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Wherever you live, if you hold opera close to your heart, you know HGO. I’ve long been an admirer of this storied company, and now, as its new general director, I get to work alongside the finest team in all of opera. It is my true honor to be here with you as the company presents its stunning winter repertoire.

We are thrilled to welcome director Francesca Zambello back to Houston to share her beautiful production of Poulenc’s *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. In the hands of Zambello and our own Maestro Patrick Summers, this story, centered around a group of Carmelite nuns who meet a tragic fate during the French Revolution, grips onto you tightly and won’t let go.

The opera’s cast is unparalleled, from HGO Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Christine Goerke as Madame Lidoine, to esteemed HGO Studio alumna Natalya Romaniw as Blanche, to beloved soprano Patricia Racette as Madame de Croissy. Incredibly, Racette has already triumphed in the roles of Blanche and Lidoine. That she is now making her role debut as de Croissy is nothing less than historic.

Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade’s sublimely creative cinematic production of *The Magic Flute* represents an entirely new way to experience Mozart’s adventure-filled masterpiece. The cast is led by alumni of this company’s renowned artist training program, the HGO Studio—including Norman Reinhardt as Tamino, Andrea Carroll as Pamina, Thomas Glass as Papageno, and Anthony Robin Schneider as Sarastro/Speaker—with soprano Rainelle Krause in her company debut as the Queen of the Night.

Dame Jane Glover takes the podium for *The Magic Flute*, and if you’ve never experienced the pure artistry of this Mozart specialist, know this: you are in for an extraordinary musical journey with a conductor who has doubly earned the long list of honors to her name.

Only one ends tragically, but in both of HGO’s winter operas, the protagonists face extreme adversity, enduring trials that reveal their character and their strength of spirit. I cannot help but draw a line from these stories to the present day, and the many ordeals this resilient community has faced. Thank goodness that in life as in Mozart, triumphant rebirth has followed. The Wortham is open again, and there is no place I’d rather be than here with this company, and with you. I hope you enjoy the performance!

Khori Dastoor

*General Director and CEO*
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HEAR, HEAR!

Well-deserved honors for creative visionary (and HGO collaborator!) Jawole Willa Jo Zollar

Congratulations are in order to the incredible Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, who has been awarded a 2021 MacArthur Foundation fellowship!

Zollar is the founder of the experimental Brooklyn-based dance group Urban Bush Women (UBW), whose primarily Black and female members have been exploring their experience in America through dance since 1984. Her MacArthur “genius grant” award comes on the heels of UBW receiving a $3 million grant from MacKenzie Scott.

The MacArthur fellowship carries with it a stipend of $625,000, awarded to Zollar both to recognize her decades of “high-risk, high-reward” artistic achievement and to support her future projects.

Lucky for us, those projects include an HGO-commissioned world premiere! With composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer, Zollar is in the process of creating the new opera Intelligence, serving as both choreographer and director. The world-premiere work is based on the true story of Mary Jane Bowser, a brilliant Black woman who acted as a spy for the Union during the Civil War. Eight UBW dancers will help share Bowser’s story when the opera debuts in Houston in 2023.

Reached by the Washington Post after the MacArthur honorees were announced, Zollar shared that when Heggie asked her to come on board for Intelligence, she hesitated—at first.

“What I discovered about opera is, it’s big,” Zollar told the Post. “The emotions are big. Sometimes I’ve been critiqued as having too much emotion in my work that goes on too long, and in opera, that’s valued. So, yes! I’ve found my people.”

CELEBRATING CARLISLE FLOYD

A memorial concert honoring the American opera giant.

On September 30, 2021, Carlisle Floyd died at age 95. The great American composer and educator, known as the “Dean of American Opera,” had a decades long relationship with HGO and with Houston. He is dearly missed.

“No other company in the history of opera has had such a long creative relationship with a living composer as has Houston Grand Opera with Carlisle Floyd, who also founded the renowned HGO Studio with David Gockley in 1977,” says HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers.

As we mourn the passing of this opera giant, we are planning to honor his memory with a special concert: Celebrating Carlisle Floyd. The event will feature selections from some of his most beloved operas, including Cold Sassy Tree, Of Mice and Men, Willie Stark, and Susannah, with a full orchestra conducted by Maestro Summers. The HGO Chorus and current and former members of the HGO Studio will help pay tribute to the revolutionary composer and dear friend to many.

The event takes place at the Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater at 8 p.m. on February 11, 2022. Free but ticketed. Visit HGO.org.
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Talk to Us

One of the greatest operas in the repertoire returns to HGO this winter.

By Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director, Houston Grand Opera

Francis Poulenc’s opera *Dialogues of the Carmelites* is based on a true story. The 16 nuns at the Carmelite monastery in Compiègne, a city 60 miles northeast of Paris, nearly lived through their ordeal. Though oppressed for years, their arrest, conviction, and execution in Paris on July 17, 1794 came only nine days before Robespierre’s demise brought an end to the Reign of Terror, a particularly brutal offshoot of the larger French Revolution.

It is sobering to realize that the French Revolution lasted about a year and half, shorter than our current pandemic, yet in that time the guillotines were unremitting. There were nearly 10,000 beheadings in those months, a quarter of them in Paris. The stated crime of the Carmelites was insurrection: they refused to renounce their faith within the new secular political order. They were condemned to death by a small but vocal group of zealous revolutionists who themselves lacked the conviction to die for anything, yet the nuns remained true to what they believed.

Having abandoned their convent as instructed by law, the Carmelites were initially arrested because they were wearing their robes, veils, and wimples after religious clothing had been banned. They were dressed that way because it was their washing day and their civilian clothes were drying in the sun, but whatever the nuns said to authorities merely made worse what had long been decided: they could not be allowed to live if the government was to keep control of its insatiably violent political machine. Like the ancient Roman law that condemned Jesus Christ to a torturous death, the Carmelites were martyred to
exert power...but for nine more days. This is part of what makes the Carmelites such a profound experience: in the opera, a selfish political world devoted to control confronts a selfless belief system devoted to service.

Had it not been for a German novelist a century ago, Gertrude von le Fort, we might not have known of the Carmelites at all. An 18th century memoir of Mother Marie (Françoise-Geneviève Philippe) preserved the facts of the time, as she was the only sister to escape execution. In the 1920s, von le Fort saw within the plight of the French Carmelites a parallel to what could happen if Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party went from fringe to power and, with tragic obviousness, she was among the most prescient writers of her time. Her 1931 book about the martyrdom of the Carmelites, Die Letzte am Schafott, published as The Song at the Scaffold in English-speaking countries, was popular with millions of Catholics worldwide, and in bringing the story of the nuns back into public consciousness von le Fort sent an unheeded warning to the world about the Nazis. Through a complicated set of circumstances and several other Catholic writers, most especially the influential Georges Bernanos, the story found its way into a movie script and, finally, Poulenc’s opera in the mid-1950s. Bernanos (1888-1948), married to a direct descendent of Joan of Arc’s brother, was a major figure of Catholic literature and philosophy, a world that has largely dissipated into internecine squabbles and new-age aphorisms.

The opera’s most pivotal role is the only character Gertrude von le Fort invented, Blanche de la Force, and Poulenc’s opera revolves around her. She represents, in touching ways, the theological and spiritual conundrums of both von le Fort and Poulenc. Born into a privileged family, Blanche lives like a frightened rabbit, and we learn why. Late in her pregnancy, Blanche’s mother went into premature labor because of a mob attack on her carriage, so fear of violent revolution is coursing through Blanche’s blood. She is sure that within the convent, among the Carmelites, she can find the grace that will replace her fear with peace. Blanche enters holy orders fearfully and, in the most moving of ways, transforms into a courageous heroine in the opera’s famous final moments. The famous ending of Dialogues of the Carmelites is always remembered because its symbolism is so powerful: as each nun approaches the guillotine and we hear its awful sound, there is one less voice to sing their defiant “Salve Regina.” In a shockingly short time, only Blanche’s voice is left. The rest, as Shakespeare’s Hamlet says, is silence.

Dialogues of the Carmelites is a musical marvel. Poulenc didn’t so much compose his characters in the traditional sense as he allowed them to speak across time through him. It is always a surprise to hear so little traditionally religious music within it, yet it is a work of extreme devotion and piety. The puzzle of Poulenc’s opera is the uncompromising severity of its words set against the sensuous color of its music. Its effect is like the art of gay Parisians Pierre et Gilles, whose garishly beautiful religious paintings always somehow bring Poulenc’s music with them. Or think of the colorful depictions of the Christ and the Passion in Spanish churches or in all of the countries where Spanish culture arrived—they create a chasm between what we feel versus what we are told we are supposed to feel. In visual art, much is always made of Jesus and Mary looking more like the artists who painted them than real likenesses, but that is entirely their purpose: we create in art what we need, not what actually was. Similarly, pick out any two consecutive chords in Poulenc’s opera, and you’ll find something out of any 20th century pop song, but meld them together, and this searing and unbearably moving opera is the result—it is a remarkable thing.

“Dialogues”? We don’t go to the opera to hear characters talk, so what does this enigmatic word mean for an expansive art like opera? We think of dialogue as a conversation between people, and Poulenc’s opera has a fair amount of that. But the dialogues of the title describe the inner journey of each character in dialogue with their own voice, their God within. We see this most profoundly in the scene at the deathbed of the Old Prioress. Death should present no fear for her, since by her faith death is the highest purpose of life, the gateway to paradise. Yet the
We conjure the Carmelites through Poulenc’s extraordinary opera because they conjured us first, and they are trying to tell us something.

Old Prioress, after a lifetime of surety and service, is unsure of the one thing for which she has spent a long lifetime in prayer. If faith cannot bring peace at that moment, she wonders, what has it been for? She obsesses on the death agony of Jesus Christ and the fears he must have felt in the Garden of Gethsemane. Blanche finds the Old Prioress’s death unbearable, a fulfillment of every fear and shame she’s ever felt. Every scene of this opera asks us ‘why?’, but the answer never comes—it is always left to us.

As tragic as the story of the Carmelites is, it is also a work celebrating what of their lives was joyous. For the Carmelite nuns, prayer was the sole reason they were together. It was their belief that no one becomes a full person on their own, and this belief in one community gave each of their individual lives meaning. Weren’t they right? It is only through community that we find ourselves, that we discover a standard of conduct, ethics, and morals. We are our tribes.

It is often said that more of history’s wars have been fought over religion than anything else, but is it actually religion that’s being fought over? Is it not simply hunger for power or money, or trying to halt those hungry for them, that makes people kill? It is true that peaceful believers have been scapegoated repeatedly by authoritarians, and the Carmelites were among them.

A separation of state and church surely protects both, but this appears to be an eternal struggle solved almost nowhere at any time in history.

We conjure the Carmelites through Poulenc’s extraordinary opera because they conjured us first, and they are trying to tell us something. Careening towards the end of Edward Albee’s 1966 play A Delicate Balance, the leading character, Tobias, describes his early mornings in the house as the first one awake, and his words somehow bring to life the quite different world of the Carmelites:

“It's very strange...to be downstairs, in a room where everyone has been, and is gone...very late, after the heat has gone – and the furnace and the bodies....Each thing stands out in its place....The inn is full – it's rather...Godlike, if I may presume: to look at it all, reconstruct with such...detachment, see yourself look at it all...play it out again, watch.”

If we listen, detached, to the reconstructed inner voices of the gentle Carmelites, we realize that their dialogues are ultimately not with each other, but with us.
The first time I directed *Dialogues of the Carmelites* was more than 20 years ago. The story of the Carmelites of Compiègne and the French Revolution resonated with me on so many levels, but it has never felt as immediate as it does now. Revolutions begin in idealism, but so often they turn violent and repressive, with strict tests of ideological purity.

When I look at things happening in the world today, and even happening in this country, I can see ideologies hardening and a kind of herd mentality overtaking people. So often it seems there is no room for nuanced dialogues between people of differing views. In so many settings—political, educational, religious, medical, you name it—there is a sense that if you are not with us, you are against us.

Many people are familiar with the historic events depicted in the opera. Spoiler alert: The Carmelites of Compiègne were eventually put to death by those who seized power in France during the Revolution. In the opera, even before the sisters take the vow of martyrdom, their fate seems inevitable. So what is the journey of the opera? For me, the thing that keeps me engaged is not the question whether they will live or die. It is the question of how they will choose to live their days in a world that is increasingly chaotic, and ultimately, how they will choose to die.

It’s important to note that while the sisters depicted in the opera are united by the vows they have taken, theirs is not a life of easy, constant agreement. How best to serve God and the community when the world is spinning out of control? This is the question that drives each forward on her own distinctive path. Their lives of prayer and contemplation are alike on the surface, but as we see in the opera, their individual consciences have individual responses to the situation. The dialogues of these Carmelites—about prayer, piety, heroism, martyrdom, grace—are, for me, the heart of the opera.

When I directed *Carmelites* in Santa Fe, I had the opportunity to meet with a Carmelite nun to learn more about the life of the Carmelite community there. (In each cloister, there is one nun who interfaces with the outside world.) As we got to know each other, I wondered if there might be a way for us to share the opera with the community. She was able to arrange for us to perform in their chapel. The sisters sat behind screens, so we never saw them, but as the last notes of the “Salve Regina” hung in the air, we could hear them weeping.

The story of the Carmelites of Compiègne always stops me in my tracks. They had such conviction, such faith, and for that they are justly celebrated. For me, my time with the Carmelites in Santa Fe was so moving and inspirational. At the same time, I look around the world and think about the potential dark side of unflinching conviction. Poulenc’s opera is, for me, an invitation to dialogue. Every ideology begins in idealism, a heartfelt wish to see a better world. If we can take the time to understand our neighbors’ hopes, perhaps we can avoid repeating some of the darker chapters of our history. —Francesca Zambello
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HoustonGrandOpera
HGO lighting supervisor Michael James Clark remembers, back in March 2020, taking a sad walk around the bayou north of the Wortham Center. He was on his cell phone with the technician and incoming crew for The Magic Flute, and he had to tell them to cancel everything due to COVID-19.

“When it got shut down,” he tells Cues, “the set was in the rehearsal room, the media servers and projectors were on the way to Houston... It was very much within striking distance of getting everything here."

This blockbuster production had already been making its way around the world, from its start with the theater group 1927 and directors Barrie Kosky (Komische Oper Berlin) and Suzanne Andrade (1927). Clark was eager to try his hand achieving the visual and technical spectacle of it all. When HGO had to cancel, so much preparation had already been done at the Wortham that, to him, it was like “having a long race and getting to that finish line,” but not being able to cross it. Nor did he know if he ever would.
And all the excitement Clark and the HGO creative team had stashed away back at the start of the pandemic is back with electrifying force.

The technology is in place, and the team has been working hard on perfecting its implementation for The Magic Flute’s opening night. With the curtains ready to rise and reveal this production’s unusual set—a white projection screen with doors and rotating platforms that allows artists to interact with silent-film-style images—months of preparation and fine-tuning have been piled on top of all the work put in back in spring 2020.

There’s a lot of moving parts involved in Kosky’s production. The projected images allow little room for error. While they must appear interactive, they can only be manipulated a small amount, which makes this production unlike all others in HGO history. For a normal production, Clark explains, “everywhere it goes it’s going to be fundamentally different,” accounting for differences in place, performer, available space and equipment, and the instant-by-instant chemistry of human artists on stage. With this production, the images often come at the performers relentlessly, requiring unusual precision on their part.

It makes sense, then, that an essential aspect of rehearsals is having the special projection equipment fully implemented and a technician on hand to fine-tune how every single image connects with each character’s movement and music. The technical crew can subtly manipulate a specific image beforehand to account for a performer’s height or gait. Or they can delay its movement ever so slightly.

So much goes into each moment. For example, say a performer lifts her hand to hold a projected bird. Pulling this off requires the crew to have programmed in her preferred timing and the height at which she will hold her hand. Meanwhile, the artist must act out the moment exactly as she did in rehearsal, in the precise place, at the precise moment, and with the same precise movement. During performances operators can create pauses between projected moments (“padding,” Clark calls it), but with dozens or even hundreds of animated images on the screen-stage at any given time, recovering from missed cues can be difficult.

This version of The Magic Flute presents other unique challenges for performers. The set, constructed to be a surface for projections, is fitted with areas for real people. Artists can occupy various spots behind it, both on the floor and on elevated platforms, which can rotate to position them in just the right place at the perfect moment. Often, a performer will then be stuck there. During her “Queen of the Night” aria, soprano Rainelle Krause must be suspended high above the stage, her limbs restricted as she sings, as fellow soprano Andrea Carroll reacts energetically to projected images on the stage below.

This is all very different from how other productions depict that same scene, often with the Queen chasing her quarry around the stage, allowing the performers to navigate the moment in real time. The demands of the Kosky production mean the actors are held in place by the images, one of them literally bound to a wall.

Such a creative and innovative, but exacting, new way to produce Mozart’s classic opera brings excitement along with challenges. The artists and staff, who’ve had to create a new workflow while solving so many novel problems, have been looking forward to this production for a long time.

“I think a lot of us are really excited to just see this,” Clark says, “and experience what has become such an iconic version of this show, finally, on our stage.”
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An Opera in Two Parts
Music and libretto by Francis Poulenc

Sung in French with projected English translation

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER

The performance lasts approximately 3 hours, including one intermission.

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

In 1794, 16 members of the Carmelite convent in Compiègne, France, were executed by guillotine at the height of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, accused of sympathy for the monarchy and of illegally living as a religious community. In 1931, Gertrud von le Fort wrote The Song at the Scaffold, an account of the Martyrs of Compiègne that introduces the fictional Blanche de la Force. Georges Bernanos was hired to adapt von le Fort’s novel into a film screenplay; he died before the film could be produced, but the screenplay was later published as a stage play. Composer Francis Poulenc saw the play and adapted the opera libretto himself; the opera premiered at La Scala in 1957.

THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL

At the onset of the French Revolution, Blanche de la Force, daughter of the Marquis, seeks shelter in a convent from the trauma of the world. The prioress of the Carmelite order tells Blanche that the convent is a house of prayer, not a refuge from the world. Ailing and on her deathbed, the prioress relates a fitful vision of their convent desecrated, and then she dies. The new prioress, Madame Lidoine, counsels the order on patience and humility even with the revolution’s rising anti-clericalism, but Mother Marie extracts a vow of martyrdom from the nuns in Madame Lidoine’s absence. Blanche flees the convent, pursued by Mother Marie, and while they are gone the other nuns are arrested and taken to be executed. Mother Marie has lost her chance to be martyred with the rest of the order, but Blanche makes the decision to join them at the site of execution so that she can be martyred alongside them.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The famously haunting ending of the opera is the Salve Regina, a Marian antiphon that Poulenc set for the Carmelites to sing as they go to their execution. Historic accounts of the real Martyrs of Compiègne say that the sisters were transported to the guillotine in an open cart for over two hours, and they reportedly sang the Salve Regina, Miserere, and evening vespers through the streets of Paris. In Poulenc’s setting of the text for the finale, listen for the diminishing number of voices singing the prayer; as each sister is led to her death, the prayer is sung by fewer and fewer voices until only one remains.

FUN FACT

Designed by Hildegard Bechtler, this production takes as its physical inspiration Le Corbusier’s gorgeously sparse chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, France, which was designed and built as Poulenc’s opera was being written.
CAST & CREATIVE

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

The Chevalier de la Force  
Eric Taylor † *  
MRS. SHARON G. LEE AND Mr. ROBERT F. LEE AND ARNOLD LEVY

The Marquis de la Force  
Rod Gilfry

Blanche de la Force  
Natalya Romanov ‡

Thierry/M. Javelinot  
Luke Sutliff †  
LYNN GROSS/BRANDI HARRISON-TAYLOR FELLOW

Madame de Croissy  
Patricia Racette

Sister Constance  
Lauren Snouffer †

Mother Marie  
Jennifer Johnson Cano *

Madame Lidoine  
Christine Goerke  
HGO LYNNE WATT GREAT ARTIST

Chaplain  
Chad Shelton †

Sister Mathilde  
Sun-Ly Pierce †  
MR. AND MRS. CHARLES G. NICKSON/JOHN SERPE AND TRACY MADDOX FELLOW

First Officer  
William Guanbo Su †  
ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO FELLOW

First Commissioner  
Ricardo Garcia †  
DR. ELLEN R. GOLDSMITH AND MR. MELVIN D. ROSENAU JR./MICHELLE BEALE AND DICK ANDERSON FELLOW

Second Commissioner  
Geoffrey Hahn †

Mother Jeanne  
Emily Treigle † *  
MR. AND MRS. JAMES W. CRAWFORD JR.  
MR. WAYNE VASSILIU FELLOW

Jailer  
Blake Denson †  
Gloria M. Portela/Carolyn J. Levy/  
Liz Grimm and Jack Roth Fellow

Mother Gerald  
Frankie Hickman

Sister Claire  
Kathleen Manley

Sister Antoine *  
Abby Powell *

Sister Catherine  
Kaitlyn Stavinoha

Sister Felicity  
Julie Hoefeltz †

Sister Anne of the Cross  
Gabrielle Reed *

Sister Alice  
Kendall Reimer *

Sister Valentine  
Emily Louise Robinson *

Sister Gertrude  
Lauren Henderson-Turner *

Sister Martha  
Hannah Roberts *

Sister S. Charles  
Sarah L. Lee *

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor  
Patrick Summers  
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

Director  
Francesca Zambello

Set Designer  
Hildegard Bechtler *

Costume Designer  
Claudie Gasine *

Lighting Designer  
Mark McCullough

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

French Diction Coach  
Patricia Kristof Moy

Musical Preparation  
Kirill Kuzmin ‡

Benjamin Manis

Peter Pasztor †

Madeline Slettedahl

Alex Munger †

Katherine M. Carter

Annie Wheeler

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

PRODUCTION CREDITS

English supertitles by Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Jeremy Johnson. Supertitles called by Emily Kern.

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

Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local USA-829.

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

Stage crew personnel provided by IATSE, Local #51.

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Spring 1789. The Chevalier de la Force tells his father, the Marquis, about an angry mob demonstrating against the aristocracy; his sister Blanche's carriage was seen surrounded. Worried, they discuss her high-strung, fearful nature. She arrives calmly, but her state of nerves is betrayed when a servant's shadow terrifies her. She tells her father that she has decided to become a nun. She says she finds the world an alien place and doesn't know how to live in it.

Several weeks later, Blanche comes to the Carmelite convent in Compiègne. Mme. de Croissy, the prioress—a woman debilitated by fatal illness—gently but firmly makes it clear to Blanche that the convent is a house of prayer, not a refuge from her fear: it will test her weaknesses, not her strengths.

Young Sister Constance and the newly joined Sister Blanche of the Agony of Christ talk about their fear of death, which Constance claims to have overcome. Blanche admits her envy of the simple, straightforward Constance. Suddenly, Constance says she knows she will die young and that she and Blanche will die together.

The prioress, on her deathbed, struggles to appear calm as anxiety overtakes her. She relates a fitful vision of their convent desecrated and makes a last attempt to confess her fear of death. As she falls back lifeless, Blanche kneels sobbing by the bed.

ACT II

That night, Constance and Blanche keep vigil by the prioress' coffin. Blanche tries to pray but feels afraid and starts to leave. Mother Marie tells her that she should accept her fear and get some rest, waiting until the next day to pray for forgiveness. Constance says the prioress died a death too ugly and small for her. Someone else, she says, will be surprised one day to find death so easy.

In another room, the ceremony of obedience to the new prioress is coming to an end. The newly-appointed Mme. Lidoine addresses the sisters, counseling patience and humility, warning against the temptation of easy martyrdom.

INTERMISSION

Blanche's brother, the Chevalier, arrives to see his sister. He says their father doesn't think it is safe for her to remain in the convent. Annoyed, Blanche asks her brother to accept her courage as being equal to his. After he leaves, Blanche turns to Mother Marie, regretting her outburst. Mother Marie reassures Blanche that the motive behind her pride will give her the strength to rise above it.

Summer 1792. The Chaplain finishes his last Mass at the convent: the revolutionaries have forbidden him to perform his duties, and he must go underground. Constance wonders what is happening to the country, and Sister Mathilde remarks that fear is infectious.

Mme. Lidoine observes that when there is a shortage of priests there is an abundance of martyrs. This gives Mother Marie the idea of the destiny of their order. Mme. Lidoine replies firmly that she did not mean this, that martyrs are not chosen by their own will, only by God's. The Chaplain quickly reenters, having narrowly escaped capture by a crowd.

While soldiers hold the crowd in check, two commissioners tell the sisters that the legislative assembly has ordered them expelled from their convent. The First Commissioner takes Mother Marie aside, saying he will do what he can to help them get away safely. Blanche is given a figurine of the Christ child, but she drops and breaks it when the revolutionary cry "ça ira!" is heard from outside. Blanche is mortified by this omen.

ACT III

In Mme. Lidoine's absence, Mother Marie suggests that they take a vow of martyrdom. The vow would have to be unanimous, and the other sisters suspect Blanche will vote against it. One vote is against, but Constance confesses it was hers, and she asks to reverse it. Blanche runs off. As the sisters are led from their convent, an Officer warns they will be watched.

At daybreak, Mme. Lidoine joins the vow of martyrdom after the nuns' first night in prison. The Carmelites have been found guilty of illegal assembly and conspiracy against the government, and they are sentenced to death. Constance says she has dreamed Blanche will rejoin them.

A crowd gathers to witness the executions. The nuns sing a prayer in praise of the Virgin as they advance to the guillotine one by one, finally leaving only Constance. Her face lights with joy as she spies Blanche in the crowd. Constance, smiling at her friend, goes to her death. Blanche calmly mounts the scaffold, adding a few lines of her own prayer, before the guillotine's last stroke disperses the crowd.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Dialogues of the Carmelites was previously staged by HGO during the 1988-89 season.
HGO ORCHESTRA

Patrick Summers, Artistic and
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Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

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Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
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Carrie Kauk†, Assistant Principal
Second Violin
Linda Sanders*, Acting Assistant Principal
Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky*
Anabel Detrick*
Rasa Kalenskaite†
Hae-a Lee-Barnes*
Chavdar Parashkevov†
Mary Reed*
Erica Robinson*
Oleg Sulyga*
Sylvia VerMeulen*
Melissa Williams†
Zubaida Azezi
Andres Eduardo Gonzalez
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Emily Madonia
Mila Neal
Sylvia Ouelette
Rachel Shepard
Trung Trinh
Hannah Watson

CELLO
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Erika Johnson*, Assistant Principal
Ariana Nelson†
Wendy Smith-Butler†
Steven Wiggs*
Steve Estes
Shino Hayashi
Hyeok Kwon

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

FLUTE
Henry Williford*, Principal
Tyler Martin*
Izumi Miyahara

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert†, Principal
Mayu Isom*, Acting Principal
Stanley Chyi
Claire Kostic

CLARINET
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Eric Chi*
Molly Mayfield

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Michael Allard*
Micah Doherty

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Kimberly Penrod Minson*
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Randal Adams*

TROMBONE
Thomas Hulten*, Principal
Mark Holley†
Justin Bain†
Cameron Kerl
Shane Stewart

TUBA
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Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

HARP
Joan Eidman*, Principal
Laurie Meister

KEYBOARD
Madeline Slettedahl

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown*

*HGO Orchestra core musician
†HGO Orchestra core musician on leave
this production
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Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

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Mika Stepankiw
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Florence Wilder
G. Matthew Williams

WOH'S WHO

PATRICK SUMMERS
(UNITED STATES)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair
CONDUCTOR

Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company’s first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s Ring and its first performances of the Verdi Requiem; collaborating on the world premieres of Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix, André Previn’s Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis’s The Refuge, Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life, The End of the Affair, and Three Decembers, Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree and Prince of Players, Tod Machover’s Resurrection, and Joel Thompson’s The Snowy Day; leading the American premiere of Weinberg’s Holocaust opera The Passenger, both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Perez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers has enjoyed a long association with San Francisco Opera (SFO) and was honored in 2015 with the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes conducting Jake Heggie’s Moby-Dick, which was recorded and telecast on PBS’s Great Performances. In 2017, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree by Indiana University. He was recently named Co-Artistic Director of the Aspen Music Festival’s opera program alongside Renée Fleming. During the 2019–20 season at HGO, he conducted Saul and Aida. Other recent engagements included Dead Man Walking at the Israeli Opera.

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO
(UNITED STATES)
DIRECTOR

Francesca Zambello is an internationally recognized director of opera and theater, as well as General Director of the Glimmerglass Festival since 2010 and Artistic Director of Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center since 2012. Both organizations have thrived artistically and financially while increasing their national and international profiles as a result of her vision and leadership. She also served as the Artistic Advisor to the San Francisco Opera from 2005-11 and as the Artistic Director of the Skylight Theater from 1987-92. Her U.S. directing debut took place at HGO with a production of Fidelio, and she has since directed almost two dozen productions for the company. She debuted in Europe at Teatro la Fenice in Venice.
with Beatrice di Tenda and has since staged new productions at major theaters and opera houses in Europe, Asia, Australia, Russia, and the United States. She has worked at over 50 international opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Paris Opera, Bolschoi, Munich State Opera, Covent Garden, and Opera Australia. Zambello has been named a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government, a Knight with the Order of the Star of Italy, and received the Russian Federation’s Arts Medal, all for her service to culture. Other honors include three Olivier Awards from the London Society of Theatres and two Evening Standard Awards, and she has twice received the French Grand Prix des Critiques for her work at the Paris Opera. She also received the Medallion Society Award from San Francisco Opera, recognizing 30 years’ work for the company. Zambello speaks French, Italian, German, and Russian. She attended Moscow University in 1976 and graduated cum laude from Colgate University in 1978. She has served as an adjunct professor at Yale University.

**HILDEGARD BECHTLER (GERMANY)**

Hildegard Bechtler is making her HGO debut. She is an award-winning designer based in London and working internationally. Her work in opera and ballet includes productions for the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Sydney Opera House, Opera National de Paris, La Scala Milan, Glyndebourne, Edinburgh International Festival, Munich Staatsoper, and Amsterdam Muziektheater. Recent work includes the world premieres of The Cellist for the Royal Ballet and Thomas Adès’s The Exterminating Angel, which was performed at the Salzburger Festspiele, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Royal Opera House; and La damnation de Faust at the Schiller Theatre Berlin, which was a revival of the English National Opera’s award-winning production. She won the Australian Green Room Award for Best Opera Design for Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk at Sydney Opera House. Bechtler’s designs for theater have appeared on the stages of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Old Vic, Donmar Warehouse, at the Roundabout Theatre New York, on Broadway, and extensively in the West End, including the Olivier Award-nominated Top Hat and Oresteia. Credits for the Royal National Theatre include Antony and Cleopatra, Hansard, After the Dance (Olivier Award), and Iphigenia at Aulis (Evening Standard Award nomination). Recent work includes Nora for Internationaal Theatre Amsterdam, The Doctor at the Almeida Theatre and the Adelaide Festival, and Iwanow at Staatstheater Stuttgart.

**CLAUDIE GASTINE (FRANCE)**

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Claudie Gastine is making her HGO debut. She has been designing costumes and sets for theater, opera, ballet, and cinema for more than 50 years. Her first theater play was in 1964 with Raymond Rouleau, designing sets and costumes for Notre petite ville by T. Wilder (Théâtre Hébertot, Paris). Her first opera was in 1967 with Gian-Carlo Menotti, at the Festival dei Due Mondi (Spoleto, Italy), designing costumes for Il furieso all’ isola di San Domingo by Donizetti. With Menotti she has designed costumes for Don Pasquale (Hamburg), La traviata (La Fenice, Venezia), Lucia di Lammermoor (Teatro dell’Opera, Roma), Eugene Onegin (Teatro Nuovo, Spoleto, Italy), and for The Marriage of Figaro and The Birthday of the Infanta (Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston). With French director Jean-Marie Simon, she worked in most opera houses in Europe, creating costumes for La traviata, Manon (Grand Théâtre, Genève) Jérusalem, Rigoletto (Palais Garnier, Paris), Luisa Miller (La Monnaie, Bruxelles), La bohème (Lucca, Italy). With Nicolas Joël, she worked on Un Ballo in maschera (Opéra Bastille, Paris) and La Rondine (La Scala, Milano), and with Stein Winge, on Khovanshchina (La Monnaie, Bruxelles). Gastine also worked with Alfredo Arias designing costumes for The Merry Widow (Teatro Nuovo, Spoleto) and Peines de cœur d’une chatte anglaise, which was performed all around the world. She designed sets and costumes for Trio (Théâtre de Paris) and La Ronde (Odéon, Paris). In 2014 she created sets and costumes for a short movie, Lettre à ma fille by the actress and director Dominique Valentin, starring Judith Magre.

**MARK MCCULLOUGH (UNITED STATES)**

**LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Mark McCullough designs for opera and theater companies in the United States and abroad. He has lit many productions for HGO, including The Pearl Fishers (2019), Florencia en el Amazonas (2019), and West Side Story (2018). He also has lit productions for the Vienna Staatsoper (Macbeth); Bolshoi Theatre (La traviata); the Metropolitan Opera (The Marriage of Figaro); the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing (The Tales of Hoffmann); La Scala (Cyranos de Bergerac); Madrid’s Teatro Real (Luisa Miller); Strasbourg’s Opéra National du Rhin (The Beggar’s Opera); The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (The Queen of Spades); Opera North (Eugene Onegin); as well as numerous productions with Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, The Dallas Opera, Glimmerglass, Canadian Opera Company, New York
City Opera, Seattle Opera, and San Francisco Opera, including the full Ring cycle directed by Francesca Zambello. Among his successes in theater have been the Broadway productions of Outside Mullingar; Jesus Christ Superstar (revival); After Ms. Julie; and The American Plan. International theater credits include Whistle Down the Wind (Aldwych Theatre, London); Der Besuch Der Alten Dame (Ronacher Theatre, Vienna); Artus (St. Gallen, Switzerland); Rebecca (St. Gallen, Switzerland and the Palladium Theatre, Stuttgart); and the UK tour of Jesus Christ Superstar. Future engagements include How I Learned to Drive on Broadway; Florencia en el Amazonas at Chicago Lyric Opera; The Sound of Music at Glimmerglass Festival; and Fidelio, Written in Stone, and Così fan tutte for Washington National Opera.

RICHARD BADO
(UNITED STATES)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

CHORUS MASTER

HGO Studio alumnus Richard Bado is director of artistic operations and chorus master at HGO. He made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading HGO’s acclaimed production of Show Boat at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, he has conducted for Houston Ballet, La Scala, Opéra national de Paris, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, Tulsa Opera, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, and Wolf Trap Opera. This season he conducted performances of The Nutcracker with the Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey, Jamie Barton, Ryan McKinny, and Nathan Gunn. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University; he also studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. For 12 years, he was the director of the opera studies program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. He has served on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Dolora Zajick Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, the International Vocal School in Moscow, and the Texas Music Festival. He received HGO’s Silver Rose Award in 2013 in celebration of his 25th year as chorus master.

PATRICIA RACETTE
(UNITED STATES)

SOPRANO—MADAME CROISSY

Patricia Racette’s past roles with HGO include Floria in Tosca (2010), Alice Ford in Falstaff (2005), Cio-Cio-San in Madame Butterfly and the titular role in Jenůfa (2004), Elisabetta de Valois in Don Carlo (2001), Love Simpson in Cold Sassy Tree (2000), Margherita in Mefistofele (1999), and Violetta in La traviata (1999). She has performed in the most celebrated opera houses of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro alla Scala, Paris Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro Real, and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. Her Grammy Award-winning performance of Violetta in de Falla’s El amor brujo was featured on a CD released by the BBC. In 2020, she was named a Young Artist of the Year at the 2020 Gramophone Classical Music Awards and Singer of the Year at the 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards. She has performed many times with HGO, including as Ortlinde in Die Walküre (2015), Micaela in Carmen (2014), and Krystyna in The Passenger (2014). Also for the 2021-22 season, she will make her house debut at Opéra de Rouen in the title role of Jenůfa under the baton of Anthony Hermus and return to Garsington Opera for performances of Strauss’s Vier letzte Lieder with the Hallé orchestra. Racette’s 2020-21 season included her highly praised performance of Alice Ford in Falstaff for The Grange Festival, Mimi in La bohème for English National Opera’s outdoor Drive & Live series, and the title role in Tosca with English National Opera at Crystal Palace Bowl for the new South Facing Festival. In concert, she performed Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915 with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and excerpts from La bohème and Jenůfa with Ben Glassberg and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in a televised performance at the BBC Proms. Highlights of previous seasons include her house debut at English National Opera as Mimi in La bohème and her role debut as Cio-Cio-San in the acclaimed Minghella Madame Butterfly under the baton of Martyn Brabbins; Tatjana in Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin at Garsington Opera, the Welsh National Opera, and in Oliver Mears’s new production for Scottish Opera; her European debut as Suzel in L’amico Fritz for Den Jyske Opera; Lisa in Pique Dame with Opera Holland Park and National Theatre Brno; the title role in Janacek’s Jenůfa with Grange Park Opera, and Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with the Hallé orchestra under the baton of Sir Mark Elder. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

NATALYA ROMANIW
(WALES)
SOPRANO—BLANCHE

HGO Studio alumna (2012-14) Natalya Romaniw is a winner of the 2016 Critic’s Choice Award for Music, and was named Young Artist of the Year at the 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards. She has performed many times with HGO, including as Ortlinde in Die Walküre (2015), Micaela in Carmen (2014), and Krystyna in The Passenger (2014). Also for the 2021-22 season, she will make her house debut at Opéra de Rouen in the title role of Jenůfa under the baton of Anthony Hermus and return to Garsington Opera for performances of Strauss’s Vier letzte Lieder with the Hallé orchestra. Romaniw’s 2020-21 season included her highly praised performance of Alice Ford in Falstaff for The Grange Festival, Mimi in La bohème for English National Opera’s outdoor Drive & Live series, and the title role in Tosca with English National Opera at Crystal Palace Bowl for the new South Facing Festival. In concert, she performed Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915 with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and excerpts from La bohème and Jenůfa with Ben Glassberg and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in a televised performance at the BBC Proms. Highlights of previous seasons include her house debut at English National Opera as Mimi in La bohème and her role debut as Cio-Cio-San in the acclaimed Minghella Madame Butterfly under the baton of Martyn Brabbins; Tatjana in Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin at Garsington Opera, the Welsh National Opera, and in Oliver Mears’s new production for Scottish Opera; her European debut as Suzel in L’amico Fritz for Den Jyske Opera; Lisa in Pique Dame with Opera Holland Park and National Theatre Brno; the title role in Janacek’s Jenůfa with Grange Park Opera, and Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with the Hallé orchestra under the baton of Sir Mark Elder. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.
Teatre del Liceu. Her vast repertoire includes the title roles of *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *Jenůfa*, Kátya Kabanová, and *Salome*; all three leading lady roles in *Il Trittico* and Katerina in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Her performances in *Madame Butterfly*, *Peter Grimes*, and *I Pagliacci* at the Metropolitan Opera were seen worldwide in movie theaters as part of *The Met: Live in HD series*. Racette made her directorial debut with a new production of *La traviata* at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in the summer of 2018 and returned in the summer of 2021 to direct herself in a production of Poulenc’s *The Human Voice*. Planned productions of *The Human Voice* at the Dallas Opera and *Susannah* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2020 were unfortunately canceled due to the pandemic. This season, Racette makes two role debuts: Madame Croissy at HGO and Desirée Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* at the Arizona Opera.

Racette is currently the Artistic Director of Opera Theatre of St. Louis’s Gerdine Young Artist and Richard Gaddes Festival Artist programs. She also continues to be sought after for master classes and workshops to foster artistry in the next generation of classical singers.

**CHRISTINE GOERKE (UNITED STATES)**

**SOPRANO—MADAME LIDOINE**

This season soprano Christine Goerke is HGO’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist. Previously with HGO, she performed the roles of Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (2001), Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (2009), Prima Donna/Ariadne in *Ariadne Auf Naxos* (2011), Princess Eboli in *Don Carlos* (2012), Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* (2015), *Siegfried* (2016), and *Götterdämmerung* (2017), and the titular role in *Elektra* (2018). She has appeared in many of the most prestigious opera houses of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real in Madrid, and the Saito Kinen Festival. She has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now moving into dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles. Goerke also has appeared with a number of leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Radio Vara, the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms, and both the Hallé Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Symphony at the Edinburgh International Festival. She has worked with some of the world’s foremost conductors including James Conlon, Sir Andrew Davies, Sir Mark Elder, Christoph Eschenbach, Klaus Peter Flor, James Levine, Sir Charles Mackerras, Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Andris Nelsons, Seiji Ozawa, David Robertson, Donald Runnicles, Esz-Pekka Salonen, the late Robert Shaw, Patrick Summers, Jeffery Tate, Christian Thielemann, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Edo de Waart. Goerke’s recording of Vaughan Williams’s *A Sea Symphony* with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra won the 2003 Grammy Award for Best Classical Recording and Best Choral Performance. Her close association with Robert Shaw yielded several recordings including the Brahms’ Liebeslieder Waltzes, Poulenc’s *Stabat Mater*, Szymanowski’s *Stabat Mater*, and the Grammy-nominated recording of Dvorák’s *Stabat Mater*. Other recordings include the title role in *Iphigenie en Tauride* for Telarc and Britten’s *War Requiem*, which won the 1999 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance. Goerke is the recipient of the 2001 Richard Tucker Award, the 2015 Musical American Vocalist of the Year Award, and the 2017 Opera News Award.

**JENNIFER JOHNSON CANO (UNITED STATES)**

**MEZZO-SOPRANO—MOTHER MARIE**

Jennifer Johnson Cano is making her HGO debut. She has garnered critical acclaim for committed performances of both new and standard repertoire, and for her performance as Offred in Poul Ruders’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*. With more than 100 performances on the stage at The Metropolitan Opera, her most recent roles have included Nicklausse, Emilia, Hansel, and Meg Page. Highlights this season include the premiere of Kevin Puts’s *The Hours* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Chicago and San Francisco Symphonies, and the New York premiere of Marc Nekrug’s *A Song By Mahler* at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She also performs the world premiere of Gregory Spear’s *Castor and Patience* (Celeste) with Cincinnati Opera; Bartok’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* (Judith) with Roanoke Opera; and workshops of Gregg Kallor’s new opera, *Frankenstein*, with Arizona Opera. Cano joined The Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera after winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and made her Met debut during the 2009-10 season. Her honors include being named a First Prize winner at the Young Concert Artist International Auditions, and receiving a Sara Tucker Study Grant, a Richard Tucker Career Grant, and the George London Award. She has degrees from Webster University and Rice University.

**LAUREN SNOUFFER (UNITED STATES)**

**SOPRANO—SISTER CONSTANCE**

With a repertoire spanning the music of Claudio Monteverdi and Johann Adolph Hasse through to Missy Mazzoli and George Benjamin, HGO Studio alumna
Lauren Snouffer is celebrated as one of the most versatile and respected sopranos on the international stage. Highlights of her rich association with HGO include performances of The Marriage of Figaro (2016), Carousel (2016), Show Boat (2013), The Rape of Lucretia (2012), and the world premieres of Ricky Ian Gordon’s The House Without a Christmas Tree (2017) and Tarik O’Regan’s The Phoenix (2019). Her concert schedule has yielded collaborations with many of the world’s most distinguished conductors and orchestras including Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra, Cristian Măcelaru and the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Andrés Orozco-Estrada and the Houston Symphony, Krzysztof Urbański and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Bernard Labadie and Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Patrick Dupré Quigley and the San Francisco Symphony, and Edo de Waart and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Recent operatic appearances have included Hans Abrahamsen’s The Snow Queen with Opéra national du Rhin, Handel’s Arminio and Serse at the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe, the title role of Berg’s Lulu with the Teatro Municipal de Santiago, and Benjamin’s Written on Skin with Opera Philadelphia, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, and at the Tanglewood Festival. Future engagements include the world premiere of Stefan Wirth’s Girl with a Pearl Earring, Mozart’s Idomeneo, and Pergolesi’s L’Olimpiade with the Opernhaus Zürich, and a Cincinnati Opera debut in The Pirates of Penzance.

ROD GILFRY
(UNITED STATES)
BARITONE—MARQUIS

American baritone Rod Gilfry, a two-time Grammy award nominee, singer, and actor, has performed in all of the world’s music capitals. Previously with HGO, he originated the role of Mr. Potter in Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life (2016). His most recent Grammy Award nomination was for his performance in the title role of Messiaen’s monumental opera Saint François d’Assise in Amsterdam. Best known as an opera singer, he is also an acclaimed recitalist and concert artist, and appears frequently in musical theater classics. His discography of 28 audio and video recordings includes the DVD and CD of his one-man show My Heart is So Full of You. With a 77-role repertoire, Gilfry sings music ranging from the Baroque to works composed expressly for him. In recent seasons, he has originated the role of Walt Whitman in Matthew Aucoin’s Crossing in Boston, The Father in Aucoin’s Eurydice at Los Angeles Opera, Alfred Stieglitz in Kevin Puts’s The Brightness of Light opposite Renée Fleming, Claudius in Brett Dean’s Hamlet with Glyndebourne Festival, and David Lang’s solo opera the loser in New York City. This season, Gilfry returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Claudius in Brett Dean’s Hamlet and originates the role of Robert McNamara in the world premiere of Huang Ruo’s and David Henry Hwang’s Written in Stone at Washington National Opera. In addition, he and Renée Fleming reprise The Brightness of Light with Los Angeles Opera, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Finally, he sings Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the San Francisco Symphony. In addition to his full-time performance schedule, Gilfry is an Associate Professor of Vocal Arts at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music.

ERIC TAYLOR
(UNITED STATES)

Mrs. Sharon G. Ley and Mr. Robert F. Lietzow
Jill and Allyn Risley Drs. Rachel and Warren A. Ellisworth IV Fellow

TENOR—CHEVALIER

A first-year HGO Studio artist from Saint George, Utah, Eric Taylor is making his HGO debut. Taylor recently completed his Master of Music degree at Rice University, where he performed the roles of Sam Polk in Susannah and Tito in La clemenza di Tito. He was named the second prize winner in HGO’s 2021 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, he also performs the role of First Armored Man in The Magic Flute and will perform Pong in Turandot and Tybalt in Romeo and Juliet. While pursuing his undergraduate degree in music at Westminster College, he performed several leading roles, including Nemorino in The Elixir of Love and Rodolfo in La bohème, in addition to appearing in Carmina Burana with Salt Lake City’s Ballet West. Taylor has participated in Apprentice Artist programs with Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, and Utah Lyric Opera. He had been set to perform in Santa Fe Opera’s Tristan and Isolde and HGO’s Werther and Parsifal last season, but those engagements were canceled due to COVID-19. He was named a semi-finalist at the Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions in 2017. He will return to the Santa Fe Opera in 2022 to perform the role of Melio in Tristan and Isolde and cover Don José in Carmen.

CHAD SHELTON
(UNITED STATES)

HGO Studio alumnus Chad Shelton (1997–2000) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as the Witch of Endor in Saul (2019); Patrick Kelly as well as a variety of other roles in The Phoenix (2019); Pollione in Norma and Aegisth in Elektra (both in 2018); Mao Tse-tung in Nixon in China (2017); Cavaradossi in performances of Tosca (2015–16); Charles II in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); Froh in Das Rheingold and Fredrik Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014); and Alfredo in La traviata (2012), among many others. This season he also sings Loud Stone in

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A first-year HGO Studio artist from New Orleans, Emily Treigle is making her HGO debut. Treigle was recently named a Grand Finals Winner in the 2021 Metropolitan Opera’s Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition and was the third prize winner in HGO’s 2021 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, she will also perform the role of Gertrude in Romeo and Juliet. In spring 2021, she covered the title role of L’enfant in L’enfant et les Sortilèges at Rice. In 2019, Treigle trained with HGO’s Young Artist Vocal Academy and participated in the Aspen Music Festival, where she portrayed Madame Armfeldt in A Little Night Music. Last summer, she returned to Wolf Trap Opera as a Studio Artist for the second time. Previous roles include Bradamante in Alcina and Mrs. Ott in Susannah, an opera made famous by her grandfather, world-renowned bass-baritone Norman Treigle. Treigle pursued her Master of Music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where she received her Bachelor of Music degree.

Emily Treigle
(UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover/
Mr. Veer Vasishtha Fellow
MEZZO-SOPRANO—MOTHER JEANNE

SUN-LY PIERCE
(UNITED STATES)
Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson/John Serpe
MEZZO-SOPRANO—SISTER MATHILDE

Originally from Clinton, New York, Chinese American mezzo-soprano Sun-Ly Pierce is a second-year HGO Studio artist and the first prize winner in HGO’s 2020 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, she performs the roles of Mercedes in Carmen, Sister Mathilde in Dialogues of the Carmelites, 2nd Lady in The Magic Flute, and Stephano in Romeo and Juliet. Last season with HGO, she appeared as Liesl in My Favorite Things: Songs from The Sound of Music and as Hansel in HGO Digital’s Hansel and Gretel. Pierce completed the graduate vocal arts program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music and holds a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance from the Eastman School of Music. As a winner of the Marilyn Horne Song Competition, Pierce was set to perform on an international recital tour with pianist Chien-Lin Lu featuring the premiere of a new song cycle by two-time Grammy Award–winning composer Jennifer Higdon, which was canceled due to COVID-19. In the fall of 2019, Pierce joined the Broad Street Orchestra as Dorinda in Handel’s Acis and Galatea. She returned to the Music Academy of the West this summer as 2021 Vocal Fellow. Next summer, she will perform the role of Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni with the Aspen Music Festival.

Sun-Ly Pierce
(UNITED STATES)
Lynn Gissel/Brenda Harvey-Traylor Fellow
MEZZO-SOPRANO—SISTER MATHILDE

SPERLING CAST

EMILY TREIGLE
LUKE SUTLIFF
SUN-LY PIERCE
BLAKE DENSON

A first-year HGO Studio artist from Littleton, Colorado, Luke Sutliff recently completed his Master of Music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, he also performed the role El Dancairo in Carmen, and will perform the role of Mercutio in alternate cast performances of Romeo and Juliet. At the Shepherd School, he appeared as Kaiser Overall in Der Kaiser von Atlantis and Johannes Zegner in Proving Up. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Juilliard School, where he studied with the late Sanford Sylvan and made his Alice Tully Hall debut performing Fauré’s L’horizon chimérique. Sutliff previously performed the roles of Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Belcore in The Elixir of Love at the Chautauqua Institute. Sutliff joined Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Artist for summer 2021, covering the role of Jon Seward in The Lord of Cries and performing Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. He will return to Santa Fe in 2022 to cover the role of Figaro in The Barber of Seville and perform El Dancairo in Carmen.

Luke Sutliff
(UNITED STATES)
M. JAVELINOT / THIERRY

A first-year HGO Studio artist from Paducah, Kentucky, was a Grand Finals Winner in the 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and is a 2018 alumnus of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA). For HGO’s 2021-22 season, Denson also performed the role of Morales in Carmen and Daddy...
Tim in alternate cast performances of The Snowy Day, and he will perform the role of Gregorio in Romeo and Juliet. During the 2020-21 HGO Digital season he appeared in Giving Voice; Hansel and Gretel as Peter; and Suite Española: Explorando Iberia. He obtained his Bachelor of Music in voice degree from the University of Kentucky School of Music and completed his Master of Music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. Denson will make his debut with Des Moines Metro Opera in summer 2022 as Jake in Porgy and Bess.

RICARDO GARCIA (UNITED STATES)

Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr./Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Tenor—First Commissioner

A second-year HGO Studio artist from Castro Valley, California, Ricardo Garcia completed his Master of Music in Voice at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) and holds a Bachelor of Music in Voice from the University of the Pacific. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, Garcia also performed the role of El Remendado in Carmen and Papí/Jasper in alternate cast performances of The Snowy Day, and will perform the role of Romeo in alternate cast performances of Romeo and Juliet. During the 2020-21 HGO Digital season he appeared in Vinkensport as Hans Sach’s Trainer; The Making of The Snowy Day, an Opera for All; and Suite Española: Explorando Iberia. He was a studio artist at Wolf Trap Opera, where he covered Romeo in Romeo and Juliet and Giocondo in La pietra del paragone, and a voice fellow with Music Academy of the West, where he sang Jenik in The Bartered Bride. Recent roles include Lamplighter/Drunkard in The Little Prince and Fenton in Falstaff. As a first-year apprentice at Santa Fe Opera, he covered Parpignol in La bohème and sang Fenton/Normanno in the Apprentice Scenes Night. Recently, Garcia won the New Orleans District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the second place winner in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, he also performed the role of Zuniga in Carmen, and will perform the roles of Second Armored Man in The Magic Flute, A Mandarin in Turandot, and the role of Lorenzo da Ponte in the world premiere of The Phoenix. He is a graduate of the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange Program with a degree in Sustainable Development and received his Master of Music degree from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

GEOFFREY HAHN (UNITED STATES)

Baritone—Second Commissioner

Geoffrey Hahn is an HGO Studio alumnus (2018-20). This season with HGO, he also performs the role of Paris in Romeo and Juliet. Previously with HGO, he performed the roles of Schaunard in La bohème (2018) and Marullo in Rigoletto (2019), and was scheduled to sing Second Nazarene in Salome (COVID cancellation). He also covered a wide range of roles for HGO, including Zurga in The Pearl Fishers, Riolobo in Florencia en el Amazonas, Masetto in Don Giovanni, and the role of Lorenzo da Ponte in the world premiere of The Phoenix. Hahn is an advocate of varied and innovative performance genres. He starred in the award-winning short film Dichterliebe: PoetLove, a reimagining of Robert Schumann’s cycle of songs with text by Heinrich Heine. He is a graduate of the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange Program with a degree in Sustainable Development and received his Master of Music degree from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

WILLIAM GUANBO SU (CHINA)

Anne and Albert Chao Fellow

Bass—First Officer

A third-year HGO Studio artist from Beijing, William Guanbo Su is a Grand Finals Winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the second place winner in HGO’s 2019 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, Su also performed the role of Zuniga in Carmen, and will perform the roles of Second Armored Man in The Magic Flute, A Mandarin in Turandot, and the Duke of Verona in Romeo and Juliet. During the 2020-21 HGO Digital season, he performed the role of Bowie Krebs in The Impresario and in fall 2019 with HGO, he performed the role of Usher in Rigoletto. He has studied German lieder at the Franz Schubert Institute in Vienna, and in 2017 won first prize in the Gerda Lissner Lieder Competition. During the summer of 2019, he sang Count Ceprano in Verdi’s Rigoletto with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist. Last spring, he made his Austin Opera debut as Angelotti in Tosca, and this summer, he returned to the Aspen Music Festival as a voice fellow to sing Sarastro in The Magic Flute and Garibaldo in Rodelinda. This season, he also makes his debut at the Metropolitan Opera as the Jailer in Tosca.
An Opera in Two Acts
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart | Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

Sung in German with projected English translation

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes, including one intermission.

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

The Magic Flute was written in 1791 and was Mozart’s last opera, premiering only two months before his death. It was written as a Singspiel, a German theatrical structure that includes singing and speaking, though in this production the dialogue is removed. Barrie Kosky’s production of The Magic Flute has played internationally in over 20 cities to over half a million people. Conceived with Suzanne Andrade and Paul Barritt of the British theater company “1927,” the new take on the classic fairy tale creates a silent-film aesthetic with remarkably complex video projections over the singers.

THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL

Three ladies, attendants of the Queen of the Night, save the young Prince Tamino from a fierce dragon. The Queen of the Night beseeches him to rescue her daughter, Pamina, who is being held captive by an evil sorcerer, Sarastro. The ladies show him a picture of Pamina; he falls instantly in love and agrees to rescue her. To protect him on his mission, the ladies provide him with a magic flute. He sets off with Papageno, the queen's birdcatcher.

When Tamino arrives at Sarastro’s palace, he meets a priest who warns him that Sarastro and the Queen of the Night are not what he was told. Tamino meets Sarastro and is invited to undergo trials of wisdom and enlightenment which will make him worthy of Pamina’s hand. He agrees, and is protected by the music of the magic flute through these trials. When he is done, Sarastro blesses him and Pamina. The Queen of the Night is furious, but before she can put her final plan into action she is cast away into the night, freeing Tamino and Pamina to be together.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

“Der Hölle Rache,” the Queen of the Night’s second act aria, is one of the most recognizable arias in all of opera. It is also one of the more challenging: as Pamina’s mother threatens her with disownment unless she assassinates Sarastro, Mozart requires the soprano to sing eight coloratura high F notes. The aria has appeared in many commercials and films, including commercials for Volvo and Amazon Echo.

FUN FACT

The highly symbolic text of The Magic Flute is said to be largely based on Masonic principles, as Mozart and Schikaneder were both Freemasons. The Age of Enlightenment had a significant effect on the text as well: enlightened absolutism was a theory of monarchical authority in which enlightened rulers worked for the welfare of all their subjects rather than only for themselves or for the elite classes.

Enlightenment rulers prided themselves on their support for the arts, for wisdom, and for intellectual curiosity, all elements of Sarastro’s brotherhood. Emperor Joseph II was a friend and benefactor to Mozart and was considered one of the great Enlightenment rulers.
CAST & CREATIVE

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Tamino
Norman Reinhardt ‡
Caitlin Lynch ‡
Sun-Ly Pierce †
Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson/John Sarpe and Tracy Maddox Fellow

1st Lady
Caitlin Lynch ‡

2nd Lady
Sun-Ly Pierce †

3rd Lady
Taylor Raven *
Thomas Glass ‡
Rainelle Krause *
Aaron Pegram
Andrea Carroll ‡
Alexis Medina *
Ella Clark Theurer *
Liam Norton *
Anthony Robin Schneider ‡
Eric Taylor †
Mrs. Sharon G. Ley and Mr. Robert F. Lietzow/ and Jill and Allyn Risley/ Drs. Rachel and Warren A. Ellsworth IV Fellow

Papagno
Papageno

Queen of the Night
Rainelle Krause *

Monostatos

Pamina

1st Spirit
Alexis Medina *

2nd Spirit
Ella Clark Theurer *

3rd Spirit
Liam Norton *

Sarastro/Speaker
Anthony Robin Schneider ‡

1st Armored Man
Eric Taylor †
Mrs. Sharon G. Ley and Mr. Robert F. Lietzow/ and Jill and Allyn Risley/ Drs. Rachel and Warren A. Ellsworth IV Fellow

2nd Armored Man
William Guanbo Su †
Anna and Albert Chao Fellow

Papagena
Raven McMillon †
Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer/ Nancy Haywood Fellow

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor
Dame Jane Glover

Original Co-Directors
Barrie Kosky
Suzanne Andrade *

Revival Director
Tobias Ribizki *

Associate Director
Erik Friedman *
Esther Bialas *

Set and Costume Designer
Diego Leetz *
Michael James Clark
Paul Barritt *

Original Lighting Designer
Richard Bado †
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Assistant Lighting Designer
Kevin J. Miller

Animation Designer
Karen Reeves
Benjamin Manis
Kevin J. Miller
Alex Munger †
Gary Holtingworth and Ken Hyde/Trey Yates/Dr. Saúl and Ursula Balagura Fellow

Principal Children Preparation
Bin Yu Sanford †
Stephanie Larsen/Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Miro-Quesada/ Ms. Lynn Dao Pha Fellow

Musical Preparation
Stage Manager
Brian August

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

PRODUCTION CREDITS

English supertitles by Jeremy Johnson. Supertitles called by Jazmine Olwalia.
Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.
Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local USA-829.
Orchestral musicians are represented by the Houston Professional Musicians Association, Local #65-699, American Federation of Musicians.
Stage crew personnel provided by IATSE, Local #51.
Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.
This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
**SYNOPSIS**

**ACT I**

Tamino, a prince, faints as he is attacked by a large serpent that is then destroyed by Three Ladies, servants of the Queen of the Night. They cannot agree on who should stay to watch over the young man, so they all go off to tell their Queen about him. He comes to and sees Papageno, the Queen's birdcatcher, who claims to have killed the serpent himself. The Ladies punish Papageno for this lie by padlocking his mouth; they then give Tamino a portrait of Pamina, the Queen's daughter, with whom Tamino falls in love.

The Queen promises Tamino that Pamina will be his if he will rescue her from Sarastro, the Queen's enemy, who has kidnapped her. Papageno will accompany him, and they will have a magic flute and magic bells to help them, and Three Spirits to guide them.

In Sarastro's realm, Monostatos attempts to assault Pamina, but Papageno (who has been separated from Tamino) unexpectedly appears and frightens him off. He comforts Pamina and they escape.

The Three Spirits lead Tamino to Sarastro's temple of nature, reason, and wisdom. Tamino approaches each door in turn, and voices order him back from the first two; from the third the Speaker enters and tells him he has been deceived in thinking that Sarastro is evil. He leaves Tamino to consider this reversal of his fate.

Tamino discovers that the magic flute can tame the wild animals in the forest. Papageno answers his call, but they just miss each other; Papageno and Pamina enter, pursued by Monostatos. Papageno plays his magic bells and so they avoid being captured. Sarastro returns with his followers from hunting; Pamina tells him the whole truth of what has happened to her. Tamino is brought in by Sarastro's men, and sees Pamina for the first time. Sarastro orders Monostatos to be punished and invites Tamino and Papageno to prove themselves worthy by undergoing the trials of initiation into the community of Isis.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**

Sarastro explains his purpose in introducing Tamino and Papageno to the mysteries of Isis. His fellow initiates overcome their misgivings and take the men blindfolded into the vaults of the temple. The first trial is to be silent in a darkened room. When the Three Ladies attempt to distract them and win them back to the Queen's cause, the men ignore them.

Monostatos has another opportunity to violate Pamina, and this time it is the Queen who intervenes to defend her. She gives her daughter a dagger with instructions to kill Sarastro and recover the sign of the sun from him. Monostatos has overheard and now threatens to betray Pamina if she does not yield to him. Pamina, distraught, confesses everything to Sarastro, who assures her that he has no thought of revenge on her mother. Tamino and Papageno begin a second trial of silence, the contemplation of mortality. Papageno cheats by chatting to an old lady who says she is his girlfriend. The Three Spirits bring food and drink, and return the magic instruments to assist them. At the sound of Tamino's flute, Pamina appears and cannot understand why he rejects her in silence. She concludes that he no longer loves her.

Sarastro congratulates Tamino on his strength of will but tells him that, after one last meeting, he may never see Pamina again. The lovers greet each other joyfully but sadly part. Papageno also meets the old woman again, and discovers that she is really a perfect young wife for him; to his annoyance an initiate insists that he, like Tamino, should continue the trials alone, and Papagena is taken away from him.

Pamina, now inconsolable, contemplates suicide. The Spirits prevent her, however, and reunite her with Tamino, who has reached the final trial: the ordeals of fire and water. Pamina is allowed to join him, and together they brave the dangers, guarded by the music of the flute and strengthened by their love for one another. They are both welcomed into the temple.

It is Papageno’s turn to contemplate suicide after losing Papagena. The Spirits remind him of his magic bells, and as he plays them Papagena appears again. The Queen, Monostatos, and the Three Ladies plan a final assault on Sarastro’s temple. They are destroyed by the vision of a family united in wisdom and selfless love.

**HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

HGO ORCHESTRA

Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant*, Concertmaster
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Chloe Kim*, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor*, Principal, Second Violin
Carrie Kauk†, Assistant Principal
Second Violin
Oleg Sulyga*, Acting Assistant Principal Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky*
Anabel Detrick*
Rasa Kalesnykaite†
Hae-a Lee-Barnes*
Chavdar Parashkevov†
Mary Reed*
Erica Robinson*
Linda Sanders*
Sylvia VerMeulen*
Melissa Williams†
Andres Eduardo Gonzalez
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Emily Madonia
Mila Neal
Rachel Shepard
Hannah Watson

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

FLUTE
Henry Williford*, Principal
Tyler Martin*

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert†, Principal
Mayu Isom*, Acting Principal
Stanley Chyi

CLARINET
Sean Krissman*, Principal
Eric Chi*

BASSOON
Amanda Swain*, Principal
Michael Allard*

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

TRUMPET
Tetsuya Lawson*, Principal
Randal Adams*

TROMBONE
Thomas Hulten*, Principal
Mark Holley†
Justin Bain*

TUBA
Mark Barton†, Principal

TIMPANI
Alison Chang*, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown*, Principal

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

HARP
Joan Eidman†, Principal

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown*

*HGO Orchestra core musician
†HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production
HGO CHORUS

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

Nathan Abbott
Haley Abramowitz
Geordie Alexander
Preston Andrews
Maggie Armand
Dennis Arrowsmith
Sarah Bannon
Zachary Barba
Megan Berti
Leslie Biffle
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Esteban Cordero
Don Figg
Maurice Goodwin
Dallas Gray
Frankie Hickman
Austin Hoeltzel
Julie Hoeltzel
Jon Janacek
Joe Key
Wesley Landry
Sarah Lee
Yoojin Lee
Aarianna Longino
Alejandro Magallón
Heath Martin
Neal Martinez
Byron Mayes
Katherine McDaniel
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Patrick Perez
Abby Powell
Said Pressley
Nicholas Rathgeb
Gabrielle Reed
Kendall Reimer
Francis Rivera
Hannah Roberts
Michael Rodriguez
Kathleen Ruhleder
Johnny Salvesen
Christina Scanlan
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
John Weinel
Jennifer Wright

SUPERNUMERARIES
Ken Grissom
Krystal Uchem
Wesley Whitson
WHO'S WHO

DAME JANE GLOVER
(UNITED KINGDOM)
CONDUCTOR

Acclaimed British conductor Jane Glover, named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 2021 New Year’s Honours, is Music Director of Chicago’s Music of the Baroque. She returns to HGO after conducting the most recent production of The Elixir of Love (2016). Upcoming and recent past engagements include returns to the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras and Houston Symphony, conducting The Magic Flute with the Metropolitan Opera, and debuts with the Chicago Symphony and Minnesota Opera (Albert Herring). Other engagements in recent seasons have included the BBC Proms, Washington National Opera conducting Gluck’s Alcina, the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Aspen Music Festival, and Minnesota Orchestra. She conducted many productions at Royal Academy of Music where for many seasons she was Director of Opera and now is Felix Mendelssohn Visiting Professor; recently she was Visiting Professor of Opera at her alma mater, the University of Oxford. Glover’s many recordings feature repertoire of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Britten, and Walton with the London Mozart Players, London and Royal philarmonic orchestras, and the BBC Singers. Her book, Mozart’s Women, was published in 2005 and Handel in London in 2018. In 2020 she was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Gamechanger Award for her work in breaking new ground for other female conductors.

BARRIE KOSKY
(AUSTRALIA)
ORIGINAL CO-DIRECTOR

Barrie Kosky’s work was last seen at HGO in Saul (2019). He has been intendant and artistic director of the Komische Oper Berlin since 2012. New productions for 2021-22 include Mahagonny for Komische Oper Berlin, The Cunning Little Vixen at Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Don Giovanni at Wiener Staatsoper, and Tosca at Dutch National Opera. His work at the Komische Oper Berlin includes The Magic Flute, The Monteverdi Trilogy, Ball at the Savoy, Eugene Onegin, The Tales of Hoffmann, Rigoletto, La Belle Hélène, Moses und Aron, La bohème, Rusalka, Le Grand Macabre, West Side Story, Pelléas et Mélisande, Semele, The Bassarids, Die Perlen von Cleopatra, Anatevka, and Candide. He has directed opera productions for the Bayerische Staatsoper (Die Schweigsame Frau, Agrippina, The Fiery Angel, and Der Rosenkavalier), the Salzburg Festival (Orphée aux Enfers), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (Saul), Festival Aix en Provence (Falstaff, Coq D’Or), Oper Frankfurt (Dido and Aeneas/Bluebeard’s Castle, Salome, and Carmen), Opera Zurich (La Fancuilla del West, The Stigmatized, Macbeth, and Boris Gudonov), Opéra National de Paris (Prince Igor), and Royal Opera House Covent Garden (The Nose, Agrippina, and Carmen). He also has presented his productions at the Los Angeles Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Gran Liceu Barcelona, Vienna Staatsoper, Het National Opera Amsterdam, English National Opera, Oper Graz, Theater Basel, Aalto Theater Essen, Staatsoper Hannover, Deutches Theater Berlin, and Schauspielhaus Frankfurt, and he is a regular guest at the Edinburgh International Festival. He previously served as artistic director of Gilgul Theatre Company, artistic director of the 1996 Adelaide Festival, and co-director of Vienna Schauspielhaus. His many awards include an Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production for Castor et Pollux (English National Opera), Best Director at the 2014 International Opera Awards, Best Opera House (Komische Oper Berlin) at the 2015 International Opera Awards, and a 2016 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre for Saul (also nominated for a 2016 International Opera Award and winner of six Helpmann Awards). In 2020 he was the recipient of a Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award, in recognition of his unique and influential contribution to the Australian arts world.

SUZANNE ANDRADE
(UNITED KINGDOM)
ORIGINAL CO-DIRECTOR

Suzanne Andrade is making her HGO debut. She is the co-founder and co-artistic director (with Paul Barritt) of the London-based theater company 1927. Its trademark style integrates performance, music, and animation to create groundbreaking theater. For 1927, she has written and directed the multi-award-winning shows Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, The Animals and Children Took to the Streets, and Golem. Since 2007, the company has toured across five continents to 38 countries. Andrade’s operatic debut was The Magic Flute for the Komische Oper Berlin, which she co-conceived and co-directed and which has been licensed to opera houses in Germany, the United States, Spain, Finland, and Poland. In 2017, she co-created productions of Stravinsky’s Petrushka and Ravel’s L’enfant et les sortilèges at the Komische Oper, co-directing with 1927 collaborator Esme Appleton. In 2016 she was featured in The Stage 100 List of the most influential people in theater in the U.K.
Recently, he directed Venus and Adonis worked with the Philharmonie Luxembourg. This season he will X: Schön ist die Welt forza del destino 2011, he has directed several world premieres of various chil-

Linz, Staatsoper Hannover, and Komische Oper Berlin. Since

Helsinki, Warsaw, Philadelphia, Athens, and Rome. He has worked as assistant and performance director at the Landestheater Linz, Staatsoper Hannover, and Komische Oper Berlin. Since 2011, he has directed several world premieres of various children’s operas, including the world premiere of Freunde! by Peter Androsch, for which he was nominated for the German theater prize Der Faust at the Junge Oper Hannover. He has directed La clemenza di Tito and The Elixir of Love at the Staatsoper Hannover, Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten at Komische Oper Berlin, and Königskinder at Musiktheater im Revier in Gelsenkirchen. Recently, he directed Venus and Adonis, Dido and Aeneas, and L’heure espagnole at the Staatstheater Oldenburg; Montagsstück X: Schön ist die Welt at the Bayerische Staatsoper München; and worked with the Philharmonie Luxembourg. This season he will direct Gianni Schicchi at Staatstheater Oldenburg, as well as La forza del destino at the Anhaltisches Theater Dessau. His direction of the children’s opera Tom Sawyer, a world premiere with music by Kurt Weill at the Komische Oper Berlin, was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EriK Friedman (United States) Associate Director

A Chicago native currently based in Los Angeles, Erik Friedman is making his HGO debut. Most recently he has directed this Komische Oper production of The Magic Flute at Israeli Opera, and has completed work on remounting Francisco Negrin’s Il trovatore at LA Opera. He will also direct this Magic Flute in March at Des Moines Metro Opera. Working frequently with LA Opera since 2015, Friedman has assisted on productions including The Ghosts of Versailles, Macbeth, Salome, La clemenza di Tito, Moby Dick, La bohème, Carmen, Roberto Devereux, Rigoletto, and Don Carlo. Over the past decade he has worked with opera companies and theaters across the United States, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Santa Fe Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Central City Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater, among others. Theatre projects include work with Steppenwolf Theatre and training with Actors Theatre of Louisville. Friedman also has worked extensively as an instructor for the young artist programs at multiple opera companies, including Santa Fe Opera, LA Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also taught at Wheaton College, Indiana University, and North Park University. He holds graduate degrees in voice performance and theater directing from Indiana and DePaul Universities.

Tobias Ribitzki (Germany) Revival Director

Tobias Ribitzki is making his HGO debut. Ribitzki has previously staged the Barrie Kosky production of The Magic Flute in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Madrid, Linz, Staatsoper Hannover, and Komische Oper Berlin. Since 2011, he has directed several world premieres of various children’s operas, including the world premiere of Freunde! by Peter Androsch, for which he was nominated for the German theater prize Der Faust at the Junge Oper Hannover. He has directed La clemenza di Tito and The Elixir of Love at the Staatsoper Hannover, Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten at Komische Oper Berlin, and Königskinder at Musiktheater im Revier in Gelsenkirchen. Recently, he directed Venus and Adonis, Dido and Aeneas, and L’heure espagnole at the Staatstheater Oldenburg; Montagsstück X: Schön ist die Welt at the Bayerische Staatsoper München; and worked with the Philharmonie Luxembourg. This season he will direct Gianni Schicchi at Staatstheater Oldenburg, as well as La forza del destino at the Anhaltisches Theater Dessau. His direction of the children’s opera Tom Sawyer, a world premiere with music by Kurt Weill at the Komische Oper Berlin, was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Esther Bialas (Germany) Set and Costume Designer

Designer Esther Bialas is making her HGO debut. Her collaborations as a stage and costume designer with director Barrie Kosky include Strindberg’s A Dream Play (Deutsche Theater Berlin) and Strauss’s Die Schweigsame Frau (Bavarian State Opera), as well as Ball at the Savoy, Seven Songs/The Seven Deadly Sins, West Side Story, and The Magic Flute (Komische Oper Berlin). She also has a longstanding collaboration with director Nicolas Stemmann, designing costumes for his productions of Hamlet (Schauspiel Hannover), Jelinek’s The Work (Burgtheater, Vienna), and Schiller’s The Robbers (Thalia Theater, Hamburg). Together with director Christiane Pohle, she founded the women’s theater company LaborLavache, presented at the Schauspielhaus Zürich. She has created stage and costume designs for the Basel Theater, Vienna Burgtheater, and the Deutsche Theater Berlin, for opera productions in Lucerne and Basel, as well as for film. Other design credits include The Tales of Hoffmann (Bregenzer Festspiele, directed by Stefan Herheim); Eötvös’s Three Sisters (Vienna State Opera); costumes for La Cenerentola (Oslo Opera, directed by Stefan Herheim); and costumes for La traviata (Theater Basel, directed by Daniel Kramer). Bialas studied costume design in Hamburg and since 2004 has taught costume design at the Lerchenfeld University in Hamburg.

Diego Leetz (Germany) Original Lighting Designer

Diego Leetz is making his HGO debut. He began his career in 1988 as a lighting technician and later as a lighting supervi-
sor at the Berliner Staatsoper, where he worked on Paul Abraham’s Blume von Hawaii, directed by Andrea Schwalbach; Il mondo della luna, directed by Karoline Gruber; La forza del destino, directed by Stefan Herheim; and Maria Stuarda, directed by Karsten Wiegand. Since then he has designed the lighting for productions by a wide range of notable directors, including Günter Krämer, Barrie Kosky, Torsten Fischer, Stefan Herheim, and Kirill Serebrennikov. His notable credits include Krämer’s production of the Ring cycle for the Opéra national de Paris. Since the
2012-13 season he has been the Artistic Director and Head of Lighting at Komische Oper Berlin, for which his extensive lighting credits include American Lulu, Taner Akyol’s Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves, The Magic Flute, The Fiery Angel, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Milos Vacek’s Des Kaisers neue Kleider, Così fan tutte, Nico Dostal’s Clelia, La belle Hélène, Marius Felix Lange’s Das Gespenst von Canterville, and the ballet Don Juan.

**Paul Barritt**

**(United Kingdom)**

Animation Designer

Paul Barritt is making his HGO debut. He is the co-founder and co-artistic director (with Suzanne Andrade) of the London-based theater company 1927. For 1927, he has co-created, animated, and designed three highly acclaimed and innovative animated shows: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, The Animals and Children Took to the Streets, and Golem. His operatic debut was The Magic Flute for the Komische Opera Berlin, which he co-conceived and animated and which has been licensed to opera houses in Germany, the United States, Spain, Finland, and Poland. In 2017, he co-created and animated Stravinsky’s Petrushka and Ravel’s L’Enfant et les sortilèges for the Komische Opera. For his work with 1927, he has won the Critic’s Circle Award for best design (Golem) and the coveted Knight of the Illumination award for Best Projection (Golem). Outside of 1927, he has collaborated with Musik Fabrik Köln on an animated new music concert (Krazy Kat Projekt); created the short film White Morning (2013), which played in many of the major film festivals including Sundance, Melbourne International Film Festival, and London Short Film Festival; and collaborated with the Victoria and Albert Museum to animate a painting by Dennis van Alsloot. He also lectures in animation and illustration at Middlesex University. In 2015, he was featured alongside Suzanne Andrade in the Progress 1000, a list of the 1,000 most influential people in London, and in 2016 he was featured in The Stage 100 List of the most influential people in UK theater.

**Richard Bado**

**(United States)**

Chorus Master

Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

For information about Richard Bado, please see page 33.

**Karen Reeves**

**(United States)**

Principal Children Preparation

Karen Reeves has been working with young singers at HGO since 1991. She is a Grammy Award winner, having served as chorus master for the HGO Children’s Chorus in the Houston Symphony’s performance of Berg’s Wozzeck, which won the 2017 Grammy for Best Opera Performance. She prepared HGO’s Juvenile Chorus for the world premiere of The House Without a Christmas Tree in 2018 and has also prepared the HGO Children’s Chorus and child soloists for such operas as Otello, Carmen, La bohème, Dead Man Walking, Tosca, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Hansel and Gretel, The Little Prince, and this season’s Turandot, as well as the spring 2021 outdoor performance at the University of Houston, My Favorite Things: Songs from The Sound of Music. She was a member of the HGO Chorus for 13 seasons, and during the 1999–2000 season, she became the founding director of the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio, HGO’s intensive program for high school students preparing for further vocal music study. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from Southwestern University and her Master of Music degree from Rice University. She taught on the voice faculty at Houston Baptist University, and for more than 20 years she taught in the voice department of Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as an artist consultant. She has served as a grant evaluator for the Texas Commission on the Arts music and opera advisory panel. She is the opera program administrator at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

**Norman Reinhardt**

**(United States)**

Tenor—Tamino

HGO Studio alumnus Norman Reinhardt (2003–06) has been seen at HGO as Tony in West Side Story (2018), Lensky in Eugene Onegin (2015), Ferrando in Così fan tutte and Cassio in Otello (both in 2014), Jacquino in Fidelio (2011), Lysander in A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2009), Bénédict in Béatrice et Bénédict (2008), and Ernesto in Don Pasquale (2006), among others. As a member of the ensemble at Oper Leipzig, he extended his repertoire to include Alfredo in La traviata, Count Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Tom Rakewell in The Rake’s Progress, and Tamino in The Magic Flute, all of which he performed under Ulf Schirmer. His portrayal of Tamino has brought considerable critical acclaim, leading to a debut at the Bregenz Festival in David Pountney’s production under Patrick Summers (released on DVD by Unitel). Reinhardt made his debut at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival and at the Salzburg Festival as Tony alongside Cecilia Bartoli and conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. He sang his first Pollione in Norma with Bartoli at both the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. Recent season highlights include Adolar in Christof Loy’s new production of Euryanthe for Theater an der Wien; Luciano in Ariodante for Opéra de Monte-Carlo; Flamand in Capriccio for Teatro Real; and Pollione in Norma for Staatsoper Stuttgart. He also made his role
Joins the Metropolitan Opera as Yamadori in *Madame Butterfly*.

Thomas Glass is a Grand Prize winner of the 2019 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a recent alumnus of the HGO Studio (2017-19). This season he also appears with HGO as Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*. Previously with HGO, he has performed Marcello in selected performances of *La bohème* (2018); Alvaro in *Florencia en el Amazonas* (2019); Figaro in outdoor performances of *The Barber of Seville* (2018); Figirol in mainstage performances of *The Barber of Seville* (2018); Officer Krupke in *West Side Story* (2018); and Baron Douphol in *La traviata* (2017). In the 2021-22 season, he joins the Metropolitan Opera as Yamadori in *Madame Butterfly*. Recently, he sang the title role in *Sweeney Todd* at Wolf Trap Opera, the Berkshire Opera Festival as Ford in *Falstaff*, and returned to Minnesota Opera as the Vicar in a digital production of *Albert Herring*.

**ANDREA CARROLL**  
**(UNITED STATES)**  
**SOPRANO—PAMINA**

HGO Studio alumna Andrea Carroll (2012-14) has performed with HGO many times, including as Leila in *The Pearl Fishers* (2019), Maria in *West Side Story* (2018), Woglinde in *Götterdämmerung* (2017), Mary in *It's a Wonderful Life* (2016), and Julie in *Carousel* (2016). Carroll began the 2021-22 season in her debut at the Bard Music Festival performing the role of Columbine in Ethel Smyth’s *Fête galante* and as the soprano soloist in Fauré’s *Requiem*. On the operatic stage, she makes her debut at Milan’s Teatro alla Scala as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and she appears in concert at the Wiener Konzerthaus in the premiere performance of Johannes Maria Straud’s *Piece for Orchestra and Soprano* and as the soprano soloist in Brahms’ *Requiem* for her debut with The Cleveland Orchestra. She began the 2020-21 season in her company debut with San Diego Opera as Musetta in *La bohème* before returning to Garsington Opera as Adèle in *Le comte Ory*. She was scheduled to make her debut season at the Metropolitan Opera as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. In addition to roles of Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner, Carroll has appeared at the Vienna State Opera in two world premieres, singing the title role in Johanna Doderer’s *Fatima* and Kitty in Johannes Maria Staud’s *Die Weiden*. Carroll has also performed with the Glimmerglass Festival, Wolf Trap Opera, and the major companies of Oslo, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Utah. She is a recipient of a 2018 Richard Tucker Foundation Career Grant.

**RAINELLE KRAUSE**  
**(UNITED STATES)**  
**SOPRANO—QUEEN OF THE NIGHT**

Rainelle Krause is making her HGO debut. She has sung Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* with Royal Danish Opera, Theater Basel, Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden, and Deutsche Oper Berlin. During upcoming seasons she will perform the roles of the Princess in *The Snow Queen* with Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Queen of the Night with Oper Köln and Opera North Carolina. Notable recent engagements include Oscar in *Un ballo in Maschera* with Royal Danish Opera, Pat Nixon in the Princeton Festival’s * Nixon in China*, Musetta in *La bohème* with Imperial Symphony Orchestra, Tania in *Al gran sole carico d’amore* with Theater Basel, Monica in *The Medium* with Painted Sky Opera, an engagement as guest soloist with *Voices of Change* for their Holocaust memorial performance, and an appearance as a featured artist for Opus Opera’s event, *Mystique*, a circus and opera collaboration.

**ANTHONY ROBIN SCHNEIDER**  
**(AUSTRIA/NEW ZEALAND)**  
**BASS—SARASTRO/SPEAKER**

Anthony Robin Schneider is an HGO Studio alumnus (2017-18). Previously with HGO, he sang Doctor Grenvil in *La traviata*, Curio in *Julius Caesar*, Tutor/Old Servant in *Elektra*, and Don Basilio in performances of *The Barber of Seville*, all during HGO’s 2017-18 season. He is a member of the Ensemble at Oper Frankfurt, where his 2021-22 roles include Iolanta (Ibn-Hakia), *Christmas Eve* (Panas), *Fedora* (Cirillo), and *Lohengrin* (Heinrich der Vogler). This season he also returns to Tirol Festspiel Erl for *Die Walküre* (Hunding). Last season with Oper Frankfurt he was seen in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Dr. Bartolo), *Le vin herbé* (Le Duc Hoël), and *Siegfried* (Fafner), and in his first season in Frankfurt he had roles in *Don Carlo* (Grand Inquisitor), *Rigoletto* (Sparfucile), *Don Giovanni* (Commendatore), and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Administrator/Sergeant). In the summer of 2021, he made his debut at Tirol Festspiel Erl in *Lohengrin* (Heinrich). Additional recent engagements include a return to the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 conducted by Edo de Waart. Schneider made debuts at the Wiener Staatsoper in *Les Troyens* (Ghost of Hector), The Cleveland Orchestra in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Truffaldino), and Oper Frankfurt in *Der ferne Klang* (Der Wirt), and returned to Wolf Trap Opera for *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (Der Tod) and *Le vin herbé* (Duc de Hoël) in their collaboration with Washington Concert Opera. In concert he performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edo de Waart. Schneider made his debut with The Santa Fe Opera in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Truffaldino) and *Candide* (Baron/Grand Inquisitor). He was a Filene Young Artist at Wolf Trap Opera, performing in *Tosca* (Sacristan) and Rossini’s *La pietra del paragone* (Fabrizio). Additionally, he sang Handel’s *Messiah* in his Canadian debut with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.
AARON PEGRAM
(UNITED STATES)
TENOR—MONOSTATOS

Previously with HGO, Aaron Pegram performed Monostatos in the 2015 production of The Magic Flute. He is currently in his 13th season as an ensemble member at the Semperoper Dresden. His most recent roles with the company include Tavannes in Les Huguenots, Valzacchi in Der Rosenkavalier, the Four Servants in The Tales of Hoffmann, Kibis in Spolianny’s Wie Werde ich Reich und Glücklich, and concert performances as Goro in Madame Butterfly under the baton of Giampaolo Bisanti and Spolletta in Tosca conducted by Omer Meir Wellber. Other notable performances include Tanzmeister in Ariadne auf Naxos conducted by Christian Thielemann, Conferencier in Cabaret, Pedrillo in The Abduction from the Seraglio, Beppe in Pagliacci, the Radio Singer in the European premiere of The Great Gatsby, and appearing as a tenor soloist in Doktor Faust and Harlekin in Der Kaiser von Atlantis. Pegram performed the role of Don Basilio in Semperoper Dresden’s new production of The Marriage of Figaro, which traveled to the prestigious Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland, where he reprised the role in the summer of 2015. Upcoming performances at the Semperoper include a return as Goro in a fully staged premiere of Madame Butterfly, a return to his musical theater roots as Jack in Sondheim’s Into the Woods, and a role debut as the Police Inspector in The Nose by Shostakovich. Pegram debuted at New York City Opera as Goro in Madame Butterfly in 2008. After two seasons as an apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera, he returned to Santa Fe to perform Don Basilio in The Marriage of Figaro in 2008, as well as Baron Puck in The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein and Detective/Prison Guard in the world premiere of Theodore Morrison’s Oscar, both in 2013. His introduction into opera began at Orlando Opera as a young artist in 2003.

RAVEN McMILLON
(UNITED STATES)
SOPRANO—PAPAGENA

A second-year HGO Studio artist from Baltimore, Raven McMillon was recently recognized as a 2021 Grand Finals Winner in the Metropolitan Opera’s newly-branded Dominque and Eric Laffont Competition. For HGO’s 2021-22 season, McMillon also performed the roles of Frasquita in Carmen and Peter in The Snowy Day. During the 2020-21 HGO Digital season, McMillon performed the roles of Rona Richards in The Impresario; Peter in The Making of The Snowy Day, an Opera for All; and Gretel in Hansel and Gretel. She also featured in the HGO Digital concert Giving Voice and performed as Sister Margareta in HGO’s My Favorite Things: Songs from The Sound of Music. McMillon received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Vocal Performance at Carnegie Mellon University and completed her graduate degree at the University of Cincinnati College – Conservatory of Music (CCM). Her opera credits include Adele in Die Fledermaus; the title role in Goldie B. Locks and the Three Singing Bears; Linfae in La Calisto; and Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro. In addition to her opera credits, McMillon has also workedshop new roles such as Mary in Chiao’s The Secret Codes of Mary Bowser and Lucy in Picker’s Awakenings. This summer she performed the role of Frasquita in Carmen with Cincinnati Opera and Rosina in The Barber of Seville with Opera Steamboat. Later this season, she sings Pamina at Des Moines Metro Opera, debuts with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Kevin Puts’s The Hours, and joins Opera Philadelphia in her role and company debuts as Gilda in Rigoletto.

CAITLIN LYNCH
(UNITED STATES)
SOPRANO—1ST LADY

HGO Studio alumna Caitlin Lynch was the first-place winner in HGO’s 2008 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Previously with HGO, she sang the role of Hero in Beatrice and Benedict (2008) and performed as a soloist in Chorus! (2009). She began her 2021-22 season with her company debut at Austin Opera, singing one of the roles she is best known for, Countess Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro. Other engagements this season include Violetta in La traviata with the South Bend Symphony, joining the Metropolitan Opera to cover Countess in its production of The Marriage of Figaro, singing a concert of Bolcom and Brahms with the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, and appearing with the Kansas City Symphony for performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Lynch has performed her signature role of Countess Almaviva in celebrated performances with Glimmerglass Opera, Seattle Opera, San Diego Opera, Lyric Opera Baltimore, Michigan Opera, and Opera Lyra Ottawa. Other Mozart roles include Donna Anna (Pittsburgh Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre) and Donna Elvira (Madison Opera, Opera Carolina) in Don Giovanni, Konstanze in The Abduction from the Seraglio (Arizona Opera), and Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte (Opera Carolina, Arizona Opera, Palm Beach Opera).

SUN-LY PIERCE
(UNITED STATES)
MEZZO-SOPRANO—2ND LADY

For information about Sun-Ly Pierce, please see page 36.
TAYLOR RAVEN (UNITED STATES) MEZZO-SOPRANO—3RD LADY

Taylor Raven is making her HGO debut. Other highlights of her 2021-22 season include debuts at Washington Concert Opera for Lakmé (Mallika) and North Carolina Opera for Moravec’s Sanctuary Road. On the concert stage she will make debuts with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Iowa, and return to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Additional engagements include the world premiere of a song cycle commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with Urban Arias and a return to the roster of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Last season she made debuts at Des Moines Metro Opera in Pique Dame (Pauline) and Finger Lakes Opera in The Barber of Seville (Rosina). She is a recent graduate of the Young Artist Program at the LA Opera where she was seen in La clemenza di Tito (Annio), Don Carlo (Tebaldo), the Kosky production of The Magic Flute (3rd Lady) conducted by James Conlon, and Hansel and Gretel (Sandman). As a Filene Artist at Wolf Trap Opera, Raven performed in The Barber of Seville (Rosina) and L’heure espagnole (Concepción).

ALEXIS MEDINA TREBLE—1ST SPIRIT

Alexis (Lexie) Medina is making her HGO debut. A 16-year-old junior at Magnolia High School in Magnolia, she has loved music from a young age. She was a member of her elementary school’s fourth grade choir and, in junior high, began competing in Region Choir as well as Solo and Ensemble, receiving top scores. Since her freshman year of high school, she has been involved in the All-State Choir. She has performed the national anthem at school football games and other events. Medina also plays piano and guitar and hopes to earn a degree in music.

ELLA CLARK THEURER TREBLE—2ND SPIRIT

Ella Theurer is making her HGO debut. A rising talent in Houston’s performing arts scene, she has been performing since the age of 3. She has participated in various productions at Theater Under the Stars (most recently Sister Act), Miller Outdoor Theatre, Main Street Theater, HITS Theatre, and the nationally recognized High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA), where she is a ninth grader involved in the instrumental department. Her achievements include numerous solo performances. She performed on the recording of acclaimed artist Bob Chilcott’s Circlesong with the Grammy Award-winning Houston Chamber Choir. She is currently a member of the Treble Choir of Houston.

LIAM NORTON TREBLE—3RD SPIRIT

Liam Norton is making his HGO debut. An eighth-grade student at Pershing Middle School, he developed a love for singing in elementary school, where he sang with his school choir. He performed with the Houston Boychoir for several years. Norton has appeared in several musicals and performed the role of Shepherd Boy and as a member of the Ragazzi in the 2019 production of Tosca at Opera in the Heights. He was a member of the HGO Children’s Choir at the outset of the pandemic. Most recently he performed in the HITS Theatre production Showstoppers at Miller Outdoor Theatre, and in their winter performance of She Loves Me.

ERIC TAYLOR (UNITED STATES) TENOR—FIRST ARMORED MAN

For information about Eric Taylor, please see page 35.

WILLIAM GUANBO SU (CHINA) BASS—SECOND ARMORED MAN

For information about William Guanbo Su, please see page 37.
Following the thrilling Opening Night performance of Bizet’s *Carmen*, patrons returned to a beloved pre-pandemic tradition with a dinner party celebrating HGO’s triumphant 67th season.

As the lights came up on *Carmen*, a festive group of operagoers progressed to the tented Ray C. Fish Plaza for an intimate seated dinner with fellow Houston arts enthusiasts. Chairs Betty and Jess Tutor welcomed new HGO General Director and CEO Khori Dastoor and guests to an alluring setting by The Events Company, bursting with the same jewel tones of Rob Ashford’s production and accented with touches of black Spanish lace—a nod to Carmen’s femme fatale dress.

City Kitchen Catering presented a colorful three course feast inspired by the opera’s Seville setting—poached shrimp and jumbo lump crabmeat, pan-roasted chicken breast with apricots and pistachios, twice baked potato with Manchego, and an inspired tarta de Santiago with almonds and white chocolate mousse, coffee ice cream, and caramel sauce.

The annual gala event raised over $460,000 for HGO.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Esteban Lecese, Patricia Morales, Tom Ajamie, Sallie Sargent

Margaret Atkek Williams, Dr. Giuseppe Colasurdo

Brian Bunham, Allyson Pritchett

Jess and Betty Tutor, event chairs

Robin Anghi, Gerri Gill

Adrienne Keys, Paul Marsden

Lindy and John Rydman

Myrtle Jones, Brandon McClendon
SPECIAL EVENTS

Marsha Bourque, Molly Crownover, Anne Chao

Matt Ringel and Louisa Sarofim

Dr. Peter and Hon. Theresa Chang

Terrylin Neale, Dr. Warren Ellsworth IV

Janet Gurwitch, Ron Franklin

Jonas Kaufmann and presenting underwriter Louise Chapman

Beth Madison, Lynne Bentsen

Rachel Beard Thomson, Dick Kantenberger

Marsha Bourque, Molly Crownover, Anne Chao
After 600 days away, HGO made a historic return to live performance in the Brown Theater with an epic concert and dinner event featuring superstar tenor Jonas Kaufmann, accompanied by Maestro Patrick Summers and the HGO Orchestra.

Hailed as “the world’s greatest tenor” by The Telegraph, Kaufmann not only made his HGO debut on the Brown Theater stage but also gave his first-ever performance in Texas. With a cult-like following for his heroic tenor voice that soars in French, Italian, and notable German roles, Kaufmann dazzled the crowd before performing no less than five encores, including “Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond” from Die Walküre, “E lucevan le stelle” from Tosca, “Träume” from Wesendonck-Lieder, “Ombra di nube,” and “Mattinata.”

Following the concert, close to 250 guests gathered at the newly renovated Four Seasons Houston for a seated dinner event with Kaufmann himself. HGO General Director and CEO Khori Dastoor presented Kaufmann with Texas-shaped, sterling silver cufflinks made by local artisan Max Lang as guests dined on salmon and beef short rib and “Mr. Kaufmann’s First Texas Pecan Pie” in an elegant setting by Kirksey Gregg Productions.

Together the concert and gala dinner raised over $660,000 in support of HGO.
The Matter of

Monostatos

How Mozart’s stereotyped villain has evolved over time

By HGO Dramaturg Jeremy Johnson

Editor’s note: This article is the third in a four-part series examining race and representation in opera. The first installment appeared in the Cues edition for Carmen, discussing the title character’s representation as a Romani woman, and the second appeared in the program for The Snowy Day, discussing new works as an avenue to broadening authentic representation in opera. The fourth installment will appear in the program for Turandot.

The first installment in this series presented a dilemma: some classic operas contain inauthentic representations of non-Western European cultures. This inauthentic representation often perpetuates racist stereotypes, and 21st century opera companies are faced with important and difficult questions about what pieces to produce and how to produce them. The second installment offered one approach: the commissioning of new works, a strong tradition at Houston Grand Opera, presents us with the best opportunity to broaden the perspectives depicted on the operatic stage and offer authentic representations to audiences. But what should we “do” about those pieces, so beloved by opera audiences for centuries, that depict inauthentic representations?
Do we “cancel” them from the stage? Do we produce them with or without commentary on the stereotypes contained therein? Without commentary invites the criticism that we are ignorant of what is depicted; with commentary invites the criticism that we know about it and devote resources to it anyway. This series does not seek to answer these questions, but to invite you, our audience, to consider these questions with us. This article will do so in the context of the character Monostatos in Mozart’s The Magic Flute.

What does Monostatos have to do with race and representation in opera? These days, not much, but historically, quite a bit. Monostatos is identified in character listings as “ein Mohr,” German for “a Moor.” A slave to Sarastro, he is a cunning, scheming, but ineffective villain whose duplicitousness lands him on the wrong side of the story. He is also a character that historically was performed in blackface up until the 20th century. “Moor” is another exonym used by white Europeans in the medieval era to describe, typically, North African Muslims. The term does not accurately identify any single race, religion, culture, or combination thereof, but rather was used as a catch-all term to describe Berbers, Arabs, and South Indian Muslims, among many other peoples.

Following an early 17th-century expulsion of the descendants of Spanish Muslims (the expulsion de los moriscos), the remaining Arab and Berber Muslims in Europe were forced into slavery. The European importation of slaves from the Muslim world continued as late as the mid-19th century. By the time Mozart and Schikaneder were writing The Magic Flute, in 1791, the cultural perception Crandall describes above was the common view of the Moorish slaves. Alyssa Howards, department chair of German and Russian at Wake Forest University, writes that Monostatos is “the embodiment of the two primary stereotypes of Muslims in the Enlightenment period, cruelty and overcharged sexuality.” Monostatos’s primary motivation throughout the piece is his lust for Pamina, and he easily shifts his loyalty from Sarastro to the Queen of the Night thinking she will help him achieve his desires. Crandall writes, “His motivations and deeds are not diabolical but merely selfish, wanting those things not socially (or morally) allotted him.”

“Monostatos’s primary motivation throughout the piece is his lust for Pamina, and he easily shifts his loyalty from Sarastro to the Queen of the Night thinking she will help him achieve his desires. Crandall writes, “His motivations and deeds are not diabolical but merely selfish, wanting those things not socially (or morally) allotted him.”
The “selfish” and “lustful” nature of Monostatos—and the duplicitousness of his scheming—represents the Enlightenment-era stereotype of his ethnic minority. Just as we saw with Carmen as a Romani woman, the prevailing cultural attitudes of an opera’s historical context influence the original interpretations of the character and how they are depicted. Now, Monostatos is not the title character of this opera, nor is his involvement particularly integral to the plot or the overarching search for beauty, truth, and wisdom. (In fact, I recently saw a production that cut the character of Monostatos entirely for pandemic-related reasons, and the opera was not particularly worse off for it.) There is very little in the text and the music that reflects Monostatos’s original ethnic minority, and the opera is certainly not “about” that aspect of Monostatos’s character.

Over the course of the 20th century, then, directors and producers evolved the depiction of Monostatos: in some productions, he was presented as orange, blue, or green, rather than a minority, still as a way to “other” him but by trying to avoid racial stereotypes. Later on, productions

“His motivations and deeds are not diabolical but merely selfish, wanting those things not socially (or morally) allotted him.”
“Sklave,” which changes the “everyone feels the joys of love,” and “lustful” nature described above is a reflection of his inner character, no longer a depiction of his racial stereotype. (Would it make any sense, or no sense at all, to internalize rather than racialize otherness in the context of Verdi’s Otello, in which the Shakespearean Moor’s external otherness is central to the plot?)

Interestingly, it has become standard to change the few words in Schikaneder’s libretto that refer to Monostatos’s skin color. When he sings an aria about longing to kiss the sleeping Pamina, Monostatos says, “Und ich soll die Liebe meiden, weil ein Schwarzer häßlich ist,” which translates to “And I must avoid love, because a Black man is ugly.” In deemphasizing Monostatos’s original stereotype as a Moor, the standard libretto edit replaces “Schwarzer” with “Sklave,” which changes the line to “and I must avoid love, because a slave is ugly”—moving his externalized otherness from his skin color to his social status, though the two were, of course, inseparable to 18th-century audiences. While Monostatos laments his social status as a Moorish slave—“everyone feels the joys of love,” yet he is not allowed to have them—the standard edit still does not quite achieve the internalized otherness of his character that has become the modern interpretation. This libretto edit has been done for long enough, though, that it is accepted practice: singers expect it, administrators don’t think twice about it, and audiences would never know the difference if people like me didn’t point it out in longwinded program articles. I wonder what those conversations were like years ago when the words were first changed. Were people at first resistant to changing anything in a Mozart classic?

Returning to the first article in this series, what would that look like for Carmen as a Romani woman? It’s one thing to adjust a few words for a secondary character in Monostatos when The Magic Flute has little to do with that character’s original ethnicity. It’s another when Carmen is the title character. Yet, as we discussed in the fall, the modern interpretation of Carmen has very little to do with her social status as a Romani woman and more to do with the dynamics of possessive men and independent women. Would it affect Carmen much if “les Zingarellas” (the French word for “g*psy,” which has its etymology in a phrase for “too dirty to touch”) were changed in the libretto to another word? What if the dance number that opens the second act, labeled in the score as the “G*psy Song,” were cut entirely? Cuts are an accepted part of producing opera when considered for timing (think a four-hour Handel opera lovingly trimmed to two and a half) or for a great, compelling artistic reason. Take this Flute production, for example: Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade have brilliantly come up with a unique, silent-film style aesthetic for this production of The Magic Flute, which cuts all the spoken dialogue and replaces it with projections of the action over fortepiano excerpts of Mozart music. What if, in addition to timing and great artistic reasons, judicious cuts were a normal and accepted method of production to avoid depicting inauthentic representations on the stage?

Briefly, add yet another layer to this conversation: speaking from her perspective as an educator of the German language, Howards also writes, “removing racial markers eliminates the entire sociohistoric content, robbing us of the ability to compare modern racial issues to those of Enlightenment-era Vienna.” Should we, then, change “Schwarzer” to “Sklave” and make other changes to Monostatos’s character? If the goal is to study the German libretto in a historical comparison, then no, I suppose not. But if the goal is to perform an emotionally moving, musicotheatrical experience on a stage that is welcoming, inclusive, and universal for all audiences, should we not adjust inauthentic representations in the way that has become standard for Monostatos? Imagine the shock if Monostatos were still depicted today in darkened makeup, his skin color the only reason for his character’s stereotyped duplicity and selfishness. How, exactly, and to what extent can this “Monostatos solution” be applied to other operas? It’s a complex discussion, and one that likely changes from opera to opera. It was easy in The Magic Flute; would it be as easy in Carmen or Turandot?
OUT OF CHARACTER

By Kyle Russell, HGO Editorial Manager
Christine Goerke has had a storied career, beginning with her time as a lyric soprano singing for the Metropolitan Opera in the late ’90s. The 2010s brought a curve ball: a dynamic shift in her voice, and in her career, as she unexpectedly transitioned into a dramatic soprano. At first Goerke feared the change might end her career, but it was really a new beginning. Since then, she’s learned to sing a wide repertoire of dramatic roles, which includes starring as Brünnhilde when HGO produced the operas of Wagner’s Ring (2014-17) and as Elektra at the Resilience Theater (2018) after Hurricane Harvey flooded out the Wortham.

Now Goerke is back in Houston to sing another dramatic soprano role, that of Madame Lidoine in Dialogues of the Carmelites. Recently, while she was in New York to perform the title role in Turandot for the Metropolitan Opera, Goerke made time to speak with Opera Cues about her upcoming HGO performance. And despite her high-flying career as one of the world’s great sopranos, she was charmingly grounded, easy to speak with, and quick to laugh.

How did you first come to love the opera?

I was a clarinet major when I was in college, and I didn’t really know that I could sing. I saw my first opera completely by accident. I was watching television when I was 13 and flipping through the channels, and there was a performance on our public television station. And it turned out to be Francesca da Rimini, of all things, from the Metropolitan Opera. And I was completely fascinated. I’d never seen an opera. I’d never heard an opera. But I just thought it was beautiful. I didn’t actually see my first live opera until about eight years later. I had already started to study at that point, and I found out I could sing completely by accident when I had to take a sight-singing test for my instrumental major.
Do you have a favorite role or an aria that you’ve performed? Do you have any special memory of that kind of thing?

Oh, it’s really difficult. The answer to that question is always whatever role that I’m doing at the moment. But I’ve done a couple of roles so many times that they have become, really, part of me. The title role in Strauss’s *Elektra* is one of them, and that’s something that I’ve sung at HGO. And also, another one that I’ve sung at HGO is Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle. I actually have an incredibly close relationship with the role that I am about to sing, which is Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, because it is something that I have done a fair bit, and a story that, as a Catholic, I have gotten really close to. And I was able to go and do some research in Paris and the cemetery where the nuns are buried and really dig deep into this story. So this role, in particular, has a very special place in my heart.

What does it mean to you? What is that place in your heart?

It’s so funny, because it’s the way everything goes in our lives, you know? Something means something very big to us when we’re 20, and then, when we’re 30, it means something different to us, and when we’re 40, it means something different to us. The last time that I sang this role, I was not yet a mother. And I could understand on an incredibly basic level how important it is to take care of others, and to be responsible for more than one person, and to be a figure of authority, and to show people the right way. And now that I have children, it is a totally different animal. And I am equal parts excited and terrified to jump back into this role with that maternal knowledge, because it brings with it a huge amount of emotion. So it’s going to be difficult to sort of walk the line between emotions and actually singing. I’m very curious to see how this will go. I know that it will mean a great deal to me to walk back in with the life experience that I’ve had now.

You mentioned your Elektra. You won a big award for the role in 2014 (the Helpmann Award, in Sydney), but you also gave a great performance as Elektra here in Houston in 2018.

Yes, I did. I have to say, to me, this role has been sort of the gift that has kept giving to me. I am fascinated by the opera. I’m fascinated by the character. And doing *Elektra* at HGO, it was after the hurricane. It was after we were thrown from the theater, and the theater was undergoing incredible renovations, and we were in the convention center. And it was a very difficult experience because we were not in the space that we understood. It was an incredible experience because the audience was so close to us that we were able to share something that we would never have been able to share with that piece. And I will never forget being able to have that experience with the Houston audiences. So for me, that particular performance stands out more than any of the others.

Is there anything else that you’d like the audience coming into this performance to know about you as an artist?

I’m so excited that Patrick Summers is conducting the opera. Patrick and I have known each other since I was 25. We met when I was at Wolf Trap for the first time, and he was conducting *Julius Caesar*, and I was singing the role of Nireno, which is a eunuch. So that was fun. We’ve known each other a long time, and I’m overjoyed to still be making music with him. ▶

Goerke as Ortrud in HGO’s *Lohengrin* in 2009.

Goerke (left) with the nymphs in HGO’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* in 2011.
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- **HGO’s 2014 production of Carmen** featuring Ana María Martínez and Brandon Jovanovich. Photo by Lynn Lane.
A young Joshua (right) poses for a photo with his sister Nathalie (left) on the staircase in their childhood home. PHOTO COURTESY JOSHUA HOPKINS.
I’ll never forget the tragic phone call I received in the late afternoon of September 22, 2015. I was told, “Your sister Nathalie was shot and murdered.” At first I couldn’t comprehend the news, struck by shock. The words were repeated to me, more slowly. I was speechless and started shaking. It was a beautiful autumn day in Canada’s capital, where I was in the midst of final rehearsals for The Barber of Seville as the title role of Figaro. I remember walking to rehearsal an hour later with my wife Zoe, both of us in a complete daze—our world had been turned upside down. That morning my sister’s ex-boyfriend had gone on a killing spree, brutally murdering three women in their separate homes in Renfrew County, west of Ottawa. My beloved sister Nathalie Warmerdam (née Hopkins), Anastasia Kuzyk, and Carol Culleton were the victims of a crime that would be recognized as one of the worst cases of domestic violence in Canadian history.

Somehow, I went on with my rehearsals and sang all of the Barber performances; my opening night was just four days after Nathalie’s murder. I welcomed the focused distraction of Figaro’s challenging vocal acrobatics and comedic antics within Rossini’s masterpiece. It was a strange coincidence that I was working near my hometown of Petawawa, Ontario, where my family had gathered to mourn. This meant Zoe and I could be with them on three separate occasions between my performances. Each visit involved a surreal event of some sort: a somber meeting with the Provincial homicide detectives in a family living room; Nathalie’s visitation held on a star-filled, crystal-clear evening at a funeral home in the neighboring city of Pembroke; and the “Celebration of Nathalie,” a gathering held to pay tribute to her by way of poetry readings, speeches, and musical presentations. I sang Rodgers & Hammerstein’s “When You Walk Through a Storm.”

After making its virtual world premiere during HGO Digital’s first season, Songs for Murdered Sisters will make its live premiere this spring, with baritone Joshua Hopkins accompanied by composer/pianist Jake Heggie. 7 p.m. March 8, 2022. Rothko Chapel. Panel follows performance.
The day before my final Barber performance, my wife and I met with the artistic administration of Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO). An idea had formed—to create a new musical work, not only to commemorate my sister but also to bring social awareness to the global epidemic of violence against women. Our intention was to develop a song cycle, melding the power and beauty of poetry and music to tell this personal story through my voice as someone who has suffered a great loss. I walked out of the meeting with a heart full of gratitude and promise, supported by NACO’s strong commitment to addressing this tragedy.

When I returned home to Houston, my amazing friends at Houston Grand Opera (HGO) gave their love and support to me and my family. Patrick Summers offered his condolences and asked if there was anything he could do. I told him about this new project I was creating with NACO and without hesitation, Patrick promised to seek HGO resources for co-commissioning our song cycle, broadening its reach across the border.

Now the search was on for the creators. For our composer, I asked myself the following questions: Who can I trust to handle this emotionally sensitive subject with grace? Who can craft a beautiful and melodic collection of songs? As it happened, in the autumn of 2016 I was creating the role of Harry Bailey for the HGO world premiere of Jake Heggie’s glorious new work, It’s a Wonderful Life. During the opera’s run, I met with Jake to pitch the project, which touched him deeply, and he fully committed to sharing my sister’s story through song. He and I both strongly believed that our writer should be a Canadian woman, to keep our intention of a cross-border initiative and to ensure the project included a female voice.

He encouraged me to THINK BIG, so that the project would reach the widest possible audience. Names like Joni Mitchell and k.d. lang were discussed as possible collaborators.

As fate would have it, the following January I was singing Papageno in Mozart’s The Magic Flute in Toronto, and a close friend recognized world-renowned author and poet Margaret Atwood in the audience. Could there be a more ideal writer of our time to address this serious topic? We knew we would be incredibly privileged to have her involved. When Jake and I reached out, her response was immediate but tentative. Over the course of the next few weeks, without committing to the project but very much engaged, Margaret asked questions about the structure of the cycle and my relationship with my sister. One issue she raised was the lack of a female singing voice in the project, something which Jake and I had previously discussed. I responded to her: “I have grappled with whether or not it makes sense for me to be the artist presenting this work because I’m a man. I’ve concluded that this is a subject worthy of examination regardless of gender and that it is vital that men speak out against domestic abuse.”

There are significant moments in life that are etched in our memories for eternity. Less than a month after proposing the project to Margaret, Zoe and I were attending a performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York when I received an incredible surprise gift. At intermission, as is commonplace in this digital age, I checked my email and found a new message from Margaret that included eight powerful new poems. I was stunned—before formally committing to

Composer Jake Heggie and Joshua (foreground) on the scoring stage of Skywalker Sound with an image of Joshua’s sister Nathalie and her two children (background). PHOTO BY ZOE TARSHIS.

Joshua meets with author Margaret Atwood (left) for the first time in New York City. PHOTO COURTESY JOSHUA HOPKINS.
the project, she had sent us her beautiful words. Barely having time to skim what she had titled Songs for Murdered Sisters, I returned to the auditorium for the second act, my head reeling. The next morning, I shut myself alone in my bedroom and read Margaret’s poems without distraction. I wept. I was compelled to write her:

“I am completely floored by what you have written, and I’m deeply touched. I never could have imagined that my grief, my guilt, my anger could have been so elegantly crafted into such beautiful and striking words.”

Fast-forward two years to another day that I will never forget, when Jake sent the completed piano/vocal score of his 27-minute song cycle. Jake relates his work to Schubert’s epic cycle Die Winterreise, or “Winter’s Journey.” He describes this journey as akin to that of a devastated wanderer attempting to find meaning and answers within a landscape of love, loss, grief, anger, rage, and possible redemption. I wrote in response, “And here they are! I can’t wait to hear how you have interpreted and paced Margaret’s remarkable texts. You have both given me the most amazing gift possible through your unbelievable creative talents.”

Weeks later, after theaters around the world had shuttered their doors and canceled live performances for the foreseeable future due to the coronavirus pandemic, I sat at my keyboard with a heavy heart and listened to a recording that Jake had made for me, playing his own songs on piano. I played my vocal line while I listened to get a sense of how the voice complemented the instrumental line. When the final song hauntingly faded away, I picked up my phone and, shaking with emotion, called Jake. I reached his voicemail and, with a waver ing voice filled with profound emotion, left him a rambling message of gratitude and admiration.

Much has happened since then. As we had feared, our live September 2020 world premiere performances of Songs for Murdered Sisters were postponed in Houston; the orchestral premiere with NACO in Ottawa was also postponed. However, the project took a surprising and unexpected turn when Jake and HGO proposed making a professional film of the cycle, to premiere as a virtual online presentation on Marquee TV as part of the groundbreaking HGO Digital, Sarah and Ernest Butler Performance Series. So, in late October 2020, I embarked on an emotionally cathartic journey, joining Jake and an incredible group of talented creatives in San Francisco to make art during a pandemic. Jake and I first recorded the song cycle over three days on the breathtaking Skywalker Sound scoring stage, not only to serve as the audio track for the film, but also to be released as a professional digital recording on the Pentatone label. We then joined forces with the gifted director James Niebuhr and his fabulous crew to make the film. During an adrenaline-filled, 15-hour shoot inside the crumbling depths of Oakland’s abandoned 16th Street train station, I inhabited the grief and rage that welled up from within. The journey was intense, unforgettable, and will remain one of the most profound artistic experiences of my life.

As I reflect, I can’t help but think of the thousands of women in danger from their abusive partners, unable to escape or connect with those who could support and protect them. The alarming statistics on domestic violence are sobering here in Houston. Even before the pandemic, Harris County “consistently ranked number one in Texas for the highest number of most women killed by intimate partners.” (Houston Chronicle, Hannah Dellinger, August 11, 2020) There have also been significant spikes in calls and police responses since the pandemic began. In 2021, “from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, there were more than 25,000 domestic violence cases, which are up by 74%.” (Click2Houston, Brittany Taylor, October 7, 2021) Thankfully, the city of Houston has been adapting to provide help for victims. In September 2020, Mayor Sylvester Turner expanded the mayor’s office of human trafficking to include domestic violence, and further announced he would “expand the availability of police department teams that help respond to domestic abuse calls. The teams pair police officers with victims’ advocates to help provide a less intimidating response.” (Houston Chronicle, Dylan McGuinness, November 9, 2020)

Since receiving Margaret’s haunting words and Jake’s gorgeous music, I have shed countless tears. The words and music, in their own separate ways and woven together, have opened a portal to my heart, connecting me to complicated emotions that were lying dormant under all the layers of self-protection and denial. I had often found myself feeling numb about Nathalie’s death—something too shocking to comprehend. This work has provided meaning for me, transforming my grief into something palpable. If I can awaken the heart of someone who does not yet recognize this societal failure caused by our patriarchal system, or motivate someone to do their part, take action, and perhaps save someone from a similar plight as Nathalie’s, then I may truly hope to honor my sister’s memory.

The Songs for Murdered Sisters digital album, released on the Pentatone label with composer Jake Heggie at the piano, is available on all major platforms.

Margaret Atwood’s Songs for Murdered Sisters were published in her latest poetry collection, Dearly.

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**What you can do to help:**

*I’m calling all men to own their responsibility to help end violence against women. Please take the White Ribbon Pledge at whiteribbonsisters.com and speak out against all forms of gender-based violence—and share your commitment using the hashtag #WhiteRibbonSisters.*

*Please give generously to support: Houston Area Women’s Center & The Women’s Home*
NOTES FOR THE FUTURE

The Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, a life-changing event for young artists

By HGO Studio Director Brian Speck

One of the great joys of working at Houston Grand Opera is the renewed energy that comes with each new class of HGO Studio artists. Every year around this time, we welcome a group of talented and hopeful singers to compete in the annual Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Because the Studio is all about looking toward the future, identifying artists with the greatest potential for operatic careers is one of the program’s highest priorities, and we’re fortunate to have this great tradition to bring new talent to the HGO stage.

This season’s event marks 34 consecutive years of competitions. The list of past finalists and winners is a roster of current operatic stars, many of whom are alumni of the Studio and appear regularly at HGO. With the competition in its fourth decade, it garners the respect of professionals throughout the opera industry who look to HGO as an incubator for talent.

Selecting the finalists and repertoire for Concert of Arias is no small task. The process begins six months prior to the event, as the pool of singers is narrowed through several rounds of video and live auditions. Finalists are selected a few days prior to the concert, and at that time, a panel from the Studio and artistic departments at HGO reviews each singer’s repertoire to select arias for the finals. While the balance and flow of the concert is an important consideration, the primary goal is to show each singer at their best, in repertoire that highlights their unique gifts. This sometimes points to familiar and cherished arias, but it can also mean lesser-known selections are included. Each singer’s two arias contrast in some way, giving the audience and judges an opportunity to experience the versatility of their artistry and voice.

In the effort to recruit the greatest singers for the HGO Studio, Concert of Arias is a valuable tool. Preparations that happen throughout the week allow prospective Studio artists to learn about the company’s culture and work. The excellence of both the concert and the post-concert event show finalists the pride that HGO takes in developing talent. Singers know from the Concert of Arias experience that an invitation to the Studio is an opportunity to join a company that will provide immense support and encouragement on the challenging path to a career on the stage. And of course, appearing in the concert can dramatically change a young singer’s life; they are recognized for their talent by a company known for artistic excellence, and become known throughout the opera world as a singer with great potential.

Competitions serve another important purpose for artists in the beginning stages of their careers. The path to singing professionally can be expensive; in addition to the usual costs of daily life, singers need to invest in time with coaches and teachers, publicity materials like headshots and videos, scores, and many other resources. It is often the monetary prize in a competition that gives a singer the ability to pursue their career with energy and purpose. Concert of Arias has provided financial support to many of today’s leading artists, and it means a great deal for them to have this tangible and useful indication of the company’s belief in their talent.

When new Studio artists step inside the Wortham for their first day with the company, they have an incredible memory to look back on, and they already feel at home. It is a big leap from academic training to a professional company at HGO’s level, and participating in Concert of Arias assures singers that they are a valued part of the company. HGO audiences greet them with warmth and familiarity and eagerly anticipate their debuts, remembering their inspiring performances from the competition. It’s a tradition that we love for so many reasons, and as always, we’re thrilled to present this year’s finalists on January 21.

The 34rd Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers Concert of Arias takes place at the Wortham Theater Center at 7 p.m. on January 21, 2022. After the live competition finals and concert, dinner with the artists follows in the Grand Foyer. Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth, chairs.

For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org. HGO.org/COA. You can also enjoy the event virtually, for free, as part of the HGO Digital season; it will be streamed live on January 21 and remain available through February 20. HGODigital.org.
HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2021–22

Raven McMillon, soprano  
*Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer/ Nancy Haywood Fellow*

Elena Villalón, soprano  
*Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai Fellow*

Sun-Ly Pierce, mezzo-soprano  
*Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson/ John Serpe and Tracy Maddox Fellow*

Emily Treigle, mezzo-soprano  
*Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover/ Mr. Veer Vashita Fellow*

Ricardo García, tenor  
*Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr./Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow*

Eric Taylor, tenor  
*Jill and Allyn Risley/ Sharon Ley Lietzow and Robert Lietzow/Drs. Rachel and Warren A. Ellsworth IV Fellow*

Blake Denson, baritone  
*Gloria M. Portela/ Carolyn J. Levy/Liz Grimm and Jack Roth Fellow*

Luke Sutliff, baritone  
*Lynn Gissel/Brenda Harvey-Traylor Fellow*

Cory McGee, bass  
*Beth Madison Fellow*

William Guanbo Su, bass  
*Anne and Albert Chao Fellow*

Alex Munger, pianist/coach  
*Gary Hollingsworth and Ken Hyde/ Trey Yates/Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura Fellow*

Bin Yu Sanford, pianist/coach  
*Stephanie Larsen/ Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Miro-Quesada/ Ms. Lynn Des Prez Fellow*

HGO STUDIO FACULTY & STAFF

Brian Speck, *Director*

Jamie Gelfand, *Studio Manager*

Ana María Martinez, *HGO Artistic Advisor*

Stephen King, *Director of Vocal Instruction*

Sponsored by Jill and Allyn Risley, Janet Sims, and James J. Drach Endowment Fund

Patrick Summers, *Conducting Instructor and Coach*

Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair

Peter Pasztor, *Principal Coach*

Sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Jr. Endowment Fund

Kirill Kuzmin, *Principal Coach*

Kevin J. Miller, *Assistant Conductor*

Madeline Slettedahl, *Assistant Conductor*

Brian Connelly, *Piano Instructor*

Tara Faircloth, *Drama Coach*

Adam Noble, *Movement Coach*

Christa Gaug, *German Instructor*

Raymond Hounfodji, *French Instructor*

Sponsored by Craig Miller and Chris Bacon

Enrica Vagliani Gray, *Italian Instructor*

Sponsored by Marsha Montemayor

Kristine McIntyre, *Showcase Director*

HGO STUDIO SUPPORTERS

The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of the Texas Voice Center. 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, Gwyneth Campbell, and David and Norine Gill. HGO thanks Magnolia Houston for outstanding support of the HGO Studio and YAVA programs.

Additional support for the Houston Grand Opera Studio is provided by is provided by Sylvia Barnes and Jim Trimble and the following funds within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.:

- The Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation Endowment Fund
- Marjorie and Thomas Capshaw Endowment Fund
- James J. Drach Endowment Fund
- The Evans Family
- Carol Lynn Lay Fletcher Endowment Fund
- William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Mr. and Mrs. Melvyn Hetzel
- Charlotte Howe Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Elva Lobit Opera Endowment Fund

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Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil Quaker State Company) Fund

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Tenneco, Inc., Endowment Fund

Weston-Cargill Endowed Fund
CONNECTING WITH HGOco

The latest from the Opera’s community collaboration and learning initiative

A Marvelous Matinee

On December 15, HGOco had the wonderful opportunity to share this season’s world-premiere opera, Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney’s *The Snowy Day*, with young people from across Houston at our student matinee. The Cullen Theater was packed with students who had a blast joining Peter on his magical, snow-filled journey through the city!

Throughout the school year, HGOco works with schools to ensure students have access to our productions. The 2021-22 season features three performances for student-only audiences: last fall’s *Carmen*, December’s *The Snowy Day*, and still to come in spring 2022, *Romeo and Juliet*.

To provide as many schools as possible the opportunity to join us for student performances, we offer transportation reimbursements for all of them. In addition, teachers are equipped with study guides to deepen students’ learning experiences. Are you interested in bringing your students to HGOco’s May 5 student matinee for *Romeo and Juliet*? Contact us at hgoco@hgo.org to book tickets as low as $5. —Chelsea Lerner

Fun at the ERJCC

After an 18-month hiatus from performing live in our communities, the HGOco team was thrilled to present programming surrounding HGO world-premiere opera *The Snowy Day* for audiences at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center’s Oliver Lapin Day, a part of the Ann and Stephen Kaufman Jewish Book and Arts Festival, on November 14.

HGOco's Sing! Move! Play! and Storybook Opera are fun, 30-minute interactive storytelling programs with an opera singer that are perfect for pre-K through second grades. Music for the ERJCC presentations was drawn from *The Snowy Day*, HGO’s new opera from librettist Andrea Davis Pickney and composer Joel Thompson, based on the well-loved children’s book by Ezra Jack Keats.

Children and their families had a wonderful time experiencing *The Snowy Day* while ice skating, building a snowman, dancing, and singing—in Spanish and Hebrew! —Chelsea Lerner

Touring Programs: Back in Schools!

After close to two years conducting programming for classrooms online, the HGOco team is happy to have developed an advanced digital toolbox for future use. But, having worked with campuses to get safety measures in place for the spring semester, we are over the moon to bring opera back to schools with two in-person learning programs: Storybook Opera and Opera to Go!

High School Night for *Carmen*.
These programs often give students their first opera experiences, and they serve more than 60,000 young people in person during pandemic-free years. As COVID’s impact continues, the volume of performances may not be typical, but the HGOco team plans to provide even deeper opportunities for learning.

Storybook Opera sends teaching artists into classrooms that serve the youngest students on campuses, in pre-K to second grades. The artists read stories aloud, enhancing them with their operatic talents. Students sing and read along with a book, then retell the story in their own words. Programs focus on Social and Emotional Learning skills such as considering stories from multiple perspectives, building empathy, and reflecting on how books might relate to students’ current or past experiences. They observe the ways music can reflect characters’ moods and are taught to sing when they feel the same way.

*The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats is HGOco’s latest Storybook Opera offering. For the first time, we’ve been able to use the score from a company-commissioned world premiere as a teaching tool in the classroom. After recent Storybook Opera visits, students could be heard singing composer Joel Thompson’s melodies in the halls and on playgrounds! *The Snowy Day* will be available throughout the spring semester alongside three other stories: *The Armadillo’s Dream, Lula the Might Griot,* and *Agua, Agüita (Water, Little Water) & Fuego, Fueguito (Fire, Little Fire).*

The HGOco team is also excited that Opera to Go!, recommended for students in grades 2-8, is back on the road with the live tour of *The Barber of Seville in Texas.* Now set in the Lone Star State, Rossini’s opera has been given a makeover by Kristine McIntyre, complete with a Spanish-English libretto. A troupe of six cast and crew travel the greater Houston area to bring 45-minute performances right to the heart of communities and schools. This delightful production is directed by Cecilia Duarte.

Dates are available for the spring tour for both Storybook Opera and Opera to Go! Contact HGOco at hgoco@hgo.org to book artists in your community. —Alisa Magallón
THE IMPRESARIOS CIRCLE

ROBIN ANGY 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. They are charter members of the Impresarios Circle and generously underwrite a mainstage production each season.

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 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.

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.
The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and Margaret Root Brown and George R. and Alice Pratt Brown, has been a treasured partner of HGO since 1984. Based in Houston, the Foundation distributes funds principally for education, community service, and the arts, especially the visual and performing arts. HGO is tremendously grateful for The Brown Foundation’s leadership support, which has been critical to the company’s unprecedented growth and success in recent years. The Brown Foundation was among the lead contributors to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey and COVID-19 recovery efforts.

SARAH AND ERNEST BUTLER
HGO subscribers for over 20 years, Ernest and Sarah are the lead underwriters for the company’s digital artistic programming for the 2020-21 season. They also have generously endowed three chairs at HGO: those of HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, Chorus Master Richard Bado, and HGO Chorus Concertmaster Denise Tarrant. Because supporting young artists is a particular passion for both, HGO’s Concert of Arias is one of their favorite annual events. Ernest and Sarah reside in Austin and are longtime supporters of Ballet Austin, Austin Opera, Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Texas Cultural Trust, and the University of Texas Butler School of Music, which has carried their name since 2008. Ernest and Sarah are world travelers, and they never miss an opportunity to see opera in the cities they visit.

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, HGOcco’s Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment.

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

THE ROBERT AND JANE CIZIK FOUNDATION
The Cizik family name is synonymous with passion, devotion, and service to the people of Houston. The Ciziks have always been associated with hard work, high achievement, inspirational leadership, and love for their family. Survived by his wife, Jane, Robert Cizik spearheaded the fundraising and building of HGO’s home, the Wortham Theater Center. The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation gives generously to many educational institutions and charitable organizations, including UTHealth, Harvard University, the University of Houston, and the University of Connecticut. In 2017, the School of Nursing at UTHealth was re-named the Jane and Robert Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth in recognition of the family’s dedicated support.
Mathilda is a native of New Orleans and a long-time resident of Houston. She is a retired museum educator, having served for many years as Manager of the Docent and Tour Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, as well as a volunteer with Taping for the Blind, Inc. She and her late husband, Mike, created the Cochran Family Professorship in Earth and Environmental Sciences to support Tulane University’s School of Science and Engineering. Mathilda currently serves as a member of the HGO Board of Directors and is chair of the HGOco Committee. She has been an HGO subscriber since the 1986–87 season.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 40 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including a long-standing tradition of supporting HGO’s season-opening operas. 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. Kelly Rose, general counsel and SVP, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

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

THE CULLEN FOUNDATION
For more than three decades, The Cullen Foundation has been a vital member of the HGO family. Established in 1947, the Foundation has more than a half-century history of giving generously to education, health care, and the arts in Texas, primarily in the Greater Houston area. The Opera is very grateful for the Foundation’s longstanding leadership support of HGO’s Family and Holiday Opera Series, as well as special support for HGO’s COVID-19 recovery efforts.

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s mainstage season for nearly 30 years. The Trust was established from assets of The Cullen Foundation to specifically benefit Texas performing arts institutions, particularly those within the Greater Houston area. In recent years, The Cullen Trust has provided lead support for memorable productions including HGO’s Family and Holiday Opera Series, and made a leadership contribution to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery fund, as well as a generous gift to HGO’s COVID-19 recovery efforts.

DRS. LIZ GRIMM AND JACK ROTH
HGO subscribers since the 2013–14 season, Liz and Jack have both committed themselves to cancer research and patient care through their work at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Jack is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves as HGO Studio Committee Chair. Liz and Jack were generous underwriters of HGO’s historic, first-ever Ring cycle and lead supporters of HGO’s German repertoire, including Elektra. Additionally, Liz and Jack chaired the 2018 Opera Ball and will chair this season’s Concert of Arias on January 21, 2022.

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST FOUNDATION
The William Randolph Hearst Foundation is a national philanthropic resource for organizations working in the fields of culture, education, health, and social services. The Foundation identifies and funds outstanding nonprofits to ensure that people of all backgrounds in the United States have the opportunity to build healthy, productive, and inspiring lives. A dedicated supporter of HGO, the Foundation is a leading advocate for HGOco. The continued support from the Foundation makes it possible for Houstonians of all ages to explore, engage, and learn through the inspiring art of opera.

H-E-B
For over 115 years, H-E-B has contributed to worthy causes throughout Texas and Mexico, a tradition proudly maintained today. And for over 20 years, H-E-B has been a lead supporter of HGOco’s arts education programs for Houston area students. H-E-B’s partnership helps over 70,000 young people experience the magic of opera each season. Always celebrating Houston’s cultural diversity, H-E-B helped make possible last season’s Marian’s Song and this season’s upcoming world premiere, The Snowy Day.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOWMENT, INC.
Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the Endowment contains over 50 named funds, both unrestricted and restricted, and annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chair Yolanda Knoll, Senior Chair Tom Rushing, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors.
**HOUSTON METHODIST**
For over ten years, Houston Grand Opera has partnered with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO.

Houston Methodist’s Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) is the only center of its kind in the country, comprising a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed upon performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO’s mainstage season and partners frequently on HGOco collaborations. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Warren Ellsworth and Dr. Apurva Thekdi serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

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

**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 Impresarios Circle. Richard has great passion for opera, especially Wagner, and he and Donna were underwriters for HGO’s *Ring* cycle. They are also special events sponsors, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.

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

**BETH MADISON**
This season marks Beth’s 23rd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Impresario’s Circle in late 2021. Paul is President of Bechtel’s Energy global business unit in Houston and has served in key leadership roles for over two decades, dating back to his start with the company in London in 1995. His background as a pianist comes in handy as he accompanies his partner Jay Rockwell, an accomplished operatic baritone, who has sung with the Houston Grand Opera chorus in recent productions.

**PAUL MARSDEN AND JAY ROCKWELL**
Paul Marsden and Jay Rockwell became HGO Trustees in the 2020–21 season and generously increased their support to join the Impresario’s Circle in late 2021. Paul is President of Bechtel’s Energy global business unit in Houston and has served in key leadership roles for over two decades, dating back to his start with the company in London in 1995. His background as a pianist comes in handy as he accompanies his partner Jay Rockwell, an accomplished operatic baritone, who has sung with the Houston Grand Opera chorus in recent productions.

**THE ROBERT AND JANICE MCNAIR FOUNDATION**
Janice and the late Bob McNair, longtime HGO subscribers and supporters, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob was a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995-97). Through the family’s passionate support of students, young entrepreneurs, medical research and the community, The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation is transforming some of the biggest challenges our nation faces today into the solutions of tomorrow. As the lead supporter of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series, the McNair Foundation makes it possible for thousands of students and families to experience shorter length family-friendly operas during the holiday season each year.

**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 in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.
THE MELLON FOUNDATION
Established in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the humanities, arts, higher education, and cultural heritage. The driving force behind so many of HGO’s new commissions, The Mellon Foundation’s longstanding support of HGO helps us tell relevant new stories and add to the operatic repertoire by developing new works, like Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney’s *The Snowy Day*.

SID MOORHEAD
Sid Moorhead is the owner of Moorhead’s Blueberry Farm in Conroe, Texas, a family business that started as his father’s hobby over 40 years ago. After working for several years as a computer analyst, Sid left the corporate world to run the farm. He’s been an opera lover since he was in college, and he joined the Opera as an HGO Trustee in 2014. Now a member of the HGO Board of Directors who served as chair of Concert of Arias 2021, Sid enjoys traveling to experience opera around the world on our HGO Patron trips. We’re thrilled to have Sid as a valued member of our HGO family.

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

NOVUM ENERGY
Founded in 2011 in Panama, Novum Energy is an international physical oil supply and trading company committed to industry excellence in delivery standards and customer service. Founder and President Alfredo Vilas serves on the HGO Board of Directors and has over 20 years of experience and a passion for service to the community through cultural, recreational, and philanthropic work.

BEVERLY AND STAMAN OGVIE
HGO subscribers since 1997, Beverly and Staman Ogvie are true advocates for HGO and the performing arts. Staman is the former Chief Executive Officer of Hines, and is responsible for the development, acquisition, and management of more than 29 million square feet of commercial real estate as well as several thousand acres of planned community developments. Beverly previously served on the HGO Studio Committee. In addition to their commitment to the performing arts, Staman and Beverly established The Staman Ogvie Fund for Spinal Cord Injury Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Research with Memorial Hermann Foundation. The fund has raised over $10 million toward innovative research to restore function for individuals suffering from spinal cord injuries. The Ogvies also provided critical support in response to HGO’s COVID-19 recovery efforts.

JILL AND ALLYN RISLEY
Jill and Allyn Risley have been HGO subscribers since the 2003-04 season and are members of the company’s Founders Council. Allyn and Jill have been key influencers of HGO programs for many years, with special affection for our esteemed HGO Studio. They co-sponsor HGO Studio Artist Eric Taylor and faculty member Dr. Stephen King, Director of Vocal Instruction. Allyn is Chairman of Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT) North America, an engineering company specializing in liquid gas containment systems using cryogenics. Allyn has served as Chair of the HGO Board of Directors since August 2020.

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

SHELL
Shell is a leader in the Houston arts community, supporting HGO for over 40 years. Shell’s leadership support makes opera more accessible to everyone through the NEXUS Initiative for Affordability and inspires young minds with STEM-aligned arts education opportunities like our annual Opera Camps. Shell was also a major supporter of HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery. HGO is honored to have Christos Angelides, external relations general manager of integrated gas ventures, as a Trustee.
Dian and Harlan Stai
Harlan, a member of the HGO Board of Directors, and Dian are charter members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and their leadership support includes mainstage productions, the HGO Studio, the HGO Endowment, and special events. The Stais have also sponsored HGO Studio artists and they host annual recitals featuring HGO Studio artists at Mansefeldt, their renowned Fredericksburg ranch. HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.

Texas Commission on the Arts
The mission of the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) is to advance our state economically and culturally by investing in creative projects and programs. TCA supports a diverse and innovative arts community in the state, throughout the nation, and internationally by providing resources to enhance economic development, arts education, cultural tourism, and artist sustainability initiatives. Over the years, TCA has provided invaluable support to many HGO projects, including mainstage productions and HGOco education initiatives.

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

Vinson & Elkins LLP
HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins LLP for nearly three decades. For more than 100 years, Vinson & Elkins LLP has been deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and mainstage productions, including this season’s Live from The Cullen recital featuring Reginald Smith Jr. The Opera is honored to have two Vinson & Elkins LLP partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Chris Bacon 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 General Director Khori Dastoor, and is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball, and she generously chaired the 2018 Hurricane Harvey benefit Concert HGO and Plácido: Coming Home!

The Wortham Foundation, Inc.
In the 1980s, the Wortham Foundation contributed $20 million to lead the capital campaign for the Wortham Theater Center, guided by businessman Gus S. Wortham’s early recognition of the vital role of the arts in making Houston an appealing place to live and work. During their lifetimes, Gus and his wife, Lyndall, were dedicated to improving the lives of Houstonians. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support. This leadership support has been vital to HGO’s growth and commitment to excellence. The Wortham Foundation’s support of HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery helped to bring the company back home, and we are deeply grateful.

Lynn Wyatt
Lynn’s generosity touches every aspect of HGO. She is a Lifetime Trustee of HGO and serves as the vice chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. She chaired HGO’s Golden Jubilee Gala in 2005. Oscar Wyatt endowed The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund in 2010, honoring Lynn’s service to the company and dedication to bringing the world’s best operatic artists to HGO, and she was the honoree at the 2010 Opera Ball. Lynn and Oscar have been lead supporters of a number of HGO productions and programs, including the multiyear company-wide initiative Seeking the Human Spirit.
Houston Grand Opera Trustees and Patrons Circle members support the Opera with annual donations of $10,000 or $5,000, respectively, and make possible the incredible work of HGO. Trustees and Patrons enjoy many benefits at the Opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, behind-the-scenes experiences, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and much more. For information on joining as a Trustee or Patron, please contact Kelly Nicholls at 713-980-8698 or knicholls@hgo.org.

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JANUARY 12
Digital Program: What If? Dialogues of the Carmelites: Presented by HGOco as part of the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, Dramaturg Jeremy Johnson hosts an interactive online workshop that examines the context in which our operatic characters make decisions. Then we ask.... What if? 6-7 p.m. hgo.org/community-and-learning/community/sthes-programs/what-if

JANUARY 14, 16M, 19, 22
Performances of Poulenc’s Dialogues of the Carmelites. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the January 14 performance only.

JANUARY 20
HGOco presents Storybook Opera: The Snowy Day, a free event at Jacinto City Library. For information, visit hcpl.net/branch/jacinto-city-branch-library.

JANUARY 21 (LIVE EVENT & DIGITAL RELEASE)
Concert of Arias: The 34rd Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers Concert of Arias, a celebration of the future of opera. 7 p.m. live competition finals and concert. Dinner with the artists follows in the Grand Foyer. Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth, chairs. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org. HGO.org/COA. Streams on HGO Digital through February 20. Free; HGODigital.org.

FEBRUARY 1
Music and Healing, season 2, episode 4: Music and Loneliness, featuring HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers. Livestreamed on HGOco’s Facebook and YouTube pages. 1-2 p.m.

FEBRUARY 11
Celebrating Carlisle Floyd: A memorial concert honoring the American opera giant, who passed away in 2021 at age 95. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. 8 p.m. Free but ticketed. Visit HGO.org.

FEBRUARY 11 (RELEASE)
HGO Digital: Live from The Cullen: Lauren Snouffer: The internationally renowned soprano, along with pianist Joseph Li, celebrates love and the natural world through works by Debussy, Berg, Schubert, and contemporary composer Will Liverman. Streams through March 13. Free; HGODigital.org.

FEBRUARY 4, 6M, 8, 10, 12, 13M
Performances of Mozart’s The Magic Flute. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission receptions for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the February 4 performance only, and for members of Overture at the February 12 performance only.

FEBRUARY 5, 6
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. 7:30 p.m. February 5; 5 p.m. February 6.

MARCH 1
Music and Healing, season 2, episode 5: Music and Parkinson’s Care, featuring HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers. Livestreamed on HGOco’s Facebook and YouTube pages. 1-2 p.m.

MARCH 8
Live premiere, presented by HGOco: Jake Heggie, Margaret Atwood, and Joshua Hopkins’s song cycle, Songs for Murdered Sisters. Panel discussion follows performance. 7 p.m. Rothko Chapel.
MARCH 11
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 19 (LIVE EVENT & DIGITAL RELEASE)
Giving Voice: HGO’s third annual Giving Voice concert will celebrate diverse artists in opera. Soprano Nicole Heaston hosts. Live event, Wortham Theater Center’s Cullen Theater, 7 p.m. Streams on HGO Digital through April 18. Free; HGODigital.org.

MARCH 19, 20, 26, 27
HGOco presents Songs on the Water at Buffalo Bayou Park, a 90-minute journey that includes a recital, wine, and light bites. 4-5 p.m. and 6-7 p.m. each day. Visit buffalobayou.org for tickets. $75.

MARCH 24
Digital Program: What If? — Turandot: Presented by HGOco as part of the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, Dramaturg Jeremy Johnson hosts an interactive online workshop that examines the context in which our operatic characters make decisions. Then we ask... What if? 6-7 p.m. hgo.org/community-and-learning/commu-nity/sths-programs/what-if

APRIL 8 (RELEASE)
HGO Digital: Live from The Cullen: Michelle Bradley: The fast-rising soprano, with HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers at the piano, sings Mahler’s five-song Rücksert-Lieder, Barber’s Hermit Songs, Op. 29, and a selection of spirituals. Streams through May 8. Free; HGODigital.org

APRIL 9
Opera Ball 2022: The Journey to Marrakesh: Join us for a dreamy Moroccan adventure when Houston’s only annual white tie gala returns with cocktails, dinner, a luxury auction, and dancing the night away. 6:30 p.m. Wortham Theater Center. Jennifer and Benjamin Fink, chairs; Teresa and José Ivo, auction chairs. Event followed by the ENCORE After Party, Tami Hiraoka and Louis Borrego, chairs. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org. HGO.org/OperaBall

APRIL 22, 24M, 30, MAY 3, 6, 8M
Performances of Puccini’s Turandot. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 22 performance only.

APRIL 29, MAY 1M, 7, 11
Performances of Gounod’s Romeo and Juliet. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission receptions for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 29 performance only, and for members of Overture at the May 7 performance only.

MAY 2-3
The Barber of Seville in Texas: HGOco and Opera to Go! present Kristine McIntyre’s bilingual adaptation of Gioachino Rossini’s classic comic opera, now set in Texas. Recommended for children in grades 2-8. Miller Outdoor Theatre. 9 a.m. Free.

MAY 5
Student Matinee: HGOco hosts groups of students in grades 4-8 and their chaperones at performances of Gounod’s Romeo and Juliet. 10 a.m. School groups only; reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

APRIL 8 (RELEASE)
HGO Digital: Live from The Cullen: Federico de Michiels: The renowned Argentinian bass-baritone Federico de Michiels shares tango and chamber songs from his home country alongside jazz standards. He also plays guitar, with Emiliano Messiez on piano. Streams through June 12. Free; HGODigital.org.

JUNE 10 (RELEASE)
HGO Digital: Suite Española II: Building on the critical and audience response for spring 2021’s Suite Española: Explorando Iberia, created by and starring the incomparable Ana María Martínez, this follow-up program celebrates the musical traditions of Spanish-speaking cultures in Central America and the Caribbean. Streams through July 10. Paid; HGODigital.org.

JUNE 13-JULY 1
Opera Camp: HGO is bringing back two of its most popular camps this summer! Create an Opera for grades 3-8 will run June 13-24, and Art of Opera for grades 9-12 will run June 20-July 1. Learn more at HGO.org/SummerCamp.

For more performances and events, in person and virtual, visit HGO.org!
“a sustained creative statement, almost a composition in itself... I had never heard a recital quite like it.” —Alex Ross, The New Yorker

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PLAN YOUR VISIT

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

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

HGO’s Customer Care Center is another great resource. For performance information, to purchase or exchange tickets, or to make a donation to HGO, contact the Customer Care Center at 713-228-6737. You can also email customercare@hgo.org. Throughout the season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. During performance runs, the Center is open until 6 p.m., and on performance days, it is open until curtain time. The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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

BROWN AND CULLEN ALCOVES

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

EXCHANGING YOUR TICKETS

Full-season and mini-package subscribers may exchange their tickets for a different performance of the same opera without fee, subject to availability. Exchanges can be made by phone until the performance begins. Non-subscription single tickets may be exchanged with a service fee of $10 per ticket. When exchanged for tickets of greater value, the customer will be responsible for the difference; no refunds will be made. No exchanges are permitted after the performance has begun.

LOST OR MISPLACED TICKETS

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

PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

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

PARKING

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

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

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

HGO AND SAFETY

It is wonderful to be back with you at the Wortham Theater Center. As we get back to live opera on the mainstage, the safety of our audience, cast, creative team, union members, technicians, and staff remains our top priority.

As a reminder, for performances during HGO’s winter repertoire, there are protocols in place throughout the theater for the protection of all, created with guidance from the HGO Health Committee, local health officials, and the Centers for Disease Control:

- All guests attending HGO performances and events will be required to wear a mask covering the nose and mouth while inside the Wortham Theater Center, including while seated for a performance.
- The Green Room will remain closed throughout the winter.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures are in place throughout the building.
- The building has been equipped with additional hand sanitizing stations, upgraded air ventilation, and increased touchless amenities.

Thank you for adhering to HGO’s safety procedures!
MAKE PLANS NOW to see two new productions this spring!

PUCCINI

TURANDOT

APRIL 22–MAY 8, 2022
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

A Visionary Artist Reimagines a Masterwork

Full of arresting pools of color, breathtaking lighting design, and highly stylized movement, this masterful new production could only have been created by visionary director Robert Wilson.

Considered Puccini’s finest musical masterpiece, Turandot premiered in 1926, after the composer’s death. The opera transports audiences to a fantasy land ruled by the titular princess, who doesn’t want to marry. She gives her would-be suitors two options: answer three vexing riddles correctly, or die by beheading. Her plan is working perfectly—until Calaf comes to town and she meets her match. But first Turandot must try, one more time, to kill him.

Celebrated soprano and HGO Studio alumna Tamara Wilson (Turandot), tenor Kristian Benedikt in his HGO debut (Calaf), HGO Studio alumna and soprano Nicole Heaston (Liù), and bass and Studio alumnus Peixin Chen (King Timur) lead the diverse and globe-spanning cast. HGO Principal Guest Conductor Eun Sun Kim takes the podium for this superlative new production.

GOUNOD

ROMEO AND JULIET

APRIL 29–MAY 11, 2022
Sung in French with projected English translation

A Story as Timeless as Love Itself

Gounod’s sweeping adaptation of Shakespeare’s timeless tragedy, Romeo and Juliet, returns to the Wortham in a dazzling new production that will transport audiences to an evening at the London Globe. With a large chorus, big, rich harmonies, intricate dance numbers, and sumptuous costumes, this is French grand opera at its finest.

The story opens in Verona, where the star cross’d lovers’ families are feuding. As the tale goes, tragedy strikes, and Romeo and Juliet need to choose family or true love. Along the way, the doomed couple sing four romantic duets that are so beautiful, they will warm even the coldest heart. Radiant soprano Adriana Gonzalez, the first prize Operalia winner from 2019, makes her HGO debut as Juliet opposite beloved tenor Michael Spyres. HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers conducts.
This six-year multidisciplinary initiative is designed to highlight the universal spiritual themes raised in opera and to expand and deepen Houstonians’ connections to opera and to art. The theme for 2021-22 is Character and includes Carmen, The Snowy Day, Dialogues of the Carmelites, and Turandot.

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