 through 120 Voices: A Campaign for HGO’s Requiem Chorus, which will be matched by a generous donor for a total of $200,000, doubling the impact of each gift.

Watch for an email with a link to our special campaign website, 120voices.org, to donate and keep track of the campaign’s progress throughout the week of September 26–30.

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

For the second year in a row, an alumna of the HGO Studio, the company’s renowned young artist training program, has won the Richard Tucker Award. Soprano Tamara Wilson was in London to attend the Olivier Awards as a nominee for Best Achievement in Opera when she received the news she had won the prestigious Richard Tucker Award, often called the Heisman Trophy of Opera.

The Richard Tucker Award, which comes with a cash prize of $50,000, is given to a rising American opera singer who is poised for a major international career. HGO Studio alumna Jamie Barton won in 2015; previous winners also include Renée Fleming, Stephanie Blythe, HGO Studio alumna Joyce DiDonato, David Daniels, and Lawrence Brownlee.

Tammy was an HGO Studio artist from 2005 to 2007. Just months after completing her training, she opened HGO’s 2007–08 season as Amelia in A Masked Ball. She has returned regularly since then, most recently as Leonora in Il trovatore.
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painting: “Opera” by Alex Kenevsky, c. 2005
The HGO family was saddened to learn of the passing of José “Pepe” Martínez on April 23. The longtime music director of the famed Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán was knitted into the fabric of HGO history when the company commissioned him to compose and write the lyrics for the world’s first mariachi opera, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna/To Cross the Face of the Moon*. He teamed up with Leonard Foglia, who wrote the book, co-wrote the lyrics, and directed. *Cruzar* was cheered at its world premiere performances in Houston in 2010, and in 2011, HGO took it to Paris to open the season for Théâtre du Châtelet. “I will never forget the look on Pepe’s face when we opened *Cruzar* at the Châtelet,” recalls HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech. “His eyes were wide open and moist as he came off stage after a six-minute standing ovation from a predominantly French audience. He was almost overcome that the music that he had written had such an effect on a group—many of whom had no idea 90 minutes earlier what they were about to see. Through his son as translator, Pepe simply said, ‘Music is a language,’ ” summing up the work’s powerful impact across cultures. *Cruzar* has also been performed at San Diego Opera and Arizona Opera and was brought back to HGO by popular demand in 2013.

Martínez again teamed up with Foglia for a second mariachi opera, *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina/The Past Is Never Finished*, seen at HGO in May 2015. As with *Cruzar*, it was a hit, striking a universal chord. “Pepe had a unique artistic voice and an inspiring love for music for his whole life,” says HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers. “His two operas for HGO will linger long in the memory as moving and immediate testaments to his deep love of his Mexican homeland.”

**IN MEMORIAM**

Former President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush honored the cast and creative team of HGO’s spring production of *Carousel* with their attendance at the April 24 matinee performance. Afterwards, the Bushes good-naturedly met the cast for photos onstage.

The Bushes also attended *Carousel* during his presidency. During HGO’s summer 1990 production of the musical, the July 7 performance was designated the Presidential Performance. It coincided with the 16th annual Economic Summit, hosted in Houston, which brought President Bush together with leaders of Canada, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, and Japan.

**RETURN ENGAGEMENT**

Former President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush with the cast and conductor of *Carousel*. Photo by Priscilla Dickson.
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HGO lost a dear family member on May 28 with the passing of Rudy Avelar, our beloved “Prince of Patron Services.” For thousands of people, Rudy was the face of HGO—standing at the valet stand wearing his trademark bow tie. A welcome smile from Rudy signaled the start of a magical night of opera.

“‘No’ doesn’t exist. ‘Can’t be done,’ are words and phrases never uttered by me. ‘Let me see who can help you’ is as bad as it gets. I try to treat everyone with respect and kindness.”
—Rudy Avelar

“At the car park stand when you arrived, he always made it special...seeing Rudy made it feel like now the opera is official and can begin. He had an incredible knack for making everything joyous—just hearing his voice meant something good was in the air.”
—Bobbie-Vee Cooney

Left: Rudy and his beloved late mother, Cruz
Rudy met his idol, Joan Sutherland, when she came to HGO in Lucrezia Borgia—and they became fast friends.
TEXAS ROOTS

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Rudy’s HGO career of nearly 40 years began in the box office at Jones Hall in 1977. After working as an assistant to David Gockley, HGO’s then–general director, Rudy created the director of patron services position in 1986. With his enthusiasm, generosity, and extraordinary attention to detail, Rudy was a natural at meeting the needs of HGO supporters.

“Our donors have enough stress in their lives without having to worry about their opera tickets,” he once said.

At any HGO party, dinner, or performance, Rudy could be found at the door resolving last-minute problems and keeping his Patrons Circle members happy. He created a program that other performing arts companies could only hope to emulate, and he brought to the task a force of personality and an exuberance that could never be duplicated.

I adored him. Not only did Rudy always have an agenda, but he was so smooth he could twist your arm and make it feel like a massage. Whatever he was asking, it was a pleasure to say yes. He loved to pretend that he was a curmudgeon, but he was so kind and generous. Many of my friends said that Rudy always made us feel like we were the most important people at the opera—and it was wonderful.”

—Dian Stai
With 2016 educational contributions exceeding $25 million, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has reached a milestone of committing more than $400 million to Texas youth since 1932.
Rudy was a unique individual and a wonderful friend. We shared a profound love of opera and of college football. During the worst time of my life, when my wife died suddenly, his love and support helped sustain me. I particularly enjoyed his companionship when we lunched together at Tony’s. He loved an after-meal cappuccino but only one person could prepare it precisely the way he favored. On one occasion this individual was absent with an illness so Rudy was to be disappointed. On the spot, management contacted Rudy’s cappuccino-domo at home and received secret instructions over the telephone to get it exactly right. In no way was Mr. Avelar just a customer. Rudy was an institution there, just as he was to the HGO Patrons whom he befriended and for whom he enriched our opera experience and our lives.”  
—Richard Lydecker

Rudy loved to give his opinion...he would look at me and say, ‘Now that’s what you should wear when you go to the opera.’ He loved and appreciated the women in his life, and he loved to know how we were doing...and how we were dressed. He was very complimentary...unless he didn’t say anything at all. That’s how you knew you didn’t pass muster! Every year in September, I would call Rudy to ask how his summer was or how his family was doing, and every year he would say, ‘Oh, God, Terrilyn, can you believe I’m still here?’ But he was thrilled to be there year after year. He put up with a lot of people and a lot of demands, but he loved the challenge. He was one of a kind, and I was just really crazy about him.”  
—Terrilyn G. Neale

Rudy’s passion for sports was well known by all who knew him. 
Rudy never stopped taking care of his HGO Patrons—especially on trips.
JUST THE FACTS

GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR 2016–17 REPERTOIRE WITH HGO DRAMATURG PAUL HOPPER.

Photo by Alastair Muir
DONIZETTI
The ELIXIR of LOVE

Brown Theater
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Nemorino
Dimitri Pittas

Adina
Nicole Heaston ‡

Dr. Dulcamara
Patrick Carfizzi

Belcore
Michael Sumuel ‡

Giannetta
Alicia Gianni ‡

Conductor
Jane Glover *

Director
Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2016–17

Set and Costume Designer
Daniel Slater

Lighting Designer
Robert Innes Hopkins

Choreographer/
Tim Claydon

Associate Director
Richard Bado ‡

Chorus Master
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Guarantor: Houston Methodist
Grand Underwriters: Margaret Alkek Williams; Lynn Wyatt; ConocoPhillips

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

An Opera North production
Houston Grand Opera opens its 62nd season on a high note with Donizetti’s effervescent comedy *The Elixir of Love*. Director Daniel Slater’s bright, bubbly production comes to Houston for the first time, having dazzled audiences of all ages with hot air balloon rides and Vespas zipping along the Italian Riviera. A cast of Houston favorites brings new life to some of Donizetti’s most cherished bel canto tunes, including the celebrated tenor aria “Una furtiva lagrima.”

**BACKGROUND**

Along with Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti epitomized the Italian Romantic spirit of the 1830s. When Donizetti began his career in 1818, Gioachino Rossini, whose abundantly florid style reigned supreme, dominated Italian opera. An incredibly prolific composer who worked well under tight deadlines and high-pressure commitments, Donizetti composed nearly 70 operas encompassing both tragedies and comedies, and more than five hundred other instrumental and vocal works.

*The Elixir of Love* was composed under a particularly tight deadline of just two weeks. Milan’s Teatro della Canobbiana needed an emergency replacement when another composer failed to deliver his commission on time. Donizetti paired with his trusted librettist Felice Romani to adapt an existing libretto by Eugène Scribe and successfully completed the work on schedule. When he got word that Rossini wrote *The Barber of Seville* in three weeks, he replied, “Well, what do you expect? He was always so lazy.”

**SYNOPSIS**

Hopeless Nemorino laments that he lacks the wit and courage to approach the clever and beautiful Adina, whose head is buried in a copy of *Tristan and Isolde*. She reads of how Isolde spurned Tristan’s love until a potion altered their fate. The cocksure Captain Belcore showers Adina with attention, much to the dismay of Nemorino. Meanwhile, Dr. Dulcamara arrives with all the pomp and circumstance of the Wizard of Oz, visiting the town to sell his phony wares to the townspeople. Nemorino buys a magic love potion from the doctor, hoping it will help him win Adina’s love. The elixir turns out to be a bottle of wine, and all end up in their proper places.

**FUN FACT**

American poet Walt Whitman was a lifelong opera fan and took particular interest in Italianate works. Whitman deeply absorbed bel canto melodies and was enthralled by the risks taken by the virtuosic singers. “Oh, sweet music of Donizetti, how can men hesitate what rank to give you!” he proclaimed. Opera’s influence on Whitman’s poems is palpable from the titles to the structure—he often replicates the balance of recitative and aria in his works. When creating *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman likely was influenced by Italian opera and opera singers above all else.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

The illustrious Jane Glover makes her Houston Grand Opera debut conducting a superlative cast of comedic singing actors. Tenor Dimitri Pittas makes a welcome return to HGO in one of his signature roles, Nemorino. With a voice that was born for Italian repertoire, Pittas was seen recently at HGO as Edgardo in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Rodolfo in *La bohème*. HGO Studio alumna Nicole Heaston lends her warm, nimble soprano to the role of Adina, which requires vocal acrobatics alongside tender, lyrical singing. Fellow Studio graduates Michael Sumuel and Alicia Gianni return as the arrogant Belcore and Adina’s assistant Giannetta, respectively, and Patrick Carfizzi supplies his trademark wit and charm for the role of the quack doctor Dulcamara, one of the most memorable characters in the repertoire.
GOUNOD
FAUST

Brown Theater
Sung in French with projected English translation

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

FAUST

Faust
Michael Fabiano *

Marguerite
Ana Maria Martínez ‡
Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2010–11

Méphistophélès
Luca Pisaroni

Valentin
Sol Jin † *
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow

Marthe Schwerlein
Luretta Bybee *

Siébel
Megan Mikailovna Samarin †
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Wagner
Ben Edquist †
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai,
Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow

Conductor
Antonino Fogliani

Production
Francesca Zambello

Revival Director
Garnett Bruce

Set and Costume Designer
Earl Staley

Original Lighting Designer
Ken Billington

Lighting Realizer
Michael James Clark

Fight Director
Luke Fedell

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

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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

Photo by Brett Coomer

Premier Guarantor: The General and Mrs. Maurice Hirsch Memorial Opera Fund

A Houston Grand Opera production
Internationally acclaimed tenor Michael Fabiano makes his HGO debut in the title role of the classic tale of a disastrous deal with the devil, returning in Francesca Zambello’s beloved production. Faust is French grand opera at its most sublime and features a number of beloved and recognizable arias such as Marguerite’s “Jewel Song” and Faust’s “Salut! Demeure chaste et pure.”

BACKGROUND
The legend of Faust is most often associated with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s two-part tragic German play, despite its roots as early as the 15th century. During his first stay in Rome, composer Charles Gounod became intimately acquainted with Goethe’s Faust. “The work did not leave me; I carried it everywhere,” he later recalled. Hector Berlioz, who also penned an operatic version of the tale, had a similar reaction. The springboards for this enthusiasm were the first French translations of Goethe’s Part I in the 1820s. Given the Shakespearean quality and rich synthesis of styles and genres in the work, its influence upon mid-19th century French culture was multifaceted. A surge of new plays and paintings based on Goethe’s work saturated the stages and galleries of France. Michel Carré penned one of these adaptations, and with the help of Jules Barbier created the libretto for Gounod’s Faust. The opera centers the drama on Faust and Marguerite, altering the heroine’s name from Goethe’s Gretchen.

SYNOPSIS
An aged Faust is distressed by his inability to answer the riddle of humanity in the twilight of his life and scholarly career. He fills his cup with poison but is interrupted by the carefree singing of villagers outside. As he curses life and all human aspirations he calls upon Satan to come to his aid. In a flash, the devilishly suave Méphistophélès appears with a proposition. The devil transforms Faust into a handsome young man in exchange for his soul in the afterlife. The renewed Faust falls for the beautiful and innocent Marguerite, sister of the overprotective soldier Valentin, and she bears him a child. Méphistophélès interferes and tensions surge when Faust kills Valentin in a duel and Marguerite sees visions of terrors claming for her soul in hell. In her madness and despair she kills her child and is imprisoned, condemned to death. Faust attempts to liberate Marguerite but it is too late.

FUN FACT
Earl Staley’s sumptuous set designs employ a technique known as trompe l’oeil, French for “deceive the eye.” The method uses meticulously realistic painted curtains to create the illusion that the depictions exist in three dimensions. Originating as early as ancient Greece, the technique creates a forced perspective that allows the scenery to appear to continue for miles into the distance. Trompe l’oeil can be seen in Renaissance frescoes, the surreal works of Salvador Dalí, and even Looney Tunes—Wile E. Coyote just can’t seem to catch Roadrunner in that painted mural tunnel.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS
American tenor Michael Fabiano makes his Houston Grand Opera debut in the title role of Faust. The first of four Richard Tucker Award winners to grace the HGO stage this season, Fabiano has brought his critically acclaimed interpretations of opera’s leading men to the stages of La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Metropolitan Opera.

Ana María Martínez brings her luscious, mahogany-hued soprano to the role of Marguerite after last year’s triumphant interpretation of Rusalka. Italian bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni makes his role debut as Méphistophélès—his debut of Count Almaviva in HGO’s 2011 production of The Marriage of Figaro led to further performances of the role in Chicago, New York, Vienna, and Salzburg. HGO Studio artists Sol Jin and Megan Mikailovna Samarin sing Valentin and Siébel, and mezzo-soprano Luretta Bybee makes her HGO debut as Marthe. Antonino Fogliani (Aida, 2013) returns to conduct the HGO Chorus and Orchestra in Gounod’s rich, lyrical score.
World Premiere
Cullen Theater
Sung in English with projected English text

JAKE HEGGIE / GENE SCHEER
IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

George Bailey
Clara
Mr. Potter/Mr. Gower
Mary Hatch Bailey
Harry Bailey
Uncle Billy Bailey
Winged Angels, First Class

William Burden
Talise Trevigne *
Robert Orth
Andrea Carroll ‡
Joshua Hopkins ‡
Anthony Dean Griffey
D’Ana Lombard ‡
Zoe 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

Conductor
Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Projection Designer
Sound Designer
Choreographer

Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Leonard Foglia
Robert Brill *
David C. Woolard *
Brian Nason
Elaine J. McCarthy
Andrew Harper
Keturah Stickann

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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

Grand Guarantor—The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation
Guarantors—The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts; Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation; Sara and Bill Morgan; Franci Neely, Cynthia and Anthony Petrello; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Dede Wilsey
Grand Underwriters—The Cullen Foundation; Tracey D. Conwell Endowed Fund

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. Co-commissioned and co-produced by Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera.
Beginning with an angel on a swing and ending with a sing-along, the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* represents a fun, fresh, family-friendly take on the story that inspired Frank Capra’s classic 1946 holiday film. The tale of the life and struggles of everyman George Bailey has touched audiences for decades, providing a timely reminder during the holidays that human life—no matter how humble—is a great gift and always worth living.

**BACKGROUND**

The story of *It’s a Wonderful Life* comes from Philip Van Doren Stern’s short story *The Greatest Gift*. After unsuccessfully shopping the story to publishers, he decided to share the story as a holiday gift to friends and family, printing 200 copies of what was essentially a 21-page holiday card. One of those copies made it into the hands of producer David Hempstead, who purchased the movie rights for $10,000.

The film was ostensibly a flop when it premiered in 1946, leaving director Frank Capra half a million dollars in debt. The movie didn’t enter the holiday canon until the copyright lapsed in 1974; it was available royalty free for the next 20 years, finding a new life on broadcast television.

**SYNOPSIS**

Clara, Angel Second Class, swings from the moon while she counts prayers for George Bailey. It is clear that George is about to take his own life, and a Voice is heard assigning Clara to be George’s guardian angel. If she’s able to save him she’ll be granted her wings and join the First Class angels. Clara tumbles through a heavenly vortex and finds herself at a wall of doors, each one providing a glimpse into critical moments in George’s life growing up in Bedford Falls, New York. She watches as a young George Bailey saves his brother from drowning in a frozen lake, later dancing with Mary Hatch and dreaming of traveling the world. George’s fate changes when his father dies and he must take over the family business, fearing that the miserly Mr. Potter—the richest man in town—will dissolve the company.

George and Mary wed, but as World War II begins and the Baileys fall on hard times, George makes plans to end his life on Christmas Eve. Clara intercedes to show him what life would look like if he had never lived. Enlightened, George realizes that “no one is a failure who has friends.”

**FUN FACT**

It may be an iconic Christmas movie, but *It’s a Wonderful Life* was filmed in the summer of 1946 during a heat wave in southern California. At one point Frank Capra had to shut down the production due to dangerously high temperatures, which explains why characters are visibly sweating in key moments of the film.

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**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

*It’s a Wonderful Life* will be the sixth Heggie premiere conducted by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, beginning with Heggie’s first opera *Dead Man Walking* in 2000. Heggie pairs with librettist Gene Scheer after their immensely successful collaborations on *Moby-Dick* (2010), *Three Decembers* (HGO world premiere in 2008), and *To Hell and Back* (2006). Leonard Foglia directs the world premiere production; he previously directed HGO world premieres of Heggie’s *The End of the Affair* (2004) as well as *Three Decembers*, plus Ricky Ian Gordon’s *A Coffin in Egypt* and the late José “Pepe” Martínez’s *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. Foglia was also the librettist for the latter two works.

Soprano Talise Trevigne makes her Houston Grand Opera main-stage debut as the angel Clara, having previously sung in Heggie and Scheer’s song cycle *Pieces of 9/11*, an HGOco world premiere in 2011. She also created the role of Pip in Heggie’s *Moby-Dick*. Tenor William Burden, last seen in Houston as the title role in *Faust*, sings George Bailey, and soprano Andrea Carroll, who delighted audiences last season as Carousel’s Julie Jordan, sings his wife, Mary Hatch Bailey. The world premiere cast includes other Houston favorites Anthony Dean Griffey as Uncle Billy, Joshua Hopkins as Harry Bailey, and Robert Orth as Mr. Potter/ Mr. Gower.
JOHN ADAMS/ALICE GOODMAN
NIXON IN CHINA

Brown Theater
Sung in English with projected English text

JAN. 20
7:30 p.m.
JAN. 22
2 p.m.
JAN. 24
7:30 p.m.
JAN. 26
7:30 p.m.
JAN. 28
7:30 p.m.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Richard Nixon
Pat Nixon
Chou En-lai
Mao Tse-tung
Henry Kissinger
Chiang Ch’ing
First Secretary
Second Secretary
Third Secretary
Scott Hendricks ‡
Andriana Chuchman *
Chen-Ye Yuan ‡
Chad Shelton ‡
Patrick Carfizzi
Tracy Dahl
Yelena Dyachek †*
Megan Mikailovna Samarın †
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
Zoie Reams †
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow
Conductor
Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Projection Designer
Choreographer
Associate Choreographer
Sound Designer
Chorus Master
Robert Spano
James Robinson
Allen Moyer
James Schuette
Paul Palazzo
Wendall K. Harrington
Seán Curran *
Nora Brickman *
Brian Mohr *
Richard Bado ‡
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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

 Guarantor—Vinson & Elkins LLP  A Houston Grand Opera production

32  >  SUMMER 2016
John Adams’s first opera, commissioned by Houston Grand Opera in 1987, returns on its historic 30-year anniversary. *Nixon in China* follows President Richard Nixon’s momentous trip in February 1972. As the first U.S. president to visit the People’s Republic of China, Nixon sought to normalize the relationship between the two countries—but the opera is not merely a retelling of historic events. *Nixon* delivers sharply sketched characters and a chilling survey of 20th-century power struggles by examining a significant moment in time when the eyes of the world watched history in the making on their television screens. Director James Robinson’s critically acclaimed production offers a timely examination of the role of the media in celebrity politics.

**BACKGROUND**

“Adams’s music enters the ear easily, but it is not simple, certainly not simple-minded, and never predictable,” writes noted American music critic Michael Steinberg. Minimalism, a term often linked with John Adams, Steve Reich, and Phillip Glass, is a moniker that fails to respect the diversity of the genre. The guiding forces are the same—repetition, a steady pulse, and pleasing harmonies—but it’s the deviance from these rules that illuminates each unique compositional voice. Minimalists are as diverse as the Romantics. Peter Sellars, director of the original 1987 production, had the idea for *Nixon in China* and paired Adams with librettist Alice Goodman—the three went on to collaborate again on *The Death of Klinghoffer*. At the time of the premiere, it was quite rare to see operatic roles based on living characters, although the creators each had very different visions of what these real people were actually like. Steinberg expands on this point: “The ‘real’ Nixon, who stands behind all these, is a polyphonic mélange in himself: whose Nixon, which historian’s, which witness’s, after all, is the real Nixon?” Thirty years have passed but *Nixon*’s messages about perception and illusion still ring true.

**SYNOPSIS**

A hushed chorus sets an atmosphere fraught with apprehension and anxiety as the people of China await the arrival of Richard Nixon and his enclave. His plane, the *Spirit of ’76*, is met by Chou En-lai and a small group of officials. As the president and his wife disembark, he sings of his excitement and unease as American eyes watch his every move on the evening news. In his first meeting with Chairman Mao, Nixon struggles to hold his ground, but the evening concludes with a euphoric banquet as the leaders of both countries raise a glass and toast peace and fraternity. The following day Mrs. Nixon is taken on a sightseeing tour concluding with a performance of a revolutionary ballet devised by Mao’s wife, Chiang Ch’ing. The Nixons watch in horror as Madame Mao declares her obedience to her husband’s moral code and riots break out. On the Americans’ last night in Peking, each character considers the events they have witnessed, and what they mean. The last thought falls to Chou, who wonders, “How much of what we did was good?”

**FUN FACTS**

The music of *Nixon in China* blends the sprawling forms and majestic orchestration of Wagner and Mahler with the repetition of Reich and Glass. The opera is scored for 51 players but lacks bassoons, French horns, and tubas. Adams augments the orchestra with saxophones, pianos, and electronic synthesizer, creating an unfamiliar sonic cloud in which the action unfolds.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Maestro Robert Spano returns to conduct the HGO Chorus and Orchestra in Adams’s demanding score. A champion of new music, Spano is the music director of both the Atlanta Symphony and the Aspen Music Festival. Scott Hendricks steps into the shoes of Richard Nixon for the first time, alongside soprano Andriana Chuchman in her HGO debut as Pat Nixon. Baritone Chen-Ye Yuan delivers his acclaimed interpretation of Chou En-lai and tenor Chad Shelton tackles the formidable Chairman Mao. Veteran soprano Tracy Dahl returns to HGO as Mao’s wife, Chiang Ch’ing, a role she recorded to critical acclaim in 2009. Last seen in Houston as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Dahl has sung some of the most demanding coloratura roles on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and La Scala. Patrick Carfizzi returns as the controversial Henry Kissinger.
VERDI
REQUIEM

Brown Theater
Sung in Latin with
projected English
translation

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CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Soprano soloist  
Angela Meade *  
Sasha Cooke  
Alexey Dolgov  
Peixin Chen ‡

Alto soloist  
Tenor soloist  
Bass soloist

Conductor  
Patrick Summers  
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair  
Richard Bado ‡  
The Sarah and Ernest Butler  
Chorus Master Chair

Chorus Master  
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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

Grand Guarantor—Edward and Frances Bing Fund
Giuseppe Verdi’s paradigm-shifting Requiem comes to Houston Grand Opera for the first time in the company’s 62-year history. HGO joins the ranks of many of the world’s greatest opera houses that have presented the piece, often referred to as an opera in disguise. Verdi’s Requiem was first performed in Milan’s Church of San Marco on May 22, 1874. Except for this one occasion, Verdi had no thought of his Requiem remaining in the church. What he offered the public was a concert piece, and it was accepted as such just three days after the premiere with performances at La Scala. The following month Verdi took the work to Paris for seven performances at the Opéra-Comique and today it is regularly programmed by opera houses across the globe. Contemporary audiences continue to embrace the secular, cathartic nature of this religious music.

BACKGROUND

Despite the work’s connection with Italian poet Alessandro Manzoni (marked by its official title, Requiem Mass for the anniversary of the death of Manzoni 22 May 1874), the road to Verdi’s Requiem truly began with the death of composer Gioachino Rossini in 1868. Verdi’s disgust for Italy’s political and military leaders at the time underscored his belief that artists were the most valuable source of national pride. Four days after Rossini’s death Verdi contacted his publisher, proposing that a requiem mass be composed by a group of leading Italian composers and performed on the one-year anniversary of Rossini’s death. Verdi was assigned the final movement (“Libera me, Domine”) although countless setbacks prevented the mass from being performed in its entirety until 1988.

Following the premiere of Aida in 1871, Verdi retired from writing for the theater but would not, or could not, renounce composing altogether. Later he was famously lured out of retirement to write Otello and Falstaff, but at the same time he diligently completed his own complete Requiem. Upon hearing of Manzoni’s death, Verdi contacted the Mayor of Milan, offering to organize a performance for the anniversary of his death. Verdi offered to cover the cost of copying the music (no small feat in the 19th century) and to conduct the piece without collecting a fee. He declined any amount of gratitude, stating, “It is an impulse, or better, a need of the heart that impels me to honor, insofar as I can, this Great Man.”

FACT

The Verdi Requiem has a long history of providing spiritual balm when words alone fail. In the 1940s, a group of Jewish inmates at Terezín concentration camp learned the piece using a single smuggled score. Faced with the horrors of their perilous situation, they fought back with art and music and performed the Requiem 16 times, most famously on June 23, 1944, before high-ranking officials to support the pretense that they were provided a high quality of life at the camp. Reimagining the piece as a condemnation of their captors, the imprisoned Jews were able to sing what they dared not say.
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Siegfried
Brünnhilde
Hagen
Gunther
Wältraute/Second Norn
Alberich
First Norn
Third Norn/Gutrune
Woglinde
Flosshilde
Wellgunde

Simon O’Neill
Christine Goerke
Andrea Silvestrelli
Ryan McKinny ‡
Jamie Barton ‡
Christopher Purves
Meredith Arwady
Heidi Melton *
Andrea Carroll ‡
Catherine Martin ‡
Renée Tatum

Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
La Fura dels Baus
Carlos Padrissa
Roland Olbeter
Chu Uroz
Peter van Praet
Franc Aleu
Esteban Muñoz
Richard Bado ‡
The Sarah and Ernest Butler
Chorus Master Chair

Conductor
Production
Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Projection Designer
Associate Director
Chorus Master

Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus

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

Premier Guarantor—Mr. John G. Turner and Mr. Jerry G. Fischer
Grand Guarantors—Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.; Medistar
Guarantors—Robin Angly and Miles Smith; Mrs. Janice Barrow; BBVA Compass
Grand Underwriters—The Brown Foundation, Inc.; Carol Franc Buck Foundation; C. Howard
Pieper Foundation; Dr. Elizabeth Grimm and Dr. Jack Roth; Houston First; Donna Kaplan and
Richard A. Lydecker; Beth Madison; Mr. & Mrs. J. Landis Martin; Will L. McLendon; Chevron

A co-production of Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia, and
Maggio Musicale, Florence
Houston Grand Opera's historic first presentation of Richard Wagner's epic saga Der Ring des Nibelungen comes to its sensational conclusion with the final installment, Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods). HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers conducts the HGO Chorus and Orchestra alongside a venerable cast of international Wagnerian stars. Watch as the banks of the Rhine overflow and the castle of the gods burns in opera's most spectacular finale.

SYNOPSIS

Three Norns, the daughters of Erda, weave the rope of fate. They recall how it was once fastened to the World Ash Tree, which Wotan destroyed when he used it to make his spear and establish his rule over the universe. The rope snaps, breaking the connection between past and future, and the fate of the gods is sealed. Siegfried emerges from a cave with Brünnhilde, placing the ring of power on her finger as he departs to pursue his heroic destiny.

At the Gibichung Hall, royal siblings Gunther and Gutrune meet with their half brother (and Alberich's illegitimate son), Hagen. Hagen crafts a plan to give Siegfried a potion that will make him forget about Brünnhilde and marry Gutrune. Brünnhilde will be forced into Gunther's arms and Hagen will collect the all-powerful ring.

On the mountaintop, Waltraute warns Brünnhilde that their father, Wotan, has accepted that the downfall of the gods is inevitable. To avoid this fate, she asks Brünnhilde to return the ring to the Rhinemaidens, but Brünnhilde refuses to relinquish the symbol of Siegfried's love. Brünnhilde hears Siegfried's horn but is shocked to see a man in Gunther's form appear and tear the ring from her.

Brünnhilde is dragged to the Gibichung Hall, encountering a drugged Siegfried who denies ever knowing her. Broken, she reveals Siegfried's only weakness as Hagen plans his murder.

Siegfried visits the Rhinemaidens but does not heed their warning that his death is imminent if he does not return the ring to the Rhine. Hagen restores Siegfried's memory and as he recalls how he pierced through the fire to win Brünnhilde, Hagen kills him. His body is taken to the Gibichung Hall where Brünnhilde commands that a funeral pyre be built. She takes the ring from Siegfried and rides her horse into the flames. The hall crashes down, the Rhine overflows, and Hagen is dragged beneath the waves by the Rhinemaidens as he tries to steal the ring. As Valhalla burns, the kingdom of the gods is destroyed.

FUN FACTS

The climactic conclusion of the entire Ring cycle is Brünnhilde's “Immolation Scene.” In nearly sixteen hours of opera it may seem unlikely that there could possibly be anything more, anything better than what has already been heard. Yet, in the finale of Götterdämmerung, Wagner delivers a scene of such overwhelming intensity that it rattles the soul. In Brünnhilde’s moment of self-sacrifice Wagner weaves together the leitmotifs of redemption, love, Siegfried, Valhalla, and countless others to sublime effect. A few years after the cycle premiered at Bayreuth in 1876, Wagner’s wife Cosima noted in her diary, “In the evening, before supper, [Richard]... glances through the conclusion of Götterdämmerung, and says that never again will he write anything as complicated as that.”

Christine Goerke returns as Brünnhilde after her triumphant portrayal of Wagner’s heroine in the last two Ring installments. New Zealand tenor Simon O’Neill, singing Siegfried, was seen recently at HGO as Siegmund in Die Walküre and the title character in Verdi’s Otello.

HGO studio alumni Jamie Barton and Ryan McKinney return as Waltraute/Second Norn and Gunther, respectively, and soprano Heidi Melton makes her house debut as Gutrune/Third Norn. Andrea Silvestrelli (Fafner in previous Ring installments) brings his resonant bass to the role of Hagen, and Meredith Arwady, seen previously in the cycle as Erda, sings First Norn. All three of HGO’s original Rhinemaidens (soprano Andrea Carroll and mezzo-sopranos Catherine Martin and Renée Tatum) dip back into the pools of the Rhine, bringing the cycle full circle.
**MOZART**

*The ABDUCTION from the SERAGLIO*

Brown Theater
Sung in German with projected English translation

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**CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM**

**Konstanze**
- Albina Shagimuratova ‡
- Lawrence Brownlee

**Belmonte**
- Ryan Speedo Green *

**Osmin**
- Uliana Alexyuk ‡
- Chris Bozeka †
  - *Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*

**Blonde**
- Blonde Uliana Alexyuk ‡

**Pedrillo**
- Blonde Uliana Alexyuk ‡
- Chris Bozeka †
  - *Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*

**Pasha Selim**
- Blonde Uliana Alexyuk ‡
- Chris Bozeka †
  - *Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*

**Conductor**
- Thomas Rösner

**Director**
- James Robinson

**Set Designer**
- Allen Moyer

**Costume Designer**
- Anna R. Oliver

**Lighting Designer**
- Paul Palazzo

**Projection Designer**
- Wendall K. Harrington

**Chorus Master**
- Richard Bado ‡
  - *The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair*

**Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and Chorus**

*Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist*
James Robinson’s delightful, celebrated production of Mozart’s The Abduction from the Seraglio returns with a new cast of exceptional artists. Transporting the action to the Orient Express in the 1920s, Robinson’s production is a cheeky reading of Mozart’s irresistible singspiel. Abduction pairs acrobatic arias with wisecracks and sight gags, brilliantly balancing frivolity with solemnity. Spoken dialogue propels the story forward until the downcast lovers’ story comes to its conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Mozart’s move to Vienna in 1781 coincided with the establishment of a German opera company, the National Singspiel. Joseph II established the company to perform works in German, creating a new German operatic style instead of relying on Italian imports. The newly created genre was known as singspiel, characterized by comedic plots and spoken dialogue. Mozart was presented with a libretto and could not craft the type of dramatic ensembles we see in his later collaborations with Lorenzo Da Ponte. Instead, Abduction is known for a number of arias that push the human voice to the outer limits of possibility. Konstanze’s “Marten aller arten” (Tortures of every kind) is a notable example that requires swift coloratura skills and an iron lung in the vein of the Queen of the Night—Mozart wrote Konstanze for soprano Caterina Cavalieri and catered his writing to her unique talents.

SYNOPSIS

After being abducted by Turkish pirates, Konstanze, her servant Blonde, and Blonde’s lover, Pedrillo, are being held captive by Pasha Selim on his private car aboard the Orient Express en route from Istanbul to Paris. Belmonte, Konstanze’s lover and Pedrillo’s master, comes looking for her, only to be crossed by Selim’s henchman Osmin. Belmonte eventually connects with Pedrillo and they craft a plan to disguise Belmonte and rescue their lovers. Pedrillo informs Konstanze of the escape plan and attempts to remove Osmin from the equation by getting him drunk. The lovers are reunited but Osmin foils their escape and brings them before Pasha Selim. Upon learning that Belmonte is the son of an old enemy, the pasha shows magnanimity and frees them, declaring that love cannot be won by force.

FUN FACT

James Robinson’s production features a stuffed goat, affectionately known as Gladys, in a brief scene that shows the train moving along its journey. The last time the production was produced in Houston, the HGO staff was disheartened to learn that Gladys would be moved to the storage warehouse until her next appearance on stage. The staff adopted Gladys and she now lives in the administrative offices, safe from the harsh conditions of the warehouse.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Viennese conductor Thomas Rösner returns to Houston Grand Opera to conduct an international cast of virtuosic singers. Last seen in Houston for Die Fledermaus in 2013, Rösner enjoys a vibrant career conducting at Opernhaus Zürich, Welsh National Opera, Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, and other European houses.

Russian soprano Albina Shagimuratova and American tenor Lawrence Brownlee star as the separated lovers Konstanze and Belmonte. Shagimuratova, an illustrious graduate of the HGO Studio, has thrilled Houston audiences with her dazzling interpretations of Lucia di Lammermoor, Violetta in La traviata, the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute, and Gilda in Rigoletto. Brownlee returns in one of Mozart’s most demanding tenor roles; recent HGO appearances include The Italian Girl in Algiers and La Cenerentola.

Sonorous American bass Ryan Speedo Green makes a highly anticipated HGO debut as Osmin. Ukrainian soprano Uliana Alexyuk returns to Houston having performed a number of roles at Moscow’s Bolshoi Opera and Staatstheater Karlsruhe since her Studio tenure, and second-year Studio artist Chris Bozeka sings her lover, Pedrillo. In a bit of luxury casting, Christopher Purves, our Alberich in Götterdämmerung, takes the role of Pasha Selim.
Each season, a staggering 80,000 people come downtown to the Wortham to experience HGO’s magical main-stage season. Did you know that another 120,000 people also experience the magic of HGO outside of the Wortham?

BY KELLY FINN
HGO Director of Development,
Institutional Giving
Entering its ninth season, Houston Grand Opera’s HGOco initiative continues to redefine the way an opera company serves its community—working with everyone in the city to share opera that’s meaningful for all audiences and age groups and creating new works based on who we are. And we’re not about to sit still!

Houston is the single most culturally diverse urban locale in the country, and our population is also one of the youngest. Houston boasts the second largest veteran population in the country, and the city has become a global destination for arts and culture. HGOco's upcoming season celebrates all of those communities that make Houston unique through a season of innovative, truly collaborative projects and performances that you won’t want to miss, plus expanded offerings for students and educators.

SINGING THE SONG OF HOUSTON
HGOco’s Song of Houston program continues to foster stories, music, and emerging talent. A variety of bold new works are in store during the 2016–17 season under the banner of Song of Houston, an innovative vehicle for telling the stories of those who call Houston home.

Some Light Emerges, a chamber opera premiering on March 16 and 17, 2017, celebrates the indelible impact of the Rothko Chapel, a Houston institution. Composed by Laura Kaminsky to a libretto by Mark Campbell and Kimberly Reed, the opera weaves together the storyline of Dominique de Menil’s vision and eventual commissioning of the chapel from Mark Rothko among the stories of five individual Houstonians who find their own personal meaning from visiting the space.

As is the case with all Song of Houston premieres, Some Light Emerges is being developed in close collaboration with Houston’s visual arts community, including our friends from the Rothko Chapel, The Menil Collection, and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Don’t miss this unique musical celebration of Houston’s social history, rich visual arts, and diversity of faith and spirituality.

Also with strong ties to the visual arts, a song cycle in development titled The Magnificent Pretty Boy will be workshopped in September, with two sessions open to the public on September 23 and 24 at The Menil Collection.

The work is inspired by a real-life outsider artist, Henry Ray Clark (1936–2006), a Houston street hustler who was known as The Magnificent Pretty Boy. While serving time in Huntsville State Prison, he discovered his natural talent for visual art through the prison arts program. He developed a style that is immediately recognizable, incorporating colorful and intricate geometric patterns; his work has been exhibited at The Menil Collection, making it an especially appropriate venue for the workshop sessions, as well as the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

To develop the song cycle that tells his story, HGOco commissioned the Grant Wallace Band, a collective of three classically trained composers heavily influenced by outsider artists and the sounds of folk and bluegrass.

Another popular song cycle, Veterans Songbook, continues this season. Entering its third year, Veterans Songbook is an ongoing series of musical storytelling workshops in collaboration with local veterans organizations: veterans are paired with local composers to create songs that share their experiences.

“...As a music teacher, I know how rare it is for elementary schools to have thriving music programs. HGOco is helping to fill that gap for the children in our community who might not otherwise gain valuable exposure to music and arts programs.” —Jamie Abrams
Therapeutic, unifying, and transformative for participants, their friends and families, and audience members, these powerful new songs give voice to the stories of generations of veterans who have served our country. Information on public performances will be posted on our website as details are confirmed.

To close out HGOco’s Song of Houston season in May 2017 is Das Barbecü, an over-the-top Texan version of the Ring cycle that we simply could not pass up. A rousing musical theater piece originally commissioned by Seattle Opera from composer Scott Warrender to a side-splitting libretto by Jim Luigs, Das Barbecü is a clever take on the Ring myths, set in our great state with no shortage of cowboys, big hair, and rodeos—and, of course, there’s a huge battle among humans, gods, giants, and dwarves for a golden ring. Stay tuned for more details as we lighten up after the devastation of Götterdämmerung.
with hits like “Makin’ Guacamole” and “Rodeo Romeo.” Performance dates and venue will be posted on our website at HGO.org/community.

ARTS IN THE CLASSROOM
A beloved staple for Houston-area schoolchildren over the decades, Opera to Go! tours schools, community centers, hospitals, and other locations bringing 45-minute opera performances to students, families, and audiences of all ages. Kids love opera, and they feed off the contagious energy of the talented young cast members, who interact with them and bring to life cherished stories through the magic of live music.

There is an extremely high demand for this program in schools all over the area and beyond. Not only are many school districts facing limited resources, but educators also know how transformative live arts and culture experiences can be for young minds. With lead support from the Houston Endowment, we are expanding Opera to Go!, adding 30 free performances in venues that may not have regular access to performing arts. Next season the talented Opera to Go! performers bring back an HGO favorite and a celebration of girl power, The Princess and the Pea, and showcase a new production that we have a feeling will be a hit around these parts: a Texan version of The Barber of Seville, a funny bilingual retelling of the Rossini classic in which Rosina and Almaviva overcome a language barrier, among other obstacles, to be together. Remember, Opera to Go! is not just for kids. We strongly encourage entire families to bring their friends and enjoy some of our free community performances of Opera to Go! at Miller Outdoor Theatre, the Heinen Theatre, and The Deluxe Theater in the Fifth Ward.

HGOco’s Student Performance Series continues a special tradition of introducing young people to our art form by inviting them downtown to the Wortham to experience a main-stage opera. From the thrill of live music to the simple joy of riding the escalator up to the Grand Foyer for the first time, students never forget the first time they came to HGO. This season, students in grades 2–12 and their chaperones will experience The Elixir of Love with two matinees and one High School Night in November.

OPERA FOR YOU
HGOco, an integral part of our company, is a laboratory for new ideas and talented new creative teams and artists. Each HGOco program is created with Houstonians in mind: Houston, with its diversity of cultures, history, and music, has no shortage of stories, and HGOco is here as a catalyst and a connector to share them. Why? Because when you combine good music and a good story, magic happens.
A New Work Emerges

Composer Laura Kaminsky clearly recalls the first time she saw the work of artist Mark Rothko. She was only three-and-a-half or maybe four years old and was taking a children’s painting class at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Walking down the corridor to class one day with her mother, she chanced to look into a room where several Rothko paintings were displayed. “I stopped dead in my tracks,” she recalls. And in class, while everyone else was painting trees and houses, she was trying to make a Rothko.

Laura Kaminsky: The chapel is such an incredibly powerful place and its mission is so beautiful—to be a place for people of all faiths and no faith, a place for contemplation and reflection, a place to be alone with one’s deepest self. I went to my collaborators, Mark and Kim, and said, “I’m going to pitch you something general about the chapel, and then if you like it, you have to make it your story.” They thought that my general idea to create an opera that takes place in the chapel was great, but that my specific ideas about who the characters could be and what stories they needed to tell were terrible! So, they said, “Okay, we’ll work with it and come back with a fully realized storyline.” And they did and it totally blew me away.

Each character they developed, and all are fictional, represents a person living in Houston in different decades from the ’70s to today, and each one comes to the chapel to deal with his or her issues. But the unique twist was to add one real-life character, who Mark believed needed to be central to the opera—Dominique de Menil, the visionary who imagined the chapel and then ensured that it was built. Mark and Kim developed a fabulous cast of characters, each of whom tells a powerful story, taking us on a journey from the ’70s to today. In addition, the chapel itself, in a way, is a character. Of course the space can’t sing, so there’s a lot of music that represents the chapel. It’s purely instrumental music and it weaves throughout the piece. Dominique de Menil keeps coming back. She has a complex narrative about the space and the inspiration and struggle with Mark Rothko to make it, and the issues of situating it in Houston and having the community embrace it.

How does it work out to have two librettists?

There’s a wonderful creative synergy among the three of us, but whatever transpires between Mark and Kim when they are writing is a mystery to me. But it clearly works. They bring out more from each other than alone. I love their
In Some Light Emerges, they assigned each other different characters to write. Then they wove it together and edited it and they still won’t tell me who owns which one. I think I’ve got it [figured out], but they both just wink at me and laugh. I feel like I found a creative heart with them.

**How would you describe your compositional language?**

As I write Some Light Emerges, which is my second opera, I’ve found a desire to write singable lines that really stick in your head and to give each character his or her own unique voice. My harmonies are not straight ahead—I would say that they’re almost like complex jazz chords or Messiaen chords, but they function in their own way.

Basically, I have a lyrical voice, yet with a pretty complex harmonic sense, and a strong rhythmic sense that comes from the years I spent living in Ghana and Eastern Europe, studying both West African drumming and Eastern European folk music. My musical voice comes from a number of things. I wasn’t formally trained in a conservatory setting—I was a psychology major at Oberlin College. So although I was writing music from the time I was about 10 or 12, I didn’t have years of music theory classes. My musical language has evolved from listening to a wide range of music, and how I listen and how I hear does not come from study or textbooks—so it’s mine. Which makes things easier in that I’m not following rules, but it’s harder because I don’t always know all the rules.

**So you started out to be a psychologist?**

Yes, I was a psych major at Oberlin, and I was also studying composition. In my last year I was doing a senior honors project in psychology and also writing my first string quartet for my senior recital in the Conservatory, and I kept saying, “I think I don’t really want to finish this research project. I really want to finish my string quartet.” I just knew I wanted to be a composer—I think I freaked out my family when I told them I was not going to apply for grad school in psychology. I sent some scores to [composer] Mario Davidovsky and said, “May I take lessons with you?” thinking I’d study privately in between managing some kind of day job. Davidovsky called me up and said, “I’ll get you into graduate school and you can come and study with me and get your master’s.”

**What do you think is the most important quality that has added dimension to your composition?**

I think it’s listening widely and being open to all kinds of music, and really letting it seep in. If I like something, it influences me. I love Chick Corea. I’m not a jazz pianist, but I love what he does and it sits in my head. I love Meredith Monk—she’s a dear friend, so I feel both a personal and professional connection to her work, and I love the honesty of her voice. And Chick Corea and Meredith Monk don’t seem like they would go together, nor do Bernstein, Sondheim, Shostakovich, Messiaen, Penderecki, and Rzewski, but they all touch me and I know that all of those sound worlds are in me and have an impact on what I write.

**Just being in the Rothko Chapel is a deeply spiritual experience for many people. What do you, Mark, and Kim want people to come away with after experiencing Some Light Emerges?**

The idea of a spiritual space, and the power of art to give us room to be our most human selves and to be open to reflection and to action, I think, is what we’re hoping people will come away with. If you give yourself the time and open yourself, you can find answers. You can find peace. You can deal with difficulty. You can seek joy.

**Given your reaction as a young child to seeing that first Rothko painting, visiting the chapel must have been almost overwhelming.**

When you go in, it’s a little bit cold, almost, and you have to give yourself time to engage with the space before it starts to shimmer and talk. If you go in thinking, “Oh, these are just a bunch of dark paintings in an octagon,” you’re not going to have any kind of experience. But if you sit there for a while, the light comes in through the oculus and as you look at the work, it starts to change and move. That’s where the imagination takes each of the characters in Some Light Emerges.
Mrs. Alban. I realized that these theater people were "my people"—it really was a lightning-bolt moment. I was performing as well as doing technical work, and I loved it.

Did that influence your choice of high school?

Absolutely. I told my parents that I wanted to go to HSPVA [High School of Performing and Visual Arts] and they were not exactly against it but it was very much "If that's what you want to do, then fine, but you need to make it happen." I had to work on my audition pieces on my own, although it was slightly easier to get into the school in those days. HSPVA was based at Houston Community College then, but we helped move the school into the current facility during my first year after school.

The new building was only a couple of minutes from my family home so I think my parents were happy about that.

Vermont and Texas are quite different—how did you like it here?

It was difficult. I went to the Awty School, which was still being run by Mr. and Mrs. Awty, and almost as soon as I arrived, it began transitioning into a dual language school. I felt I was very much a misfit. It wasn’t until the eighth grade (and I had a couple of friends who were interested in drama) that I met the drama teacher, Mrs. Alban. I realized that these theater people were “my people”—it really was a lightning-bolt moment. I was performing as well as doing technical work, and I loved it.

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The new building was only a couple of minutes from my family home so I think my parents were happy about that.

It must be strange for you to see the growth at HSPVA and the planning of the new campus downtown.

It has changed a lot, but the spirit of the school remains. I do remember that very soon after I arrived having the feeling that this was the school for me—I was surrounded by people like me, and I felt at home. We did our shows at the Heinen Theatre at HCC so it’s full circle for me now that HGO has a partnership with them and we use that venue for HGOco performances. As a performer I quickly established my specialty—playing old ladies! I realized that acting was a calling and although I really liked it I wanted to do something that no one else could do.
It was very mature, to look for a place where you could be your own person and, once in the school, really excel.

I guess so, but also the movie Fame came out and that was another “dawning” that the performing life wasn’t really for me! As I thought about the future, my parents were supportive but also were skeptical that the theater was really a career. I decided to take a year off after high school and prove to myself that this was something I really could do for the rest of my life. I had worked with a director at HSPVA, Jay Julian, and he asked me to stage manage a show for him at Main Street Theatre while I was still in school, and that opened the door to work at other Houston theaters during that next year—Stages, Main Street, and Strand Street in Galveston. I also did part-time work at I Can’t Believe It’s Yogurt!, and by the end of the year had decided that theater was my calling.

So, back to school?

Yes—I’d researched the schools that had specific stage management programs and was accepted at Webster University. Webster offered a four-year bachelor’s degree program in fine arts, and the University’s venue is also shared by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (OTSL) and the Repertory Theater of St. Louis. There was no opera yet for me at this point, and I came back and worked at Main Street when I wasn’t at school. Eventually I did some work at OTSL as an intern while still at school and really loved it. I was lucky enough to work with Stephen Wadsworth there, and we hit it off so I got to observe him in rehearsals on his next show and really started to understand how directors work. While still in St. Louis, I also worked with Francesca Zambello, so I was working with very good people. The relationship with Stephen gave me the opportunity to come to HGO for the first time, to do a new La clemenza di Tito with him in the Cullen Theater as part of the Mozart Festival in 1991.

Local girl makes good, then?

It wasn’t quite that straightforward! I had moved to Chicago by then, as I had friends there and it is such a great theater town, but it was tough to get work there. I was getting some work elsewhere in opera and had studied some piano to help with music reading. I did meet my now-husband, Bruce, who was working in a music store, but then I came back to Houston to work a whole season with HGO. I was then hired as an assistant stage manager at Lyric Opera of Chicago (LOC), and was able to return to OTSL in the summers as well. It was great to have that intensity and amount of work.

You do like to be busy, don’t you!

It seems that way! I liked being an assistant stage manager but I really loved to call shows and left LOC in order to get more chances to stage manage. Bruce and I decided to move to Maine because I had an opportunity for more consistent work, but it was in straight theater. Halfway through that year I got pregnant with my daughter, Sadie, and when the company manager left I moved into company management there. We were in Maine for six years but it was hard because I knew there was no possible progression for me. I had just had my son, Sam, and I reached out to Ann Owens at HGO to see what might be available, as some family issues meant that I wanted to get back to Houston. A temporary job came up in the costume shop so we moved back as a family in May 2003 and I was really lucky as the perfect job soon came up in the Technical Department. The Rehearsal Department was being formed and I applied and got the position to head it up. It allowed me to combine all the skills and knowledge that I had gained to that point to ensure that nothing was overlooked and the rehearsal process went smoothly.

But you soon took on extra responsibilities outside the Rehearsal Department, didn’t you?

I did. Greg Weber, who was the technical and production director, used my experience to help him recruit for the stage management and assistant director teams among other areas. Although I missed calling shows, I was happy that my new role was an important part of holding the department together and an opportunity to do good work. When Greg left, we were without a full-time replacement for six months and it was an incredibly stressful and busy time—we had a lot of new
staff and I had to step into more of a leadership role. Then you arrived!

I remember having lunch with Anthony Freud and Diane Zola and talking to them about how I could work with you and whether I would still be needed. I knew my value and was determined not to let anything fail—I have a passion to make things work and to build better systems to make things easier and clearer for other departments.

You certainly do that, and that is why (after a few weeks of trying to fully understand each other) I was able to be clear about how the department was going to move forward. Your knowledge has been absolutely invaluable and I am so grateful you have been able to add other experience as you have moved up to your current role as general manager.

Having worked in a lot of different roles and departments has been invaluable for me and allows me to think through things in a detailed and thorough way. I think that’s why we work well together. You are a “big picture” person, and then I make the plan as to how we can accomplish it. I didn’t expect to end up in this role, and I do still sometimes miss the direct contact of running shows, but HGO is a great company and I will always do whatever I can to keep the quality and efficiency of the work we do here as high as possible.

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Loreen Samson, Old Reserves Buildings, 34” X 46”
Roebourne, Western Australia

Violet Samson, Bush Lolly, 32” X 44”
Roebourne, Western Australia

Be sure to see Booker-Lowe’s exhibition of Australian Aboriginal art at the Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts, Spring, TX, September 24th through December 2016!
YELENA DYACHEK | SOPRANO
Hildebrand Foundation Fellow

When she heard her name being called as a Grand Finals winner in the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Yelena Dyachek couldn’t believe her ears. “Wait, was that me?” she said to herself. Coming on the heels of winning the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in HGO’s 2016 Concert of Arias, it was like a “dream come true,” she said.

“I was brought up with music,” Yelena says, recalling that her whole family played instruments and sang at parties. She sang her first solo at the age of three, in church, and attended music school. When the family moved from their native Ukraine to the United States, Yelena’s mother found her a voice teacher, who began giving her new student classical CDs. Yelena thought the recordings were “kind of cool,” but it took a live opera experience, Aida in Sacramento, to completely win her over.

Her first connection with HGO came via the Aspen Music Festival and School, where Yelena spent three summers and met HGO Director of Artistic Administration Diane Zola, who teaches there. Zola recognized the young soprano’s potential and encouraged her to “get more serious,” says Yelena. “I heard her. The next year, I tried to take away as much as I could from everything that I was experiencing.” Yelena also met HGO Studio Director Brian Speck at Aspen. “I already felt like I was connected to the company in some way. It made me feel like this is a place I can call home.”

Her roles this season include First Secretary in Nixon in China and the leading role of Dominique de Menil in the HGOco world premiere of Some Light Emerges: “I think the coolest thing about HGO is the fact that the company produces new works that are related to the community. I like the idea that Some Light Emerges is inspired by the Rothko Chapel and I am really looking forward to it.”

SOL JIN | BARITONE
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow

Sol Jin’s mother was surprised when he won his first singing contest at a summer church camp in his native Korea—she didn’t know he had any singing talent. She quickly secured a teacher for him, and many more competition wins were to come, recently including the Audience Choice Award in HGO’s 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Just weeks after that, like fellow incoming Studio artist Yelena Dyachek, he heard his name being called on the Metropolitan Opera stage as a Grand Finals winner in the National Council Auditions and had a similar reaction: “Was that my name?”

He admits to having been “afraid of opera” when he first started out in the music program at South Korea’s prestigious Yonsei University. “I wanted to do art song recitals. In opera, you have to be aware of the other singers, and all conductors are different,” he says. But when he actually sang his first role, he realized that he enjoyed “becoming someone else”—although he still finds characterization to be the biggest challenge of opera.

HGO audiences will hear Sol sing the role of Valentin—Marguerite’s brother, a soldier—in Faust in the fall. He says that the role is a little high for him, but he is less concerned about that than about the characterization of the highly emotional role. “He has a duty to protect his sister, but he feels she has betrayed him,” he says. He has at least one thing in common with the character of Valentin: he was a soldier, in Korea, before coming to the United States in 2013. He will also cover the role of Chou En-lai in Nixon in China.

Sol will be busy with his work in the Studio, but the wonderful sports stadiums in Houston have not escaped his notice, and he looks forward to catching baseball and basketball games whenever his schedule permits.
Meet the four young artists who will enter HGO’s premier young artist training program—the HGO Studio—this season. They join returning singers Chris Bozeka, Federico De Michelis, Ben Edquist, Mane Galoyan, Megan Mikailovna Samarin, and Yongzhao Yu, and pianist/coaches Kirill Kuzmin and Geoffrey Loff.

For opportunities to see the HGO Studio artists perform, please see p. 53.

ZOIE REAMS | MEZZO-SOPRANO
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow

There wasn’t a defining “aha” moment when Zoie Reams realized she wanted to be an opera singer. Instead, her career choice flowed gradually and naturally from her experience, said the second prize winner of the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias.

As a ballet student since the age of three, she was exposed to—and came to love—classical music. When she got a little bit older, the Chicago native also enjoyed singing with the Lyric Opera of Chicago Children’s Chorus. During high school, she attended boarding school in Minnesota and “really got serious” about singing when she was accepted in the Minnesota Opera’s Project Opera, a program for young singers. From there, she went on to become an apprentice, receiving even more opportunities to learn and perform. The highlight of her experience with Minnesota Opera was performing in the chorus in a main-stage production of Roberto Devereux.

Zoie will be learning and singing a lot of new music during the season at HGO—in fact all of her roles this season are in contemporary repertoire. She will perform in the world premieres of It’s a Wonderful Life and Some Light Emerges and will also sing Third Secretary in Nixon in China—“I’m excited to sing it, but I’m honestly a little nervous because I haven’t sung any Adams, or much music like his—and it’s very difficult,” she says.

The HGO Studio has been on Zoie’s radar for a long time because of its emphasis on performance opportunities. “It’s always been at the top of my list,” she says, “and I’m attracted to the city as well.” This summer, she did her shopping for a Houston apartment long distance, from Cooperstown, New York, where she performed Tituba in The Crucible and covered the Beggar Woman in Sweeney Todd with Glimmerglass Festival Opera.

PETER WALSH | PIANIST/COACH
Nancy and Ted Haywood/Stephanie Larsen Fellow

“It makes complete sense for me to be in opera,” says Peter Walsh. And while he acknowledges that he began focusing on opera as a profession relatively late, everything from childhood on seems to have led him in this direction.

When he was small, his grandmother bought him a toy piano. “I started plunking things out by ear—just single-note melodies. And then my parents realized they could recognize what I was playing,” he says. They signed him up for piano lessons when he was five years old.

His first opportunity to collaborate as a pianist with singers came in elementary school, when the class was preparing a musical program. “I had an immense fear of singing in public, even in a group,” says Peter. “So I went home and learned how to play all the songs by ear on the piano. The music teacher was amenable to me accompanying the class instead of singing.”

But it was solo piano performance he studied at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. During his training, he accompanied quite a few singers in art song, but he’d had “almost no experience” in opera when, nearing the end of his doctoral program at USC, he decided to branch out and was accepted at the Music Academy of the West. The first opera he worked on was Stravinsky’s extremely difficult The Rake’s Progress. It was a “baptism by fire,” he says, but he also realized he had found his path.

Collaborating with singers is uniquely satisfying, he says. “You are tasked with carrying them through and supporting them and being there for them on a human level, not just a musical level. When I can think about those things, the music just comes out better.”

This season at HGO, Peter will coach The Elixir of Love, Nixon in China, HGOco’s world premiere of Some Light Emerges, and Götterdämmerung.
Summer is a time when the HGO Studio artists scatter throughout the world, singing roles with festival companies, learning languages, and preparing for the busy season to come. Here at HGO, we’re working hard to prepare for the upcoming year, and reflecting on a very successful 2015–16 season.

At the end of May, four distinguished artists completed their time in the HGO Studio—congratulations to sopranos Pureum Jo and D’Ana Lombard, mezzo-soprano Sofia Selowsky, and pianist/coach Sahar Nouri! We’ll miss seeing these wonderful artists every day, but we’re excited that all four have major engagements planned in the coming year to kick off their post-Studio careers.

Every spring brings a new round of competitions and awards in the opera world, and Studio artists and alumni are always well represented. Alumna Tamara Wilson was honored this year with one of opera’s biggest prizes, the Richard Tucker Award, following last year’s win by another HGO alum, Jamie Barton. Current Studio artist Megan Mikailovna Samarin won a study grant from the Tucker Foundation. At the Gerda Lissner Competition, Kevin Ray took first prize in the Wagner Division, and D’Ana Lombard won second prize in the General Division. Two incoming Studio artists, Yelena Dyachek and Sol Jin, were among five Grand Finals winners in the prestigious Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

This May’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA) was an extraordinary success for the 16 young singers who attended. YAVA participants, all undergraduate students, spend a full week at HGO, where they receive coachings, voice lessons, and group sessions with HGO staff. The training is paying off, as YAVA alumni have also fared well on the competition circuit: Nicholas Brownlee (2011) recently won the Belvedere International Singing Competition in Cape Town, South Africa, following receipt of a Tucker Study Grant in March. YAVA alumni Samantha Hankey (2012, 2014), Jamez McCorkle (2012), Rebecca Pedersen (2013), and Theo Hoffman (2015) also received major awards this spring. A number of YAVA alumni have now entered major young artist programs, including the HGO Studio.

Looking forward to the 2016–17 season, we are thrilled to welcome soprano Yelena Dyachek, mezzo-soprano Zoie Reams, baritone Sol Jin, and pianist/coach Peter Walsh (find out more about them on pp. 50–51). Returning to the Studio are soprano Mane Galoyan, mezzo-soprano Megan Mikailovna Samarin, tenors Chris Bozeka and Yongzhao Yu, baritone Ben Edquist, bass-baritone Federico De Michelis, and pianist/coaches Kirill Kuzmin and Geoffrey Loff.

Please join us for our annual Studio Showcase on September 11 (2:30 p.m.) and 13 (8 p.m.). Accompanied by our pianist/coaches, the Studio singers will perform scenes from La bohème, Carmen, The Rake’s Progress, Dialogues of the Carmelites, I Capuleti e i Montecchi, L’italiana in Algeri, Lucia di Lammermoor, L’heure espagnole, and Faust. We always program this production with the artists’ specific strengths in mind, which makes for an unforgettable event that really shows them off! Subscribers can reserve free tickets by contacting Justine Welch at 713-546-0270. À la carte operagoers can join us by purchasing tickets online or by calling Customer Care (713-228-OPERA or 800-626-7372).

—Brian Speck, HGO Studio Director
**HGO Studio FACULTY & STAFF**

Brian Speck, Director
Bradley Moore, Music Director
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Jeremy Johnson, Studio Administrator
Carlisle Floyd, Artistic Advisor
Stephen King, Director of Vocal Instruction
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Tometer Zvulun, Showcase Director
Edward Berkeley, Guest Acting Instructor
Gerardo Felisatti, Guest Coach
Kevin Miller, Guest Coach
Laurent Philippe, Guest Coach
The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of McGladrey, LLP.

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

Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.

Additional support for Houston Grand Opera Studio is provided by the following funds within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.: The Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation Endowment Fund

**HGO Studio ARTISTS 2016–17**

Chris Bozeka, tenor
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Federico De Michelis, bass-baritone
Beth Madison Fellow

Yelena Dyachek, soprano
Hildebrand Foundation Fellow

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

Mane Galoyan, soprano
Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr
Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow

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

Kirill Kuzmin, pianist/coach
Bill and Melinda Brunger/Jill and Allyn Risley Fellow

Geoffrey Loff, pianist/coach
Lynn Guggolz/Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow

Zoie Reams, mezzo-soprano
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow

Megan Mikailovna Samarin, mezzo-soprano
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.

**STUDIO SHOWCASE**
The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform in a program of opera scenes in Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater, on Sept. 11 (2:30 p.m.) and Sept. 13 (8 p.m.). Free to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**SEPT. 11 & 13**

**NOV. 17 & 20**

**RECITALS AT RIENZI**
Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. Nov. 17 (7:30 p.m.) and Nov. 20 (5 p.m.).
HG0co is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HG0co’s many projects, the touring group Opera to Go! performs family-friendly works in schools, churches, and community venues. Each year, HG0co also offers student performances (for school groups only) of a popular opera.

**SUMMER OASIS**

In June of 2016, over 100 young singers sang, danced, wrote music and words, and built sets and props during HGO’s summer Opera Camps. New this year, the Opera Experience camp was expanded to two, week-long offerings, and after-camp care was available for all sessions.

**Opera Experience** campers sang classics from the Broadway songbook by such composers and lyricists as Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, Jule Styne, Stephen Sondheim, and Irving Berlin. And, importantly, all Opera Experience campers left camp with an audition song prepared, to help them continue their musical journeys.

**Create an Opera** campers wrote the libretto and composed the music for their own opera based on the children’s book *Rosie Revere, Engineer*. They created the set and props, and interpreted Rosie’s inventions in recycled materials, paint, glue, and even their own bodies.

Our oldest campers, in the **Art of Opera**, spent two weeks rehearsing *The Emperor’s New Clothes* with music adapted from Mozart’s operas. This culminated in a performance for parents and friends at the Heinen Theatre on the central campus of Houston Community College.

**READY FOR COLLEGE**

The Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Class of 2015–16 presented its graduation recital at Duncan Recital Hall at Rice University on Sunday, May 15. This adjudicated recital is the culmination of HGO’s scholarship program that offers talented high school seniors a year of voice lessons, master classes with HGO main-stage artists, and assistance with the college audition process—all with the aim of helping them through the audition process and into vocal music programs at their chosen institutions. The first place scholarship of $3,000 went to Pepperdine University on behalf of Nathaniel Thompson, while Madison Mackey won the second place scholarship of $2,000, which goes toward her tuition at Boston University. The third place prize of $1,000 went to Louisiana State University on behalf of Leah Moody.
Opera to Go! embarks on the 2016-17 season with a revival of *The Princess and the Pea*, music by Mary Carol Warwick and libretto by Mary Ann Pendino. A brave princess faces dragons and ogres, but will a single pea prove her greatest challenge? This operatic treatment of the classic Hans Christian Andersen tale features an unsteady prince, an overbearing queen, and a mountain of mattresses. *The Princess and the Pea* tours to area schools and community centers from September 19 through December 16. Highlighting the tour are three free performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, September 21-23 at 11 a.m. daily.

In the spring, Opera to Go! is thrilled to present a brand new bilingual (English/Spanish) production of *The Barber of Seville* where language divides a young couple as much as a stubborn uncle. Opera's most famous barber, Figaro, plays the role of translator as Rossini's sparkling, witty score takes center stage. *The Barber of Seville* will tour from January 30 through May 19, with free public performances at the Heinen Theatre on the central campus of Houston Community College, February 3-4 at 9:30 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. daily.

To book performances, visit HGO.org/operatogo or call 713-546-0231.

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**THE NEXUS INITIATIVE**

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

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HGO warmly welcomes Deloitte as the latest addition to our wonderful network of corporate supporters. Deloitte provides industry-leading audit, consulting, tax and advisory services to many of the world’s most admired brands, including 80 percent of the companies on the Fortune 500. Deloitte has more than 220,000 professionals delivering services in audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk management, tax, and related services in more than 150 countries and territories.

Houston principal Gary Adams serves as an HGO Trustee on behalf of Deloitte. Gary has over 30 years of experience in the oil and gas industry, and serves as a leader within Deloitte’s Global Oil and Gas practice.

A proud supporter of many fine arts organizations like HGO, Deloitte provides leadership through financial support, pro-bono work, and volunteer work in innovative ways with the Houston community. We’re thrilled to welcome Deloitte to the HGO family and we thank them for their support of our main-stage season and special events.

**GARY ADAMS**

Houston Grand Opera is thrilled to have Claire Liu as a member of the HGO Board of Directors and as vice chair of the Finance Committee.

As a child, Claire took violin lessons and was exposed to opera through listening to classical music records that her uncle left behind at her parents’ house. The first time Claire attended an opera was in January of 1987: HGO’s production of Verdi’s *Aida* that opened the newly built Wortham Theater Center. She and her husband, Joe Greenberg, were instantly hooked and became HGO subscribers.

“HGO has a bright future,” Claire says. “The leadership is fantastic...I love working with Patrick and Perryn, especially with regard to the strategic planning process. This is an exciting time to be on the board, as we appeal to a wider audience and meet the needs of Houston’s changing demographics.”

Claire recently retired from LyondellBasell Industries, where she led the corporate finance team. Joe is the founder of Alta Resources, LLC, and serves on the board of YES Prep public schools and Teach for America. Claire and Joe have two children, Robert and Margaret. When not working to strengthen public education and the arts, Claire and Joe enjoy the outdoors. Claire has run marathons in all 50 states, and the entire family went on a recent adventure climbing to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

**CLAIRE LIU**

Houston Grand Opera is delighted to welcome the Honorable Alastair J. M. Walton as a new Houstonian and one of our newest HGO Trustees. Alastair, Australia’s consul general and senior trade commissioner to Houston, has been an opera fan since he was a young teenager, when his father (then consul general in Los Angeles) took him to his first performance.

“The opera completely takes you into a different world,” Alastair said, after being mesmerized by HGO’s 2016 production of *Rusalka*. “It doesn’t matter how bad your day is, when you end it with the opera, it always ends up well.” Alastair adds that the people he has met through his support of HGO, the Houston Ballet, and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo have become like a second family to him. Alastair loves Houston, calling it a city of “civility and optimism.”

A career investment banker, Alastair has been chairman of BKK Partners, an independent corporate advisory firm serving the Asia Pacific region, and he is a former co-chairman and managing director of Goldman Sachs Australia. Prior to joining Goldman Sachs, Alastair worked with Credit Suisse First Boston for 14 years. Alastair is also a supporter of the Sydney Dance Company, the Houston Ballet, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Menil Collection. He has four children who live in Australia and London.

**HON. ALASTAIR J. M. WALTON**
Following the April 22 opening night performance of Carousel, Jana and Scotty Arnoldy hosted HGO patrons at a late-night reception in their stunning home. Perryn Leech and Patrick Summers introduced the cast and creative team to great applause.

To celebrate the April 16 opening of Siegfried, the penultimate installment of HGO’s four-season Ring cycle, lead sponsors John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer hosted cast and crew at a late-night buffet at The Dunlavy. Guests danced well into the night to the rocking tunes of New Orleans band Gal Holiday and the Honky Tonk Revue.

Photo by Wilson Parish

Photo by Wilson Parish

Photo by Wilson Parish
YOUR LEGACY COUNTS!

Who will enjoy world-class opera because of your generosity?

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

For more information, please contact Richard Buffett at 713-546-0216 or rbuffett@hgo.org.

HGO.org/LaureateSociety

OPERA BALL AUCTION LUNCHEON

On March 10, more than 60 longtime HGO supporters gathered at Tony’s for the annual Opera Ball Auction Luncheon, hosted by Special Events Committee Chairman Denise Bush Bahr. Each attendee was asked to bring a gift card for her favorite Houston establishment, resulting in a “Ladies of the Opera” auction package worth over $6,000.
Your support matters. Ticket sales alone cover only 25 percent of HGO’s annual costs. We rely on the generosity of donors like you to aid us in creating world-class, uncompromising operatic programs.

Your donation to HGO grants you exclusive benefits like valet parking, Masterson Green Room access, and invitations to our behind-the-scenes lecture series.

Will you support HGO with your Annual Fund gift today?

To donate or for more information, visit HGO.org/Giving or contact Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704 or jwijangco@hgo.org.
JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE
HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. They partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools to bring HGOco programs to economically disadvantaged students. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO's Founders Council. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they also support Concert of Arias and HGO's main-stage productions, including last season's Tosca and Rusalka.

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

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

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

IMPRESARIOS circle
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.

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. David Powell, BBVA Compass’s co-head of the U.S. corporate and investment banking business and head of global clients and investment banking, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

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 has also supported 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 2015–16 season-opening production, Puccini’s Tosca. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979 and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO's innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna (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, and the 2015–16 production of The Little Prince.

MARIANNE AND DAVID DUTHU

Marianne and David have been HGO subscribers since 1991 and members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence since 2009, 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 CPAM, and Dr. Mauro Ferrari, president and CEO, Houston Methodist Research Institute, serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

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 2015.

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 Così fan tutte and Rigoletto.

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 newly retired from LyondellBasell Industries where she led the corporate finance team and was formerly a managing director with Bank of America. Joe is founder, president, and CEO of Alta Resources, L.L.C., a private company involved in the development of shale oil and gas resources in North America. Claire and Joe support many organizations, with particular emphasis on educational organizations including YES Prep and Teach for America. An avid runner, Claire has completed a marathon in all 50 states.

**BETH MADISON**
This season marks Beth’s 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. The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97).

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

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

**THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION**
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. Mellon Foundation–supported projects include last season’s world premiere of *Prince of Players* by legendary American composer Carlisle Floyd 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 member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.
faces at HGO performances, recitals, and events. From donating to contemporary. Owners Tony Bradfield and Kevin Black are familiar with HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and John is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society.

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

TENENBAUM CLASSIC JEWELERS
HGO is thrilled to welcome Tenenbaum Classic 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 is privileged 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. Schlumberger is deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and main-stage productions, including last season’s Rusalka. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Mark R. Spradling and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

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 and is also chair of the HGO Studio Committee. John 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.

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

Make Opera Friends!

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!

Theater District Open House: Lead tours through the Wortham Center at this event showcasing the Opera’s upcoming season with some of the people who make the magic happen.

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!

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

AMICI: Meet other opera lovers at local restaurants, movies, wine tastings, and more; check us out at Meetup.com! (Visit meetup.com/AmiciHGOGuild.)

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

Save the Date!

Guild Awards Luncheon: Join us October 1, 2016, for our annual awards luncheon honoring Guild members who have given their effort and time to further the Guild programs. Reservations required.


Opera Night Live: October 4, 2016. Don’t miss this special evening of interviews, music, and camaraderie!

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

**SEPTEMBER**

11 & 13

- **Studio Showcase:** The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform in a program of opera scenes, Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater, at 2:30 p.m. (Sept. 11) and 8 p.m. (Sept. 13). Free to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.

21–23

- **The Princess and the Pea:** HGOco and Opera to Go! present this new work by Mary Carol Warwick and Mary Ann Pendino at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 11 a.m. daily. Free. The Princess and the Pea tours from Sept. 19 through Dec. 16. To book a performance, visit HGO.org/OperaToGo or call 713-546-0231.

**OCTOBER**

1

- **Fall Awards Lunch—Magic Behind the Scenes:** the HGO Guild honors stellar volunteers and supporters at the Omni Houston Hotel, 4 Riverway, 11:30 a.m. For information, contact Gwyneth Campbell at 713-885-5024 or visit HGOguild.org.

4

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

21, 23m, 26, 29, NOV. 4

- **Performances of Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love.** Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Oct. 21 performance only.

21

- **Opening Night Dinner:** HGO celebrates the opening of the 2016–17 season following the performance of The Elixir of Love. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater, Ray C. Fish Plaza. For more information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.

23

- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about The Elixir of Love immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

**NOVEMBER**

1 & 3

- **Student Matinees:** HGOco hosts groups of students in grades 4–8 and their chaperones at performances of Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love, 10 a.m. School groups only; reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

5

- **The Princess and the Pea:** HGOco and Opera to Go! present this new work by Mary Carol Warwick and Mary Ann Pendino at The Deluxe Theater, 10 a.m. Free. The Princess and the Pea tours from Sept. 19 through Dec. 16. To book a performance, visit HGO.org/OperaToGo or call 713-546-0231.

7

- **Ring 401:** HGO Dramaturg Paul Hopper introduces Götterdämmerung, which concludes HGO’s presentation of Wagner’s Ring cycle this spring. Cullen Theater, 6:30 p.m. For information, please email Ringevents@hgo.org.

9

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

17 & 20

- **Recital at Rienzi:** Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of MFAH, at 1406 Kirby Drive. Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 20 at 5 p.m.

23

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

**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.

**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.

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.

27

- **Concert of Arias:** the 29th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater. Champagne reception at 6 p.m., competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or sipsen@hgo.org.
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.

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.

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
• Spring Event: the HGO Guild holds its annual fundraiser 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.

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.

15
• HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital, Dudley Recital Hall, University of Houston, 7 p.m. Free.

31
• HGO Association Annual Meeting and Reception: Wortham Theater Center, 5–7 p.m. Open to board, trustees, and donors. Call 713-546-0217 for information.
Houston Grand Opera offers a wealth of services to enhance your opera experience.

Want to brush up on the opera before you attend? Need directions to the theater? This information and much more is available on our website where you can also purchase tickets and make a donation: www.houstongrandopera.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@houstongrandopera.org. Throughout the season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (or until curtain time on performance days). The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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

**Brown and Cullen Alcoves**

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

**Exchanging Your Tickets**

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

**Lost or Misplaced Tickets**

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

**Patrons with Disabilities**

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

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

**Food and Beverage Services**

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

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

**PARKING**

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

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

Parking in the Theater District Parking Garage is $10.00 on weekends and after 5 p.m. on weekdays. Clearance
for trucks and vans is 6’8”. The tunnel connecting the garage to the Wortham Theater Center is on the Green 2 level of the garage.

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

DIRECTIONS

VIA I-10
Traveling East
Smith exit
RIGHT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #8

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

VIA US-59
Traveling North
Take Louisiana/Brazos exit; follow Louisiana Street
LEFT on Prairie Street
LEFT into Theater District Garages, entrance #8

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

VIA 290
Loop 610 South to I-10 East
(see I-10 directions)

VIA I-45
Traveling North
Houston Avenue/Memorial Drive exit
RIGHT on Memorial Drive feeder; cross Bagby Street

LEFT into Theater District garage, entrance #1

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

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

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

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

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

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

Smoking is prohibited in the Wortham Theater Center.

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

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

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