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MADAME BUTTERFLY
JANUARY 23, 25, 28, 31
FEBRUARY 6, 8

THE MAGIC FLUTE
JANUARY 30
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Welcome to the Wortham Theater Center, where two of the most popular operas of all time await you this winter. If you’ve been looking for good “first-time operas” to bring family and friends to, you are in luck!

We are thrilled to bring back the striking Michael Grandage production of Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* that made such a hit when it premiered at HGO in 2010—and equally thrilled to have soprano Ana María Martínez reprise her heartbreaking performance of the title role. We also welcome back tenor Alexey Dolgov as the American Navy lieutenant who abandons her and baritone Scott Hendricks—who, like Ana María, is an alum of the HGO Studio—as the American consul who tries in vain to protect her. Rising conductor Giancarlo Guerrero, who is renowned in this repertoire, makes his HGO debut.

We’ve mounted charming productions of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* in the past, but we can’t wait for you to see this one, created by Sir Nicholas Hytner for English National Opera in 1988. The production became one of the most beloved in the ENO repertoire, delighting opera-goers of all ages. Houston residents David Portillo (in his HGO debut) and HGO Studio alumna Nicole Heaston sing the young lovers, Tamino and Pamina, and Kathryn Lewek makes her HGO debut in her signature role, the Queen of the Night. The distinguished Robert Spano—music director of both the Atlanta Symphony and the Aspen Music Festival and School—returns to conduct.

At the end of December 2014, our comprehensive campaign, *Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera*, came to a triumphant end, significantly exceeding our original $165 million goal. You can find the final tally in a special thank-you on page 23. We are humbled by your tremendous support, which ensures that HGO audiences can continue to enjoy opera at the very highest standards.

We are delighted you joined us and hope you enjoy the performance.

Star mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, an alumna of the HGO Studio, returns on March 19 for a gala celebrating our 60th anniversary. We’d love to have you join us! Find details at HGO.org.
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Scenes from Madame Butterfly, above, and The Magic Flute, below.

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I am pleased to welcome you to Houston Grand Opera’s performance of Puccini’s tragic masterpiece, Madame Butterfly. Baker Botts L.L.P. is a proud sponsor of this beautiful production, which was created by HGO in 2010 by award-winning British theater director Michael Grandage. We are especially thrilled that renowned soprano and HGO Studio alumna Ana María Martínez is reprising her role as Cio-Cio San, joined by the outstanding tenor Alexey Dolgov as Pinkerton.

Baker Botts is a global law firm that has been an integral part of the Houston business and arts community since we opened our doors almost 175 years ago. In fact, in the late 1800s, when the firm was named Gray & Botts, we officed in Gray’s Opera House in downtown Houston. We have been proud of our strong association with Houston’s rich arts community ever since.

The firm supports HGO, the Houston Symphony, the Alley Theatre, and Houston Ballet, among other Houston arts organizations. In recognition of this commitment, the firm has been honored as one of the BCA 10: Best Companies Supporting the Arts in America.

Thank you for your support of HGO, and for joining us for Madame Butterfly. I hope that you enjoy the performance.

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We are very proud to support HGO and the vibrant cultural arts community in Houston. From all of us at Winston, thank you for joining us for HGO’s 2015 production of *Madame Butterfly*. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

John Keville

Denmon Sigler
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Dear Opera Patron:

On behalf of my colleagues at Houston Methodist and the Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM), thank you very much for joining us at the Wortham Theater Center for Houston Grand Opera’s *The Magic Flute*.

We are thrilled to support this colorful and exciting production of one of Mozart’s most beloved works. Conductor Robert Spano leads a fantastic young cast and the dazzling HGO Orchestra and Chorus in this visually stunning English National Opera production created by Sir Nicholas Hytner and staged at HGO by Ian Rutherford.

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for HGO, and we understand the importance of culture in this city and keeping our artists healthy. Through CPAM, Houston Methodist offers a comprehensive program tailored to meet the specific needs of professional and amateur performing artists, including specialized treatment, preventive care, and health education. More than 100 CPAM physicians are dedicated to treating the unique needs of performing artists so that they can do what they do best—enrich the lives of Houston audiences.

It is our pleasure to partner with HGO and to support this evening’s production of *The Magic Flute*. Thank you for coming, and please enjoy the opera.

Sincerely,

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2014–15 HSVS MEMBERS RACK UP AWARDS

Members of HGO’s High School Voice Studio are enjoying a successful year. **Tyler Resto** was chosen from among 11,000 applicants in ten disciplines as one of 170 national finalists (and one of only eight in the classical voice category) to complete in National YoungArts Week in Miami in early January. As a national finalist, Resto will receive coachings and performance opportunities and will compete for monetary prizes.

In addition, Resto, **Austin Ingalls**, and **Shilpa Sadagopan** placed first, second, and fourth, respectively, in the Texoma NATS Regional Conference on November 8 at Lone Star College–Kingwood. A total of 548 students competed this year with 121 teachers registered from Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, said **Dr. Jason Lester**, director of HSVS.

HSVS is a one-year intensive program to prepare high school seniors for college vocal music programs. Auditions for the 2015–16 school year will be held in the spring, and juniors in good standing may apply. Information and applications will be available at HGO.org/HSVS by February 2.

HGO PARTNERS WITH BOOKS BETWEEN KIDS

You can’t change the past, but you can make a difference in the future. To celebrate Charles Dickens and the themes in his novella *A Christmas Carol*, HGO partnered with the local organization Books Between Kids to collect gently used children’s books to be distributed to children in need. We invited all of our staff and ticket holders to bring books to the Wortham Center throughout the run of our world premiere of Iain Bell and Simon Callow’s *A Christmas Carol* and leave them in special drop-off boxes. Over 300 books were collected, thanks to the work of **Juli Rosenbaum** of Books Between Kids, who coordinated the effort, and to volunteers from Books Between Kids and Houston Grand Opera. Together, we helped spread the love of reading throughout Houston.

OPERATOGO! VISITS MIDLAND

Continuing a seven-year partnership with Midland Opera Theater, Opera to Go! toured to Midland, Texas, in November, bringing *Cinderella in Spain* to an estimated 4,150 students. The ensemble presented five performances of the popular bilingual opera and also had several opportunities to go into classrooms and provide interactive opera experiences with pre-K through first grade students through the Opera Blasts program. If you are interested in bringing Opera to Go! or Opera Blasts to your school, please contact HGOco at 713-546-0231 or email operatogo@hgo.org.
Since its creation in 2007, HGOco has sought unique and surprising ways to connect with different Houston-area communities through its Song of Houston program. For the first several years, these communities were often delineated on the basis of culture or ethnicity, as in the four-year East + West chamber opera series and the Mexico 2010 project. Beginning this season, the next chapter of Song of Houston defines communities more broadly, looking beyond heritage to other shared experiences that bind individuals together, such as neighborhoods and industries.

On November 11—Veterans Day—HGO announced the launch of a major community initiative along these new lines: the Veterans Songbook. Houston’s already robust veterans community is on track to become the largest in the nation as service members return home from the most recent conflicts. Envisioned as a multi-year project, the Veterans Songbook will give voice to the stories of Houston-based men and women who have served our country and to the stories of their loved ones, through collaboration with veterans service organizations throughout the city. The intent of the project is twofold: to offer an outlet for creative self-expression to Houston veterans, and to raise awareness of this diverse, resilient, and growing group within the greater Houston community, sparking a broader conversation about conflict and courage, strength and sacrifice. At the end of the project, we hope to have created a wide array of songs—a literal songbook—inspired by individual stories that encompass the range of the veterans’ experience.

The Veterans Songbook project began this fall with two pilot workshop series focused on storytelling. The first, a six-week program in partnership with U.S.VETS-Houston, was led by HGOco Director Sandra Bernhard. Through a guided series of reflections, participants first created a “word wall” based on words and phrases that held meaning for them in relation to their service, and then wrote and shared a personal story with the group. Composer Mark Buller joined the final sessions and created original songs based on his experience of the group’s work.

The second workshop series was an intensive one-week program held in collaboration with Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA), the Tennessee-based African-American ensemble Carpetbag Theatre, the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, and Grace After Fire, a support organization for women veterans. Artists from the Carpetbag Theatre, in town for a week-long residency at MECA that culminated in two performances of their original play Speed Killed My Cousin, led two storytelling workshops, incorporating songs, stories, and reflections. They also led a digital storytelling session, in which participants had the chance to refine and record their stories.

Both workshop series drew on the power of sharing stories to underline the essential commonalities among all people and to celebrate our shared humanity—something we hope the Veterans Songbook will continue to illuminate over the next several years as we deepen our engagement with Houston’s veterans community.

VETERANS SONGBOOK GIVES VOICE TO HOUSTON VETERANS

BY BRITTANY DUNCAN
HGOco PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
The first presentation of songs from the Veterans Songbook will take place on Sunday, January 25, before the 2 p.m. matinee performance of Madame Butterfly. Join us in the Grand Foyer to hear a selection of songs composed by Mark Buller based on stories from the fall workshops and to learn more about the Veterans Songbook project. (Tickets to Madame Butterfly are required to enter the Grand Foyer.) We also plan to share these songs via the Internet—stay tuned to HGO.org/veterans_songbook for more information as the program develops.

GET INVOLVED
Do you know a veteran with a story to tell or a veterans service organization that would make a great partner for this project? We’ll be rolling the program out more broadly this spring and beyond and would welcome your suggestions. Please contact HGOco Programs Director Brittany Duncan at 713-546-0211 or sohstories@hgo.org.

Photo by Lynn Lane

HGOco staff and U.S.VETS workshop participants celebrate the first songs from the Veterans Songbook.
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For information on providing leadership support for the Ring, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.
The composer of three of the world's most popular operas, Madame Butterfly, Tosca, and La bohème, Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) has traditionally been dismissed by all but the upper echelon of critics and historians. His treatment by critics is particularly puzzling when one considers the effusive approbations showered on his contemporaries, like Mahler, Stravinsky, Richard Strauss, and Jean Sibelius, among others, who are invariably classified among the pantheon of the world's greatest composers. Audiences, of course, care not a whit for theory, and Puccini's standing with critics has never made the slightest difference in his popularity.

At the heart of all this is a larger cultural shift: Puccini was expected to assume the operatic mantle of Giuseppe Verdi, whose death in 1901 left Italy without its unifying figurehead. Puccini was in every way a lighter-hearted man than Verdi, a true child of his time who suffered a tragic accident unknown prior to his era: in 1903, his car flipped over, nearly killing him, and his slow recovery delayed Madame Butterfly's composition. Puccini aspired only to entertain and transport; he harbored no desire or ambition to write darkly psychological and dense works like those penned by Wagner, and one could scarcely imagine Puccini immersing himself in Italian translations of Shakespeare, as Verdi did throughout his life, inspiring the great older composer to a late-in-life renaissance with two superb operas, Otello and Falstaff. In an art form where aesthetics so freely float, it seems pedantic in the extreme to accuse Puccini of failing to achieve a philosophical profundity to which he didn't aspire.

History does not heed the random demarcations we place upon it, and the cultural apogee of the 19th century lived a few years into the 20th, until the cataclysm of World War I ended it forever. Puccini's operas didn't mirror this era so much as they tried to temper and lighten the cultural and human tragedy that was unfolding all around him. Puccini's penultimate work, Il trittico, attempts to wrestle artistically with the idea of loss; his final one, Turandot—which was nearly complete at his death—delivers a simple but poignant message in the guise of a fairy tale: love is all there is.
Puccini’s powerful Madama Butterfly is one of the few operas with its own audience: it attracts fans who wouldn’t dream of sitting down to Don Giovanni. It has handily survived the vast number of interpretational eccentricities foisted upon it, but it almost didn’t survive its world premiere at Teatro alla Scala in 1904—a night filled with poison and partisan jealousy that threatened to bury the work forever. Initially, it appeared that the vicious cabal that launched the audience on the attack had succeeded: Puccini withdrew his opera before the second performance. Historians have tried to piece together the reason for the failure, but it’s fairly clear, given human nature: too many other Italian composers and, more likely, music publishers had a vested interest in the failure of any Puccini world premiere. Puccini refunded his commission money to La Scala, and in place of the scheduled second performance, the company performed Gounod’s Faust. Puccini revised the work for the Italian city of Brescia, where it was a success. London heard the work a little over a year later, and by the time Puccini’s “piccolo Giapponese” made it to New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 1907, starring the famed Geraldine Ferrar and Enrico Caruso and conducted by Toscanini, the work was fully resuscitated from its rocky initiation. One of the most famous tenors in history, the first artist of any genre to sell a million recordings, Caruso enjoyed great success in Puccini’s operas, though he didn’t enjoy singing Pinkerton because audiences inevitably dislike the character.

Puccini based his opera on the play Madama Butterfly by American impresario and playwright David Belasco. The play was based in turn on a short story by John Luther Long, Madama Butterfly—which was itself based on Pierre Loti’s Madame Crysanthème and also on the memories of Long’s sister, Jennie, who had lived in Nagasaki in the late 19th century and had heard stories about a young local woman, a poor geisha abandoned by a foreign husband and driven to despair. Much has been made of the fact that Puccini spoke barely a word of English when he attended Belasco’s play in London, but it’s probably a good thing; one reads this play now and cringes at the syrupy writing and ethnically clichéd Asian English-isms. Not surprisingly, since Puccini couldn’t understand a word of the play, the scenes that made a lasting impression on him (and which are given the most memorably dramatic music in his opera) are the scenes of Butterfly’s all-night vigil, for which Puccini wrote the atmospheric Humming Chorus, and the final tragic scene, both inventions of Belasco not found in the source materials. John Luther Long’s story is a delightful period piece, appearing as it does only a few years after Japan was opened to the trading West in 1860, the same temporal distance between right now and the Clinton administration. The exoticism of Asia was intoxicating.
to the European and American world, made even more so by the burgeoning art form of photography. Japanese art swept the world as well, as painting and ceramic techniques from the land of the rising sun were taken up by Manet, Monet, Degas, and a host of others.

Many types of sopranos have enjoyed success in the huge title role. Rosina Storchio, the first Cio-Cio-San, possessed a comparatively light voice and was a popular Susanna in Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and Gretel in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*. Verdian sopranos of a heavier variety have also sung the part. One of Puccini’s favorite interpreters of the role was Italian soprano Toti dal Monte, a famous Gilda in *Rigoletto*, among many other lighter roles. Puccini talked about Dal Monte’s *sfumato* quality, a word not usually associated with music but rather with Italian painting, as it was one of the four qualities of Renaissance brush work perfected by Leonardo da Vinci: an ability to shade, to draw a veil...
Destiny’s Call

Io seguo il mio destino e piena d’umiltà,
Al Dio del signor Pinkerton m’inchino.
È mio destino.
Nella stessa chiesetta in ginocchio con voi pregherò
Io stesso Dio.

I follow my destiny and, full of humility,
I bow to Mr. Pinkerton’s God. It is my destiny.
In the same little church, kneeling with you,
I’ll pray to the same God.

over a scene. Our heroine here at HGO, Ana María Martínez, repeating one of the great successes in the company’s recent years, shares those qualities. 

Madame Butterfly is a marvel of orchestral transparency and color, with hundreds of details adding up to a work of incredible fragility and sweetness, so easy on the ear and so familiar that one can overlook its incredible skill. There are few passages in opera as entrancing as the Act I entrance of Cio-Cio-San. Firstly, the words are utterly honest, childlike, and sadly prescient: “I have answered love’s call… I came to love’s threshold where the good is gathered of those who live and those who die.”

A delicate solo violin, viola, and cello, with lush answering chords on the harp and glockenspiel, accompany her to the stage. The scene of her denunciation by the Bonze is fantastically orchestrated; it builds up an enormous amount of exciting energy, a sonic world of dense tension that contrasts with everything we’ve heard previously in the opera, with all of Cio-Cio-San’s lighter musings. Pinkerton, so often dismissed as just a bad guy, is more complicated than facile opinion would have him be. He is a naïve youngster, lost in what he considers to be a playground, traveling where he’s sure he’ll never be again, and his music is that of a swaggering and overly confident frat boy, not a monster. His heartfelt and touchingly remorseful third-act aria inevitably feels false to today’s audiences, who are accustomed to far more scripted displays of remorse. Interestingly, after several revisions, he became B. F. Pinkerton, short for Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, but in early versions he was, improbably, Sir Francis Blummy Pinkerton, and the resulting initials “F. B.” strangely survived in many extant live recordings of the early century, despite the Imperial Commissioner calling him by his full and correct name moments before.

Puccini’s musical quote of “The Star Spangled Banner” is interesting. The tune is very old, written in the 1760s for the Anacreontic Society, a London men’s club named after the bawdy Greek poems of Anacreon. Fifty years later, Francis Scott Key wrote his poem to commemorate a battle of the War of 1812. Key has an interesting Texan connection: he was only an amateur poet—by profession, he was an attorney, and he was the defense for Sam Houston himself in his trial for assaulting a fellow congressman, which forced Houston’s emigration to what was then Mexican Texas. Although “The Star Spangled Banner” was not the U.S. national anthem at the time of the opera’s 1904 premiere—it wasn’t until 1931 during the Hoover presidency that it became official—it was specifically associated with the U.S. Navy, which in the late 1880s had begun to play the song upon arrival in foreign ports. Puccini uses the music several times later in the opera, most movingly when it is sung by Cio-Cio-San as she triumphantly declares the triumph of her faith that her long-lost husband would return on the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Madame Butterfly is thoroughly an Italian opera, but it has one authentically Japanese melody at the end of Cio-Cio-San’s entrance music, and it summons the heart of this beloved opera: just a few minutes later in Act I, Puccini transforms this music into a brief and childlike aria accompanied by a quietly fluttering harp. One of opera’s most beloved heroines confesses that she will happily forego the religion of her youth to accept the foreign faith of her new husband. In a subtle microcosm of cultural destiny, masked by exotic beauty and momentary expectation, the inexorable tragedy is set quietly into motion.

Photo by Felix Sanchez
A quarter of a century ago, I went to Vienna for the first time. Of all the cities in the world, Vienna calls music most to mind. Many of the great composers of the 18th and 19th centuries lived and worked in its graceful environs. And although Mozart was from Salzburg and had his best successes in Prague, it was in Vienna that he lived and worked and suffered most. And it was there he died.

BY M. OWEN LEE
As Mozart lay on his death bed, one of his operas was running nightly in a people's theater beyond the old walls. That was *The Magic Flute*. Everyone loved it—little children, young lovers, shopkeepers, professors from the university. Night after night, in a fever, Mozart would follow in his imagination the performance of *The Magic Flute* across the city. He would look at his watch and say, "Ah, now they are all laughing at the birdcatcher's song. Now they are hearing how man and wife together can reach to godliness. Now the Prince and Princess are passing unharmed through the fire and water." Then, if his strength held out, he would work some more on a Requiem Mass. He was never to finish it.

I am a Catholic priest, and I have stood at the bedsides of more than a few dying people. But I know of no death like Mozart's. Not one with so many unanswered questions.

He wasn't afraid of death. His Freemasonry had taught him to think of death as a friend. But toward the end, he suffered under a peculiar illusion. His last work, a Mass for the Dead, had been commissioned by an anonymous messenger who one day appeared unannounced before him, dressed in gray. Mozart was to write a Requiem Mass, quickly, and he was to tell no one, nor ever try to find out whence the commission came. He started writing, observing the secrecy imposed on him. And when he turned to another assignment, the gray stranger reappeared to warn him that the time for the Requiem was running out.

Mozart's health began to fail—so fast that he was sure he was poisoned. And his letters, too, grew feverish: "I cannot rid myself of the sight of that strange man. I see him constantly entreating me, impatiently demanding the work…and I know from what I suffer that my hour is come. I am at the point of death."

Actually, the sinister-looking stranger was only a servant sent by a rich Viennese nobleman who was in the habit of commissioning works from professional composers and passing them off as his own. But to the fevered Mozart, the stranger was an emissary from another world. The death he was writing a Requiem for was, he began to believe, his own.

He was working on the Requiem the day he died. He lay in bed and some of the singers from *The Magic Flute* came to see him and, at his request, sang the pages he had just written. "Lacrimosa dies illa"—that day of tears. After a few measures, Mozart wept so fitfully they had to stop. Later, he sank into a delirium, during which he kept trying to complete the Requiem. As always, he had it fully composed in his head. But there wasn't time to get it down on paper. Shortly after midnight, he died.

A wealthy Freemason arranged for Mozart's funeral—but for the least expensive funeral available. There was no Mass. A solitary priest blessed Mozart's corpse before only a few mourners. Mozart's wife, Constanze, had been taken away by friends.

Then, the accounts say, the funeral party was proceeding to the little cemetery of St. Marx when a sudden storm sent them all scurrying to their homes. One lone gravedigger saw the body into the earth.

Actually, records indicate that December 6, 1791, was a mild, misty, windless day in Vienna. Why, then, did the mourners all leave? Why, when Constanze finally visited the cemetery and asked to see the grave, could no one tell her where it was? In my ministry, and earlier when I had helped my grandfather dig graves in a little German town in Michigan, I had laid to rest some unfortunate men. But none had gone so unattended as
this man, perhaps the greatest natural genius known to humankind.

These melancholy considerations are a part of any Mozart-lover’s response to The Magic Flute, even though it is mostly a happy work, at times a radiantly beautiful work, a fairy tale. A fairy tale that raises still more questions about life and death.

Its main conflict is between the star-flaming Queen of the Night and the sun-lit Egyptian wise man, Sarastro. The Queen is one of a long line of matriarchs in the history of literature and the history of religions. She has been compared to Isis and Ishtar and Astarte and Cybele, and Demeter and Juno—grieving and sympathetic at first, then turning savage, vindictive, and destructive. The Sarastro who opposes her is, as his name indicates, akin to the Persian Zoroaster. He heralds the destruction of one era and the dawn of a new one. At first, when we hear from the Queen that he has abducted her daughter, Pamina, we think Sarastro must be evil. So does the Prince who travels to Sarastro’s realm to rescue Pamina. But once there he is told differently. He wonders, “O everlasting night, when will you end?” And mysterious voices answer, “Soon, soon, young man, or never.” It’s a moment that Ingmar Bergman made much of in his film The Hour of the Wolf—and later he said, to the surprise of many of his public, “Those measures are to me the center of all of Mozart and also of the whole history of civilization.”

Bergman’s is a welcome comment, for among opera-goers outside of German-speaking lands it is more or less received wisdom that, while The Magic Flute contains a lot of charming and often sublime music, it is saddled with the most nonsensical libretto this side of Verdi’s Il trovatore. I am of the opinion that The Magic Flute and Il trovatore have two of the best librettos ever set to music. To be convinced of the worth of the libretto of The Magic Flute one has only to see the opera in a city where German is spoken. Where it was an instant success and has been one of the most popular operas in the repertoire for two centuries. Where its characters’ names have become household words. Where one of the greatest of all intellects, Goethe, was so taken with it he began work on a sequel. Where both philosophers and children still watch it with equal amounts of levity and gravity.

How did this strange opera come to be? Mozart’s librettist, Emanuel Schikaneder, wanted for his popular theater a typical Viennese fairy-tale pantomime—a magic opera with plenty of spoken dialogue between the songs, plenty of scope for crowd-pleasing stage machinery, and, he hoped, a big fat part for himself. The basis of the new opera was a story from a book of oriental genie tales collected by the poet Christoph Martin Wieland. But this was soon conflated with Masonic elements derived largely from a novel by the Abbé Jean Terrasson called Sethos.

Both Mozart and Schikaneder were Freemasons. Mozart, in his last years, was more and more convinced of the secret society’s high ethical aims, had written music in a new style for its ceremonies, and seemed determined to express something of its mysteries in The Magic
Flute. But most people who write about the work today, including those who are initiates, will say that the Masonic element has been over-emphasized. Many allegorizing commentators have also gone too far. If Sarastro, who sings “Within this sacred masonry” in Mozart’s new Masonic style, represents Freemasonry, then the Queen must, they say, represent Catholicism. [In this scenario,] Pamina represents Austria itself, rescued from a benighted Mother Church by an enlightened Freemasonry. Prince Tamino represents Crown Prince Joseph, who had succeeded his mother and introduced radical reforms. The Moor Monostatos represents the black-robed clergy, secretly aiding the church by joining the Masons and working against them from within.

Not all of this is satisfactory—but some of it is almost certainly right. The Magic Flute is, on one level, an allegory celebrating the conflict of the Enlightenment, and particularly Masonic enlightenment, with what was perceived as reactionary Catholic baroque. But it has much more to do with the universals of myth than with the particulars of history. And if Ingmar Bergman and many others are right, The Magic Flute is about more than any one of us. It is about the whole history of civilization.

It seems best, then, to approach The Magic Flute as an allegory of mankind’s progression from nature to culture, from unreason to reason. Think of Pamina as a child maturing. Before birth, a child and its mother are one. Then, after the physical sundering at birth, a process of spiritual separation begins. The child learns to speak, to experience, to find other relationships—most importantly, with the father. Psychologists distinguish between mother and father principles. The mother is nature. The father is culture, discipline, and law. The mother’s love is typically protective and lavished unconditionally on the child. The father’s is won through obedience. The child reaches maturity when he or she achieves a synthesis of maternal intuition and paternal reason.

Seen this way, the Queen of the Night is not a personification of evil. She is a personification of the dark unconscious, where intuition reigns and reason is unknown; of nature, which nurtures and also destroys. On the other hand, Sarastro is not a personification of good. He is that bright consciousness that is the beginning of reason, which builds cities and civilizations and is associated archetypally with the father. But he abducts those he would purify, subjecting them to cruel and horrendous ordeals, although behind the frightening

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exterior he is benevolent and ultimately just. *The Magic Flute*, then, can be seen as mankind’s evolutionary progress from the mother’s realm to the father’s.

You often read that each character in *The Magic Flute* lives in a separate musical idiom. That’s certainly true. The Queen’s high coloratura is ornamentally baroque; Sarastro’s low bass solos are in Mozart’s new “Masonic” style; Papageno sings folk tunes; Tamino is, as Edward Dent has observed, “Italian and Classical,” Pamina “German and almost Romantic.” It’s all very carefully done. So it is all the more significant that, across the carefully divided musical lines, almost identical melodies sound. The phrase sung in the Queen’s realm when Tamino receives his magic flute (“O Prinz, nimm dies Geschenk von mir”/O Prince, take this gift from me) is echoed in Sarastro’s realm, as Sarastro sings “O Isis und Osiris, schenket…” (O Isis and Osiris, give…). Even the words in German correspond to a degree. And similarly, the Queen’s first revelation to Tamino (“O zittre nicht mein lieber Sohn”/Tremble not, my dear son) corresponds to the wondering phrase Tamino sings as he lifts his eyes in Sarastro’s world: “O ew’ge Nacht, wann wirst du Schwinden?”/O eternal night, when will you disappear?

These and other similarities of musical phrase indicate that what takes place in the opera is not so much a conflict of opposing forces as a transition from one experience to another.

Perhaps now we can see something of why Mozart, so popular with the public, was slighted in his day by the wealthy, the powerful, and the privileged. Mozart’s music was more than they could appreciate when, as was their habit, they half-listened. It was well ahead of its time, as only the most perceptive spirits of the day realized. And his operas, which he rightly thought his greatest works, not only blended serious and comic traditions in surprising new ways; they sounded depths of meaning never dreamed of in opera before.

Why was Mozart deserted at his death? The cold facts of the case, now thoroughly detailed in books by H. C. Robbins Landon and Wolkmar Braunbehrens, are that for a few years Joseph II issued strict regulations for burials, for reasons of public health and to relieve poor families of heavy funeral expenses. Mozart’s burial was not dishonorable, or notably different from that of any other bourgeois in 1791, but his death still seems the classic rejection of genius by a world not yet ready to receive it.

Mozart himself is more popular in Vienna, and throughout the world, than ever before. We are more than ever ready to receive *The Magic Flute* as a supremely civilized work of art, blending as it does Classic and Romantic, comic and tragic, reason and unreason, nature and culture, masculine and feminine, Osiris and Isis, sophisticated and unsophisticated, as no other music does. There is a wonderful completeness about it, and a marvelous lightness. Almost any other composer, confronted with the issues in this opera, would have weighted it with Significant Music. With Mozart, even the most sublime moments are luminous and light: especially those moments when the sweet uses of reason are sung by three intuitive angels—the three spirits, sailing in their heavenly chariot, leading us onwards.

It was Karl Barth, I believe, who said that when the angels play for God they play Bach, but when they play for themselves, they play Mozart. I like to think that on those occasions God listens in. Secretly.

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M. OWEN LEE is an American scholar in classics and music who now makes his home in Canada. In Houston, he taught at St. Thomas High School in 1954–55 and at the University of St. Thomas from 1968 to 1972. He is a professor emeritus of classics at the University of Toronto. This article was excerpted, with Father Lee’s permission, from commentary he originally prepared for the *Talking about Opera* series by the Metropolitan Opera Guild, which had been revised and published by the University of Toronto Press.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

Madame Butterfly

An Opera in Three Acts
Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in Italian with projected English translation

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

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<td>Goro</td>
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<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>Sofia Selowsky †</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharpless</td>
<td>Scott Hendricks ‡</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cio-Cio-San</td>
<td>Ana María Martínez ‡</td>
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<td>Cousin</td>
<td>Katherine McDaniel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Joy Jonstone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncle Yakuside</td>
<td>Joe Key</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Debra Alons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imperial Commissioner</td>
<td>Thomas Richards †</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>Jon Janacek *</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Bonze</td>
<td>Reginald Smith Jr. †</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Yamadori</td>
<td>Morgan Pearse †</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Pinkerton</td>
<td>D’Ana Lombard †</td>
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<td>Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorrow</td>
<td>Rubina Rahman, Jackson Roush</td>
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A co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

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The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and Theater District Improvement, Inc., and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor
Giancarlo Guerrero *

Production
Michael Grandage

Revival Director
Louisa Muller

Set and Costume Designer
Christopher Oram

Original Lighting Designer
Neil Austin

Lighting Realizer
Philip Alfano

Movement Advisor
Courtney D. Jones

Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡
* Houston Grand Opera debut
† Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
‡ Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist

Musical Preparation
Jordana de Souza *
Bradley Moore
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Alkek Chair
Patrick Harvey ‡
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair
Sahar Nouri †
Audrey Jones Beck Endowed Fund/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow

Stage Manager
Jessica L. Mullins

Assistant Director
Omer Ben Seadia *

Surtitles by
Scott F. Heumann, adapted by Paul Hopper

PRODUCTION CREDITS

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

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

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

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

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.
Synopsis

Madame Butterfly

Act I

Pinkerton, a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, has arranged with the Nagasaki marriage broker Goro to marry a fifteen-year-old girl, Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San). By Japanese law, the groom is free to dissolve the marriage whenever he wants to, and though Pinkerton is clearly fascinated by his child bride, it is obvious that he doesn’t take the marriage seriously. He says as much to Sharpless, the American consul, who warns him that Butterfly is in earnest and tragedy may ensue, but Pinkerton pays no attention. When the brief ceremony is over, Butterfly’s uncle, a Buddhist priest, arrives in a fury, revealing that the girl has renounced her people’s ancient faith and taken the white man’s god. The family, horrified, deserts Butterfly. She weeps bitterly, but Pinkerton comforts her, and soon all is forgotten as the two express their love.

Intermission

Madame Butterfly lasts approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes, including one intermission.

Act II

Pinkerton has been gone for three years. Everyone—even her faithful maid, Suzuki—tells Butterfly that he has forsaken her, but she steadfastly insists that he will come back, as he promised, “when the robins make their nest.” Goro keeps urging her to marry his wealthy client, Prince Yamadori. And even Sharpless suggests that she accept this offer, since he knows that although Pinkerton is in fact coming back, he is bringing an American wife with him. Sharpless tries to prepare Butterfly for this blow, but before he can do so, she reveals that she has had a child by Pinkerton, and the consul leaves without delivering his message. The harbor cannon then announces the arrival of a ship. It is Pinkerton’s, the USS Abraham Lincoln. With Suzuki’s help, Butterfly decorates the little house with flowers. Then, with Suzuki and the child, Butterfly prepares to await Pinkerton’s arrival.

Act III

Dawn. Butterfly has waited all night. Suzuki persuades her to go and rest, and in her absence from the room, Pinkerton and Sharpless arrive. They break the news to Suzuki and try to enlist her help in persuading Butterfly to give up the child to Kate, Pinkerton’s new wife, who has also come but is discreetly waiting outside in the garden. Pinkerton then leaves: the memories of the house and his remorse are too much for him. Kate speaks with Suzuki and then goes out again. Butterfly enters and, horror-stricken, learns the truth. When Kate repeats her request, Butterfly answers that she will give the child to his father if Pinkerton will come back in half an hour. Butterfly blindfolds the child and then kills herself. She dies just as Pinkerton runs in, calling her name.

HGO Performance History

Madame Butterfly was most recently staged at HGO during the 2010–11 season, with Ana María Martínez singing her first Cio-Cio-San. It was staged as part of HGO’s inaugural season in 1955–56 and also HGO’s Jubilee in 2004–05. Madame Butterfly has also been staged during seasons 1997–98, 1993–94, 1989–90, 1984–85, 1979–80, 1972–73, 1967–68, and 1964–65. In addition, it was performed by Texas Opera Theater, HGO’s former touring group, and as part of the Spring Opera Festival.

Performances beginning at 7:30 p.m.
will end at approximately 10:10 p.m.
Performances beginning at 2 p.m.
will end at approximately 4:40 p.m.

At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

VIOLIN
Denise Tarrant *, Concertmaster
Jonathan Godfrey *, Assistant Concertmaster
Erica Robinson *, Principal Violin
Carrie Kauk *, Assistant Principal Violin
Miriam Belyatsky *
Rasa Kalesnykaite *
Sarah Ludwig *
Chavdar Parashkevov *
Anabel Ramirez *
Mary Reed *
Linda Sanders *
Oleg Sulyga *
Sylvia VerMeulen *
Stephanie Bork
Andres González
Emily Herdeman Kelly
Fiona Lofthouse
Mila Neal
Sylvia Ouellette
Rachel Shepard

CELLO
Barrett Sills *, Principal
Louis-Marie Fardet *, Assistant Principal
Erika Johnson *
Wendy Smith-Butler *
Steve Estes

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

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

OBOE
Elizabeth Priestly Siffert *, Principal
Robin Hough *

ENGLISH HORN
Spring Hill

CLARINET
Sean Krisman *, Principal
Eric Chi *

BASS CLARINET
Molly Mayfield

BASSOON
Amanda Swain *, Principal
Joseph Grimmer *

FRENCH HORN
Sarah Cranston *, Principal
Kimberly Penrod Minson *
Scott Strong *
Kevin McIntyre
Gavin Reed

TROMPET
Jim Vassallo *, Principal
Randal Adams *
George Chase

TROMBONE
Thomas Hultén *, Principal
Mark Holley *

BASS TROMBONE
Ilan Morgenstern †
Jeremiah Stones

CIMBASSO
Mark Barton *, Principal

HARP
Joan Eidman *, Principal

TIMPANI
Nancy Nelson *, Principal

PERCUSSION
Richard Brown *, Principal
Christina Carroll

BANDA
Karen Slotter, Percussion

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER
Richard Brown

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

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

The Tales of Hoffmann
October 24-27, 2014
Frau Margot
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—Amazon Books, 2014
GIANCARLO GUERRERO (COSTA RICA)  
CONDUCTOR  
Houston Grand Opera Debut  
About the Artist: Giancarlo Guerrero is the music director of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and principal guest conductor of Cleveland Orchestra Miami. He has established himself with many of the major North American symphony orchestras, including those of Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, among others. He is also known to audiences of large summer festivals such as the Hollywood Bowl (Los Angeles) and Blossom Music Festival (Cleveland). In opera, Maestro Guerrero has conducted new productions of Carmen, La bohème, and Rigoletto, and in 2008 conducted the Australian premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's one-act opera Ainadamar at the Adelaide Festival. In Europe, he recently made debuts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Copenhagen Philharmonic, and Frankfurt Radio Symphony. This season, he makes debuts with the Orchestre National de France, Tonkünstler Orchester, and Residentie Orkest (The Hague Philharmonic). His recordings with Nashville Symphony won Grammy Awards in 2011 and 2012, including Best Orchestral Performance. A fervent contemporary music advocate, he has championed works by John Adams, John Corigliano, Osvaldo Golijov, Jennifer Higdon, Michael Daugherty, Roberto Sierra, and Richard Danielpour.

MICHAEL GRANDAGE  
(UNITED KINGDOM)  
ORIGINAL DIRECTOR  
About the Artist: Michael Grandage formed the Michael Grandage Company in 2012 with James Bierman to produce work in film, theater, and television. Before that, Grandage was artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse (2002–12) and artistic director of Sheffield Theatres (2000–05). He is the recipient of Tony, Drama Desk, Olivier, Evening Standard, Critics’ Circle, and South Bank awards. His most recent work for the Michael Grandage Company included directing a season of five plays at the Noel Coward Theatre: Privates on Parade with Simon Russell Beale; Peter and Alice, a new play by John Logan that starred Judi Dench and Ben Whishaw; The Cripple of Inishmaan starring Daniel Radcliffe; A Midsummer Night’s Dream with Sheridan Smith and David Walliams; and Henry V starring Jude Law. For the Donmar Warehouse, he directed 25 productions including King Lear with Derek Jacobi, Red with Eddie Redmayne and Alfred Molina, and Frost/Nixon with Michael Sheen and Frank Langella. He has also directed numerous productions in the West End as well as for Sheffield Theatres (a complex of three theaters in Sheffield, South Yorkshire). His opera work includes Billy Budd and The Marriage of Figaro for Glyndebourne as well as productions at the Metropolitan Opera. Grandage is president of Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London and author of the book A Decade at the Donmar (2012). He was appointed CBE in the 2011 Queen’s Birthday Honours.

LOUISA MULLER (UNITED STATES)  
DIRECTOR  
About the Artist: In recent seasons, Louisa Muller has made directing debuts at the Metropolitan Opera (Don Giovanni), Lyric Opera of Chicago (La bohème), Grand Théâtre de Genève (Madame Butterfly), and Atlanta Opera (Faust). She is in her seventh season on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera, where she has assisted such directors as David McVicar, Robert Carsen, Bartlett Sher, Michael Grandage, Stephen Wadsworth, and Giancarlo del Monaco. She has also served on the directing staffs of Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has served as a guest coach for Wolf Trap Opera Studio, Lawrence University, and the University of Texas at Brownsville and has directed opera scenes for The Santa Fe Opera and Wolf Trap Opera Studio. This season she returns to the Metropolitan Opera to direct Don Giovanni again and to assist David McVicar on a new production of Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci. In summer 2015, she will direct a new production of John Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles for Wolf Trap Opera and apprentice scenes for Santa Fe Opera.

CHRISTOPHER ORAM  
(UNITED KINGDOM)  
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER  
About the Artist: Christopher Oram trained at the West Sussex College of Art and Design and has collaborated with Michael Grandage on numerous productions since 1996. Recent engagements include a double-bill of Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies (Royal Shakespeare Company: Stratford, London, New York); Macbeth (Manchester International Festival and Park Avenue Armory); Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Evita (Broadway); Company (Sheffield Crucible); Don Giovanni (Metropolitan Opera); Red (Donmar Warehouse, Broadway, Los Angeles); King Lear (Donmar, Brooklyn Academy of Music); and Billy Budd (Glyndebourne, Brooklyn Academy of Music). As part of the inaugural season for the Michael Grandage Company, he designed Privates on Parade, Peter and Alice, The Cripple of Inishmaan (also seen on Broadway), A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Henry V. Among his forthcoming engagements is Man and Superman for the...
Who’s Who

Madame Butterfly

Neils Austin (United Kingdom)
Original Lighting Designer
About the Artist: Neil Austin works internationally on plays, musicals, opera, and dance and is a fellow of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has won numerous best lighting awards, including a 2010 Tony Award for Red, a 2011 Olivier Award for The White Guard (National Theatre), and a 2008 Knight of Illumination Award for Parade (Donmar Warehouse). He was also nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for Evita (Broadway), a 2009 Olivier Award for Piaf and No Man’s Land, an Irish Times Theatre Award for No Man’s Land, a 2007 Olivier Award for Thérèse Raquin (National Theatre), an Outer Critics Circle Award for Frost/Nixon (Broadway), and a 2009 Whatsonstage.com Award for Oedipus, Piaf, and No Man’s Land. Austin was named as one of the “25 Pacesetters on the London Arts Scene” by Variety in 2007.

Philip Alfano (United States)
Lighting Realizer
HGO Appearances: The Barber of Seville (lighting designer for Miller Outdoor Theatre revival, 2012) and Madame Butterfly (2011) at Miller Outdoor Theatre; The Bricklayer (lighting designer, 2012) and Your Name Means the Sea (2011) for HGOCo; and Studio Showcase (2012) and Così fan tutte (2011) for the HGO Studio. He is the lighting associate for HGO.
About the Artist: In addition to his work for HGO, Philip Alfano serves as the lighting supervisor for The Santa Fe Opera. Future Houston engagements include designing lights for the Rice University Shepherd School of Music production of Hansel and Gretel. Alfano holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in lighting design from the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Courtney D. Jones (United States)
Movement Advisor
As dancer: Show Boat (swing) and Die Fledermaus (2013).
About the Artist: Courtney D. Jones’s professional dance credits include Hope Stone Dance, Jennifer Muller/The Works, The Kevin Wynn Collection, and Freddick Bratcher and Company Contemporary Dance Theatre. Her theater credits include the first national tour of Broadway’s Wicked; a concert presentation of Show Boat at Carnegie Hall; choreographer for Panto Rapunzel (and Zombies) and assistant to the choreographer for Panto Red Riding Hood at Stages Repertory Theatre; and performances in Failure: A Love Story, Auntie Mame, Panto Pinocchio, In the Next Room, Urban Cowboy the Musical, and A Chorus Line at Stages Repertory Theatre. She earned a bachelor of fine arts degree at SUNY Purchase and is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Houston. She co-founded Houston Dance Collective and serves as a consultant at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, her alma mater. She is also a guest teacher and choreographer under her own CdJ Project. She was among Dance magazine’s “25 to Watch” in 2012 and was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts in 1999.

Richard Bado (United States)
Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Chorus Master
About the Artist: A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Richard Bado has conducted at La Scala, Opéra National de Paris, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, the Tulsa Opera, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, Wolf Trap Opera, and Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, he appeared last season in a recital tour with Renée Fleming. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vergas, Samuel Ramey, and Nathan Gunn and has appeared on A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor. He holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University; he also studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. He is the director of the opera studies program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. He has served on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Dolora Zajick Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, and the International Vocal School in Moscow and has served on the music staffs of the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, the Bolshoi Opera Young Artist Program, Opera Australia, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Chautauqua Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera.

Ana María Martínez (Puerto Rico)
Soprano—Cio-Cio-San
About the Artist: Grammy Award–winner Ana Maria Martínez began the 2014–15 season at Lyric Opera of Chicago, performing Donna Elvira in a new Robert Falls production of Don Giovanni, followed by a return to Opéra National de Paris as Mimi in La bohème. Later this season, she returns to Dallas Opera as Mimi concludes the season in the leading role of Paolina in the United Kingdom’s first professionally staged performances of Donizetti’s Poliuto at the Glyndebourne Festival. Recent highlights include her acclaimed Rusalka in a new David McVicar production and her role debut as Desdemona in Otello last season at Lyric Opera of Chicago, a return to the Vienna State Opera as Cio-Cio-San in Madame Butterfly conducted by Plácido Domingo, Cio-Cio San and Mimi at the Bavarian State Opera, a concert with Plácido Domingo at Teatro Real in Madrid and at HSBC Arena in Rio de Janeiro as part of the World Cup celebration, a gala concert alongside baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky with the Turkish Opera and Ballet Theatre, and the November release of a recording of Manon Lescaut with Martínez in the title role opposite tenor Andrea Bocelli and conducted by Domingo. In addition, Martínez created a unique recital program with pianist Craig Terry (HGO Studio 2000–02) conducted by Domingo. In addition, Martínez created a unique recital program with pianist Craig Terry (HGO Studio 2000–02) that she brought to Vocal Arts DC and to the Broad Stage in Santa Monica.

Alexey Dolgov (Russia)
Tenor—Pinkerton

HGO Appearances: Tenor/Bacchus in Ariadne auf Naxos (2011), Maria Cavaradossi in Tosca (2010), and Rodolfo in performances of La bohème (2008).

About the Artist: Siberian tenor Alexey Dolgov is a principal soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre. This season and beyond, he will sing the Verdi Requiem in Nice and with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Stockholm, Rodolfo in La bohème at Washington National Opera, and Lensky in Eugene Onegin and the title role of Roberto Devereux at Bavarian State Opera. He is also scheduled to return to the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera, and Opéra de Montreal. He will make his company debuts at Gran Teatre del Liceu and at Teatro Real as Cassio in Otello, and at La Monnaie as Prince Gvidon in The Golden Cockerel. Last season, he made his house debut at Berlin State Opera (Rodolfo in La bohème), performed in Eugene Onegin in concert with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, and sang leading roles in La traviata, La bohème, and Prince Igor at the Bolshoi. Past highlights include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Cassio, his role debut as Tamino in The Magic Flute (Opéra de Nice), and performing Vladimir Igorevitch in Prince Igor (Bolshoi Theatre). He also sang the title role in Roberto Devereux with Bavarian State Opera on tour in Japan and performed with the Metropolitan Opera on tour in Japan singing Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor, a role that he also sang at the Washington National Opera. He has sung Pinkerton in Madame Butterfly at Opera di Roma, the Saito Kinen Festival with Seiji Ozawa, and Washington National Opera.

Scott Hendricks (United States)
Baritone—Sharpless


About the Artist: Last season, Texan Scott Hendricks made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Sharpless in Madame Butterfly and performed Jack Rance in La fanciulla del West (Zurich). Other recent highlights include his Royal Opera, Covent Garden, debut as Scarpia in Tosca, a role he has also sung at Opéra National de Paris, Washington National Opera, and Bavarian State Opera; Germont in La traviata (La Monnaie, in a new production by Andrea Breth); role debuts as Michele in Il tabarro and Gianni Schicchi in a new production of Il trittico (Cologne Opera); Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen (Opéra National du Rhin); Sharpless in Madame Butterfly (Washington National Opera with Plácido Domingo); Jochanaan in Salome (La Monnaie); Amonasro in Aida and Iago in Otello (Canadian Opera Company); Conte di Luna in Il trovatore (La Monnaie); Marcello in La bohème (San Francisco Opera); the title role of Macbeth (La Monnaie), which received Opernwelt’s Production of the Year award; the title role of Król Roger (Gran Teatre del Liceu and Opéra National de Paris); and the Traveller in Death in Venice (Teatro La Fenice and Gran Teatre del Liceu). Engagements this season include Conte di Luna in Il trovatore at the Mikhailovsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, the title role of Macbeth for Netherlands Opera, Renato in Un ballo in maschera at La Monnaie, and Scarpia in Tosca for Israeli Opera.

Sofia Selowsky (United States)
Mezzo-soprano—Suzuki


About the Artist: Sofia Selowsky recently completed her master’s degree in voice at the University of Cincinnati College—Conservatory of Music (CCM). During the summer of 2014 she joined Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a member of the Gerdivine Young Artist Program, performing Mère Jeanne in Dialogues of the Carmelites and covering the Second Lady in The Magic Flute. Other previous roles include Lazuli in L’Étoile and Véronique in Bizet’s Le docteur Miracle (CCM Opera); Baba the Turk in The Rake’s Progress, Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus, and Florence Pike in Albert Herring (all at Harvard University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree); and Cecilia March in the European premiere of Mark Adamo’s Little Women (Intermezzo Foundation). She has appeared as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival. She was a national semifinalist in the 2014 Metropolitan Opera...
National Council Auditions; other recognition includes the Italo Tajo Memorial Award in the CCM Opera Scholarship Competition (2013), an Emerging Talent Award from the Kurt Weill Foundation’s Lotte Lenya Competition, the Emile Dieterle Scholarship (CCM), and an Artist Development Fellowship from Harvard University.

**John Easterlin (United States)**

**Tenor—Goro**

**Houston Grand Opera Debut**

**About the Artist:** Recent engagements for John Easterlin include the role of Andy Warhol in the world premiere of Philip Glass’s *The Perfect American* at Teatro Real and the English National Opera, and Larry King in the U.S. premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage’s *Anna Nicole* at the New York City Opera. At the Metropolitan Opera he has performed the Scrivener in *Khovanschina* and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*; a return engagement at the Met is scheduled for next season. Other recent performances include Andres in Wozzeck at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Miserà in *Boris Godunov* at Teatro Real; Jack O’Brien and Toby Higgins in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* with the Bolshoi Theatre Moscow and Teatro Real; Herod in Salome for his debut with the Vienna State Opera; Prince Nilsky in *The Gambler* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Squeak in *Billy Budd* and the Hunchback Brother in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, both at the Opéra National de Paris and the Lyric Opera of Chicago; and the Magician in *The Consul* with Glimmerglass Opera. Last season he made his house debut at Washington National Opera as Monostatos and performed Herod in *Salome* with the Merida Festival in Spain. He received 2008 Emmy and Peabody awards for a telecast of Los Angeles Opera’s production of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and two 2009 Grammy awards for Opera Recording of the Year and Classical Album of the Year.

**Reginald Smith Jr. (United States)**

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

**Bass-baritone—The Bonze**

**HGO Appearances:** Dancairo in *Carmen* and Marullo in *Rigoletto* (2014); Blind in *Die Fledermaus* (2014, 2013). HGO Studio artist (2013–15). *About the Artist:* Atlanta, Georgia, native Reginald Smith Jr. has performed the title role in *Falstaff*, Germont in *La traviata*, Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, Figaro and Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Capulet and the Duke in *Romeo and Juliet*, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Colline in *La bohème*, the title role in *The Mikado*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Billy in *River of Time*, and Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Awards include second place in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions for the central region, third place in the mid-south region, Encouragement Award from the London Foundation Competition, People’s Choice Award in the Dallas Opera Guild Competition, as well as first place in the National Opera Association Competition Scholarship Division and the Orpheus Vocal Competition Young Artist Division. Engagements for the summer of 2014 included the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly* for Cincinnati Opera. In concert this season, he performs in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, in a holiday pops concert with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and in Berlioz’s *Romeo and Juliet* with the Boise Philharmonic. He sings the Speaker in HGO’s student performances of *The Magic Flute*.

**D’Ana Lombard (United States)**

**Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow**

**Soprano—Kate Pinkerton**


**About the Artist:** D’Ana Lombard, a native of New York, was a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at Los Angeles Opera for the past two seasons. She earned her master’s degree at Mannes College. Previous performances include the title role in *Suor Angelica* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* conducted by Joseph Colaneri. She made her L.A. Opera debut as Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*. With the Colburn School in Los Angeles, she performed the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* under James Conlon and was conducted by Plácido Domingo at a gala in his honor. At L.A. Opera this past season, she studied/covered Alice in *Falstaff* and the title role of *Thaïs* and sang Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* conducted by James Conlon. Awards include the Metropolitan Opera National Council Rohatyn Great Promise Award, the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation Encouragement Award, the Gerda Lissner Foundation Encouragement Award, and the Marcello Giordani Foundation Award in memory of Sergio Franchi. This coming summer, she will sing Rosina in *The Ghosts of Versailles* with Wolf Trap Opera and will create the role of Eva in the world premiere of Jack Perla’s *An American Dream* with Seattle Opera. She is singing First Lady in HGO’s concurrent performances of *The Magic Flute*.

**Morgan Pearse (Australia)**

**Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow**

**Baritone—Prince Yamadori**


**About the Artist:** Morgan Pearse studied at the University of Sydney and its Sydney Conservatorium, as well as the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London. In 2013, he won the gold medal at the Royal Over-Seas League Competition. Roles include Lord Ellington in *La vie parisienne* at the RCM and the title role in *Owen Wingrave* with Sydney Chamber Opera. Last season at...
English National Opera, he performed Pompeo in *Benvenuto Cellini* directed by Terry Gilliam and Minos in *Arianna in Creta* at the RCM. He also sang the title role of *Imeneo* for London Handel Festival and the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Garibaldo in *Rodelinda*, and James in the world premiere of Jude Obermüller’s *I Remember the Ship* at the RCM. In Australia, he sang Apollo in *L’Orfeo* with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra on tour. Concerts and recitals include Schubert’s *Winterreise*, Fauré’s Requiem at the Sydney Opera House, performances of Britten’s *War Requiem* throughout Poland, and Handel’s *Messiah* with the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs at Sydney Opera House. He sings Papageno in HGO’s student performances of *The Magic Flute*, and later this season will sing Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*.

**Thomas Richards (United States)**  
*Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow Bass-baritone—Imperial Commissioner*  

**About the Artist:** A native of Burnsville, Minnesota, Thomas Richards was named a winner of the 2013 Grand Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He earned his master of music degree at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music (CCM). His roles with CCM Opera include Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Father Trulove in *The Rake’s Progress*, and Frank Maurrant in *Street Scene*. Recently, he performed Colline in *La bohème* at the Central City Opera Festival and sang Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the Merola Opera Program. For the 2014 Glimmerglass Festival, he performed The Bonze in *Madame Butterfly*, Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Orville Mason in *An American Tragedy*. This coming March, he will perform with Gotham Chamber Opera in the world premiere of *The Tempest Songbook*, comprising incidental music for *The Tempest* attributed to Purcell along with Kaija Saariaho’s 2004 *Tempest Songbook*. He appears as Priest/Armed Man in HGO’s concurrent performances of *The Magic Flute*.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

The Magic Flute

A Singspiel in Two Acts
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

English Translation by Jeremy Sams
Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
Sung in English with projected text

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

Tamino
David Portillo *

First Lady
D’Ana Lombard †
Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow

Second Lady
Megan Samarin *†
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Third Lady
Renée Tatum

Papageno
Michael Samuel ‡
Morgan Pearse † (February 10m, 11, 13m)
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow

Queen of the Night
Kathryn Lewek *

Monostatos
Aaron Pegram *

Pamina
Nicole Heaston ‡
Pureum Jo † (February 10m, 11, 13m)
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis/Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

Three Spirits
Hannah Haw *
Brooke Camryn Caballero *
Eden Nielson *

Speaker of the Temple
Patrick Carfizzi
Reginald Smith Jr. † (February 10m, 11, 13m)
Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Memorial Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene Endowed Fellow

Sarastro
Morris Robinson

Priests/Armed Men
Kevin Ray ‡
Thomas Richards †
Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Bahr Fellow

Papagena
Pureum Jo *†
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and Ms. Sasha Davis/Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow
Alicia Gianni ‡ (February 10m, 11, 13m)

This production was created by English National Opera.

Houston Methodist is the official health care provider for Houston Grand Opera.

United Airlines is the official airline of Houston Grand Opera.

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

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

Conductor
Robert Spano
Emily Senturia  *† (February 10m, 11, 13m)
Beth Madison Fellow

Production
Sir Nicholas Hytner

Revival Director
Ian Rutherford

Set and Costume Designer
Bob Crowley *

Original Lighting Designer
Nick Chelton

Lighting Realizer
Michael James Clark

Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Musical Preparation
Peter Pasztor ‡
Patrick Harvey ‡
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair

Children’s Musical Preparation
Karen Reeves

Dialogue Coach
Jim Johnson

Stage Manager
Kristen E. Burke

Assistant Director
Katrina Bachus

Bird Trainers
Mark Bozeman and Corinna Sadler

Surtitles by
Paul Hopper, from the English translation by Jeremy Sams

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Spirit Cover
Johana Lenington


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.
THE MAGIC FLUTE LASTS APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS AND 35 MINUTES, INCLUDING ONE INTERMISSION.

ACT I

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

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

In Sarastro’s realm, Monostatos assaults Pamina. Papageno (who has been separated from Tamino) unexpectedly appears and frightens him off. He comforts Pamina and they escape.

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

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

INTERMISSION

ACT II

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

Monostatos has another opportunity to violate Pamina and this time it is the Queen who intervenes to defend her. She gives her daughter a dagger with instructions to kill Sarastro and recover the sign of the sun from him. Monostatos has overheard and now threatens to betray Pamina if she does not yield to him. Pamina, distraught, confesses everything to Sarastro, who assures her that he has no thought of revenge on her mother.

Tamino and Papageno begin a second trial of silence, the contemplation of mortality. Papageno cheats by chatting to an old lady who says she is his girlfriend. The Three Spirits bring food and drink, and return the magic instruments to assist them. At the sound of Tamino’s flute, Pamina appears and cannot understand why he rejects her in silence. She concludes that he no longer loves her.

Sarastro congratulates Tamino on his strength of will but tells him that, after one last meeting, he may never see Pamina again. The lovers greet each other joyfully but sadly part. Papageno for this lie by padlocking his mouth; they then give Tamino a portrait of Pamina, the Queen’s daughter, with whom Tamino falls in love.

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

—Nicholas Hytner

HGO PERFORMANCE HISTORY


Performances beginning at 7:30 p.m. will end at approximately 10:05 p.m.

Performances beginning at 2 p.m. will end at approximately 4:35 p.m.

At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.
Houston Grand Opera Chorus

Richard Bado, Chorus Master—The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Patrick Harvey, Assistant Chorus Master—Mr. and Mrs. James A. Elkins Endowed Chair

Geordie Alexander
Dennis Arrowsmith
Alyssa Barnes
G. Leslie Biffle
Brennan Blankenship
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Cecilia Duarte
Ashly Evans
Cecilia Felix
Ami Figg
Laurelle Gowing
Joshua Green
Douglas E. Henshaw
Frankie Hickman
Sasha Holloway
James R. Jennings
Joy Jonstone
Esther M. Kelly
Joe Key
Kirsten Koerner

Wesley Landry
Miles Robert Lutterbie
Alejandro Magallón
Keenan Manceaux
Neal Martinez
Byron J. Mayes
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Jeff Monette
Stacia Morgan
Laura Elizabeth Patterson
Patrick Perez
Cristino Perez
Ardeen Pierre
Steven Ponder
Said Henry Pressley
Elisabeth Rosenberg
Stephanie Sanchez
Michael J. Sawyer
Leigh Tomlinson
John Weinel
Jennifer Wright

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Scott Gaille

Based on Mr. Gaille’s course at Rice University’s Graduate School of Business, “the book on how energy companies grow by acquiring international concessions.”

- BISNOW Magazine

Supernumeraries

BEARS
Luke Fedell
Storey Hinojosa
Stephanie Marzuola
Jonathan Teverbaugh

CHILDREN
Issa Abusada
Akira Bunge
Sam Dill
Jacqueline Hickman
Thomas Hickman
Emily Johnson
Morgan McGhee
Alexandria McGhee
Elia Minson
Bergen Nielson
Sophia Perez
Jacob Sutton
Kennedi C. Woods
Donovan C. Woods
Robert Spano (United States)  
Conductor  
About the Artist: Conductor, pianist, composer, and pedagogue Robert Spano is now in his 14th season as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He is also music director of the Aspen Music Festival and School, where he oversees programming of more than 300 events and educational programs for students. Spano's work with the Atlanta School of Composers reflects his commitment to American contemporary music: he has led ASO performances at Carnegie Hall; Lincoln Center; and the Ravinia, Ojai, and Savannah Music Festivals. He has made guest appearances with the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; the San Francisco, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, and Philadelphia symphony orchestras; and Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, BBC Symphony, and Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He has also conducted for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Welsh National Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago; and the 2005 and 2009 Seattle Opera productions of Wagner's Ring cycle. Recent engagements include Britten's War Requiem at Carnegie Hall, Aida in Atlanta, and the world premiere of Steven Stucky's The Classical Style in Ojai, which he reprised at Carnegie Hall in December. His work at the Aspen Music Festival and School this past summer included eight concerts and the premiere of his Hölderlin Songs with soprano Susanna Phillips. His recordings for Telarc, Deutsche Grammophon, and ASO Media have received six Grammy Awards. Maestro Spano, a resident of Atlanta, was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 2012.

Emily Senturia (United States)  
Beth Madison Fellow  
Conductor (February 10, 11, 13)  
About the Artist: Emily Senturia, a répétiteur from San Francisco, has been on the music staff for nearly 40 operatic productions at Virginia Opera, Brevard Music Center, Rice University, and Indiana University, among others. She held the 2011–12 Lucille Graham Répétiteur/Conducting Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She spent four summers as a coaching fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, where most recently she was a coach for Peter Grimes and chorus master for Candide. Senturia recently served as assistant conductor and coach for The Barber of Seville and Tosca with Pensacola Opera, as well as Carmen with The Atlanta Opera. During the summer of 2014, she worked on Julius Caesar at Wolf Trap Opera. Her 2014–15 assignments at HGO include serving as coach and cover conductor for Così fan tutte, A Christmas Carol, and Sweeney Todd.

Sir Nicholas Hytner (United Kingdom)  
Original Director  
About the Artist: Theater, film, and opera director Nicholas Hytner is director of the National Theatre in London. His work includes productions at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter; Leeds Playhouse; and Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, where he was associate director. He has directed Measure for Measure, The Tempest, and King Lear for the Royal Shakespeare Company. His work for the National Theatre includes Ghetto, The Wind in the Willows, The Madness of George III, The Recruiting Officer, Carousel, The Cripple of Inishmaan, The Winter's Tale, and Mother Clap's Molly House. During his tenure as director of the National, his productions have included Henry V; His Dark Materials; The History Boys; Stuff Happens; Henry IV Parts 1 & 2; Southwark Fair; The Alchemist; The Man of Mode; The Rose Tattoo; Rafa; Rafta…; Much Ado About Nothing; Major Barbara; England People Very Nice; Phèdre; The Habit of Art; London Assurance; Hamlet; One Man Two Guvnors; Collaborators; Travelling Light; Timon of Athens; People; Cocktail Sticks; Othello; and Fifty Years on Stage. Other work in London includes Miss Saigon, The Importance of Being Earnest, Cressida, The Lady in the Van, and Orpheus Descending. In New York, he has directed Carousel, Twelfth Night, and Sweet Smell of Success. His work in opera includes productions for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Kent Opera; English National Opera; Glyndebourne; Paris Opera; the Théâtre du Châtelet; Geneva Opera; and the Bavarian State Opera. Films include The Madness of King George, The Crucible, The Object of My Affection, and The History Boys.

Ian Rutherford (United Kingdom)  
Director  
About the Artist: Ian Rutherford studied at Guildhall School of Music, Sheffield University, and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art before joining English National Opera (ENO). As a staff director for ENO, he directed critically acclaimed revivals of The Barber of Seville, Falstaff, Madame Butterfly, The Magic Flute, and La bohème. With Diva Opera (Britain's premier chamber opera company) he has directed Tosca, La traviata, Gianni Schicchi, Lucia di Lammermoor, and La belle Hélène; these productions have toured throughout Europe. He has also directed new productions of Madame Butterfly for Opera Holland Park, Cendrillon for Royal Academy of Music, La bohème for Blackheath Concert Halls, and the world premiere of Christopher Bowers-Broadbent's The Face at Gray’s Inn, London. Rutherford directed a new production of Il matrimonio segreto for Festival les Azuriales in Cap Ferrat, France, which was so favorably received in 2003 that it returned in 2004. He also directed the revivals of many David Alden productions, including the Ariodante seen at HGO (also staged...
at Vlaamse Opera and Opera Oviedo); Lucia di Lammermoor for Canadian Opera Company, Opera Gothenburg, and Washington National Opera; Peter Grimes at Opera Oviedo and Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Billy Budd for the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He also directed revivals of Melly Still's Rusalka for Opera Slovenia, and David McVicar's Die Meistersinger at Lyric Opera of Chicago and The Rape of Lucretia at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Future plans include Otello at Royal Swedish Opera, The Abduction from the Seraglio for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Die Meistersinger at San Francisco Opera.

Bob Crowley (United Kingdom)
Set and Costume Designer
Houston Grand Opera Debut

About the Artist: Recent productions for six-time Tony Award–winner Bob Crowley include Skylicht for Wyndham's Theatre, London; Aladdin for Disney, Toronto, and Broadway; The Glass Menagerie for the American Repertory Theatre and Broadway; The Audience at the Gielgud Theatre; Once in London, on Broadway (Tony Award), and U.S. tour; People for the National Theatre; The Dark Earth and the Light Sky for the Almeida; and Disney's The Little Mermaid in the Netherlands and Russia. He has designed numerous productions for the National Theatre, most recently including Travelling Light, Collaborators, King James Bible, Juno and the Paycock (also seen at the Abbey Theatre Dublin), The Habit of Art, The Power of Yes, Phèdre, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Gethsemane, Fram (which he also co-directed with Tony Harrison), and The History Boys, which won Crowley a Tony Award for the Broadway performances. He has designed more than 25 productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, including Les liaisons dangereuses and The Plantagenets (Olivier Award); for the Donmar Warehouse, he designed Into the Woods and Orpheus Descending. His work in opera includes Don Carlos for the Metropolitan Opera; La traviata for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; and The Cunning Little Vixen for Théâtre du Châtelet. Future projects include An American in Paris for Théâtre du Châtelet and Broadway. He has received the Royal Designer for Industry Award and the Robert L. B. Tobin Award for Lifetime Achievement in Theatrical Design at the TDF Irene Sharaff Awards in New York.

Nick Chelton (United Kingdom)
Original Lighting Designer


About the Artist: Nick Chelton, a native of London, has designed lighting for numerous plays and musicals in the West End and for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, the Almeida, and the Abbey Theatre Dublin. He has lit more than 20 productions at English National Opera, including Rusalka, Doctor Faust, The Magic Flute, The Love for Three Oranges, Figaro's Wedding, and Il trittico. For the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he designed lighting for The Rake's Progress, Macbeth, Samson et Dalila, Tannhäuser, Un re in ascolto, Mitridate, and Eugene Onegin. For City of Birmingham Touring Opera (now Birmingham Opera Company), he lit The Ring Saga, an arrangement of Wagner's Ring by Jonathan Dove and Graham Vick. He has lit many productions for Scottish Opera and the Welsh National Opera including The Cunning Little Vixen and The Makropulos Case and has also worked with the opera companies of Paris, Geneva, Monte Carlo, Amstterdam, Madrid, Barcelona, Venice, Berlin, Tel Aviv, Sydney, New York (Metropolitan), Chicago, and many others. In television, he lit the dramas Peter in Paradise and Family.

Michael James Clark
Lighting Realizer


About the Artist: In addition to his work at HGO, Michael James Clark was a member of the lighting department at The Santa Fe Opera for seven seasons. For Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, he lit Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music and The Coronation of Poppea. He holds a bachelor’s degree in lighting design from North Carolina School of the Arts.

Richard Bado (United States)
The Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair

Chorus Master

For information about Richard Bado, please see p. 44.

David Portillo (United States)
Tenor — Tamino

Houston Grand Opera Debut

About the Artist: This season, David Portillo sings Don Ramiro in La Cenerentola for his debut at Washington National Opera and returns to Aix-en-Provence as Pedrillo in The Abduction from the Seraglio and to Arizona Opera for Tonio in The Daughter of the Regiment. Concert engagements include Handel’s Messiah with St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, and Richmond Symphony, and Berlioz’s rarely performed Lélio with the Dayton Philharmonic. Last season, he traveled to Japan to sing Gonzalve in L’heure espagnole for the Saito-Kinen Festival and to Europe for debuts with the Vienna State Opera as Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, Aix-en-Provence as Lurcanio in Ariodante, Salzburg Festival as
Don Gaspar in La favorite, and Opera Angers-Nantes as Narciso in Il turco in Italia. Other recent engagements include Ralph Rackstraw in HMS Pinafore with Arizona Opera, Almaviva for Tulsa Opera and for a debut at Palm Beach Opera, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni in a return to Opera Philadelphia and for Fort Worth Opera, Trin in La fanciulla del West for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Renaud in Armide with the Metropolitan Opera/ Juilliard Opera, Don Ottavio and Ferrando in Così fan tutte for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Almaviva and Belmonte in The Abduction from the Seraglio for Pittsburgh Opera, Ferrando with Virginia Opera, Narciso and Flute in A Midsummer Night’s Dream for Wolf Trap Opera, Tonio for Dayton Opera, and Ferdinand in The Tempest for the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy.

Nicole Heaston (United States)  
Soprano—Pamina  
About the Artist: Since her debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Zerlina in Don Giovanni, Nicole Heaston has appeared regularly with that company, including the roles of Ilia in Idomeneo, Pamina in The Magic Flute conducted by James Levine, and Echo in Ariadne auf Naxos. In recent seasons she made her Italian debut in Adriano in Siria at the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini, Jesi, and her debut with the Los Angeles Opera as Musetta in La bohème. She also joined New Orleans Opera in Rigoletto, and returned to Carnegie Hall for the Marilyn Horne Foundation’s annual recital, The Song Continues. Other recent engagements include the title role of Handel’s Alcina at the Norske Opera House in Norway, Armina in La finta giardiniere in Glyndebourne following a debut as Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro at Opéra de Lille, Haydn’s The Creation for Teatro Carlo Felice, and her Semperoper Dresden debut in the title role of The Coronation of Poppea. She has performed Musetta in La bohème with Fort Worth Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City and in her debut with New York City Opera alongside Rolando Villazón, which was recorded and broadcast nationwide.

Pureum Jo (Korea)  
Mr. Joseph Matulevich and  
Ms. Sasha Davis/Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow  
Soprano—Pamina (February 10, 11, 13);  
Papagena (Jan. 30, Feb. 1m, 4, 7, 14)  
HGO Appearances: HGO debut.  
About the Artist: Pureum Jo earned a master of music degree at The Juilliard School. She has appeared in the title role of Matsuoka (Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Lincoln Center Festival); Blanche in Dialogues of the Carmelites (The Chautauqua Institution); Sandrina in La finta giardiniere and Fraarte in Radamisto (The Juilliard School); and Micaela in Carmen (Aspen Music Festival). She has covered Norina in Don Pasquale and Giulia in La scala di seta (The Juilliard School). She has also performed at Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall, including performances with the Marilyn Horne Foundation’s recital series The Song Continues; Juilliard’s Wednesdays at One series; and a concert of Rameau works with Juilliard415. She has appeared as a soloist in Haydn’s Mass in Time of War and Mozart’s Laudate Dominum with New York City’s Voices of Ascension. She will perform again with that ensemble this season in the Mozart Requiem and Coronation Mass. She is the recipient of the Anna Case MacKay Scholarship and the Novic Grant.
The Magic Flute

Kathryn Lewek (United States)
Soprano—Queen of the Night
Houston Grand Opera Debut
About the Artist: A double prize winner at the 2013 Operalia World Opera Competition, Kathryn Lewek has performed her signature role, the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute, internationally. The role has introduced her to Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Bregenz Festival, the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Opera Leipzig, Opéra de Toulon, English National Opera, Nashville Opera, and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. This season, she sings the Queen of the Night with The Royal Danish Opera, Vienna State Opera, Welsh National Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. Recent performances include the role of La Fée in Cendrillon with New Orleans Opera and Angelica in Handel’s Orlando with the Hobart Baroque in Tasmania, for which she earned a Helpmann Award nomination. Previous European debuts include Dolcina in Suor Angelica with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester and Jessica in the world premiere of André Tchaikowsky’s The Merchant of Venice with the Bregenz Festival in a production that won the International Opera Award in 2014 for best world premiere. This season, she will sing her first performances of the title role in a new production of Lucia di Lammermoor with Opera Carolina, make a company debut with Glimmerglass Opera as Cunegonde in Candide, and perform Haydn’s Creation under the baton of John Nelson. Future seasons include a return to the Deutsche Oper Berlin in a role debut, plus company debuts with Teatro Real, Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Théâtre du Capitole, and Opéra National de Bordeaux.

Morris Robinson (United States)
Bass—Sarastro
HGO Appearances: Lodovico in Otello (2014); Commendatore in Don Giovanni and Joe in Show Boat (2013).
About the Artist: A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Morris Robinson made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Fidelio. He has since appeared there as Sarastro in The Magic Flute, Ferrando in Il trovatore, the King in Aida, and in roles in Nabucco, Tannhäuser, and new productions of Les Troyens and Salome. He has also appeared at the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Vancouver Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Australia, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. His many roles include Osmin in The Abduction from the Seraglio, Ramfis in Aida, Zaccaria in Nabucco, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos, Timur in Turandot, the Bonze in Madame Butterfly, Padre Guardiano in La forza del destino, Ferrando in Il trovatore, and Fasolt in Das Rheingold. This season, he returns to Opera Philadelphia as the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos and to the Atlanta Opera in Rigoletto.

Michael Sumuel (United States)
Bass-baritone—Papageno
About the Artist: Michael Sumuel began the 2014–15 season at Lyric Opera of Chicago as Masetto in a new Robert Falls production of Don Giovanni conducted by Sir Andrew Davis. Later this season, he returns to Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Junius in The Rape of Lucretia. On the concert stage, he will sing a series of Bach cantatas in a return to Mercury in Houston; perform in Handel’s Messiah with the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; and appear in selected scenes from Porgy and Bess with the Santa Barbara Symphony. This season also marked his debut with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Edward Polchick in Handel’s Messiah, performing the same work at the Louisiana Philharmonic. He also debuted at Central City Opera, singing the title role in The Marriage of Figaro. He has performed with San Francisco Opera (Tom in the world premiere of Christopher Theofanidis’s Heart of a Soldier, Elviro in Xerxes) and with the San Francisco Symphony (Messiah and Copland’s Old American Songs). Collaborating with Da Camera of Houston, he sang selected songs of Brahms and Schönberg in a multimedia song project called In the Garden of Dreams. He made his European operatic debut as Schaunard in La bohème at Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Morgan Pearse (Australia)
Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau Jr. Fellow Baritone—Papageno (February 10, 11, 13)
For information about Morgan Pearse, please see p. 46.

Patrick Carfizzi (United States)
Bass-baritone—Speaker
About the Artist: Patrick Carfizzi began the 2014–15 season with the St. Louis Symphony under the baton of Markus Stenz in the Brahms Requiem and Vier ernste Gesänge, followed by his company debut with Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Mustafa in The Italian Girl in Algiers. Later this season, he will return to Seattle Opera as the Music Master and Truffaldino in Ariadne auf Naxos and will round out the season with his role and company debut in the title role of Don Pasquale with the Hesse State
Theater in Wiesbaden, Germany. During the 2013–14 season, he celebrated his 300th performance with the Metropolitan Opera, where he has performed, among other roles, Quince in Tim Albery’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream conducted by James Conlon, Frank in Jeremy Sams’s new production of Die Fledermaus, and Schaunard in Franco Zeffirelli’s production of La bohème, which was broadcast to movie theaters worldwide on the Live in HD series. Other recent highlights include a concert production of Peter Grimes with the St. Louis Symphony under the baton of David Robertson, performed both in St. Louis’s Powell Hall and at Carnegie Hall; a return to the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for his role debut as Dulcamara in The Elixir of Love; and Henry Kissinger in John Adams’s Nixon in China with San Francisco Opera.

**Reginald Smith Jr. (United States)**

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

**Bass-baritone—Speaker (February 10, 11, 13)**

For information about Reginald Smith Jr., please see p. 46.

**Aaron Pegram (United States)**

**Tenor—Monostatos**

Houston Grand Opera Debut

About the Artist: Tenor Aaron Pegram has been a member of the ensemble with Semperoper Dresden for five seasons, last season adding to his list of credits with the company the roles of Pang in Turandot, Brighella in Ariadne auf Naxos, and Remendado in Carmen. Other roles he has performed with the company include Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, Pedrillo in The Abduction from the Seraglio, Nazarene in Salome, Steersman in The Flying Dutchman, Elemer in Arabella, Lippo Fiorentino in Street Scene, Heinrich der Schreiber in Tamahäuser, Cajus in Falstaff, Monostatos in The Magic Flute, Camille in The Merry Widow, Goro in Madame Butterfly, and Gastone in La traviata, among others. In summer 2013, he returned to The Santa Fe Opera as Baron Puck in La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein. He made his New York City Opera debut as Goro, as well as covering Bardolfo in Falstaff for the company. He has appeared with Santa Fe Opera as Second Shepherd in Strauss’s Daphne, the Herald in Cendrillon, and Basilio in The Marriage of Figaro. His road to the operatic stage began in 2003 after winning the second prize at the Heinz Rehfuss Singing Actor Award sponsored by the Orlando Opera, where he performed Alfred in Die Fledermaus, Little Bat in Susannah, Nemorino in The Elixir of Love, Beppe in Pagliacci, The Swan in Carmina Burana, and the lead tenor role in The Mikado, Nanki Poo, directed by Dorothy Danner. Previously, he had a successful career at Walt Disney World in Florida playing over 1,500 performances in the title role of The Hunchback of Notre Dame: A Musical Adventure.

**D’Ana Lombard (United States)**

Lynne Murray Sr. Educational Foundation Fellow

**Soprano—First Lady**

For information about D’Ana Lombard, please see p. 46.

**Megan Samarin (United States)**

Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

**Mezzo-soprano—Second Lady**


About the Artist: Last summer, Megan Samarin was a Wolf Trap Opera Studio Artist, singing La Marchande in Les mamelles de Tirésias. She earned her bachelor’s degree in classical vocal performance at the Manhattan School of Music, where she sang Farnace in La Doriclea, Anne in The Mother of Us All, and Vénus in Orphée aux enfers. As a member of the Seagle Music Colony Young Artist Program in summer 2013, she sang Madame Larina in Eugene Onegin, Cherubino in John Davies’s The Three Little Pigs, Cis in Albert Herring, Third Graduate in Street Scene, and Ethel in 42nd Street. She was featured at the Brevard Music Center Janiec Opera Company as Soeur Mathilde in Dialogues.
of the Carmelites and Cousin Hebe in Gilbert and Sullivan’s HMS Pinafore. With the New York Lyric Opera Theater, she performed Hansel in Hansel and Gretel, and with Opera on the Avalon she sang the Flower Girl in The Marriage of Figaro. She is a 2014 District Encouragement Award winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Next summer, she will sing Marzia in Vivaldi’s Ciaot in Utica at Glimmerglass Opera. Later this season at HGO, she will sing Johanna in Sweeney Todd. Alicia Gianni was nominated for Houston’s Best Jazz Vocalist in the Houston Press 2011 Music Awards. Earlier this season she performed in concerts with the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra and at Arizona Opera in a week-long Christmas Cabaret of music from film. She has sung Despina in Così fan tutte and Fortuna/Giunone in Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria with Wolf Trap Opera; Countess Ceprano in Rigoletto with Florida Grand Opera, and the title role in a concert performance of Suor Angelica as part of the summer festival in Torre del Lago, Italy. During her studies at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music, she performed Micaela in Carmen, Mrs. Poe in The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe, Infantin Klara in Zemlinsky’s Der Zwerg, and Zillergut in The Good Soldier Schweik. Her concert repertoire includes the Brahms Requiem, Mozart’s C Minor Mass, and the Mozart Requiem. With the Houston Symphony, she was featured in a 2007 New Year’s Eve performance under the baton of Maestro Randall Craig Fleischer, and again in 2008 performing Kapilow’s Green Eggs and Ham as part of the symphony’s Children’s Series. For information about Thomas Richards, please see p. 47. Renée Tatum opened the 2014–15 season with a return to the Metropolitan Opera as the Second Lady in Julie Taymor’s production of The Magic Flute led by Ádám Fischer. Last season, the California native made her role debuts as Suzuki in Madame Butterfly with Chautauqua Opera and as Rosina in The Barber of Seville with Opera Las Vegas. Concert appearances included Salome with Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mozart’s Requiem with Music Director Daniel Stewart and the Santa Cruz Symphony, and Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mozart’s Requiem, and the Curtis Institute of Music, as a guest artist in association with Opera Philadelphia and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Recent engagements include his first performances of the title role of Peter Grimes with Chautauqua Opera as well as Don José in Carmen with Wolf Trap Opera and the Lyrique-en-Mer/Festival de Belle-Ile. While a Santa Fe apprentice artist, he created the role of the Second Clubman in the world premiere of Paul Moravec’s The Letter. Also with the company, he sang the role of the Poet in Menotti’s The Last Savage, covered the Drum Major in Wozzeck, and performed scenes of the title role of Idomeneo. On the concert stage, he has joined the Philadelphia Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and the Sunriver Music Festival for Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. He returns to HGO later this season to perform Beadle Bamford in Sweeney Todd. Kevin Ray joined his alma mater, the Curtis Institute of Music, as a guest artist in his first performances of Bacchus in Ariadne auf Naxos in association with Opera Philadelphia and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Recent engagements include his first performances of the title role of Peter Grimes with Chautauqua Opera as well as Don José in Carmen with Wolf Trap Opera and the Lyrique-en-Mer/Festival de Belle-Ile. While a Santa Fe apprentice artist, he created the role of the Second Clubman in the world premiere of Paul Moravec’s The Letter. Also with the company, he sang the role of the Poet in Menotti’s The Last Savage, covered the Drum Major in Wozzeck, and performed scenes of the title role of Idomeneo. On the concert stage, he has joined the Philadelphia Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and the Sunriver Music Festival for Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. He returns to HGO later this season to perform Beadle Bamford in Sweeney Todd.
For tickets or information visit HGO.org/OperaBall or call Clare Greene at 713-546-0277
Unsung Heroes:
HGO Props Master
Zoltan Fabry

Photos by Ashley Seals
They say that a cat has nine lives, but there are some humans who embody that saying because of the sheer number of activities they have pursued in their (supposedly singular) lifetimes! HGO Props Master Zoltan “Zoli” Fabry is one such person.

In the last issue of Opera Cues, I talked to Megan Freemantle about what makes her tick as properties design director for HGO. In this article, I spotlight the person on whom Megan relies most to make it all happen when a show hits the stage—Zoli. He is among HGO’s longest-serving and most loyal staff members, and he spoke with me early this season before a rehearsal of Otello.

Perryn Leech: It is clear from your accent that you are not originally from Texas. Where did you grow up and what is your family story?

Zoli Fabry: I grew up in the “old country”—Hungary. I am the second eldest sibling in a family that includes four brothers and one sister. My eldest brother won the Pulitzer Prize for his satirical writing and drawings, and the rest of the boys have all pursued careers in creative industries as well. One brother is in Houston with me: Istvan has been part of my crew at HGO up until last year. My son is now also in the local union, so we certainly keep it in the family!

How did you get started on the journey that brought you to HGO?

I went to an arts school in Budapest. It is a great school that you can attend between the ages of 10 and 21, and in addition to the traditional school curriculum, it teaches a huge range of skills and crafts. I loved attending school there—and as luck would have it, the building was opposite the Hungarian State Opera House so we were able to get tickets to see shows there. Very quickly I fell in love with opera and the wonderful music. This was an opera house where both Gustav Mahler and Giacomo Puccini had served as music director for a period of time, so I knew I was seeing opera for the first time at a really good place!

So obviously you fell in love with opera, started to work in the field professionally, and that was that, then—yes?

Not quite so fast! While in school, I honed very strong skills as a circus performer and therefore wanted to put all my efforts into becoming a professional. There was a team of seven of us who together performed a springboard and balancing act. We were able to perfect our act and eventually were offered a great job that would have allowed us to tour to the then-U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, that tour was
canceled, so we went to Germany instead. We were hired as a troupe and eventually, we moved to England to work for Britain’s most famous circus, called Billy Smart.

**Share a little about how you eventually got to the United States.**

Ringling Brothers—the famous traveling circus company—offered the troupe a job in Venice, Florida, and we decided that it would be a good adventure for us. We originally committed to four years but then we were extended an additional two. It was an amazing experience, but that type of circus performing is not often a long-term career. As you get older, it becomes much more difficult to maintain the high performance level year after year. The other guys in the troupe are like my second family, though, and I still see each of them every year as they all still live in the United States.

One of my friends still works as a professional consultant and planner of theatrical shows. I like the Cirque du Soleil–type performances; the work these companies have produced over the last two decades has really taken circus and acrobatic skills to another level. They have added technical elements and high production values, but I cannot help missing the old craft of the traditional circus.

**What an amazing story! But you still haven’t arrived in Texas. How did that happen?**

My first wife was a Houston girl and we moved here just before our son was born. This is truly my second home, and I have now been in Houston longer than anywhere else. When I arrived I met a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (I.A.T.S.E.) Local 51, and he said they were looking to hire people who had my specific skills. In my first week, I earned more than I ever had in the circus and I really liked the camaraderie I felt from working with a team of people again.

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**Houston Grand Opera**

**CONCERT OF ARIAS**

27th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers

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**Honoree:** Mariquita Masterson

**Chairs:** Jana and John Scott Arnoldy

**Thursday, February 5, 2015**

Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center

- 6 p.m. – Champagne reception
- 7 p.m. – Vocal competition
- Post-concert – Celebration dinner

For tickets or information visit HGO.org/COA or call Clare Greene at 713-546-0277

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*www.HGO.org*
As I started to do more work, I sought out the jobs with the opera—it was fantastic to get back to the art form I had fallen in love with in Budapest. I enjoyed the symphony work as well, but the opera is different in many ways.

When you first started with HGO, performances were still in Jones Hall, correct?

Yes. It was really a nightmare that the opera, ballet, and symphony were all sharing the same performance space, and the environment was crazy. I first joined HGO in 1979, but it was not long before I was working for the symphony full-time as well. That’s what makes this fun, though, and I absolutely loved being able to do both. Opera is definitely the more difficult as there are so many moving parts involved in making the productions happen.

Many of the truly great directors and designers have worked at HGO. What are your most special memories of the past 35 years?

There are so many! I worked with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle early on in my career here and he was an amazing man. He was half-Hungarian and half-French, and his direction was always brilliant and inspiring. I also have great memories of working with Leonard Bernstein when we performed *A Quiet Place*—another truly legendary talent.

And I can’t forget the singers—Mirella Freni is for me the ultimate soprano and Plácido Domingo has the most amazing stage presence. I am also very proud of the HGO Studio and can remember Susanne Mentzer, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, and Albina Shagimuratova, who all trained in the HGO Studio and are now opera superstars. It is amazing to watch each of their journeys!

The Studio has certainly been a huge influence on how HGO has grown as a company. What other changes have affected your job?

The move to the Wortham Theater Center in 1987 was huge. It allowed us to have a decent work area for the first time and we now have the tools and space to be able to better repair and make props. Generally speaking, the research and information is so much better now—we used to have our own handwritten notes about what went where, but now we can update our paperwork so much more easily, and that pays off when we do a revival of a show that we may not have done for six or seven years. This job will always be about people—getting to know the designers and what they are looking for, and then being able to get your team of technicians to realize that vision. It is also wonderful to get to know singers of all ages—just this season we have some wonderful veterans returning, another exciting influx of Studio artists, and singers giving their house debuts.

Even after 35 years your passion for the job is inspiring!

There is no secret. The simple fact is that I really enjoy the people with whom I work, and now I am experienced enough that I know how to best make things work on stage. I truly love my job and therefore it seems like the years have flown by!
A giant serpent, dancing bears, and beautiful white doves—all of them help to put the magic in our staging of *The Magic Flute*. Of course, the serpent is a stuffed creature wrapped around Tamino and the bears are supernumeraries in disguise, but the birds most assuredly are real, live birds. And they are not just “stage dressing”—they actually perform.

The production, created by Sir Nicholas Hytner in 1988 for English National Opera, calls for the birds to make their first appearance during the Birdcatcher’s Aria. As Papageno begins the aria, he opens his birdcatcher’s basket, which has one dove in it. The bird hops out of the basket and perches on the rim. During the course of the aria, the sound of Papageno’s magic pipes seems to summon more birds, which are released one at a time from backstage and fly to the basket to perch on the basket rim. There they...
When we spoke in November, Bozeman was wrestling with the dilemma of how to get the birds to fly to Papageno’s basket. Like human performers, they need motivation. “They wouldn’t just fly to the basket for no reason,” says Bozeman, speculating that Fay used food to entice them. Bozeman was given the actual basket that will be used in the production for the duration of the training process, and he demonstrated how he was getting the birds accustomed to flying to the basket from greater and greater distances.

Bozeman has raised pigeons since his youth. His fiancée, Corinna Sadler, assists with dove releases for weddings and other special occasions, which they have been doing since Bozeman did a release for a friend’s wedding in 2012. Dove releases have become such an important part of their business that the URL for their website is dovereleasehouston.com.

The birds themselves are pure white rock doves—related to the pigeon, but with more elegant, streamlined bodies than pigeons found in the wild because they are selectively bred for beauty and athleticism. To many people, they symbolize love, hope, peace, and new beginnings. And since their homing instinct has never yet been fully explained by science, they are mysterious as well. Highly appropriate for a production of The Magic Flute.

The doves also help the production realize the aim of “bringing the humanity back into the tale and making it a more compelling story,” says revival stage director Ian Rutherford. “Throughout the evening there is theatrical sleight of hand that the performers interpret as magic. The child in the audience is awakened and soon we, too, fall into this theatrical magic and journey with the performers. All of this makes the story and storytelling central to this production of The Magic Flute.”

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Part of the way we gauge the success of the training we offer through the HGO Studio is by the success of our alumni: Where are they invited to sing? What roles are they offered?

Judging by the four-week period from December 4 through January 2, we think we must be doing pretty well: four Studio alums made their Metropolitan Opera debuts.

Soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen (2009–11), our Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte last fall, made her Met house debut as the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro on December 4. Of her first performance, New York Classical Review wrote that she sang with a “blooming, blushing sound, culminating in a breathtaking account of ‘Dove sono.’ Her tone here was pure gold, her high notes soaring and direct, her soft voice gossamer.” Rachel is having a great season: On August 30, she won first prize and two other major prizes at Plácido Domingo’s prestigious Operalia competition.

Mezzo-soprano Carolyn Sproule (2012–14) made her debut as a “sweet-voiced” (New York Times) Sandman in Hansel and Gretel on December 18. The production by Richard Jones is well known and loved, and it was conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

And when it comes to Aidas, we’ve got the Met covered for all its December and January performances: sopranos Tamara Wilson (2005–07) and Marjorie Owens (2002–06) made their debuts in the title role, with Tamara singing the first of her performances on December 26. The New York Classical Review raved about her “combination of unerring pitch, exacting vibrato, careful dynamics, and excellent phrasing.” Marjorie appeared on January 2, unfortunately too late for reviews to be available in time for this issue of Opera Cues.

Congratulations to all!

We are proud of you and we look forward to your continued successes.
Hotel accommodations for YAVA generously provided by the Lancaster Hotel.

United Airlines is the official airline of Houston Grand Opera and Concert of Arias.

Additional support for Houston Grand Opera Studio is provided by the following funds within the Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.:

- The Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation Endowment Fund
- Thomas Capshaw Endowment Fund
- Carol Lynn Lay Fletcher Endowment Fund
- William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Charlotte Howe Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Elva Lobit Opera Endowment Fund
- Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment Fund
- Erin Gregory Neale Endowment Fund
- Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil-Quaker State Company) Fund
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HGOco is HGO’s broad initiative for connecting the company with the community in which we live. Among HGOco’s many projects, the touring group Opera to Go! performs family-friendly works in schools, churches, and community venues. Each year, HGOco also offers student performances (for school groups only) of a popular opera.

CONTINUING A TRADITION: THE MAGIC FLUTE FOR STUDENTS

How many of you reading this program remember your first opera? Do you remember what you saw? Who you sat with? Your favorite part? As we were preparing for Houston Grand Opera’s 2014–15 Student Matinees and High School Night, HGOco heard story after story from HGO’s audience members that began with “I remember my first opera…” For many, that first experience happened at a student performance. Every year, HGO hosts nearly 6,000 students in grades 3–8 with two opportunities to experience a special two-hour performance of an opera or, for high school students and their chaperones, a full length opera. This year, we offer Mozart’s The Magic Flute for these student performances.

HGOco works with HGO Guild docents who visit classrooms to help them prepare for their trip to the Wortham. Additionally, HGOco offers a professional development session and study guide to help participants learn more about the symbols and themes in The Magic Flute and about Mozart and the time in which he lived. When the students enter the Wortham Theater Center for a Student Matinee at 10 a.m. or a High School Night performance at 7 p.m., they are fully prepared to see and hear the opera.

During intermission, the students may stay in their seats to see a scene change done in full view of the audience and meet some of the artists involved in the production. By the end of the performance, their responses are invariably enthusiastic—you’d almost think they were at a rock concert! This is what a first opera experience is all about.

Want to help? Ask your local schools whether they have reserved seats for HGO’s student performances. If not, schools can book tickets at HGO.org/studentperformances. You can also sponsor a school that may not have attended in the past. Help HGO continue this tradition by getting the word out.

IT’S NOT TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT SUMMER OPERA CAMP

Opera Camp registration opens on February 2 for HGO’s three camps held at the Wortham Theater Center. Camps are held in June each year and are available for students entering grades 3–12. Check our calendar on page 97 for dates, and find even more information at HGO.org/operacamp. Don’t let your kids miss out!

The Pirates of Penzance performed by Art of Opera campers, 2014.
TASTY PASTRY AT THE HEINEN THEATRE

Each year, HGO’s touring company specializing in family-friendly fare—Opera to Go!—can be seen in public performances at the Heinen Theater located on Houston Community College’s Central Campus. This year is no exception as we bring the world premiere of Mark Buller and Charles Anthony Silvestri’s comic opera The Pastry Prince (An Italian Folk Tale).

Buller has been commissioned by HGOco several times for shorter works including the current Veterans Songbook (see p. 25), but The Pastry Prince is the first longer work the composer has created for the company. Like all Opera to Go! performances, The Pastry Prince lasts 45 minutes.

Silvestri, who wrote the engaging libretto, is the author of more than 20 published works in collaboration with celebrated composers and received critical acclaim for several choral pieces with composer Eric Whitacre. Most notable among them was “Sleep,” which was published as a children’s book in 2013. The Pastry Prince is Silvestri’s first opera.

The Pastry Prince is a play-within-a-play: Giacomo, the leader of a down-and-out troupe of actors, takes on an understudy to present an opera for the noble Duke of Bologna. What the actors don’t know is that their new understudy happens to be none other than the Duke in disguise!

Opera to Go! is Houston Grand Opera’s most far-reaching program, reaching more than 40,000 individuals each year. All ages are welcome.
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. To demonstrate their belief, they partnered with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Inner-City Catholic Schools on a three-year initiative to bring HGOco programs Opera to Go!, Storybook Opera, and Opera Camp: Create an Opera to students who might not otherwise be exposed to opera. Judy and Dick, the founder and chairman of Wapiti Energy LLC and Bayou Well Holdings Company LLC, are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence. Beyond their support of general operations and HGOco, the Opera is grateful for the couple’s generous contributions to Concert of Arias (2012–15) and HGO’s main stage, including last season’s Aida and Rigoletto and this season’s Otello and Madame Butterfly—three out of four by Verdi, one of their favorite composers.

ROBIN ANGLY AND MILES SMITH
HGO subscribers since the 2005–06 season, 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’s great passion for music has led to their engagement with other local organizations: they serve on the board of Ars Lyrica Houston and are benefactors of the Soma International Foundation. Robin is additionally on the boards of Inprint and Da Camera. Robin and Miles have been donors to HGO special events and the Young Artists Vocal Academy, and most recently supported HGO’s main-stage production of Das Rheingold and The Passenger at Lincoln Center Festival. They are chairing the 2015 Opera Ball.

DENISE AND PHILIP BAHR
This season marks Denise and Philip’s twentieth as HGO subscribers. The couple has supported the Opera since 1996, underwriting special events and main-stage productions (most recently Il trovatore in 2012–13). Denise and Philip 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. Beyond serving as champions of HGO, Denise and Philip have a deep commitment to music that extends to their support of University of Houston Moores School Society, Houston Symphony, and Houston Ballet. The Opera was honored to have the couple chair the 2010 Opera Ball.

JANICE BARROW
Janice’s relationship with HGO extends back to the early 1980s, when she and her late husband, Tom, first became subscribers. Jan is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society and the Founders Council, contributing towards HGO’s main stage and special events. She is also an avid supporter of the HGO Studio, having underwritten several rising opera stars over the past twenty years. Jan’s late husband, Dr. Thomas Barrow, 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 Sunbelt-based financial institution that operates 684 branches, including 352 in Texas, 89 in Alabama, 78 in Arizona, 62 in California, 45 in Florida, 38 in Colorado, and 20 in New Mexico. BBVA Compass is committed to financial education, diversity and inclusion, and supporting the arts in its communities. The bank is the U.S. subsidiary of BBVA, a Spain-based global financial services group founded in 1857, and is a well-known champion of Spanish art. BBVA Compass was a lead corporate sponsor of HGO's Ring (created by the Spanish production team La Fura dels Baus) and also supports the NEXUS Initiative, HGO's affordability program. David Powell, BBVA Compass’s co-head of the U.S. corporate and investment banking business and head of global clients and investment banking, serves on the HGO Board of Directors.

PAT AND DANIEL BREEN

Pat and Dan realize the importance of supporting HGO’s main-stage work, having sponsored many of the company’s most cherished productions over the past two decades. They have generously provided leadership support to HGO’s Inspiring Performance campaign. Pat is one of the most dedicated members of the HGO Board of Directors, having first joined in 1987, and currently serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. Dan is owner of the investment firm Breeco Investments. They have six sons—Daniel, John, Thomas, Brian, Patrick, and Michael—and many beloved grandchildren.

THE BROWN FOUNDATION, INC.

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

ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO

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

CONOCOPHILLIPS

ConocoPhillips is a global, independent energy exploration and production company that operates multinationally but calls Houston home. For over thirty years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to main-stage productions, including the 2014–15 season-opening production, Verdi’s Otello. In 2009, the company gave a major multiyear grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. HGO is fortunate to have Janet L. Kelly, ConocoPhillips’s senior vice president, legal, general counsel, and corporate secretary, serve on the HGO Board of Directors and also as chairman of the HGO Endowment Board.
BOBBIE-VEE AND GERALD COONEY
Bobbie-Vee and Jerry have been HGO subscribers since 1979, and have generously supported HGO productions of the most beloved classics of the Italian repertory, including Aida, La bohème, Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly. In the 2010–11 season, the Cooneys helped make possible the CD recording of HGO’s innovative commission Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, the world’s first mariachi opera, and in 2013, they supported Cruzar’s return to the Wortham Center. They have been active supporters of all HGO special events for many years, from 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 board of directors.

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

THE CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts has been a lead underwriter of HGO’s main-stage season for nearly thirty years. The Trust was established from assets of The Cullen Foundation to specifically benefit Texas performing arts institutions, particularly those within the Greater Houston area. In recent years, The Cullen Trust has provided lead support for memorable productions of The Barber of Seville (2011–12), Tristan and Isolde (2012–13), and Carmen (2013–14).

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOWMENT, INC.
Established and incorporated in 1982, the Houston Grand Opera Endowment (HGOE) is a vital financial management tool that ensures HGO has a reliable, regular source of income. Today, the Endowment contains fifty-four named funds, both unrestricted and restricted to specific purposes, such as HGOco. HGOE annually distributes 5 percent of the Endowment’s average market value to HGO, making it the largest single annual funder of the Opera. HGOE leadership includes Chairman Janet L. Kelly, Senior Chairman Terrylin Neale, and several members of the HGO Board of Directors. This season, HGO is thrilled to have HGOE as the premier guarantor of A Christmas Carol.

HOUSTON METHODIST
This year, Houston Grand Opera celebrates nine 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 is comprised of a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed on performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO special events and main-stage productions such as La traviata (2011–12), La bohème (2012–13), Aida (2013–14), and this season’s The Magic Flute. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. C. Richard Stasney, founder of CPAM, and Dr. Mauro Ferrari serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION
Based in Liberty, Texas, the Humphreys Foundation has been a major underwriter of HGO’s main-stage season since 1980. Geraldine Davis Humphreys (d. 1961), a member of the pioneer Hardin family of Liberty, Texas, bequeathed her estate to the Humphreys Foundation, which was formally established in 1959. The Foundation provides support for performing arts in Texas and college scholarship funding for students in the arts. Linda Bertman, Louis Paine, and Robert Wall serve as trustees of the Humphreys Foundation. In recent years, the Foundation’s generous support has helped make possible unforgettable main-stage productions such as last season’s Rigoletto, 2013’s Show Boat, and the world’s first mariachi opera, Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, in 2010 and 2013.
NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER
HGO first welcomed Nancy and Rich to the Opera family when they became 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. Rich and Nancy’s passion for enhancing Houston life has led to their involvement with numerous nonprofit institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rice University’s Kinder Institute for Urban Research; DePelchin Children’s Center Foundation; Discovery Green Conservancy; and MD Anderson Cancer Center. HGO is indebted to the Kinders for their visionary support in areas including general operations, main-stage productions, special events, and especially HGOco, the Opera’s innovative education and community collaboration initiative.

BETH MADISON
This season marks Beth’s twentieth as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004, first though her company, Madison Benefits Group, and later as an individual donor. Immediate past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, Beth shows no signs of scaling down her involvement—she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council, supporting HGO special events and, last season, three operas on HGO’s main stage: The Passenger, A Coffin in Egypt, and Das Rheingold. Beth has received several distinctions for her robust community service, including induction into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and a 2010 President’s Medallion from the University of Houston. In 2014, Governor Rick Perry appointed her to the University of Houston System Board of Regents. Beth was named a 2014 Woman of Distinction Ambassador by ABC13.

M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION
The M.D. Anderson Foundation has provided general operating support to HGO for more than thirty years. Based in Houston, the M.D. Anderson Foundation was established in 1936 by Tennessee-born, Houston-transplanted cotton mogul 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 the 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.

MEDISTAR
HGO is delighted to count Medistar Corporation among its newest corporate supporters. Medistar is a full-service real estate development company that specializes in the design, development, financing, and construction of hospitals, long-term acute care facilities, cancer centers, integrated medical plazas, medical office buildings, and other medical facilities for the health care industry. The company is led by founder Monzer Hourani, an internationally renowned engineer whose innovations of many building techniques and concepts have had a great impact on the U.S. construction industry. Medistar joined the HGO family as a Grand Guarantor of the company’s production of Wagner’s Ring cycle (2014–17).
THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION
HGO is honored to partner with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, based in New York City. The Mellon Foundation’s opera program supports a small number of companies demonstrating a longstanding commitment to artistic innovation by developing and presenting ambitious new works or those rarely heard. This strategy is well aligned with a company like HGO, with a strong record of commissioning and producing innovative original work. Last season’s main-stage productions of Weinberg’s The Passenger and the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Leonard Foglia’s A Coffin in Egypt would not have been possible without the Mellon Foundation’s leadership investment. Upcoming Mellon Foundation–supported projects include the world premieres of this season’s holiday opera, A Christmas Carol, and Prince of Players (2015–16) by legendary American composer Carlisle Floyd, as well as Our City, the latest series of Houston-based chamber operas from HGOco.

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 main-stage and Opera to Go! performances at Miller Theatre. HGO is tremendously grateful to MTAB for providing the Opera’s second home for so many years, and looks forward to the bright future of this longstanding partnership. June Deadrick (left) is a new HGO trustee representing the Miller Theatre Advisory Board.

BRUCIE AND ANDREW MOORE
Brucie and Andy have been a treasured part of the Opera family for more than twenty years. The couple resides in Goliad, Texas, where they own Rock On M Ranch, LLC. Subscribers since the 1998–99 season, Brucie and Andrew are members of HGO’s Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, supporting special events, general operations, and main-stage productions. HGO has had the honor of Brucie’s service on the HGO Board of Directors since 2013. In addition to her board participation, she is also a lifetime member of the board of governors of Leadership Corpus Christi, a board member of the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, principal underwriter for the Corpus Christi Area Youth Orchestra, and board president of Harbor Playhouse, also in Corpus Christi. Andy, an accomplished performer, was the 2012 winner of HGO’s Singing with the Houston Idols and recently performed in productions of Les Misérables and Shrek the Musical. Brucie and Andy were recently honored by Harbor Playhouse as Philanthropists of the Year.

SARA AND BILL MORGAN
HGO subscribers for over fifteen years, Sara and Bill have been supporting HGO since 2002. Sara is no stranger to the Houston arts community—she 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. In addition to their support of HGO special events, the Morgans’ contributions to HGO’s main stage in recent years (Dead Man Walking, 2010–11; The Rape of Lucretia, 2011–12; and The Passenger at the Lincoln Center Festival, 2013–14) have helped the company to reach new heights. The couple will support HGO’s new holiday opera series with It’s a Wonderful Life in the 2016–17 season. HGO is thrilled to have Sara serve on its 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 member of the HGO Board of Directors, and serves on the Special Events and Governance Committees. She was the inaugural chair of the HGOco Committee and generously supports HGOco initiatives as a guarantor. Franci is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Texas and a graduate with high honors of the University of Texas School of Law. She was a partner of the law firm Susman Godfrey, where she earned a reputation as one of Texas’s finest litigators.

CYNTHIA AND ANTHONY PETRELLO
Cherished members of the HGO family, Cynthia and Tony are deeply committed to improving the lives of Houstonians through their support of health care and the arts. Tony is the chief executive officer of Nabors Industries, the world’s largest land-based drilling contractor. Cynthia, a community leader and HGO Board member since 2003, currently serves on the Opera’s Special Events and HGOco Committees, the latter of which she is chair. HGO is immeasurably grateful for the Petrellos’ support of HGOco and the main stage, underwriting this season’s A Christmas Carol. The Petrellos also support HGOco programs for children, including the Student Performance Series and Opera to Go!

SCHLUMBERGER
Schlumberger, Ltd., is a leading corporate contributor to HGO, supporting the main stage and a wide range of special projects over nearly twenty years. Schlumberger’s leadership gift was integral to launching HGO’s ongoing affordability program, the NEXUS Initiative, in 2007—since then, NEXUS has made great opera accessible to more than 150,000 people. As the world’s leading supplier of technology, integrated project management, and information solutions to customers working in the oil and gas industry, Schlumberger is a global business, but the company also proactively engages with the local communities where its employees live and work. HGO is honored to count Schlumberger among its most dedicated corporate supporters, and thrilled to have Dan Domeracki, vice president of government and industry relations, serve on the HGO Board of Directors.

DIAN AND HARLAN STAI
In the twenty-six years since they first joined the Houston Grand Opera family, Dian and Harlan have left no part of the company untouched by their warmth and generosity. 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 runs the gamut from main-stage productions to 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. Their support of HGO’s main stage includes Tosca (2009–10), Lucia di Lammermoor (2010–11), Madame Butterfly (2010–11), La traviata (2011–12), Cruzar la Cara de la Luna (2012–13), and A Coffin in Egypt (2013–14). HGO was privileged to recognize Dian and Harlan as the honorees of Opening Night 2008 and the 2014 Concert of Arias.
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 shares a passion for Wagner that led them to support the Ring cycle (2014–17) with 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, in addition to serving on the boards of the American Friends of Covent Garden and the Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation. He is also chair of the HGO Studio Committee. Jerry is a board member of Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. Prior to their instrumental contribution to HGO’s Ring, in recent years John and Jerry have supported HGO main-stage productions and special events. They are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence, and John is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society.

VINSON & ELKINS LLP
HGO has been privileged to have the support of international law firm Vinson & Elkins for nearly three decades. Headquartered in Houston with approximately 700 lawyers in fifteen offices worldwide, V&E is 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 main-stage productions, including last season’s monumental The Passenger. The Opera is honored to have two V&E partners serve on its board of directors: Mark R. Spradling (general counsel and secretary, vice chair—Audit Committee) and Glen A. Rosenbaum (chairman emeritus).

MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS
A jewel of the Houston community, Margaret has been a treasured friend of HGO for over thirty years. A longtime singer, she possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera. 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. Recent main-stage productions Margaret has supported include The Barber of Seville (2011–12), La bohème (2012–13), Show Boat (2012–13), Aida (2013–14), and Carmen (2013–14). A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball.

THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.
The Wortham Foundation’s relationship with HGO dates back more than thirty years. In the 1980s, the 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 by serving on many civic, cultural, and philanthropic boards. Lyndall’s love for the arts and Gus’s involvement in city beautification and expansion have lived on through the philanthropic giving of the Wortham Foundation. The Foundation continues to support the Opera through the Wortham Foundation Permanent Endowment and generous annual operating support.
Since 1932, nearly $375 million for the youth of Texas.

We’re the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, and you made it all possible!

Scholarships, combined with junior market auction money, livestock and horse show premiums and prizes, calf scramble awards, school art auction money, judging contest prizes, grants to universities, and funds to cultural, community, and civic organizations, bring the total Show commitment to more than $24 million in 2014!

Scholarship recipients are currently attending more than 100 Texas colleges and universities, with awards worth nearly $40 million!

Just this year, more than 2,100 students are attending college on Show scholarships!

Learn more at rodeohouston.com
Guests celebrated the opening of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* on October 31 at a late night buffet hosted by John Onstott and Geo. H. Lewis & Sons. HGO patrons mingled with the cast and creative team and sipped on Halloween-inspired cocktails.

*LAUREATE SOCIETY RECITAL*

On October 5, Laureate Society members were treated to a special performance by this season’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Award recipient, Simon O’Neill, and HGO Head of Music Staff Bradley Moore. The annual recital recognizes Laureate Society members for including HGO in their estate plans.
SAN FRANCISCO PATRONS TRIP

HGO patrons and trustees enjoyed a long weekend in “The Golden City,” attending performances of Bellini’s *Norma* and Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah* at San Francisco Opera. Trip attendees also spent an intimate evening with composer Jake Heggie, toured the Asian Art Museum, and celebrated with mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton, who sang Adalgisa in *Norma*.

STUDIO SHOWCASE

Guests mingled and congratulated the 2014–15 HGO Studio artists after Studio Showcase on September 16 at a post-performance dessert reception hosted by members of the HGO Studio Committee and Jackson and Company.
Opening Night Dinner

Houston Grand Opera opened its 60th anniversary season with an elegant dinner following a dramatic production of Verdi’s *Otello*. Chaired by Alex and Astley Blair, the dinner on Ray C. Fish Plaza featured a sumptuous meal by Tony’s Catering and gold and scarlet décor by The Events Company. Guests toasted director John Cox, who was presented with the Silver Rose Award in honor of his artistic contributions to HGO.
CORPORATE COUNCIL BACKSTAGE TOUR

On Monday, October 27, leaders from Houston’s corporate community gathered in the Wortham Theater Center with members from Houston Grand Opera’s Corporate Council for an annual Backstage Experience event. The 65 attendees enjoyed a wine reception, private backstage tour led by HGO Managing Director Perryn Leech, an elegant dinner in the Founders Salon, and an opportunity to enjoy part of a rehearsal of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

OPENING NIGHT FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

HGO’s O.N. for Young Professionals hosted “Ode to Amadeus” on October 2 to kick off HGO’s 60th season.

In honor of the two Mozart pieces in HGO’s 2014–15 season, *Così fan tutte* and *The Magic Flute*, and in honor of *Amadeus* film actor Simon Callow, who wrote the libretto for HGO’s world premiere of *A Christmas Carol* and also directed it, the group celebrated the 2014–15 season at the Deborah Colton Gallery on Upper Kirby.

Encouraged to don “18th century chic,” the O.N. group welcomed the 2014 Houston theater season with specialty cocktails, lite bites and music by DJ Here Come the Girls, and beautiful art from the gallery.
Houston Grand Opera
Santa Fe Patron Trip
July 29–August 3, 2015

Be a part of the Houston Grand Opera patrons who set out to explore the historic city of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Enjoy art, spectacular dinners at private Santa Fe homes, and three Santa Fe Opera performances including *La finta giardiniera*, *Salome*, and *Cold Mountain*.

For more information, contact Rudy Avelar at 713-546-0271 or visit HGO.org/SantaFe.
A CHRISTMAS CAROL CAST PARTY

HGO patrons celebrated the opening of A Christmas Carol with a late-night buffet on December 5. Guests mingled with composer Iain Bell, librettist Simon Callow, and tenor Jay Hunter Morris and were treated to a viewing of host Glen Rosenbaum’s extensive train collection.

Houston Grand Opera 60th Anniversary Concert & Gala

Chair: Terrylin G. Neale
Thursday, March 19, 2015
Wortham Theater Center

Join us for a special concert featuring international opera star Joyce DiDonato with Patrick Summers leading the HGO Orchestra and HGO Studio artists. The concert will be followed by an intimate on-stage dinner benefiting the Houston Grand Opera Endowment.

7:30 p.m. – Concert, Cullen Theater
Post-concert – Celebration dinner, Brown Theater

For tickets or information visit HGO.org or call Clare Greene at 713-546-0277

Please note gala dinner tickets include a ticket to the performance. Concert-only tickets may be purchased by visiting HGO.org.
MARCIA E. BACKUS

Marcia Backus is vice president and general counsel at Occidental Petroleum Corporation (OXY)—an international oil and gas exploration and production company and one of the largest U.S. oil and gas companies. Marcia oversees more than 60 lawyers in the United States and Occidental’s assets around the world.

Prior to joining OXY in 2013, Marcia was a longtime partner at Vinson & Elkins in Houston, Texas. She led the firm’s Energy Transactions/Projects Practice Group, representing industry and private equity companies in domestic and international mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, private equity investments, project development, and other energy transactions.

Marcia is ranked among the Leading Business Lawyers in oil and gas by both Chambers USA and Chambers Global, and was named 2012 Lawyer of the Year in mergers and acquisitions by The Best Lawyers in America. She holds a B.A. degree, awarded summa cum laude, from the University of Texas, and a J.D. with high honors from the University of Texas School of Law, where she was elected to the Order of the Coif honorary scholastic society. Marcia also co-founded the school’s Center for Women in Law.

A supporter of Houston Grand Opera since 1998, Marcia joined the HGO Board of Directors in June.

In addition to her involvement with HGO, Marcia is currently a trustee of the University of Texas Law School Foundation and a former director for Society for the Performing Arts and Mental Health America of Greater Houston.

CATHERINE AND RANDY CRATH

Cathy and Randy Crath have always been patrons of the arts. Originally from Toronto, Randy’s previous employment with the Bank of Nova Scotia gave them the opportunity to live in Brazil, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and New York City. While Randy focused his career on international banking, Cathy studied ballet, jazz, and tap dance, which she taught in Puerto Rico. She then went on to work in the American School in Monterrey, Mexico, and practiced private therapy.

While in Rio de Janeiro, the Craths attended their first opera. Cathy was moved by the deep emotion in opera and the ability that it has to connect us all. Their love for opera grew and they have attended the opera in each city they called home including when they moved to Houston.

In 2009, they became subscribers of Houston Grand Opera and made a deeper commitment in 2012 by joining the Patrons Circle. The Craths are excited by the growth of the company and the expansion of new ideas, like the American premiere of The Passenger last season. Recently, Cathy became a trustee and is passionate about music education and the HGO Studio.

Randy recently joined Evercore Partners, Inc., as the senior managing director in its oil and gas group. Cathy and Randy have three adopted children ages 12, 9, and 5. In addition to volunteering with HGO, Cathy serves on the board of directors for the Mercury ensemble.
“If you’re not a Guild member and you enjoy events like Opera Night Live, you should consider joining the HGO Guild.”

Ryan McKinny
Bass-baritone, Houston Grand Opera Studio alum
Members of Houston Grand Opera's Patrons Society support the opera at a level of $4,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes our Patrons Society members. For information on joining the Patrons Society, please call Jennifer Wijangco at 713-546-0704.

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† Houston Grand Opera Studio artist
‡ Former Houston Grand Opera Studio artist

THE RING
Wagner
DIE WALKÜRE
Apr. 18, 22, 25, 30, May 3m

Premier Guarantors—Houston Grand Opera Endowment, Inc.; Medistar Corporation; Mr. John G. Turner and Mr. Jerry G. Fischer. Grand Guarantors—Robin Angly and Miles Smith; BBVA Compass; Mrs. Janice Barrow. Guarantors—The Brown Foundation; Chevron; Donna Kaplan and Richard A. Lydecker; Will L. McLendon; Miss Catherine Jane Merchant; Elizabeth Phillips; Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Sweeney; John C. and Sheila R. Tweed; Birgitt van Wijk; The Vaught Foundation.

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SWEENEY TODD
Apr. 24, 26m, 29, May 2, 8, 9

Grand Underwriter—Brucie and Andrew Moore

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Lorena Randi *

Chorus Master
Richard Bado ‡

José “Pepe” Martínez/Leonard Foglia

EL PASADO NUNCA SE TERMINA
THE PAST IS NEVER FINISHED
May 13, 16, 17m

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Music
José “Pepe” Martínez

Lyrics
Leonard Foglia

Director
Leonard Foglia

Projections/Set Designer
Elaine McCarthy

Costume Designer
Scott Marr

Lighting Designer
Christopher Maravich

Please note: El Pasado Nunca Se Termina is not part of our 2014-15 subscription series; tickets must be purchased separately.
### JANUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23, 25m, 28, 31, FEB. 6, 8m</td>
<td>• Performances of Puccini’s <em>Madame Butterfly</em>. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the January 23 performance only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 25 | • HCoco presents songs by Mark Buller from the *Veterans Songbook* prior to the performance of *Madame Butterfly* in the Grand Foyer. Free to all ticket holders.  
• *Behind the Music*: An intimate conversation about *Madame Butterfly* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free. |
| 27 | • HCoco presents a Professional Development Workshop for teachers on *The Magic Flute*. Wortham Theater Center, 6 p.m. |
| 29–31 | • *Opera to Go!* presents the world premiere of Mark Buller and Charles Anthony Silvestri’s *The Pastry Prince (An Italian Folk Tale)* at the Heinen Theatre. Two performances daily at 9:30 and 11:15. *The Pastry Prince* tours from January 26 through May 22. To book, visit HGO.org/OperaToGo or call 713-546-0231. |
| 30, FEB. 1m, 4, 7, 14 | • Performances of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the January 30 performance only. |

### FEBRUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• <em>Behind the Music</em>: An intimate conversation about <em>The Magic Flute</em> immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>• <em>Concert of Arias</em>—27th Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers. Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center. The evening begins with a 6 p.m. champagne reception, followed by the competition at 7 p.m. Celebration Dinner to follow in the Grand Foyer. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or <a href="mailto:sipsen@hgo.org">sipsen@hgo.org</a>.</td>
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### MARCH

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>• HCoco Studio Recital at Rienzi. Hear HCoco Studio artists in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, MFAH's decorative arts wing, 1406 Kirby Drive, 7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>• HCoco presents High School Night performance of <em>The Magic Flute</em>, 7 p.m. For school groups only. Visit HGO.org/studentperformances.</td>
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### APRIL

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>• <em>Opera Ball 2014</em>. Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, 7 p.m. Followed by the Encore Party. For information, contact Scott Ipsen at 713-546-0242 or <a href="mailto:sipsen@hgo.org">sipsen@hgo.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>• HCoco presents a Professional Development Workshop for teachers on <em>Die Walküre</em>. Wortham Theater Center, 5 p.m. (please note early start).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18, 22, 25, 30, MAY 3m</td>
<td>• Performances of Wagner’s <em>Die Walküre</em>. Wortham Theater Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Night for Young Professionals in the April 18 performance only.</td>
</tr>
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### MAY

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• <em>Behind the Music</em>: An intimate conversation about <em>Sweeney Todd</em> immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 10</td>
<td>• HCoco Studio Recital at Rienzi. Hear HCoco Studio artists in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, MFAH’s decorative arts wing, 1406 Kirby Drive. May 7 at 7:30 p.m., May 10 at 5 p.m.</td>
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### JUNE

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• HCoco’s Opera Experience camp for grades 4–9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>• HCoco’s Create an Opera camp for grades 3–6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–26</td>
<td>• HCoco’s Art of Opera camp for grades 7–12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### JUNE OPERA CAMPS

Registration begins February 2. For information, visit HGO.org/operacamp. All camps held at the Wortham Theater Center.

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FOR INFORMATION ON ALL HOUSTON GRAND OPERA EVENTS, CALL THE CUSTOMER CARE CENTER AT 713-228-OPERA (6737) OR 800-626-7372 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. FOR INFORMATION ON HCOCO EVENTS, PLEASE CALL 713-546-0230, EMAIL HCOCO@HGO.ORG, OR VISIT HGO.ORG/HCOCO.
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  HGOco Technical Director
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Want to brush up on the opera before you attend? Need directions to the theater? This information and much more is available on our website where you can also purchase tickets and make a donation: www.HGO.org

HGO’s Customer Care Center is another great resource. For performance information, to purchase or exchange tickets, or to make a donation to HGO, contact the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPeRA (6737) or 800-62-OPeRA (800-626-7372). You can also e-mail customercare@hgo.org.

During HGO’s active repertory periods, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (or until curtain time on performance days). The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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

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

EXCHANGING YOUR TICKETS
Full-season subscribers may exchange their tickets for a different performance of the same opera without fee, subject to availability. Exchanges can be made by phone until 24 hours before the performance begins; for exchanges within 24 hours of curtain time, please visit the Box Office in person. Non-subscription single tickets may be exchanged with a service fee of $10 per ticket. When exchanged for tickets of greater value, the customer will be responsible for the difference; no refunds will be made. No exchanges are permitted after the performance has begun.

LOST OR MISPLACED TICKETS
There is no charge for replacing lost tickets. More than 24 hours prior to the performance: call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPeRA (6737) or 800-62-OPeRA (800-626-7372) to request replacement tickets. They will be reprinted and held at the Will Call window for your performance. Within 24 hours of the performance: go to the Box Office Manager’s window. The Box Office Manager will access your account and reprint your tickets free of charge.

PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES
The Wortham Theater Center features wheelchair access to both theaters with a choice of seating locations and ticket prices. An FM assistive listening device, generously provided by the Houston First Corporation, is available for use free of charge at all performances. Please call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-OPeRA (6737) or 800-62-OPeRA (800-626-7372) for full details.

Descriptive services for persons with vision loss are available with 48-hour advance reservations. Please call 713-546-0203 for details.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES
To pre-order food and beverages at the Encore Café prior to the performance, call at 713-250-3650. Pre-order beverages for intermission at any of the lobby bars when you arrive at the theater. When you return at intermission, your beverages will be waiting for you.

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

PARKING
Valet parking is a benefit of membership for Patrons Circle and National Patron donors; the valet station is located on Prairie Street. If you would like information about membership at this level, please contact a member of HGO’s Development staff at 713-546-0704, or e-mail us at donorservices@hgo.org.
Nicole Heaston came to Houston in 1995 as a member of the HGO Studio and decided to stay. Of course, she had a powerful incentive: here, she met her husband, Stanley Lane, and married him two weeks after she performed the role of Figaro's bride, Susanna, in The Marriage of Figaro! Stanley's work in the oil and gas industry has kept them in the Houston area, where they have put down roots and grown to a family of four, including a daughter, Morgan, 11, and a son, Julian, 8. Pursuing an opera career while based in Houston has worked “just fine,” says Nicole. “We live in Katy, and it’s a 45-minute drive to a major international airport. It’s no different from living in Chicago or New York.”

Our Pamina in The Magic Flute, Nicole took time out on a busy day in December for a phone chat with Opera Cues editor Laura Chandler.

It’s been said that The Magic Flute should be titled Pamina. Why is that?

I’ve always thought that she is the moral compass of the piece. She’s the one person that stays grounded the entire time—she uses her belief in love and honesty to drive most of the characters. It’s really hard for her when her mother turns on her, since she isn’t living up to the ideals Pamina believes in. But Sarastro is, and she finds a kindred spirit in him. But most of the time, Pamina is trying to bring everyone to their good moral center. She is the catalyst through the entire show.

What are your current favorite roles?

My last two roles were the title role in Alcina and Arminda in La finta giardiniera. Those roles couldn’t be more different from Pamina, even though Finta is also Mozart. They are both stronger characters, meaner characters, and more of a contrast to Pamina. I enjoyed tapping into my dark side, but it’s nice to come back to Pamina and sing a character who is virtuous and innocent. It’s great to go along the whole spectrum, vocally and dramatically.

What are some of your favorite memories from your Studio days?

The very first thing I did at HGO was Juliet in a Studio performance of Romeo and Juliet—it is one of my best memories because it was the first time I’d sung on a major opera stage. Honestly, singing Pamina in a main-stage production of The Magic Flute (1997) was one of my most special memories. Nearly all of the cast were Studio members—Joyce DiDonato was the Second Lady, Eric Owens was Sarastro—and we were conducted by Richard Bado, a former Studio member. Our Magic Flute was playing in repertory with Boris Godunov, and they had all these fantastic, famous Russian singers. But our Flute was tight, well-sung, well-acted, and I remember the reviewers and the audience really enjoying it. And we felt such pride, because we were just little Studio members! It was the coolest thing! There’s no way the Met would put on The Magic Flute with nothing but their Studio members. My daughter was a supernumerary in Show Boat, and I went to the performances. I remember one young lady in the cast that was absolutely fantastic [Lauren Snouffer as Ellie], and I never would have guessed she was a Studio artist. No place else besides HGO would she get to do a role like that on the main stage.

If your daughter came to you and said, “Mama, I want to be an opera singer,” what would you tell her?

I would tell her to work hard, to work on her languages, and to be patient. In this career, sometimes people start out red hot coming out of the gate, and some people blossom later. And sometimes there are cold periods in your career. If you can’t stay focused and keep your eye on the prize—and remember this is a gift from God and you are meant to share it, and you are doing this for your joy and His—then you’re not going to succeed.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My children are my heroes, because they really work hard. Another is my grandmother. She was so strong, and so much love and light came from this one person that it touched everyone she met. In opera, I’d have to say Leontyne Price. I remember seeing her do an interview, and she said, “The greatest joy I have in my life is listening to myself sing.” She knew she had a gift and if she didn’t believe in herself, nobody else would, either. To be a black woman coming up when she did and be so successful—there had to be serious heart and courage there.
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