



HoustonGrandOpera

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Houston Grand Opera Presents *Das Barbecü*, April 23 and 30

*Comedic Texas-themed retelling of Wagner's Ring cycle will be performed at
two iconic Houston venues*

"Cowboy crooners" invited to participate in open mic event March 27

Houston, February 7, 2017— **Houston Grand Opera** (HGO) will present *Das Barbecü*, a fast-paced and raucous retelling of Wagner's epic *Ring* cycle, on **April 23** at **Jackson Street BBQ**, and **April 30** at **Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon**. Five actors play over 30 roles in this comic take on opera's most spectacular saga, complete with mismatched lovers, a double shotgun wedding, and family feuds, all wrapped up in a Texas-sized heap of Wild West fun. Songs run the gamut from Broadway to Texas swing, from jazz to twangy country and western. Ticket prices include a BBQ feast and drink. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for dinner, with performances beginning at 7 p.m.

Written in 1991 by Seattle composer **Scott Warrender** with book and lyrics by **Jim Luigs**, *Das Barbecü* was commissioned by Seattle Opera as a lighthearted counterpoint to its presentation of Wagner's heroic *Ring* cycle. The creators condensed the circuitous 15-plus-hour story into two and a half hours of fun. The *New York Times* described the 1994 Broadway production as "middle camp, something you could happily take the kids to."

HGO is completing its own four-year presentation of the *Ring* cycle with *Götterdämmerung*, April 22–May 7 at the Wortham Theater Center. Performances throughout the cycle have consistently sold out. "With so much excitement about the *Ring* in Houston," said HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, "we thought that this delightfully clever Texas-themed version would provide the perfect complement to the monumental final installment. And we are thrilled to offer *Das Barbecü* in two authentic Texas venues."

HGO's production of *Das Barbecü* is presented under the auspices of HGOco, which connects HGO's creative resources with the diverse and vibrant Houston community. The show will be directed and choreographed by **Mitchell Greco**, who will be making his HGO debut. He is artistic associate at Houston's Stages Repertory Theatre, where he has directed and choreographed *Xanadu*, *Big Fish*, *The Honky Tonk Angels* series, *Five Course Love*, *Girls Night: The Musical*, *Life Could Be a Dream*, and co-directed *Shear Madness*. Other directorial credits include *The Rocky Horror Show* at Theatre Under the Stars; *Promises, Promises*; *Bells are Ringing*; *New Girl in Town*; and *The Pajama Game* with Bayou City Concert Musicals, and *The Busy World Is Hushed* and *On the Verge: The Geography of Yearning* at Sam Houston State University, where he earned his BFA in musical theater.

HGO assistant conductor and Studio alumnus **Patrick Harvey** will be music director. This season he helped prepare HGO's presentations of *The Elixir of Love*, *Faust*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *Nixon in China*. In 2016 he prepared *Das Rheingold* at North Carolina Opera and appeared in recital as a pianist with mezzo-sopranos Jamie Barton and Stephanie Blythe for HGO and with mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke for Da Camera of Houston. He has served on the music staff of The Santa Fe Opera since 2012 and will return this summer.

Casting will be announced at the end of March. On **Monday, March 27**, HGO will hold a **Cowboy Crooner open mic night** at the **Mucky Duck** at 2425 Norfolk, Houston. A singer from that evening may be chosen as an opening act for the *Das Barbecü* performances. **Sign-up will begin at 6 p.m. and the music will start at 6:30 p.m.**

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About Houston Grand Opera

Since its inception in 1955, Houston Grand Opera has grown from a small regional organization into an internationally renowned opera company. HGO enjoys a reputation for commissioning and producing new works, including 62 world premieres and seven American premieres since 1973. In addition to producing and performing world-class opera, HGO contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO has toured extensively, including trips to Europe and Asia, and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and two Emmy awards—the only opera company to have won all three honors.

Through HGOco, Houston Grand Opera creates opportunities for Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to observe, participate in, and create art. The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy world-class opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007 NEXUS has enabled more than 225,000 Houstonians to experience first-quality opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

Das Barbecü

Music by Scott Warrender/Book & Lyrics by Jim Luigs

Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Sunday, April 23, at Jackson Street Barbecue, 209 Jackson St., Houston, TX 77002

Sunday, April 30, at Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon, 11410 Hempstead Rd, Houston, TX 77092

Doors open 6:30 p.m., Performance at 7 p.m.

TICKETS: \$40 including BBQ dinner and one drink. HGO.org or call 713-228-6737.

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