Quick-Start Guide to the Opera

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painting: “Opera” by Alex Kenevsky, c. 2005
Welcome once again to the HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

For our winter repertory, as we so often do, we’ve paired two operas that couldn’t be more different from each other: Richard Strauss’s harrowing Elektra, which hasn’t been seen at HGO since 1993, and Rossini’s comic masterpiece The Barber of Seville.

Elektra is so riveting and so theatrical that it would be performed much more often than it is—if only the title role weren’t so difficult. Elektra is onstage for essentially the entire opera and must give a no-holds-barred portrayal of a woman unhinged by her desire for revenge. It’s safe to say that in our day, Christine Goerke owns the role, and we couldn’t be more thrilled to have her back with us after her triumphant portrayal of Brünnhilde in our Ring cycle. A fabulous principal cast surrounds her, including distinguished HGO Studio alumni Tamara Wilson, Greer Grimsley, and Chad Shelton, along with Michaela Martens in her HGO debut. You are in for a wild ride!

Also “wild” (but in a completely different sense) is the comic romp The Barber of Seville as imagined by director Joan Font and his team from Els Comediants, the theater collective behind the production. We are delighted to welcome back to the podium Emily Senturia, a former conductor/pianist in the HGO Studio and music staff member for two seasons. Lucas Meachem sings the famous barber in his HGO debut, and we welcome back recent Studio alumni Sofia Selowsky and Peixin Chen, along with David Portillo, whom you’ll remember as our Tamino in The Magic Flute a few seasons ago. In an extraordinary bit of luxury casting, Studio alumnus Eric Owens, who has built an illustrious international career, makes a long-overdue return to HGO as Don Basilio.

In the interim between our winter and spring reps, we also have three important events we hope you’ll join us for: Concert of Arias (Feb. 1), the final round in our annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers, the HGO Studio’s most significant fundraising event; Studio Showcase (Mar. 10 & 11), a scenes program featuring the artists of the HGO Studio; and the Opera Ball (April 14), the single most important annual fundraiser for HGO. All of these events have been relocated to new venues and we hope to see you there! Find information on p. 25 and also in our calendar on p. 84.

We are thrilled that you have joined us at the HGO Resilience Theater. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for continuing to support us during our displacement from the Wortham Theater Center.

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WEST SIDE STORY

APRIL 20–MAY 6
Indiana University Honors HGO’s Patrick Summers

Patrick Summers, HGO’s artistic and music director since 2011 and music director since 1998, received an honorary doctoral degree in music from his alma mater, Indiana University. The degree, conferred by IU President Michael A. McRobbie, was presented during IU’s winter commencement ceremony on December 16.

“It is a thrill for the Jacobs School to honor its alumnus in recognition of the many ways in which he influences our field and impacts the cultural life of our country,” said Gwyn Richards, David Henry Jacobs Bicentennial Dean. “His work, vision, and passion embody the drive and accomplishment that is a model for all of our students.”

The school particularly made note of Summers’s conducting repertoire such as Wagner’s Ring cycle and the American premiere of Weinberg’s The Passenger, and commissioning and promoting new works. The Jacobs School partnered with HGO to co-produce Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s It’s a Wonderful Life last season, and IU Opera staged the work in November.

“I am always gratefully aware that I attended IU in a golden era of the school, and so many of those professors of my youth remain at my side in memory every hour of my career,” said Summers. “But it is now so thrilling to see the school continuing to deepen and grow with a new generation of extraordinary faculty, and I am moved beyond any words by this recognition from my beloved and distinguished alma mater.”

HGO Ring Documentary Wins Regional Emmys

Last spring’s documentary on HGO’s Ring cycle, for which HGO partnered with Sculpting With Time Productions, has won regional Lone Star Emmy Awards in the categories of directing and photography. Congratulations to Sculpting With Time principals Alex and Whitney Douglas! The 3.5-minute documentary can be seen on YouTube.

Fingers Crossed for these Grammy Nominees!

Several artists with HGO connections are featured on recordings nominated for 2018 Grammy Awards, including four HGO Studio alumni.

In the Best Opera Recording category, soprano Lauren Snouffer (2011–13), who was just at HGO to create an indelible portrayal of Addie Mills in the world premiere of The House without a Christmas Tree, is heard on Handel’s Ottone as Teofane, with the period instrument orchestra Il Pomo d’Oro, conducted by George Petrou.
IN RECENT MONTHS, Houston Grand Opera has lost three beloved artists who played important roles in our company’s history.

The long, vibrant, and enriching life of soprano Brenda Lewis came to a close on September 16; she was 96 years old. Her death is an especially poignant one for Houston Grand Opera, as she starred in the inaugural production of the company in 1956, portraying the title role in Richard Strauss’s incendiary *Salome*, paired in that first season with Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*—two operas written within the lifetime of the company’s founder, Walter Herbert. Says HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, “Brenda lived her whole life with that maverick spirit: enterprising, bold, unafraid, and standard-setting. The company salutes the joy of her near-century of life.”

November 11 marked the death of the legendary director Frank Corsaro at age 92. Prolific, imaginative, and often controversial, Corsaro directed many firsts at HGO: the American premieres of Rossini’s *La donna del lago* and Handel’s *Rinaldo*; HGO’s first world premiere, Thomas Pasatieri’s *The Seagull*; the first professional staging of Scott Joplin’s *Treemonisha*, which went on to Broadway and was recorded; and Renée Fleming’s first Violetta in *La traviata*. Other important HGO projects included the Maurice Sendak–designed productions of *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Magic Flute*, and an especially provocative production of *Lucrezia*, which he recalled gleefully in a 2001 interview for *Opera Cues*. Coming to opera from the theater world, he changed the landscape of opera by demanding complete performances of his singers: they had to act as well as sing.

Corsaro, in fact, was the choice of Siberian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky to direct him in *Rigoletto* at HGO in 2001. Sadly, the beloved singer lost his battle with brain cancer on November 22. Hvorostovsky’s announcement of his diagnosis, in June 2015, stunned the opera world. From that time on, he managed only a few performances. His final one was an unannounced performance at the Metropolitan Opera Gala last May: he sang Rigoletto’s aria “Cortigiani, vil razza dannata” to the wild enthusiasm of the audience. But HGO audiences heard it first—his *Rigoletto* at HGO marked his first American performances in the role, which he called the “most difficult” of the Verdi baritone roles in a 2012 *Opera News* interview; he returned to HGO to star in the “most beautiful”—the title role in *Simon Boccanegra*—to open the 2006–07 season. He will be sadly missed for his charisma and for the beauty, depth, and expression he brought to each of his roles.

Tenor Nicholas Phan (2002–05) and pianist Myra (Choi) Huang (2001–03) are heard on *Gods & Monsters*, nominated for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. Nominated in the same category is Joyce DiDonato for her recording *In War & Peace—Harmony Through Music*, with Il Pomo d’Oro, conducted by Maxim Emelyanychev.

HGO’s world premiere recording of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* is also nominated for a Producer of the Year Award (producer Blanton Alspaugh).

And to top it all off, the HGO Children’s Chorus, directed by Karen Reeves, is featured in the Houston Symphony’s Grammy-nominated recording of *Wozzeck*.

Winners will be announced January 28, 2018.

IN MEMORIAM

Brenda Lewis as Salome in HGO’s inaugural production (HGO Archives); Frank Corsaro directing *The Seagull* (photo by Beth Bergman); Dmitri Hvorostovsky as Simon Boccanegra at HGO in 2006 (photo by Brett Coomer).

No Monkeying Around

Our fresh, new opera *Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers* kicks off the spring tour of Opera to Go! with four free performances at the Heinen Theatre (3517 Austin St.), February 2 and 3, at 9:30 and 11 a.m. Inspired by Indian and Chinese mythology and the Bollywood style, this hilarious fable demonstrates the power of teamwork as a monkey prince and his brainy sister outwit a hungry crocodile and escape from the City of Tigers. HGO’s 65th world premiere opera will tour to schools, libraries, and community centers January 31–May 18. For more information and to book performances, please visit HGO.org/Operatogo.
Dear Opera Patron:

Welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s performance of Richard Strauss’s *Elektra*.

Chevron proudly supports this riveting production filled with stirring music, edge-of-your-seat drama, and an internationally acclaimed cast comprising some of opera’s brightest stars.

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Chevron is delighted to partner with HGO in bringing world-class opera to the people of Houston. Thank you for attending *Elektra*, and we hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

Astley Blair
Chevron
Dear Opera Patron,

On behalf of Houston Methodist, I thank you for joining us for Houston Grand Opera’s colorful performance of one of the most beloved operas of all time, Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*.

Houston Methodist has been a proud supporter of the Opera for more than a decade as the official health care provider of HGO. We’re thrilled to announce that we are now the presenting sponsor of HGO’s Young Professionals programs. From the 450 under-45 subscribers in the Opening Nights for Young Professionals (ONYP) group, to the generous and passionate members of HGO’s Young Patrons Circle, Houston Methodist applauds the next generation of arts supporters.

At Houston Methodist, we truly believe that our city’s cultural health is just as vital as our physical health. Through the Center for Performing Arts Medicine, Houston Methodist offers a comprehensive program tailored to meet the specific needs of professional and amateur performing artists.

Thank you for joining us for *The Barber of Seville*, and please enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

Marc Boom, M.D., M.B.A., FACHE
President and CEO
Houston Methodist
Dear Opera Patron,

It is with pride that The Cullen Foundation joins Houston Grand Opera in welcoming you to the HGO Resilience Theater. Established in 1947 by Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen, the Foundation has partnered with HGO for decades, helping to make Houston rich in culture and opportunity. We are proud to support HGO’s family-friendly Holiday Opera Series, including the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s *The House without a Christmas Tree* earlier this season. It is an honor to join HGO every holiday season in giving the gift of beautiful music to Houstonians and visitors of all ages and experiences.

We hope you enjoy the performance, and we invite you and your family to return to the opera many times to enjoy future productions.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Wise
President
The Cullen Foundation
SEEKING THE

Human Spirit

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA 2017–2023

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THE
UNIVERSAL
LANGUAGE

BY JIM TOWNSEND
Development Communications Manager
A month before HGO Studio artist Mané Galoyan gave a triumphant performance as Violetta in the alternate-cast performances of Verdi’s La traviata at the HGO Resilience Theater, she stood before a very different audience and sang one of that character’s most heartbreaking arias—“Addio del passato,” or “Farewell to the past.” It’s a haunting piece that brings tears to the eyes of many who hear it, including 15 residents of The Women’s Home who were in attendance for that intimate performance and the discussion session that followed.

The Women’s Home is a nonprofit organization that provides housing and support services for Houston-area women who are recovering from homelessness. For over 60 years, this organization has successfully helped women rebuild their lives. HGO is proud to partner with The Women’s Home as part of the Seeking the Human Spirit initiative.

In collaboration with the Institute for Spirituality and Health, HGO joined residents from The Women’s Home for “The Courage to Search,” a unique, 14-week course designed to give participating members a structured environment to explore spiritual healing together. It was an inspiring experience for everyone involved, and HGO looks forward to working with The Women’s Home this spring during the company’s powerful presentation of Bellini’s Norma—another spiritually charged work about a sacrifice made by a strong woman.

One of the aims of Seeking the Human Spirit is to examine how people interact on an emotional and spiritual level with great art in their daily lives. The healing power of music can reach us and edify us no matter what we’re going through—and as the visit to The Women’s Home demonstrated, it can bring us closer together.

As part of HGO’s partnership with The Women’s Home, Mané and two of her fellow HGO Studio artists, mezzo-soprano Zoie Reams and pianist/coach Blair Salter, performed for the residents.

“We didn’t give any context or translation of the piece beforehand,” recalls Blair. When the residents were asked how they felt about the aria, they responded with sincerity and thoughtfulness—even without understanding the words.

“The first lady who responded felt that the character was truly suffering and had experienced a loss of love,” Blair says—which is exactly what Violetta is experiencing at that point in the opera. “I had a kind of ‘whoa’ moment at that,” Blair added. “It was incredible that these

“The music touched our clients in a way that nothing else has touched them, many of them responding with tears and expressions of deep sorrow. The music seemed to connect them in time and space to others who had experienced loss, sorrow, and anguish, and that connection gave them hope and healing. One client remarked, ‘This is a dream come true,’ and another said, ‘I couldn’t understand the words, but I knew exactly what she was saying.’ Thank you, Houston Grand Opera, for sharing the gift of music and the power it has to heal with the clients and staff of The Women’s Home.”

—Anna Dragsbaek, CEO, The Women’s Home
women who were listening to the aria in Italian for the first time could so beautifully pinpoint its meaning.”

Zoie Reams sang “Somewhere” from Bernstein’s *West Side Story*. The audience commented that it seemed more hopeful, but guessed at the underlying tragedy.

“People were in tears, and afterwards, they shared their own life stories,” says Zoie. “One of the women felt comfortable enough to share a story about loss in her own life that the song reminded her of. It was so touching that she opened up to a stranger. Sometimes, when you do a show, you don’t always see the emotional connection that people make—this was a really nice reminder.”

“This was the exact message that *Seeking the Human Spirit* is looking to share,” adds Blair. “These are amazing women striving for change in their lives. It’s so special to watch someone hear something new, connect to it immediately, and openly express how it made them feel. It was such a hopeful and positive reminder of the power of music.”

Carleen Graham, director of HGOco, HGO’s community engagement arm, also visited The Women’s Home to present a meaningful interactive workshop: Cultivating Empathy through Music and Storytelling. She found that the women she visited were warm, welcoming, and eager to share.

The workshop focused on the power of storytelling, common experiences, and how music can amplify our emotional responses and memories. As Carleen and the residents of The Women’s Home listened to selections of music from each of their pasts, they shared something personal and nostalgic.

“One of the women responded very emotionally to an exercise we did, when music conjured memories of sharing stories with her mother. It was very moving for everyone,” Carleen remembers. “It was gratifying to know that they have a safe space in which to explore their feelings as they work through their very real challenges.”

In November, participants in Courage to Search were invited to the HGO Resilience Theater to see Mané and Zoie take the stage in *La traviata*. They got a special behind-the-scenes look at the making of the opera on a tour of HGO’s warehouse led by Producing Director Molly Dill, so they were able to interact with an accomplished woman in a leadership role at HGO. Several of the creative women of HGO’s production team joined Molly on the tour and showed participants how the wings for *La traviata* and props for the world premiere of *The House without a Christmas Tree* were designed and built.

HGOco is also sending the wildly popular children’s programs Storybook Opera and Opera to Go! to The Women’s Home to bring the magic of opera to the children and families who are thriving in transitional housing there.

“The Women’s Home provides exceptional services to women in need,” says Carleen. “It is an honor to work with them and the Institute for Spirituality and Health.”

—A program participant

“Seeing *La traviata* was one of the greatest experiences of my life. It made me wish my mom was there to see it with me, as she inspired my love for music. I feel so blessed to have been able to attend the performance and tour the warehouse. This program has helped me learn how I can communicate with others without letting them steal my joy or peace.”

—A program participant
Join us in that Golden Age where stars were born and glitz set the stage. Palm trees and the Polo Lounge—cocktail shakers and deal-makers—Fred and Ginger, Garbo, Grant, and Garland, dancing cheek to cheek. Walk the red carpet to a swanky supper club on Sunset and let the songs of this glamorous era carry you away to the movies!

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BY PATRICK SUMMERS
Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

A BRILLIANT NIGHTMARE
THEY MET EXPECTANTLY, at the start of the 20th century, and one imagines the composer already inventing music as they sat down to talk. The operas of the cheekily gifted composer Richard Strauss (1864–1949) and Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), a literary genius, felt like worthy successors to the music dramas of Richard Wagner, beginning in 1909 with their incendiary Elektra, which we present this season for only the third time in HGO’s history.

Hofmannsthal and Strauss’s collaboration resulted in works that rank with the Enlightenment masterpieces of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, to whom they paid thrilling homage in the exquisite opera they wrote just a few years after Elektra—Der Rosenkavalier, an opera that enshrined an idyllic, autumnal Vienna in historical memory and serves to this day as an elegy to an era that would soon be ended forever by the 20th century’s wars. Connoisseurs rightly revel in their other operas—Ariadne auf Naxos (1916), Die Frau ohne Schatten (1919), Die ägyptische Helena (1927), and Arabella (1933)—though each is a rarity.

Hofmannsthal has now achieved the gigantic reputation he deserves, but he didn’t have it at the time he met Strauss, as he possessed the type of talent often seen only in retrospect. He was a quiet revolutionary, and the Vienna of Hofmannsthal’s youth tended to bestow legitimacy only on established intellectual and philosophical revolutions rather than embrace the radicals as they emerged.

There has always been, right up to this day, a cultural mystique to Vienna that can’t be explained solely by the impressive buildings of a former empire that still rim the Ringstraße. There is a perfection of a German word that has no translatable equivalent: ausstrahlung, which is sometimes rendered as “charisma” but has a deeper meaning in that it connotes emotional depth emanating from a place or a person. Every phrase of music composed by Mozart has this feeling, and all composers aspire to it. Richard Strauss was among a distinguished pantheon of composers who achieved this feeling in much of what he wrote. Mozart and Strauss shared a talent for sparkling musical play and both had precocious gifts, brought to uncommon life when they found their perfect muses and creative equals, as both were lucky enough to do.

Early in his career, in 1902, Hofmannsthal wrote a short story that gave the intuitive Strauss the clearest indication of the depth of what they might achieve together: in “Ein Brief” (A Letter), he created a fictional letter from Lord Chandos to Francis Bacon, historical figures from three centuries before. Embedded within the beautiful prose Hofmannsthal conjures for Chandos, he laments the inadequacy of words to fully explain ourselves, and he has Chandos voice a fear that his inability to articulate might mean that his very soul is dissolving. It expresses the deepest subconscious fear of the new century in Vienna: that the great Germanic cultural achievements of the 19th century—Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Wagner, Nietzsche, Brahms, Schopenhauer, and Mahler, to name just a few—were in danger of coming to an end, as indeed they were. It is the story that ignited Hofmannsthal’s career, and in it one hears the beginnings of the psychological depths of the opera Elektra, as the young poet instinctively knew how to create text that left room for the singular power of music. A great operatic librettist knows what words cannot say.

There is another unexpected presence in Elektra, and he had a name like a Wagnerian operatic character: Sigmund Freud can be considered an uncredited and appropriately subconscious co-author of the opera. Though Freudian psychology in actual practice is now waning, considered retrograde in light of newer and more empathic developments in the field, it would be impossible to overstate the cultural effect Freud had over the early years of the 20th century, and Elektra could have been created only in a world in which the unspeakable had finally been uttered. Freud thought emotions were onion-like: one had to slowly peel their layers away, in both dreamscape and waking, to get to their truth. Freud
was revolutionary simply because he dared to descend so far, in word at least, into the human psyche. *Elektra* tears open that nightmarish world and violently burrows into it, in ways no other theatrical work has ever done.

Echoing Hofmannsthal’s Chandos letter, Freud insisted that psychoanalysis was inarticulable, which seems on the surface like the ultimate paradox, because talking is the treatment. Freud found it impossible to talk about his methods, and, to his detractors, this made him more of an ambitious celebrity than a serious practitioner.

Hofmannsthal and Strauss took a harrowing psychological view of their title character: Elektra is no immature hysterical child; she is an adult imprisoned forever by two inescapable needs: to avenge her father’s murder and also to “right” the story of her incurably injured life. As imagined by her post-Freudian creators, *Elektra* is a searing reminder that compulsive repetition in anything brings on death.

Events that occur before the curtain rises on *Elektra* inform every moment of this one-act opera: Elektra’s father, Agamemnon, has been murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, who had him killed because he ordered the sacrificial killing of one of their daughters, Elektra’s sister Iphigenia. Elektra sent her brother Orestes to the Trojan War when they were both very young, and at the time of the opera’s action, decades later, he is presumed dead. From the outset of the opera, the household is in emotional turmoil, with Clytemnestra plagued with traumatizing dreams, terrified that her children will take revenge upon her. For this reason, Clytemnestra forbids Elektra to have a child, lest she have a son who would grow to be a warrior seeking retribution on the next generation. The opera is a series of meetings between Elektra and each member of her family, a lifetime in miniature.

The character of Elektra (Electra) is omnipresent in literature. Hofmannsthal based his versions mostly on Sophocles’s original tragedy from the fifth century BCE. Wagner’s ideal dramatist, and thus of greatest interest to Strauss, was Aeschylus, who also wrote of Electra in his play *The Libation Bearers*, which focuses on the revenge of Agamemnon’s murder carried out by Orest and his friend Pylades. There is a stark Euripidean *Electra* as well, in which the title character, a princess, is married to a commoner, and Castor and Pollux make a bizarre moralizing appearance at the end to quickly tell brother and sister, as should be obvious, that matricide is bad. Despite the differences in plot, in most versions of the legend Elektra is the complex woman that Hofmannsthal incomparably made transcendent for Strauss. Few works of art ask more from an audience, for we are not mere observers of the action of *Elektra*; the opera seems to demand that we inhabit her mind.

One overwhelming quality of the opera is its foundation in dance, as this is the aspect of Hofmannsthal’s version of the story that so allured Strauss: the sexless Elektra expressing the deepest aspects of her emotions wordlessly, in great sweeps of sensuous choreographic power, a mirror image of Strauss’s lurid 1905 opera, *Salome*.

Why, you might naturally ask, is this phenomenal opera so rarely performed? Beyond its herculean orchestral demands, the answer is a simple one: the title role requires a singularly gifted dramatic soprano with all of the scarce qualities the words express: a consummate singing actress able to hold the stage for nearly two backbreaking hours without a pause for even a sip of water, a performer able to portray the full range of human emotions in voice and dance, all while executing one of the most musically and psychologically complex scores ever set down by a composer. Those qualities will always be rare, but the radiant Brünnhilde from our recent *Ring*, Christine Goerke, having heroically soared through *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*, rightly assumes the mantle of the two sopranos, both German, who have performed the work previously in this company: Inge Borkh, the most famous interpreter of the role in her era, who performed the opera with HGO’s founder, Walter Herbert, at the podium and with a cast that included Norman Treigle and Regina Resnik; and Hildegard Behrens, who was a memorable Elektra in 1993 to Leonie Rysanek’s Clytemnestra, with Christoph Eschenbach conducting. Like her predecessors, Christine is sure to galvanize a surrounding cast into the blazing and uncommon event *Elektra* should always be. ■

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Few works of art ask more from an audience, for we are not mere observers of the action of *Elektra*; the opera seems to demand that we inhabit her mind.
QUICK START GUIDE

Elektra

STORY IN A NUTSHELL
After her father, King Agamemnon, is murdered, Elektra awaits the return of her exiled brother, Orest, who will help her take revenge on the killers—their mother, Klytaemnestra, and her lover, Aegisth. When news arrives that Orest is dead, Elektra tries unsuccessfully to persuade her sister, Chrysothemis, to help her.

Realizing that she must act alone, Elektra searches for the axe that was used to kill Agamemnon but is interrupted by a strange man whom she eventually recognizes as Orest. Overjoyed that he is still alive, Elektra tells him of her prolonged, anguished wait for revenge. He is ready to carry it out. As Elektra waits outside, Orest enters the palace, and soon Elektra hears the screams of Klytaemnestra.

Aegisth appears in the courtyard, demanding that someone bring a torch so that he can find his way inside. Elektra is only too glad to lead him into the palace to his death. Her mission completed, Elektra dances in demented ecstasy.

A full synopsis appears on p. 36.

ELEKTRA IN CONTEXT
Elektra was the fourth opera (out of an eventual 15) for composer Richard Strauss (1864–1949), and his first with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929). Their partnership continued until Hofmannsthal’s death and resulted in some of Strauss’s finest operas, including Der Rosenkavalier, Arabella, and Ariadne auf Naxos. Strauss said many times how he loved writing for the soprano voice, and that is clear from those works alone.

Of Strauss’s operas prior to his partnership with Hofmannsthal, only 1905’s Salome—based on Oscar Wilde’s play about the biblical temptress who, by dancing for King Herod, won the head of John the Baptist as her prize—was a success, even though critics had condemned it as immoral and musically dissonant. The Metropolitan Opera, which held the American premiere in 1907, banned it after only one performance and it wasn’t seen there again until 1934!

Strauss followed Salome with Elektra (1909). He was secretive about the opera, releasing few details before its premiere, and there was much anticipation about it. But when the opera premiered in Dresden, people either loved it or hated it. Some were impressed by its theatricality and the vocal feats of the singers, but because the music reflects Elektra’s desire for revenge and her crazed state of mind, it isn’t always “pretty.” Many found aspects of Elektra’s sexuality deeply disturbing.

The controversy continued to sell tickets, and Strauss got his own type of revenge upon the Metropolitan Opera for its ban of Salome: he held Elektra’s American premiere at the Met’s competing opera house, the Manhattan, where it made a lot of money for the company and for the composer.

Many people regard Elektra as Strauss’s finest opera.

LISTEN FOR THE LEITMOTIFS
In Elektra, Strauss made ample use of leitmotifs, musical phrases that are associated with a particular character, place, idea, or feeling. Richard Wagner is the composer most associated with leitmotifs, and Strauss was heavily influenced by him.

By far, the most important and recognizable leitmotif in Elektra is the one that denotes her father, Agamemnon, who was murdered before the opera begins. We never see so much as his ghost in the opera, but we hear him because of the leitmotif, which recurs throughout the opera. Its pervasiveness illustrates Elektra’s obsession—with her father, his death, and her need to avenge his murder.

How will you recognize it? Listen carefully to the four opening notes of the opera. That’s it! You can almost hear the music crying “a-ga-MEM-non”—and, if there’s any doubt as to the composer’s intentions, you hear it not only in the orchestra. Elektra sings his name, using those same notes, several times during her first aria. You can’t miss it.

Other leitmotifs to listen for in Elektra are associated with the title character herself (a dissonant chord instead of a series of notes), Elektra’s love for Orest, and the axe.
KING OF COMEDY

BY PAUL HOPPER
Assistant Artistic Director
GIOACCHINO ROSSINI crafted 39 operas over the course of less than two decades and enjoyed his success by retiring in 1829 at the age of 37. When he emerged from retirement in 1857, he began writing a collection of 13 volumes of songs, choruses, and dances titled Pêchés de vieillesse or Sins of Old Age. Rossini considered his Petit Messe Solennelle—one of the composer’s only sacred works—to be the last piece of the collection, and concluded the 1863 masterpiece with a note proclaiming, “I was born for comic opera.” The composer had retired from writing operas more than 30 years earlier, but humor still coursed through his veins.

Rossini made his operatic debut, like many of his contemporaries, in the genre of farsa. These short, one-act comedies were typically performed in pairs, often with a ballet in between. Five of Rossini’s early farcical operas premiered at Venice’s Teatro San Moisè and represented contemporary commercial trends: exaggerated and absurdly humorous stories, comedies of error, and unexpected plots with twists and turns.

Farsa sat rather low in the hierarchy of operatic genres, so novel elements were easily and often introduced. La cambiale di matrimonio, Rossini’s first opera, finds the simple story of young lovers foiled by an unhappy father integrated into the new setting of business and financial affairs. The father is a London businessman, the suggested fiancé a Canadian from the New World named Slook, and the libretto is littered with newfound slang. These early operas from Rossini were the predecessors to his mature comedic works, for which he is best known: L’italiana in Algeri (The Italian Girl in Algiers), La Cenerentola (Cinderella), and Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville).

Rossini was the most famous European composer of the early 19th century. His works reached more listeners in opera houses and concert halls than those of any of his contemporaries, and his melodies were heard whistled throughout the streets, yet his legacy is diminished in the eyes of many scholars because nearly all of his works virtually disappeared beginning at the second half of the 19th century. Only a handful of his comedic works were continuously performed, most notably The Barber of Seville, until the rise of recording technology and scholarly Rossini writings led to the “Rossini Renaissance” of the 21st century.

But why was Rossini so immensely popular with audiences of the 1810s and 1820s? He was far from revolutionary; instead, he found success in unifying the dramatic and musical offerings explored by his predecessors while focusing on coherence, balance, and clarity. Audiences loved his compositions for the fusion of lyrical expression with drama; singers loved them for the passionate vocal outpouring and flashy melismatic writing. While Mozart’s characters constantly reflect upon their own evolution, Rossini’s characters are vessels for emotions that bubble so vigorously that they simply must exclaim their passions through music. Rossini’s operas are inherently theatrical and exploit the full possibilities of the genre, creating a self-aware subgenre.

University of Oxford professor Emanuele Senici synthesizes this thesis by contrasting Mozart’s comic works “with the grotesque, deformed version of reality presented in Rossini’s opere buffe. It is as if Rossini’s characters have always worn masks, self-consciously staging their actions in a theatrical (as opposed to real) fashion, constantly aware that they are operatic characters, rather than real human beings. These
characters have no past and no future, no memory of who they have been and no anticipation of who they may become; they live exclusively in the theatrical present—in Freudian terms, they have no unconscious. The only reality known to Rossini’s comic operas is operatic; in other words, the subject of Rossini’s comic operas is comic opera itself.”

There are a number of points within Senici’s comments that are worth exploring, not the least being that many readers might think that the Freudian analysis in HGO’s current repertoire should be reserved for Elektra. (Strauss’s opera is often considered to be the first Freudian opera—the influential philosopher had published his first important papers as Strauss was writing the piece. For an unpacking of opera’s most dysfunctional family, see pp. 26–29.)

More saliently, Senici’s reference to masks is an interesting nod to opera buffa’s roots. Opera buffa rose in popularity in the 18th century as a counterpoint to the more serious offerings of opera seria. Buffa operas spoke to the people, telling comedic stories of the common man, while opera seria portrayed the noble upper class in less relatable conflicts. Italian buffa operas differed from their German and French counterparts—singspiel and opéra comique, respectively—in that there was no spoken dialogue, but all of these genres drew on the influence of the Italian commedia dell’arte.

Commedia dell’arte was a genre of traveling professional theatrical troupes that gained popularity beginning in the 16th century. Also known as commedia della maschera, the plays featured exaggerated stock characters in recognizable masks that immediately signified which character was being portrayed.

Many of the commedia dell’arte archetypes are on display in The Barber of Seville. Doctor Bartolo descends from Il Dottore and Pantalone—bumbling, wealthy old men who interfere in the plight of young lovers. Figaro hails from Brighella, the sharp servant (or barber) looking to thwart his master’s plans to pursue his love interest, and Rosina and Count Almaviva are based on commedia’s Innamorati, or young lovers.

Finally, Senici’s quote offers an interesting perspective on the opera’s source material, the first installment of Pierre Beaumarchais’s trilogy known as “the Figaro plays.” Rossini is certainly not the only composer to set an episode of Beaumarchais’s French work—Giovanni Paisiello had already set Le barbier de Séville in 1782, Mozart famously turned to the second installment for The Marriage of Figaro, and John Corigliano adapted the trilogy’s final work into The Ghosts of Versailles at the end of the 20th century. While these characters do indeed have a past and a future (Rossini’s Count Almaviva and Rosina go on to become Mozart’s Count and Countess Almaviva), in The Barber of Seville it’s as if the characters exist “only in the theatrical present.”

It’s also easy to think of individual composers in a vacuum, devoid of connection to other masters. But Rossini occupied the space in music history between Beethoven and Wagner and interacted with both—Rossini met Wagner in 1860 and a few years later declared, “Monsieur Wagner has good moments, but awful quarters of an hour!” Rossini had the opportunity to meet Beethoven in 1822 while the composers were at significantly different points in their respective careers: Rossini was the fresh-faced 30-year-old enjoying immense commercial success while the 51-year-old Beethoven was the cantankerous, deaf master approaching the end of his life. Although Rossini had already successfully ventured into opera seria with Tancredi, Otello, and Mosè in Egitto (Moses in Egypt), Beethoven offered a historic comedic jab: “Ah, Rossini, so you’re the composer of The Barber of Seville. I congratulate you; it is an excellent opera buffa which I have read with great pleasure. It will be played as long as Italian Opera exists. Never try to write anything else but opera buffa; any attempt to succeed in another style would be to do violence to your nature.”

Their conversation continued, discussing Mozart’s legacy, Cimarosa, and Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater, but Beethoven drove it home as they bid farewell at the door: “Remember, give us plenty of Barbers.”
QUICK START GUIDE

The Barber of Seville

STORY IN A NUTSHELL
Count Almaviva has fallen in love with a young girl, Rosina, and has followed her to the house where she is kept sequestered by her old guardian, Dr. Bartolo, who wishes to marry her. Almaviva serenades Rosina; she is captivated by his voice but is prevented from responding by the suspicious Bartolo. Almaviva tries to figure out how to get inside the house to court her.

At the suggestion of the town barber and jack-of-all-trades, Figaro, Almaviva disguises himself as a drunken soldier and bursts into the house demanding to be quartered there, but pandemonium breaks out, ruining his plan. He is forced to try another method of gaining entry to the house.

Again he appears in disguise, this time as “Don Alonso,” a music teacher substituting for Rosina’s regular instructor, Don Basilio. Rosina recognizes her suitor, and he proposes to her. They plot to elope that night, but Bartolo is suspicious. Learning that “Alonso” is a fraud, Bartolo sends Basilio to fetch a notary so he can marry his ward that very evening. Gaining Basilio’s complicity with a bribe, Almaviva and Rosina sign the marriage contract when the notary arrives. Bartolo surprises them, but it is too late to intervene. Young love has won the day.

A full synopsis appears on p. 50.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE IN CONTEXT
The Barber of Seville, the 17th of the 39 operas that make up the prodigious output of Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), achieves a rare thing; it premiered two centuries ago, and audiences from all over the world still flock to see it and find it funny.

The opera we know now as Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville) premiered under the title Almaviva, o sia L’inutile precauzione (Almaviva, or The Useless Precaution) because there was already an opera titled Il barbiere di Siviglia, a very successful one by composer Giovanni Paisiello. Paisiello’s opera, like Rossini’s, was based upon the first in a trilogy of plays by the French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais.

Rossini, who was 23 years old while he was composing Barber, had written to the elderly Paisiello to reassure him that he was not trying to undermine his opera; the theater where Rossini’s opera premiered, the Teatro Argentina in Rome, went to great lengths to reassure Paisiello’s fans that this new opera was more of an homage than a challenge to the older composer’s work. This was to no avail: a noisy group of Paisiello fans attended the premiere and voiced their disgust with boos and hissing. Their rowdiness was only exacerbated by mishaps that occurred during the performance: according to musicologist and Rossini biographer Richard Osborne, the Don Basilio tripped over a trapdoor and sang his aria with a bloody nose, and during the Act I finale, a cat wandered onto the stage, would not be coaxed off, and was eventually flung into the wings.

The second performance was a completely different story. Rossini, who had been unnerved by the previous failure, did not attend and went to bed early. He was awakened by the sounds of a noisy crowd in the streets, all praising the opera. Paisiello’s opera was still more popular than Rossini’s version for a time, but public opinion soon shifted in favor of Rossini’s, which is widely regarded as his masterpiece.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR
The Barber of Seville has one of the most famous overtures in all of opera—and its fame is due mostly to Bugs Bunny! It will be familiar to anyone who knows Bugs Bunny’s famous The Rabbit of Seville. An opera overture usually features excerpts of music you will hear throughout the opera—this one does not, but it nevertheless sets the stage perfectly for the story to come.

The Barber of Seville also includes one of the most recognizable arias of all time in “Largo al factotum,” the Act I aria in which Figaro introduces himself and where you’ll hear “Figaro, Figaro, Fi-ga-ro!” Don Basilio’s aria later in Act I is a good example of Rossini’s technique of beginning arias slowly and gradually increasing the momentum and volume. Rossini uses that technique so often that he was nicknamed “Signor Crescendo.”
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

ELEKTRA

An Opera in One Act | Music by Richard Strauss | Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

Sung in German with projected English translation

Production owned by Lyric Opera of Chicago. Lyric Opera gratefully acknowledges the support of the Irma Parker German Opera Endowed Chair.

| JAN. 19 | JAN. 21m | JAN. 27 | JAN. 31 | FEB. 02 |

HGO RESILIENCE THEATER, GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

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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)

First Maidservant  Kathryn Day
Second Maidservant  Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen †
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
Third Maidservant  Zoie Reams †
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow
Fourth Maidservant  Jennifer Root †
Fifth Maidservant  Jennifer Check *
Overseer  Julie Makerov
Elektra  Christine Goerke

Chrysothemis  Tamara Wilson †
Klytaemnestra  Michaela Martens *
Confidante  Mane Galoyan †
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
Trainbearer  Kaitlyn Stavinoha
Young Servant  Richard Trey Smagur †
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow
Third Maidservant  Zoie Reams †
The Evans Family/John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer Fellow
Fourth Maidservant  Jennifer Root †
Fifth Maidservant  Jennifer Check *
Overseer  Julie Makerov
Elektra  Christine Goerke

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor  Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair
Production  David McVicar
Revival Director  Nick Sandys *
Set and Costume Designer  John Macfarlane
Set design for the HGO Resilience Theater in collaboration with HGO Technical Department
Original Lighting Designer  Jennifer Tipton
Resilience Theater Lighting Designer  Michael James Clark
Chorus Master  Richard Bado †
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Musical Preparation  Peter Pasztor †
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair
Bradley Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Peter Walsh †
Nancy and Ted Haywood/Stephanie Larsen Fellow
Stage Manager  Annie Wheeler
Assistant Director  Katrina Bachus
Supertitles by  Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by  Jeremy Johnson

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

* HGO debut  † HGO Studio artist  ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. There is no intermission.

**SETTING**

**Before the opera begins:** While Agamemnon was away fighting in the Trojan War, Klytaemnestra took his nephew Aegisth as a lover. The two killed Agamemnon upon his return and usurped his throne. Klytaemnestra is now fearful that her children—Chrysothemis, Elektra, and Orest—will avenge their father’s murder. Elektra has had Orest sent away for his safety.

In the courtyard of Agamemnon’s palace, five maids discuss the erratic behavior of Elektra, who has lost her rightful place in the royal household and been condemned to a menial existence. One of the maids declares her loyalty to Elektra who, despite her strange ways, is still a royal princess and daughter of the late king.

Elektra enters the courtyard, brooding over the murder of her father and upon his unpunished assassins. She swears that she and her siblings, Orest and Chrysothemis, will dance at Agamemnon’s tomb when their vengeance sets his soul at peace. Chrysothemis comes to warn Elektra that Klytaemnestra and Aegisth are plotting to imprison her. She advises her sister to avoid Klytaemnestra, who the night before had been suffering from terrifying dreams. Elektra replies that she must speak to Klytaemnestra, and Chrysothemis leaves as her mother approaches.

Klytaemnestra asks her daughter if she knows a remedy for her nightmares and the suffering they provoke. Elektra suggests that the sacrifice of an appropriate victim would end her mother’s torment. When Klytaemnestra presses her for details, Elektra reveals that the queen herself must be the victim and that her blood will be offered by Orest, who is in exile. Servants rush in to whisper news to Klytaemnestra, who begins to laugh as if in triumph. After the queen has left the courtyard, Elektra learns from Chrysothemis that the servants told Klytaemnestra that Orest has died. Elektra refuses to believe her brother is dead; she reveals to Chrysothemis that she has kept the axe used in their father’s murder for Orest to use in their vengeance on Klytaemnestra and Aegisth. Now, Elektra asks Chrysothemis to help her exact revenge on the couple, but Chrysothemis is horrified and rushes away.

A stranger enters, explaining that he is waiting to give Klytaemnestra an eyewitness account of Orest’s death. This confirmation of the awful news releases a torrent of grief in Elektra, who discloses her identity. The “stranger” then identifies himself—it is Orest. Elektra listens ecstatically as Orest informs her of his mission of vengeance. His tutor chides them for recklessly discussing their plans where they can be overhead. He tells Orest that Klytaemnestra awaits, and the two men enter the palace. Almost immediately, Klytaemnestra’s shrieks ring out. The courtyard quickly fills with terrified servants, who flee to avoid facing reprisals from Aegisth. When he reaches the courtyard, he finds no one there but Elektra. Although disturbed by her suddenly gentle demeanor, he allows her to light his way across the threshold. Once inside, he is heard desperately calling for help. To his shouts of “Can no one hear me?” Elektra cries, “Agamemnon hears you!” Only a moment after Aegisth is killed, Chrysothemis and the maids run out to tell Elektra that Orest has avenged the murder of Agamemnon. Elektra performs a triumphal dance but then falls lifeless to the ground. Chrysothemis rushes to the palace door, frantically calling for Orest.

**HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

HGO performed Richard Strauss’s *Elektra* during its third season, 1957–58, with Inge Borkh as Elektra, Norman Treigle as Orestes, and Regina Resnick as Klytaemnestra. *Elektra* opened HGO’s 1993–94 season with Hildegard Behrens as Elektra, Josephine Barstow as Chrysothemis, and Leonie Rysanek as Klytaemnestra.

*Synopsis courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago*
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
ORCHESTRA

Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
Sarah and Ernest Butler
Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor *, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Hae-a Lee-Barnes *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Stephanie Bork
Oleg Chelpanov
Andres Gonzales
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Fiona Lofthouse
Mila Neal
Emily Osinski
Sylvia Ouellette
Rachel Shepard
Hanna Watson

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Erika Johnson *, Assistant Principal
Ariana Nelson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steve Estes
Shino Hayashi
Courtenay Vandiver

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

FLUTE
Seth Morris †, Principal Christina Medawar *
Stephanie Bork
Oleg Chelpanov
Andres Gonzales
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin
Fiona Lofthouse
Mila Neal
Emily Osinski
Sylvia Ouellette
Rachel Shepard
Hanna Watson

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *
Aiden Chung †
Stanley Chyi
Spring Hill

PIANO
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *
Aiden Chung †
Stanley Chyi
Spring Hill

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

TRUMPET
Jim Vassallo †, Principal
Barbara Butler, Acting Principal
Randal Adams *
Daniel Egan
Charlie Geyer
Logan Kavanaugh
Gerrardo Mata

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

TROMBONE
Mark Barton *, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman *, Principal
Laurie Meister

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll
Karen Slotter

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown *

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

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

Kirill Kuzmin, Chorus Pianist

Ofelia Adame
Geordie Alexander
Debra Alons
Dennis Arrowsmith
Sarah Bannon
Megan Berti
Christopher Childress
Ann Scott Davis
Robert Dingman Jr.
Justin Dunkle
Stacia Morgan Dunn
Ashly Evans
Don Figg
Stewart D. Gaitan
Juan Garza
Brian M. Gibbs
Sarah Jane Hardin
Frankie Hickman
Carolyn Hoehle
Austin Hoeltzel
Jon Janacek
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Wesley Landry
Laurie Lester
Britany Lovett
Sarah Lysiak
Miles Robert Lutterbie
Lindsay Lymer
Keenan Manceaux
Antonio Martinez
Neal Martinez
Brienne Mathews
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Jammieca Mott
Cristino Perez
Kathleen Ruhleder
Paul Joseph Serna
Haley Stage
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
Lauren Stocker
Naonobu Sugitani
John Weinel
Benjamin Williams
Jennifer Wright
Patrick Wright

SUPERNUMERARIES

Amy Barnes
Luke Fedell
Dave Harris
Anna Harris
Cynthia Leal
Brian Mitchell
Sarah Myers
Carian Parker
Sarah Warren
Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. He has conducted more than 60 operas at HGO and has been responsible for many important artistic advances, including the development of the HGO Orchestra. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company’s first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s Ring and its first performances of the Verdi Requiem; collaborating on the world premieres of André Previn’s Brief Encounter, Christopher Theofanidis’s The Refuge, Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life, The End of the Affair, and Three Decembers, Carlisle Floyd’s Cold Sassy Tree and Prince of Players, and Tod Machover’s Resurrection; leading the American premiere of Weinberg’s Holocaust opera The Passenger, both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Tamara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers has enjoyed a long association with San Francisco Opera and was honored in 2015 with the company’s highest honor, the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes collaborating with André Previn on the 1998 world premiere of A Streetcar Named Desire and conducting several of the performances, and conducting Jake Heggie’s Moby-Dick, which was recorded and telecast on PBS’s Great Performances. Earlier this season at HGO, he conducted Julius Caesar; he will also conduct the spring performances of Bellini’s Norma. He was recently awarded an honorary doctor of music degree from Indiana University.

David McVicar’s work was seen previously at HGO in Manon (2003). Trained as an actor at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, McVicar has directed numerous operas including Andrea Chénier, Les Troyens, Adriana Lecouvreur, Aida, Salome, The Marriage of Figaro, Faust, The Magic Flute, and Rigoletto for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; The Abduction from the Seraglio, Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg, Julius Caesar, Carmen, and La bohème at Glyndebourne; Norma, Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci, Julius Caesar, Maria Stuarda, Anna Bolena, and Il trovatore for the Metropolitan Opera; Wozzeck, Rusalka, Elektra, Julius Caesar, Manon, Il trovatore, and Billy Budd for Lyric Opera of Chicago; and a Ring cycle for Opera National du Rhin. His work has also been seen at Gran Teatre del Liceu, Opera Australia, La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera, Opera North, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, La Monnaie, Mariinsky Theatre, Berlin State Opera, Savonlinna Opera, and at the opera companies of Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Lille. His Les contes d’Hoffmann was seen at the Salzburg Festival, and he directed La clemenza di Tito for the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He was knighted in the 2012 Diamond Jubilee Birthday Honours List and was named a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government.

Nick Sandys is making his HGO debut. He has worked alongside David McVicar as his fight director on 12 productions, notably Il trovatore and Julius Caesar, both at the Metropolitan Opera (HD broadcast), as well as Billy Budd, Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg, Wozzeck, and Elektra. He has choreographed violence for over 50 productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he is a resident fight director. He is the producing artistic director of Remy Bumppo Theatre Company in Chicago, where he has directed productions of Puff: Believe It or Not, Great Expectations, Pirandello’s Henry IV, Life of Galileo, Travesties (Joseph Jefferson Nomination 2015), Our Class (Joseph Jefferson Nomination 2014), and Seascape, among others, and has performed in many shows for the company, most recently Pygmalion, An Inspector Calls, and The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? He has also directed for Chamber Opera Chicago, Eclipse Theatre, Stage West, and Fort Worth Shakespeare in the Park, among others. Sandys is an artistic associate at First Folio Theatre and has been adjunct faculty at The Theatre School at DePaul since 1995. Sandys is a certified fight director with the Society of American Fight Directors, and his award-winning fight direction has been seen throughout the Chicago area, on Broadway, and regionally. He has received 15 Joseph Jefferson Nominations, a Dallas Critics Circle Award, and a 2011 Achievement Award from The Helen Coburn Meier and Tim Meier Foundation for the Arts.
John Macfarlane works extensively in dance and opera; his designs were previously seen in HGO’s *The Queen of Spades* (2010). In opera, Macfarlane’s collaborations with director Willy Decker include *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Cologne Opera); *Julius Caesar* (Scottish Opera); *Peter Grimes* (Brussels); *La clemenza di Tito* (Paris Opera); *Otello* (Brussels); *Falstaff* (Florence); *Boris Godunov* (Amsterdam); *Bluebeard/ Ewarten* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden); and *Idomeneo* (Vienna Opera). With David McVicar, he worked on *Agrippina* (Brussels); *The Magic Flute* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden); *Don Giovanni* (Brussels); *The Rake’s Progress* (Scottish Opera); *Maria Stuarda* (Metropolitan Opera); and *Rusalka* (Chicago). Two of his productions with Richard Jones won prestigious awards: *Hansel and Gretel* (Welsh National Opera) won an Olivier Award and *The Queen of Spades* won the Royal Philharmonic Award. With Francesca Zambello, he designed *Benvenuto Cellini* (Grand Théâtre de Genève), *The Barber of Seville* (Santa Fe), and *War and Peace* (Bastille, Paris). He is presently creating designs for sets and costumes for a new production of *Swan Lake* for the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, to open this May. For the Metropolitan Opera, he designed a new *Tosca*, which opened on New Year’s Eve, *The Flying Dutchman*, and *Agrippina*. Macfarlane also exhibits regularly as a painter and print maker. He was named a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2006.

Jennifer Tipton is well known for her work in theater, dance, and opera. HGO audiences have seen her lighting designs in *The Queen of Spades* (2010), *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1996), *Parsifal* (1992), *Lohengrin* (1991), and *The Juniper Tree* (original lighting designer, 1986). Her recent work in opera includes *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Bartlett Sher at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her recent work in dance includes Liam Scarlett’s *The Age of Anxiety* for the Royal Ballet in London. In theater, her recent work includes *The Room* by Harold Pinter for the Wooster Group. She teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama. Her honors include the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, the Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003, and the Mayor’s Award for Arts and Culture in New York City in April 2004. In 2008, she was made a United States Artists “Gracie” Fellow and a MacArthur Fellow.

Michael James Clark is the lighting supervisor for HGO, where he has designed lighting for the HGOco world premiers of *Some Light Emerges* (2017), *After the Storm* (2016), and *O Columbia* (2015) as well as mainstage productions of *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 Elixir of Love, Tosca, The Magic Flute, Die Fledermaus, La bohème, Madame Butterfly, and Rigoletto*. He also designed lighting for Stages Repertory Theater productions of *The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical, Honky Tonk Angels*, and *The Marvelous Wonderettes: Dream On*. For Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, he lit Stephen Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music* and *The Coronation of Poppea*.

Richard Bado has been HGO’s chorus master for 30 seasons and recently returned as head of music staff, a position he held from 1991 to 2005. An alumnus of the HGO Studio (1984–85), 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. Also for HGO, he conducted the Robert Wilson production of Thomson’s *Four Saints in Three Acts* on tour to the Edinburgh Festival and, most recently, *Carousel* (2016). He has also conducted for La Scala, Paris Opera, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, Tulsa Opera, Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, and Wolf Trap Opera. This season he conducted performances of *The Nutcracker* for the Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital, including a U.S. recital tour in fall 2017. 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. He has appeared on *A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor*. For 12
years, he was the director of the Opera Studies Program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

**DENISE TARRANT (UNITED STATES)**

*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 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 *Florescia 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 *Sabipuedes* (2004); and Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* (2003). She performed onstage as the solo violinist in *Julius Caesar* earlier this season and also when the production debuted in 2003. She has been concertmaster of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1988 and has 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).

**CHRISTINE GOERKE (UNITED STATES)**  
**Soprano—Elektra**  

Christine Goerke has appeared in the major opera houses of the world. At HGO, she sang Brünnhilde in HGO’s first-ever *Ring* cycle, which concluded last spring; Princess Eboli in *Don Carlos* (2012); Prima Donna/Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (2011); Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (2009); and Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan tutte* (2001). Her repertoire also includes the title role in *Turandot*, Kundry in *Parsifal*, Leonora in *Fidelio*, Dyer’s Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Cassandra in *Les Troyens*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Alice in *Falstaff*, and Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. She has also appeared with such leading orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra (in Boston and at Carnegie Hall and the Tanglewood Festival), Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Radio Vara (at the Concertgebouw), Sydney Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms. This season, she returns to the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera for *Elektra*, the Lyric Opera of Chicago for *Die Walküre*, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, for *Lohengrin*. Other future plans include the full *Ring* cycle at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera. Goerke was the recipient of the 2001 Richard Tucker Award, the 2015 *Musical America* Vocalist of the Year Award, and the 2017 *Opera News* Award.

**TAMARA WILSON (UNITED STATES)**  
**Soprano—Chrysothemis**  

HGO Studio alumna Tamara Wilson (2005–07) was seen most recently at HGO as Leonora in *Il trovatore* (2013); other roles include Elisabeth de Valois in *Don Carlos* (2012); Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw* (2010); Konstanze in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2008); and Amelia in *A Masked Ball* (2007), among others. She won first prize in HGO’s 2005 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and won the prestigious Richard Tucker Award in 2016. She began the 2017–18 season as the title role in *Aida* to open the season at the Washington National Opera in a production by Francesca Zambello; later this season she will make her Paris debut as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* with the Mariinsky Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev at the Philharmonie de Paris. She makes her New York Philharmonic debut in Bernstein’s *Kaddish Symphony* (Symphony No. 3) with Leonard Slatkin to celebrate Bernstein’s Philharmonic: A Centennial Festival, and will also debut with the Boston Symphony in the same piece under Giancarlo Guerrero. At the BBC Proms, she will return for Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She makes her Italian debut with Riccardo Chailly and the La Scala Orchestra in Verdi’s *Requiem* with performances in Pavia, Paris, and Hamburg. Wilson made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Aida* and London debut in Calixto Bieito’s new production of *La forza del destino* at the English National Opera, for which she received an Olivier Award nomination.

**MICHAELA MARTENS (UNITED STATES)**  
**Mezzo-soprano—Klytaemnestra**  

Michaela Martens is making her HGO debut. She began her 2017–18 season singing Klytaemnestra at San Francisco
Opera; she later returns to North Carolina Opera as Dalila in a concert performance of *Samson et Dalila* and sings Susan B. Anthony in Virgil Thomson’s *The Mother of Us All* at the Hudson Opera House in Hudson, NY. Recent roles include Martha in John Adams’s *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with the St. Louis Symphony at Carnegie Hall, Freia in a concert performance of *Das Rheingold* with North Carolina Opera, Herodias in *Salome* with Pittsburgh Opera, the title role in *Hérodiade* for her debut with Washington Concert Opera, Judith in *Bluebeard’s Castle* in concert with the New Japan Philharmonic in Tokyo, Cassandre in *Les Troyens* with Geneva Opera, and Kostelnička in *Jenufa* with English National Opera. Roles at the Metropolitan Opera include Marilyn Klinghoffer in John Adams’s *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Judith in *Bluebeard’s Castle*, Kundry in *Parsifal*, Contessa in *Andrea Chénier*, and Gertrud in *Hansel and Gretel*—a role she reprised in her debut with the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. With the Santa Fe Opera she performed Herodias, and with San Francisco Opera she sang Cassandre.

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**My family**

**Jenny Elkins**
Community Volunteer
Houston Trust Company
Founding Shareholder
Board Member
Client
in *The Pirates of Penzance* and an end of the season concert for San Diego Opera, Scarpia in *Tosca* with Michigan Opera Theatre, and excerpts from *Die Walküre* with Pacific Symphony. Future engagements through 2020 include multiple returns to the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera, and Teatro Real in Madrid.

**CHAD SHELTON**  
(UNITED STATES)  
Tenor—Aegisth  
HGO Studio alumnus Chad Shelton (1997–2000) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as Mao Tse-tung in *Nixon in China* (2017), Cavaradossi in performances of *Tosca* (2015–16); Charles II in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players* (2016); Froh in *Das Rheingold* and Fredrik Egerman in *A Little Night Music* (2014); and Alfredo in *La traviata* (2012), among many others. His engagements in the 2017–18 season include another return to HGO for his role debut as Pollione in *Norma*, a return to Don José in *Carmen* with Austin Opera, and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Phoenix Symphony. Last season, he returned to the Grand Théâtre de Genève for his first performances of Sir Edgar Aubry in *Der Vampyr*, sang Don José on tour in Japan as a guest artist of the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy Opera Project, and returned to the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for its production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. He recently made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Rodrigo in a new production of *Otello* and sang his first performances of Erik in *The Flying Dutchman* with Boston Lyric Opera. He has joined the Opéra National de Lorraine numerous times, including for the title role in *Idomeneo*, Giasone in *Medea*, Don José, Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Guido Bardi in *Eine florentinische Tragödie*, Lechmere in *Owen Wingrave*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, and the title role in *Candide*.

**JULIE MAKEROV**  
(UNITED STATES)  
Soprano—Overseer  
Julie Makerov returns to HGO after her debut as Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* (2015). She won the 2010 Dora Award, Canada’s most prestigious live theater honor, for her portrayal of Senta in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*. Recent engagements include Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Lady Florence in *The Magic Flute* with the Montepulciano Opera Festival, among many others. Makerov has been praised for her work in *The Flying Dutchman*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and *The Magic Flute*, among many others. She recently made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* (2015). She won the 2010 Dora Award, Canada’s most prestigious live theater honor, for her portrayal of Senta in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*. Recent engagements include Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Lady Florence in *The Magic Flute* with the Montepulciano Opera Festival.

“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.”
Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* with the American Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leon Botstein, Chrysothemis in *Elektra* with Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Queen of Hearts in Unsuk Chin’s *Alice in Wonderland* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as the Mother in *Hansel and Gretel*, Los Angeles Opera as Senta, Canadian Opera Company as the title roles in *Tosca* and *Rusalka* and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, in Salzburg as Senta under the baton of Sir Ivor Bolton, and Frankfurt Opera as Margherita in Boito’s *Mefistofele*. She reprised the role of Rusalka in the Czech Republic with the Český Krumlov International Music Festival. Other highlights include her debuts with Theater Erfurt and Frankfurt Opera singing the title role in *Tosca* and performing in Matsumoto, Japan, with Seiji Ozawa’s internationally acclaimed Saito Kinen festival.

**KATHRYN DAY (UNITED STATES)**

Contraalto—First Maidservant
Kathryn Day made her HGO debut in 1979 as Lady Katherine de Vaucelles in *The Vagabond King*. She performed Bronka in Weinberg’s *The Passerenger*, a role she sang both for the American premiere at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival in 2014. Recently, she returned to her artistic home at the Metropolitan Opera for performances in *Salome* and *La traviata* and the role of the Designer in the company’s new production of *Lulu*, and reprised the role of Bronka with Florida Grand Opera. She has performed many roles with the Metropolitan Opera, including the Respectable Lady in *The Nose*, Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Bolkonsky’s Housemaid in *War and Peace*, Glasha in Katya Kabanova, Suspicious Old Lady in *The Gambler*, First Maidservant in *Elektra*, Annina in *La traviata*, Governess in *The Queen of Spades*, Giovanna in *Rigoletto*, and the Maid in *Manon*. She has also performed with Seattle Opera (Ulrica in *A Masked Ball*, Ortrud in *Lohengrin*, and Azucena in *Il trovatore*), Des Moines Metro Opera, Opéra de Montréal, Portland Opera, Long Beach Opera, San Diego Opera, the Savonlinna Festival, Austin Lyric Opera, and others.

**ARYEH NUSSBAUM COHEN (UNITED STATES)**

Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow
Countertenor—Second Maidservant
HGO Studio artist Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen won first prize in HGO’s 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and made his mainstage debut as Nirenus in *Julius Caesar*. He was a Grand Finals winner in the 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, recipient of a 2017 Sara Tucker Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, and winner of the 2017 Irvin Scherzer Award from the George London Foundation. This past summer, he joined Wolf Trap Opera for *The Juniper Tree*. He made his European debut at the Theater an der Wien, singing the leading role of Timante in the modern premiere of Gluck’s *Demofonte*. Other roles include Nerone and Ottone in *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, Raphael (The Angel) in Jonathan Dove’s *Tobias and the Angel*, and Cefalo in *Gl’ amori d’Apollo e d di Dafne*. Upcoming engagements include debuts with Ars Lyrica Houston and Cincinnati Opera. Nussbaum Cohen earned a bachelor’s degree in history from Princeton University.

**ZOIE REAMS (UNITED STATES)**

Mezzo-soprano—Third Maidservant
Zoie Reams won second prize in HGO’s 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and is a second-year artist in the HGO Studio. She sang Flora Bervoix in *La traviata* to open the season, and has also been heard at HGO as Third Secretary in *Nixon in China*, the alto Winged Angel in the world premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*, and Cecce in the HGOco world premiere of *Some Light Emerges*. She won first place in the Emerging Artist category of the 2015 *Classical Singer* competition and second place in the Gulf Coast Region in the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Past roles include Béatrice in *Béatrice et Bénédict*, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, and Katisha in *The Mikado*. She performed Tituba in *The Crucible* with the Glimmerglass Festival and Clarice in Rossini’s *La pietra del paragone* with Wolf Trap Opera. Later this season, she will appear as Rosalía in HGO’s new production of *West Side Story*.

**JENNIFER ROOT (UNITED STATES)**

Soprano—Fourth Maidservant
others. In the summer of 2016, she appeared with the Miami Wagner Institute in concert, performing sections of Die Walküre, including the role of Helmwige in its entirety. She previously made her role and house debut as Senta in The Flying Dutchman with Washington National Opera after covering the role with Sarasota Opera and the Glimmerglass Festival. Also with the Glimmerglass Festival, she performed Elizabeth Griffiths in Tobias Picker’s revised An American Tragedy and sang one performance of the title role in Ariadne auf Naxos, a role debut. She performed the role of Lady Billows in two productions of Albert Herring, one with Opera:Vivente and the other with the Aspen Opera Theater Center.

JENNIFER CHECK  
(UNITED STATES)  
Soprano—Fifth Maidservant  
Jennifer Check is making her HGO debut. Other engagements this season include her role debut as Abigaille in Nabucco in a co-production with Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier Occitanie and Opéra National de Lorraine and a return to the Metropolitan Opera for Norma and Così fan tutte. Recently, she returned to the Metropolitan Opera as the High Priestess in Aida and for Kaija Saariaho’s L’amour de loin; joined the Lyric Opera of Chicago roster for Norma; sang Verdi’s Requiem in the hallmark Defiant Requiem presentation with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Philharmonic; sang further performances of Verdi’s Requiem with Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Brevard Music Center, and the Berkshire Chorale; and joined the American Symphony Orchestra for Elgar’s The Apostles and the St. George’s Choral Society for Dvořák’s Stabat Mater. She recently sang her first performances of several Verdi heroines: Lady Macbeth in Macbeth with Opéra de Nancy et de Lorraine, Elisabeth in Don Carlos at the Caramoor International Music Festival, the title role in Aida and Leonora in Il trovatore with Utah Opera, and Desdemona in Otello with Berks Opera.

ANTHONY ROBIN SCHNEIDER  
(AUSTRIA/NEW ZEALAND)  
Beth Madison/ Frances Marzio Fellow  
Bass—Tutor/Old Servant  
Anthony Robin Schneider, a first-year artist in the HGO Studio, sang Doctor Grenvil in La traviata and Curius in Julius Caesar in HGO’s fall performances. The trilingual singer (English, French,

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and German) recently graduated from the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, where he performed Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Archibaldo in *L’amore dei tre re*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Colline in *La bohème*, and Des Grieux in *Manon*. Other recent highlights include singing part of Handel’s *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, reaching the semifinals of the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and taking part in master classes with Joyce DiDonato at Carnegie Hall. In summer 2017, he joined Wolf Trap Opera as a Filene Young Artist, performing Fabrizio in Rossini’s *La pietra del paragone* and the Sacristan in *Tosca*. He will make his debut with Santa Fe Opera this summer, with roles in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Candide*. Schneider is a Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation Scholarship recipient.

**RICHARD TREY SMAGUR (UNITED STATES)**

*Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow*

Tenor—Young Servant

Richard Trey Smagur, of Clarkesville, Georgia, is a first-year artist in the HGO Studio and was a 2012 participant in HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy. He was a Grand Finals winner in the Metropolitan Opera’s 2017 National Council Auditions. He made his HGO debut as Gastone de Letorières in *La traviata* this fall. 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 concert, he performed in *Elijah* with the Tucson Desert Song Festival and as a tenor soloist with the Cincinnati Boy Choir. In summer 2016, he was a fellow at Steans Music Institute at Ravinia Music Festival. Smagur’s roles during his academic 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*.

**MANÉ GALOYAN (ARMENIA)**

*Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Babr/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow*

Soprano—Confidante

This fall, Mané Galoyan began her third season in the HGO Studio by singing performances of Violetta Valéry in *La traviata*. Her previous roles at HGO include Adina in performances of *The Elixir of Love*, Kitchen Girl in *Rusalka*, and Forest Bird in *Siegfried* as well as two roles in world premieres: Margaret Hughes in Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players* and Lucy in David Hanlon and Stephanie Fleischmann’s *After the Storm*. Major competition awards include first prize in HGO’s 2015 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, third place in the women’s voice division of the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition, a 2014 prize in the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition, and first prize in the Seventh Bibigul Tulegenova International Singing Competition in Kazakhstan. She participated in HGO’s Young Artists Vocal Academy in 2013. In summer 2016, she sang Smorfiosa in Gassmann’s *L’opera seria* with Wolf Trap Opera.

**KAITLYN STAVINOHA (UNITED STATES)**

*Soprano—Trainbearer*

Kaitlyn Stavinoha made her HGO mainstage debut in *Carousel* (2016). She has been active with the HGO Chorus and with HGOco, performing most recently as Gretel in over 70 performances of Opera to Go!’s *Hansel and Gretel* and HGOco’s Veterans Songbook initiative. She has recently made several debuts with Houston classical arts companies. Recent appearances include Elvira in *The Italian Girl in Algiers* with Operativo Houston and her company debut with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston singing Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*. Upcoming performances include a role and company debut with Opera in the Heights performing Oscar in *A Masked Ball*. Last year, she won an Encouragement Award in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Role highlights include Marie (*The Daughter of the Regiment*), Adina (*The Elixir of Love*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*) and Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*). She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in vocal performance from Oklahoma City University and Baylor University.
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January 19–February 2, 2018
HGO Resilience Theater: Volunteer at the George R. Brown Convention Center to help opera-goers find their way to the HGO Resilience Theater before performances.

February 4–28, 2018
Artist in Residence: Schedule an informal, informative, and entertaining presentation by a member of the HGO Studio, sponsored by the Guild.

February 13, 2018
Guild Board Meeting: Find out more about Guild activities, suggest new programs, and meet board members who work with various programs.

March 24, 2018
HGO Guild Spring Event: An evening of fun you will not want to miss!

April 4, 2018
Opera Night Live: Free! Meet a member of the artistic team from West Side Story. Guests are welcome with reservations.

April 13–28, 2018
Artist in Residence: Schedule an informal, informative, and entertaining presentation by a member of the HGO Studio, sponsored by the Guild.

April 20–May 11, 2018
HGO Resilience Theater: Volunteer at the George R. Brown Convention Center to help opera-goers find their way to the HGO Resilience Theater before performances.

Have fun... as you help HGO

From right: HGO Studio artists Yelena Dyachev, soprano, and Zoie Reams, mezzo-soprano, with Guild Studio Buddies Committee Co-Chair Amy Psaris at the party for the alternate cast of La traviata.

Don Clarke, Guild volunteer coordinator, helps season subscriber Cindy Lawson find her way to the HGO Resilience Theater. Don coordinated dozens of Guild members who assisted opera fans.

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

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THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

An Opera in Two Acts | Music by Gioacchino Rossini | Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

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Sung in Italian with projected English translation

A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and Opéra National de Bordeaux

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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)

Fiorello: Thomas Glass †
  Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow
Count Almaviva: David Portillo
Figaro: Lucas Meachem *
Rosina: Sofia Selowsky *
Dr. Bartolo: Peixin Chen †
Don Basilio: Eric Owens †
Berta: Yelena Dyacheck †
  Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn Endowed Fund Fellow
Sergeant: Sol Jin †
  Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor: Emily Senturia †
Director: Joan Font
Set and Costume Designer: Joan Guillén
Lighting Designer: Albert Faura
Choreographer/Associate Director: Xevi Dorca
Chorus Master: Richard Bado †
  Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Fortepiano: Blair Salter †
  Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/ Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow
Continuo: Blair Salter †
  Dr. Saul and Ursula Balagura/ Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow
Prompter: Geoffrey Loff †
Musical Preparation: Geoffrey Loff †
  Jonathan Gmeinder †
  Bill and Melinda Brunger/
  Lynn and Henry Gissel/
  Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow
Stage Manager: Kristen E. Burke
Assistant Director: Andreas Hager *
Supertitles by: Colin Ure, adapted by Daniel James

PRODUCTION CREDITS

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.

* HGO debut    † HGO Studio artist    ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

SYNOPSIS

The performance lasts approximately 3 hours and 5 minutes, including one intermission.

ACT I
Count Almaviva has fallen in love with Rosina, a young girl he saw in Madrid, and has followed her to the house in Seville where she is kept sequestered by her old guardian, Dr. Bartolo, who wishes to marry her and acquire her dowry. Accompanied by his servant Fiorello and some musicians, Almaviva comes in disguise to serenade her, but gets no response. As daylight breaks, the barber Figaro appears and promises to help Almaviva for a suitable reward. Serenading Rosina again, Almaviva identifies himself as a poor man named Lindoro because he wants her to love him for himself, not for his wealth. Figaro comes up with an idea: Almaviva should force entry into Bartolo’s house on the pretext of being a soldier billeted there. The two happily contemplate their respective rewards.

Meanwhile, Rosina, stirred by this most attractive voice, determines to find its owner. Bartolo enters with the music master Don Basilio, who warns him that Almaviva is his rival for Rosina’s hand. Bartolo decides to marry his ward at once, but Figaro overhears and warns Rosina, promising to carry a letter from her to Lindoro. The suspicious Bartolo tries to get Rosina to admit she has written to her suitor and warns her not to trifle with him. Suddenly Almaviva, disguised as a drunken soldier, bursts in and passes Rosina a note, which she hides. A loud quarrel ensues when Bartolo claims exemption from billeting orders. As a curious crowd forms outside, police try to take the troublemaker into custody, but he confides his identity to the Sergeant, who lets him go amidst pandemonium.

INTERMISSION

ACT II
Bartolo suspects the intruder was a spy sent by Almaviva, who once again appears in disguise, this time as Don Alonso, a music teacher substituting for a sick Basilio. Alonso announces he is staying at the same inn as Almaviva and has found a letter from Rosina. He offers to tell Rosina that Almaviva is cheating on her with another woman. Reassured, Bartolo allows Alonso to give Rosina her singing lesson. Bartolo observes the lesson until Figaro arrives to shave him. With Bartolo unable to decide whom to trust alone, Figaro manages to steal the key to the upstairs balcony and Rosina recognizes Lindoro, who proposes to her. As the shaving is about to begin, Basilio himself appears, and the sham threatens to unravel. Quickly, Almaviva bribes him to play sick and rushes him out of the house. Figaro shaves Bartolo, distracting him while the lovers make their plans to elope, but Bartolo overhears the word “disguise” and sends for Basilio. After everyone has left, the maid Berta wanders in and complains that she is working in a madhouse.

Learning that Alonso is a fraud, the doctor sends Basilio to fetch a notary at once so he can marry his ward that very evening. Calling Rosina, he shows her a note, saying Lindoro has deceived her and plans to win her for his master, Almaviva. Rosina is angry and agrees to marry Bartolo, also revealing that Figaro and Lindoro plan to enter by way of the balcony. Bartolo goes for the police. Figaro and Almaviva come in through the window, only to be spurned by Rosina, who accuses Lindoro of wooing her for Almaviva. Lindoro reveals his true identity and Rosina is delighted. Figaro urges them to hurry, but as they prepare to escape, they realize Bartolo has thwarted their plan by removing the ladder from the balcony. Basilio enters with the notary, but is dismissed with another bribe from Almaviva, who joins Rosina in signing the marriage contract. Bartolo surprises them, but is too late to intervene. Rosina is free at last; young love has won the day.

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY
HGO presented Rossini’s The Barber of Seville for the first time during the 1963–64 season and subsequently in seasons 1968–69, 1976–77, 1983–84, 1992–03, 2003–04, 2011–12, and in four touring productions. Among the distinguished interpreters of the roles at HGO are Sherrill Milnes (Figaro, 1969); Maria Ewing (Rosina, 1976 and 1983); Paolo Montarsolo (Bartolo, 1976, and Basilio, 1983); Thomas Allen (Figaro, 1983); Francisco Araiza (Almaviva, 1983); Cecilia Bartoli (Rosina, 1993); Joyce DiDonato (Rosina, 2004); Richard Croft (Almaviva, 2004); Nathan Gunn (Figaro, 2011); Ana María Martínez (Rosina, 2011); and Lawrence Brownlee (Almaviva, 2011).
VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Natalie Gaynor *, Principal Second Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Second Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Anabel Detrick *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Mary Reed *
Erica Robinson *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Melissa Williams *
Andrés González
Kana Kimura
Maria Lin

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Erika Johnson *
Arian Nelson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steven Wiggs *

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

FLUTE
Seth Allyn Morris †, Principal
Christina Medawar *
Acting Principal Monica Daniel-Barker

OBOE
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Ballet DANCE SALAD Festival
MARCH 29, 30, 31, 2018 7:30 P.M.
The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Zilkha Hall in Houston, Texas

Royal Swedish Ballet
Stockholm
Mats Ek

Semperoper Ballett Dresden
Germany
David Dawson

Ballett Zürich
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Royal Swedish Ballet in
Julia & Romeo
Choreography by Mats Ek.

Photography by Royal Swedish Ballet.

MARCH 29, 30, 31, 2018  7:30 P.M.
The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Zilkha Hall in Houston, Texas
Joan Font is a founding director of Els Comediants and has participated in the creation of more than 30 stage productions on four continents. At HGO, his work has been seen in the Rossini comedies The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), La Cenerentola (2007), and this production of The Barber of Seville (2011–12). He has directed at Los Angeles Opera under Plácido Domingo, Washington National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and Seattle Opera, and later this year he will bring his Cenerentola to the Lyric Opera of Chicago. In Europe, he has directed in Bordeaux, La Monnaie (Brussels), Barcelona's Liceu, Teatro Real in Madrid, and in A Coruña. Font started working as an opera director in titles such as The Magic Flute for Gran Teatre del Liceu and Orfeo ed Euridice for the Peralada Festival. He also premiered a new production of the zarzuela La verbena de la Paloma at Festival de Granada. He has worked on special projects for the Festival d’Avignon and Venice’s Biennale as well as other projects in Paris, New York, Chicago, Bogotá, Sydney, Tokyo, Dublin, Edinburgh, London, Hannover, and Beijing, among other cities. Outside opera, he worked with Els Comediants on a special presentation for Shanghai’s World Expo and the specially made show for the celebration of Hanoi’s Millennium. He is working on new productions of The Love for Three Oranges, The Marriage of Figaro, and Hannel and Gretel.

Emily Senturia (United States)
Conductor
HGO Studio alumna Emily Senturia (2013–15) joined the HGO music staff as assistant conductor/assistant chorus master for two seasons, during which time she conducted performances of The Elixir of Love, The Little Prince, and The Magic Flute. She has recently been a regular member of the music staff of Wolf Trap Opera, where she has conducted two Studio Spotlight scenes programs in addition to coaching La bohème, The Ghosts of Versailles, and Julius Caesar. This season, she conducted Iolanta with Savoyet Performing Group at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival before joining the music staff at Opera Philadelphia for productions of Elizabeth Cree and War Stories as part of the company’s inaugural festival, O17. She covered Alcina at Washington National Opera, will lead La liberazione di Ruggiero for the inaugural project of Opera X, a company devoted to promoting operas by female composers, and finishes her season coaching Sweeney Todd for the Atlanta Opera. Her training also includes Wolf Trap Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Royal Academy of Music in London. She studied orchestral conducting at Indiana University and Boston University, and violin at Rice University.

Joan Guillén (Spain)
Set and Costume Designer
Barcelona-based designer and artist Joan Guillén has designed sets, costumes, masks, and props for opera and theater. His work has been previously seen at HGO in The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), which was seen after its HGO presentation at Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro Comunale of Florence, the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, and Théâtre de les Arts in Valencia; La Cenerentola (2007), which was later staged at La Monnaie in Brussels, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Welsh National Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Omaha, Washington National Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago; and this production of The Barber of Seville (2011–12), seen also at the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, Gran Teatre del Liceu, and Canadian Opera Company. Another important production was Faust-Bal at Teatro Real. Guillén has also done extensive work in the arts as a painter, sculptor, and cartoonist. He has taught at the School of Dramatic Art at Barcelona’s Theatre Institute for many years and has also been a visiting professor at many schools and universities around the world. The most recent of his many honors was the 2016 National Culture Prize, awarded by the Catalan National Council of Culture and the Arts. Other awards include the gold medal for costume design at the 1999 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, the world’s largest exhibition in the field of set design and theater architecture.

Albert Faura (Spain)
Lighting Designer
Albert Faura’s lighting designs have been seen at HGO in The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), this production of The Barber of Seville (2011), and La Cenerentola (2007). He has worked with directors such as Josep Maria Flotats, Sergi Belbel, Bigas Luna, Nicolas Joel, and Marco Antonio Marelli and with companies such as Centro Dramático Nacional, Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Festival Grec de Barcelona, Teatro Filarmonico de Verona, Washington National Opera, Opéra de Genève, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Welsh National Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Omaha, Washington National Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago; and this production of The Barber of Seville (2011–12), seen also at the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, Gran Teatre del Liceu, and Canadian Opera Company. Another important production was Faust-Bal at Teatro Real. Guillén has also done extensive work in the arts as a painter, sculptor, and cartoonist. He has taught at the School of Dramatic Art at Barcelona’s Theatre Institute for many years and has also been a visiting professor at many schools and universities around the world. The most recent of his many honors was the 2016 National Culture Prize, awarded by the Catalan National Council of Culture and the Arts. Other awards include the gold medal for costume design at the 1999 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, the world’s largest exhibition in the field of set design and theater architecture.
National de Paris, Maggio Musicale, Welsh National Opera, and Grand Théâtre de Genève. His work in opera most recently includes La Brèche at Teatro de Sagunto, Il trovatore at the Gran Teatre del Liceu and Teatro Compoamor de Oviedo, Enseñanza libre and La gitana blanca at Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid, and La damnation de Faust at Opéra de Liège. Recent theater work includes Infamia at Teatre la Villarroel de Barcelona, Mont soroll per no res (an adaptation of Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing) at Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, and Relato de un naufragio (a play based on Gabriel García Márquez’s The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor) at the Bitó-Teatre Lliure de Barcelona. He has won two Butaca Awards, a Max Award, and two Barcelona Critics’ Awards. He studied lighting design at the Theater Institute of Barcelona and took an international theater lighting course organized by the British Council in London.

**XEVI DORCA (SPAIN)**

**Choreographer/Associate Director**

Xevi Dorca’s previous work at HGO includes choreographing The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), this production of The Barber of Seville (2011–12), and La Cenerentola (2007). These productions have also been seen at the Grand Théâtre de Genève; Gran Teatre del Liceu; Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia; Los Angeles Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; Seattle Opera; Opera Omaha; Washington, D.C.; Canadian Opera Company; and Opéra de Montréal. He has performed as a dancer in such operas as The Barber of Seville, directed by Carlos Santos, and Orfeo e Euridice, directed by Joan Font, both at the Peralada Festival; The Faerie Queene, directed by Lindsay Kemp; and Leonardo Balada’s Faust-Bal at Teatro Real. As a dancer he has worked with the Sol Picó, Color Danza, Anima’s Animal Art, Mar Gómez, and Rasatabula dance companies, touring multiple countries including Brazil, Great Britain, Austria, Czech Republic, Japan, Taiwan, the Netherlands, and Italy. He has also worked as an actor in films, plays, and commercials.

**RICHARD BADO (UNITED STATES)**

**Sarat and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair**

Chorus Master

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

**DENISE TARRANT (UNITED STATES)**

**Sarat and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair**

Concertmaster

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

**LUCAS MEACHEM (UNITED STATES)**

**Baritone—Figaro**

Lucas Meachem is making his HGO debut. His latest honor came at the 2016 Grammy Awards when he took home a Grammy for Best Opera Recording as Figaro in Los Angeles Opera’s production of The Barber of Seville; also in 2016, he was named the winner of San Francisco Opera’s inaugural Emerging Star of the Year Award. He has sung Figaro in The Barber of Seville with the Vienna State Opera; Den Norske Opera; and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. His 2017–18 season includes a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Marcello in Franco Zeffirelli’s production of La bohème, Athanaël in Thais with the Minnesota Opera, a return to the Dresden Semperoper to reprise the title role of Mozart’s Don Giovanni, and a series of concerts in Salzburg, Monte Carlo, Montreal, Prague, and Napa Valley. Meachem’s recent engagements include a return to San Francisco as Dr. Malatesta in Laurent Pelly’s production of Don Pasquale, a return to Lyric Opera of Chicago for his role debut as Chorèbe in Les Troyens under Sir Andrew Davis, his house and role debut as Sharpless in Madame Butterfly at the Dallas Opera, a reprise of Don Giovanni with the Dresden Semperoper, Count Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro with Teatros del Canal in several locations throughout Spain, and Silvio in Pagliacci with the Metropolitan Opera directed by Sir David McVicar. Recent concert engagements include Ein Deutsches Requiem with conductor Emmanuel Villaume and the Prague Philharmonia.

**DAVID PORTILLO (UNITED STATES)**

**Tenor—Count Almaviva**

David Portillo made his HGO debut in 2015 as Tamino in The Magic Flute. His engagements this season include two role debuts at the Metropolitan Opera: Eduardo in the North American première of Thomas Adès’s The Exterminating Angel and as Camille de Rosillon in The Merry Widow. In Europe, he will make two important house debuts, at the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Count Libenskof in Il viaggio a Reims, and the Bavarian State Opera as Pasquale in Orlando Paladino. He will sing Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni for his debut with the Dallas Opera. Orchestral highlights include Mozart’s Requiem with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. Recent roles include Ferrando in Cosi fan tutte with Opera Australia in a new production by Sir David McVicar, conducted by Jonathan Darlington; Jacquino in Fidelio at the Metropolitan Opera; Tamino for his debut with Frankfurt Opera; Pedrillo in The Abduction...
from the Seraglio for a debut with Dutch National Opera; Don Ramiro in La Cenerentola with San Diego Opera; and Dr. Richardson in the world premiere of Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's Breaking the Waves at Opera Philadelphia. Recent concert performances included an international tour of Handel's Ariodante in the role of Lurcanio, conducted by Harry Bicket, with tour stops in New York, London, Vienna, and Paris, among others; and, in Japan, Count Almaviva with Marc Minkowski and Ensemble Kanazawa.

**SOFIA SELOWSKY (UNITED STATES)**
Mezzo-soprano—Rosina
HGO Studio alumna Sofia Selowsky (2014–16) has been heard in multiple HGO productions, following her mainstage debut as Suzuki in Madame Butterfly. During her time in the Studio she was heard as the Fox in Rachel Portman’s The Little Prince, the Second Wood Nymph in Rusalka, Nell Gwynn in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players, and Eliza in the world premiere of David Hanlon’s After the Storm. In the current season, she sang performances of Argento’s Casa Guidi with Lexington Philharmonic and Mozart’s Requiem with North Carolina Symphony. Future performances this season include a concert of the music of Pergolesi with Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, her Atlanta Opera debut as Mercédès in Carmen, and her debut with Des Moines Metro Opera in its 2018 summer season. In the summer of 2017, she returned to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Frau Grubach in The Trial. Selowsky also performs frequently with symphony orchestras throughout the United States. In 2015, she debuted with the Houston Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada in Schubert’s The Pilgrimage of the Rose and returned to the orchestra in the 2016–17 season in performances of de Falla’s Three Cornered Hat. Also that season, she debuted with Minnesota Orchestra in performances of Handel’s Messiah, and with Sarasota Orchestra in Mozart’s Requiem, led by Music Director Anu Tali.

**PEIXIN CHEN (CHINA)**
Bass—Dr. Bartolo
HGO Studio alumnus Peixin Chen (2012–15) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as the bass soloist in the Verdi Requiem (2017). His other roles at HGO include Dr. Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); Sarastro in outdoor performances of The Magic Flute (2015); Montano in Otello, Second SS Guard in The Passenger, and Usher in Rigoletto (2014); Ferrando in Il trovatore (2013); and Customs House Guard in La bohème (2012–13). He entered the Studio after winning third prize in HGO’s 2012 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. In the current season, he makes his Opera Philadelphia debut as Sarastro in the acclaimed production of The Magic Flute co-directed by Suzanne Andrade and Barrie Kosky, with full-scale animation created by Paul Barratt; takes to the stage of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Sparafucile in Rigoletto directed by David Gately; and debuts at the Bard Music Festival as the Old Patriarch in Dvořák’s Dimitrij conducted by Leon Botstein in a new production directed by Anne Bogart. Last season, he joined the Metropolitan Opera for productions of Aida and Salome, made his Detroit Symphony Orchestra debut with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony led by Leonard Slatkin, having also sung this work with Andrés Orozco-Estrada and the Houston Symphony, and joined Edo de Waart for staged performances of The Marriage of Figaro with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He returns to HGO later this season to sing Oroveso in Norma.

**ERIC OWENS (UNITED STATES)**
Bass—Don Basilio
HGO Studio alumnus Eric Owens (1995–97) has been heard previously at HGO as Ramfis in performances of Aida (1999); Sarastro in The Magic Flute, Ari in the world premiere of Jackie O, and performances of Méphistophélès in Faust (all in 1997); Angelotti in Tosca and St. Plan in Four Saints in Three Acts (1996); and Friar Lawrence in Romeo and Juliet (1995). Earlier in the 2017–18 season, he returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago in David Pountney’s new production of Die Walküre to continue his portrayal of Wotan, begun last season in Das Rheingold. He will also sing Filippo II in Verdi’s Don Carlo at Washington National Opera, Enrico in Donizetti’s Anna Bolena at Canadian Opera Company, and the Forester in Janáček’s The Cunning Little Vixen at the Glimmerglass Festival, where he will serve as artist in residence and artistic advisor. Concert appearances include Rossini’s Stabat Mater with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti, Verdi’s Requiem with both the National Symphony Orchestra led by Gianandrea Noseda and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, and Mendelssohn’s Elijah with Music of the Baroque. He will also give a recital at the Shriver Center in Baltimore, as well as dual recitals with Susanna Phillips at the Schubert Club in St. Paul and Lawrence Brownlee at the Celebrity Series of Boston. Owens was Musical America’s 2017 Vocalist of the Year. He serves on the board of trustees of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.
YELENA DYACHEK
(UKRAINE/UNITED STATES)
Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn Foundation
Endowed Fund Fellow
Soprano—Berta
Second-year HGO Studio artist Yelena Dyachek sang Annina in La traviata to open HGO’s season this fall. She won the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award in the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, and shortly thereafter, she was named a Grand Prize Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Last season at HGO, she sang First Secretary in Nixon in China and Dominique de Menil in the HGOco world premiere of Some Light Emerges. Previous 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 Così fan tutte (also with the Merola Opera Program) and Tatjana in Eugene Onegin. Later this season at HGO, she will be heard as Clotilde in Norma.

THOMAS GLASS
(UNITED STATES)
Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow
Baritone—Fiorello
Thomas Glass, born and raised in Edina, Minnesota, joined the HGO Studio for the 2017–18 season after winning third prize in HGO’s 2017 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias. He made his HGO mainstage debut as Baron Douphol in La traviata. Last season, he was a member of Minnesota Opera’s Resident Artist Program, performing Capulet in Romeo and Juliet, Gustave in the world premiere of Bolcom and Campbell’s Dinner at Eight, and Schaunard in La bohème, and covering Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet, Donner in Das Rheingold, and Dan Packard in Dinner at Eight. For the Wolf Trap Opera Studio, he sang Joseph in The Ghosts of Versailles and Bragheron in Gassmann’s L’opera seria, also covering the roles of Tarquinius in The Rape of Lucretia and Schaunard. He received his master of music degree in voice performance from Rice University, where he sang Snug in Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Figaro in The Barber of Seville, Peter in Hansel and Gretel, and L’Humana Frugiliti in Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria. He joined San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program this past summer. Later this season, he will perform Officer Krupke in HGO’s new production of West Side Story.

SOL JIN (KOREA)
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow
Baritone—Sergeant
Named as one of 25 rising stars by Opera News, Sol Jin began his second season as an HGO Studio artist by singing Giorgio Germont in selected performances of La traviata. He won the Audience Choice Award in the 2016 Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias and was also named a Grand Prize winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He has appeared in concert as Rodrigo in Don Carlo and Prince Yeletskey in The Queen of Spades and covered the title role in Gianni Schicchi with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program; he covered the title role in Ernest Bloch’s Macbeth with the Manhattan School of Music. Other credits include the Count in The Marriage of Figaro with Long Island Opera Company. He recently performed at Carnegie Hall and with the Merola Program as Giorgio Germont in scenes from La traviata, a role he sang for his debut at Long Island Opera Company. He sang Germont again last summer with Aspen Opera Center.
UNSUNG HEROES

JUDY MALONE-STEIN
WARDROBE SORCERESS

BY PERRYN LEECH
Managing Director
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chair
Judy Malone-Stein is a magician who can literally make the (seemingly) impossible possible. She is the head of the HGO wardrobe teams, which can change an artist from one character to another in the blink of an eye. She talks about her background and work with Perryn Leech.

PERRYN LEECH: Where were you brought up, and were you interested in the arts when you were younger?

JUDY MALONE-STEIN: I was brought up in the small, east Texas town of New London, and the majority of the work was in the oil fields out by Kilgore. My dad was working on the rigs, doing heavy manual work and my mom was a homemaker. She was an avid reader and my dad played the slide steel guitar and built a Cobra-Matic turntable into the old radio cabinet we had. My mom’s father also worked in the oil fields with his team of oxen, while my grandma raised their six children and fostered 11 more. My dad’s father also worked in the oil fields and helped to form the Pipe Fitters Union in Houston.

Sounds like a busy and hard-working family. Was that when you began to understand the importance of work ethic?

Maybe after age five. Prior to that, my brother and I really lived out in nature and while he was at school I would go on adventures with my dog in the woods. When my dad took a promotion to a refinery in Levelland, Texas, I could better appreciate the seriousness that work posed when he became ill from his job duties. I had also begun school and was exposed to a bilingual community—and to other children besides those in my extended family. The neighborhood girls taught me how to play beauty shop with dolls, while I taught them how to catch horned toads and fireflies! We also got our first TV.

What was it like at school?

I loved being around other kids, as I’d not had many to play with when I was younger, but I remember finding school pretty easy. There were no arts and music in my elementary school, so my mom enrolled me in the “Reddy Kilowatt” community center to learn cooking and sewing and crafts. I won third place in a sewing contest at age eight. We left Levelland and returned to Longview in east Texas, where I began sixth grade at the Pine Tree school system, from which I graduated. I began playing clarinet and began reading all of Charles Dickens. I felt somehow connected with his child characters, which I believe informed my decision at age 11 that I wanted to be a “shrink.”

That seems to be an interesting thing to decide at such a young age—were you enjoying school then?

I was, but it was a very difficult time. I realized that my dad’s job had taken a big toll on him and that he was dying. When he did pass away, I had to grow up very quickly. I was very affected by his death, and as part of searching for something, I found music (the clarinet) and horseback riding. It was my way of breaking that anger and it became a real release for me. I moved onto the alto sax in middle school, but the passion I discovered for music certainly helped me. I was first-chair sax and in the jazz band that was tutored by Doc Severinsen, who was friends with the band teacher. My brother had moved to Texas City and started to work for my uncle’s vacuum truck business, Malone Trucking, and my mom had gone to work after Dad’s passing and worked many jobs, including sewing teacher, butcher, carpenter, and real estate agent. I learned from her actions that I could do or be anyone I wanted to be, if I applied myself.

Did you still want to pursue your dream of being a “shrink”?

Even with a music scholarship to the University of North Texas in Denton, I still wanted to be a shrink. With the support of my mom, I put down my sax...
and came to the University of Houston to study psychology. I also started working with the Prairie Law Collective, which supported the counter-culture. This was the middle of the Vietnam War and it was a very politically charged time. I was exposed to cultures, politics, and religions that broadened my perspective, and I chose to study sociology. In my senior year, I transferred to Texas Southern University to begin a master’s degree in social work while completing my undergraduate classes. A year of social work in highly underserved communities gave me the experience to realize there must be better approaches to healing the ills of others.

In 1973, I was offered a one-year contract in New York City in the National Office of the National Lawyers Guild, developing social projects based on constitutional law issues of the day, and decided that I couldn’t resist being in the heart of the revolution. I learned to write grants and obtain funding, resulting in the recruitment of law students nationwide to work on constitutional legal issues during the summer. We also produced a national newsletter.

It sounds like it was very intense but rewarding working there. It was very much my big “grow up” year. I returned to Houston and was ready to settle down. During the ’70s, the saying “get a degree and become a secretary” was a fact. I started work for Limon’s Lassies, a temp agency, doing secretarial work and typing. I met my husband and it was a love-at-first-sight thing—we married eight months later and then had our son. My husband had a landscape design and maintenance business, and unfortunately, it eventually consumed his whole life. I took a job with Aramco and was doing international intermodal shipping of expat household goods and hazardous materials. I was really good at it, and finally my college education was starting to pay off!

Then the oil crash came, and I left Aramco and my husband. I wanted to travel, return to the arts, and also allow my spiritual side to flourish. I began this new phase by working for Continental Airlines (free travel!) and chanting with Buddhists who were dressers and got me working in theater. I also began an organization to take the arts into underserved schools, which became Dragon’s Gate Arts Community Development and was active from 1992 through 2010.

Huge life changes, then! From all this, how did you come to HGO? In 1986, I had started to do some dressing and crafting and sewing in the Opera and Ballet shops and really enjoyed it. I did lots of shows and then was made supervisor for a production of La clemenza di Tito in the Cullen. I’ve been working at HGO off-and-on ever since, and I will stay here until I retire. This has been the place that stirs my passion in the work I do with such talented, dedicated, and lovely people.

It’s amazing the wide range of jobs you have done—do you find your experience in psychology helps with our artists? I’m not sure I should comment on that! I do really enjoy this job and working for HGO, and it is kind of the perfect retirement job for me. It affords me the time to do art with young children through Young Audiences school residencies in schools. It also has encouraged me to bring a strong, positive wardrobe presence to the backstage area, and, as business agent for Local 896 of the Theatrical Wardrobe Union, to train and improve the labor force available to the industry in Houston while improving conditions for the workers. The company does great work and I have a wonderful team of people that I work for and with. I loved most of the jobs I have had over the years, but HGO is special. It is my work family.
INSIDE THE NEWLY BUILT HGO Resilience Theater, over 3,000 students found their way off buses and into the George R. Brown Convention Center for three student performances of La traviata or The House without a Christmas Tree. Because of generous support from key members of the HGO family, students from 16 schools attended the performances at no charge. The majority of these students were experiencing opera for the first time. Many had their experience enhanced with free docent presentations prior to the performance. These presentations, given in a joint partnership by HGOco staff and members of the Houston Grand Opera Guild, explored the history of opera and the life and times of the composers—and familiarized students with the plot and characters of the operas. In addition, teachers received a study guide in advance to aid them in preparing their students.

For decades, Houston Grand Opera has shown its commitment to young people and the future of opera by offering student performances. We look forward to many more sold-out student performances in the years to come! Additionally, we are expanding our educational programs into multi-week school residencies developed to enhance core curriculum using opera as a conduit.

If you are interested in bringing a group of students to a student performance or having a performance or residency come to your school, please contact HGOco at hgoco@hgo.org. Tickets for next year’s student performances will go on sale this spring.

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

High School sophomores and juniors who are interested in pursuing voice at the college level are encouraged to apply to the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio class of 2019. Online applications will be due in early spring followed by an audition tour during March and April. Finalists will be chosen in May 2018. For more detailed information please visit HGO.org/HSVS.
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HGOco programs, including Student Performances and HGO’s performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, are supported through the NEXUS initiative, which is made possible by:

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**COME CAMPING WITH US!**

Secure a spot at Opera Camp by signing your student up online starting February 5, 2018. HGOco is proud to bring a month of opera and music-filled experiences to children of all ages. In June 2018, we will host four camps: Create a Singer for singers with unchanged voices who will be in grades 4–9 in the fall, Create an Opera for artistic and creative students in grades 3–8, and Art of Opera for high-school students who want to perform or learn production skills. New this year is Sing! Move! Play!, a musical experience for children who will be in grades K–2 in the fall. Learn more at HGO.org/community-programs.

**TAKE A (SPRING) BREAK WITH HGOco**

HGOco is thrilled to return to Discovery Green as part of our Spring Break activities, March 14–16. Come outside and visit this gem in downtown Houston for interactive fun with our singing storytellers. Storybook Opera and First Songs will delight your kiddos and get everyone singing and dancing.
We’re in the midst of a busy winter repertory, as the majority of our artists perform in Elektra and The Barber of Seville. These two productions offer the Studio’s singers and pianists the chance to work alongside some of the most renowned professionals in the business, including distinguished Studio alumni Tamara Wilson, Greer Grimsley, Chad Shelton, Sofia Selowsky, Eric Owens, Peixin Chen, and Emily Senturia. Collaborating with seasoned professionals is a key element of the Studio’s curriculum; nothing is more eye-opening than standing next to extremely accomplished artists and observing how they go about their work.

Our adventurous and unconventional fall season was highlighted by alternate-cast performances of La traviata, featuring a cast made up entirely of HGO Studio artists and alumni, with Mané Galoyan, Yongzhao Yu, and Sol Jin in the three leading roles, conducted by Studio Music Director Bradley Moore. This opportunity to invest time and energy in major roles is a rare and valuable opportunity for emerging artists.

The HGO Studio is designed to provide productive and timely opportunities to the best talents in the business, and we’re proud of the excellent work these artists did in a challenging time.

This season’s Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias is right around the corner, on February 1 at Rice University’s Stude Concert Hall, followed by a celebratory dinner at the Hotel ZaZa. We’ve spent the last several months recruiting an exciting group of singers for this special evening. Each year, I’m amazed and inspired by the fearless singers who walk into the audition room, filled with hope and passion for this art form. This year, we had 506 applicants! The odds are staggering; only about 1 percent of applicants will be invited to participate in the competition. It takes a lot of courage for the singers, who put all they’ve got into their auditions in hopes of being invited to join the HGO Studio.

Looking back to September, we were heartbroken to lose our usual introduction of the HGO Studio when Studio Showcase was canceled due to Hurricane Harvey. The good news is that we now have a home for the program, and I’m thrilled that we’ll present this evening of opera scenes featuring the HGO Studio this spring. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 10 (7 p.m.), and Sunday, March 11 (3 p.m.), at the Moores Opera House at the University of Houston. The extraordinarily talented artists of the Studio will present scenes from nine operas, with introductions by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers. Tickets are FREE to HGO subscribers and affordable for single-ticket buyers, and can be reserved by calling Customer Care at 713-228-6737 (OPERA). Please give our artists a warm, belated welcome to Houston by joining us to support them and hear excerpts from roles that will undoubtedly define their future careers.

We’re happy to return to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, this February for a pair of recitals in a gallery of the Audrey Jones Beck building. These programs promise a stunning combination of visual art and music, designed to highlight the specific talents of the artists. Studio singers Yelena Dyachek, Yongzhao Yu, and Sol Jin perform with pianist Blair Salter on February 23 and 24 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available online at HGO.org (scroll down to “HGO Studio—Programs and Events” on the home page), or by calling Customer Care at 713-228-6737 (OPERA).

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

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The HGO Studio also receives generous support from Frosch International Travel, Mr. Jackson D. Hicks, Jerry and Sharyn Metcalf, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Reynolds.

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, Frosch International Travel, and the HGO Guild. Additional support for YAVA is provided by Mr. Patrick Carfizzi and Dr. David and Mrs. Norine Gill.

Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.


HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2017–18

Yelena Dyachek, soprano Jill and Allyn Risley/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

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

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

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

Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, countertenor Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

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

Blair Salter, pianist/coach Dr. Sauli and Ursula Balagura/ Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund Fellow

Anthony Robin Schneider, bass Beth Madison/ Frances Marzio Fellow

Richard Trey Smagur, tenor Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

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

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

SAVE THE DATE

Don’t miss these opportunities to hear HGO Studio artists!

FEB. 1 | CONCERT OF ARIAS
Join us for the exciting final round in the 30th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Champagne reception at 6 p.m.; competition at 7 p.m. in Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. Celebration Dinner to follow at Hotel ZaZa. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

FEB. 23 & 24 | STUDIO RECITAL SERIES
HGO Studio artists perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m. Purchase tickets online at HGO.org or by phone at 713-228-6737.

MARCH 10 & 11 | STUDIO SHOWCASE
Singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform a program of opera scenes Saturday, March 10 (7 p.m.), and Sunday, March 11 (3 p.m.), at the Moores Opera House at the University of Houston. FREE to season subscribers; nonsubscribers may purchase tickets at HGO.org or by phone at 713-228-6737.
Houston Grand Opera is delighted to welcome Fred Griffin to the HGO Board of Directors. Fred is the chairman of Griffin Partners, a premier commercial real estate development, management, and leasing company with over three decades of experience in Houston. He became interested in HGO thanks to his wife, Betsy. “I’ve enjoyed coming to the opera so much, and so has he. He has had a lifelong interest in what’s going on in Houston,” she says.

From his work in renovating the George R. Brown Convention Center to serving as chairman of the board of Space Center Houston, and in his role on the board of directors and Executive Committee of the Clear Lake Economic Development Foundation, Fred has demonstrated his tireless commitment to our city. He has played a key role in the purchase, planning, and development of Kingwood, Woodlake, Greenspoint, Copperfield, Clear Lake City, and other substantial projects throughout the greater Houston area.

“I was very impressed with how well HGO managed the move to the Resilience Theater. I love the music, and I’ll leave critiquing the operas to my wife,” Fred says, “But I’m happy to help in any way I can from a business standpoint.”

The Hearst Foundations are generous supporters of HGOco, our community collaboration and arts education initiative.

Founded in 1945 by William Randolph Hearst, The Hearst Foundations are national philanthropic resources for organizations working in the fields of culture, education, health, and social services. The Hearst Foundations identify and fund outstanding nonprofits to ensure that people of all backgrounds in the United States have the opportunity to build healthy, productive, and inspiring lives. Since their inception, the Hearst Foundations have made more than 20,000 grants, totaling $1 billion.

HGO is deeply grateful for The Hearst Foundations’ longstanding support of the HGO Studio, our renowned artists in residence program, through a special commitment to the HGO Endowment. The Hearst Foundations also make it possible for HGO to bring the power of world-class music to young people all over Texas through our Student Performance Series and our popular touring ensemble for children and families, Opera to Go!

HGO is proud to welcome Katherine Thomasson as one of our newest Young Trustees. Katherine is the head of internal communications in the U.S. at Shell. She and her husband, Michael Talbot, moved to Houston 18 months ago for work, and they love their new home.

Katherine is originally from Connecticut, and has lived much of her life overseas. “Classical music has always been a big part of my life,” Katherine says. Her mother was a pianist, and Katherine studied piano and oboe as a child. When she lived in London, she and her friends became avid operagoers at Glyndebourne, Opera Holland Park, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Her favorite opera is Verdi’s Simon Boccanegra.

“A decade ago, I became passionate about how to get more young people involved in supporting the opera. So I worked with the Development team to try to create a network of young professionals… People see your passion, and they respond to it.”

In addition to supporting the arts in Houston, Katherine is a committed volunteer at BARC, the City of Houston’s animal shelter and adoption facility, and serves on the board of the BARC Foundation. We are so grateful for Katherine for bringing her enthusiasm and energy to the HGO family.
Laureate Society members kicked off October at the beautiful Junior League for An Afternoon of Music with American soprano and HGO Studio alumna Heidi Stober, with pianist Bethany Self, an HGO Studio alumna and former member of the music staff. The dynamic duo and dear friends delighted guests with a program including Handel, Strauss, Donizetti, Gershwin, and more. The 150 guests then enjoyed a wonderful dinner with lively conversation around Stober’s roles as Cleopatra in the fall production of Julius Caesar and multiple roles in the holiday world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek’s The House without a Christmas Tree.

On a balmy day in October, the HGO Patrons Committee hosted a select group of subscribers for a behind-the-scenes look at where the magic begins, with a reception and private tour of the mammoth HGO production warehouse. Back to his old stomping grounds from his days as technical and production director, HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech offered a warm welcome that kicked off the tour. Properties Design Director Megan treated guests to a “photo booth” constructed of production crates and props from operas past followed by a tour of the eclectic prop shop. The tour concluded in HGO’s impressive makeshift costume shop. Head of Costumes Norma Cortez previewed costumes for La traviata and Julius Caesar and offered an insider account of the relocation from the Wortham Theater Center within days of Harvey pouring more than 14 feet of water into the shop’s basement home.
Houston Grand Opera opened its 63rd season with a new production of Verdi’s beloved La traviata on October 20, immediately followed by a late night dinner celebration chaired by Kristina and Paul Somerville.

Inspired to celebrate the resilience of HGO in its against-all-odds relocation outside of HGO’s Harvey-ravaged Wortham Theater Center home, more than 400 guests and La traviata cast members reveled in the spirit of the evening, toasting to the themes of HoUSton Strong and “the show will go on!” While Paul cheered on the Houston Astros in his diamond seats in their game six win against the Yankees, Kristina cheered on HGO in her Oscar de la Renta gown and blinged-out Astros ball cap. Managing Director Perryn Leech welcomed patrons and complimented Ms. Somerville’s fashion statement, but noted that the neon construction vest he donned with his black tie was “all the rage” these days at the Wortham. Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers introduced the internationally acclaimed cast.

A foyer on the second level of the GRB was the site for the fête, with décor inspired by the colorful creations of the production’s costume and puppet designer, Cait O’Connor.
La traviata cast with Patrick Summers and Perryn Leech

La traviata chorus members

Patrick Summers, Mayor Sylvester Turner, Board Chairman Jim Crownover, and Perryn Leech

Molly and Jim Crownover

Aaron and Sarah Stai and Dian and Harlan Stai

Kendall and Christopher Hanno

Robin Angly and Miles Smith

Terrylin Neale with Jerry and Bobbie-Vee Cooney

La traviata puppet designed by Cait O'Connor

Margaret Alkek Williams and Kristina Somerville
The star-studded cast of *Julius Caesar* shined as bright as the lights over Hollywood at an opening night cast party honoring the artists and creative team in the HGO Resilience Theater Green Room. Three generations of world-class countertenors—David Daniels (Ptolemy), Anthony Roth Costanzo (Julius Caesar), and Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen (Nirenus)—mingled with HGO Patrons and friends along with international star Stephanie Blythe (Cornelia) and four past and current HGO Studio artists, Heidi Stober (Cleopatra), Megan Mikailovna Samarin (Sextus), Federico De Michelis (Achillas), and Anthony Robin Schneider (Curius).
HGO PATRONS
COME TOUR WITH US!

GARSINGTON & GLYNDEBOURNE
JULY 15-22, 2018

Enjoy the best of English countryside opera festivals at Garsington Opera and Glyndebourne, synonymous with beautiful gardens and great opera.

Garsington Opera
• The Skating Rink  World premiere opera by David Sawer, featuring Neal Davies, Sam Furness, Ben Edquist, and Susan Bickley
• The Magic Flute  Featuring Louise Alder, Benjamin Hulett, Jonathan McGovern, and Iride Martínez

Glyndebourne Festival
• Saul  Featuring Markus Brück and Iestyn Davies
• Pelléas et Mélisande  Featuring Christina Gansch, John Chest, Christopher Purves, and Brindley Sherratt

SANTA FE
AUGUST 14-19, 2018

A perennial favorite of HGO Patrons, this trip features spectacular open-air opera and dinners hosted by fellow HGO Patrons in their beautiful homes. The 2018 trip will coincide with the Santa Fe Indian Market.

Operas Include:
• Candide  Featuring Brenda Rae, Alek Schrader, and Kevin Burdette
• Dr. Atomic  Featuring Ryan McKinny and Julia Bullock
• Madame Butterfly  Featuring Ana Maria Martínez and Joshua Guerrero

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT HGO.ORG/TRAVEL
Contact Scott Ipsen 713-546-0242 | sipsen@hgo.org
The Impresarios Circle is Houston Grand Opera’s premier donor recognition society. These vanguard supporters who provide annual support of at least $100,000 are instrumental to HGO’s success. For information, please contact Greg Robertson, chief advancement officer, at 713-546-0274.

Robin Angly, Chairman

JUDY AND RICHARD AGEE
HGO subscribers since 2000–01, Judy and Dick are ardent believers in the power of storytelling through words and music. They partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools to bring HGOco programs to economically disadvantaged students. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO’s Founders Council. Beyond their generous support of general operations and HGOco, they also support Concert of Arias and HGO’s mainstage productions.

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

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 is also supports the HGO Studio, having underwritten several rising opera stars over the past 20 years. Jan’s late husband, Tom, former chairman of the HGO Board of Directors, was instrumental in the concept and construction of the Wortham Center. A lifelong lover of music, Jan is past president of the Houston Symphony and has a special affinity for Puccini and Wagner.

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

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

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 chairmen 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. Earlier this year, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, The World’s First Tooth Fairy... Ever.

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ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO
Anne and Albert have been subscribers and supporters of HGO for the past two decades. While serving as president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation, Albert finds time for numerous cultural causes. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and was the co-chair of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera. Over the years, the Chaos have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco’s Song of Houston, and 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 2017–18 season-opening production, Verdi’s La traviata. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Janet L. Carrig, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, serves on the HGO Board of Directors and also as senior chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.

BOBBIE-VEE AND GERALD COONEY
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979 and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertoire, including Aida, La bohème, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. The Cooneys also supported HGO’s innovative commission Crucar la Cara de la Luna (2010, 2013), the world’s first mariachi opera. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from the Opening Night Dinner, which Bobbie-Vee chaired in 2004, to Concert of Arias, which the couple chaired together in 2014. HGO is honored to have Bobbie-Vee serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

JIM AND MOLLY CROWNOVER
Jim Crownover is the chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. 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.

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 this season’s Elektra. Additionally, Liz and Jack are chairmen of the upcoming 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 supported an expansion 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.
End annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment's average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGO leadership includes Chairman Thomas Rushing, Senior Chairman Janet L. 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 HGO's arts education programs, helping more than one million Houston-area students experience the magic of live opera through Opera to Go!, the Student Performance Series, and Storybook Opera. A Section 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $400 million to the youth of Texas since 1932. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the world's largest livestock show and rodeo, with more than 2.6 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 special events, HGO's young professionals program, and mainstage productions like this season's *The Barber of Seville*. 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, such as last season's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

**DONNA KAPLAN AND RICHARD LYDECKER**

Richard Lydecker has been an HGO subscriber and supporter for more than three decades. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Richard has great passion for opera, especially Wagner, and he and Donna were underwriters for HGO's *Ring* cycle. They are also special events sponsors, supporting Opera Ball and Concert of Arias.

**NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER**

Nancy and Rich became HGO subscribers during the 2000–01 season. Rich is co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Kinder Morgan, and Nancy is a focused philanthropist whose work has positively impacted communities throughout Houston and beyond. Rich and Nancy established the Kinder Foundation in 1997 to provide impactful gifts to projects dedicated to urban green space, education, and quality-of-life issues in the Greater Houston area. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, 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 22nd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council. 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.

**JANICE AND ROBERT McNAIR**

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

**M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION**

The M.D. Anderson Foundation has provided general operating support to HGO for more than 30 years. The Foundation was established in 1936 by Monroe Dunaway Anderson, whose company, Anderson, Clayton and Co., was the world’s largest cotton merchant. While the Foundation started the Texas Medical Center and was instrumental in bringing to it one of the premier cancer centers in the world, the Foundation’s trustees also looked to improve the wellness of communities through the arts. HGO is privileged to have such a longstanding and committed partner as the M.D. Anderson Foundation in enhancing the quality of life for all Houstonians.
Perryn Leech is proud to serve on the board of 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 and the upcoming Song of Houston commission Home of my Ancestors. HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech is proud to serve on the board of OPERA America.

MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD

The Miller Theatre Advisory Board (MTAB), appointed by Houston’s mayor and confirmed by the City Council, acts as a steward of public and private funds to provide professional-caliber performances free to the public at the Miller Outdoor Theatre for the cultural enrichment of Houston’s diverse communities and visitors to the city. HGO’s partnership with MTAB extends back nearly six decades, making great opera accessible to thousands of Houstonians each year through live 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.

FRANCI NEELY

Franci is among the opera’s strongest friends and advocates, having been a subscriber since the 1983–84 season and one of the first members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Franci is a senior member of the HGO Board of Directors and serves on the Special Events Committee. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor.

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 this season’s West Side Story and the mariachi operas Cruzar la Cara de la Luna and El Pasado Nunca Se Termina.

OPERA 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 and the upcoming Song of Houston commission Home of my Ancestors. HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech is proud to serve on the board of OPERA America.

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 opera accessible to more than 250,000 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.

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 honored 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 vintage to contemporary. Owners Tony Bradfield and Kevin Black are familiar faces at HGO performances, recitals, and events. From donating fabulous one-of-a-kind auction items to generously supporting our mainstage opera season and special events, the Tenenbaum team helps HGO sparkle and shine.

JOHN G. TURNER & JERRY G. FISCHER

John and Jerry, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, travel around the world to experience the best that opera has to offer. HGO subscribers and donors for over a decade, the couple’s leadership support of Wagner’s Ring cycle (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
Without your donation, your favorite opera would be over before the first act ended.

DONORS MAKE GREAT ART POSSIBLE.

Ticket sales cover only 25% of our annual costs. We rely on you for the rest. We’re counting on you—become an HGO donor today.

As an HGO donor, you will receive exclusive member benefits designed to enhance your opera experience.

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.

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.

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.

Vinson & Elkins LLP 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 this season’s West Side Story. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: from left, Mark R. Spradling and Glen A. Rosenbaum.

MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS
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CALENDAR
2017–18

JANUARY
19, 21m, 27, 31, Feb. 2
Performances of R. Strauss’s Elektra. HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown.

21
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about Elektra immediately following the performance. Free.

26, 28m, Feb. 3, 8, 10
Performances of Rossini’s The Barber of Seville. HGO Resilience Theater at the George R. Brown. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the January 26 performance only.

28
Behind the Music: an intimate conversation about The Barber of Seville immediately following the performance. Free.

FEBRUARY
1
Concert of Arias: the 30th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Champagne reception at 6 p.m., competition at 7 p.m. at Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. Celebration Dinner to follow at Hotel ZaZa. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

2 & 3
HGOco and Opera To Go! present Kamala Sankaram and David Johnston’s Monkey & Francine in the City of Tigers. Heinen Theatre at Houston Community College, central campus, 9:30 and 11 a.m. daily. Monkey & Francine tours from Jan. 29 through May 18. Book a performance at HGO.org/OperaToGo or by calling 713-546-0231.

4
HGOco presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a masterclass with HGO Studio artists Zoie Reams and Thomas Glass. 2 p.m. The public is invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at amagall@hgo.org for information.

23 & 24
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main Street, 7:30 p.m.

MARCH
4
HGOco presents singers from the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio in a masterclass with HGO Head of Music Staff Richard Bado. 2 p.m. The public is invited. Contact Alisa Magallón at amagall@hgo.org for information.

10 & 11
Studio Showcase: The singers and pianists of the HGO Studio perform a program of opera scenes. Moores Opera House, University of Houston. Free to season subscribers; non-subscribers may purchase tickets at HGO.org.

14–16
Spring Break at Discovery Green: HGOco presents activities and performances at Discovery Green, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

24
Spring Event: the HGO Guild holds its annual fundraiser at the Houston Racquet Club, 10709 Memorial Dr. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.

APRIL
4
Opera Night Live: the HGO Guild invites you to enjoy wine and snacks and learn more about West Side Story from a special guest. 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.

14
Opera Ball 2018: 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Brooke Rogers at 713-546-0271 or brogers@hgo.org.

20, 22m, 28m, 28, May 1, 3, 4, 6m
Performances of Bernstein’s West Side Story. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the April 20 performance only.

MAY
10 & 13
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 10 at 7:30 p.m. and May 13 at 5 p.m.

20
HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital, Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University. 6 p.m. Free.

30
HGO Association Annual Meeting and Reception: 5–7 p.m. Open to members of the HGO Board of Directors, HGO Trustees, and donors. Call 713-546-0217 for information.

JUNE
4–22
HGOco presents a range of Opera Camps geared for students of various ages and interests. Registration begins February 5, 2018.

5
HGO Guild Volunteer Gathering: Find out how you can use your talents to help HGO by volunteering with the Guild. United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.
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Leonard Bernstein
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Based on a Conception of
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Entire Original Production Directed and Choreographed by
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Apr. 20 | 22m | 28m | 28 | May 1 | 3 | 4 | 6m

Maria
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Riff
Brian Vu *

Conductor
Timothy Myers

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Houston Grand Opera Orchestra

Bellini
NORMA

Apr. 27 | 29m | May 5 | 8 | 11

Norma
Liudmyla Monastyrska

Adalgisa
Jamie Barton ‡

Pollione
Chad Shelton ‡

Oroveso
Peixin Chen ‡

Conductor
Patrick Summers
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

Director
Kevin Newbury

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Convenient parking is available at the Avenida North Garage located at 1815 Rusk Street, directly across from our new venue. A sky bridge connects the parking garage to the GRB, and there will be clear signage to direct you to the theater.
OUT OF CHARACTER

Coming Home: ERIC OWENS

ERIC OWENS, a member of the HGO Studio from 1995 to 1997, is originally from Philadelphia. He lived in New York for a time and is now based in Chicago. But this winter, he comes “home” to Houston to sing Don Basilio in Rossini’s The Barber of Seville. When he spoke by telephone to HGO’s Laura Chandler before the holidays, he said, “I know this is going to sound strange, but that period in Houston, as far as lifestyle is concerned, might have been the height of my career. I had an apartment, a car, I saw the same people all the time. I also remember that David Gockley [HGO’s general director at the time] wasn’t scared of putting us onstage in major roles. It was a wonderful time in my life, and I’m happy to be coming back.”

LAURA CHANDLER: Was there a specific experience that let you know you were going to have a major career? ERIC OWENS: There are some milestones, even though I wasn’t aware of them at the time, that gave me a higher profile. One was about 11 years ago when I did Grendel, directed by Julie Taymor and composed by Elliot Goldenthal. Because of the director, a lot of press came and saw me do this tour-de-force role that remains the most challenging role I’ve ever done. That led to me doing the Ring at the Met, because Peter Gelb came to see Grendel, and at the time they were making plans for the new Ring at the Met. That was my first foray into Wagner. I had been a working singer for quite a while, but those situations propelled me forward in my career. Even now, though, it’s something that’s incredibly fragile. I’ve had so many friends whose careers have been cut short, for whatever reason. We’re not tenured—we’re giggers! Everything we do really is an audition.

Apart from your singing, you get numerous comments from critics on the authenticity of your acting. Where does that come from? From the desire to be a complete performing artist. There were several performers who stood out to me, and I asked myself why I was drawn to these people. I tried to reverse engineer what they were doing, and I realized they were listening to the other characters. You could see the wheels turning and it looked like they were coming up with those words and the music on the spot.

As a performer, is it harder to make people laugh or cry? It’s way harder to make people laugh, because what makes us cry is universal—what makes us laugh is not. We all cry at the same things, but anytime you go to a comedy club or see a sit-com, some people think it’s funny, and some don’t. With comedy, there is so much nuance.

Are there things you’d like to do that you don’t or maybe even can’t do because of your lifestyle as an opera singer? I don’t want to blame my career for anything I don’t have in my life, although it does make certain things more challenging. It’s a relationship killer, because you are gone most of the time. There are couples who are both opera singers and have children. My hat is off to them, because that’s got to be the hardest thing ever. On paper, the travel looks like fun, but imagine going to the airport all the time!

Is there a reverse of that coin: are there things that are easier because you’re an opera singer? I have made so many wonderful friends, and sometimes I bemoan the fact that I don’t get to see them regularly, but I never would have met them if not for my career. I get to make some of the most incredible music ever written and share the making of that music with incredible artists. There are sacrifices, and it all comes at a cost, but sometimes I’m involved in something that makes me forget any cost; and then they come around with money and I think, “Oh, how wonderfully redundant!” It’s amazing when that happens.

Are there still roles you are dreaming about but haven’t done yet? One is Amfortas in Parsifal, although I’m not sure that will ever happen. I would love to sing Figaro in The Marriage of Figaro. I adore Mozart’s music and it’s not something I’ve done in some time. I get my Mozart thrills mostly in recital; they take more energy than a five-hour opera! It is just you and a pianist, and you have to be your own artistic director. With your voice, you have to create all the atmosphere. It takes energy not to release the emotions physically, the way you can in an opera, but in recital, you’re basically in one spot. It’s intense.

It’s been a long time since you were in Houston. Is there anything you’re looking forward to doing while you are here? Driving on a finished toll road!
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