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Photos by Eva Ripoll, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia; Brandon A. DuHamel.
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Cover photo for Götterdämmerung by Eva Ripoll, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia.

Cover design for The Abduction from the Seraglio by Pattima Singhalaka.

This page: photo from The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008) by Andrew Cloud.
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Welcome to the Wortham Theater Center.

It hardly seems possible that we are concluding our first-ever presentation of Richard Wagner’s four-opera masterwork, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which began in April 2014. We have been enjoying the journey and will be sorry to see it end. But what an end! Whatever you loved most about the three previous installments, there’s more of it in *Götterdämmerung*, we promise.

People travel all over the world to see the Ring (maybe you’re one of them—we’ve had visitors from 17 countries as well as 45 states) but there simply are no finer singers than those we have enjoyed in Houston. We’re delighted to welcome a cast of distinguished Wagnerians headed by soprano Christine Goerke and tenor Simon O’Neill, as well as director Carlus Padrissa and the other creative forces behind the production from the Catalan theater group La Fura dels Baus.

We end our mainstage season with an opera that could not be a greater contrast: Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. This opera has a special place in our hearts, as it is one of three works—the others were *Aida* and *Nixon in China*—chosen to inaugurate the Wortham Theater Center in 1987. Composed when Mozart was falling in love with the woman he would marry, *Abduction* perfectly blends romance and comedy with emotional depth in the way only Mozart could combine them.

In a stroke of genius, director James Robinson sets the action on the 1920s Orient Express: with the luxury railroad’s endpoints being Istanbul and Paris at that time, what better symbol could there be of East meeting West? While *Abduction* can potentially lend itself to dated stereotypes, this production finds the heart of the opera—expansive, generous, and, above all, human. We welcome back conductor Thomas Rösner and a marvelous ensemble cast featuring HGO Studio alumna Albina Shagimuratova and tenor Lawrence Brownlee. In a bit of luxury casting, Christopher Purves—our Alberich from *Götterdämmerung*—takes on the pivotal but all-spoken role of Pasha Selim.

With the final notes of *Abduction*, HGO’s mainstage 2016–17 season ends, but we hope you’ll join us for outdoor performances of *The Elixir of Love* at Miller Outdoor Theatre (May 19 and 20) and The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion at The Woodlands (May 26). There is no better finale to the season.

Please enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

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THE CRUCIBLE
OCT 21–24
BY ROBERT WARD
Witch-hunting fever has infected the town of Salem, turning neighbor against neighbor with devastating results. A searing indictment of mob psychology, Arthur Miller’s classic drama was written as a response to the McCarthy anti-Communist witch-hunts of the 1950’s. His play inspired this Pulitzer Prize winning opera by American Robert Ward. Sung in the original English with the English text projected above the stage.

THE SECRET MARRIAGE
Il matrimonio segreto
JAN 27–30
BY DOMENICO CIMAROSA
So, you’ve secretly married your father’s assistant, your father is a fool, your sister is a harpy, your maiden aunt is lusting after your new husband, and a wealthy English count has come to enter into an arranged marriage with your sister, but decides he’d much rather marry you instead. What could possibly go wrong? The Secret Marriage is considered to be the funniest opera of the 18th century. Come see why! Sung in the original Italian with English translation projected above the stage.

THE INSPECTOR
JAN 26–29
MUSIC BY JOHN MUSTO
LIBRETTO BY MARK CAMPBELL
An inspector from Mussolini’s Rome is paying an incognito visit to a small Italian village, sending everyone into a frenzy of comic obsequiousness, greed, and lust for power. American composer John Musto’s very funny adaptation of Gogol’s satirical play, The Government Inspector, premiered recently at Wolf Trap to rapturous reviews. Sung in the original English with the English text projected above the stage.

ROMEO AND JULIET
APR 7–10
BY CHARLES GOUNOD
Lyrical music that will cause you to swoon makes this story of doomed love even more romantic than Shakespeare’s. Gounod’s opera proves that French is still the language of love. Bring a date, but don’t tell your parents. Sung in the original French with English translation projected above the stage.

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Rounding up the Kiddos!

Our new Opera to Go! adaptation of The Barber of Seville scoots into Miller Outdoor Theatre (6000 Hermann Park Dr.) for three FREE performances, May 2–4 at 11 a.m. daily. Language barriers and a stubborn uncle threaten to keep two young lovers apart while opera’s famous barber plays the role of translator. This 45-minute opera, sung in English and Spanish, is fun for the whole family. No tickets or reservations required!

The Numbers Behind the Ring

As HGO wraps up its first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s mammoth masterwork, Der Ring des Nibelungen, we celebrate it as a major milestone in the life of the company.

The numbers behind the HGO Ring underscore just how big the challenge was—and how great the impact for the company and the city.

The Ring is Just Plain Big.
The four operas together are 16.5 hours long, with a total price tag of $16 million. It takes 299 people—cast and creative team, crew, orchestra, chorus, and supers—to run Götterdämmerung alone!

HGO’s Ring Was the North American Premiere of a Cutting-Edge Production with Unique Demands.

- Our Ring required a total of 638 hours of supernumerary rehearsals (214 for regular supers, 424 for crane operators). For comparison, last season’s Eugene Onegin required only 47 hours.
- 12 video screens and 15 projectors were required.
- The three suspended water tanks seen in Das Rheingold and Götterdämmerung weigh a whopping 2,500 pounds each.

Houston Benefited.

Based on the first three Ring operas, we project that 41,581 tickets will have been sold—to attendees from 17 countries and 45 states. An extremely conservative estimate of economic impact is $1,309,000, based on a 2012 study of arts event–related spending in Houston by Americans for the Arts, which used a figure of $31.49 per person.

Most of All, HGO Benefited.

HGO has joined the ranks of only a handful of opera companies able to meet the artistic and financial demands of the Ring, and we did it with some of the world’s finest Wagnerian singers. It brought the company international attention and not only enhanced HGO’s reputation but also the artistry of everyone involved.

Numbers don’t tell the whole story.

Incoming HGO Studio Artists win at the Met

For the second year in a row, two incoming HGO Studio artists were Grand Finals winners in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions: countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and tenor Richard Smagur.

Nussbaum Cohen, the first countertenor to join the HGO Studio, won first prize in HGO’s 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Smagur is an alumnus of HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy (YAVA). Another YAVA alum, Samantha Hankey, was also among the six winners of the Grand Finals, held on March 19.

During the 2017–18 season, HGO audiences will hear Nussbaum Cohen as Nirenus in Julius Caesar and Second Maid servant in Elektra, while Smagur will sing Gastone de Letorières in La traviata and Young Servant in Elektra.

Previous winners include such artists as Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Samuel Ramey, Eric Owens, Angela Meade, Stephanie Blythe—and Yelena Dyachek and Sol Jin, the HGO Studio artists who were Grand Finalists in 2016. The award comes with a cash prize of $15,000.

Eric Delagrange, Octavio Moreno, Megan Berti, and Alexander Scheuermann in The Barber of Seville. Photo by Lynn Lane.
Through myth we find humanity

Witness this timeless tale unfold in San Francisco Opera’s spectacular production directed by Francesca Zambello. Acclaimed Wagnerian conductor Donald Runnicles leads an extraordinary international cast featuring Evelyn Herlitzius, Greer Grimsley, Daniel Brenna, Karita Mattila, Brandon Jovanovich, Jamie Barton and Falk Struckmann.

Cycle 1—June 12–17, 2018
Cycle 2—June 19–24, 2018
Cycle 3—June 26–July 1, 2018

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At Houston Grand Opera, we believe that great art has the power to move people in unexpected ways. That’s the impact of HGOco’s Song of Houston program. By transforming the unique stories of Houstonians into operas, HGOco creates unexpected works of art that are at once universal and deeply personal.

Houston’s Rothko Chapel made the perfect subject for a Song of Houston opera—Some Light Emerges, which was presented March 16–17 at The Ballroom at Bayou Place. Composed by Laura Kaminsky to a libretto written by Mark Campbell and Kimberly Reed, the piece celebrates the Rothko Chapel and the visionary philanthropist who made it possible, Dominique de Menil—as well as the diverse characters whose lives intersect with it. More than 400 people attended a performance of the intimate chamber opera, which Wei-Huan Chen of the Houston Chronicle called “sublime… shin[ing] most brightly through its motley assemblage of visitors and the reasons they have for seeking sanctuary.”

“I think everybody spends their lives trying to figure out what their contribution is and how to make a difference," says director Robin Guarino. “In conceiving the chapel, and in perceiving her own vocation as a great humanitarian. The chapel transformed her.”

Some of the artists involved in Some Light Emerges also felt the transformative power of the story. The role of Dominique de Menil was sung by first-year HGO Studio soprano Yelena Dyachek. “I am astonished at the ability of one woman to change the art culture of a city and make it one of the most important aspects of Houston society,” Dyachek says. “She did not wait for others to change the world, she rolled up her sleeves and did the work herself.”

Mezzo-soprano Zoie Reams, another member of the HGO Studio, sang the role of Cece, an unmotivated high school student and Hurricane Katrina refugee who is encouraged to visit the Rothko Chapel by a teacher who sees her potential as an artist. Cece is so moved and intrigued by the chapel and the paintings that she gets a degree in art and becomes an art teacher.

On her first visit to the Rothko Chapel, Reams felt like Cece. She’d seen other Rothko paintings to which she had felt a stronger reaction, but after noticing the way the light interacts with the paintings in the chapel, something changed. “I started to see the intricacy of the paintings as I walked around,” she says. “It all changes with the natural light. The words of the libretto became clearer to me.”

“At a time when a global sanctuary is so called for, the chapel is always living in the now,” says Guarino. “It remains constant, but it’s always a response to what we need…a place for a kind of quest, and a portal to think about things in a different way. People come into the chapel seeking things. They don’t always get the answers they want, and sometimes, that’s the point.”
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Verdi
LA TRAVIATA
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Violetta Valéry Albina
Shaguramovato Shalga
Mane Galoyan ‡
Afrold Germin
Dimitri Pittas
Yongzhao Yu ‡
Director
Giorgio Germont
George Peatan *
Sol Jin ♦
Conductor
Eun Sun Kim *
Bradley Moore ♦
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B.
Alack Chair
Projection Designer
Arin Arbus
Set Designer
Riccardo
Hernández
Costume Designer
Cait O’Connor *
Lighting Designer
Marcus Doshi *
Houston Grand
Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

Handel
JULIUS CAESAR
Oct. 27 | 29m | Nov. 4 | 8 | 10
Julius Caesar
Anthony Roth Costanza ♦
Lynn Wyatt Great Artist
2017–18
Geopatra
Heidi Stober ♦
Cornelia
Stephanie Blythe
Sextus
Megan Mikailova
Samarin ♦
Prolerny
David Daniels
Achillas
Federico De Micheli ♦
Conductor
Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams
Chair
Director
James Robinson
Set Designer
Christine Jones
Costume Designer
James Schuette
Lighting Designer
Christopher
Akerlind
Premier Guarantor—The General and Maurice Hirsch Opera Fund
Guarantors—Robin Angly and Miles Smith. Grand Underwriter—Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund

R. Strauss
ELEKTRA
Jan. 19 | 21m | 27 | Feb. 2
Elektra
Christine Goerke
Chrysothemis
Tamara Wilson ♦
Kyaetemnestra
Michaela Martens ♦
Orest
Greer Grimsley ♦
Revival Director
Aegisth
Chad Shelton ♦
Conductor
Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams
Chair
Production
David McVicar
Chorus Master
Richard Bado ♦
The Sarah and Ernst Butler
Chorus Master Chair
Houston Grand
Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

Rossini
THE BARBER
OF SEVILLE
Jan. 26 | 28m | Feb. 3 | 8 | 10
Figaro
Lucas Meachem ♦
Count Almaviva
David Portillo
Rossina
Sofia Selowsky ♦
Don Basilio
Eric Owens ♦
Doctor Bartolo
Peixin Chen ♦
Berta
Yelena Dyachek ♦
Conductor
Julian Wachner ♦
Director
Joan Font
Set and Costume
Designer
Joan Guillén
Lighting Designer
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WEST SIDE STORY
Apr. 20 | 22m | 28m | 28 | May 1 | 3 | 4 | 6m
Maria
Andrea Carroll ♦
Tony
Norman
Reinhardt ♦
Anita
Alicia Gianni ♦
Riff
Brian Vu ♦
Conductor
Timothy Myers
Director
Francesca Zambello
Choreographer
Julio Monte *
Set Designer
Peter J. Dawson
Costume Designer
Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer
Mark McCullough
Associate Director
Eric Sean Fogel ♦
Houston Grand
Opera Orchestra
Norma
Ludmila
Monastyrskaya
Adalgisa
Jamie Barton ♦
Pollione
Simon O’Neill
Oroveso
Peixin Chen ♦
Conductor
Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams
Chair
Director
Kevin Newbury
Set Designer
David Korins *
Costume Designer
Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer
Duane Schuler


Bellini
NORMA
Apr. 27 | 29m | May 5 | 8 | 11
Norma
Ludmila
Monastyrskaya
Adalgisa
Jamie Barton ♦
Pollione
Simon O’Neill
Oroveso
Peixin Chen ♦
Conductor
Patrick Summers
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WRAPPING UP AN EPIC EXPERIENCE

BY JIM TOWNSEND
HGO Development
Communications Manager

Wagner’s Ring cycle is gigantic. Our family of donors made it possible.

The full score is well over 3,000 printed pages long, with a playing time of more than 15 hours. It has a massive orchestra and parts for 34 characters across three generations, as it follows the struggles of gods and heroes through romance, betrayal, and war. The story moves from the construction of Valhalla to the destruction of the universe—and every great and terrible moment in between is awe-inspiring.

Nothing in an opera house could be more expansive, more transformative, more challenging, and more rewarding for the company and the audience alike. And of course, everything is bigger in Texas.

HGO’s first-ever Ring had to be big. The demands of this titanic work of art on the orchestra and singers are so extraordinary that only the greatest opera companies in the world can pull it off, and HGO rose to the task. Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers spent years preparing the HGO Orchestra to meet the greatest demands in Western music.

This massive effort required massive support. Several key supporters made leadership contributions that allowed us to go forward with this history-making, multiyear initiative. We call them Ring Leaders, and they have earned the gratitude of HGO and the many opera
lovers who joined us from 45 states and 17 countries to experience the Ring at the Wortham Theater Center.

The enthusiasm of the HGO family of patrons was high from the onset. When Summers and then—HGO General Director Anthony Freud made the announcement that the company was ready to begin work on the Ring at a dinner in 2010, some of these Ring Leaders jumped from their chairs ready to write a check at that very moment.

Robin Angly and Miles Smith were among the first of the Ring Leaders. “We got involved because HGO was ready to become a grownup opera company, and the Ring put us on the map. Patrick did such a terrific job of building the orchestra so they would be ready for the Ring, with vehicles like Wagner’s Lohengrin and Tristan und Isolde.”

“I’m very proud that it came to fruition,” Robin adds. “We traveled with some of the other Ring Leaders to Seville to see the Fura dels Baus production, and we loved the idea...it was so innovative, particularly with the video projections. It’s been an incredible journey, and I’m glad to have been a part of it.”

The enthusiasm of the Ring Leaders paid off. The four-year series began in April 2014 with a dazzling, critically acclaimed, and completely sold-out run of Das Rheingold that put HGO and the city of Houston in the international cultural spotlight. By the time the curtain falls on Götterdämmerung in May, HGO expects that the entire cycle will have been experienced by 40,000 people—making it the biggest draw in the company’s 62-year history.

Rhonda and Donald Sweeney, two of our Ring Leaders, have attended nine Ring cycles since their first at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1989 and are especially delighted by HGO’s production. “I think our production is lively, energetic, and colorful,” Rhonda says. “It is really different, and that makes it attractive even for people who’ve seen it many times.”

Ring Leaders John Turner and Jerry Fischer of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have traveled the world to experience incredible opera, having seen 15 Ring cycles to date. “When we first saw Siegfried in Seville, we knew that the Fura dels Baus production would be a great fit for Houston. We have enjoyed it from start to finish.”

But the Ring doesn’t just inspire people in the opera house—there’s so much one can learn about its history, mythology, and musical significance. As Maestro Summers says of the Ring, “It is an experience that mirrors our own relationship to the world at every level: intellectual, emotional, natural, organic, material. At whatever point you intersect with the Ring, you will find an extraordinary level of depth.”

From the Ring Study Days hosted every season by Assistant Artistic Director Paul Hopper to guest lecturers and discussion panels, HGO takes every opportunity to share our quest for a deeper understanding of the Ring with our community.

“I tend to study each opera for six months in advance of watching it, so these educational events are perfect,” says Corbyn Cravero, a recent graduate of Texas A&M University. “Hearing Patrick Summers’s perspective in person was greatly appreciated.”

The titular ring in Wagner’s story is one that bestows great power on its wearer. For HGO, the Ring has done exactly that—it’s made us stronger and brought us to the forefront of the international cultural conversation.

More than anything, the Ring brought us closer to our community of supporters. By staging the Ring, HGO has reached a new level of achievement—and we couldn’t have done it without the generous support of donors like you. Thank you!
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For information on providing leadership support for the Ring, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
In the final segment of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, the true hero emerges to transform the world.

*GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*

BEYOND
THE INFINITE

BY M. OWEN LEE
Götterdämmerung. What does it mean—this twilight of the gods, this dusk, disappearing, fading away of the gods? Wotan dies in this opera, his World Ash Tree in flaming pieces. What does it mean when a god dies?

Something of an answer to that awesome question begins on Pentecost Sunday, 1869, as a young professor of classics walks around the Lake of Lucerne to Tribschen, the house picturesquely set below the mountaintop where, legend has it, Pontius Pilate lies buried, and a perennial cloud tells us he still weeps for the time he sentenced a God to die.

The young professor stands at the gate for a long time, listening and wondering as he hears from within a chord struck over and over again on the piano. Wagner is inside that house, waiting out another Swiss exile, composing Siegfried. Eventually the 24-year-old fledgling classicist rings the bell and receives an invitation to lunch the next day. Thereafter, he spends many long days in conversation with Lucerne’s resident genius, the composer of the Ring.

Wagner, plagued as always with self-doubts, is delighted to have found a brilliant young intellectual who admires his work. And Nietzsche, for that is the young classicist’s name, thinks that in Wagner he has found Aeschylus come alive again.

As it turned out, not even Wagner—strong-willed, intuitive, neo-pagan though he was—could live up to Friedrich Nietzsche’s superhuman ideals. There was bound to be some disillusionment on both sides, and there was. But before the famous break-up, Nietzsche wrote a book more important for understanding Greek tragedy than any since Aristotle. That book, The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, Nietzsche had talked through with Wagner.

And later, in Nietzsche’s most famous work, one that has sent intellectual shock waves across the philosophies of our century, a mythical prophet named Zarathustra descends from his mountains to announce, not in exultation but in sorrow, “God is dead.” The Age of Reason, Nietzsche says, has killed the father god whom mankind needed and loved. Now, with the Age of Reason also discredited, mankind must be made to face the nothingness that remains. Only then can it find, within itself, the new creative force that will sustain it in a world without God.

What does it all mean? Primitive man, dimly conscious of earth and sea, sun and moon, worshipped them as cosmic gods, under the dominion of father sky, Uranos. Then, over the eons, threatened by thunderstorms, earthquakes, volcanos, and tidal waves, man came to think of Uranos as overthrown when his violent son Kronos, with his Titans, took over the world. Finally, as man learned to think and to feel, and became fully conscious of himself and his own powers, Kronos was thought to have been dethroned by his son Zeus, a god of consciousness, with a sophisticated dynasty of Olympian gods representing not just sky and sea, thunderstorm and rainbow, but also thought and love, domesticity and creativity. But the Zeus of myth knows that a time will come when he too will pass away, and he fears it.

The question in all of this then becomes: Does god die, or is it rather that evolving man emerges into new levels of awareness and so, feeling the changes in himself, changes his god?

It was a question asked in Wagner’s time by Ludwig Feuerbach, and answered by him emphatically: what we call God is actually man’s projection of his inner self. Wagner was profoundly influenced by that idea, and also by the early German Romanticists, Novalis and Schelling and the two Schlegels and Herder, and their approach to myth, so widely accepted today—that man’s myths are the repositories of eternal truths about himself. While Wagner was shaping his four dramas, he was attuned to the philosophic ideas that were shaping his

Hagen guards the Gibichung hall as Siegfried and Gunther set off to retrieve Brünnhilde from the mountaintop.
Europe. He thought at the start that his Ring would be an image of his century's politics, but he gradually saw it turn from political to metaphysical concerns. At the end of the Ring, man rises to a new level of awareness. It is as if he has seen the third god, Zeus (or Wotan, or whatever we choose to call the god of consciousness), pass away, just as the previous gods had done. And a new force appears to rule the world.

Who or what is that new power? That is what Götterdämmerung is about.

An important figure began the Ring’s story and returns vividly in Act II of Götterdämmerung—Alberich. In some ways, this Nibelung dwarf is the main character in the Ring. In fact the whole cycle is called The Ring of the Nibelung—that is to say, The Ring of Alberich. He appears in three of the four operas, and at the central moment in the opera in which he does not appear, Die Walküre, Wotan remembers him in whispers and dread. He is clearly important. At the end of the cycle, when all the other main characters are gone, he survives. The three Rhinemaidens have their gold again, and possibly the whole cycle can start over.

The cosmic struggle in the Ring is between Alberich and Wotan. The sky god even calls himself and the dwarf Light-Alberich and Dark-Alberich, perhaps indicating that he and the Nibelung are opposed manifestations of the same force. Each is bent on world power and needs the ring to get it. Each fathers a son to get him the ring. But there is a difference between them. Wotan and his son and his son's son all die. Alberich’s son, Hagen, goes in the end to a watery grave. But Alberich himself—we remember only after Wagner's last suspended chord has died away—Alberich still lives!

And yet, we think, what power can he have? In order to steal the gold in the first place, Alberich had to renounce love. And when he cursed the ring fashioned from the gold, that lovelessness spread over all the world. The whole terrible story—the loveless betrayals and deaths of those who wear the ring, and the vengeful and savage acts of those who covet it—all of that is the inevitable working out of Alberich's curse. But in the end, when the ring becomes natural gold again in the waves, the one thing that can defeat Alberich comes sounding across the water and through the fire—what Sieglinde called, when she first sang the phrase in Die Walküre, “the mightiest of miracles.” With that force to replace the dying god Wotan, can Alberich really begin the cycle anew? No, Alberich will not be the new god to rule the world. For at the end of the Ring we have, not a return to the beginning, but a transformation.

From the death of Siegfried to the closing page, Götterdämmerung rises to a level many will say is unsurpassed in any work for the stage. And the part that Siegfried plays in this is surprising. It had been Wagner’s first intention, 25 years previous, to have Brünnhilde take Siegfried after his death to a heroic afterlife with Wotan in Valhalla. But Wagner changed the text of that final scene—five times. In the sixth and final version, he cut most of the text and let the music explain that Siegfried’s innocent death gives Brünnhilde the insight that enables her to do what she knows Wotan wants her to do—transform his old world into a new world.

So the last two themes we hear are those associated with the hero and heroine who possess Wotan’s lost vision and embody his will. In the end, Wagner, sensing that his Ring was as much about the human psyche as about the whole world, let his music say what, years before, he had written to his friend Röckel: “Siegfried alone is not the complete human person. He is only the half. It is only with Brünnhilde that Siegfried transforms the world.”

Now I must say at length what I have meant from the first to say. The Ring can be thought of as taking place not only in its natural landscape of rivers and mountains covered by fir trees (the way Wagner wanted it on the stage), and not only in a 19th-century industrialized Europe endangered by greed and corrupting materialism (the way Wagner first thought of it and some modern productions stage it), but in that inner landscape that is Wagner’s and mine and yours (the way Wagner eventually suggested we see it).

On that inner level, Wotan and Alberich, Siegfried and Brünnhilde are four inner impulses, four aspects of consciousness—the present state of human evolution. Consciousness as light and dark, as male and female. You may want to add Fricka as conscience, and Loge as intelligence, and Erda as intuition, and those other characters, especially the human characters, as the sorrows and desires and fears that inhabit your inner landscape.

That will make Wagner’s Ring fit what Schlegel and the other German Romantics were saying, that the myths of the gods were about man, that the secret of the universe lay in each human soul. It will explain why Fricka knows what Wotan tries to hide, why Erda knows what Wotan must do, why Loge knows how to implement what Wotan plans: that is the way conscience and intuition and intelligence work for consciousness.

Seen this way, the Ring is a story of a soul in crisis. The great elemental world of gods and men is also the private world of man's inner struggle with his own destructive impulses, of his awareness of limitations and guilt, of the emergence in him of new ideas, and the dying in him of transforming deaths.
Wagner once said something very startling about his Ring. He said that it teaches us that “we must learn to die.” The great deaths in myths are symbols of inner transformations in man, who makes the myths. In this myth, Wotan—the god of consciousness—dies. Wagner didn’t originally intend that. He intended that Erda, when she appears in Das Rheingold, would warn Wotan that his power would end unless he gave up the ring. Later, he revised Erda’s warning to read, “All that exists ends. A dark day is dawning for the gods. I counsel you—give up the ring.” Relinquishing its power is not an alternative. Wotan will pass away in any case. He must accept the loss of his power and embrace his death.

At the end of the Ring, the god of consciousness dies. And his voluntary withdrawal leaves the world within us to be ruled henceforth not by the consciousness he represents, but by that “mightiest of miracles,” the transformation wrought by his daughter Brünnhilde. The Ring begins with the emergence of man into consciousness and ends with consciousness voluntarily yielding to—the next evolutionary development in human nature.

That, I suggest, is why Wagner couldn’t put the end of the Ring into words, even in six separate attempts. As he labored over his mythic cycle, an intuitive idea kept hammering away at him, year after year—perhaps the most important idea of his century: man was meant to evolve beyond his present state, even as he had evolved into it. But this step would require the death of his present consciousness and its transformation into—Wagner could only say what that was in music, in the theme associated with the transformation of Wotan’s will, Brünnhilde.

Now perhaps I can align the Ring with an evolutionary parable of our own century. In that marvelous film 2001, Stanley Kubrick shows (in his prologue) the evolution of ape to conscious man to his next stage, completed when he lands his spaceship on Jupiter. There is a computer brain on the ship, the sum total of man’s present intelligence. The computer tries to prevent man’s further evolution, for that would mean the end of its power. The lone surviving astronaut realizes that the computer must be destroyed. He defuses it, function by function. And when its last two functions—reason and memory—are defused, man lands on his new planet and evolves to his new stage. He is transformed.

That intuitive film is very close to Götterdämmerung. In the old Prose Edda that Wagner used as one of his sources, Wotan’s two ravens are called Reason and Memory. In Götterdämmerung, Wotan sends them off to witness Siegfried’s death. Then they fly back to die with their god, whom Wagner called “the sum of our present awareness.” And the world is transformed.

The Ring is about us. About our unarticulated dreams and aspirations. About an evolutionary potential in us we sense only at moments of heightened awareness. At the end of the Ring, it is as if a door has opened, as if the sky has turned round, as if, in the words of C. S. Lewis remembering his childhood, we have “tasted heaven.”

Wagner’s mythic Ring tells us what we are. We are the world in which Wotan confronts Alberich and Brünnhilde and Siegfried, and Fricka and Erda and Loge. Each of us is a world flawed and fallible and destined to die, full of destructive impulses, yet capable too of goodness and heroism, open to beauty and joy, and destined for greater things than we know. Like all great art, and in concert with the great religions of the world, the Ring assures us that our lives have meaning—even, perhaps especially, the sorrows and the pain and the deaths in them, for those are transforming experiences. And though our consciousness is, like Wotan himself, finite, we sense that we are meant to move towards something beyond consciousness that is infinite. That comes rushing in on us on a wave of sound as the Ring reaches its last page.

M. Owen Lee is an American scholar in classics and music who now makes his home in Canada. In Houston, he taught at St. Thomas High School (1954–55) and at the University of St. Thomas (1968–72). He is professor emeritus of classics at the University of Toronto. This article was excerpted, with his kind permission, from his book Wagner’s Ring: Turning the Sky Round.
Muslims Christians & Mozart

By Larry Wolff
Mozart and his librettists wrote a comedy. But it is hard to listen to Osmin’s aria today and not think about contemporary nightmare scenarios of hostages and global conflict. An evening with Abduction from the Seraglio—first presented in Vienna in 1782—reminds us that in the 18th century, when the vast Ottoman Empire was governed by the Turkish sultans in Istanbul, Mozart was one of many European composers fascinated by the relations, encounters, and conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

It was an age of warfare against the Turks, full of the tensions between the Muslim and Western worlds. But Abduction may be an opera for our own times, too: an intriguing if disturbing model of how to understand—through the structure of music—the anger of an enemy and how to explore harmoniously the reconciliation of cultural difference.

Europeans being held captive in the Muslim world was a common occurrence in Mozart’s time. Alongside the Atlantic slave trade, there was a Mediterranean slave trade, driven by the Barbary pirates of North Africa who operated within the domain of influence of the Ottoman Empire. Religious and philanthropic associations were active all over Europe, raising money for ransoms, and publishers hawked both moving memoirs of female captivity and, later, pornographic fictions on the same theme.

Sex trafficking is, of course, not what one usually thinks about when listening to Mozart’s brilliant overture, with its musical explosion of what would have been viewed in his time as characteristically “Turkish” percussion—cymbals, triangle, bass drum—that the composer used to wake up the audience and compel attention. But female slavery, however evasively dramatized in this comedic presentation, forms the backstory of Abduction, in which Konstanze, a Spanish lady, and her English servant Blonde have been kidnapped by pirates and sold to Pasha Selim. Many productions…don’t dwell on all this, but the director Calixto Bieito shocked the opera world by emphasizing the brutality of trafficking in a harrowing, violent 2004 Berlin staging.

At the same time that Mediterranean piracy was an 18th-century reality—delivering thousands of European captives into Ottoman servitude and, not to be forgotten, numerous Muslim captives into Europe—operas about Turks were a cultural phenomenon, with hundreds of productions featuring turbaned sultans and pashas enslaving hundreds of sopranos in their harems. In 1683, just shy of a century before the premiere of Abduction, the Viennese withstood a
Turkish siege. Ottoman military bands played authentic Turkish percussion to terrify the residents—the same percussion that Mozart later imitated for its entertainment value in *Abduction*.

The siege was broken with the arrival of a Polish army, and the ensuing victories of the allied Christian troops pushed back the borders of the Ottoman Empire. This made the Turkish military seem less fearsome than before, and European opera houses rather suddenly began staging operas about Turks.

There was an almost instantaneous operatic treatment in Hamburg in 1686: Johann Wolfgang Franck's *The Lucky Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa and The Unlucky Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa*, composed for performance on successive evenings. (The Grand Vizier who led the Ottoman troops was put to death after the failure of the siege.) Most important, however, was the 1689 premiere, in Venice, of Marc' Antonio Ziani's *Il gran Tamerlano*. This was the predecessor of Handel's *Tamerlano*, which was produced in London in 1724 and portrayed with deep sympathy the defeated Ottoman sultan Bajazet, whose heroic sufferings as a captive of the conqueror Tamerlane were a common operatic subject throughout the 18th century. Rameau included a section called “The Generous Turk” in his *Les Indes galantes* (1735), while Gluck and Haydn both composed operas on roughly the same libretto, *The Unexpected Encounter, or The Pilgrims to Mecca*, Gluck's in French, Haydn's in Italian. Grétry's *Caravan of Cairo* was such a huge success in Paris in the 1780s that the Metropolitan Museum of Art preserves French fabric samples printed with scenes from the work.

Operas about Turks could be serious or funny, but, curiously, those that depicted Europeans in Ottoman captivity were almost always comedies that ended happily, with the emancipation of the prisoners, usually by an unexpected act of magnanimity from the Turkish authority (like Pasha Selim in *Abduction*). Some actually reckoned with the brutal realities of trafficking and slavery, if also in comic fashion: The bass Ludwig Fischer, who starred in Georg Joseph Vogler's *Merchant of Smyrna* as a gleefully evil slave dealer, was also Mozart's first Osmin.

Osmín, the pasha’s overseer and the guardian of the harem, dominates *Abduction* with extravagant musical rages that reach down to the depths of the bass vocal range. Mozart was thoroughly invested in exploring through this character the ways that music could express extreme emotions while still remaining musical: “A person who gets into such a violent rage oversteps all order, measure, and object,” he wrote in a 1781 letter. “He no longer knows himself. In the same way the music must no longer know itself—but passions violent or not, must never be expressed to the point of disgust, and music must never offend the ear.”

While Mozart lived in a century of intermittent European wars against the Ottoman Turks, as well as a century of captivity and slave trade on the Mediterranean, he couldn't help being
interested in exploring the ways in which the two sides were closer than they realized. In the original libretto for Abduction (which had already been set by a different composer in Berlin in 1781), the tenor hero, Belmonte, was revealed to be the long-lost son of the Ottoman pasha, and though this plot twist was eliminated in Vienna, Mozart does allow a certain intimacy between the two cultures. Though the captive Konstanze declares that she would rather submit to “every kind of torture” than surrender sexually to the pasha, she also seems drawn to him (“admire you, yes, but love you, never”), and her stunningly difficult ornamentation of her aria recalls Osmin’s in its extremity. (Later in his career, Mozart would use the same kind of soprano dazzle to portray the fury of the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute.) Belmonte seeks to rescue (or “abduct”) Konstanze from the pasha’s harem, but when they are caught escaping, the pasha turns out to be a “generous Turk” in the 18th-century tradition. The lovers are neither beheaded, nor hanged, nor impaled, but are set free to return to Europe and love each other. Mozart’s finale celebrates the magnanimity of the pasha as a way of flattering the Austrian Hapsburg emperor (who was actually in the audience at the Vienna premiere), with an opera that offered a model of enlightened despotism relevant to Muslim and Christian rulers alike. Mozart acknowledged what the political scientist Samuel P. Huntington called the “clash of civilizations” between the Islamic world and the West, but he also understood that that “clash” was qualified by numerous points of contact and familiarity. In Abduction, when the European captive Pedrillo offers alcoholic temptation, and once the Quranic prohibition has been considered and discarded, Osmin, the angry overseer, becomes entirely amiable, joining Pedrillo in a tribute to Bacchus and a toast to all women, blondes and brunettes alike.

In the spirit of the Enlightenment, and within the genre of comic opera, Mozart really could imagine a brotherhood of Christians and Muslims. After all, even in an age of violent conflicts, harmony was what he understood best.

Larry Wolff is the Silver Professor of History at New York University and author of the book The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage.

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Houston Grand Opera presents

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

A Music Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts
Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in German with Projected English Translation

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

First Norn               Meredith Arwady
Second Norn / Waltraute  Jamie Barton ‡
Third Norn / Gutrune     Heidi Melton *
Brünnhilde               Christine Goerke
Siegfried                Simon O’Neill
                        Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2014–15
Gunther                  Ryan McKinny ‡
Hagen                    Andrea Silvestrelli
Alberich                 Christopher Purves
Woglinde                 Andrea Carroll ‡
Wellgunde                Catherine Martin ‡
Flosshilde               Renée Tatum

A co-production of Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia; and Maggio Musicale, Florence.

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*  Houston Grand Opera debut
†  Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
‡  Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
CREATIVE TEAM
Conductor                  Patrick Summers  
                        *Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*
Production                  La Fura dels Baus
Director                    Carlus Padrissa
Associate Director          Esteban Muñoz
Set Designer              Roland Olbeter
Costume Designer           Chu Uroz
Lighting Designer           Peter van Praet
Video Designer              Franc Aleu
Lighting Realizer          Gianni Paolo Mirenda
Chorus Master               Richard Bado ‡  
                        *The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair*
Musical Preparation        Peter Pasztor ‡
                        *Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair*
Stage Manager              Christopher Staub
Assistant Director         Katrina Bachus
Supertitles by            Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Supertitles cued by       Jeremy Johnson

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
SYNOPSIS | GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

THE PERFORMANCE LASTS APPROXIMATELY 5 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES, INCLUDING TWO INTERMISSIONS.

PROLOGUE

The three Norns busily weave the rope of destiny. They envision Valhalla in flames and predict the gods’ imminent downfall. Suddenly their rope breaks and they tumble down to their mother, Erda, deep in the earth.

Siegfried and Brünnhilde awake after their night together. Knowing he is destined to pursue heroic challenges, Brünnhilde encourages him to leave. As a pledge of his love, he gives her the ring before he departs.

ACT I

At his home on the banks of the Rhine River, Gunther, the leader of the royal Gibichung family, ponders how to strengthen his rulership and asks his half-brother, Hagen, for advice. (Gunther and Hagen have the same mother.) Hagen, the son of Alberich, recommends strategic marriages: he proposes Brünnhilde as bride for Gunther, and Siegfried as husband for Gunther’s sister, Gutrune. Gunther and Gutrune know this can be accomplished only through trickery, so Hagen suggests that Siegfried be lured to their home and given a potion that will make him fall in love with Gutrune. They would then induce Siegfried to secure Brünnhilde for Gunther, since Gunther could never break through the protective flames that surround her on his own. They hear Siegfried’s horn nearby, invite him to their hall, and begin to implement their deceitful plan.

Brünnhilde’s Valkyrie sister Waltraute pays her a visit. She describes a broken Wotan who wishes only that Brünnhilde would return the ring to the Rhinemaidens: the very survival of the gods depends upon it. Brünnhilde refuses to yield the ring, citing it as a token of Siegfried’s love, and Waltraute leaves in anguish.

Having drunk the love potion, Siegfried has fallen in love with Gutrune and has no recollection of Brünnhilde. In return for Gutrune’s hand, Siegfried takes on Gunther’s appearance with the aid of the Tarnhelm and breaks through the flames to claim Brünnhilde for Gunther, tearing the ring from her hand.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Alberich comes to Hagen in the night as he sleeps outside the Gibichungs’ hall, urging him to get the ring from Siegfried. At daybreak, Siegfried arrives, announcing he has won Brünnhilde for Gunther. When they enter, Brünnhilde is shocked to see Siegfried—and the ring on his hand—and accuses him of betraying her. But Siegfried, still under the potion’s spell, denies their love. When Hagen offers to kill Siegfried, Brünnhilde, now bent on avenging her honor, reveals Siegfried’s one weak spot—his back. Together they convince Gunther to join in their plot to murder Siegfried as the marriage celebrations begin.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

Out hunting near the banks of the Rhine, Siegfried spies the Rhinemaidens, who beseech him to return the ring, but Siegfried ignores their warnings about the ring’s curse.

Hagen, Gunther, and the other members of Siegfried’s hunting party appear and decide to rest. As they drink wine, Siegfried regales them with stories about his past: about his boyhood with Mime, reforging the sword Nothung, and killing the dragon. As he reminisces, Hagen offers him wine that contains an antidote to the potion, and all of Siegfried’s memories of Brünnhilde return. Hagen thrusts his spear into Siegfried’s back, and the hero dies with Brünnhilde’s praises on his lips.

At the Gibichung hall, Gutrune has just awakened from a bad dream when Hagen, Gunther, and the rest of the party return with Siegfried’s body. Grief stricken, she blames Gunther, but he replies that Hagen was the killer. Quarreling over the ring, Hagen strikes Gunther down, but when he tries to take the ring from Siegfried’s hand, the dead hero raises his arm menacingly and all recoil in terror.

Brünnhilde orders a funeral pyre to be built on the banks of the Rhine. Denouncing the gods for their guilt in Siegfried’s death, she returns the ring to the Rhinemaidens and rides her horse, Grane, into the flames. The fire spreads and begins to consume Valhalla. The old order has perished.

HGO PRODUCTION HISTORY

This is HGO’s first staging of Götterdämmerung, the final work in Wagner’s Ring tetralogy.
Houston Grand Opera ORCHESTRA

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

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor *, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Second Violin
Hae-a Lee Barnes *
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed †
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Stephanie Bork
Oleg Chelpanov
Aloysia Friedmann
Andres Gonzales
Ling Ling Huang
Kana Kimura
Fiona Lofthouse
Mila Neal
Sylvia Ouelette
Rachel Shepard
Trung Trinh
Hannah Watson

DOUBLE BASS
Dennis Whittaker *, Principal
Erik Gronfor *, Assistant Principal
Carla Clark *
Hunter Capoccioni
Deborah Dunham
Paul Ellison

FLUTE
Seth Allyn Morris *, Principal
Christina Medawar *
Hannah Hammel
Melissa Suhr

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal
Alison Chung *
Spring Hill

ENGLISH HORN
Robert Atherholt

CLARINET
Sean Krissman †, Principal
Jonathan Gunn, Acting Principal
Eric Chi*
James Johnson

BASS CLARINET
Molly Mayfield

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Conrad Cornelison *
Nathan Koch

FRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston *
Kim Minson *
Corbin Castro
Shir Farkash
Jamie Leff
Ryan Little
Kevin McIntyre
Gavin Reed
James Wilson

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams *
Charles Geyer

BASS TRUMPET
Carl Lenthe

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén *, Principal
Mark Holley *
Craig Beattie

BASS TROMBONE
Kyle Gordon *

TUBA
Mark Barton *, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman *, Principal
Laurie Meister

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

BANDA
Spencer Park *, horn
Jamie Leff, horn
Tamas Markovics, bass trombone

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

* HGO Orchestra core musician
† HGO Orchestra core musician
on leave this production
Houston Grand Opera

CHORUS

RICHARD BADO, CHORUS MASTER—The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
EMILY SENTURIA, ASSISTANT CHORUS MASTER

Nathan Abbott
Ofelia Adame
Geordie Alexander
Debra Alons
Sydney E. Anderson
Dennis Arrowsmith
Megan Berti
G. Leslie Biffle
Brennan Blankenship
Jessica Blau
Andrew Briggs
Laurelle Brown
Zachary Bryant
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Esteban Cordero
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Ann Scott Davis
Robert Dee
Justin Dunkle
Ashley Duplechien

Lazaro Estrada
Ashly Evans
Peter Farley
Ami Figg
Don Figg
Julia Fox
Stewart D. Gaitán
Brian M. Gibbs
Suzanne Gregory
Megan Gryga
Nancy Hall
Sarah Jane Hardin
Douglas E. Henshaw
Frankie Hickman
Austin Hoeltzel
Sasha Holloway
Jon Janacek
James R. Jennings
Joy Jonstone
Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Eric Laine
Wesley Landry
Katie Loff
Amelia Love
Britany Lovett
Miles Robert Lutterbie
Lindsay Lymer
Sarah Lysiak
Keenan Manceaux
Heath Martin
Antonio Martinez
Neal Martinez
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Stacia Morgan Dunn
Gary V. Navy
Matthew Neumann
Laura Elizabeth Patterson
Cristino Perez
Patrick Perez
Juan T. Polanco-Palacios
Teresa Procter
Jessica S. Richards
Jay Rockwell
Paul Joseph Serna
Kade I. Smith
Haley Stage
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
John Stevens
Lauren Stocker
Naonobu Sugitani
Riley Vogel
Gabriel Walker
John Weinel
Patrick Wright
Jennifer Wright

CRANE OPERATORS
Luke Fedell
Domingo Fos Ferrandis
Lorenzo Gabaldon
Ferran Garrigues Insa
Joel Grothe
Dave Harris
Brock Hatton
Andrew Love
Cris Skelton
Levni Tennessee

SUPERNUMERARIES

Cristina Amaro
Melanie Bell
Sarah Boice
Cynthia Coffield
Kacee Dugas
Maureen Fenninger
Shelby Fisher
Rob Flebbe
Julie Fontenot
Cara Fowler

Amanda Gamel
Kat Jimenez
Darin Montemayor
Sarah Myers
Jessica Nguyen
Aki Ohinata
Mary Park
Diana Perez
Megan Perry
Victoria Pierce

Kristi Posey
Lori Rulledge
Rose Salcido
Karla Saldivar
Sheila Scott
Cicily Smith
Lisa Stringer
Sarah Warren
Vicki Wood
Shiva Zamen
La Atlántida includes productions of Wagner's Ring and collaborating on the world premières of Jake Heggie's It's a Wonderful Life, Three Decembers, and The End of the Affair; André Previn's Brief Encounter; Christopher Theofanidis's The Refuge; Carlisle Floyd's Prince of Players and Cold Sassy Tree; and Tod Machover's Resurrection. He also led the American première of Weinberg's Holocaust opera The Passenger at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival and has nurtured the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers is principal guest conductor for the San Francisco Opera, where he was honored in 2015 with the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes collaborating with André Previn on the 1998 world première of A Streetcar Named Desire and conducting several of the performances, and conducting Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's Moby-Dick, which was recorded and telecast on PBS's Great Performances. Next season at HGO, he will conduct Handel's Julius Caesar, Strauss's Elektra, and Bellini's Norma.

LA FURA DELS BAUS (Spain)
Production
La Fura dels Baus is the innovative Barcelona-based theater group behind this production of Wagner’s Ring cycle. Established in 1979, La Fura began as a street theater group and over the years has developed its own “Furan language,” style, and aesthetics based on collective creation. Since the early 1990s, La Fura dels Baus has diversified its creative efforts, moving into plays, digital theater, film, opera, and major corporate events. La Fura produced the opening ceremony for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, which was broadcast and watched live by more than 50 million viewers. Since then, such companies as Pepsi, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Volkswagen, Swatch, Airtel, Microsoft, Absolut Vodka, Columbia Pictures, Warner Bros., the Port of Barcelona, Telecom Italia, and Sun Microsystems have commissioned the group to produce large-scale “macro” shows for them around the world. La Fura’s production L’home del mil-lenni, celebrating the new millennium, drew an audience of more than 20,000 in Barcelona; Divine Comedy was performed in Florence for more than 35,000 spectators; La navaja en el ojo, which opened the Valencia Biennial, attracted an audience of more than 20,000. A number of courses and workshops have trained actors in Furan language. La Fura’s work in opera includes productions of La Atlántida, Le martyre de Saint Sébastien, La damnation de Faust, The Magic Flute, Elektra, Aida, Carmina Burana, and Terra Nova.

CARLUS PADRISSA (Spain)
Director
Carlus Padrippa is one of the six artistic directors of the innovative Spanish theater company La Fura dels Baus. He has directed all of the previous installments of the Ring at HGO: Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). Padrippa was the driving force behind La Fura dels Baus’s participation in the opening ceremony of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, which he and Álex Ollé directed in collaboration with Hansel Cereza, Jordi Arús, Miquel Badosa, and Pera Tantína. Padrippa’s early work in opera and in collaboration with Álex Ollé and the plastic artist Jaume Plensa began with Falla’s La Atlántida and Debussy’s Le martyre de Saint Sébastien. These were followed by La damnation de Faust (Salzburg Festival); The Magic Flute (Ruhr Biennale); and Bartók’s Bluebeard’s Castle and Janáček’s song cycle Diary of a Missing Person (Paris Opera and Gran Teatre del Liceu). One of La Fura’s most ambitious projects was converting the ship Naumon into a modern floating performance center that has logged more than 40,000 miles from the Atlantic Ocean via the Mediterranean all the way to the China Seas. Padrippa has also directed Turandot at Bavarian State Opera, Stockhausen’s Michaels Reise um die Erde in its Austrian premiere and on an international tour that included the Linzener Lincoln, Tannhäuser at La Scala, Les Troyens at the Palau de les Arts de Valencia and the Mariinsky in St. Petersburg, Parsifal at the Cologne Opera, Elektra in Sweden, Cantos de sirena in Switzerland, El amor brujo in Spain, Benvenuto Cellini in Germany, Terra Nova in Austria, and many others.

ESTEBAN MUÑOZ (Chile)
Associate Director
Esteban Muñoz has served as associate director for all three previous operas in HGO’s Ring cycle: Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). He has worked as an assistant to many directors including Calixto Bieito, Barrie Kosky, Michael Hampe, Emilio Sagi, Keith Warner, Balázs Kovalik, and Hugo de Ana in productions of the Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile, Teatro del Lago (Chile), Ópera de Lausanne, Munich Biennale, the Prince Regent Theater in Munich, and numerous open-air opera productions. He has also worked very closely with La Fura dels Baus and Carlus Padrippa since 2011. He has frequently been invited to the Bavarian State Opera, where he works principally as an assistant director. In 2013, Muñoz was awarded the ProArte Prize for Young Artist of the Year in Chile. His most recent engagements include Halévy’s La Juive with Calixto Bieito at the Bavarian State Opera, Das Rheingold with Carlus Padrippa at the National Taichung Theater (Taiwan), and Stravinsky’s Petrushka and Ravel’s L’enfant et les sortilèges with the theater group 1927 at the Komische Oper Berlin. Upcoming engagements include...
his debut at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow with The Magic Flute, Wagner’s Die Walküre with Carlos Padrissa at the National Taichung Theater, and a new production of Fiddler on the Roof with Barrie Kosky at the Komische Oper Berlin, where he became a staff member during the 2016–17 season.

ROLLAND OLBETER (Germany)
Set Designer
Roland Olbeter’s work has been seen at HGO in the three previous segments of the Ring cycle: Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). He has lived and worked in Barcelona since 1986. Formally trained as a concert violinist and as a naval constructor, he has worked extensively in theater, opera, and cinema and has created sound and movement installations as well as set designs. In his work for opera, he collaborates intensively with Carlos Padrissa of La Fura dels Baus. He won the Franco Abbiati award for the design of La Fura’s Ring operas. His work has been seen in such opera houses as the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, La Scala in Milan, Santurini Hall in Tokyo, Maggio Musicale in Florence, Vienna Pocket Opera, Cologne Opera, the Mariinski in St. Petersburg, Bavarian State Opera, and Lincoln Center, among others. Olbeter has worked for more than 10 years to develop electro-acoustic instruments to perform music in festivals and museums with the support of the German high-tech company Festo. He realized the opera Orlando Furioso for five robotic instruments and soprano with music by German composer Michael Gross. In July 2016 he produced and staged the machine opera Gulliver’s Dream with music by Elena Kats-Chernin, which is now touring through Spain and Europe.

GIANNI PAOLO MIRENDA (Italy)
Lighting Realizer
Gianni Paolo Mirenda realized the lighting on HGO’s previous stagings of Das Rheingold (2014) and Siegfried (2016). He began his career in 1980 as a member of the coaching staff of the Maggio Musicale. in his home city, Florence, Italy, holding various positions in the area of stage lighting. In 1996 he collaborated on Maggio Musicale’s first tour to Tokyo and Yokohama with Zubin Mehta and, the following year, to Shanghai to inaugurate the Grand Theater. He has collaborated with such distinguished directors as Luca Ronconi, Pier Luigi Pizzi, Graham Vick, Jonathan Miller, Robert Carsen, Liliana Cavani, and Ferzan Ozpetek. He has also lit Franco Zeffirelli’s landmark production of Pagliacci and has done lighting for live recordings of operas and ballets. Recently he realized the lighting for Das Rheingold to inaugurate the National Taichung Theater in Taiwan for the opera’s Asian premiere. Mirenda serves as director of the Video, Audio, and Lighting Department at the Petruzzelli Theater in Bari, Italy.

CHRISTIAN MICHIGAN (Belgium)
Production Designer
Christian Michigan has won an award from the German Cultural Fund for his work with La Fura dels Baus in this production of Wagner’s Ring. Other work with La Fura includes the opening ceremony of the Valencia Biennale and the operas Les Troyens, Tannhäuser, Parsifal, Turandot, and Venenuto Cellini.

PETER VAN PRAET (Belgium)
Original Lighting Designer
HGO audiences saw Peter van Praet’s lighting designs in the previous segments of the Ring cycle: Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). He has designed lighting for many productions by Robert Carsen, most recently including La fanciulla del West at La Scala, Don Carlo in Strasbourg, and Der Rosenkavalier at the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Other productions with Carsen include Jenůfa, The Cunning Little Vixen, Katya Kabanova, and Richard III at the Flemish Opera; Rusalka and Capriccio in Paris; Fidelio in Amsterdum and Florence; Les Boréades in Paris and New York; Tosca at Gran Teatro del Liceu; Der Rosenkavalier in Salzburg; La traviata in Venice; Elektra in Tokyo; A Midsummer Night’s Dream in Barcelona; Iphigénie en Tauride at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and in Madrid and Toronto; Candide at La Scala, English National Opera, and in Japan; Don Giovanni at La Scala; Falstaff at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala, and the Metropolitan Opera; and the world premiere of CO2 at La Scala. With director Pierre Audi, Van Praet has lit productions of Les Troyens, Alcina, and Zoroastre. With Valentina Carrasco, he lit the Colón-Ring (an abridged version of Wagner’s Ring for Teatro Colón), The Turn of the Screw, Don Giovanni, and Oedipe.

GIANNI PAOLO MIRENDA (Italy)
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Gianni Paolo Mirenda realized the lighting on HGO’s previous stagings of Das Rheingold (2014) and Siegfried (2016). He began his career in 1980 as a member of the coaching staff of the Maggio Musicale’s first tour to Tokyo and Yokohama with Zubin Mehta and, the following year, to Shanghai to inaugurate the Grand Theater. He has collaborated with such distinguished directors as Luca Ronconi, Pier Luigi Pizzi, Graham Vick, Jonathan Miller, Robert Carsen, Liliana Cavani, and Ferzan Özpetch. He has also lit Franco Zeffirelli’s landmark production of Pagliacci and has done lighting for live recordings of operas and ballets. Recently he realized the lighting for Das Rheingold to inaugurate the National Taichung Theater in Taiwan for the opera’s Asian premiere. Mirenda serves as director of the Video, Audio, and Lighting Department at the Petruzzelli Theater in Bari, Italy.

CHU UROZ (Spain)
Costume Designer
Chu Uroz’s costume designs have been seen at HGO in the three previous installments of Wagner’s Ring: Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). Born in Barcelona, Uroz studied at the Barcelona and Vallès schools of architecture before specializing in industrial design at the Elisava School of Design. In 1992 he participated in the artistic direction and costume design of the opening ceremonies for the Olympic Games in Barcelona, in close collaboration with La Fura dels Baus. His work in the Olympics ceremonies earned him a Gold Award. In film, Uroz worked with the late director Bigas Luna on Jamón, jamón (production designer and art director); Huevos de oro (curator and film production); Yo soy la Juani and Di Di Hollywood (production designer); and Comedias barbáras and Gaudir nouvelle (artistic director). Uroz has also worked for the band U2 as a stage and wardrobe consultant. He has worked as a costume designer and art director with La Fura dels Baus since 2000, and in 2009 he won the prestigious Franco Abbiati Award for
FRANC ALEU (Spain)
Projection Designer

Franc Aleu’s projection designs have been seen at HGO in Das Rheingold (2014), Die Walküre (2015), and Siegfried (2016). He recently won the Catalonian government's prestigious National Culture Award in the audiovisual category. He has worked in theaters and opera houses all over the world, including the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, La Scala in Milan, La Monnaie in Brussels, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Maggio Musicale in Florence, and Vienna Pocket Opera, among others. Outside the performing arts, he has created visual projections on façades of landmark buildings such as Barcelona’s City Hall and the Catalan Parliament, and he works in advertising, design, conceptualization, and direction of all kinds of events. He has created architectural designs for exhibition pavilions such as the Expo Zaragoza 2008. A recent highlight was directing El somni, the first gastronomic multisensory opera in collaboration with the Roca brothers, whose restaurant El Celler de Can Roca, in Girona, Spain, has been named the world’s best. Aleu gives master classes and lectures in major European cultural centers such as Milan, Cologne, Prague, Barcelona, and other cities.

RICHARD BADO (United States)
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Chorus Master

Richard Bado has served as HGO’s chorus master since 1988 and was the company’s head of music staff for 14 seasons. HGO honored him in 2013 with the Silver Rose Award to mark his 25th anniversary as chorus master. The HGO Studio alumnus (1983–85) made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading HGO’s acclaimed production of Show Boat at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt and later conducted Robert Wilson’s production of Four Saints in Three Acts on tour to the Edinburgh Festival (1996). Most recently, he conducted last season’s Carousel. Bado has also conducted at 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, Wolf Trap Opera, and Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital and 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. He is the director of the Opera Studies Program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

**DENISE TARRANT (United States)**
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Concertmaster

A native of Texas, Denise Tarrant started her professional violin career at the age of 16 with the Midland Odessa (Texas) Symphony. Afterward she studied at the University of Houston, Rice University, Trinity University (London), and the Royal College of Music (London). She became HGO’s concertmaster under the baton of Patrick Summers in 1999. Highlights of her work at HGO include the world premieres of Carlisle Floyd’s *Cold Sassy Tree* (2000) and Tod Machover’s *Resurrection* (1999), as well as Catán’s *Florencia en el Amazones* (2001), and Floyd’s *Of Mice and Men* (2002), all of which were released on CD by Albany Records. She further performed in the world premieres of Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* (2016), *Three Decembers* (2008), and *The End of the Affair* (2004); Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players* (2016); André Previn’s *Brief Encounter* (2009); Mark Adamo’s *Lysistrata* (2005); Catán’s *Salsipuedes* (2004); and Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* (2003). She performed on stage as the solo violinist in *Julius Caesar* in 2003. She has been concertmaster of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1988 and has been featured as a violin soloist in numerous Houston Ballet productions including Stanton Welch’s *Manniyas* (Ross Edward’s Violin Concerto), *Clear* (Bach’s Concerto for Violin and Oboe), *The Four Seasons* (Vivaldi), and Natalie Weir’s *Steppenwolf* (Bruch Violin Concerto).

**SIMON O’NEILL (New Zealand)**
Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2014–15
Tenor—Siegfried

Simon O’Neill made his HGO debut performing the title role in *Lohengrin* (2009) and subsequently sang Florestan in *Fidelio* (2011), the title role in *Otello* (2014) and Siegmund in *Die Walküre* (2015). He has also performed principal roles with the Metropolitan Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; La Scala; and the Bayreuth and Salzburg festivals. He is a Fulbright Scholar, was awarded the Arts Laureate of New Zealand, and holds an honorary doctorate in music from Victoria University of Wellington. Notable debuts include Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Mackerras); Gran Sacerdote (High Priest of Neptune) in *Idomeneo* at the Metropolitan Opera (Levine); Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* for Opera Australia (Armstrong); Siegmund in *Die Walküre* for the Bavarian State Opera (Nagano); the title roles in *Lohengrin* (Nelsons) and *Parsifal* (Gatti) for the Bayreuth Festival; Chairman Mao in *Nixon in China* for the San Francisco Opera; and *Parsifal* at the Vienna State Opera (Thielemann).

Engagements for 2016 and beyond include Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 in Tokyo (Harding); Florestan in Rome with Pappano; *Gurrelieder* with Runcicles at the Edinburgh Festival; Boris in *Katya Kabanova* for the Berlin State Opera (Rattle); Siegmund for the Berlin State Opera (Barenboim), Berlin Philharmonic (Rattle), Leipzig Opera (Schirmer), and Bavarian State Opera (Petrenko); Drum Major in *Wozzeck* for the Hamburg State Opera; and the title roles in *Siegfried* in Hong Kong (van Zweden) and *Parsifal* with Bavarian State Opera (Petrenko).

**CHRISTINE GOERKE (United States)**
Soprano—Brünnhilde

Christine Goerke continues her portrayal of Brünnhilde after singing the role at HGO in *Die Walküre* (2015) and *Siegfried* (2016). Her other HGO roles include Princess Eboli in *Don Carlos* (2012), Prima Donna/Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2011), Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (2009), and Fiordiligi in *Costa fan tutte* (2001). She has appeared in the major opera houses of the world and has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now moving into the dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles. She has received acclaim for her portrayals of the title roles in *Elektra*, *Turandot*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Norma*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and *Florencia en el Amazonas*; Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle; Kundry in *Parsifal*; Ortrud in *Lohengrin*; Leonora in *Fidelio*; Eboli in *Don Carlos*; Dyer’s Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*; Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*; Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*; Alice in *Falstaff*; and Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. This season, she made her role debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Cassandra in *Les Troyens* and returned to Opera Philadelphia for *Turandot* and the Canadian Opera Company for *Gotterdammerung*. Future plans include the full *Ring* cycle at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera; a return to the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, for *Turandot*; and the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera to sing the title role in *Elektra*, which she will perform at HGO next season.

**ANDREA SILVESTRELLI (Italy)**
Bass—Hagen

Andrea Silvestrelli has previously performed Fafner in both *Das Rheingold* (2014) and *Siegfried* (2016) at HGO, along with Philippe II in *Don Carlos* (2012), Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* (2009), and Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2008). This season, his engagements include Fafner in *Das Rheingold* with the National Taichung Theater in Taiwan, Oroveso in *Norma* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, both with San Francisco Opera. Last season with San Francisco Opera, he sang Wurm in *Luisa Miller*, The Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, and the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo*. He also returned to Erl, Austria, for performances of the *Ring* cycle at the Tiroler Festspiele. Other recent performances include Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Mackerras); Gran Sacerdote (High Priest of Neptune) in *Idomeneo* at the Metropolitan Opera (Levine); Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* for Opera Australia (Armstrong); Siegmund in *Die Walküre* for the Bavarian State Opera (Nagano); the title roles in *Lohengrin* (Nelsons) and *Parsifal* (Gatti) for the Bayreuth Festival; Chairman Mao in *Nixon in China* for the San Francisco Opera; and *Parsifal* at the Vienna State Opera (Thielemann).
include the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Ferrando in *Il trovatore* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago; additional performances as the Commendatore with the Canadian Opera Company; Fafner/Hagen in the *Ring* cycle with the Tiroler Festspiele; Pistola in *Falstaff* and Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the San Francisco Opera; and the title role in *Bluebeard’s Castle* with the Tiroler Festspiele.

**RYAN MCKINNY (United States)**

*Bass-baritone*—*Gunther*

HGO Studio alumnus Ryan McKinny (2005–08) performs regularly at HGO, including such roles as Donner in *Das Rheingold*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and the title role in *Rigoletto* (2014); Kurwenal in *Tristan and Isolde* (2013); and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (2012). This season he makes his Dutch National Opera debut in Pierre Audi’s production of *Parisifal*; performs Donner in *Das Rheingold* for his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut conducted by Andris Nelsons at Tanglewood; returns to Washington National Opera as Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*; and sings Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at Hawaii Opera Theater, Amfortas in *Parisifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, and Richard Nixon in John Adams’s *China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by the composer. Recent highlights include his highly acclaimed Bayreuth Festival debut in a new UweLaufenberg production of *Parisifal* as Amfortas, the role he also sang for his debut at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires; a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Biterolf in *Tannhäuser* under James Levine, which was broadcast around the world in HD; his Washington National Opera debut as Donner and Gunther in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*; and a return to the Hamburg Opera for his first European performances of *The Flying Dutchman*. In recent seasons, he was seen at the Metropolitan Opera as the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* and Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* under James Levine.

**CHRISTOPHER PURVES (United Kingdom)**

*Baritone*—*Alberich*

Christopher Purves continues his portrayal of Alberich after singing the role at HGO in *Das Rheingold* (2014). He also sang Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* (2010) and is concurrently performing Pasha Selim in HGO’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Highlights this season for Purves, formerly a member of the experimental rock group Harvey and the Wallbangers, include the title role in Richard Jones’s new production of *Don Giovanni* for English National Opera; Alberich in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert; the Protector in *Written on Skin* for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the title role in Barrie Kosky’s production of *Saul* at the Adelaide Festival; and Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski. Recent operatic highlights include Gamekeeper in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the title role in *Saul* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Protector at Lincoln Center and on tour with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, his debut at the Opéra National de Paris in Schoenberg’s *Moses und Aron*, Alberich in *Götterdämmerung* at the Bavarian State Opera and in *Siegfried* with Canadian Opera Company, the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* at Opera North, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Welsh National Opera, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* in his house debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Balstrode at La Scala.

**JAMIE BARTON (United States)**

*Mezzo-soprano*—*Waltraute/Second Norn*

An alumna of the HGO Studio (2007–09), American mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton is the winner of the 2017 Beverly Sills Artist Award, 2015 Richard Tucker Award, both Main and Song Prizes at the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, and the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Her HGO credits include Fricka in *Das Rheingold* (2014) and in *Die Walküre* (2015), among other roles. She will reprise Waltraute and Second Norn in *Götterdämmerung* with the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and New York Philharmonic. She will return to Houston next season as Adalgisa in *Norma*, a role she has performed to great acclaim at the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and San Francisco Opera, and will sing her first runs of Eboli in *Don Carlo* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Washington National Opera. The winner of the 2014 International Opera Award in the Young Singer category and the 2014 Marian Anderson Award, Barton has recently made concert debuts at Wigmore Hall and with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and has returned to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Jake Heggie’s *The Work at Hand* was commissioned for her, and she premiered it at Carnegie Hall in 2015. Next season, she returns to New York to present the world premiere of Iain Bell’s *Of You*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall.

**MEREDITH ARWADY (United States)**

*Contralto*—*First Norn*

Meredith Arwady has previously performed at HGO as Erda in *Das Rheingold* (2014) and *Siegfried* (2016) as well as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* (2015). Also at HGO, she sang Auntie in *Peter Grimes* (2010) and created the role of Myrtle Bagot in the world premiere of André Previn’s *Brief Encounter* (2009). This season’s engagements include her house debut at Washington National Opera reprising her acclaimed portrayal of Kathy Hagen in Terence Blanchard’s *Champion*, Filippovychna in *Eugene Onegin* at the Dallas Opera, and Amelia in Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Le coq d’or* at Santa Fe Opera. Recent highlights include her Los Angeles Opera debut in Woody Allen’s production of *Gianni Schicchi* as Zita with Plácido Domingo as Schicchi, appearing at Oper Frankfurt and the Canadian Opera Company as Erda in *Siegfried*, and singing First Norn in Frankfurt. She debuted at the English National Opera as Martha in John Adams’s *The
Dramatic soprano Heidi Melton is making her HGO debut. Her engagements for the 2016–17 season include her role debut as Brünnhilde in new productions of Die Walküre and Siegfried, both at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe; her debut with the London Symphony Orchestra and Berlin Philharmonic in Ligeti’s Le grand macabre under Simon Rattle; a return to the Hong Kong Philharmonic in concert performances of Siegfried, which will be recorded on Naxos; and Quad City Symphony for Strauss’s Four Last Songs and Isolde’s Liebestod. She recently debuted with the Vienna Philharmonic singing Brünnhilde’s immolation scene from Göttterdammerung under the baton of Valery Gergiev, in both Vienna at the Musikverein and in New York at Carnegie Hall. She made her New York Philharmonic debut with Alan Gilbert in Strauss lieder and Act III of Die Walküre as Brünnhilde. For the Hong Kong Philharmonic with Jaap van Zweden, she sang Sieglinde in complete concert performances of Die Walküre (also recorded on Naxos). She returned to the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Venus/Elisabeth in Tannhäuser with Donald Runnicles, as well as to Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe for her first Isolde in a new Christopher Alden production of Tristan und Isolde conducted by Justin Brown. She debuted at the English National Opera in Tristan and Isolde conducted by Edward Gardner.

Andrea Carroll continues her portrayal of Woglinde, a role she sang in Das Rheingold when HGO began its Ring cycle in 2014. The HGO Studio alumna (2012–14) won first prize and the Audience Choice Award in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Roles at HGO include Mary Hatch Bailey in the world premiere of It’s a Wonderful Life earlier this season, Julie Jordan in Carousel (2016), Anne Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014), Adele in performances of Die Fledermaus (2013–14), and Musetta in performances of La bohème (2012–13). This season’s engagements include Micaëla in Carmen with Opera San Antonio, Gilda in Rigoletto with Palm Beach Opera, and Mélisande in Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande with Garsington Opera. On the concert stage, she performs Mozart arias with Musica Angelica Baroque in Los Angeles. Last season, she joined the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera and during her residency she performed over 25 roles, including Gilda, Musetta, Adina in The Elixir of Love, Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier, Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro, Norina in Don Pasquale, and Papagena in The Magic Flute. Other recent engagements took her to Washington National Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Seattle Opera, and Utah Opera. She returns to HGO next season as Maria in West Side Story.
EMANUEL AX PLAYS MOZART
CHRIS BOTTI RETURNS
HILARY HAHN PLAYS
BERNSTEIN

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JAMES EHNES PLAYS
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THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO

A Singspiel in Three Acts
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Gottlieb Stephanie
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in German with projected English translation

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Belmonte Lawrence Brownlee
Osmin Ryan Speedo Green *
Pedrillo Chris Bozeka †
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
Pasha Selim Christopher Purves
Konstanze Albina Shagimuratova ‡
Blonde Uliana Alexyuk ‡

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Colorado, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Minnesota Opera.

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

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

Conductor: Thomas Rösner
Director: James Robinson
Set Designer: Allen Moyer
Costume Designer: Anna R. Oliver
Lighting Designer: Paul Palazzo
Projection Designer: Wendall K. Harrington
Chorus Master: Richard Bado ‡
Musical Preparation: Emily Senturia ‡
Stage Manager: Kristen E. Burke
Assistant Director: Omer Ben Seadia
Supertitles by: Patricia Houk, adapted by Daniel James

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles cued by: Kirill Kuzmin †

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
Setting: The 1920s. All the action takes place on the Orient Express, en route to Paris from Istanbul.

Before the opera begins
Turkish pirates in the Mediterranean have boarded and looted a yacht carrying Konstanze, a Spanish noblewoman; Blonde, her English maidservant; and Pedrillo, the personal valet of Konstanze’s fiancé, Belmonte. Intrigued by Konstanze, the wealthy Pasha Selim purchases the three Europeans.

After months of searching, Belmonte has traced them to Pasha Selim’s private car on the exotic Orient Express, about to depart Istanbul for Paris. Konstanze has become Selim’s favorite, but she yearns for Belmonte and resists the pasha’s advances. Blonde is being pursued by Osmin, overseer of the harem, although she remains true to Pedrillo, who has been taken into Selim’s service.

ACT I
Belmonte searches for Pasha Selim’s private car, yearning to be reunited with Konstanze. He meets the boorish Osmin and asks him where he might find Pedrillo. Osmin, who believes Pedrillo is his rival for Blonde’s affections, flies into a rage and Belmonte departs. Pedrillo begins working on Osmin, the overseer of the harem, and Osmin angrily dismisses him in the correct way to treat women. Osmin orders her to love him, for that’s the way it’s done in Turkey. Blonde scolds Osmin and instructs him to tell Konstanze of Belmonte’s arrival. Osmin warns Blonde not to flirt with Pedrillo. Meanwhile, Konstanze mourns her separation from Belmonte. Osmin reminds her that by the next day she must decide whether to accept his offer. She maintains that she can honor him but never love him. She will remain true to her beloved even in the face of torture or death. Selim is baffled, wondering why Konstanze has so much hope and courage. Pedrillo tells Blonde of Selim’s arrival and describes the plan for the “abduction.” They will put a sleeping potion in Osmin’s drink and all four lovers will escape. Blonde is delighted at this news and looks forward to telling Konstanze of Belmonte’s arrival. Pedrillo begins working on Osmin, telling the overseer that Mohammed should not have forbidden drinking, and after being reassured that the drinks are not poisoned, Osmin succumbs to temptation. He joins Pedrillo in praising wine and women before falling fast asleep. The coast now clear, Belmonte and Konstanze joyously embrace. The happy reunion darkens when Belmonte and Pedrillo jealously question the women’s faithfulness, but misunderstandings melt into relief and joy.

PAUSE

ACT II
Blonde scolds Osmin and instructs him in the correct way to treat women. Osmin orders her to love him, for that’s the way it’s done in Turkey. Blonde scolds Osmin and instructs him to tell Konstanze of Belmonte’s arrival. Pedrillo begins working on Osmin, telling the overseer that Mohammed should not have forbidden drinking, and after being reassured that the drinks are not poisoned, Osmin succumbs to temptation. He joins Pedrillo in praising wine and women before falling fast asleep. The coast now clear, Belmonte and Konstanze joyously embrace. The happy reunion darkens when Belmonte and Pedrillo jealously question the women’s faithfulness, but misunderstandings melt into relief and joy.

Konstanze offers to die to save her beloved; Belmonte suggests that Selim might collect a handsome ransom from his wealthy family, the Lestados. Selim then realizes that Belmonte is the son of an old enemy and bids them prepare for the kind of punishment that Belmonte’s father would have dealt. The lovers vow to welcome death as the path to an eternal union, but Selim decides that rather than taking revenge, he will free his captives, for he despises Belmonte’s father too much to emulate him. He bids Belmonte to return to his homeland and become more humane than his father. This magnanimous act confounds Osmin, who protests the loss of Blonde to no avail. The pasha declares that love cannot be won by force. As the train pulls into the Paris station, the lovers vow never to forget the pasha’s kindness. Osmin’s rage erupts, but he is silenced by the crowd chanting praise to Pasha Selim.

INTERMISSION

ACT III
Pedrillo gives the signal for escape. When the women appear, the noise awakens Osmin, who sends for the guards. The lovers are trapped and Osmin will not accept Belmonte’s bribe to keep silent. Instead, Osmin savors the prospect of torturing and killing his enemies. Pasha Selim is informed of the treachery and arrives to question the prisoners. While
VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor †, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Acting Principal Second Violin
Melissa Williams *, Acting Assistant Principal Second Violin
Hae-a Lee Barnes *
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Kana Kimura

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

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

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

FLUTE
Seth Allyn Morris *, Principal
Christina Medawar *

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal
Alison Chung

CLARINET/BASSET HORN
Sean Krissman *, Principal
Eric Chi *

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Conrad Cornelson *

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

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams *

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén †, Principal
Mark Holley †

BASS TROMBONE
Kyle Gordon †

TUBA
Mark Barton †, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman †, Principal

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

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

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CHORUS

RICHARD BADO, CHORUS MASTER—The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
EMILY SENTURIA, ASSISTANT CHORUS MASTER

Geordie Alexander
Brennan Blankenship
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Suzanne Gregory
Frankie Hickman
Jon Janacek

Wesley Landry
Laurie Lester
Amelia Love
Keenan Manceaux
Kathleen Manley
Heath Martin
Katherine McDaniel

Natasha Monette
Cristino Perez
Patrick Perez
Teresa Procter
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
John Weinel

SUPERNUMERARIES

Troy E. Falldyn
Anna Harris
Brian Hues
Orlanders Jones
Brian Mitchell
Shannon Murray
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Molly Searcy
Rodney White

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WHO’S WHO

THOMAS RÖSNER (Austria)
Conductor
Born in Vienna, Thomas Rösner made his U.S. debut at HGO conducting Die Fledermaus (2013). He conducted his first orchestral concerts at the age of 14; an invitation from Fabio Luisi marked the beginning of his international career, when he was engaged on short notice to conduct on a tour of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Recent appearances include Fidelio at the Zurich Opera; Così fan tutte at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in a staging by Michael Hanke; the world premiere of Die Schatzinsel and Così fan tutte at the Zurich Opera; a return to Welsh National Opera for a highly acclaimed new production of Die Fledermaus; The Magic Flute at Opera Festival Sardegna, Italy; Die Königskinder at Semperoper Dresden; and The Merry Widow at the National Center for Performing Arts in Beijing. He has also conducted at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, Stuttgart State Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bregenz Festival, and the New National Theatre Tokyo (Salome with Tokyo Symphony Orchestra) as well as Glyndebourne Festival, Edinburgh Festival, and Opera di Roma. From 2000 to 2004, Rösner was associate conductor of the Orchestre National de Bordeaux; he has also been music director of the Festival Opera Klosterneuburg in Austria, and from 2005 to 2011 he was chief conductor of Orchestre Symphonique Bienne, Switzerland. His most recent recording features works by Kletzki and Marek with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra on the Musique Suisses label.

JAMES ROBINSON (United States)
Director
James Robinson’s work at HGO includes Nixon in China earlier this season, this production of The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008, 2002); Julius Caesar (2003); La bohème (2008, 2002); the world premiere of Catán’s Salsipuedes (2004); and Lucia di Lammermoor (2003). Robinson is artistic director at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has mounted productions including Unsuk Chin’s Alice in Wonderland (American premiere), Peter Ash’s The Golden Ticket (world premiere), John Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles (also presented at the Wexford Festival), and John Adams’s The Death of Klinghoffer. Robinson has directed new productions for San Francisco Opera (Norma, Il trittico, and L’élisir d’amore); the Canadian Opera Company (Norma, Elektra, and Nixon in China); the Santa Fe Opera (Capriccio, Così fan tutte, and The Rake’s Progress); and New York City Opera (La bohème, Hansel and Gretel, and Il viaggio a Reims). His work has also been seen at the Australian Opera, the Washington National Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Seattle Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera, the Dallas Opera, the Minnesota Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater. Recent highlights include the critically acclaimed 2013 world premiere of Terence Blanchard’s Champion for the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, an opera he directed at Washington National Opera this season. Next season, he will return to HGO to direct Julius Caesar and the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s The House without a Christmas Tree.

ALLEN MOYER (United States)
Set Designer
Allen Moyer’s work has previously been seen at HGO in Nixon in China earlier this season; this production of The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008, 2002); La bohème (2008, 2002); and the world premiere of Catán’s Salsipuedes (2004). Recent opera credits include Vanessa and The Daughter of the Regiment for the Santa Fe Opera, Emmeline and the world premiere of Jack Perla’s Shalimar the Clown for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Die Fledermaus for Canadian Opera Company and English National Opera, Orfeo ed Euridice for the Metropolitan Opera, and many productions for San Francisco Opera, Scottish Opera, Washington National Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Welsh National Opera, National Academy of St. Cecilia, Wexford Festival, Seattle Opera, and New York City Opera, including Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein’s The Mother of Us All, Il trittico, Il viaggio a Reims, and La bohème (broadcast on Live from Lincoln Center). Broadway credits include The Lyons, Lysistrata Jones, the musical Grey Gardens (Tony/Drama Desk/Outer Critics Circle nominations and the 2006 Hewes Award from the American Theater Wing), After Miss Julie, The Little Dog Laughed, Twelve Angry Men (including the national tour), and The Constant Wife. Moyer is the recipient of a 2006 Obie Award for sustained excellence. He will design sets for HGO’s world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s The House without a Christmas Tree next season.

ANNA R. OLIVER (United States)
Costume Designer
Anna R. Oliver’s designs have been seen at HGO previously in this production of The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008, 2002) and Turandot (2004). Her work in opera includes Hansel and Gretel (New York City Opera and L.A. Opera); The Magic Flute (San Jose Opera); Il viaggio a Reims (Canadian Opera Company, New York City Opera); Orpheus and Eurydice (Opera Colorado); Norma (Canadian Opera Company, San Francisco Opera, Opera Colorado); and designs for the Welsh National Opera, Dallas Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Pacific, and Boston Lyric Opera, among others. Her many productions for the Old Globe in San Diego include Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, Magic Fire, Don Juan, and Misalliance. Elsewhere in California, her work has been seen at the La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Festival, and San Jose Repertory Theatre. She has also designed for the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., Seattle Repertory Theatre; McCarter Theatre; Long Wharf Theatre; and Dallas Theater Center.
WENDALL K. HARRINGTON (United States)
Projection/Video Designer
Wendall K. Harrington’s career has embraced diverse disciplines including projection design for theater, publishing, and video production. Her work has been seen at HGO in Nixon in China earlier this season, in this production of The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008), and in The Juniper Tree (1986). Her Broadway design credits include All the Way, Driving Miss Daisy, Grey Gardens, They’re Playing Our Song, The Elephant Man, My One and Only, The Heidi Chronicles, The Will Rogers Follies, Having Our Say, Company, Racing Demon, Ragtime, John Leguizamo’s one-man show Freak, The Capeman, Putting It Together, and Who’s Tommy. In opera, her credits include Werther at the Metropolitan Opera; Julie Taymor’s The Magic Flute in Florence, Italy; A View from the Bridge at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Die Gezeichneten at Los Angeles Opera; The Photographer at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; and Transatlantic, The Grapes of Wrath, and Rusalka for Minnesota Opera. She has received the Drama Desk Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the American Theatre Wing Award, the TCI Award for Technical Achievement, and the Obie Award for sustained excellence in projection design, and the Michael Merritt Award for collaboration. She is head of the projection design concentration at the Yale School of Drama.

RICHARD BADO (United States)
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair Chorus Master
For information about Richard Bado, please see p. 43.

PAUL PALAZZO (United States)
Lighting Designer
Paul Palazzo has lit previous HGO stagings of Nixon in China (2017), this production of The Abduction from the Seraglio (2008, 2002), and Don Pasquale (2006). He is a 1986 graduate of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and has designed the lighting for numerous opera productions internationally for such companies as English National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Portland Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, Wolf Trap Opera, and Utah Opera. His dance credits include the 2007 world premiere of Mark Morris’s Italian Concerto. Broadway credits include the Roundabout Theatre’s production of Twelve Angry Men. His museum and installation work includes American Food 2.0 at the U.S. pavilion at Milan Expo 2015; and Infinite Variety: Three Centuries of Red and White Quilts for the American Folk Art Museum. Palazzo’s international base of corporate clients includes Hewlett-Packard, IBM, SAP, and Sony Electronics.

DENISE TARRANT (United States)
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair Concertmaster
For information about Denise Tarrant, please see p. 44.

ALBINA SHAGIMURATOVA (Russia)
Soprano—Konstanze
HGO Studio alumna Albina Shagimuratova (2006–08) has been seen at HGO as Violetta in La traviata (2012); Lucia in Lucia di Lammermoor (2011); Gilda in Rigoletto (2009); and Musetta in La bohème and Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute (2008), among others. She first came to international attention as the Gold Medal winner in the 2007 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, followed by her European opera debut as the Queen of the Night at the Salzburg Festival under the baton of Riccardo Muti. She has also sung the Queen of the Night with the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera, Covent Garden; La Scala (available on DVD); Vienna State Opera; Bavarian State Opera; Deutsche Oper Berlin; San Francisco Opera; Bolshoi Theater; Los Angeles Opera; Hamburg State Opera; and the Lucerne Festival, among others. Her 2016–17 season began with a festival and role debut at the BBC Proms as the title character in Rossini’s Semiramide conducted by Sir Mark Elder at the Royal Albert Hall. The performance will be broadcast and recorded on the Opera Rara label for release in 2017. Other season engagements include her signature role as the title character in Graham Vick’s production of Lucia di Lammermoor at Lyric Opera of Chicago under Enrique Mazzola, the Queen of the Night at Opéra Bastille and the Vienna State Opera, Donna Anna in Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, and Aspasia in Mitridate, re di Ponto at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. She will open HGO’s 2017–18 season this fall as Violetta in La traviata.

LAWRENCE BROWNLEE (United States)
Tenor—Belmonte
Lawrence Brownlee, recently nominated for Male Singer of the Year in the International Opera Awards, sang the leading tenor roles at HGO in a trio of Rossini comedies produced by the Spanish theater collective Els Comedians: Lindoro in The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), Count Almaviva in The Barber of Seville (2011), and Don Ramiro in La Cenerentola (2007). Brownlee has performed with nearly every leading international opera house and festival, as well as major orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Highlights of the current season include his San Francisco Opera debut as Ernesto in Don Pasquale, Idreno in Semiramide at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the title role in Le comte Ory with Seattle Opera, and the title role in Charlie Parker’s Yardbird with Lyric Opera of Chicago/Lyric Orchestra.
Unlimited and with London’s Hackney Empire in partnership with English National Opera. Recent performances include *La donna del lago* at the Metropolitan Opera, *La Cenerentola* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *The Barber of Seville* at the Paris Opera, a new production of *I Puritani* at Zurich Opera, and *Yardbird* with Opera Philadelphia at the historic Apollo Theater in New York City. Other performances include *Carmina Burana* with the L.A. Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the Berlioz Requiem at the Edinburgh Festival, and an extensive U.S. recital tour.

**RYAN SPEEDO GREEN**  
(United States)  
Bass-baritone—Osmin

Ryan Speedo Green is making his HGO and role debut. This season he also returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Colline in the iconic Zeffirelli production of *La bohème* and joins the Vienna State Opera for his third season as an ensemble member, with roles including Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Timur in *Turandot*, among others. Additional engagements include his house and role debut as Escamillo in *Carmen* with Opera San Antonio. Concert work includes Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Gustavo Dudamel leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, *Belshazzar’s Feast* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival, and Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with the Santa Cruz Symphony, conducted by music director Daniel Stewart. Green will also give recitals at the Ravinia Festival and the Ferguson Center for the Arts. In the fall of 2016, Little, Brown and Co. published *Sing for Your Life* by New York Times journalist Daniel Bergner; the book tells the story of Green’s personal and artistic journey from a trailer park in southeastern Virginia and from time spent in Virginia’s juvenile facility of last resort to the Metropolitan Opera stage. An alumnus of the Met’s Lindemmann Young Artist Program, Green has performed a number of roles at the Met, including the Mandarin in *Turandot*, Rambo in the Met premiere of *The Death of Klinghoffer* conducted by David Robertson, the Second Knight in a new production of *Parsifal* that was broadcast as part of the Met’s *Live in HD* program, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, and the Jailer in *Tosca* (also broadcast in *Live in HD*).
ULIANA ALEXYUK (Ukraine)
Soprano—Blonde
HGO Studio alumna Uliana Alexyuk sang Gilda in Rigoletto, Ivette in The Passenger (both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival), Ida in Die Fledermaus, Frasquita in Carmen, and Mrs. Nordstrom in A Little Night Music during her season in the Studio (2013–14). Before coming to Houston, Alexyuk, born in Kiev, was a member of the Young Artists Program at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. She has performed at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Bolshoi Theatre, Dresden Semperoper, Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, and Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. Her most recent engagements include The Tsar’s Bride at Lincoln Center in New York (on tour with the Bolshoi), Marfa in The Tsar’s Bride and Amina in La sonnambula at the Bolshoi Theatre, the title role in L’enfant et les sortilèges, Musetta in La bohème and Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute at Badisches Staatstheater, Yvette in The Passenger at Lyric Opera of Chicago, a recital at Musashino Cultural Foundation of Tokyo, and Zerbinetta in Ariadne auf Naxos at Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. Her repertoire also includes Ludmila in Ruslan and Ludmilla; the roles of Princess, Fire, and Nightingale in L’enfant et les sortilèges; First Lady in The Magic Flute; Brigitta in Iolanta; and Adele in Die Fledermaus. For world premieres, she created the roles of Anya in Philippe Fénélon’s La cerisaie and Dita in Fabio Vacchi’s Lo stesso mare.

CHRIS BOZEKA (United States)
Tenor—Pedrillo
Second-year HGO Studio artist Chris Bozeka won second prize in the 2015 Eleanor McCallum Competition Concert of Arias. At HGO, he sang student performances of Nemorino in The Elixir of Love earlier this season. Last season, he performed the Drunkard/the Lamplighter in The Little Prince, Don Curzio in The Marriage of Figaro, the Huntsman in Rusalka, and Male Emilia in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players. As a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music, he sang Nemorino, Ernesto in Don Pasquale, and the Narrator in Owen Wingrave. He performed Goro and a performance of Pinkerton in Madame Butterfly with the Castleton Festival and Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program. Last summer with Glimmerglass Opera he sang Pirelli in Sweeney Todd.

CHRISTOPHER PURVES (United Kingdom)
Pasha Selim
For information about Christopher Purves, please see p. 45.

Nicholas Phan and Heidi Stober in The Abduction from the Seraglio at HGO, 2008.
Photo by Andrew Cloud.
The HGO Chorus is not a full-time ensemble; members audition for every show, and the majority have other full-time or part-time jobs. Their passion for choral singing means that they have to make many sacrifices in order to carve out the time needed. Tony Martinez has been a member of the HGO Chorus since 1997 and is also the group’s representative for AGMA (American Guild of Musical Artists).

Perryn Leech: Tell me a little about your early memories and especially how you got into music.

Tony Martinez: I was born in Odessa, Texas, and was one of five kids, so we were a busy family. We were brought up by my mom on her own and we were pretty nomadic—she would move us around, always looking for a less expensive place to live. I had no musical inclination at that point other than singing along with the radio!
It must have been difficult for you to be settled in school with moving around so much.

It certainly was! I went to a total of 15 schools in all, including going to two of the elementary and two of the middle schools twice each! I got used to fitting in quickly. My mom taught us all to work hard and that your work is your freedom. It was hard at times for her, but she would always find work and then get off welfare. She pushed us very hard to do well at school but when my older siblings reached the end of their schooling, she pushed them to get jobs and contribute.

When did choral music start to appeal to you?

In middle school I had to sign up for an elective and decided to join the marching band as a percussionist. My family moved (again) just before school started so I was dropped from the band roster. I was then put in other electives. My new school didn't offer one of my electives so I joined choir instead of the only other option, P.E. I had never studied music but I learned quickly and, since my voice changed at 11, I was able to find a good niche in the choir. Then I moved again! Luckily I soon moved back to that school again and Mrs. Love, the choir director, welcomed me back and I was there for the rest of middle school.

So there was definitely some luck involved in going back to that school and that teacher?

Certainly, but I also realized that choir was the main reason I was going to school. I had been in the gifted and talented programs at all the schools I had been to, but it was choir that really made me push myself. It somehow unlocked everything for me. I knew at the age of eight that I wanted to get out of Odessa and I thought music would be my way out.

That kind of calling, especially so early in life, must have allowed you to focus. What were your next steps?

I knew that music was what I wanted to do but I also had other interests like cartography and architecture, so I wasn't completely boxed in. I knew I was going to college and decided to major in music. My mom was mad—she wanted me to be a doctor or lawyer since I had done so well at school. I knew I wanted to find a state school but that it had to be more than a day's drive from Odessa!

That's a pretty specific set of criteria! So where did that lead you?

There were four real options and I looked at West Texas State, Texas Tech, University of Texas, and University of Houston. I had been in All State Choir for the past two years and a friend there told me that U of H was where I needed to go. I was so thrilled when I got into U of H, which was by then my first choice. When I drove into Houston and saw the skyline and the lights I knew this was where I wanted to be.
for the past two years and I held a similar position for the previous thirteen years at St. Martin's Lutheran in Sugar Land. I have also been the video director at the Houston Symphony for the past five seasons. If you go to the Symphony and see live video, I'm calling the shots from my pit in the basement! Video is another thing that I have taught myself, and I enjoy it very much. It has allowed me to increase my knowledge of orchestral music and I get to see some great music being made by others while I work.

You also took on being the lead AGMA representative at HGO as well—you're a glutton for punishment, aren't you?

I actually enjoy it as it allows me to use another part of my brain. I took it on in 2001–02 and have been chair since 2006–07. Most of the time it is about making sure that the members have support when they have questions or concerns. Every three or four years we have collective bargaining agreement negotiations and I enjoy representing the chorus, which is such an important part of an opera production.

I have a huge respect for how you balance your schedule and for your willingness to keep on learning and adding to your skills.

I am very lucky to do all the things that I do that allow me to make great music and be mentally challenged. It's an honor to work with Richard and my colleagues at HGO so sometimes it doesn't even seem like work.

Great school and a very good music program, but it sounds like the city was an equal draw!

I really did like the school and when I went there I didn't declare my major when I started. I did two years at U of H but then decided to take a break and started to work. I was on an accelerated management course at Jack in the Box but knew that wasn't where I wanted to end up. After two years, I decided to go back and finish my bachelor of arts degree.

It must have been hard to pay to go back to school after you had been earning money by working.

Yes and no. I was missing it by then, and once I was back, I started coming to HGO on free dress rehearsal tickets and decided that I wanted to try to be a part of that. I auditioned and got accepted into the HGO Chorus—although I didn't make it until my third try! In 1997 I was accepted and my first show was Boris Godunov. I knew immediately this was my dream work—to make music at this level. The discipline and working environment that Richard Bado commands is amazing. This was what I needed—it truly grew my appreciation of the art form and how to rehearse properly. It has an amazing energy that feeds my soul.

You have other jobs though that allow you enough time off to be in the chorus though?

Absolutely. I have been music director for the House of Prayer Lutheran Church clockwise from upper left: Tony with Laura Claycomb in The Daughter of the Regiment; conducting his church orchestra rehearsal; graduation from Head Start.
HGOco is Houston Grand Opera’s broad initiative for connecting the company to the community. Its rich and varied programming includes Opera to Go!, a touring company that performs family-friendly operas in schools and community venues; Song of Houston, productions that bring the unique stories of Houstonians to the stage in original operatic works; and summer Opera Camps for students.

**BIG CHANGES FOR THE BAUER FAMILY HIGH SCHOOL VOICE STUDIO**

The Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (HSVS) welcomes three voice teachers to the program for the 2017–18 school year: Dr. Nicole Asel, assistant professor of voice at Sam Houston University; Dr. Barbara Clark, associate professor of voice at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University; and Mr. Hector Vásquez, affiliate artist in voice at the University of Houston, Moores School of Music. HSVS participants receive weekly lessons, participate in monthly master classes, and, this season, the opportunity to perform in the world premiere of The House without a Christmas Tree.

The HVS will also expand to 12 participants and will include both high school juniors and seniors for the first time since the program was inaugurated in 1999–2000.

The 2017–18 Bauer Family High School Voice Studio will be announced in the fall issue of Opera Cues.

**THERE ARE STILL OPENINGS IN OPERA CAMP 2017!**

Start the summer right by signing your children up for HGOco’s multi-day summer camps. Students learn vocal and theatrical skills from highly experienced faculty and staff. No previous experience is required. In addition, after-camp care makes it easy for working parents to take advantage of this unique summer activity. Please visit HGO.org/community-programs/students for more information.

**OPERA EXPERIENCE**

For students entering grades 4–9 in fall 2017

Campers develop healthy singing technique and hone their music theory skills. The camp culminates in a performance showcasing group and solo repertoire.

**CREATE AN OPERA**

For students entering grades 3–6 in fall 2017

Campers collaborate to write, design, build and perform a one-of-a-kind musical masterpiece based on a children’s story. This camp is perfect for singers and non-singers alike.

**ART OF OPERA**

For students entering grades 7–12 in fall 2017

Campers enhance their vocal and dramatic skills by rehearsing and performing a fully staged opera or musical production. This exciting camp fills quickly: register early to guarantee your participation. Recommendation from a choir director or voice teacher is required.
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APRIL 30 | 7 p.m.
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6:30 p.m. dinner

$40 DRINK, MEAL & SHOW

HGO.org > 61
Spring is a time of change for the HGO Studio; as we say farewell to several artists, I’m also proud to announce the talented singers and pianists who will join the HGO Studio next season. Six outstanding artists will finish their time in the Studio this May: mezzo-soprano Megan Mikailovna Samarin, tenor Chris Bozeka, baritone Ben Edquist, bass-baritone Federico De Michelis, and pianist/coaches Geoffrey Loff and Kirill Kuzmin. After their hard work in the HGO Studio, they are poised for extraordinary careers. Keep an eye out for them—you’ll see many of them back at HGO very soon!

Six new artists will join us next fall. Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, winner of the 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition, will be the first countertenor ever in the HGO Studio—a well-deserved accomplishment after his outstanding performance in the Concert of Arias. Baritone Thomas Glass, our third-place winner, will also come to Houston after a busy season as a resident artist with Minnesota Opera. Two other singers will join us: tenor Richard Smagur, an alumnus of the HGO Young Artists Vocal Academy (2012), and bass Anthony Robin Schneider, whose accomplishments include a debut this summer at Wolf Trap Opera, alongside several current HGO Studio artists. Two pianist/coaches will be added to the roster: Canadian pianist Blair Salter comes to us from the doctoral program in collaborative piano at the University of Michigan, and Jonathan Gmeinder joins us after finishing a year as a staff pianist and coach at the Juilliard School and Aspen Music Festival following his collaborative piano degree at the Manhattan School of Music. We can’t wait to begin working with this excellent class of new Studio artists this fall.

While it’s quiet at HGO in the summer, the festival opera season springs to life all over the United States. One of the advantages of HGO’s schedule is that Studio artists are available to perform major roles in summer productions. Three artists will sing leading roles in Aspen this summer: Yelena Dyachek sings Vitellia in La clemenza di Tito, and Yongzhao Yu and Sol Jin perform Alfredo and Germont in La traviata, roles they’ll reprise in alternate-cast performances with HGO in the fall. Wolf Trap Opera has cast some unusual repertoire with HGO Studio artists: Megan Mikailovna Samarin and Zoie Reams will perform in the Rossini rarity La pietra del paragone, and Megan and Ben Edquist will sing leading roles in Philip Glass/Robert Moran’s The Juniper Tree. Federico De Michelis will perform Mr. Flint in Billy Budd and Timur in Turandot for his debut at Des Moines Metro Opera, where Geoffrey Loff will join the music staff for Billy Budd. Kirill Kuzmin will join the music staff at the Miami Music Festival, and Peter Walsh will return for a second year as a pianist in the prestigious Steans Music Institute at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. Our incoming singers have a busy summer, too: Richard Smagur will be an apprentice artist at Santa Fe Opera, Thomas Glass will join the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco, and Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen and Anthony Robin Schneider will both spend the summer at Wolf Trap.

In just a few weeks, we mark the exciting return of our Studio cast of The Elixir of Love in outdoor performances. Mane Galoyan, Chris Bozeka, Ben Edquist, and Federico De Michelis will perform the leading roles (with Studio alums Alicia Gianni as Giannetta and Emily Senturia conducting) at Miller Outdoor Theater (May 19 and 20) and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands (May 26). I hope we’ll see you at the parks!

— Brian Speck
HGO Studio Director
HGO Studio ARTISTS 2016–17

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

Federico De Michelis, bass-baritone
Beth Madison Fellow

Yelena Dyachek, soprano
Hildebrand Foundation Fellow

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

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

Sol Jin, baritone
Mr. and Mrs. James C. Crowe

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

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

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

Megan Mikailovna Samarina, mezzo-soprano
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

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

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

SAVE THE DATE
Don’t miss these rapidly approaching opportunities to hear HGO Studio artists!

MAY 11 & 14
STUDIO RECITAL SERIES
Hear HGO Studio artists in their final recital of the year in the intimate salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1406 Kirby Drive. May 11 (7:30 p.m.) and May 14 (6 p.m.). Purchase tickets through HGO.org or 713-228-OPERA (6737).

MAY 19
THE ELIXIR OF LOVE
Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park
HGO Studio artists are featured in FREE outdoor performances of The Elixir of Love at 8 p.m. See calendar on p. 86 for details.

MAY 26
THE ELIXIR OF LOVE
Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands
HGO Studio artists are featured in an outdoor performance of The Elixir of Love at 8 p.m. FREE tickets available. See calendar on p. 86 for details.
GERRI GILL

When Gerri Gill first moved to Houston from New York, subscribing to the Opera was one of the first items on her agenda. She volunteered with the HGO Guild and has fond memories of taking her two children backstage during tours to try on costumes and learn about the theater. It was during such a tour that Gerri decided to become more involved as a member of the HGO Patrons Circle, HGO’s core annual supporters, and eventually a leader within the Patrons Circle Committee.

A former resident of Tokyo, Gerri retired from directing the Japan American Society of Houston and running an event-planning business. Now she is a world traveler and an avid photographer—her work has been sold in the HGO Guild auctions and at the annual Opera Ball. Her two children live in Toronto and San Francisco, and her four grandchildren are quickly becoming opera fans as well.

Gerri’s favorite night of the year is Concert of Arias. She loves hearing new voices, and is excited about the future of opera. That’s why, earlier this season, she hosted a Young Patrons Circle party at her home for supporters under the age of 45. “I think these events are a big part of what HGO does…to make the opera more inviting for people. I see the Young Patrons as the future of HGO.”

In addition to HGO, Gerri supports Planned Parenthood, Ars Lyrica, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Menil Collection, and the Houston Committee on Foreign Relations. We’re grateful for everything she does for HGO and the Houston community.

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION

Houston Grand Opera is honored to welcome United Health Foundation to our family of supporters.

Established by UnitedHealth Group in 1999, the United Health Foundation has committed nearly $315 million to programs and communities across the globe, supporting over a thousand partner organizations to improve the health and lives of those they serve. United Health Foundation works to improve our nation’s health system, build a diverse and dynamic health workforce, and enhance the well-being of local communities.

United Health Foundation knows that the performing arts are part of what makes Houston a vibrant community. HGO is deeply grateful for the United Health Foundation’s support of our three signature special events: the Opening Night celebration and dinner, Concert of Arias, and the Opera Ball.

James G. Springfield serves as the HGO Trustee on behalf of United Health Foundation. James lives in Missouri City with his wife, Teri, and is the senior vice president of Optum, UnitedHealth Group’s health services platform. We’re happy to welcome James and Teri to the HGO family.

JERRY G. FISCHER AND JOHN G. TURNER

Houston Grand Opera is grateful to have John Turner and Jerry Fischer of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as valued members of the HGO family. John and Jerry have been members of our Founders Council for Artistic Excellence since 2009, and have supported many of our productions, including Lohengrin, Madame Butterfly, Peter Grimes, Ariadne auf Naxos, and Tristan and Isolde and they are Premier Guarantors of all four operas in Wagner’s Ring cycle. John serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

Jerry first fell in love with opera when his high school thespian club saw The Pearl Fishers in New Orleans. John grew up in a family with a real passion for the arts and has come to love opera since a trip to the historic opera houses of Germany and Austria in 1999. He and Jerry seek out opera on their international travels and have seen 15 Ring cycles. “When we first saw Siegfried in Seville, we knew that this production would be a great fit for Houston, and we have enjoyed it from start to finish," says John.

Along with his siblings, John is part owner of Turner Industries, the largest privately owned industrial services organization in Louisiana. Jerry is a retired attorney. They are longtime supporters of the arts in Baton Rouge; John and Jerry have served on the board of directors of both the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra and Opéra Louisiane, and they were instrumental in establishing an endowment for the Louisiana State University Opera. Jerry is also a devotee of the visual arts, and he and John are closely involved with the LSU Museum of Art.
Let's Make Beautiful Music Together — Join the Guild!

**Make Opera Friends!**

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

**YAVA (Young Artists Vocal Academy):** Help young artists in HGO’s week-long program for talented singers at the undergraduate level, introducing them to a breadth of professional information. Meet budding artists as they undergo intense training, develop an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and make contacts at HGO that will last their entire career.

**Meet Opera Friends!**

**HGO Studio Buddies:** Show your enthusiasm for the talent being developed by the Houston Grand Opera Studio! Buddies act as in-town contacts for artists during their Studio tenure.

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

**Save the Date!**

**Picnic at the Park: The Elixir of Love, May 19, 2017.** Join Guild members and friends as we picnic together before attending the opera at Miller Outdoor Theatre. We’ll have reserved seats in the covered area for the performance — no need to stand in line for tickets! RSVPs and advance payment required by May 15. More information to follow at our website, hgoguild.org.

**Volunteer Gathering: June 6, 2017.** Enjoy complimentary wine and a light supper as you learn how you can help HGO through volunteering with the many Guild programs. In addition to supporting HGO, joining the Guild means you’ll learn more about opera, meet outstanding performers and designers as well as other opera lovers, and have fun! We’ll meet at the United Way building, 50 Waugh Drive. Find out more at guild@hgo.org.

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

On January 27, hundreds gathered in the Cullen Theater to watch eight young singers compete in Concert of Arias, the final round of HGO’s annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Celebrating its 29th year, the competition was streamed live on Facebook for the first time, and viewers were able to cast their votes for an Online Viewers’ Choice Award. Following the performance, guests enjoyed a special black-tie dinner in the Grand Foyer, chaired by Judy and Richard Agee and honoring Beth Madison. The event raised over $600,000 to benefit the Houston Grand Opera Studio.


Beth Madison and Federico De Michelis

Ben Edquist with Dian and Harlan Stai

Glen Rosenbaum and Rita Leader

Jim and Molly Crownover

Photos by Priscilla Dickson and Wilson Parish
CONCERT OF ARIAS
WELCOME RECEPTION

Concert of Arias semifinalists were welcomed to Houston in grand Texas fashion at a reception hosted by Judy and Richard Agee on January 21. Artists and Concert of Arias underwriters met and mingled while dining on fajitas and sipping margaritas.
NIXON IN CHINA CAST PARTY

Following the opening performance of Nixon in China, guests celebrated at a cast party hosted by Vinson & Elkins LLP, Jackson and Company, and Brenda Harvey-Traylor. After enjoying a thematic late-night buffet, Perryn Leech and Patrick Summers introduced the cast and creative team to great applause.

REQUIEM CAST PARTY

On February 10, guests gathered in the Wortham Theater’s Founders Salon to celebrate the opening of Verdi’s Requiem. Hosted by HGO supporters Anna Dean, Mickie and Ron Huebsch, and Barbara Van Postman, attendees enjoyed wine, Champagne, and a late-night buffet from Michael Nee and Elegant Events.
TRUSTEE EXPERIENCE

Performing the Verdi Requiem was a hallmark achievement for the company, and the HGO Trustees had a special opportunity to see how the musical magic happens. On January 31, HGO gave the trustees a chance to go behind-the-scenes and watch a working rehearsal with Chorus Master Richard Bado and the 120-voice chorus. All who attended left in eager anticipation for the performances.

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Ticket sales alone cover only 25 percent of HGO's annual costs. We rely on the generosity of donors like you to aid us in creating world-class, uncompromising operatic programs.

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

Will you support HGO with your Annual Fund gift today?

To donate or for more information, visit HGO.org/Giving or contact Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704 or jwijangco@hgo.org.
UNLOCKING THE MUSIC

Each season, generous HGO Trustees host fellow trustees at salon events. This spring, guests were treated to an evening with Bradley Moore—HGO’s head of music staff and HGO Studio music director. He explained the work of the music staff and, with Studio mezzo Zoie Reams, demonstrated a vocal coaching. Trustee Jill Risley and husband Allyn, a member of the HGO Board of Directors, graciously hosted.
JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE
HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. They partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools to bring HGOco programs to economically disadvantaged students. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of the HGO Founders Council. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they chaired the 2017 Concert of Arias and support HGO’s mainstage productions, including this season’s *The Elixir of Love* and *Faust*.

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

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

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

BBVA Compass

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

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

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

CONOCOPHILLIPS

For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to main-stage productions, including the 2016–17 season-opening production, *The Elixir of Love*. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.
BOBBIE-VEE AND GERALD COONEY
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979 and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO’s special events for many years, from the Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

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

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s main-stage season for nearly 30 years. The Trust was established from assets of The Cullen Foundation to specifically benefit Texas performing arts institutions, particularly those within the Greater Houston area. In recent years, The Cullen Trust has provided lead support for memorable productions of Carmen, A Christmas Carol, The Little Prince, and the 2016–17 production of It’s a Wonderful Life.

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

LIZ GRIMM AND JACK ROTH
HGO subscribers since the 2013–14 season, Liz and Jack became members of the HGO Founders Council the same season. Both committed themselves to cancer research and patient care and have contributed greatly to the work being done at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. In addition to donating to HGO special events, Liz and Jack are generous underwriters of HGO’s Ring cycle. HGO was pleased to welcome Jack as a member of the board of directors in 2014. Liz and Jack are the chairs of Opera Ball 2018.

THE WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST FOUNDATION
For four decades, The William Randolph Hearst Foundation has supported HGO’s arts education efforts, providing crucial support for Opera to Go! and the Student Performance Series—a longstanding tradition that brings students from all over the city to the Wortham Theater Center to experience the magic of live mainstage opera. The Foundation works with organizations like HGO to ensure that people of all backgrounds in the United States have the opportunity to build healthy, productive and inspiring lives. We’re deeply grateful for the Foundation’s many years of generous support.

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. The HGO Endowment is the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Janet L. Carrig, Senior Chairman Terrylin Neale, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors. This season, HGO is thrilled to have HGOE as the premier guarantor of Götterdämmerung.

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

HOUSTON METHODIST
Houston Grand Opera has partnered with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM) for more than 10 seasons. The only center of its kind in the country, CPAM comprises a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed on performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO special events and main-stage productions such as Aida, The Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro, and this season’s The Elixir of Love. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. C. Richard Stasney, founder of CPAM, and Dr. Mauro Ferrari, president and CEO, Houston Methodist Research Institute, serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION
Based in Liberty, Texas, the Humphreys Foundation has been a major underwriter of HGO’s main-stage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable mainstage productions, including The Little Prince, The Marriage of Figaro, and this season’s The Abduction from the Seraglio.

DONNA KAPLAN AND RICHARD LYDECKER
Richard Lydecker has been an HGO subscriber and supporter for more than three decades. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Richard has great passion for opera, especially Wagner, and he and Donna are underwriters for HGO’s Ring cycle. He is also a special events sponsor, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.
HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO's Founders Council. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and main-stage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women's Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

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

**Beth Madison**
This season marks Beth's 22nd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO's Founders Council. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and main-stage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women's Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

**Janice and Bob McNair**
Janice and Bob McNair, longtime HGO subscribers, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob is chairman and CEO of The McNair Group, a financial and real estate firm, and owner of the Houston Texans. The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation provides leadership support to Houston-area organizations supporting educational opportunities for youth. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97). The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO's Holiday Opera Series.

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

**M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION**
M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION

Nancy and Rich became HGO subscribers during the 2000–01 season. Rich is co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Kinder Morgan, and Nancy is a focused philanthropist whose work has positively impacted communities throughout Houston and beyond. Rich and Nancy established the Kinder Foundation in 1997 to provide impactful gifts to projects dedicated to urban green space, education, and quality-of-life issues in the Greater Houston area. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, main-stage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

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

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

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

**THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION**
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. Mellon Foundation–supported projects include this season’s world premiere of It’s a Wonderful Life and HGOco’s Song of Houston initiative.

**BETH MADISON**
This season marks Beth's 22nd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO's Founders Council. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and main-stage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women's Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.

**SARA AND BILL MORGAN**
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**FRANSI NEELY**
Franci is among the opera’s strongest friends and advocates, having been a subscriber since the 1983–84 season and one of the first members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Franci is a senior director of the HGO Board of Directors and previously served on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.
THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

OPERA AMERICA

HGO is thankful for our longstanding partnership with OPERA America, which has supported many of our projects and new works, including the critically acclaimed 2016 world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players* and HGOco’s Song of Houston initiative, which uses words and music to tell the unique stories of our city. Founded in 1970, OPERA America is a service organization dedicated to supporting the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of opera. HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech proudly serves on OPERA America’s board of directors.

CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELLO

Cynthia and Tony are deeply committed to improving the lives of Houstonians through their support of health care and the arts. Tony is the chief executive officer of Nabors Industries, the world’s largest land-based drilling contractor. Cynthia, a community leader, currently serves on the HGO Board of Directors and Special Events Committee, and is vice chair of the HGOco Committee. HGO is grateful for the Petrellos’ support of HGOco and the main stage, underwriting this season’s *It’s a Wonderful Life.* The Petrellos also support HGOco programs for children, including the Student Performance Series and Opera to Go!

SCHLUMBERGER

Schlumberger, Ltd., is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly 20 years. Schlumberger’s leadership gift was integral to launching HGO’s ongoing affordability program, the NEXUS Initiative, in 2007—since then, NEXUS has made great opera accessible to more than 225,000 people. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters. Fred Dyen, director of HR–Cameron Group, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

DIAN AND HARLAN STAII

Harlan, a member of the HGO Board of Directors, and Dian are charter members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and their leadership support includes main-stage productions, the HGO Studio, the HGO Endowment, and special events. The Stais have also sponsored HGO Studio artists and they host annual recitals featuring HGO Studio artists at Mansfeldt, their renowned Fredericksburg ranch. HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.

TENENBAUM JEWELERS

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

JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER

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

MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS

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

THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.

In the 1980s, the Wortham Foundation contributed $20 million to lead the capital campaign for the Wortham Theater Center, guided by businessman Gus S. Wortham’s early recognition of the vital role of the arts in making Houston an appealing place to live and work. During their lifetimes, Gus and his wife, Lyndall, were dedicated to improving the lives of Houstonians. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support.
Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

PLATINUM CIRCLE—$50,000 OR MORE
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Barnabas
Meg Boulware and Hartley Hampton
Bill and Melinda Brungard
Dr. and Mrs. William T. Butler
Ms. Janet Langford Carrig
The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Crath
GISCAR and Victoria Donenberg
Mr. and Mrs. David Dorenbek
Ms. Patricia B. Freeman and Mr. Bruce Patterson
Mr. William H. Guggolz Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood
Ms. Marianne Kah
Mr. and Mrs. George B. Kelly
Mrs. Stephanie D. Larsen
Perryn and Carol Leech
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis
Chuck and Michelle Ritter
Hinda Simon
Mr. Georgios Varsamis
Mr. William V. Walker
Mr. and Mrs. David S. Wolff

SILVER CIRCLE—$15,000 OR MORE
Samuel and Omana Abraham
Mr. and Mrs. Frank N. Barnes
Bill and Melinda Bruner
Dr. and Mrs. William T. Butler
Ms. Janet Langford Carri
The Robert and Jane Cizik Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Crath
Gislar and Victoria Donnenberg
Mr. and Mrs. David Dorendfeld
Ms. Patricia B. Freeman and Mr. Bruce Patterson
Mr. William H. Guggolz Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood
Ms. Marianne Kah
Mr. and Mrs. George B. Kelly
Mrs. Stephanie D. Larsen
Perryn and Caroline Leech
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis
Chuck and Michelle Ritter
Hinda Simon
Mr. Georgios Varsamis
Mr. William V. Walker
Mr. and Mrs. David S. Wolff

BRONZE CIRCLE—$10,000 OR MORE
Mr. Edward H. Andrews III
The Honorable Mary E. Bacon
Mr. Karl-Heinz Becker and Dr. Gudrun H. Becker
Judith and David Belanger
Kathryn and David Berg
Alex and Ashley Blair
Dr. Michael and Susan Bloom
Ms. Adrienne Bond
Walt and Nancy Bristi
Mr. Robert J. Bruni
Dr. Janet Bruner
Mr. Ralph Burch
Ms. Gwenneth Campbell and
Mr. Joseph L. Campbell
Marjorie H. Capshaw
Mr. and Mrs. Mark S. Carnes
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**APRIL**

22, 25, 29, May 4, 7m
- Performances of Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 22 performance only.

23
- HGOco presents *Das Barbecü*, a lighthearted retelling of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle. Jackson Street BBQ, 209 Jackson St. $40 general seating includes meal and show. 7 p.m.

26
- HGOco presents a Professional Development Workshop for educators on Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. The evening includes dinner, a moderated discussion on the opera’s impact, and a ticket to the dress rehearsal. Wortham Theater Center, 5 p.m. For information, call 713-546-0230 or visit HGO.org/HGOco.

28, 30m, May 6, 10, 12
- Performances of Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 28 performance only.

30
- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *The Abduction from the Seraglio* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.
- HGOco presents *Das Barbecü*, a lighthearted retelling of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle. Jackson Street BBQ & Saloon, 11410 Hempstead Hwy. $40 admission includes meal and show. 7 p.m.

**MAY**

2, 3, 4
- HGOco and Opera to Go! present a bilingual adaptation of Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* at Miller Outdoor Theatre. 11 a.m. daily. Free.

7
- **Behind the Music:** an intimate conversation about *Götterdämmerung* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

11 & 14
- **HGO Studio Recital Series:** Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of MFAH, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 11 at 7:30 p.m. and May 14 at 5 p.m.

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

31
- **HGO Association Annual Meeting and Reception:** Wortham Theater Center, 5–7 p.m. Open to board, trustees, and donors. Call 713-546-0217 for information.

**JUNE**

5–9
- **Opera Experience:** HGOco’s Opera Camp for students entering grades 4–9 in the fall of 2017. Wortham Theater Center.

6
- **HGO Guild Volunteer Gathering:** Find out how you can use your talents to help HGO through volunteering with the Guild. United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., 6:30 p.m. For information, contact Patricia Carnes at guild@hgo.org.

12–16
- **Create an Opera:** HGOco’s Opera Camp for students entering grades 3–6 in the fall of 2017. Wortham Theater Center.

12–23
- **Art of Opera:** HGOco’s Opera Camp for students entering grades 7–12 in the fall of 2017. Wortham Theater Center.

19–23
- **Opera Experience:** HGOco’s Opera Camp for students entering grades 4–9 in the fall of 2017. Wortham Theater Center.

**SEE YOU AT THE PARKS!**

Join HGO for *The Elixir of Love*, featuring current and past artists of the HGO Studio. This is the production that opened our 2016–17 season, as adapted for outdoor venues!

**MAY 19–20, 8 P.M.**

**Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park**

FREE tickets for covered seating may be picked up the day of the performance from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Miller Outdoor Theatre Box Office. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

**MAY 26, 8 P.M.**

**Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands**

Orchestra seats available for $20; FREE mezzanine and lawn seating courtesy of The Wortham Foundation. Visit woodlandscenter.org for information and tickets.

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<tr>
<th>HGOco Studio artist</th>
<th>Former HGO Studio artist</th>
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<td>Alicia Gianni ‡</td>
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<td>Richard Bado ‡</td>
<td>Dr. Ellen R. Gritz</td>
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<td>Stai, Terrell Tone Owen</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Philip</td>
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<td>Adina</td>
<td>A. Bahr/Mr. and Mrs.</td>
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<td>Mane Galoyan †</td>
<td>Charles G. Nickson Jr.</td>
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<td>Manuela</td>
<td>Dr. Dulcarmara</td>
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<td>Federico De</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Malpass</td>
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<td>Michelin †</td>
<td>Beth Madison Fellow</td>
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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.

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

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