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THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

| OCT. 19 | OCT. 21 M | OCT. 27 |
| OCT. 30 | NOV. 02 |

LA BOHÈME

| OCT. 26 | OCT. 28 M | NOV. 01 M |
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Cover design by Rachel Block
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Welcome!

There’s nothing quite like a massive, devastating flood to put life into perspective. The last year has been quite a ride, with all its trials and triumphs. But now, after an entire season away from the Wortham Center, performing in the wonderful but temporary HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown Convention Center, we are back at home—and you are here with us. That’s what really matters, and we thank you for being here to share this moment.

We open our season with a new production of The Flying Dutchman—the first time we have presented Wagner’s ghostly love story in 20 years. This new co-production of HGO (with The Atlanta Opera and Cincinnati Opera) is directed by Tomer Zvulun in his mainstage HGO debut. The haunted Dutchman is portrayed by Polish baritone Andrzej Dobber, who will be remembered as HGO’s menacing Scarpia in Tosca a few seasons ago. Senta—the woman who breaks the curse that binds him to the seas—is sung by American soprano Melody Moore, with Icelandic bass Kristinn Sigmundsson as her father, Daland. American tenor Eric Cutler returns as Erik, the suitor Senta rejects for the Dutchman. The Flying Dutchman is the first of three Seeking the Human Spirit operas this season, all united by the theme of transformation. Without giving too much away, we can say we think you’ll love the way Tomer handles the transformation at the end of The Flying Dutchman.

Puccini’s La bohème—one of the most beautiful and popular works in the operatic canon—completes our fall repertoire in a production by John Caird that gets right to the essence of the opera. La bohème is about being young, poor, and in love, and it should always be sung by a cast like ours. Rising Italian tenor Ivan Magri makes his HGO debut in the role of Rodolfo, opposite the Mimì of former HGO Studio soprano Nicole Heaston. Studio alums Michael Sumuel and Pureum Jo, a delightful Papageno and Papagena in The Magic Flute a few seasons ago, take the roles of Marcello and Musetta. Most of the rest of the cast and conductor James Lowe are Studio alumni or current artists of our acclaimed training program; this is also true of our excellent alternate cast, which will sing the November 11 matinee as well as the student performances.

Now, isn’t it wonderful to settle into these nice, comfy Wortham Theater seats? Don’t they feel fabulous? We hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

Patrick Summers  
Artistic and Music Director  
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

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P.S. Don’t miss Studio Showcase, the annual scenes program of the HGO Studio. It will be held in the Cullen Theater on December 9 and 10 and is the perfect opportunity to sample a number of scenes from operas both familiar and unfamiliar. Tickets are free to season subscribers; non-subscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.
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For information on providing leadership support for *Seeking the Human Spirit*, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
Dream a Little Dream

Some very special events will celebrate the November launch of *The Armadillo’s Dream*, HGO’s first-ever commissioned story book, about an armadillo named Sandy whose fondest wish is to sing on the Houston Grand Opera stage. The book, authored by HGOco Touring Programs Manager Dennis Arrowsmith and underwritten by the Connie Kwan-Wong Foundation and CKW Luxe, will enter the repertoire of HGOco’s Storybook Opera program. “It will become one of our five opera-themed storybooks, where a singing storyteller brings a picture book to life” for students in pre-K through second grade, Arrowsmith says. It is available both in English and in a Spanish translation by Alejandro Magallón.

Arrowsmith, who adapted his story from a Bolivian folk tale, describes it as a “sweet story about the power of determination and resilience. I hope readers are moved and inspired by the armadillo’s journey.”

**NOVEMBER 4**, *The Armadillo’s Tea*, a fundraiser for HGOco chaired by Connie Kwan-Wong. Arrowsmith will give a reading and sign copies of the book. Tickets begin at $250 and include a copy of the book. Reservations are required and space is limited! St. Regis Hotel Houston, 1919 Briar Oaks, 3 p.m. Contact Caitlin Long at clong@hgo.org for information.

**NOVEMBER 5**, *The Armadillo’s Dream* available for purchase at HGO.org.

**DECEMBER 2**, Patron Family Fun Day for HGO donors at the Patron level and their families. The Armadillo Palace at 5015 Kirby Dr. will be the scene for a reading and book signing. For information, contact Caitlin Long at clong@hgo.org.

Open to the Public

If you’ve always been curious about behind-the-scenes processes, HGOco is offering a number of public events just for you.

Mark your calendar for master classes featuring HGO mainstage artists, staff, or Studio artists working with Bauer Family High School Voice Studio members. They will be held on October 21, December 9, February 10, March 3, and April 7, all at 2 p.m. at the Wortham Theater Center. The October 21 master class will feature HGO Studio alumnus Michael Sumuel, who is singing Marcello in *La bohème*. “We encourage aspiring singers to attend, and encourage teachers to bring their students,” says Carleen Graham, director of HGOco. Attendance is free; contact Alisa Magallón at amagallon@hgo.org for information.

*Opera Up Close*—a professional development workshop for *La bohème*—will be held on October 24. This is an excellent opportunity for teachers and lifelong learners to learn more about opera and arts-integrative strategies. The
HGO Welcomes Bauer Family HSVS Class of 2019

HGO’s Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHVS) welcomed six new members for the 2018–19 season. The new members—John Baugh IV, Daniel Boyd, Jadon Campos, Nidia Guevara-Nolasco, Ashley Onuigbo, and Emilio Vasquez—represent high schools from all over the Greater Houston area. They join returning members Alina Dong, Sean Holshouser, Maximilian Macias, and Riley Vagis.

The BFHVS is designed to prepare high school juniors and seniors for vocal music study programs at the college/conservatory level. The program includes weekly private voice lessons from Houston-area college voice teachers, monthly master classes with world-class artists and teachers, and numerous performance and scholarship opportunities. The BFHVS is administered by HGOco, the education and community connection arm of HGO. BFHVS voice faculty include Nicole Asel, Christopher Michel, and Héctor Vásquez.

NEWS & NOTES

ON JULY 4, we lost a beloved member of the HGO family with the passing of Margaret “Pat” Breen, one of the longest-serving HGO Board members in the history of the company. It is hard to imagine any performance, board meeting, or special event without Pat’s warm smile and her true passion for this art form.

“The HGO family will miss Pat and remember her forever,” says HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech. “Her grace, humor, and distinct style brightened every room she entered. She was a class act, and HGO is a better company for having her be part of our work for so many years.”

Pat’s husband, Dan, preceded her in death in 2016. The couple’s six sons and nine grandchildren were the absolute light of their lives. In addition to her tireless work on the HGO Board, Pat also served on the boards of the Houston Ballet Foundation, the University of Texas Health Science Center, The Gathering Place, and The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, and she was a leader within many other charitable organizations. Her many years of volunteer work and generosity touched countless lives in Houston.

Pat’s family requested that in lieu of customary remembrances, memorial contributions be directed to HGO. We are deeply honored to have known Pat’s warmth and generosity over the years. We will remember her always with tremendous gratitude.
Dear Opera Patron,

Thank you for joining us for Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, a thrilling tale of a cursed ghost ship and the redemptive power of true love. All of us at ConocoPhillips are excited to partner with HGO in bringing the first Wagner opera back to Houston since HGO’s electrifying *Ring* cycle. As the incoming chairman of the HGO Board of Directors, I’m personally honored to welcome you back home to our beloved Wortham Theater Center and want to thank you for your heartfelt support of HGO following Hurricane Harvey.

For more than 30 years, ConocoPhillips has helped HGO raise Houston’s international profile by bringing world-class opera and innovative arts education opportunities to Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds. We couldn’t be more thrilled to help launch this wonderful homecoming season, and we’re so grateful to you for joining us for *The Flying Dutchman*.

I hope you enjoy the opera!

Sincerely,

Janet Langford Carrig
Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary (Retired)
ConocoPhillips
Dear Opera Patron,

Welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s production of Puccini’s *La bohème*, one of the most beloved operas of all time. As guarantor of HGO’s 2018–19 season, BBVA Compass is proud to support the return of this stunning production directed by frequent HGO collaborator John Caird.

BBVA Compass is proud to partner with HGO in bringing productions like this to Houston and to support the HGO programs that make opera accessible to the entire community. One of my favorites is the NEXUS Affordability Initiative, which helps make opera affordable for thousands of Houston families every year through ticket underwriting and free public performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre and The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.

Other NEXUS programs, like HGO’s annual Student Performance Series, bring the joy of opera to young audiences, making great art available to everyone. Working in tandem with Houston Grand Opera, BBVA Compass is delighted to support their efforts to bring the age of opportunity to everyone.

From my family to yours, thank you for joining us for *La bohème*. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Best regards,

Onur Genç
President & CEO
BBVA Compass
Dear Opera Patron,

Welcome back to the Wortham Theater Center for Houston Grand Opera’s thrilling 2018–19 season!

Houston Methodist has been the official health care provider of HGO for more than a decade, and we’re honored to partner on HGO’s Seeking the Human Spirit initiative, a six-year exploration of the healing power of music through unique projects and performances focused on the intersection of art, medicine, and human creativity. There’s another collaboration we are exceptionally proud of: as the presenting sponsor of HGO’s Young Professionals program, we celebrate the more than 450 passionate HGO subscribers under the age of 45 who represent the next generation of great arts supporters.

We care deeply about the cultural health of our community and understand the important role the arts play in our health and well-being. Your continued support of the HGO helps make our city a vibrant community for everyone.

Thank you for joining us.

Sincerely,

Marc L. Boom, M.D., M.B.A.
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Volunteer, gain new friendships, learn more about opera, make a difference, and discover a new side of yourself!

Save the dates

**OCTOBER 19 – NOVEMBER 11, 2018**
Volunteer at the Opera Boutique, open before and during intermissions of HGO’s fall productions. Be a cashier, assist customers with their purchases, and help to set up before performances. While working at the boutique, volunteers receive a 15% discount on full-price items and a ticket to a dress rehearsal after 2 volunteer shifts. Guild members receive a 10% discount.

**NOVEMBER 1, 6, and 8, 2018**
Volunteer to help HGOco at Student Matinees and High School Night as greeters and guides.

**NOVEMBER 11, 2018**
Visit an HGO Guild Board meeting. Guild members are always welcome at monthly board meetings. Find out more about Guild activities, suggest new programs, and meet board members who work with various programs.

**JANUARY 9, 2019**
Join us at Opera Night Live! This informative presentation features an artist from Florencia en el Amazonas and performances by HGO Studio members. Everyone is welcome. Reservations recommended.

**COMING SOON — OUR NEW WEBSITE!**
Completely redesigned! Easier to use! Want information about events or volunteer opportunities? Find it at hgoguild.org.

Let’s make beautiful music together!

Have fun…

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*(From left): Opera Boutique volunteers Donna Hahus and Jennifer Stearns discuss one of the many HGO-logo holiday gift ideas.*

Find unique items in the Opera Boutique. Open prior to each performance and at intermission and operated entirely by Guild volunteers, it is the ideal place to find perfect gifts for music lovers while you support HGO and Guild initiatives.

For more information on Guild activities, visit hgoguild.org, email guild@hgo.org, or call 713-546-0269.

Guild Underwriter: Penny Prater; Sustaining Members: Lannis Kirkland and Mary Ann Shemdin
HGO is in exceptionally good hands.

To say that the 2017–18 season presented unique challenges for Houston Grand Opera would be a Hurricane Harvey–sized understatement. Losing access to our beloved home at the Wortham Theater Center for an entire year could have had consequences for the company that go even deeper than the $15 million in losses we experienced.

But we never gave up hope, and that’s due in large part because of the tireless enthusiasm of HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech. On August 24, Perryn was recognized by Houston Business Journal as a member of the inaugural class of Houston’s Most Admired CEOs. And we can see why.

When your boss, who behaves as naturally in a hard hat as he does in a tuxedo, rolls his sleeves up and grins while he loads heavy equipment into the back of a truck, you suddenly feel like things are going to be okay. And that makes you want to jump in and shoulder your fair share of the weight, too. And together, the HGO family made sure that not a single performance was canceled as a result of Hurricane Harvey.

“This is a man who would never ask something of his staff that he himself would be unwilling to do. He pushes each of us to be the best that we can be, and he holds himself to even higher standards,” says HGO Production Manager Kristen Burke, who has worked closely with Perryn for many years. “While we built the HGO Resilience Theater in a matter of days, Perryn worked tirelessly alongside the crew on the ground for 16 hours a day, while also maintaining his executive responsibilities as managing director. Without his dedication, Houston wouldn’t have had an opera season, and many of us would have found ourselves out of work.”

That’s how Perryn is—he is always the first to arrive and the last to leave. He makes everyone around him want to try harder. Seeing him give his all, through blood, sweat, and tears, doing whatever it
His shining example set the tone for what would become the anthem of HGO’s 2017–18 season and for our community—resilience. He reached out to HGO’s supporters to find temporary spaces for staff. Once arrangements were made with the George R. Brown Convention Center, the company had less than three weeks to build a suitable performance space by the scheduled opening night performance on October 20, 2017.

Mayor Sylvester Turner stood with Perryn and HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers onstage just before the curtain rose on the Opening Night performance of *La traviata.* “When HGO’s season opened on time at the aptly named HGO Resilience Theater, Perryn helped show the world what Houstonians are made of, proving that we can accomplish anything when we work together,” says Mayor Turner. “As the managing director of HGO, Perryn is entrusted with one of the city’s most treasured cultural resources—a responsibility he has shouldered with humility, ingenuity, and incredible determination, even under extreme circumstances. True leaders like Perryn Leech—great motivators who can literally help Houston weather any storm—are exceptionally rare.”

Perryn would be the first to say that his successful leadership of HGO would not have been possible without his wonderful partnership with Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers; HGO’s team of phenomenally talented artists and staff members; his incredibly supportive wife, Caroline, and their children Jemma, Kirsty, and Rory; and finally, you, the dedicated HGO supporters who have shown that—no matter what—world-class art truly matters to our city.
SUMMONING THE ANGELS

THE WORLD OF WAGNER’S THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

BY PATRICK SUMMERS
Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
COMPOSER RICHARD WAGNER (1813–83) was 30 years old at the premiere of his Der fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman), an opera generally regarded as the first flowering of a genius who would follow it with works of greater profundity. Though his later creations are among the most monumental works of Western art, if Wagner had written nothing after The Flying Dutchman, he would still be remembered as a great composer and this opera as one of the most thrilling of the repertoire.

Richard Wagner remains one the most controversial and visionary figures in history. Every opera composer since Wagner has either emulated him or reacted passionately against him; none could ignore him. Besides all of the contradictory and maddening things about his character, he fundamentally reordered the long-held foundations of harmony and melody and permanently altered the expectations of what opera could and should communicate. Wagner considered himself a dramatist who wrote music, not a composer who wrote his own texts, and he disliked the term opera, preferring, and insisting on it whenever he had opportunity, music drama.

His status as a pervasive but contradictory cultural icon was largely posthumous, and at the time of The Flying Dutchman he was simply an aspiring composer dreaming of success in the dominant theatrical expression of his era: Romantic opera. Romanticism rejected the emotional symmetry and light/dark balances of the Enlightenment. A Romantic-era novel or opera always portrayed some communion with nature, particularly involving that grandest of human metaphors: the sea. Romanticism had little to do with current notions of “romance”; rather, the movement was an attempt to release the imagination through the portrayal of deep melancholy and heightened emotions that bordered on violence. Apocalyptic storms mirrored hearts in turmoil; craggy coastlines were metaphors of jagged relationships, and ancient natural beauty only threw into relief the pain of living and the brevity of it all, with many works expressing a hope for a better world beyond this one. An early climax of musical Romanticism was Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (1824), music unlike any heard up to that time. The open fifths that begin Beethoven’s great final symphony haunted Wagner “as a greeting from the spirit world,” and they found their way into the beginning of The Flying Dutchman’s famous overture, conjuring the torment of the title character.

Following The Flying Dutchman, Wagner quickly rejected Romanticism in favor of his own theories, further immersing himself in what he considered the only eternal arts, German and Norse epic literature and the ancient Greek theater, forms he would meld into his massive Ring of the Nibelungen. From the 1840s onward, he set out to free the opera house from what he considered decorative display and frilly sentimentality. His voracious literary appetite unearthed the characters of Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, Hans Sachs, Tristan, Isolde, Parsifal, Wotan, Brünnhilde, and most especially the character with whom he personally most identified, Siegfried. These characters would, one by one, consume the remainder of his complex creative life, and his obsession with them would by association consume anyone with whom he came into contact.

Wagner worked hard to sculpt his personal narrative. In 1839, fleeing Russian creditors in Riga, where he had for two seasons been general music director at the company that is today’s Latvian...
National Opera, Wagner sailed on the *Thetis* towards London. Rough seas forced the ship to take shelter in the port of Sandvika, Norway, which became the setting of *The Flying Dutchman*. Wagner tried in his memoirs, retroactively and very fancifully, to claim that this harrowing sea voyage inspired him to write *The Flying Dutchman*, and this remains part of the opera’s lore to this day. In actuality, he had sketched most of the text and some of the music already, though the echoes of the ship’s crew off the fiord in Sandvika did inspire the first act’s echo effects. Wagner’s libretto originally set the work in Scotland, which was the setting of his main source material, Heinrich Heine’s 1834 retelling of the Dutchman legend. Scotland was a common setting of Romantic-era art, as it was the farthest-flung outpost of Europe and it held great mystery and adventure in its highlands and foggy moors.

The legend of *The Flying Dutchman* is as old as seafaring, and multiple permutations of it re-emerged during the Industrial Revolution, because the tale of the mariner doomed to wander the seas forever aligned perfectly with one of the major cultural fears of the time: that mankind was being slowly set adrift into a soulless world of ever-more-sophisticated machinery. The basic story, while not specifically religious, is a parable of faith, for the wheels of the plot turn on rules and the consequences of breaking them: the Dutchman, who has offended the gods by making a blasphemous oath, is able to come ashore only once every seven years, and if he can find a woman who will be faithful to him for life, his sin will be cleansed, his soul redeemed, and his watery curse ended. The most famous English-language version of the tale is Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, from 1798, pocked with allusions that entered the 19th-century lexicon: “Water, water everywhere, and all the boards did shrink; water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink.”

*EVERY OPERA COMPOSER SINCE WAGNER HAS EITHER EMULATED HIM OR REACTED PASSIONATELY AGAINST HIM; NONE COULD IGNORE HIM.*

The youthful Wagner was also fascinated with ghost stories and by what would now be termed the occult, and in this he was of his time, for supernatural stories enjoyed wide popularity in the early years of Romanticism. Mary Shelley’s...
Frankenstein (1818) and Prometheus Unbound (1820) by her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, set off decades of books and theatrical versions of them about the dangers of modern science, and shades of both are cast upon The Flying Dutchman.

Conceived as a character of the utmost nobility, Senta can appear to modern spectators as simply a pawn for the men in the drama, except for the ardent Erik, who loves her sincerely: Senta’s father, Daland, seems a bit too willing to sell her and the Dutchman wants her for his own redemption. But The Flying Dutchman transcends the plot norms of its era with the only operatic quality that is ever fully transcendent: thrilling music that ultimately assures us that the Dutchman and Senta do find a metaphysical love for each other. Wagner wrote extraordinarily pictorial music several generations before the cinematic era, prompting various commentators to opine that Wagner, had he lived in the 20th century, would have been a renowned film composer. It is a fair observation, but Wagner would more likely have purchased a studio with someone else’s money, written and directed every movie with extraordinary vision, composed every score, and insisted on controlling the environment in which you experienced it. His score of The Flying Dutchman alternates rousing nautical tunes set amidst great waves of orchestral and choral power with soaring Bellini-inspired, arching melodies that limn the work with fragility. Angels permeate the libretto of The Flying Dutchman, and they find musical expression throughout it, most poignantly in the opera’s final text, sung by Senta, “Preis’ deinen Engel und sein Gebot! Hier steh’ ich treu dir bis zum Tod!” (Praise your angel and her vows. Here I am, true to you until death.)

Even though there are so many opinions and so much documentation on Wagner, there is ultimately no way to “know” him, and thus there is no definitive way to perform his works. For as long as we value introspection in our culture, Wagner’s music dramas will find their way into our definition of ourselves. He was a man with abhorrent personal qualities: a notorious womanizer, a horrendous anti-Semite, and hypocritically demanding and ungracious to nearly everyone. That he could conjure works of such moving depth and indispensable value is perhaps a sign of cautious hope for the world, for he clearly could take the demons of his life and make angels of them in art. Many artists would be surprised at the longevity of their creations. Wagner would likely feel about himself much as we do about him in 2018: an uneasy mixture of gratitude and surprise at the eternal cultural storm he unleashed.
QUICK START GUIDE
The Flying Dutchman

STORY IN A NUTSHELL
The Flying Dutchman, cursed because of a blasphemous oath he once uttered, must sail the seas endlessly until the completely faithful love of a woman frees him from the spell. He is allowed to go ashore once every seven years to find that faithful love, and he believes he has found it in Senta, the daughter of a Norwegian sea captain. Senta wishes with all her heart to break the curse and agrees to marry the Dutchman, but she has already promised her love to Erik. Genuinely fearful for her future if she weds the Dutchman, Erik confronts Senta. The Dutchman partially overhears Erik’s entreaties and believes Senta has betrayed him. Senta must now prove her faithfulness in order to save the Dutchman.

A full synopsis appears on p. 36.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN IN CONTEXT
The Flying Dutchman, which premiered January 2, 1843, in Dresden, is considered the first of Richard Wagner’s mature works, the one that would point the way to the future. In it, Wagner began to use leitmotifs (musical notes or passages associated with a particular character or theme) and introduced the theme of a suffering outsider who is redeemed by the love of a woman, both of which we see in Wagner’s subsequent operas.

For more about Wagner and the genesis of the opera, see “Summoning the Angels: The World of Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman,” beginning on p. 24.

Jenny Elkins
Community Volunteer
Houston Trust Company
Founding Shareholder
Board Member
Client
ACHIEVING THE VISION

Projections and video are being used increasingly to achieve special effects in opera. Find out more about how this is done in our interview on pp. 56–57 with S. Katy Tucker, the projection/video designer not only for The Flying Dutchman but also for Florencia en el Amazonas later this season.

WAGNER
THE CONTROL FREAK

Wagner was so obsessed with his idea of Gesamtkunstwerk—a total harmony of poetry, music, and stage design—that he could achieve his vision only by completely controlling the entire process. For each of his operas beginning with The Flying Dutchman, he not only composed the music but crafted the story and wrote the libretto. But what to do about the singers, whose performances were completely out of his control? Wagner’s answer in this case was an instruction manual titled “Remarks on the Performance of the Opera The Flying Dutchman.” It contained detailed instructions, for example, on the Dutchman’s movement, facial expressions, and gestures, coordinating everything with specific measures of music. Naturally, such detailed instructions are not observed today.

“My family values personal and confidential service from people who genuinely care about us. That’s why my husband, Jim, founded Houston Trust Company in 1994 with close friends—to help families with investment management, to serve as the family office, and to be there for our grandchildren’s grandchildren.”
MIMÌ AND MUSSETTA
THE WOMEN OF BOHEMIA

BY JEREMY JOHNSON
Dramaturg
THE TWO FEMALE ROLES in *La bohème* are two of the most famous roles in the repertoire. They are also incredibly dynamic characters that sopranos across the world love to perform: Mimi is noble, fragile, and sweet, while Musetta seems to be the opposite—fiery, impulsive, and flighty. We thought it would be interesting to put the two of them together, in the form of the two sopranos who will sing the roles at HGO, to see just how different—or how similar—these characters are.

So, Nicole Heaston (Mimi) and Pureum Jo (Musetta), both alumnae of the HGO Studio, agreed to meet with us in early September: Nicole came to our temporary offices on Lamar Street, while Pureum video-conferenced in from Germany! Both of them have sung Musetta around the country, but our HGO performances mark Nicole’s role debut as Mimi. Dramaturg Jeremy Johnson leads the conversation with them about these two fascinating characters and their stories.

**Jeremy Johnson**

First impressions can be incredibly powerful. How do you think your characters feel about one another when they first meet at Café Momus?

**Nicole Heaston**

Mimi and Musetta are kind of kindred souls in some ways, though Mimi cannot necessarily be as free as Musetta is. So when she sees her, I think she’s impressed. Sometimes when you see a woman that is a little bit more ostentatious than you are, you’re kind of intrigued by that. I think Mimi sees that in Musetta.

**JJ**

She sees a part of Musetta that Mimi has inside of her?

**NH**

Yes! Mimi is a very sexual, loving, sweet, grounded person, and Musetta is kind of like the alter-ego of that person. Mimi just doesn’t have the courage to bring that out of herself. She is immediately accepting of Musetta, even when she’s going off the rails and screaming and causing a scene. She turns to Marcello and says, “She’s a good woman,” because she can see some of herself in Musetta. When Musetta acts like that, she thinks, “Man, that’s impressive. I can’t do that.” She finds her very interesting and intriguing and wishes she could be a little bit more like that.

**Pureum Jo**

I think Musetta is too busy getting Marcello’s attention to notice Mimi! Her first impression of Mimi is probably that she is very calm and down to earth, glamorous, but very different from Musetta. Musetta feels the connection between them because they both have a big heart and a passion for love.

**JJ**

So both Mimi and Musetta have a passion for love, and that’s what brings the two of you together?

**PJ**

Yes, they both have big hearts, and they recognize that in one another.

**JJ**

What is your take on the first introduction between Mimi and Rodolfo; do you think she really needed a light?

**NH**

That’s funny for me. I don’t think she necessarily needs it… I think she blows that puppy out on her own! She feels that attraction there and she’s playing a little coy and seeing where it goes.

**PJ**

That’s a little Musetta there!

**NH**

Exactly! It needs to be playful and young, to have that lightness and that connection. There has to be a reason why she looks at Rodolfo and he looks at her and they immediately, after only eight pages of music, say, “I love you. I’ll go everywhere with you. I’ll never leave your side.” So there’s definitely that playful energy between them in that initial connection.

**PJ**

I think there were a little more fireworks when Musetta and Marcello first met! They both have hot tempers, so I’m sure there were a lot of sparks at their first meeting.

**JJ**

That’s a lot of fireworks! They do have an intense relationship. When we first meet Musetta at Café Momus, she’s making a scene to get Marcello’s attention. Everybody is really skeptical and thinks she’s just playing with him, and Marcello is lamenting her cruelty. But Mimi says that she knows Musetta is head over heels in love with Marcello. Why do you think Mimi says that?

**NH**

She’s a woman. She knows that a woman would not make that big a scene in front of everyone unless she was trying to get that man’s attention. She sees what is going on in that situation more clearly, I think, as the only woman at the table.

**JJ**

That’s interesting. It does seem that there is a big disconnect between the male reaction and the female reaction to that scene. This group of guys, who have known Musetta for so long, think she’s just toying with Marcello—which is a very different reaction than Mimi, who recognizes it as love even though she is seeing Musetta for the first time. But Mimi is the one who’s right.

**NH**

Mimi is there with all the men and they’re confused, but she says, “No, she really likes you.” She probably picked up on it because she wasn’t too close to the situation; she could see it clearly because she doesn’t have any of the baggage to the relationship like those guys and Musetta do.

**JJ**

Let’s talk about Act III when Mimi goes to Marcello for help. Her relationship with Rodolfo is falling apart due to his jealousy, but she later overhears Rodolfo give his real reason: he knows she is dying. He
loves her so much that he has to give her up so she can find someone who can take care of her. At that point, why does Mimi give up on the relationship when she hears he truly loves her and wants to help her?

NH \ Honestly, that’s the hardest thing for me as well. Every time I go through the role I wonder, what is making that change in Mimi? For me, it’s that when she hears him say, “I can’t help her,” she loves him so much that she doesn’t want to put him through that suffering. He’s in pain; he loves her so much that he has to let her go because he doesn’t know what to do. He can’t financially support her. He can’t help her emotionally. So she sees that it’s draining on him, and she decides to let him go.

PJ \ I think that’s one way Mimi and Musetta differ. Musetta would stay with Marcello because she’s so true to her own feelings and emotions. She loves Marcello too much to leave him, even if it hurts Marcello.

NH \ But then when it all comes down to it, when Mimi knows that her time is coming, she knows she can’t do it alone. The one person she goes back to is Rodolfo. She realizes that the sacrifices she thought she was making for Rodolfo were also sacrifices for herself; she needed to give that closure to him but also for herself.

PJ \ Musetta grows throughout the opera. It could be because of the atmosphere at the end. Mimi’s dying and everybody is calm. Musetta feels much deeper and more mature in Act IV; her music is different, too.

JJ \ And Musetta is the one who brings Mimi to Rodolfo.

NH \ I think that moment grounds Musetta. In Act II and Act III, she’s so over the top, but this is a moment where you get to see the goodness in her heart. You have to realize that every instance we see Musetta all over the place and over the top are all in relation to Marcello. Act IV is in relation to Mimi, to another woman. She acts out with Marcello because there’s this passion, this fire. That’s not there with Mimi, so she gets to be real. She breaks down in a prayer in that scene. Nobody else prayed but her. There’s more to Musetta than just fireworks.

PJ \ I almost cry every time I perform that scene. It’s so sad. Musetta is so in love with Marcello, and she knows Mimi has that same love for Rodolfo—but she only found it again right before her death. The moment for Musetta is complete concentration on Mimi, just having a tiny hope that she might live, giving all of her prayers in hopes that the medicine might work.

JJ \ What’s that moment like for you as a performer?

NH \ I think Mimi is the one who brings everyone into a place of peace a bit more. Her presence and softness help change Rodolfo, Marcello, Schaunard, Colline, even Musetta. She brings all of them together, and even at the very end, they’re all weeping over the death of this one woman that they haven’t known all that long. She meant something and changed something in them and brought a softness, even in her illness, to their lives.

JJ \ Let’s end this with a bit of fun. What do you think Mimi and Musetta would be like in 2018?

NH \ Mimi wouldn’t have anything to do with Rodolfo! I think about that a lot when I’m working: put yourself in another century’s mindset. She even says in the Act III quartet, “Goodbye to all the suspicion and drama.” If it were 2018, it would have ended in the middle of that quartet. But there is so much true love there, so I don’t really know. There are women out there who even in the conflicts of certain relationships, the love is so strong that they fight through it.

PJ \ Musetta would have a reality TV show!

NH \ She’d have a reality TV show! Everybody admires her fashion and makeup. She would be an Instagram star.

NH \ Dropping plates hoping somebody’s videotaping—oh yeah, she would definitely thrive in 2018!
It is Christmas Eve, and four poverty-stricken young bohemians—Rodolfo, Marcello, Colline, and Schaunard—decide to head to Café Momus for their holiday meal. Rodolfo remains behind to finish some work, and Mimì, a young neighbor who is obviously ill, knocks at the door to get a light for her candle. The two fall instantly in love, but eventually separate because of his jealousy and his guilt over their living conditions, which have worsened her illness. One day, Marcello’s lover Musetta finds Mimì lying near death in the street and brings her to Rodolfo. Mimì and Rodolfo reminisce about their love for a brief moment before her illness takes her from him for the last time. A full synopsis appears on p. 46.

The rapturous duet “O soave fanciulla” (Rodolfo and Mimì, at the end of Act I) is one of the most famous pieces of music in all of opera. The quartet that ends Act III—in which Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until spring and Musetta and Marcello quarrel furiously—is a great example of how several characters in opera can express their feelings simultaneously. This is possible in no other art form.

Some of La bohème’s most famous arias are mentioned under “Aria” in “Opera Lingo,” p. 92.

What To Listen For

The rejected act describes a party in the courtyard of Musetta’s dwelling: Musetta is being evicted because her “protector,” suspicious about her relationship with Marcello, refuses to keep paying her rent. The bohemians think this is a great occasion for an impromptu party. Musetta lends Mimì a beautiful gown to wear and introduces her to a viscount. The two dance together in the courtyard, and Rodolfo is consumed with jealousy. This explains his description of Mimì as flirtatious and his reference to a “moscardino di viscontino” (young fop of a viscount).

Does it seem odd that at the end of Act II, Rodolfo and Mimì are blissfully in love, yet when Act III begins, they are on the verge of splitting up? What in the world happened? When Rodolfo tries to explain it to Marcello, he first blames it on Mimì’s flirtatiousness and mentions how she dallied with a “foppish viscount.” But this seems totally out of character for the Mimì we’ve seen so far!

It seems like we might be missing something, because we actually are. The librettists, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, originally wrote an act that was intended to occur—you guessed it—between Acts II and III. Puccini rejected it and never composed music for it.

Jonathan Larson’s musical Rent is based on the storyline of La bohème, which is also the opera Nicolas Cage brought Cher to in the film Moonstruck.

Puccini wept when he finished composing the music for Mimì’s death scene. He told a friend: “I had to get up and, standing in the middle of the study, alone in the silence of the night, I began to weep like a child. It was as though I had seen my own child die.”
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

An Opera in Three Acts | Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER

Sung in German with projected English translation

Co-production by Houston Grand Opera, The Atlanta Opera, and Cincinnati Opera.

OCT 19  OCT 21M  OCT 27  OCT 30  NOV 02

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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.
CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Daland           Kristinn Sigmundsson
Steersman        Richard Trey Smagur †
                 * HGO debut      † HGO Studio artist      ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
Dutchman         Andrzej Dobber
Mary             Leia Lensing †
                 Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow
Senta            Melody Moore
Erik             Eric Cutler

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor        Patrick Summers
                 Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Director         Tomer Zvulun *
                 Sponsored by Stephen and Ann Kaufman
Associate Director Brenna Corner *
Set and Costume Designer Jacob A. Climer *
Lighting Designer Amith Chandrashaker *
Projection/Video Designer S. Katy Tucker *

Sound Designer   Andrew Harper
Chorus Master    Richard Bado †
                 Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Musical Preparation Geoffrey Loff †
                 Peter Pasztor †
                 Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Jr. Endowed Chair
Stage Manager    Damien Sneed
Assistant Director Christopher Staub
Supertitles by   Jeremy Johnson *

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by  Blair Salter †
                        Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow
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.

SPECIAL CREDITS

Blazek & Vetterling LLP—Houston, Auditors
Apurva Thekdi, M.D., Consulting Physician and Otolaryngologist
Quan Law Group, PLLC
Immigration and Visa Attorneys
Vinson & Elkins, Attorneys of Record
Shweiki Media, Printer, Opera Cues

* HGO debut  † HGO Studio artist  ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
SYNOPSIS

Synopsis courtesy of The Atlanta Opera.

The performance will last approximately 2 hours and 25 minutes. There is no intermission.

OVERTURE
A tremendous storm rages at sea.

ACT I: A ROCKY SEACOAST
The ship of a Norwegian captain, Daland, has dropped anchor. Daland announces they have been blown seven miles off course. He tells the crew to get some rest while the Steersman keeps watch. The Steersman falls asleep; once more, the storm begins to rage and a red-sailed ship, the Flying Dutchman, appears. Its captain, the Dutchman, laments his fate: a curse has forced him to sail continuously, able to come ashore only once every seven years to seek redemption. He has often sought death by plunging into the sea or steering his ship onto reefs, to no avail. His only hope is the coming of the Day of Judgment.

Daland, from the deck of his ship, sees the Flying Dutchman, hails its master, and asks if his ship was also damaged in the storm. The Dutchman tells him a little of his story and offers Daland a rich treasure if he will shelter him in his home. He then asks if the Norwegian captain has a daughter. When Daland replies in the affirmative, the Dutchman asks if she might be his wife, offering all of his treasure in return. Daland greedily agrees. When the weather permits, the two ships sail off toward Daland’s home.

ACT II: A FACTORY
The factory wall is dominated by a large painting. A group of young women spin and sing of their lovers’ return. Senta, Daland’s daughter, sits dreamily to one side and gazes at the painting. Mary, Senta’s nurse, asks her to join the group, but she does not hear. When the other girls tease her about being in love with the handsome young hunter Erik, she angrily tells them to stop their stupid song. She asks Mary to sing the ballad of the Dutchman, but the nurse refuses. Senta sings it herself, and we learn that while attempting to round a cape during a storm, the Dutchman had cursed and sworn, “In all eternity I’ll not give up!” Satan heard, took him at his word, and doomed him to sail continually, able to come ashore only once every seven years to seek redemption. He has often sought death by plunging into the sea or steering his ship onto reefs, to no avail. His only hope is the coming of the Day of Judgment.

Daland, from the deck of his ship, sees the Flying Dutchman, hails its master, and asks if his ship was also damaged in the storm. The Dutchman tells him a little of his story and offers Daland a rich treasure if he will shelter him in his home. He then asks if the Norwegian captain has a daughter. When Daland replies in the affirmative, the Dutchman asks if she might be his wife, offering all of his treasure in return. Daland greedily agrees. When the weather permits, the two ships sail off toward Daland’s home.

ACT III: A BAY WITH A ROCKY SHORE
The Norwegian sailors are celebrating, but the Flying Dutchman is dark and silent. As the girls and women arrive with food and drink, they call to the dark ship offering them some refreshment. When there is no answer, the men tell the women not to wake the crew members, for they are ghosts. Soon there are signs of stirring on the Dutchman’s ship and, although it is calm everywhere else, a storm comes up around it. Its ghoulish crew asks if their captain has found a wife. The two groups of sailors start a singing match, but the Norwegians give up and, making the sign of a cross, leave their ship.

Senta runs from the house, followed by Erik. When he reminds her of the day she swore her eternal faith to him, the Dutchman overhears, and, thinking her promise to him was not sincere, he says farewell. Senta tries to stop him, but he releases her from her vow. If she had sworn before God, she would be damned, but because she swore only to him, she is free to break her vow. As Erik and the others plead with her, she throws herself into the sea, crying, “Here I stand, faithful to you until death.” The Flying Dutchman sinks, and Senta and the Dutchman are seen reunited in a better world.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY
HGO performed Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman for the first time during the 1965–66 season (with Joshua Hecht in the title role), with subsequent stagings in seasons 1984–85 (James Morris) and 1998–99 (Franz Grundheber).
At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.

* HGO Orchestra core musician  † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA CHORUS

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

Nathan Abbott
Christopher Abide
Ofelia Adame
Geordie Alexander
Dennis Arrowsmith
Stephen Ash
Sarah A. Bannon
Zachary Barba
G. Leslie Biffle
Fredy Bonilla
Andrew Briggs
Sarah Brindley
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Ann Scott Davis
Robert Dee
Callie Jo Denbigh
Robert Dingman
Justin Dunkle
Stacia Morgan Dunn
Ashley Duplechien
Ashly Evans
Peter Farley
Ami Figg

Don Figg
Brian M. Gibbs
Suzanne Gregory
Nancy Hall
Sarah Jane Hardin
Frankie Hickman
Julie Hoeltzel
Jiajun Hong
Jon Janacek
James R. Jennings
Joe Key
Wesley Landry
Sarah L. Lee
Laura Lisk
Katie Loff
Amelia Love
Britany Lovett
Lindsay Lymer
Sarah Lysiak
Alejandro Magallón
Keenan Manceaux
Kathleen Manley
Antonio Martinez
Neal Martinez
Norman Lee Mathews
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Matthew Neumann
Casey Jones Parrish
Laura Elizabeth Patterson
Nicholas Rathgeb
Kendall Reimer
Hannah Roberts
Johnny Salvesen
Christina Scanlan
Valerie Serice
Paul Joseph Serna
Brian Shircliffe
Kade I. Smith
Haley Stage
John Stevens
Naonobu Sugitani
Riley Vogel
John Weinell
Jennifer Wright
Patrick Wright

SUPERNUMERARIES

Conner Borne
Greg Cote
Seth Daniel Cunningham
Luke Fedell
Ben Hudson
Brian Mitchell
Anna Pruitt
Aaron Ruiz
Terrance Simon
Miguel Stonecipher
other opera companies, notably *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Seattle, Atlanta, Cleveland); *Silent Night* (Wexford, Atlanta, Glimmerglass, Washington, Austin); *Dinner at Eight* (Minnesota, Wexford, Atlanta, San Diego); *Dead Man Walking* (New Orleans, Atlanta, Tel Aviv); *La bohème* (Seattle, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Atlanta, Dallas); *Gianni Schicchi* (Juilliard, International Vocal Arts Institute Tel Aviv), and many others. The European premiere of *Silent Night* at the Wexford Festival received two *Irish Times* Awards. Zvulun will return to Wexford for the European premiere of Bolcom's *Dinner at Eight*. During Zvulun’s tenure, Atlanta Opera’s fundraising has tripled, resulting in twice the number of productions presented annually. His focus on innovation has resulted in a Harvard Business School case study chronicling the company’s turnaround, an International Opera Awards nomination, and an invitation to deliver a TED Talk.

**JACOB A. CLIMER**  
**(UNITED STATES)**  
**Set and Costume Designer**  
Dallas native Jacob A. Climer is making his HGO debut with this production, which has already had successful runs in Atlanta and Cincinnati. Some of his most recent credits include *Orfeo et Euridice* for Portland Opera and Des Moines Metro Opera; *Rusalka* for Des Moines Metro Opera; *Relevance* with MCC Theater at the Lucille Lortel Theatre; *Kid Victory* for New York’s Vineyard Theatre; *The Abduction from the Seraglio* for Des Moines Metro Opera and Utah Opera; *La traviata* with Boston Lyric Opera; *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opera Philadelphia; and *Les Misérables* with the Dallas Theater Center. His work has also been seen at Kentucky Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, the Curtis Institute, and The New School. Climer has collaborated with New York Theater Workshop, Elevator Repair Service, Tectonic Theater Project, and Primary Stages, and for six years was a resident designer at the Dallas Shakespeare Company. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Evansville and his master of fine arts degree from Carnegie Mellon University.

**AMITH CHANDRASHAKER**  
**(UNITED STATES)**  
**Lighting Designer**  
Amith Chandrashaker, making his HGO debut, designs lighting for theater, opera, and dance. His work in opera includes *Falstaff* (Opera Omaha), *The Scarlet Letter* (Opera Colorado), *The
Abduction from the Seraglio (Atlanta Opera), Cato in Utica (Opera Lafayette), and The Elixir of Love (The Curtis Institute). In theater, his credits include The Lucky Ones (Ars Nova, Drama Desk nomination); Cardinal (Second Stage Theater); Twelfth Night and Fire in Dreamland (The Public Theater); Fairview (Soho Rep.); Her Requiem (Lincoln Center Theater/LCT3); Times’ Journey Through a Room (PlayCo.); This Is Reading (Reading Train Station); Stuffed (The Westside Theatre); FADE (Primary Stages), [PORTO] (The Bushwick Starr/ The Women’s Project); Alligator (New Georges/ Sol Project); Seven Spots on the Sun (Rattilestick); The Convent of Pleasure (Cherry Lane); Ike at Night (Under the Radar Festival/The Public); Quiet, Comfort and Baal (Hoi Polloi); Take Care (The Flea); Platono (The Kitchen, directed by Jay Scheib); The Hatmaker’s Wife (Playwrights Realm), Book of Disquiet (Peak Performances); Stoop Stories (Weston Playhouse); and Carnival Kids (Lesser America). In dance, he has lit premieres by Alexander Ekman, Azure Barton, Kate Weare, Liz Gerring, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Rennie Harris Pure Movement, Aalto Ballett Theatre Essen, Staatstheater Nürnberg, the National Dance Company of Wales, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

**S. KATY TUCKER (UNITED STATES)**

**Projection/Video Designer**

S. Katy Tucker, a video and projections designer based in New York City, is making her HGO debut. Tucker began her career as a painter and installation artist, exhibiting her work at a variety of galleries, such as the Corcoran Museum in Washington, D.C., and Artist’s Space in New York City. Her work in theater and opera has been seen around the world, including Broadway, Off-Broadway, the Metropolitan Opera, the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, the New York City Ballet, the Kennedy Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), and The Park Avenue Armory, among others. Recent productions include Dmitri Tcherniakov’s production of Prince Igor at the Dutch National Opera and Metropolitan Opera, the Ring cycle with Francesca Zambello at San Francisco Opera, Iron & Coal with Kevin Newbury, If You Listen with R. B. Schlater, sets and video for Orphée at Banff Center with Joel Ivany, and West Side Story at the Kennedy Center with Francesca Zambello. Upcoming projects include Silent Voices with Kevin Newbury, the Park Avenue Armory Gala with Stefan Beckman, and Parsifal at Indiana University Opera Theater. She returns to HGO this winter as the projection/video designer for Florencia el Amazonas.

**BRENNA CORNER (CANADA)**

**Associate Director**

Brenna Corner has worked as a director, actor, and fight director across Canada and the United States; she is making her HGO debut. She is the artistic director of Fraser Lyric Opera and Manitoba Underground Opera in Canada. Recent directing projects include The Flying Dutchman (Cincinnati Opera), The Odyssey and Scatia/Ginsburg (Glimmerglass Festival), Carmen (Atlanta Opera), The Elixir of Love (Vancouver Opera), The Magic Flute (Atlanta Opera), Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street (New Orleans Opera), and Hansel and Gretel (Vancouver Opera). Corner earned a degree in music from The University of Manitoba and theater diplomas from Grant MacEwan College and The British American Drama Academy.

**RICHARD BADO (UNITED STATES)**

**The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair**

**Chorus Master**

Richard Bado, an alumnus of the HGO Studio (1984–85), is director of artistic operations and chorus master for HGO. Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading HGO’s acclaimed production of Show Boat at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, he has conducted 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, and Wolf Trap Opera. This season, he conducts performances of The Nutcracker for the Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital, including a tour this fall. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey, Jamie Barton, Ryan McKinny, and Nathan Gunn. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University. He also studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. For 12 years, he was the director of the opera studies program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. He has served on the faculties of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Dolora Zajick Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, the International Vocal School in Moscow, and the Texas Music Festival, and has served on the music staffs of the Metropolitan Opera and many other companies. He received HGO’s Silver Rose Award (2013) in honor of his 25th anniversary as chorus master.
DENISE TARRANT
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Concertmaster
Texas native 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 Ricky Ian Gordon’s The House without a Christmas Tree (2017), Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life (2016), Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree (2000) and Tod Machover’s Resurrection (1999), as well as Floyd’s Of Mice and Men (2002) and Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas (2001), all of which have been released on CD. She further performed in the world premieres of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); André Previn’s Brief Encounter (2009); Heggie’s Three Decembers (2008) and The End of the Affair (2004); 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 last season and also when the production debuted 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 Maninyas (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).

ANDRZEJ DOBBER
(Poland)
Baritone—The Dutchman
Andrzej Dobber made his HGO debut as Scarpia in Tosca (2015). In the 2018–19 season, he will perform the title role in Nabucco at the Semperoper Dresden and will sing Scarpia both in Dresden and at the Berlin State Opera. He is seen regularly with the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Opéra national de Paris (Basille), the Teatro Comunale in Florence, Dutch National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Semperoper Dresden, Berlin State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, and the Savonlinna Opera Festival and the Glyndebourne Festival. In November 2010, Dobber made his role debut as Jochanaan in Salome at the Hamburg State Opera, under the baton of Simone Young. Since 2007, he has been closely associated with the Hamburg Opera, singing the title roles in Simon Boccanegra, Rigoletto, Macbeth, Falstaff, and Prince Igor, as well as Amonasro in Aida, Amfortas in Parsifal, Tomsk in The Queen of Spades, Giorgio Germont in La traviata, Francesco Foscari in I due Foscari, and Jack Rance in La fanciulla del West, to name a few. In 2015, Dobber was appointed Kammersänger by the Senate of the Hanseatic City of Hamburg, where he performed the role of Barak in Die Frau ohne Schatten in 2017. Last February, he gave his role debut as the Dutchman at the Semperoper Dresden; more performances followed in July. He recently appeared as Rigoletto at the Teatr Wielki in Lodz.

MELODY MOORE
(UNITED STATES)
Soprano—Senta
Melody Moore has been seen at HGO previously as Dorabella in Così fan tutte, Freia in Das Rheingold, and Marta in The Passenger, both on the main stage and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival (all in 2014); and Julie LaVerne in Show Boat (2013). This season she returns to Los Angeles Opera to make her role debut as Gertrude in Hansel and Gretel under James Conlon; makes her debut with the Dresden Philharmonic as Giorgetta in Il tabarro and Santuzza in Cavalleria rusticana, both of which will be recorded for commercial release by Pentatone; revisits her critically acclaimed portrayal of Strauss’s Salome in Daegu, South Korea; and records a solo album of American music with pianist Bradley Moore for Pentatone. Last season, she made three major role debuts: Elisabetta in Don Carlo at Washington National Opera, the title role in Salome at Florida Grand Opera, and Tatjana in Eugene Onegin at Hawaii Opera Theater. She also performed her signature roles of Tosca (Opéra de Montréal and Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile), and Senta (Atlanta Opera). Other recent career highlights include a house and role debut at Seattle Opera in the title role in Janáček’s Katya Kabanova, appearances with San Francisco Opera in the title role of Tosca, Susan Rescorla in Heart of a Soldier, Mimi in La bohème, and the Countess in Le nozze di Figaro; and performances in Francesca Zambello’s Ring cycle at Washington National Opera. She returns to HGO as Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni later this season.

KRISTINN SIGMUNDSSON
(ICELAND)
Bass—Daland
Kristinn Sigmundsson was most recently seen at HGO as Fasolt in Das Rheingold (2014); he also performed Rocco in Fidelio (2011) and Sarastro in The Magic Flute (2004) and will return
this spring as the Commendatore in Don Giovanni. This season, he will also perform Dansker in Billy Budd with Den Norske Opera. Recent engagements include the Commendatore in the Edinburgh International Festival, Daland in this production of The Flying Dutchman with the Atlanta Opera, La Roche in Capriccio with La Monnaie, Melchthal in Guillaume Tell with Staatsoper Hamburg, Sarastro with Teatro Regio Torino, and Rocco with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He sang Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro with Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Commendatore with Budapest Festival Orchestra, and Brahms’s Ein deutsches Requiem with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. He joined the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for Hunding in excerpts of Die Walküre, Staatsoper Hamburg for Melchthal and the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos, the Caramoor International Music Festival for Rocco, the Icelandic Opera for Don Basilio in The Barber of Seville, the Grant Park Music Festival for Méphistophélès in La damnation de Faust, and Los Angeles Opera for its trilogy of Beaumarchais operas as he sang Doctor Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro, Don Basilio in The Barber of Seville, and Louis XVI in Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles, the recording of which won the 2017 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.
Ariadne auf Naxos at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. In recent seasons, Cutler has also appeared at the Hamburg State Opera and La Monnaie as Apollo in Daphne, in Stuttgart as Florestan, at the Semperoper Dresden and in Madrid as the title role in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, in Frankfurt as Adolphe in Euryanthe, and in Bordeaux as the title role in Berlioz’s Damnation de Faust.

**RICHARD TREY SMAGUR (UNITED STATES)**

Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Tenor—Steersman

Second-year HGO Studio artist Richard Trey Smagur, a 2012 participant in HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy, was a Grand Finals winner in the Metropolitan Opera’s 2017 National Council Auditions. Last season at HGO, he performed Gastone de Letorières in La traviata, Young Servant in Elektra, and Count Almaviva in outdoor performances of The Barber of Seville. He is singing Parpignol in the concurrent performances of La bohème. Previous roles include Tsarevich Gvidon in The Golden Cockerel at Santa Fe Opera and Tamino in The Magic Flute with OK Mozart, and he covered Des Grieux in Manon at Des Moines Metro Opera. In summer 2016, he was a fellow at Steans Music Institute at Ravinia Music Festival. Smagur’s roles during his college training include the title role in Peter Grimes, Pinkerton in Madame Butterfly, Don José in Carmen, Tamino in The Magic Flute, Ralph Rackstraw in H.M.S. Pinafore, and the Prince in Cendrillon. Last summer, he joined Wolf Trap Opera as Tybalt in Romeo et Juliette and made his Aspen Music Festival concert debut as the tenor soloist in Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde.

**LEIA LENSING (UNITED STATES)**

Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

Contralto—Mary

First-year HGO Studio artist Leia Lensing is making her HGO debut. She won first prize and the Online Viewers’ Choice Award in the 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. She earned a master’s degree at the University of Northern Iowa, where she performed the role of the strong Irish matriarch Maurya in Vaughan Williams’s Riders to the Sea. Participating in numerous opera productions throughout her undergraduate career, Lensing performed the roles of the Second Witch in Dido and Aeneas, Mama and Dragonfly in L’enfant et les sortilèges, and La Zia Principessa in Suor Angelica. In summer 2017, she was an apprentice artist with the Des Moines Metro Opera, where she covered the role of Madame Armfeldt in A Little Night Music. Last summer, she was a member of the Santa Fe Opera apprentice singer program, covering the roles of Pasqualita in Doctor Atomic and the Baroness in Candide.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

LA BOHÈME

An Opera in Four Acts | Music by Giacomo Puccini | Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER
Sung in Italian with projected English translation
A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and the San Francisco Opera.

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for Houston Grand Opera.
United Airlines is the official airline of Houston Grand Opera.
Tenenbaum Jewelers is the preferred jeweler of Houston Grand Opera.
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.
**CAST** (in order of vocal appearance)

- **Marcello**  
  Michael Sumuel †  
  Thomas Glass † (Nov. 1 M, 6 M, 8, 11 M)  
  *Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow*

- **Rodolfo**  
  Ivan Magri *  
  Yongzhao Yu ‡ (Nov. 1 M, 6 M, 8, 11 M)

- **Colline**  
  Federico De Michielis ‡  
  Daniel Noyola † (Nov. 1 M, 6 M, 8, 11 M)  
  *Beth Madison Fellow*

- **Schaunard**  
  Geoffrey Hahn †  
  *Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*

- **Benoît / Alcindoro**  
  Héctor Vásquez

- **Mimì**  
  Nicole Heaston ‡

- **Nardus Williams † (Nov. 1 M, 6 M, 8, 11 M)  
  Nancy and Ted Hoywood Fellow**

- **Parpignol**  
  Richard Trey Smagur †  
  *Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow*

- **Musetta**  
  Pureum Jo ‡  
  *Yelena Dyachek † (Nov. 1 M, 6 M, 8, 11 M)  
  Jill and Allyn Risley/Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer Fellow*

- **Schaunard**  
  Geoffrey Hahn †  
  *Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*

- **Customs Officer**  
  Cristino Perez

- **Sergeant**  
  Riley Vogel *

**CREATIVE TEAM**

- **Conductor**  
  James Lowe †

- **Director**  
  John Caird

- **Set and Costume Designer**  
  David Farley

- **Lighting Designer**  
  Michael James Clark

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

- **Children's Chorus Director**  
  Karen Reeves

- **Musical Preparation**  
  Jonathan Gmeinder †  
  *Bill and Melinda Brungen/Lynn and Henry Gissel/Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow*

- **Italian Diction Coach**  
  Stefano Baldasseroni *

- **Stage Manager**  
  Annie Wheeler

- **Assistant Director**  
  Katherine M. Carter *

- **Supertitles by**  
  Scott Heumann, adapted by Jeremy Johnson

**PRODUCTION CREDITS**

- **Set Design Assistants**  
  Kim Alwyn, Cara Newman, Jonathan Patric Ward

- **Painting Consultant**  
  Peter Farley

- **Assistant Costume Designer**  
  Laura Gordon

- **Supertitles called by**  
  Meredith Morse

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.

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* HGO debut  † HGO Studio artist  ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
SYNOPSIS

The performance will last approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes, including one intermission.

ACT I
It is Christmas Eve in Paris. Two poverty-stricken young artists, Marcello, a painter, and Rodolfo, a poet, attempt to work in their freezing garret; in desperation, they burn one of Rodolfo’s dramas to keep warm. Their two roommates, Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, return home. Even though Schaunard has brought food, the four bohemians decide to take their holiday dinner in the Latin Quarter. Just then, Benoît, their landlord, arrives to demand his overdue rent. The men ply him with drink, and when he boasts of marital indiscretions, they throw him out with feigned indignation. Marcello, Colline, and Schaunard leave for the Latin Quarter. Rodolfo promises to join them after finishing some work, but a knock on the door interrupts him. Mimì, a young neighbor, enters, wishing to relight her candle. Obviously ill, she nearly faints and drops her room key. Rodolfo is instantly attracted to her and manages to detain her by concealing the key. He snuffs out his own candle, and as the two search in the darkness for the “lost” key, their hands touch. Spontaneously, they pour out their love for one another before leaving to join Rodolfo’s friends.

ACT II
A festive crowd celebrates Christmas Eve in the Latin Quarter. At the Café Momus, Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his roommates. Their carefree mood changes when Musetta, Marcello’s former lover, appears with Alcindoro, her elderly paramour. Musetta attempts to attract the attention of Marcello, who deliberately ignores her but ultimately cannot resist her charms. Musetta shrewdly gets rid of Alcindoro and instructs the waiter to give him the bill for everyone. She and her bohemian friends escape through the crowd.

INTERMISSION

ACT III
Early one snowy February morning, Mimì seeks Marcello, who is painting a mural at a tavern near the city gates. She tells him she and Rodolfo are on the verge of separating because of his jealousy. As Marcello tries to comfort her, Rodolfo arrives to speak with Marcello. Mimì conceals herself and overhears their conversation. Rodolfo tells Marcello he wants to leave Mimì because of her flirtatious behavior. Finally, he confesses that she is mortally ill and admits his guilty feelings: he knows that the harsh conditions of their life together have undoubtedly worsened her health. Mimì’s cough gives her away, and Rodolfo realizes she has overheard everything. The two lovers pledge to stay together until spring, but Marcello and Musetta argue viciously and separate.

ACT IV
Rodolfo and Marcello, now separated from Mimì and Musetta, are working in their garret. Schaunard and Colline arrive with supper, and the four fantasize about attending a fancy ball. Suddenly, Musetta enters with Mimì, who is near death and wants to be with Rodolfo. Musetta and Marcello leave to sell some of their possessions in order to buy Mimì a muff and to summon a doctor. Colline also departs to sell his beloved overcoat. Left alone for a few moments, Mimì and Rodolfo reminisce about happier times. The others return, but before the doctor can arrive, Mimì dies.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY

At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.
VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant, Concertmaster *
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey, Assistant Concertmaster †
Rasa Kalesnykaite, Acting Assistant Concertmaster *
Natalie Gaynor, Principal Second Violin *
Carrie Kauk, Assistant Principal Second Violin *
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Hae-a Lee-Barnes *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Andres Gonzales
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Mila Neal
Emily Osinski
Sylvia Ouellette
Rachel Shepard
Hannah Watson

CELLO
Barrett Sills, Principal *
Erika Johnson, Assistant Principal *
Ariana Nelson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steven Wiggs *
Shino Hayashi

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

FLUTE
Seth Morris, Principal †
Christina Medawar †
Susan Kang, Acting Principal Rebecca Powell Garfield
Henry Williford

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert, Principal *
Robert Atherholt
Tamer Edlebi

CLARINET
Sean Krissman, Principal *
Eric Chi *

BASS CLARINET
Molly Mayfield

BASSOON
Amanda Swain, Principal *

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

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo, Principal †
Anthony Limoncelli, Acting Principal
Randal Adams *
Charlie Geyer

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén, Principal *
Kyle Gordon *
Mark Holley *

TUBA
Mark Barton, Principal *

HARP
Joan Eidman, Principal *

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson, Principal *

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown, Principal *
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

BANDA
Monica Daniel Barker—Piccolo
Melissa Suhr—Piccolo
Barbara Butler—Trumpet
Daniel Egan—Trumpet
Craig Hauschildt—Percussion

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

* HGO Orchestra core musician † HGO Orchestra core musician on leave this production † HGO Studio artist
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA CHORUS

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Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Callie Jo Denbigh
Justin Dunkle
Ashly Evans
Peter Farley
Brian M. Gibbs
Suzanne Gregory
Nancy Hall
Sarah Jane Hardin
Frankie Hickman
Jiajun Hong
Jon Janacek
Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Wesley Landry
Katie Loff
Lindsay Lymer
Alejandro Magallón
Keenan Manceaux
Kathleen Manley
Neal Martinez
Brianne Mathews
Katherine McDaniel
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Cristino Perez
Ardeen Pierre
Nicholas Rathgeb
Gabrielle Reed
Kendall Reimer
Jessica S. Richards
Christina Scanlan
Paul Joseph Serna
Kate Smith
Haley Stage
John Stevens
Riley Vogel
John Weinell
Jennifer Wright
Patrick Wright

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA CHILDREN’S CHORUS

Karen Reeves, Director

Lydia Barnett
Rebecca Bloome
Shelby Brown
Laura Fang
Max Frankel
Alina Garcia
Maria Gelves
Gabriel Magallón
Charlotte Maher
Maxwell Manning
Victoria Martinez
Madison McIvell
Faith Parle
Lauren Verm
Daniel Wunder
David Wunder

SUPERNUMERARIES

Joe Serpa Daniels
Troy Faldyn
Luke Fedell
Cesar Jacquez
Orlanders Jones
Stephen Swank
Humbleboy, The Seagull, Stanley, Trelawney of the Wells, Peter, National Theatre productions include writer and director of plays, musicals, and operas. His Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, and a freelance Shakespeare Company, principal guest director of the spring. He is an honorary associate director of the Royal will make its world premiere at HGO this coming (with composer Tarik O'Regan) of also wrote the libretto. He is both director and librettist 2009 world premiere of by the composer. Women Of Mice and Men leading Cat Pittsburg Opera Center and has appeared at Utah Opera The Little Prince Washington National Opera conducting Rachel Portman's made debuts at T ulsa Opera conducting Hopper's Wife Opéra national de Bordeaux. He made his European debut conducting (2002 world premiere and 2004 revival), The Abduction from the Seraglio, and an HGO Studio production of The Tender Land (2000). He appeared with Elton John in HGO's Golden Jubilee Gala (2005), conducting his own orchestrations and choral arrangements of John’s songs. This season, Lowe conducts The Little Prince for Washington National Opera and Utah Opera, Show Boat at the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Francesca Zambello production of West Side Story for Lyric Opera of Chicago. He made his European debut conducting Candide in Francesca Zambello’s production at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse and Opéra national de Bordeaux. He recently led the New York premiere of Stewart Wallace’s Hopper’s Wife at New York City Opera, and he appeared at Opera Saratoga with Catán’s Il postino. Last season, he made debuts at Tulsa Opera conducting Turnadot and Washington National Opera conducting Rachel Portman’s The Little Prince. He led Jonathan Dove’s Flight at the Pittsburgh Opera Center and has appeared at Utah Opera leading Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas and Carlisle Floyd’s Of Mice and Men. He conducted Mark Adamo’s Little Women at Lyric Opera Cleveland in a production directed by the composer.

2009 world premiere of Brief Encounter, for which he also wrote the libretto. He is both director and librettist (with composer Tarik O’Regan) of The Phoenix, which will make its world premiere at HGO this coming spring. He is an honorary associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, principal guest director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, and a freelance writer and director of plays, musicals, and operas. His National Theatre productions include Hamlet, Money, Humbleboy, The Seagull, Stanley, Trelawney of the Wells, Peter Pan, and his own new Olivier Award–winning version of Bernstein’s Candide, which is now playing worldwide. Recent directorial credits include Knight’s Tale, Hamlet, and Twelfth Night in Tokyo; Don Giovanni at Welsh National Opera; McQueen at the Haymarket Theatre; Tosca in Chicago and Los Angeles; Love's Labours Lost at the Stratford Festival in Canada; La bohème in San Francisco and Toronto, Parsifal in Chicago, and his own musical Daddy Long Legs Off-Broadway in Tokyo, and across the United States. He has directed over 20 productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, including A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, The Beggar’s Opera, Twelfth Night, Peter Pan, Our Friends in the North, Nicholas Nickleby, and Les Misérables—the last two productions winning numerous awards in the West End, Broadway, and internationally.

David Farley’s set and costume designs have previously been seen at HGO in this production of La bohème (2012). He is also the set and costume designer for the world premiere of Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix this spring. Credits as designer include Sunday in the Park with George in New York and the West End, which won Olivier Awards for best design and best musical production at the Wyndhams. He was nominated for costume design and set design at the 2008 Tony Awards for Sunday in the Park with George. His credits in the West End include The Comedy about a Bank Robbery, McQueen, Daddy Long Legs, A Little Night Music, and Little Shop of Horrors, and on Broadway, A Little Night Music and 13. Further credits include Flood in Hull; Snapshots, Take Flight, Travesties, and Are You There, McPhee? in the United States; and the tours of Million Dollar Quartet, Rocky Horror Picture Show, and Crush.

Michael James Clark is the lighting supervisor for HGO, where he has designed or realized lighting for numerous operas. Last season, he redesigned the original lighting for Elektra specifically for HGO’s Resilience Theater, the temporary performance space HGO built for its season-long displacement due to Hurricane Harvey, and he has also designed lighting for the HGOco world premiers of Some Light Emerges (2017),
After the Storm (2016), and O Columbia (2015); Otello (2014); Die Fledermaus, Aida, and Il trovatore (2013); La bohème, La traviata, and The Rape of Lucretia (2012); The Marriage of Figaro (2011); the world premiere of Cruzar la Cara de la Luna (2010); and outdoor productions of The Barber of Seville, The Elixir of Love, Tosca, The Magic Flute, Die Fledermaus, La bohème, Madame Butterfly, and Rigoletto. He is also the lighting designer for the world premiere of The Phoenix later this season. In addition to his work at HGO, he has designed lighting for Stages Repertory Theatre productions of The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical (2013), Honky Tonk Angels (2015), and The Marvelous Wonderettes: Dream On (2016). For Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, he lit Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music and The Coronation of Poppea. He holds a bachelor’s degree in lighting design from North Carolina School of the Arts.

RICHARD BADO (UNITED STATES)

Sarab and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Chorus Master
For information about Richard Bado, please see p. 40.

DENISE TARRANT

Sarab and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair

Concertmaster
For information about Denise Tarrant, please see p. 41.

KAREN REEVES

(UNITED STATES)

Children’s Chorus Director

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

NICOLE HEASTON

(UNITED STATES)

Soprano—Mimi

HGO Studio alumna Nicole Heaston (1995–97) has appeared with opera companies throughout the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Semperoper Dresden, Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf, and the Glyndebourne Festival in England. She was most recently seen at HGO as Adina in The Elixir of Love (2016); other HGO roles include Pamina in The Magic Flute (2015, 1997); Gilda in performances of Rigoletto (2001); Zerlina in Don Giovanni (1999); Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro (1998); the title role in the world premiere of Jackie O (1997); Mrs. Hayes in Susannah and St. Settlement in Four Saints in Three Acts (1996); and performances of Juliet in Romeo and Juliet (1995). This season, she sang her first Mahler Symphony No. 2 with the Houston Symphony and will make three significant role debuts: these performances of Mimi in La bohème, Liù in Turandot with the Orquestra Filarmónica de Jalisco, and the title role in Didone Abbandonata at Theater Basel. She will also appear in recital at the Wang Center in Naples, Florida. Recent engagements included the title role in Alcina at Theater Basel, Alice Ford in Falstaff at the Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville, Brahms’s Requiem and Haydn’s The Creation with the Houston Symphony, a gala concert at the Bolshoi Theatre, the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro at the Boston Lyric Opera, and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

NARDUS WILLIAMS

(UNITED KINGDOM)

Soprano—Mimì

First-year HGO Studio artist Nardus Williams is making her HGO debut. Recent highlights include the role of the Milliner in Der Rosenkavalier in a production directed by Richard Jones and conducted by Robin Ticciati at the Glyndebourne Festival, where she was a Jerwood Young Artist; the role of Martha in the new commission Wake by Giorgio Battistelli for Birmingham Opera Company, directed by Graham Vick; and Countess (cover) in The Marriage of Figaro for English
National Opera. Further roles include Maggie/Marjana in the world premiere of Lewis Murphy’s Belongings for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni for Holland Park Opera, and the Fox in Janáček’s The Cunning Little Vixen at the Royal College of Music. Recent concert highlights include recitals at Wigmore Hall and St. John’s Smith Square, and Handel’s Messiah at King’s Place. Williams trained at the International Opera School at the Royal College of Music, where she was the sole recipient of the prestigious Kiri Te Kanawa Scholarship. In the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards, she won first prize and Audience Prize (2016), and she was a finalist in the 2018 Kathleen Ferrier Competition.

**IVAN MAGRÌ (ITALY)**
*Tenor—Rodolfo*

Ivan Magri, making his HGO debut, has sung leading tenor roles with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Bavarian State Opera; Berlin State Opera; Deutsche Oper Berlin; Teatro dell’Opera in Rome; Zurich Opera; Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam; and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. In the 2018–19 season, his engagements include his debut with Opera Australia as Rodolfo in La bohème and his first Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly with Opera Stuttgart. Magri will also return to the Savonlinna Festival as the Duke in Rigoletto. Recent credits include his house debut at La Fenice in Venice as Alfredo in La traviata and at Den Norske Opera in Oslo as Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor; a return to Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari, Italy, as Edgardo; the Duke at Covent Garden, Menorca, Budapest, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Dresden, and the Savonlinna Festival; Nemorino in The Elixir of Love at Covent Garden; and the title role in Werther at the Hungarian State Opera. He has also appeared in I due Foscari in Valencia; The Lombards on the First Crusade in Piacenza, Italy; Werther in Estonia; Virginia Mercadante at the Wexford Festival; and The Merry Widow in Turin; and he opened the season at Teatro Regio in Parma with Verdi’s Un giorno di regno. He has won many international competitions, including the Riccardo Zandonai International Competition for Young Opera Singers and the Francesco Maria Martini Competition. Among Magri’s teachers was the great tenor Luciano Pavarotti.

**YONGZHAO YU (CHINA)**
*Tenor—Rodolfo*

Yongzhao Yu, who won the Audience Choice Award and the inaugural Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in HGO’s 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, is an alumnus of the HGO Studio (2015–18). He made his HGO stage debut as a Winged Angel in the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s It’s a Wonderful Life (2016), and also performed selected performances of Alfredo in La traviata and Flavio in Norma during the 2017–18 season. In China, he was heard as Flavio for his debut at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing; he returned in summer 2018 to make his role debut as Roméo in Roméo et Juliette. Other recent performances include Naulz in Visitors on the Icy Mountain with the Shanghai Grand Theater, and Alfredo in the concert hall of the Shanghai Oriental Art Center. He has performed in concert in the Grand Theatre of the Suzhou Culture and Arts Center and in an Eternal Verdi concert in Shanghai in honor of the bicentenary of Verdi’s birth. In summer 2016, he made his role debut as Rodolfo in La bohème with Wolf Trap Opera, and in 2017, he sang Alfredo with the Sacramento Philharmonic and for the Aspen Opera Center. In the 2018–19 season, he joins the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for the first time, to cover Alfredo in the new production by Michael Mayer. Future seasons will see his debuts with Seattle Opera and Arizona Opera.

**MICHAEL SUMUEL (UNITED STATES)**
*Baritone—Marcello*

HGO Studio alumnus Michael Sumuel (2009–11) has been seen regularly at HGO in roles such as Belcore in The Elixir of Love (2016), Papageno in The Magic Flute (2015), Superintendent Frank in Die Fledermaus (2013–14), Schunard in La bohème (2012–13), Masetto in Don Giovanni (2013), Sharpless in performances of Madame Butterfly (2010–11), and many more. During the 2018–19 season, he will perform Alidoro in La Cenerentola at Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, and on the concert stage, he will sing Haydn’s Mass No. 12 in B-flat with the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, and Puccini’s Messa di Gloria with the San Diego Symphony. He will also participate in a Schubertiade at Wolf Trap Opera. Recent credits include Sharpless in Madame Butterfly with Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Theseus in Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Teatro Massimo in Palermo; his debut with the BBC Proms; singing Kate Whitley’s “I am I say” with the Multi-Story Orchestra at Eastgate Centre Rooftop Car Park; Mozart’s Mass in C minor with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, conducted by Pablo Heras-Casado at Carnegie Hall; Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Seattle Symphony; Handel’s Messiah with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra; Bach’s St. John Passion with Music...
of the Baroque in Chicago, conducted by Jane Glover, and a return to Mercury Houston to perform the bass solos in Bach’s St. Matthew Passion.

THOMAS GLASS (UNITED STATES)
Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow
Baritone—Marcello
Nov. 1m, 6m, 8, 11m
Second-year Studio artist Thomas Glass performed Figaro in outdoor performances of The Barber of Seville, Fiorello in mainstage performances of The Barber of Seville, Officer Krupke in West Side Story, and Baron Douphol in La traviata last season at HGO. He won third prize in HGO’s 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He is a former member of Minnesota Opera’s resident artist program, performing Capulet in Romeo and Juliet, Gustave in the world premiere of Dinner at Eight, and Schaunard in La bohème, and covering Mercutio in Romeo, Donner in Das Rheingold, and Dan Packard in Dinner at Eight. For Wolf Trap Opera, he sang Joseph in The Ghosts of Versailles and Bragherona in Gassmann’s L’opera seria, also covering the roles of Tarquinius in The Rape of Lucretia and Schaunard. He joined San Francisco Opera’s Merola program in the summer of 2017 and returned to Wolf Trap Opera this past summer as Mercutio in Roméo et Juliette. Later this season at HGO, he will sing Alvaro in Florencia en el Amazonas.

PUREUM JO (KOREA)
Soprano—Musetta
Pureum Jo is an alumna of the HGO Studio (2014–16). Her roles at HGO included Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro and Miss Frayne in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (both in 2016); Papagena and Pamina in selected performances of The Magic Flute, the Rose in Rachel Portman and Nicholas Wright’s The Little Prince, and Becca in the world premiere of Gregory Spears and Royce Vavrek’s O Columbia (all in 2015). In the current season, she will be heard in the C5 Projects Ltd. world premiere of Beauty and Sadness, an opera by Elena Langer based on the final novel of Nobel Prize winner Yasunari Kawabata. Recent engagements include her first season with the Glyndebourne Festival for Julius Caesar, joining the roster of Lyric Opera of Chicago for Orphée et Eurydice, and her San Francisco Opera debut as Dai Yu in the world premiere of Bright Sheng’s Dream of the Red Chamber. Additionally, she returned to the Sarasota Orchestra for an evening of Mozart concert arias with Music Director Anu Tāli, sang Micaëla in Carmen with Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and made her role debut as Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro with Opera Naples and Music Director Ramon Tebar.

YELENA DYACHEK (UKRAINE/UNITED STATES)
Jill and Allyn Risley/Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer Fellow
Soprano—Musetta
Nov. 1m, 6m, 8, 11m
Yelena Dyachek has been seen at HGO as Berta in The Barber of Seville and Clotilde in Norma (2018), Annina in La traviata and Dominique de Menil in the HGOco world premiere of Some Light Emerges (2017), and First Secretary in Nixon in China (2016). The third-year HGO Studio artist won the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and was a Grand Prize winner in the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Her other roles include Frau Von Daubek in the concert premiere of Thomas Morse’s Frau Schindler, the Composer in Ariadne auf Naxos, Vitellia in La clemenza di Tito, the title role in Iphigénie en Tauride, and Madama Cortese in Il viaggio a Reims at USC’s Thornton School of Music. With the Aspen Opera Center, she sang Fiordiligi in Casi fan tutte (also with the Merola Opera Program) and Tatyana in Eugene Onegin. This past summer, she joined Wolf Trap Opera as Elettra in Idomeneo.

FEDERICO DE MICHELIS (ARGENTINA)
Bass-baritone—Colline
Argentinian bass-baritone Federico De Michelis, a recent graduate of the HGO Studio (2015–17), has been seen at HGO as Achillas in Julius Caesar (2017); selected performances of Dulcamara in The Elixir of Love, Thomas Betterton in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players, and Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro (all in 2016); and performances of Angelotti in Tosca, Zaretsky in Eugene Onegin, and the King in The Little Prince (2015). He was previously a member of the Opera Studio of Teatro Argentino de La Plata and a student at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofia in Madrid. In the current season, he will return to HGO as Nourabad in The Pearl Fishers, a role he will reprise for his debut with the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, and a debut with the North Carolina Symphony in the Mozart Mass in C Minor. Recent performances include his debut with Palm Beach Opera as the title role in The Marriage of Figaro; his Philadelphia Orchestra debut performing Sciarone in Tosca under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin; a series of concerts in Key West, Florida, as part
of the Florida Keys Concert Association; Brander in La damnation de Faust with Aspen Music Festival; and Mr. Flint and Timur in Billy Budd and Turandot, respectively, with Des Moines Metro Opera.

**DANIEL NOYOLA (MEXICO)**
*Beth Madison Fellow*
**Bass-baritone—Colline**
Nov. 1m, 6m, 8, 11m
First-year HGO Studio artist Daniel Noyola was previously a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) in Philadelphia. The native of San Luis Potosí, Mexico, won first prize in the 2015 Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota; third place in the 2016 Meistersinger Vocal Competition in Graz, Austria; an encouragement award at the 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions New England regionals; and awards with Opera Index, the Mario Lanza Competition, the Carlo Morelli National Singing Competition, and many others. His performance credits include the title roles in Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro, Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte, Colas in Bastien und Bastienne, Papageno in The Magic Flute, and Leporello in Don Giovanni. He made his debut at Tri-Cities Opera as Mustafà in The Italian Girl in Algiers. Later this season at HGO, he will sing Masetto in Don Giovanni.

**GEOFFREY HAHN (UNITED STATES)**
*Mr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow*
**Baritone—Schaunard**
First-year HGO Studio artist Geoffrey Hahn, a native of Santa Barbara, California, is making his HGO mainstage debut after singing Fiorello in outdoor performances of The Barber of Seville (2018). He was a finalist in the 2018 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. Hahn earned his master of music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and graduated with a degree in sustainable development from the Columbia–Juilliard Exchange Program in New York City. His most recent performances include Sam in Trouble in Tahiti, Gideon March in Little Women, and Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Rice University; Billy in Carousel at Columbia University; and Dancâire in Carmen and Guglielmo in Così fan tutte with the Aspen Music Festival. He is a former Studio artist with Wolf Trap Opera, where he sang the role of Sciarrone in Tosca and covered the roles of Bastianello the Elder, Lino, Ippolito, and Frediano in Bastianello.

**HÉCTOR VÁSQUEZ (UNITED STATES)**
*Baritone—Benoît/Alcindoro*
Héctor Vásquez has appeared throughout the United States in opera and concert repertoire. His roles with HGO include Benoit and Alcindoro in La bohème (2012–13), George Benton in Dead Man Walking (2011), performances of the title role in Rigoletto (2009), Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen (2007), and Alvaro in Florencia en el Amazonas, a role he created for the world premiere in 1996 and reprised in 2001. He sang Alvaro again with Colorado Opera, but took on the role of the Capitán in performances of Florencia with San Diego Opera and Utah Opera. Vásquez performed for over ten seasons with the Metropolitan Opera since his debut in 1995 as Beaumarchais in The Ghosts of Versailles. He appeared in subsequent Met seasons in Carmen, Rigoletto, Madame Butterfly, Capriccio, La traviata, and The Merry Widow. Other performances include Martinů’s Soldiers’ Mass with Houston Ballet, Blitch in Susannah with Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, the world premiere of Don Davis’s Rio del sangue with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Scarpia in Tosca with El Paso Opera, the title role in Rigoletto with Festival Opera, the title role in Don Giovanni with Bard SummerScape, Escamillo in Carmen with Opera Omaha, Malatesta in Don Pasquale with Cleveland Opera, and many others. Vásquez was director of the HGO Studio from 2006 to 2008 and is currently a voice faculty member of HGO’s Bauer Family High School Voice Studio.

**RICHARD TREY SMAGUR (UNITED STATES)**
*Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow*
**Tenor—Parpignol**
For information about Richard Trey Smagur, please see p. 43.

**CRISTINO PEREZ (UNITED STATES)**
*Bass-baritone—Customs Officer*
This is Cristino Perez’s eighth season as a member of the HGO Chorus and second appearance in a mainstage role (Commissioner in La traviata, 2017). He has performed with HGOco’s Opera to Go! as George and Ogrum in Sterling Tinsley’s Daniel and the Dreamcatcher and Mr. Rodriguez and the Policeman in David Hanlon’s Past the Checkpoints. He has appeared frequently with the Houston Gilbert and Sullivan Society, performing the roles of Don Alhambra in The Gondoliers, Dick Dead-Eye in H.M.S. Pinafore, Strephon in Iolanthe, and Pish-Tush in The Mikado.
RILEY VOGEL  
(UNITED STATES)  
Bass-baritone—Sergeant

Riley Vogel, in his second season as a member of the HGO Chorus, is making his HGO debut in a solo role. Previous engagements include chorus work in the Verdi Requiem and Wagner’s Götterdämmerung and The Flying Dutchman. This past season, he appeared as Tom in Verdi’s Un ballo in maschera with Opera in the Heights, where he has also performed the role of the Customs Officer in La bohème, acted as a substitute conductor for The Magic Flute, and participated in several chorus ensembles.

Power of Place: Aboriginal Paintings from Australia’s Central Desert

Angelina Nampijinpa Tasman, Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming), 24” x 36”

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Each year, hundreds of singers from across the globe audition for the HGO Studio, one of the world’s most prestigious young artist training programs. Concert of Arias brings the best of these future opera stars to Houston for the live finals of the competition. On an evening of soul-stirring music that will leave you breathless, enjoy some of the most powerful arias in the opera repertoire—and cast your vote for the Audience Choice Award. Following the announcement of winners, we celebrate the artists and the future of the art over a black-tie dinner in the Wortham’s Grand Foyer.
Projection design in opera was in its infancy when S. Katy Tucker went to New York City from her native Kentucky to try to become a video installation artist. She says it didn’t take her long to realize she didn’t want such a solitary life: “I wanted to be around more of a community, so I ended up doing an internship at the Metropolitan Opera right after college in 2004.” There, she met director Francesca Zambello, who asked her what she wanted to do. “Something that’s like set design and video,” Tucker responded. Zambello realized that Tucker wanted to be a projection designer and introduced her to people who could help. Tucker was off and running, and while she admits she “got into opera by mistake,” she calls opera “a place that I’ve really been happy to be.”

A GROWING FIELD
Projection design is a rapidly growing field. HGO audiences have seen projections in certain operas—they were used extensively in the production of Wagner’s Ring cycle by La Fura dels Baus seen at HGO—but this season, they are an important element in three operas: Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman and Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas, both by Tucker, and in a new production of Don Giovanni to be seen this spring, with projections designed by Luke Halls. Tucker and Halls are making their respective HGO debuts.

It’s easy to see why projections and video are becoming so popular. First, they make opera more relatable for a generation that is accustomed to accessing all manner of videos at the touch of a smartphone screen—and is more attuned to the visual world than the aural.

But there are other reasons as well. Tucker designed projections for the San Francisco Opera world premiere of Mark Tuinio’s Two Women, directed by Zambello, which was set in Italy during World War II. Tucker’s job was to give the audience a sense of location and historical context.

A big challenge with Two Women was that, because it was a world premiere, the designers had to do their jobs without the benefit of the music—it was still being composed! But the
majority of Tucker's work is with Wagner operas; indeed, she says his operas cry out for projections and video. “I think Wagner thought about projection design before it existed,” Tucker says. “If you look at some of his scores, he calls for things that could have been achieved only with video.”

**TWO OPERAS, TWO MOODS**

Wagner is also by far the composer who is most associated with the development and use of leitmotifs—short fragments of music that are associated with characters, ideas, feelings. Even though Wagner was only beginning to use leitmotifs in his *Flying Dutchman*, there are some important ones that are first heard during the overture and recur throughout the opera—among them, musical themes associated with the Dutchman, with Senta, and with the stormy sea. When these musical themes occur in HGO’s production, they will be accompanied by the corresponding projections/videos. By seeing as well as hearing, the audience is better able to tune in to what the music is communicating, and in Wagner, it’s the music—more so than the words of the libretto—that tells what is happening in the opera.

While the mood of *The Flying Dutchman* is very different from *Florentina’s*, they do have something in common. *Dutchman* begins with a storm at sea that forces the Dutchman’s ship and Daland’s Norwegian ship to take shelter; *Florentina* involves a journey by boat on a river, and in one scene, a storm threatens to capsize it. The two operas have something else in common—supernatural elements. *Dutchman* is a ghostly love story; *Florentina* was inspired by magical realism, a fusion of the fantastic with the concrete. Says Tucker, “With *The Flying Dutchman*, the video helps embody the magic surrounding the Dutchman. It also helps convey the tempest and helps show the eeriness of the Dutchman’s crew, their ghostly quality. It’s a way to represent the ship in a more abstract way so that you don’t have to have a giant boat onstage.”

With *Florentina*, she adds, “The video helps take us on the journey Florentina takes on the Amazon River in a way that lighting alone couldn’t. And so we get the perspective of the ship; the ship rotates and the background rotates. With video, we are able to make the tropical animals fly and make the tempest more magical.”

As helpful as these images can be, Tucker says there are some pitfalls to avoid in designing and using them. “I try not to make video the diva; instead, it’s just another supporting role in a greater collaboration,” she says, explaining that when she sees work by other designers that she is drawn to, it’s because it doesn’t call attention to itself. “It’s supposed to serve the greater production and shouldn’t be the only memorable element. It should be something that works with the storytelling, with the lighting and the set. Anything I can do to help enhance the music or connect the audience more with the music and storytelling is always what I’m after—but unfortunately not what I always do!”

**THE PROCESS**

Tucker’s preparation with a new opera or production always begins by immersing herself in the music and the story. She had no music background prior to her work in opera, so this part of the process takes some time. She has to learn the score well enough to coordinate the placement of her designs with the music they help illuminate.

After that, she and the design team and the director look for moments in the music and in the story that could benefit from projections. They decide what the images will be and how they will work within the opera. Then, Tucker designs all the art. Depending on the scale of the project, she will create all the content herself or with a team. Instead of creating an endless stream of images, Tucker creates the content in smaller chunks that are cue-able. This way, they are easier to adjust on the fly—“slowing them down, speeding them up, changing colors,” Tucker says. “In opera, you don’t have a lot of rehearsal time, so you have to be able to work as quickly as possible once you’re in the space. It allows us to manipulate the clips when we’re in the theater so that nobody’s sitting and waiting on video.”

A programmer assists her in putting these “building blocks” on a server—a computer that tells the projectors when to show each image. Where to place the projectors is also a consideration. “Sometimes you have to do wonky angles with mirrors if you don’t have a lot of space. Other times it’s more straightforward,” Tucker says.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Tucker believes that the technological demands of the field of projection design are part of the reason why it is dominated by men: “While women are as good as men with technology, maybe some women shy away from it more,” she explains. But she adds that she sees more and more women coming into the field, and she describes one of them as a pioneer—Wendall K. Harrington, whose work has most recently been seen at HGO in *Nixon in China* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (both in 2017). “Wendall Harrington helped legitimize projection design, at least in America—I think she was probably the first person to do it on Broadway,” says Tucker.

Did projection design need to be legitimized? Tucker says yes, in some ways: “Anytime you have a new technology or a new discipline, people start out by being apprehensive. But everybody who has done it—and done it well—has helped to legitimize it.”

Her words recall the controversy in the 1980s over supertitles, the translations projected above the stage, which were once frowned upon by opera purists. Now companies are expected to provide supertitles. Who knows if they will one day be expected to include projections and video in their design toolbox? One thing is certain: As the technology continues to advance, we will be seeing more and more of it in the opera house.
UNSUNG HEROES

DENISE FRUGE

BY PERRYN LEECH
Managing Director
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair
Denise Fruge is “she who must be obeyed” when it comes to accounts payable. She is one of the key members of the Finance Department who allow HGO to function at the highest level. She joined HGO in 2001, and Perryn Leech spoke with her about how she ended up working for an opera company.

PERRYN LEECH: Tell me a little about where you were born and the kind of upbringing you had as a child.
DENISE FRUGE: I was born in Opelousas, Louisiana. I have a younger sister and we still have family in the area now; I love being able to go back to see them regularly.

What did your parents do?
My dad, Patrick Eaglin, joined the navy after I was born and my mom, Delores, was a homemaker. We moved to Jacksonville, Florida, after my dad was stationed there. My sister and I attended school there from elementary through high school.

Did you experience the performing arts much in your home and school?
Not really, although my dad loved music and especially had a passion for jazz. My mom was an avid reader and was always pushing me to read and read. I truly love reading. I also have an early memory of reading about opera and this amazing woman named Leontyne Price. It never occurred to me at that point that I might end up working at an opera company!

So music and reading were very important to you?
Yes! Although I love all types of music. I would listen to R&B on the radio. I would also buy records to listen to at home. I also learned how to play the flute and was in the school band. After that, I sang in the choir. Because of my love for literature, at that point I thought I was interested in becoming an English professor.

Is that what you decided to study at college?
Sort of! When I was 17 and in my senior year of high school, I started a work program at a bank that involved spending half a day in school and half a day working at the bank. I enjoyed that, so when I was accepted to Florida Community College of Jacksonville to study English, I always had that experience in the back of my mind.

So numbers were starting to take a higher place than words by this point then.
When I graduated from high school, I began working at Barnett Bank full time. At first, I did simple things like check processing, but then I moved up to domestic collections and accounts receivable and then repossession accounting. I ended up being at the bank (which was taken over by Bank of America) for over 10 years.

That is quite a journey after studying English at college! Why did you then move to Houston?
I met my husband through a cousin! He spent several years in the navy. After his service ended, he relocated to Houston. I moved to be with him once we were married. When I got to Houston, I immediately started looking for a job with a temp agency.
That was a big life decision and must have been a big change! How different was Houston from Jacksonville?
It was certainly different, but I settled pretty quickly here. I had a permanent job within three months working at the Texas Medical Center doing billing for the parking garages. I enjoyed that but then left when I was offered a job with Velocity Express to run its Accounts Payable Department. It wasn’t a great fit and I was soon looking again...

Was that when you came to HGO?
Not quite yet! The first time I interviewed here, I didn’t get the job. About two months later, they called me back and asked me to come in again. Then I was offered the job and was very happy to come and join HGO in November of 2001. I was working for Jennifer Love, the accounting manager at the time. Judy Massey was the CFO, followed by Richard Brown, so there was quite a lot of changeover at the start! But the difference at HGO was the people—I just felt at home here from the first day and that is why I have stayed so long.

And you’ve raised your family since you came to Houston as well haven’t you?
I have, and I’m proud that my two sons, who are now 18 and 11, have grown up into fine members of the community. My 18-year-old also loves to sing and both sons love to come to the opera! I learned my parenting skills from my parents and I have tried to instill in my sons the importance of working hard and being respectful to others. My husband was honorably discharged from the navy and retrained as a long distance truck driver—which is what his father did, too—and therefore wasn’t always home. So as a mom, I have made sure that my sons were supported but also given strong parenting!

It has certainly been a busy time since you joined HGO! You have seen a lot of changes in the city and at the company, haven’t you?
There have certainly been a lot of changes at HGO, and much more structure and restrictions are in place now that make the job easier in some ways. We are a very efficient team and a well-oiled machine. That has obviously been proven this year. Even though we lost our offices due to the flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey right at the time we had planned to start the audit, we were able to get the job done. We were very proud of that within the department.

Rightly so! It really has been an eventful journey and we are thrilled you have been here so long.
It is still the people that make HGO a special place to work. Although the Finance Department isn’t always in the limelight, we do play a very major part in the day-to-day operations of the company. ■
Houston Grand Opera, along with Liz Grimm and Jack Roth, thank all of the leading ladies, gents, and companies who supported Opera Ball 2018.

*Here’s looking at you, kid!*
Opera Ball 2018: An Evening in Old Hollywood paid tribute to that golden era—where stars were born and glitz set the stage. Chaired by Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth, the night featured a memorable appearance by Rock and Roll Hall of Famer David Lee Roth, who performed a rare, private mini-set of hits, including his “California Girls” and the Van Halen megahit “Jump!” to a crowd of over 500 just before the Encore After Party, chaired by Young Trustees Drs. Ishwaria and Vivek Subbiah. The Post Oak at Uptown Houston’s Grand Ballroom was transformed into the HGO Bel Canto Club—the swankiest supper club on Sunset Boulevard—where 14-foot golden palm trees and a custom deco dance floor created ambiance. Guests were greeted by “cigarette girls” serving Champagne cocktail coupes. “Groucho Marx” and “Charlie Chaplin” worked the crowd, and songs of the era filled the air from the Bel Canto Club bandstand featuring the white-jacketed Richard Brown Orchestra. Guests were carried away to the movies with dance numbers from Astaire Dances, by the L.A.–based American Contemporary Ballet. HGO guest artists Alicia Gianni and Norman Reinhardt introduced each dance number in song. Dinner was a smash hit, starting with a colorful nod to the produce of California with chilled gazpacho and oven-roasted beet wheels with avocado cream, candied walnuts, and strawberry dust. The main course featured surf ’n’ turf, a favorite of the power lunch cinema set. Opera Ball 2018 raised over $1.2 million to support the internationally renowned performances and community programs that distinguish HGO as one of America’s greatest opera companies.
THANK YOU TO OUR
2018 OPERA BALL STARS!

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HGO Patrons were well represented in Santa Fe in August for a week of opera and superb Santa Fe dinners hosted by fellow HGO Patrons Janie and Wayne Patterson and Marianne Kah and Jeff Coe. The group saw three operas: Bernstein’s *Candide*, John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*, featuring HGO Studio alum Ryan McKinny; and Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, featuring HGO Studio alum Ana María Martínez.

**SANTA FE PATRON TRIP**  
**AUGUST 14–19, 2018**

HGO Patrons took a trip to England’s idyllic countryside in July to visit two opera festivals—Garsington Opera and Glyndebourne. At Garsington Opera, the group caught up with HGO Studio alum Ben Edquist, who artfully performed the role of Remo in David Sawer and Rory Mullarkey’s new work *The Skating Rink*. At Glyndebourne, the highlight was Barrie Kosky’s production of Handel’s *Saul*, which married spectacle with the psychology of Saul’s mental collapse.

**U.K. PATRON TRIP**  
**JULY 15–22, 2018**

Anna Dean, Renee Margolin, Bill Brunger, and Melinda Brunger

Laura Canning and Anna Dean

Tea at Hartwell House Hotel: Kenneth Bloom, Nathan Meehan, Jan Meehan, and Sheila Swartzman

Renee Margolin, Sheila Swartzman, Kenneth Bloom, Dianne Bloom, Nancy Cook

Michelle LaNue, Ann Torreyo, Karl Torreyo, Andrea Turner, Irena Witt, Gerald Scidl

Diana Collins, Katya Dow, Connie Kwan-Wong, Farida Abjani, Teresa Reading

The Santa Fe group at the home of Marianne Kah and Jeff Coe.

The U.K. group at Hever Castle.

Garsington Opera: Linda Hart, Dianne Gross, Renee Margolin, Birgitt van Wijk, and Debbie Hirsch

Christopher Purves and Perryn Leech

Anna Dean, Renee Margolin, Bill Brunger, and Melinda Brunger
THE HGO STUDIO: BACK AT HOME

This fall we’re celebrating HGO’s homecoming—as the artists walk down the halls each day, past our offices to the rehearsal rooms, in and out of their language lessons, voice lessons, and coachings, the energy of the company feels renewed and inspired. We’re a stronger and closer community after our year in the Resilience Theater, and it’s great to be back in Wortham Center, home of the HGO Studio since the theater’s opening in 1987.

The past and present members of the Studio are a big part of the HGO family, and it feels appropriate that our cast for one of the most beloved operas, La bohème, is made up almost entirely of current and former members of the Studio. Several “generations” of Studio artists appear in the production, including graduates from the ’90s, 2000s, and 2010s, along with some artists who are just joining us this season. This tradition extends through several productions of La bohème—looking back, HGO’s 2008 La bohème featured Ana María Martínez (1994–95) as Mimi, with Joshua Hopkins (2003–05) as Marcello, Albina Shagimuratova (2006–08) as Musetta, Christopher Feigum (1996–99) as Schaunard, and Nikolay Didenko (2003–05) as Colline.

The characters in La bohème share a special bond, having gone through good times and tough times in life— together. This is often true of the HGO Studio, as well—Studio members support one another in a time of growth as they transition from their academic years to international careers. Many remain close friends after they leave the Studio. This season’s cast of La bohème stars Nicole Heaston (1995–97), Michael Sumuel (2009–11), Pureum Jo (2014–16), Federico De Micheli (2015–17), and current Studio artists Geoffrey Hahn and Richard Trey Smagur. Studio alum James Lowe (1998–2000) is the conductor. Although most of these artists were not in the Studio at the same time, I’m sure they feel a kinship that comes from the shared experience of making their artistic home at HGO. That feeling of community will make their performances of La bohème something special.

For our student performances, as well as the final matinee performance (Nov. 11), a second cast of current Studio artists will make important HGO and role debuts. Nardus Williams, a British soprano who begins the HGO Studio this season, will sing her first Mimi—an extraordinary character that is one of the icons in the soprano repertory. Thomas Glass will sing Marcello, Yelena Dyachek will appear as Musetta, and Mexican bass-baritone Daniel Noyola will make his HGO debut as Colline. They’ll be joined by recent graduate Yongzhao Yu (2015–18) as Rodolfo. These artists come from all over the world, which makes their convergence in Houston even more unusual and significant. Bringing this cast of friends to life will be one of the most memorable experiences of their lives in opera.

These important friendships grow as is time spent together in the Studio. The artists go about their daily activities together, including everything from rehearsals to language conversation classes. They coach arias and roles (developing the unique pianist-singer bond) and prepare for performances together. When a Studio artist exits the stage in a performance, it’s not uncommon for another Studio artist to be the first person they see backstage. Even their individual activities become shared—their similar goals and experiences make them an ideal sounding board for each other.

Life as an artist in the opera world can be challenging. Singers, pianist/coaches, and conductors travel around the world, moving from city to city for six to eight weeks at a time, away from their closest friends and family. They learn new cultures and languages, and find their way around unfamiliar places. Sometimes the cast they are working with becomes very close friends, bonding through the shared experience, and that’s what makes the artistic community of opera so special. For HGO Studio artists, their time with the company is a landmark in their artistic lives. It builds a lasting sense of community that helps carry them through their careers and gives them an artistic home. I hope you enjoy the fall repertory at the Wortham Center—especially this production of La bohème, which has such deep significance for the HGO Studio—and know how much it means to these artists to be back on their home stage.

—Brian Speck, HGO Studio Director
HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2018–19

Lindsay Kate Brown
Mezzo-soprano
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover/Mary C. Gayler Snook Endowed Fund Fellow

Yelena Dyachek
Soprano
Jill and Allyn Risley/Kathleen Moore and Steven Homer Fellow

Dorothy Gal
Soprano
The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow

Thomas Glass
Baritone
Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow

Jonathan Gmeinder
Pianist/coach
Bill and Melinda Brunger/Lynn and Henry Gissel/ Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow

Geoffrey Hahn
Baritone
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Leia Lensing
Contralto
Drs. Liz Grimm and Jack Roth/Carolyn J. Levy Fellow

Kyle Naig
Pianist/coach
Stephanie Larsen/Valerie and Miguel Miro-Quesada/ John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

Daniel Noyola
Bass-baritone
Beth Madison Fellow

Blair Salter
Pianist/coach
Dr. Saúl and Ursula Balagura/Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow

Richard Trey Smagur
Tenor
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Nardus Williams
Soprano
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

The HGO Studio is grateful for the in-kind support of the Texas Voice Center and RSM US, LLP.

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

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

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HGO STUDIO FACULTY & STAFF

Brian Speck, Director
Michael Heaston, Music Director
Jamie Gelfand, Studio Manager
Carisle Floyd, Artistic Advisor
Stephen King, Director of Vocal Instruction
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Patrick Summers, Conducting Instructor and Coach
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

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Geoffrey Loff, Assistant Conductor
Philip Leh, Acting Instructor

Tara Faircloth, Drama Coach
David Paul, Drama Coach
Adam Noble, Movement Instructor
Melissa Noble, Movement Instructor

Christa Gaug, German Instructor
Enrica Vagliani Gray, Italian Instructor
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Edward Berkeley, Showcase Director
John Fisher, Guest Coach
Margo Garrett, Guest Coach
Bradley Moore, Guest Coach
Audrey Saint-Gil, Guest Coach

Drama and Movement Faculty
(Tara Faircloth, Adam Noble, and Melissa Noble) sponsored by Anonymous

The HGO Studio also receives generous support from
Mr. Jackson D. Hicks and Mr. Patrick Carfizzi.

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SAVE THE DATE

Don’t miss these opportunities to hear HGO Studio artists! Purchase tickets to the events listed here online at HGO.org/scheduletickets/calendar or by telephone at 713-228-6737.

NOV. 15 & 18 | HGO STUDIO RECITAL SERIES
Hear HGO Studio artists perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive, November 15 (7:30 p.m.) and November 18 (5 p.m.).

DEC. 9 & 10 | STUDIO SHOWCASE
The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform a program of opera scenes in the Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater on Dec. 9 (2:30 p.m.) and Dec. 10 (7:30 p.m.). Free to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGO.org.
HGOco

Seeking the Human Spirit

IN 2018–19

Seeking the Human Spirit is an ambitious initiative designed to explore our connections with music and how they help us understand ourselves, each other, and the world around us. Through this work, HGO hopes to change the cultural conversation about the role of art in our daily lives.

HGO is approaching this exploration through mainstage operas chosen for their diverse spiritual themes, but community partnerships and events led by HGOco are also a key component. Already this season, on October 17, a lecture was held at the Jung Center titled “Der fliegende Holländer: Transformation of the Fallen Soul.” The lecture by Jungian analyst Dr. Ronald Schenk explored the concept of archetype and how it is reflected in great works of art, especially opera. The lecture helped to promote understanding of Wagner’s Der fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman), which HGO is performing this fall.

The signature event in spring, also open to the public, will be an exploration of creativity in collaboration with Houston Methodist’s Center for Research & Innovation under the leadership of Dr. Mauro Ferrari, a member of HGO’s Corporate Council.

Events with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will include docent tours of the museum’s permanent collection themed around Florencia en el Amazonas and the world premiere of The Phoenix. There will also be a book club focus on Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez, to tie in with the theme of magical realism prevalent in Florencia.

HGO continues to partner with The Women’s Home and the Center for Spirituality and Health—Texas Medical Center in a 14-week spiritual exploration program titled The Courage to Search. This program is tailored specifically for residents of The Women’s Home, a nonprofit that offers support to women and families. The Opera will work with Las Americas Middle School in a program titled Be the Peace—Be the Hope under a new partnership with the Texan French Alliance for the Arts. In early December, HGO will expand its partnership with Houston Methodist and its Center for Performing Arts Medicine with four music therapy residencies, following a highly successful mini-residency last season. The Opera will provide artists to work with patients in the psychiatric unit over each four-day residency.

Other vital programs are being developed between the Opera and Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the Italian Cultural & Community Center, Discovery Green, and The Houston Public Library.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will partner once again with HGO by offering docent-led tours of the museum’s permanent collection, themed around Seeking the Human Spirit.

For information about community partnerships, contact Hadia Mawlawi at hmawlawi@hgo.org.
Meet Hadia Mawlawi

Hadia Mawlawi came on board in late August as the community initiatives manager for HGOco. While the position is new, the mission has been central to HGOco since its founding in 2007: to establish and nurture relationships between HGO and the community in which we live, to seek collaboration in making art available to all.

Hadia was born in Beirut and lived there until the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War. When it became too dangerous to stay, the seven-year-old Hadia and her family made a desperate escape from the city inside a tank. They went to London, where Hadia continued her education and thought for a time that she wanted to be an art historian. She ultimately earned a degree in arts administration.

When the adult Hadia and her husband and children relocated to Houston for her husband’s work, her degree plus her background in languages—she speaks Arabic, English, French, and Spanish—made her a natural candidate for positions with the Arabic American Cultural & Community Center, the National Association for Latino Arts & Culture, and the Texas French Alliance for the Arts. She therefore came to the HGO position with an abundance of experience and potential new partnerships. In the few weeks she has been with the company, for example, she has already established most of this season’s community partnerships and events for *Seeking the Human Spirit*, HGO’s broad, six-year initiative to explore the relationship between music and our innermost selves.

“I’m sitting in my dream job,” says Hadia. “I am a believer in access and equity in the arts, and in breaking down barriers of access and understanding.”
Houston Grand Opera is proud to welcome Baker McKenzie to our family of corporate supporters. With over 13,000 employees in 78 offices across 47 countries, Baker McKenzie is the largest law firm in the United States and one of the largest in the world.

The Houston office of Baker McKenzie was established in 1997 and now has over 65 reputable lawyers with robust practices in energy, mergers and acquisitions, dispute resolution, employment, intellectual property, international law, securities, and tax.

“Baker McKenzie is excited to partner with a great organization such as Houston Grand Opera because of its commitment to showcase exceptional talent in the performing arts,” said Jonathan Newton, Baker McKenzie’s Houston office managing partner.

Through the firm’s innovative Corporate Social Responsibility program, Baker McKenzie leverages its talent, geographic reach, and resources to make a positive and lasting impact on the communities where it operates. This season, Baker McKenzie is generously underwriting HGO’s stunning new production of Mozart’s Don Giovanni.

“When they were spellbound,” she says. “It was such a pleasure to see these children, who knew nothing about opera, be so engrossed by it. Good teachers know that art has the ability to reach children in ways that more traditional teaching methods don’t.”

And Mathilda would know. As a former teacher and head of docent tours at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, she has countless experiences with great art affecting people of all ages. “The arts have the ability to take us out of our everyday lives. It’s something our souls crave.”

Mathilda and her late husband, Michael, began subscribing to HGO in 1986. When Michael passed away in 2016, Mathilda wanted to make sure that HGO remained an important part of her family’s life. “I want my granddaughters to understand the importance of a legacy...that if you have more than you need, you provide assistance for others to enjoy the same things that you do.”

Mathilda is generously underwriting this season’s production of Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman in honor of her Dutch granddaughters, Famke, Anoek, and Maaike. We can’t imagine the HGO family without Mathilda’s sharp intellect, deep passion for the arts, and giving spirit.

When HGO Board of Directors member Mathilda Cochran first saw the rambunctious Opera to Go! production Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers, she couldn’t wait to see how kids would respond to the mischievous singing monkey. She sponsored a school performance so that she could watch children’s faces.

“We are delighted to support Houston Grand Opera, a cultural cornerstone of the city. It is an honor to help bring music to Houston and Don Giovanni to the opera,” said Denmon Sigler, Baker McKenzie partner and HGO Trustee.

We’re especially thrilled that Baker McKenzie partners Denmon Sigler and Gwen Hulsey have joined our valued team of HGO Trustees.

When HGO’s newest Young Trustee, Kendall Hanno, was still a student at the University of Texas, her brother took her to see Aida at HGO. She fell in love with opera instantly, and she’s been coming back ever since.

Kendall serves as corporate counsel at Service Corporation International. As the former chair and active member of HGO’s Opening Night for Young Professionals Advisory Board, she’s been helping to make opera a blast for the next generation of opera fans for several years: “I’ve seen tons of my friends become subscribers over the years. We bring people because it’s fun to get dressed up and go to a party, and then they end up loving opera.”

As a Junior League member, Kendall has volunteered at The Children’s Museum of Houston, Kids Meals, and Texas Children’s Hospital, and she is on the Young Professionals Advisory Board at the Houston Zoo.

As busy as she is, HGO special events are among Kendall’s favorite nights of the year. “Opera Ball is like my prom...and I take tons of notes at Concert of Arias. My husband always makes fun of me, but I don’t care if I look like a nerd. It’s very educational!”

Kendall is a graduate of South Texas College of Law, where she met her husband, Christopher Hanno, a partner at Stephenson Fournier, PLLC. The Hannos are expecting their first child this November. We are so happy to have all three of them as members of the HGO family.
Houston Grand Opera salutes our Harvey Heroes, who went above and beyond to help HGO recover from the $15 million of financial impact from Hurricane Harvey. From supporting the construction of the HGO Resilience Theater to replacing millions of dollars’ worth of items damaged in the flood, you are the reason HGO didn’t postpone or cancel a single performance in the 2017–18 season. Because of you, we were able to share world-class opera with our city, no matter what.

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Many Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds experience opera for the first time during HGO’s free public performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, an annual tradition made possible by the longstanding generosity of The Anchorage Foundation. The Foundation has been improving the quality of life in Houston for four decades, and made a generous contribution to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery fund. Marc Melcher is president of The Anchorage Foundation, and his family has been involved with HGO for over 25 years.

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

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

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

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.
The Brown Foundation, Inc., established in 1951 by Herman and 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. The Brown Foundation was among the lead contributors to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

ZANE AND BRADY CARRUTH
Brady is the chief executive officer and president of Saratoga Financial Group and is a trustee of The Wortham Foundation, Inc. Zane is the President of Carson Marketing, LLC, with over 25 years of marketing experience. HGO subscribers since the 2012–13 season, Zane and Brady are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence and served as the chairman of the 2017 Opera Ball. HGO is proud to have Zane on the HGO Board of Directors. She also serves on the Marketing and Communications Committee. In 2016, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, *The World’s First Tooth Fairy...Ever.*
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 Chao have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco's Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

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

BOB AND JANE CIZIK
Longtime HGO supporters Bob and Jane Cizik are passionate about Houston's world-class performing arts organizations. As co-chair of the campaign to build the Wortham Theater Center, Bob has been pivotal to HGO's history, and the Ciziks have contributed generously to HGO's recovery efforts following Hurricane Harvey. Bob was president of Cooper Industries, a manufacturer of machinery for the oil and natural gas industry until his retirement in 1996. The Ciziks are also major supporters of UTHealth, the University of Houston, The Women's Home, Harvard University, and a number of organizations in health, education, the environment, and the arts.

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including the 2018–19 season-opening production, Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman. 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 Langford Carrig has recently retired as ConocoPhillips's senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, and serves as chairman of the HGO Board of Directors.

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 innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, the world’s first mariachi opera. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from the Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

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

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

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

THE ELKINS FOUNDATION
Established by Margaret Weiss Elkins and James A. Elkins Jr. in 1956, The Elkins Foundation enriches our community by supporting a wide variety of educational, healthcare, cultural, community, and religious organizations. We are honored that Jenny Elkins and her family have been part of the HGO family for more than 15 years.

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

HGO is grateful for the longtime leadership support of the Houston Endowment, a private foundation established in 1937 by Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones to improve the quality of life for all Houstonians. Houston Endowment recently expanded its support of our Opera to Go! program that allows for free performances in underserved communities, schools, and other venues. The Endowment made a historic $5 million grant to HGO in 2007 to help us launch NEXUS, our affordability program.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOWMENT, INC.

Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the Endowment contains over 50 named funds, both unrestricted and restricted, and annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Thomas Rushing, Senior Chairman Janet Langford Carrig, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors.

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGOco’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 2.6 million attendees in 2017.

HOUSTON METHODIST

This year, Houston Grand Opera celebrates 10 seasons of partnering with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO, and the Center for Performing Arts (CPAM). 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’s special events, young professionals program, and mainstage productions. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Barbara Bass 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 mainstage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable mainstage productions.

NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER

Nancy and Rich became HGO subscribers during the 2000–01 season. Rich is co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Kinder Morgan, and Nancy is a focused philanthropist whose work has positively impacted communities throughout Houston and beyond. Rich and Nancy established the Kinder Foundation in 1997 to provide impactful gifts to projects dedicated to urban green space, education, and quality-of-life issues in the Greater Houston area. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, mainstage 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 serves on the HGO Board of Directors and is chair of the Finance Committee. She is newly retired from LyondellBasell Industries where she led the corporate finance team and was formerly a managing director with Bank of America. Joe is founder, president, and CEO of Alta Resources, L.L.C., a private company involved in the development of shale oil and gas resources in North America. Claire and Joe support many organizations, with particular emphasis on educational organizations including YES Prep and Teach for America. An avid runner, Claire has completed a marathon in all 50 states.

BETH MADISON

This season marks Beth’s 23rd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council. She was the honoree at the 2017 Concert of Arias. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and mainstage 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.

THE JOHN P. McGOVERN FOUNDATION

John P. McGovern was a pediatrician, allergist, immunologist, and educator who was instrumental in shaping the Texas Medical Center. Katherine McGovern oversees the foundation named for her late husband, which was established in 1961 and is one of the largest charities in Houston. HGO is grateful for the many years of The John P. McGovern Foundation’s support of our mainstage season and our annual Concert of Arias, as well as a transformational contribution to our Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

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JANICE AND ROBERT McNAIR

Janice and Bob McNair, longtime HGO subscribers, are well known for their incredible philanthropy and for bringing the NFL back to Houston. Bob is senior chairman of McNair Interests, a financial and real estate firm, and owner of the Houston Texans. The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation provides leadership support to Houston-area organizations supporting educational opportunities for youth. The McNair Foundation is the lead supporter of HGO’s Holiday Opera Series. Bob is a former chair of the HGO Board of Directors (1995–97).
THE MELLOW FOUNDATION
Established in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the humanities, arts, higher education, and cultural heritage. The driving force behind so many of HGO’s new commissions, The Mellon Foundation’s longstanding support of HGO helps us tell relevant new stories and add to the operatic repertoire by developing new works, like Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix.

MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD
The Miller Theatre Advisory Board (MTAB), appointed by Houston’s mayor and confirmed by the City Council, acts as a steward of public and private funds to provide professional-caliber performances free to the public at the Miller Outdoor Theatre for the cultural enrichment of Houston’s diverse communities and visitors to the city. HGO’s partnership with MTAB extends over six decades, making great opera accessible to thousands of Houstonians each year through live mainstage and Opera to Go! performances at Miller Theatre. June Deadrick is an HGO trustee representing the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

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

NOVUM ENERGY
Founded in 2011 in Panama, Novum Energy is an international physical oil supply and trading company committed to industry excellence in delivery standards and customer service. Founder and President Alfredo Vilas serves on the HGO Board of Directors and has over 20 years of experience and a passion for service to the community through cultural, recreational, and philanthropic work. Novum Energy has supported a number of HGO productions, including last season’s West Side Story and the mariachi operas Cruzar la Cara de la Luna and El Pasado Nunca Se Termina.

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA
HGO is honored by our longstanding partnership with OPERA America, a New York based service organization that has been providing members with the resources and expertise to advance the art form of opera in North America since 1970. Current OPERA America–supported projects include the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative. HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech is proud to serve on the board of OPERA America.

THE POWELL FOUNDATION
Founded in 1967 by Houston-based attorney Ben H. Powell and his wife, Kitty King Powell, The Powell Foundation improves the lives of residents of Harris, Travis, and Walker counties through charitable work in the fields of education, conservation, human services, and the arts. In addition to its longstanding support of HGOco’s impactful student programs, The Powell Foundation was among the lead contributors to HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

JILL AND ALLYN RISLEY
Allyn and Jill Risley have been HGO subscribers since 2003, and Allyn joined the HGO Board of Directors in the 2015–16 season. Allyn is chairman of Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT) North America and former general manager of Liquefied Natural Gas at ConocoPhillips, and HGO is honored to have his leadership and expertise on the Development and HGO Studio Committees. Jill owns the Lagniappe Shoppe, a Houston-based dealership in French antiques. The Risleys are generous members of HGO’s Impressarios Circle, and they also support Allyn’s alma mater, Kansas University, where Allyn serves on the School of Engineering advisory board. HGO is grateful for the Risleys’ leadership support of our Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

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

SHELL
Shell is a leader in the Houston arts community, supporting HGO for over 40 years. Shell’s leadership support makes opera more accessible to everyone through the NEXUS Initiative for Affordability and inspires young minds with STEM-aligned arts education opportunities like our annual Opera Camps. Shell was also a major supporter of HGO’s Hurricane Harvey recovery. HGO is honored to have De la Rey Venter, executive vice president of integrated gas ventures, represent Shell on our board of directors, as well as HGO Trustee Christos Angelides, external relations general manager of integrated gas ventures.

THE 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 deeply grateful for the M.D. Anderson Foundation’s support of the company’s recovery from Hurricane Harvey, and we are privileged to have such a longstanding and committed partner in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

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

Tenenbaum Jewelers
HGO is thrilled to count 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 contemporary. Owners Tony Bradford 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 mainstage opera season and special events, the Tenenbaum team helps HGO sparkle and shine.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Tudor III
Bobby Tudor serves as the chairman and CEO of Tudor, Pickering, Holt & Co., LLC, an integrated energy investment and merchant bank providing high quality advice and services to the energy industry. Phoebe has a master’s degree in historic preservation from Columbia University and has worked as an architectural historian for the New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission. In addition to supporting HGO’s mainstage productions and special events for many years, the Tudors are major supporters of numerous Houston organizations in the fields of the arts, education, and medicine. The Tudors have three children and have been married for over 35 years.

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

Vinson & Elkins LLP
HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. For more than 100 years, V&E has been deeply committed to empowering the communities in which it serves. It has enriched the cultural vibrancy of Houston by supporting HGO through in-kind legal services and contributions to special events and mainstage productions, including last season’s West Side Story. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Chris Bacon and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

Margaret Alkek Williams
Margaret, a longtime singer, possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera, supporting HGO for over 30 years. Currently, Margaret continues her parents’ legacy as chairman of their foundation, where her son Charles A. Williams serves as president. HGO is humbled by Margaret’s incredible generosity and dedication to the company, both as an individual donor and through her family’s foundation. She has endowed the Margaret Alkek Williams Chair, held by HGO 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, and she generously chaired the 2018 Hurricane Harvey benefit Concert HGO and Placido: Coming Home!

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

Lynn Wyatt
Lynn’s generosity touches every aspect of HGO. She is a Lifetime Trustee of HGO and serves as the vice chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. She serves on the Governance Committee and chaired HGO’s Golden Jubilee Gala in 2005. Oscar Wyatt endowed The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund in 2010, honoring Lynn’s service to the company and dedication to bringing the world’s best operatic artists to HGO, and she was the honoree at the 2010 Opera Ball. Lynn and Oscar have been lead supporters of a number of HGO productions and programs, including the multiyear company-wide initiative Seeking the Human Spirit.
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 Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

PLATINUM CIRCLE—$50,000 OR MORE
Mathilda Cochran
Connie and Byron Dyer
Amanda and Morris Gelb
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Griffin
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Husseini
Mr. and Mrs. Pitch Johnson
Alfred W. Lasher III
Donna Kaplan and Richard A. Lydecker
Carolyn J. Levy
Will L. McLendon
Mr. and Mrs. D. Bradley McWilliams
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Osher
Ms. Elizabeth Phillips
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Rushing
Mr. Fayez Sarofim
Bruce Stein
Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Vilas
Mr. and Mrs. K.C. Weiner

GOLDEN CIRCLE—$25,000 OR MORE
Judith and David Belanger
Meg Boulware and Hartley Hampton
Ms. Janet Langford Carrig
Anna and Joel Catalano
Mr. Roberto Contreras
Mary Ann and Larry Faulkner
Mr. Ronald G. Franklin and Mrs. Janet Gurwitch
Mrs. Monica Fulton
Mr. and Mrs. Melburn Glasscock
Nana Booker and David Lowe/Booker Lowe Gallery
Sandy and Lee Godfrey
Dr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Haywood
Robert and Kitty Hunter
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Husseini
Ann and Stephen Kaufman
Frances Marzio
Dr. and Mrs. John Mendelsohn
Terrylin G. Neale
Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson
Gloria M. Portela and Richard E. Evans
Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Sweeney
Ignacio and Isabel Torras
Diane B. Wilsey
2 Anonymous

SILVER CIRCLE—$15,000 OR MORE
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Barnes
Mr. Karl-Heinz Becker and Dr. Gudrun H. Becker
Joan Hacken Bitar, MD

BRONZE CIRCLE—$10,000 OR MORE
Javier Aguilar and Nanette van Gend
Mr. Edward H. Andrews III
Mr. Martin D. Beirne
Jorge Bernal and Andrea Maher
Philip and Larissa Bither
Dr. Michael and Susan Bloome
Ms. Stephanie Burbridge
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burleson
Ms. Gwyneth Campbell and Mr. Joseph L. Campbell
Margarida and Penn Williamson
Mr. Trey Yates

Ms. Elaine Decanio
Anna and Brad Eastman
Mr. Scott Ensell
Carol Lay Fletcher
Ms. Patricia B. Freeman and Mr. Bruce Patterson
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Leonard A. Goldstein and Helen B. Wils
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Lee M. Huber
Mr. Mark F. Jacobs
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Elizabeth and Bill Kroger
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Marcheta Leighton-Beasley
Mark and Juliet Markovich
Mr. and Mrs. D. Patrick McCelvey
Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Miro-Quesada
Beverly and Staman Ogilvie
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Mr. Manolo Sanchez
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sauer
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Mrs. Helen A. Shaffer
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Mr. and Mrs. Jess B. Tutor
Mr. De la Rey Venter
Mr. Hector Villarreal
Marietta Voglis
Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wakefield
Mr. William V. Walker
Ms. Debra Witges
Mr. and Mrs. David P. Young
Mr. R. Alan York
Nina and Michael Zilkha
Anonymous
PATRONS SOCIETY, CONTINUED

PATRONS CIRCLE—$5,000 OR MORE
Ms. Jacquelyn M. Abbott
Mr. and Mrs. W. Kendall Adam
Ms. Cynthia Akagi and Mr. Tom Akagi
Ms. Jacqueline S. Akins
Mrs. Nancy C. Allen
Mr. William J. Altenloh and
Dr. Susan Sauvage-Altenloh
Dr. and Mrs. Glenn B. Anderson
Mr. Mark Anderson
Chris and Michelle Angelides
Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Ardell
Mr. Rich Arenschildt
Bill Arning and Mark McCray
Mr. Paul R. Aruffo and Dr. Eva Salmeron
Paul and Maida Asosky
Christopher Bacon and Craig Miller
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan W. Bagley
Kate Baker
Nancy and Paul Balmert
Ms. Thu Nhi Barrus
Mr. William Bartlett
Blanche S. and Robert C. Bast Jr., MD
Mr. and Mrs. James Becker
Dr. James A. Bell and Dr. Patricia Eifel
Drs. Robert S. and Nancy Benjamin
Dr. and Mrs. Joel M. Berman
Dr. Dennis Berthold and
Dr. Pamela Matthews
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**ACT/SCENE**

Acts and scenes refer to sections of an opera. An act is a large portion of an opera, and most operas have from two to five acts. Each act is further divided into scenes, which are generally determined by a change in location or characters.

The number of acts in an opera doesn’t have anything to do with the number of intermissions. For example, Puccini’s *La bohème* has four acts but only one intermission! Wagner’s intention with *The Flying Dutchman* was that it be performed without intermission, but he called the three major parts “acts,” so technically it is an opera in three acts performed without intermission. Some opera companies do include an intermission, but HGO is honoring Wagner’s original intent.

**ARIA**

In a nutshell, an aria is a constructed set piece performed by a solo singer in which the character reveals his or her feelings or state of mind. It is usually easy to tell when an aria begins, and you can normally tell when it ends: the music stops, and the audience applauds.

You’ll hear some of the most gorgeous (and well-known) arias ever composed in *La bohème*, including Rodolfo’s Act I aria “Che gelida manina” (How cold your hand is); Mimi’s enchanting “Sì, mi chiamano Mimi” (Yes, they call me Mimi), also in Act I, and Musetta’s “Quando m’en vo’” (When I walk by), also known as “Musetta’s Waltz,” in Act II.

With *The Flying Dutchman*, Wagner began to move away from discrete set pieces like arias, duets (two singers), and trios (three singers) and toward his ideal of a seamless musical experience—music that constantly flows, with no stops and starts. By the time of his later operas, he had achieved that vision, but *The Flying Dutchman* was early enough that it contains several arias, including the Dutchman’s Act I “Die Frist ist um” (The term is up); “Senta’s Ballad” in Act II; and arias for the Steersman in Act I, Daland in Act II, and Erik in Act III.

**CONTRALTO**

Contralto Leia Lensing, an HGO Studio artist, sings the role of Mary in *The Flying Dutchman*. Contralto is the lowest female voice type, after soprano and mezzo-soprano, and this voice type is known for having a wide range and a powerful sound.

**LEITMOTIF**

Although Richard Wagner didn’t invent the concept of the leitmotif, he is by far the composer most associated with their use. A leitmotif is a musical theme, usually no more than a few seconds long, that we are meant to associate with a character or idea. When the composer repeats a leitmotif, we remember what it represents and in that way, the music speaks to us about what’s happening. Leitmotifs are used extensively in film music: one need only think of the shark theme from *Jaws* or the Darth Vader theme from *Star Wars*.

**OVERTURE**

An opera overture is a piece of music played by the orchestra before the first act begins. Most of the time, an overture will last a few minutes and include bits of the music that will occur as the opera unfolds. Just like arias, some overtures become famous. The overture to *The Flying Dutchman* is among them.

**ROMANTIC OPERA**

The Romantic period in music prevailed throughout most of the 19th century and was the dominant style of music in Europe during Wagner’s lifetime (1813–83). Emotion, individuality, and nature were all at the forefront of Romanticism, and all can be seen in *The Flying Dutchman*. While Wagner would later abandon Romanticism to pursue his own musical ideas, *The Flying Dutchman* is considered a prime example of German Romanticism.

**VERISMO**

*La bohème* is the first opera in which Giacomo Puccini began to explore *verismo*, a style of Italian opera that attempts to portray real-life characters and the problems they face. The fact that Puccini’s characters were impoverished bohemians is certainly in keeping with the style, but their lives are a bit too romanticized to be considered true verismo.
October

19, 21m, 27, 30, Nov. 2

Performances of Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater.

Opening Night Dinner: HGO celebrates the opening of the 2018–19 season following the performance of The Flying Dutchman, Ballroom at Bayou Place. For more information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

HGOCO presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a master class with baritone Michael Sumuel. 2 p.m. Free; public invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at amagallon@hgo.org for information.

November

1 & 6

Student Matinees: HGOCO hosts groups of students in grades 4–8 and their chaperones at performances of Puccini’s La bohème. School groups only; reserve online at HGO.org/StudentPerformances.

5

Launch of HGOCO’s first commissioned story book, The Armadillo’s Dream, by Dennis Arrowsmith. For information, visit HGOCO.org/armadillosdream.

December

9

HGOCO presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a master class with an HGOCO mainstage artist. 2 p.m. Free; public invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at amagallon@hgo.org for information.

9 & 10

Studio Showcase: The singers and pianists of the HGOCO Studio perform in a program of opera scenes, Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater, on Dec. 9 (2:30 p.m.) and Dec. 10 (7:30 p.m.). Free to season subscribers; non-subscribers may purchase mezzanine tickets at HGOCO.org.

15

Transforming the Spirit through Song: Join HGOCO at Discovery Green for a holiday sing-along. 7 p.m.

January

6

HGOCO presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Winter Recital. Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. 2 p.m. Free.
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Catán
FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS
Jan. 18 | 20m | 26 | 30 | Feb. 3m
Sung in Spanish with projected English translation

In Daniel Catán’s unabashedly romantic Florencia en el Amazonas, the distinction between reality and fantasy is blurred as the opera diva Florencia Grimaldi undertakes a riverboat journey down the Amazon in search of her lost love. With music that has been called a “lush nature painting” (critic David Patrick Stearns), Florencia was commissioned and premiered by HGO in 1996 and revived by popular demand in 2001. It has become one of HGO’s most popular commissions.

Ana María Martínez, who sang Rosalba previously at HGO, now takes on the title role, which she performed for the first time at Florida Grand Opera last spring after being urged to sing it by the late composer’s widow.

Florencia en el Amazonas is one of HGO’s Seeking the Human Spirit operas for 2018–19, with the theme of transformation. We think you will be blown away by the enchanting, otherworldly transformation that ends the opera.

Bizet
THE PEARL FISHERS
Jan. 25 | 27m | Feb. 2 | 5 | 8
Sung in French with projected English translation

By popular demand, Georges Bizet’s The Pearl Fishers will be seen for the first time at HGO this winter, in a vivid production designed by Zandra Rhodes, which perfectly creates a fantastical portrait of a 19th-century pearl fishing village in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

The Pearl Fishers shows off Bizet’s gifts as a tunesmith and is notable for its evocative orchestration. The opera contains one of the most ravishing duets in the repertoire, “Au fond du temple saint”—quite an achievement for Bizet, who was only 24 when he wrote it, more than a decade before he composed Carmen. Check it out on YouTube, and you will be hooked.

International stars Lawrence Brownlee and Mariusz Kwiecień will perform the roles of the pearl fishers Nadir and Zurga and will sing the famed duet, in which they acknowledge their rivalry for the love for the beautiful priestess Leïla (Andrea Carroll) and vow to forget her for their friendship’s sake. Leïla has come to the village to pray for the fishermen’s protection and has taken a vow of solitude. Now, if everyone can only keep their promises.

Production designed by Zandra Rhodes for San Diego Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre.

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

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

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

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

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

Please note that the tunnel connecting the Theater District Garage and the Wortham is closed for construction.
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