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Right: A scene from Don Giovanni. ©ROH Bill Cooper.
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Welcome to the Wortham Theater Center!

We always take great care in pairing the operas in our repertory periods. A typical repertory at HGO consists of two contrasting operas; they often have a common theme or characteristic, like the exotic locales of our winter operas. But of all the pairings we have programmed, we can’t think of another in which the two operas are more closely connected than those this spring—and we urge you to enjoy Don Giovanni and the world premiere of The Phoenix together.

Mozart’s Don Giovanni opens the spring rep in our co-production with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, by Danish director Kasper Holten in his HGO debut. Cristian Măcelaru returns to the podium and we welcome an extraordinary ensemble cast. This production is unlike any other Don Giovanni you’ve seen before, and we love the way it goes into the mind of the title character. Although the title role, sung by HGO favorite Ryan McKinny, is portrayed in a 21st-century light, the characterization of the serial womanizer Don Giovanni was inspired by the centuries-old fictional figure Don Juan and was very likely influenced by the real-life philanderer Giacomo Casanova—a friend of Mozart’s librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte.

And now, Lorenzo Da Ponte—whose own colorful, multi-layered life is the stuff of opera—is at last the subject of one. The Phoenix, a new work by Tarik O’Regan and John Caird, takes its title from Mozart’s nickname for his favorite librettist. It refers to Da Ponte’s ability to reinvent himself, which he was forced to do multiple times in his life, whether because of the whims of life or his own choices. Two brilliant singing actors bring Lorenzo Da Ponte to life: Thomas Hampson, this season’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist, makes his HGO debut in the role of the mature Da Ponte, and John Caird, takes its title from Mozart’s nickname for his favorite librettist. Luca Pisaroni, well known to HGO audiences, plays Da Ponte as a young man and also his namesake son, Lorenzo Jr.

Tarik, John, and the cast and artistic team have created an opera that is as important as the life it portrays. We can’t think of a better way to end our season than with the story of the man who, among his numerous accomplishments, brought opera to America.

We hope you enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

Patrick Summers
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Join us for opera al fresco! As always, the season isn’t truly over until we’ve made our annual visits to Miller Outdoor Theatre and The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands—this time with La bohème, the opera that opened our season. Find dates and other details on p. 98.
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painting: “Opera” by Alex Kenevsky, c. 2005
May recitalists, from left: Kyle Naig, Leia Lensing, Richard Trey Smagur, and Yelena Dyachek. Photo by Lynn Lane.

Final Studio Recital of the Season

Your last opportunity of the season to hear artists of the HGO Studio in recital is approaching fast! Purchase your tickets now to hear Yelena Dyachek, soprano; Leia Lensing, contralto; Richard Trey Smagur, tenor; and Kyle Naig, piano, on May 2 and 5 at Rienzi, the European decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Studio recitals often have a theme, but this one doesn’t: instead, says Studio Director Brian Speck, “it is formed around pieces about which the artists are particularly passionate.”

Dyachek will perform Jake Heggie’s The Deepest Desire, a set of four songs, with text written by Sister Helen Prejean, author of the book Dead Man Walking, which inspired Heggie’s first opera. Smagur will perform Beethoven’s An die ferne Geliebte, considered the first song cycle by a major composer, which “he has been dying to sing for quite some time now,” says Speck. Lensing will sing Shostakovich’s moving Spanish Songs, inspired by the music that children orphaned in the Spanish Civil War brought to the countries where they were expatriated.

Tickets can be purchased on HGO’s website or by calling Customer Care at 713-228-6737.

To learn more about what to expect at a recital and how the artists prepare, see “The Recital Experience,” p. 68.

Learning from the Masters

On February 3, the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio (BFHVS) enjoyed a masterclass with Lawrence Brownlee, Nadir in the winter production of Bizet’s The Pearl Fishers. Brownlee is one of six master teachers who have led this group of talented students in inspiring masterclasses open to the public. Others include mezzo-sopranos Stephanie Blythe and Jamie Barton, baritone Michael Sumuel, HGO Director of Artistic Operations Richard Bado, and artists of the HGO Studio.

Star tenor Lawrence Brownlee, left, works with High School Voice Studio member Maximillian Macias.

HGOco Wins OPERA America Grant

HGO’s education and community collaboration arm, HGOco, is one of seven awardees of OPERA America’s first Civic Practice Grant. The grant is intended to support opera companies’ efforts to learn more about community priorities, develop relationships with leading organizations and their leaders, and discover and deliver services that strengthen their communities.

For HGOco, the grant will help fund the new “We Belong” project, designed to serve the city’s growing refugee population by sending teaching artists into diverse communities and helping them adapt to their new home through storytelling workshops, intergenerational activities, family-friendly performances, and the creation of a new work.

“With Civic Practice Grants, we see a great opportunity to use the art form’s unique qualities to address local civic priorities through authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships,” says OPERA America President and CEO Marc A. Scorca. “These new grants help opera companies find ways to enhance their real and perceived value as cultural citizens in communities throughout the country.”
Houston Grand Opera lost two giants of its history in the first few days of 2019; and February 28 marked the passing of an important artist on the world stage, who also played a role in HGO history.

John Mendelsohn, who passed away on January 7, was chairman emeritus of the Houston Grand Opera Board of Directors, having served as chairman of the board from 2013 to 2016. Prior to that, he was a board member and an HGO Trustee. He took great interest in challenging us to communicate better and finding more effective ways of presenting the world’s most expensive art, but his greatest pleasure came from sitting down to a live opera performance with his beloved wife, Anne. John profoundly understood the artistic imperative of the company’s first Ring cycle, but he also loved immersing himself in Wagner’s world. John was a voracious reader all of his life, and he had an expansive range of interests; when we presented The Passenger, he read everything he could find to enrich his experience with the searing and difficult opera. John sought elevation in all things. He believed in always being better, and he certainly lived it: he faced his final illness with disarming honesty, courage, and logic. Undoubtedly, he looked back on a life filled with the love of the family he adored and extraordinary professional accomplishments, of which his enormous impact at HGO was but a small part.

We are all unique, but then there was Ava Jean Mears, whom we lost on January 6. Her history with HGO stretches far back into the company’s early years: She held every possible job in the marketing and communications area at Houston Grand Opera for three-quarters of our history. Her was director of public relations for 10 seasons (1979–89); after that, she was the archivist and director of the Resource Center, the living memory of the company for generations. Her love for opera was surpassed only by her love for the people who brought it to life onstage, and she became a skilled photographer. She even set up a darkroom in her home so she wouldn’t have to wait on a lab to develop photos, and many of her photographs appeared on program covers and in the 2005 book Houston Grand Opera at Fifty. She could diffuse any difficult situation with her smile, because Ava Jean had a sixth sense for putting everyone at their ease and, thus, at their most genuine. She brought out the best in everyone she met, and she was integral to the history and development of the company that is HGO. In her many years on the staff she was one of the truest and most genuine hearts of the organization.

The musical polymath André Previn, who died on February 28, 2019, was one of classical music’s most justly renowned figures. I met him more than 25 years ago when I was asked to share with him the conducting duties of his first opera, A Streetcar Named Desire; his only other opera, Brief Encounter, premiered at Houston Grand Opera a decade ago. During the creative process of these two works, André and I developed a friendship and mentorship. Anyone who ever met him, and many who didn’t, felt close to him because he was such a genuinely shy and unassuming person, despite having a private life that overflowed with incident and publicity. Despite it all, music was all that mattered to him: “There are a million things in music I know nothing about,” he once said. “I just want to narrow down that figure.”

His story was well-documented: his family’s flight from the Third Reich, his early Hollywood career on 50 films, four Academy Awards, a brief music directorship of the Houston Symphony in the late 1960s, fame as a television star who introduced countless numbers to classical music, a conductor of every major orchestra, a gifted composer of every genre, and the finest jazz pianist of his generation, a moniker he always ceded to Oscar Peterson.

His Hollywood stories were legendary. I was visiting him once in his apartment in New York when he had me pick up a ringing phone to see who it was. “Barbra,” the voice said, which I relayed to him. “Walters or Streisand?” he replied. I whispered, “Streisand.” He took the call.

He didn’t live for posterity: “I can’t visualize anybody playing my pieces in 50 years; I’m just glad if they do them Tuesday.” He was a complete musician, an artist to his core, and I will miss him always.

—Patrick Summers
2019-20 Season

Houston Grand Opera

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19 | 20

NEW PRODUCTION
Verdi
RIGOLETTO
OCT. 18–NOV. 1

HGO PREMIERE
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Javier Martinez
Leonard Foglia
EL MILAGRO DEL RECUERDO
The Miracle of Remembering
DEC. 5–22

HGO PREMIERE
Donizetti
LA FAVORITE
JAN. 24–FEB. 9

NEW PRODUCTION
Verdi
AIDA
JAN. 31–FEB. 16

MESMERIZING DRAMA
R. Strauss
SALOME
APR. 17–MAY 1

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Mozart
THE MAGIC FLUTE
APR. 24–MAY 8

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Dear Opera Patron,

On behalf of Baker Botts, I welcome you to Houston Grand Opera’s production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. We are proud to be a sponsor of this production—which is being enjoyed for the first time by Houston audiences.

Baker Botts is an international law firm with over 725 lawyers practicing throughout a network of 14 offices around the globe. We are recognized as leaders in the energy and technology sectors. Throughout our history, we have provided creative and effective legal solutions for our clients while demonstrating an unrelenting commitment to excellence.

Our firm has deep roots in Houston, and we have been an integral part of the business and arts community since we opened our doors over 178 years ago. Baker Botts is committed to giving back to the cities in which we live and work, and supporting the arts is an important part of that tradition.

Today, we are proud to support Houston Grand Opera, the Alley Theatre, the Houston Symphony, and Houston Ballet, among other vital Houston arts organizations.

Thank you for joining us, and thank you for your support of Houston Grand Opera. Enjoy the show!

Sincerely,

**John Martin**
Managing Partner
Baker Botts LLP.
Dear Opera Patron,

Welcome to Houston Grand Opera’s original production of *The Phoenix*. All of us at Frost are proud to be able to play a role in bringing this world premiere, and the opera’s season, to Houston.

For more than 150 years, Frost has played a role in bringing good things to the communities where it does business, whether it’s supporting the arts, volunteering to pitch in with community projects, or responding to natural disasters and emergencies. We’re continuing that with our Opt for Optimism initiative, which aims to help people understand the correlation between a positive mindset and financial health. Even optimists face setbacks, but research shows that a positive outlook leads to better outcomes and fewer recurrences. It’s a theme echoed in a saga of struggle and reinvention like *The Phoenix*.

Houston is growing, and Frost is growing with it. We couldn’t be more pleased to support cultural organizations like Houston Grand Opera, which make our city a fine place to live. Enjoy the opera!

Sincerely,

David LePori  
Regional President  
Houston-Galveston Region  
Frost
For information on providing leadership support for *Seeking the Human Spirit*, please contact Greg Robertson at 713-546-0274.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS:

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In keeping with the 2018–19 Seeking the Human Spirit theme of transformation, HGOco is offering Transforming the Mind and Spirit: An Exploration of Creativity, an investigation of creativity with Mauro Ferrari, Ph.D., who will be joined by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers and invited guests. The goal is to examine the various components of creativity, including mathematics, science, visual arts, music, mysticism, and mental health, through interactive and multidisciplinary performances with optional audience involvement. Looking ahead to the event on May 20, Dr. Ferrari spoke with HGOco about his thoughts on creativity.

How does a mathematician from Italy become the president and CEO of Houston Methodist Research Institute?

Luck, mostly, and an unrelenting desire to find ways to be helpful to people who suffer from currently incurable diseases. If the conventional approaches did not work, it makes sense to me that one should try to integrate them with tools coming from different disciplines. I was formally trained in math and then got my Ph.D. in engineering at Berkeley, where I also became a tenured professor—so, when I made my pivot to medicine, I had a bunch of different science and tech platforms to bring to the fight against cancer. That took me to my federal service at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, where I put together and directed the launch of the now world-leading Cancer Nanotechnology Plan. Then in 2006, we moved here to wonderful Houston, where I first served at MD Anderson and UT Health, prior to joining Houston Methodist in the academic leadership position. [Dr. Ferrari recently retired from Houston Methodist to pursue research, education, and service opportunities.]

How did your ideas on creativity evolve?

Given my life path, I had great opportunities to work with and learn from some spectacularly creative scientists. Thus, I became fascinated with creativity itself. As an enthusiastic supporter of HGO throughout my life in Houston, I had the privilege to meet Maestro Summers, who is obviously a distinguished citizen of creative worlds, and share with him my observations. We started discussing what is in common and what is different among creative/visionary endeavors in different fields: Music, the visual arts, choreography and dance, math, science, even spirituality or mysticism. That was two years ago—and now we are ready to go onstage with the fruits of the seeds we planted then!

What are you hoping the event on May 20 will achieve?

My top objective is that people will leave the event with a greater recognition for their own creative selves, and a dedication to let it fly a bit more…it is a liberating experience, and my observation is that it helps people do a better job at everything else in life! At the same time, I am also hoping that people will feel motivated to allow those around themselves to fly a bit freer with their own creativity; we all need to lower those anti-creative barriers we put up all the time as a society.

We have enjoyed your performances playing baritone saxophone with Milton Hopkins and Texas Johnny Boy.

How do you think creative pursuits influence your professional and personal life?

It is a true privilege for me to have a chance to learn traditional blues from these great musicians and become acquainted with some of the deepest cultural foundations of Texas itself. Creativity is a way of life, not just a set of activities in one’s “other side” of life. In another show I have performed a few times, I use jazz music as a means to tell my medical science stories and the personal “lessons learned”: the only thing that counts in life is service to others; divisions in society are always hurtful; give someone a chance to give someone else a chance. I am also working on a movie series on these themes. So, I find that multidimensional creativity helps all around, certainly so in my professional and personal life, and needs to be nurtured. Our new drug ML-016, the first ever to be proven capable to routinely cure metastatic cancer in preclinical studies, was born out of a synergy of mathematics, physics, nanotechnology, and molecular oncology—but without a good dose of creative, out-of-the-box thinking, it would have never seen the light of day.

Join Us!

May 20 | 7–9 p.m.
MATCH, 3400 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002
Tickets: $15
Visit HGO.org/ExploringCreativity to purchase.

From left, Milton Hopkins, Mauro Ferrari, and Texas Johnny Boy
“WHEN I AM GONE, AND HISTORY TELLS MY STORY, MOZART WILL BE MY NAME, DA PONTE MY GLORY.”

—Emperor Joseph II of Austria in Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix

IN HIS FINAL MOMENTS in The Phoenix, the Emperor speaks these words to his two protégés, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. The Emperor is facing foreign policy failures, war, and his own demise, and he takes comfort in knowing that he will be remembered first and foremost as a champion of the arts. He also knows that an art form has to evolve, which is precisely why he commissions the work of mavericks like Da Ponte and Mozart.

Celebrating traditional, beloved operas is important, but new works are even more vital now than they were in 18th-century Europe—and by being a part of HGO, you really are making history. This season, Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix becomes the 66th new opera to take flight from the stage at HGO. It’s an important new addition to the repertoire that audiences will enjoy for generations to come, and it wouldn’t be possible without visionary donors like you.

“We began to understand the potentially profound impact which new works can have when we saw John Adams’s Nixon in China for the first time in 2017,” says HGO Trustee Sylvia Barnes. Sylvia and her husband, Jim Trimble, have generously underwritten The Phoenix. In 1987, the Grammy Award–winning Nixon in China was the sixth world premiere by HGO, and it has gone on to an Emmy-winning television performance and enduring success on international stages.

“After Nixon in China, we learned more about HGO’s influence in the opera world with its innovative new works,” says Sylvia. “So when we learned that HGO was launching World premieres funded by our generous donors, from top: Cruzar la Cara de la Luna, 2010; A Coffin in Egypt, 2014; It’s a Wonderful Life, 2016; Nixon in China, 1987 (photo is from 2017 production); The House without a Christmas Tree, 2017; The Phoenix, set design by David Farley. Production photos are by Lynn Lane, except as noted.
into the almost unbelievable true story of Lorenzo Da Ponte’s life, we wanted to be supportive. We are mesmerized by the impressively exotic and chaotic accomplishments of Lorenzo Da Ponte, and we hope that The Phoenix will prove to have the longevity and virility of Lorenzo!”

The HGO family is filled with visionary people like Sylvia and Jim who make new works a priority for this company. The Phoenix wouldn’t be possible without the generosity of individuals like Principal Guarantors Harlan and Dian Stai; Grand Guarantors Albert and Anne Chao and Ting Tsung and Wei Fong; Guarantors Robin Angly and Miles Smith; Grand Underwriters Connie and Byron Dyer; Underwriters Nana Booker and David Lowe, Rhonda and Donald Sweeney, and Muffy and Mike McLanahan; and Sponsor Glen A. Rosenbaum. They are joined in this important work by our wonderful corporate, foundation, and government supporters, including the Chao Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, OPERA America, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Sidley, Frost, and the Humphreys Foundation.

According to librettist and director John Caird, “If you commission new composers and librettists to do new work, you’re keeping the art form alive. It’s new oxygenated blood flowing through the veins of the art form. Not only are you creating new works for future generations, but you’re keeping conductors and musicians alive and giving audiences a fresh perspective on older works by looking at them through the lens of the new.”

“New works are very important to keep the repertoire more relevant as far as social concerns, political concerns, and what we go through together as humans,” says HGO’s newly appointed artistic advisor, internationally renowned soprano Ana María Martínez. “Much like a child who always needs the guidance and the love and the nurturing from the parents, the donors become that parental figure...who allows us to nurture the wings that we then need to take flight, as an arts organization, as an opera house, as a pioneer for our community.”

HGO Trustees Rhonda and Donald Sweeney are also proud supporters of The Phoenix. “Throughout our 31 years of being in the HGO family, we have enjoyed being part of creating opera for future generations,” says Rhonda. “The reason is that HGO works with the best artists in the world on new commissions. We know that future generations of opera lovers will be talking about The Phoenix for years to come.”

In the near future, we will see even more premieres: operas like next season’s El Milagro del Recuerdo/The Miracle of Remembering from Javier Martínez and Leonard Foglia, which will fuse opera with mariachi and bring new audiences to the art form. HGOco, our arts education and community collaboration initiative, is developing new family-friendly operas for schools and community venues, digital opera premieres, and new chamber works to tell the stories of Houston. We don’t want to ruin any surprises, but world premieres 67 through 72 are already underway, and they will amaze you.

And like Mozart and Da Ponte, your contributions to the repertoire will leave a lasting legacy. “The arts are what make us human,” says John Caird. “The arts allow us to rise above ourselves spiritually and aspire to something better, something beyond the mundane and the quotidian...Those who are broad-minded enough to give to the arts feel that very deeply. They feel it every time they go to an opening night; they can see it, they can smell the success that they’ve created and the good that they’ve spread around the form, and you can see it... it gives them enormous self-belief as donors, and you can feel how deeply affected they are by their partnership with the artist... Again and again, the donation of support to living artists gives both the artists and the donor a sort of immortality.”

“We are mesmerized by the impressively exotic and chaotic accomplishments of Lorenzo Da Ponte, and we hope that The Phoenix will prove to have the longevity and virility of Lorenzo!”

—HGO TRUSTEE SYLVIA BARNES
Can Mozart Survive #MeToo?

BY ARIANNA WARSAW-FAN RAUCH

Mozart’s operas seem to glorify the behavior of bad men.

But listen closely.
As a violinist, I’m used to fielding questions like Brahms or Beethoven? or But what do you do for money? Recently, though, a new question has emerged, and it could have major implications for the future of the industry: Mozart—#MeToo or #NotMeToo?

The controversy stems from Mozart’s operas, some of which feature storylines that echo—or foretell—recent headlines pertaining to instances of sexual assault and harassment both within and outside the world of classical music. Don Giovanni is perhaps the most obvious example, with an eponymous antihero who runs around violating everything with a pulse until he’s ultimately dragged into hell. But there are others, too, among them The Marriage of Figaro, in which Count Almaviva spends three and a half acts plotting to exercise his droit du seigneur (or “right of the lord”) over the maid Susanna on her wedding night—only to repent halfway through the finale. Both Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro have, as of late, received a spate of modern, social media–based stagings designed to highlight their relevance. Champions of these works see them as progressive. But many critics feel that they glorify the repugnant behavior and patriarchal values they depict—and question their place in the repertoire.

So, did Mozart, born 263 years ago..., play for Team #MeToo, or was he yet another bigoted patriarch who deserves to be swept up in the Great Reckoning? Luckily, this is a question that’s...easily answered...Mozart embedded a series of hidden codes in his operas—codes that make his position very clear.

Of course, the word “codes” is a slight dramatization, born from my habit of imagining myself as the protagonist of an as-yet-unpublished Dan Brown novel. Perhaps more accurately, Mozart’s audiences were familiar with certain compositional conventions, which assigned meaning to everything from two-note rhythmic figures to the overall key of a piece, and Mozart used these conventions to interpret and color Lorenzo Da Ponte’s librettos. (Da Ponte wrote the texts for both Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro.) The effect is a kind of running musical commentary, complete with informative wisdom and inside jokes.

Take Count Almaviva’s first scene in The Marriage of Figaro, which features the terzetto “Cosa sento!” (What do I hear?). In it, the Count angrily calls for the banishment of the pageboy Cherubino after hearing rumors that he’s in love with his wife, the Countess. The Count’s melody is, essentially, a scale—the simplest musical configuration that exists. But it halts before each step upward and repeats the last pitch before proceeding to the next, as if even this most basic of constructions is too much for the Count’s plodding intellect.

Rhythmically, Mozart utilizes a dotted figure—a motif he generally employs to depict strength and nobility. But he undercuts this with a series of grace notes in the orchestra, which sound like short comedic “blips,” thus mocking the Count’s self-regard and bravado. Mozart also plays with the listener’s expectations of strong and weak beats, making it sound as if the Count’s first phrase finishes early. This, coupled with the sudden harmonic drama of the cadence (the kind normally reserved for the end of a piece) parodies the Count’s impulsiveness—and very possibly hints at his sexual ineptitude. Within the context of an opera buffa (a genre bound by the rules of comedy and satire), ridicule is the most castigating treatment a character can receive—and Mozart goes to great lengths to ridicule the Count not only in this opening scene but throughout the entire work.

Mozart was the impetus behind the setting of The Marriage of Figaro, having taken a liking to the then-banned Beaumarchais play it’s based upon. But it was Da Ponte who first suggested an opera based on the legendary Don Juan. Of the two, Marriage of Figaro is the more inherently feminist story, with Susanna and the Countess masterminding traps for their male counterparts at every turn...Da Ponte’s Don Giovanni, on the other hand, is an odd mixture; at times the title character is clearly vilified, while at others Da Ponte’s interpretation is unclear. As a dramma giocoso, it treads the line between comedy and tragedy, making it harder for Mozart to employ the same effects he applied to Count Almaviva without undermining the work’s seriousness.

Still, from the opening scene, Mozart quietly champions Donna Anna, Don Giovanni’s would-be victim, as she chases him from her rooms. Mozart sets her words to militant dotted rhythms—this time without the subverting grace notes—that climb for two and a half measures before her line peaks and cascades...
WE ASKED CAST AND ARTISTIC TEAM MEMBERS:
How has the #MeToo movement changed the way you view the opera Don Giovanni and its central characters?

The movement hasn’t, per se, CHANGED the way I look at the central characters because they are who they were written to be. The characters provide a much-needed strain for the audience, morally, to deal with and assimilate. I think the movement does cause us to look linearly at the history of authoritative male power structures and, at the very least, be grateful that questions of humanity and individual value have come to light and that we are PAUSING at that history and beginning to pick up the editing pencil.

—MELODY MOORE, DONNA ELVIRA

I have never seen the opera as glamorizing or condoning the behavior of the title character. Giovanni may seem to be a master manipulator with a talent for seduction, but we also see clearly his callous disregard for all who cross his path, and we see the pain he causes in those who get too close. Hopefully the #MeToo movement has made us all more aware of the Giovanni around us, more able to recognize how readily they wield their charismatic power; if only their behavior were subject to the kind of resolution that Mozart and Da Ponte provided for the Don!

—PATRICK SUMMERS, HGO ARTISTIC AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

Don Giovanni gives us an opportunity to address head on the issues of power, consent, and gender dynamics. How can a man who so clearly ignores the wishes of many of the women he meets (check your libretto) think he is actually doing them a service? Why doesn’t anyone stop him? How many have to come forward for the women to be believed? Don Giovanni has always been a current and relevant piece and I think it’s wonderful that the #MeToo movement has made it that much harder for us as artists to pretend it’s not.

—RYAN MCKINNY, DON GIOVANNI

Opera’s superpower lies in its capacity to immerse the audience in the momentary drama, heartbreak, romance, or suspense. To me, sharing Zerlina’s story in the midst of the #MeToo movement is consequential. While Donna Anna and Donna Elvira recount their horrific personal accounts involving Don Giovanni from the past, the audience witnesses his interactions with Zerlina before their eyes. Mozart was very much an ally of feminism, highlighting womankind’s wit and intellect throughout his operas. I believe Zerlina’s story spotlights the issues in society that desperately need illumination—namely, consent and harassment.

—DOROTHY GAL, ZERLINA

Don Giovanni is an opera about class and thus is also about privilege, sexual and otherwise. Its title character is unrepentant on every level, and his character has always been viewed through the cultural programming of the moment, meaning that through history he has been everything on a continuum from bumblingly comic to genuinely dangerous, but always infuriatingly entitled. The welcome and overdue new vantage point of the #MeToo era is all about toppling long-established norms and privileges. Don Giovanni now challenges us differently, and hopefully it will make us uncomfortable enough to interrogate our own inconsistencies.

—KASPER HOLTEN, DIRECTOR

On April 10, HGO hosted a panel discussion featuring Patrick Summers, Kasper Holten, ROCO’s Alecia Lawyer, the University of Houston’s Fleurette Fernando, and the Ensemble Theater’s Eileen Morris. Moderated by HGO co Director Carleen Graham, the discussion centered on the #MeToo movement’s impact on the arts, how this production of Don Giovanni has evolved since its premiere in 2009, and how performing arts organizations are addressing issues of equality.

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to a resolution. Don Giovanni’s subsequent answer falls after only one measure—before reaching the equivalent high point—indicating Donna Anna’s moral high ground and foreshadowing her eventual triumph. Donna Anna later sings the commanding “Or sai chi l’onore” aria (Now you know who sought to steal my honor), in which she commands Don Ottavio to aid her in avenging her father, whom Don Giovanni has killed. The aria utilizes a combination of dotted figures and dramatic leaps to show her anger, strength, and nobility. These figures rise in a majestic sequence, celebrating her righteousness and imbuing her character with tremendous power. Don Giovanni’s arias are comparatively simpler—both harmonically and structurally—with none of the substance or complexity Mozart gives to Donna Anna.

Mozart’s handling of the opera’s two death scenes makes for an even clearer comparison. The murder of the Commendatore (Donna Anna’s father) is followed by a sad and somber interlude, set over pulsing, unsettling triplets in the accompaniment. It’s followed by Donna Anna’s tragic and unusually melodic recitative, which leads into her duet with Don Ottavio, set in the opera’s primary key of D minor. Meanwhile, Don Giovanni’s death is followed by a cheerful chorus—set in G Major, a key that traditionally symbolizes peace and accord. In this final chorus, each character is given a short epilogue*, taking us through several modulations and tempo changes, after which Mozart ends the opera in the key of D Major—the key of victory and rejoicing (used by Beethoven for his Ode to Joy some 36 years after Don Giovanni’s premiere).

The #MeToo movement has done much for the classical music world. It’s illuminated our dusty little corner of society and begun to expose the many spiders and cockroaches we’ve allowed to nest and flourish over the years. But Mozart and his operas are not among the guilty—despite the fact that his works have often fallen into the hands of directors who prioritized novelty and licentiousness over the integrity of the music. Given the often feminist sensibilities of his scores—the measures he takes to demonstrate disdain for sexual offenders and respect for women—one might easily surmise that he would have even celebrated the fall of so many unworthy figures.

Is it possible that I’m biased? Absolutely. When I was two years old, I lost my voice because I wouldn’t stop singing the Queen of the Night’s famous “Der Hölle Rache” aria from The Magic Flute... But in this case, there’s also ample evidence to back me up, and I will happily share it with anyone who remains unconvinced—in an agonizingly technical measure-by-measure analysis of all of Mozart’s operatic scores.

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*The epilogue is often cut (as it is in HGO’s production) so as not to dilute the impact of Don Giovanni’s fate.
WHENEVER THERE IS dancing onstage, performing arts organizations hire a choreographer. When there is fighting, they hire a fight director. But when there are sexually charged scenes, most companies until recently have left them up to the director and the performers to handle.

However, in the wake of the #MeToo and Time’s Up movements, that is changing, and industries are making new efforts to ensure performers have a voice during intimate stagings. Last October, the cable channel HBO announced it would have an intimacy coordinator on set for all scenes that involve sexual encounters, and theaters and opera companies are increasingly turning to these professionals. For Don Giovanni, Houston Grand Opera has hired an intimacy director (ID) for the first time—Adam Noble, a movement specialist certified by Intimacy Directors International (IDI). In addition to his duties as associate professor in the Theater and Dance Department at the University of Houston, Noble works as a freelance fight director—he will also be fight director for Don Giovanni—and as an actor, director, movement coach, choreographer, and stunt performer.

Noble recalls teaching an advanced scene study course as a visiting professor at California State University, Fresno. The students chose their own partners and their own scenes, which were to be rehearsed independently and then presented in class. One female student came to Noble in confusion because she wasn’t sure if her partner had sexually assaulted her in the course of rehearsing. The scene they were working on, from A Streetcar Named Desire, “is basically a rape scene,” Noble says. He then realized that there was an issue with the ways such scenes are approached and that performers and stage directors don’t always have the tools to deal with them.

Because it’s not unusual for theater students to rehearse on their own, Noble began to develop his own program to help them work together on intimate scenes with or without a director present and began workshopping it around 2008, in both academic and non-academic settings. He called it “Extreme Stage Physicality,” because it dealt not only with intimacy but also aggression.

Noble developed Extreme Stage Physicality independently of the IDI’s methodology, but the two share many similarities. The IDI’s “Five C’s” help to summarize the key concepts of both: Communication and consent underpin the entire process—the ID must create a culture in which intimacy can be openly discussed and the performers are empowered to give or withhold consent. The performers must understand the context of the intimate scene and how it serves the story. Choreography—the actual movement in the scene—is set and cannot be changed unless it is discussed and agreed to by all. This is intended to prevent performers from going rogue and changing the choreography because they are “in the moment.” Closure involves rituals of self-care at the end of a rehearsal or performance, which help the performers acknowledge that the scene is not real life and allow them to leave it behind when they go home.

While Extreme Stage Physicality and the IDI both predate the #MeToo movement, today’s climate has certainly brought new attention to intimacy onstage. “We are just now catching up to the need,” Noble says. “We’re realizing there is an easier way, that we can create a safer environment in which everyone can offer their best work.”

—Laura Chandler

Noble (center) gives intimacy direction to Kyle Clark and Catherine Thomas on The Debasers at the University of Houston. Photo by Christian Rodriguez.
Mozart didn’t often use trombones, but they are used to great effect in *Don Giovanni*. They appear near the end of the opera to announce the coming of the ghost of the Commendatore, who will deliver Don Giovanni’s judgment. The trombones make the music more portentous and also—because they were used extensively in church music—audiences of that time knew immediately that this moment has a sacred significance.

**DON GIOVANNI IN CONTEXT**

*Don Giovanni* was the second of the three operas composed by Mozart with Lorenzo Da Ponte as librettist. All three—*The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Cosi fan tutte* (1790)—are regarded as masterpieces.

While some of Mozart’s most popular operas were composed to German libretti (*The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Magic Flute*), all three of his operas with Da Ponte and many more besides are written to be sung in Italian. By the time Mozart and Da Ponte first worked together, German Singspiel had fallen out of fashion—at least in Vienna, where they lived and worked in Emperor Joseph II’s court—and Italian opera ruled the day. It was considered more sophisticated, and Mozart and Da Ponte’s works were especially so. Their blend of seriousness and humor was groundbreaking at a time when operas were either solemn or comic.

**WHAT’S WITH THE TROMBONES?**

Mozart didn’t often use trombones, but they are used to great effect in *Don Giovanni*. They appear near the end of the opera to announce the coming of the ghost of the Commendatore, who will deliver Don Giovanni’s judgment. The trombones make the music more portentous and also—because they were used extensively in church music—audiences of that time knew immediately that this moment has a sacred significance.

**WHAT ABOUT THE ENDING?**

Most productions show Don Giovanni being dragged off/pulled into/or falling into hell after refusing to repent of his wrongdoing at the end. This production uses a less literal—but not less real—meaning of hell.
HGO Dramaturg Jeremy Johnson explains why The Phoenix—Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s new opera about the Italian librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte—is essentially an American story.
MOST PEOPLE who have been going to the opera for a few years know that “the Da Ponte operas” were written by Mozart. But perhaps we should be more precise: those operas—The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, and Così fan tutte—were composed by Mozart. Their libretti were written by Lorenzo Da Ponte, a man from the small town of Ceneda, Italy, seven years older than the Salzburg composer: a man who, for all of his 89 years of life, is entirely known for a scant five years during which he collaborated with a musical genius. His other 84 years, though, are arguably more interesting.

Da Ponte is entirely known for a scant five years during which he collaborated with a musical genius. His other 84 years, though, are arguably more interesting.

He even raised—in only six weeks—what would today be almost five million dollars, all to build the very first opera house in New York City. He was 27 years old when America was born, and 79 years old when he became an American citizen.

Tarik O’Regan, composer of The Phoenix, says that Da Ponte’s connection to the United States is what inspired the opera. “It began with an article I wrote for the Guardian newspaper on European émigré composers and their work in New York—Britten, Bartók, Mahler—and this whole body of work created in America by European artists. And part of that was my discovery of just how much time Da Ponte had spent in the United States.” O’Regan—an immigrant and now an American citizen himself—would go on to become intrigued by this juxtaposition of time and place: Da Ponte was an “old world European” living at the same time the new world was being established. Librettist John Caird points out that Da Ponte and Mozart were writing Don Giovanni “on the very same nights that Hamilton and Madison were putting the final touches on the Constitution in September 1787. That, to me, is absolutely fascinating.”

For O’Regan and Caird, Da Ponte’s life is an American story—an immigrant story. His connection to America started almost three decades before moving here. While teaching at the Treviso seminary, he wrote political and philosophical poems for his students to recite that questioned the authority of a tyrannical monarchy. The year he wrote these revolutionary words? 1776. Caird points out that one of the poems was titled “The American in Europe”: “He’s hearing, clearly, all about the revolution in America and the Declaration of Independence. Da Ponte’s destination as an artist, from the very beginning, seemed obvious to be America.”

Those poems, though, resulted in his dismissal from his post and a lifelong ban from teaching in the Venetian Republic. The Venetian Senate formally rebuked the Treviso seminary and ordered an official inquiry into the “radicalization” of schools throughout the republic. That wouldn’t be the last time Da Ponte’s penmanship landed him in hot water.

Following only two years in Venice, he was put on trial. Officially, his trial was for infidelity—as a Catholic priest fathering illegitimate children with his live-in mistress—but the authorities had known about that and turned a blind eye for years. Perhaps not coincidentally, mere weeks before his trial he had written an ode in defense of his friend...
Giorgio Pisani, who had been accused of being a political dissident. Again, Da Ponte found his political views—and his willingness to write publicly about them—under fire from the European authorities. He fled Venice before his trial was over but was sentenced to a 15-year banishment from all lands of the Venetian Republic.

Ending up in Vienna, Da Ponte enjoyed ten years of prosperity as poet to the court for Italian opera, under the reign of Emperor Joseph II. It was here that he met and collaborated with Mozart, Salieri, and Martín y Soler. When Joseph died, his younger brother Leopold II ascended to the throne, and Da Ponte was subsequently removed from his post as Italian poet. Convinced that his “enemies” had conspired against him, he wrote a sardonic ode to the new emperor, publicly embarrassing him. One line in particular prophesied the unfortunate outcome for the Italian poet, when he wrote to Leopold, “my fate does not depend on you, because all your power, and all the powers of possible kinds, have no rights over my soul.” Da Ponte found himself banished indefinitely from Vienna.

A 12-year stint in London ended in bankruptcy, overwhelming debt, and a warrant for his arrest—but a tip from a friendly policeman gave Da Ponte enough time to flee yet another of his adopted homes. He boarded a ship for America, where he would make his home for the last 33 years of his life. He landed in America the same year that the Lewis and Clark Expedition arrived at the Pacific Ocean. O’Regan was drawn to this merger of time and place. “The Commissioners’ Plan of 1811 [in New York] was this incredibly visionary idea to build and plan out miles of this absolutely rigid grid of streets, but that happened while the co-writer of three of the most important works of the core classical repertory was living in the city at the same time. I was fascinated by that, but it was very strange—it felt like the old world was meeting the new.”

O’Regan also moved to New York—two hundred years after Da Ponte did—and points out that he was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in a ceremony of almost identical wording to the one Da Ponte would have had. “It’s an incredibly fast, progressive country that he’s now a part of. I’ve always been interested in this link between inextricably European characters and definitive eras in the United States—Stravinsky and Schoenberg living in Los Angeles during the Golden Age of Hollywood—you don’t really think of these worlds colliding, but they do.”

That collision of place and culture applies to O’Regan, as well, who grew up in a multi-cultural family. Patrick Summers, HGO’s Artistic and Music Director as well as conductor of The Phoenix, describes O’Regan’s background as ideal for composing Da Ponte’s operatic biography. “Tarik is the finest exemplar of the diverse trend of 21st-century composition: fusion. He has a British father and Algerian mother, and his childhood, spent variously between London, Algeria, and Morocco, instilled in him a deep interest and intellectual rigor about world culture, all of which he incorporates into his music. Tarik’s compositional voice is both highly lyrical and movingly intellectual; he is that real rarity: a thinking heart and a feeling brain. Tarik O’Regan is the perfect choice to bring us musically into the world of a genius who transited many cultures.”

As the world becomes more interconnected than ever, we see daily the influence of rapid globalization and cultural diversity. Perhaps it is easy to take for granted the influence that Italian culture has had on American life, but it’s even easier to forget that it all started with an immigrant. Da Ponte’s unending enthusiasm and zealous love for both of his homes—Italy and America—compelled him to unite the best parts of each. The man who wrote the libretti for three of our most beloved Italian operas? He was an American. As O’Regan puts it: “There are always these strange collisions of time and culture...things aren’t as far apart as you think.”

Editor’s note: The opera’s full title, The Phoenix, or The Operatic Adventures of Lorenzo Da Ponte on Two Continents in Two Acts, and the title of this article reflect the common practice during Mozart and Da Ponte’s time of adding taglines to opera titles. Don Giovanni’s full title, for example, is Il dissoluto punito, ossia Il Don Giovanni (The libertine punished, or Don Giovanni).
The Phoenix

It is 1832 at the Park Theatre in Manhattan. Lorenzo Da Ponte has written the libretto for a new opera titled The Phoenix, based on his life; he hopes proceeds from the performances will help him to build a new theater for Italian opera in New York. The final dress rehearsal is about to begin. Da Ponte and his son Lorenzo Jr., nicknamed Enzo, who composed the music, are co-directing and performing as well. The other performers include opera stars Maria Malibran and Patrick Kelly and two of Da Ponte’s nieces, Giulietta and Faustina. The elder Da Ponte plays himself throughout; Enzo plays himself as well as his father as a young man. The other principal characters portray themselves in the backstage scenes and scene changes but take multiple roles in the opera-within-an-opera, The Phoenix. The opera traces the circuitous route of Lorenzo Da Ponte’s life from boyhood in Ceneda, Italy, to America, where he lived for more than 30 years.

A full synopsis begins on p. 52.

How Much of The Phoenix Is Factual?

Aside from the fact that Lorenzo Da Ponte never wrote an opera about his life (although he did write highly fanciful memoirs!), and that his namesake son was never a composer nor a librettist, the major plot points and characters portrayed in the opera-within-an-opera are based on real people and occurrences. Of the cast of singers who perform the opera, all of them have some basis in fact. Maria Malibran was one of the most famous singers of her day; Patrick Kelly is based on the Irish tenor Michael Kelly (with his first name changed to Patrick in honor of HGO’s Patrick Summers); Giulietta is based on a niece of Da Ponte; and Faustina is based on a half-sister of Da Ponte.

More Facts

1. Italian opera was first heard in New York in late 1825, when an important operatic family from Europe, headed by Manuel Garcia, came to perform at the Park Theatre in New York. When they arrived, Da Ponte introduced himself, and Garcia was thrilled to meet the author of Don Giovanni. During the nine months the company performed in New York, Garcia’s young daughter made the strongest impression. She would later become one of the greatest stars of her time under her married name—Maria Malibran.

2. The Phoenix librettist John Caird says that Da Ponte actually did invite his niece (Giulietta in the opera; Giulia in real life) to come to America to perform, but she was “out of her depth” and her performance was a failure. She married an Italian man she met in America and returned to Europe without even telling Da Ponte goodbye. She never forgave him, according to Caird.

3. The war that Emperor Joseph II refers to in The Phoenix was the Habsburg-Ottoman War, 1788–91. The conflict wreaked havoc on the Austrian economy and also on Joseph’s health. His death in 1790 was related to an illness he contracted at the front.

4. The buggy used in Act II was obtained through Glenn Moreland’s Wagon Shop of Ft. Davis, Texas. Moreland has built wagons for museums, restaurants, and even Disneyland. The wagon seen in The Phoenix dates to the late 1800s, several decades after the time depicted in the opera, but Moreland says that buggy styles changed very little over that period. It’s entirely possible Da Ponte owned a buggy much like it.
The librettist and subject of the new opera *The Phoenix* lived during an exciting period in world history.
1769
Enters the Seminary of Portogruaro to receive a top-notch education

Daniel Boone begins exploring Kentucky

1773
Ordained as a priest; relocates to nearby Venice and becomes immersed in the night life

Boston Tea Party

1776
Declaration of Independence ratified

1779
Banished from Venice for “public concubinage”

1780
Lured by the promise of a court position in Dresden, Germany, he moves there only to find out he has been tricked by an enemy.

1783
Appointed court poet by Emperor Joseph II; begins to write opera libretti

American Revolution hostilities cease

1781
Relocates to Vienna, Austria, where he will meet composer Antonio Salieri, Emperor Joseph II, and Mozart.

Articles of Confederation adopted

1785
To escape debt, Da Ponte journeys to America and the family settles in New York City. Several of Da Ponte’s business ventures fail.

Napoleon crowned king of Italy

1805
The Da Pontes move to the Susquehanna Valley in Pennsylvania. Da Ponte is at first successful as a merchant, but his fortunes again take a turn for the worse.

1811
Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo, and the process of Italian unification begins.

1814
Da Ponte travels back to New York, opens a bookstore, and is the first professor of Italian literature at Columbia College (now University).

1819
Da Ponte becomes a U.S. citizen

1828
Builds New York’s first opera house

1833
Sells the opera house to pay the company’s debts

1838
Da Ponte passes away on August 17.

Although he never achieved fame and riches, he is the star of our story, with 29 known operas and collaborations with 11 different composers. He lived in America during six presidencies, from Thomas Jefferson through Martin Van Buren.
SPRING 2019

DON GIOVANNI

A *dramma giocoso* in Two Acts | Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart | Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

**DON GIOVANNI**

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

Leporello  Paolo Bordogna *
Donna Anna  Ailyn Pérez
Don Giovanni  Ryan McKinny †
Commendatore  Kristinn Sigmundsson
Don Ottavio  Ben Bliss *

Donna Elvira  Melody Moore
Zerlina  Dorothy Gal †
   The Evans Family/Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Nickson Fellow
Masetto  Daniel Noyola †
   Beth Madison Fellow

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor  Cristian Măcelaru
Director  Kasper Holten *
Set Designer  Es Devlin *
Costume Designer  Anja Vang Kragh *
Lighting Designer  Bruno Poet *
Video Designer  Luke Halls *
Original Choreographer  Signe Fabricius *
Associate Director  Amy Lane *
Associate Lighting Designer  John-Paul Percox *
Revival Choreographer  Anna-Marie Sullivan *
Fight Director/Intimacy Director  Adam Noble

Chorus Master  Richard Bado †
   Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair
Fortepiano Continuo  Kirill Kuzmin †
Italian Coach  Nicolò Sbuelz *
Musical Preparation  Jonathan Gmeinder †
   Bill and Melinda Brunger/Lynn and Henry Gissel/Ms. Marianne Kah Fellow
   Kirill Kuzmin †
   Kyle Naig †
   Stephanie Larsen/Valerie and Miguel Miro-Quesada/Richard Stout/John M. O’Quinn Foundation Endowed Fund Fellow
Stage Manager  Christopher Staub
Assistant Director  E. Reed Fisher
Supertitles by  Scott F. Heumann, as adapted by Jeremy Johnson

PRODUCTION CREDITS

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

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

Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE, 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 IATSE, Local #51.

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

This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

SPECIAL CREDITS

Blazek & Vetterling LLP—Houston, Auditors
Apurva Thekdi, M.D., Consulting Physician and Otolaryngologist
Quan Law Group, PLLC
Immigration and Visa Attorneys

Vinson & Elkins LLP, Attorneys of Record
Shweiki Media, Printer, Opera Cues

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

The performance lasts approximately 3 hours, including one intermission.

ACT I
Don Giovanni, a Spanish nobleman, is renowned throughout Europe as a seducer of women; Leporello, his servant, reluctantly aids him by keeping watch. Giovanni attempts to leave the house of Donna Anna, his most recent conquest; he kills Anna’s father, the Commendatore, when the Commendatore tries to stop him. Anna tells her fiancé, Don Ottavio, that she was raped by an unknown man and they vow revenge on the murderer.

Leporello’s attempts to persuade his master to reform are interrupted by Donna Elvira, a former mistress of Giovanni’s, who is traveling to look for him. Giovanni leaves it to Leporello to explain the extent of his master’s womanizing.

Masetto and his bride, Zerlina, are to be married in a peasant wedding, but Giovanni sets out to seduce Zerlina. Elvira interrupts and foils Giovanni’s attempt. Ottavio and Anna appeal to Giovanni for help in their pursuit of the murderer of Anna’s father. Elvira again interrupts and warns Ottavio and Anna about Giovanni’s true nature; Anna tells Ottavio that Giovanni is the man who murdered her father.

Leporello discusses with Giovanni the plans for the masked ball his master is hosting that evening. Zerlina assures Masetto that Giovanni has not touched her. Elvira joins forces with Ottavio and Anna; they are going to the ball and intend to exact vengeance on Giovanni. While everyone is dancing at the ball, Giovanni attempts to ensnare Zerlina, but she rallies everyone behind her to try to entrap Giovanni. All accuse him, but he and Leporello elude them once more.

INTERMISSION

ACT II
Hoping for success with Elvira’s maid, Giovanni exchanges clothes with Leporello, who is instructed to lure Elvira away. Giovanni is interrupted by Masetto, who is intent on killing him, but his disguise is successful and he beats Masetto up and escapes.

Returning with Elvira, Leporello is mistaken for Giovanni by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto. Removing his disguise, Leporello convinces them that he is not the guilty one. Ottavio swears vengeance on Giovanni, whom, in spite of everything, Elvira continues to love.

Giovanni hears the voice of the Commendatore, whom he killed, warning Giovanni of impending retribution. Giovanni orders Leporello to invite the ghost to supper. The ghost of the Commendatore accepts Don Giovanni’s invitation and arrives to send him to hell.

Synopsis originally produced by the Royal Opera, Covent Garden

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

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

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

Ofelia Adame
Sarah A. Bannon
Sybil Elizabeth Crawford
Robert Dee
Callie Jo Denbigh
Justin Dunkle
Ami Figg
Don Figg
Suzanne Gregory
Austin Hoeltzel
Jon Janacek
Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Sarah L. Lee

Britany Lovett
Lindsay Lymer
Alejandro Magallón
Heath Marti
Antonio Martinez
Neal Martinez
Jeff Monette
Natasha Monette
Jammieca Mott
Christina Scanlan
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Naonobu Sugitani
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CRISTIAN MĂCELARU  
(Romania/United States)
Conductor

Cristian Măcelaru made his HGO debut in 2010, conducting performances of Madame Butterfly. He was recently appointed chief conductor designate of the WDR Symphony Orchestra, effective with the 2019–20 season. Măcelaru is also music director and conductor of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. He first came to international attention in 2012, when he filled in for Pierre Boulez conducting the Chicago Symphony. In the same year, he received the Solti Emerging Conductor Award for young conductors, followed in 2014 by the Solti Conducting Award. A particularly close collaboration connects him with the Philadelphia Orchestra: Since his subscription debut in 2013, he has been on the podium of this orchestra over 100 times and served there for three seasons as conductor in residence. This season, Măcelaru makes debuts with the French National Orchestra, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and São Paulo Symphony Orchestra. He returns to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bayerische Staatsoper, City of Birmingham Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Dresden Philharmonic, Hallé Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and Detroit Symphony. This past January, he brought the National Symphony Orchestra of Romania on its first-ever tour to the United States in commemoration of Romania’s centennial, culminating in a performance at New York’s Jazz at Lincoln Center in performances with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

KASPER HOLTEN  
(Denmark)
Director

Kasper Holten is making his HGO debut. Holten is CEO of the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen, the city where he was born. He was previously director of opera at the Royal Danish Opera (2000–11) and at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden (2011–17). He has directed productions around the world, including at Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, La Scala, the Bregenz Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opéra national de Lyon, Teatro Real in Madrid, Opera Australia, NCPA in Beijing, and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Some of his notable productions include Wagner’s Ring cycle (Copenhagen), Lohengrin (Berlin) and Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (London/Beijing/Melbourne); this production of Mozart’s Don Giovanni (London/Tel Aviv/Barcelona/Tokyo); and Bizet’s Carmen on the huge outdoor stage on the lake in Bregenz. Several of his productions are available on DVD. His feature film debut, Juan (2009), was an interpretation of Don Giovanni and has been shown at major film festivals around the world. Holten was knighted by HM Queen Margrethe II of Denmark in 2003, and she awarded him the honorary medal Ingenio et Arti in 2011.

ES DEVLIN  
(United Kingdom)
Set Designer

London-based artist and designer Es Devlin is making her HGO debut. She works in a range of media, often mapping light and projected film onto kinetic sculptural forms. Her practice began in narrative theater and experimental opera, and she has made lyric stage sculptures in collaboration with Beyoncé, Kanye West, Adele, and U2 and designed the London 2012 Olympic closing ceremony. For the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, she has designed The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, Les Troyens, and Salome. She designed Otello at the Metropolitan Opera and has worked at many of the major international opera houses including La Scala, Vienna State Opera, and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. Recent theater work includes The Lehman Trilogy at the Royal National Theatre and Park Avenue Armory. Her solo sculptural work explores machine-learning and collective poetry, including Please Feed the Lions, Trafalgar Square, and The Singing Tree at the Victoria and Albert Museum 2017. Large scale explorations of labyrinth and map geometries include Room 2022 at Miami Art Basel (2017) and EGG at the XI Gallery New York. She has been awarded three Olivier Awards and was made OBE in 2015.

ANJA VANG KRAGH  
(Denmark)
Costume Designer

Anja Vang Kragh is making her HGO debut. The Denmark native began her career in fashion design, working for John Galliano (Christian Dior) and later Stella McCartney. Since 2006 she has worked extensively on theater productions in Denmark, with credits including Cabaret, Tartuffe, Robin Hood, and The Importance of Being Earnest (Royal Danish Theatre); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (State Theatre, Helsingborg); Romeo and Juliet (Aarhus
work for the National Theatre includes about Jamie, The Moderate Soprano theater credits in the West End include National Opera; and Vixen, Don Giovanni at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; The Cunning Little Vixen, and Carmen for the Bregenz Festival, all directed by Kasper Holten. Her other work includes costume designs for concerts of works by Mozart, Beethoven, the Beatles, the Beach Boys, and Bob Dylan. She also designed costumes for the film Love is in the Air (2011, directed by Simon Staho) and for the television show The Other World.

BRUNO POET (UNITED KINGDOM)
Lighting Designer
Bruno Poet is making his HGO debut. His upcoming and recent lighting designs include The Unknown Soldier at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Il trovatore at Royal Danish Opera; The Merry Widow at English National Opera; Oklahoma! at Grange Park Opera; Marco Polo at Guangzhou Opera House; and the U.K. tour of Dusty (2018). Further lighting credits include Carmen at the Bregenz Festival, Julius Caesar at the Bridge Theatre, and Big Fish at The Other Palace; lighting credits in London's West End include Tina: The Musical, Miss Saigon, and From Here to Eternity. Poet's designs for events include Fast and Furious Live Arena Tour and Giudizio Universale for Auditorium Conciliazione in Rome. His design for Rusalka for the Sydney Opera won the Australian Green Room Award. He won the Oliver Award for his lighting on Danny Boyle's Frankenstein at the National Theatre and a Knight of Illumination Award for his lighting on the Icelandic rock band Sigur Rós's 2012–13 world tour. He subsequently designed the lighting for the group's 2016–17 world tour.

LUKE HALLS (UNITED KINGDOM)
Video Designer
Luke Halls is making his HGO debut. He has designed for numerous opera companies: some recent credits include West Side Story at Malmo Opera, Marco Polo at Guangzhou Opera, and Das Liebesverbot at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires. Additional credits include The Cunning Little Vixen, Don Giovanni, and Król Roger at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; The Cunning Little Vixen, Don Giovanni, and Der Freischütz at the Danish Royal Opera; Otello at the Metropolitan Opera; Zeitgeist at the London Coliseum; The Flying Dutchman at Finland National Opera; and Carmen at the Bregenz Festival. His theater credits in the West End include Everyone's Talking about Jamie, The Moderate Soprano, and Frozen. Recent work for the National Theatre includes The Lehman Trilogy and The Great Wave. Further theater credits include My Name is Lucy Barton at the Bridge Theatre; and 2071, The Nether (also West End), Linda, and Girls & Boys at the Royal Court. He designed the video for the tours of Miss Saigon (Japan, New York, and U.K.) and Mary Poppins. He was awarded the Knight of Illumination Award for Don Giovanni in 2015 and a BAFTA Award for ITV's The Cube.

SIGNE FABRICIUS (DENMARK)
Original Choreographer
Signe Fabricius's work is being seen at HGO for the first time. She trained as a dancer and has been responsible for movement and choreography in numerous productions of theater, opera, and musicals as well as television shows. Her work in opera has been seen around the world, including at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Vienna State Opera; Opera Australia; the Bregenz Festival; Teatro Real, Madrid; Teatro Regio, Turin; New National Theatre, Tokyo, Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires; and Finnish National Opera. In her native country, Denmark, she has been noted for her movement work in productions of classic dramas such as Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Sophocles's Oedipus and Antigone, and she has also choreographed large scale musicals such as West Side Story, My Fair Lady, Jesus Christ Superstar, and Cabaret as well as several acclaimed experimental theater concerts with the collective Sort Samvittighed.

AMY LANE (UNITED KINGDOM)
Associate Director
Amy Lane is making her HGO debut. She has directed opera extensively in the United Kingdom with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where she is the head staff director; Longborough Festival Opera; Welsh National Opera; English National Opera; Opera North; and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RLPO). As an associate director, she has worked with many major international opera houses, including Den Jyske Opera, Theater an der Wien, the Icelandic Opera, Semperoper Dresden, the Bregenz Festival, and Polish National Opera. She also directs film and video elements to incorporate into her productions. In 2018, she co-directed with Kasper Holten a new commission of Marco Polo in Guangzhou and Beijing; for Sir Bryn Terfel, she directed Bryn Terfel at 50 (both stage and video, Royal Albert Hall), Tosca (RLPO, Welsh National Opera, and Eisteddfod), Falstaff (RLPO), and a concert performance of Tosca at the Abu Dhabi Festival. In the future, she will be the stage director of the entire Ring cycle for Longborough Festival Opera from 2019 through 2023. She co-directed Drot og
Marsk with Kasper Holten, which is now being performed at the Royal Danish Opera. In June, she will be the associate director for Icelandic Opera’s Brothers.

**JOHN-PAUL PERCOX (UNITED KINGDOM)**

*Associate Lighting Designer*

John-Paul Percox is making his HGO debut. He began his career in 1994 at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, working for both the Royal Ballet and the Royal Opera; he is currently a team manager in lighting for the Royal Opera House and has worked numerous times abroad for the both companies in places as far afield as China (Beijing National Centre for the Performing Arts) and Israel (Tel Aviv Performing Arts Centre). Percox has worked on over 175 productions (1,200 performances) at the Royal Opera House; he has lit performances at Sadler’s Wells Theatre, the Britten Theatre at the Royal College of Music, Operalia 2015, and a special memorial concert for Dmitri Hvorostovsky at the Royal Opera House. He has worked with such lighting designers as Jon Clark (*Exterminating Angel*), Giuseppe Di Iorio (*Morgen und Abend*), and Mimi Jordan Sherin (*Anna Nicole, Il trittico, Boris Godunov, and La bohème*). In addition to this production of *Don Giovanni*, Percox also worked with Bruno Poet on *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny.*

**ANNA-MARIE SULLIVAN (UNITED KINGDOM)**

*Revival Choreographer*

Anna-Marie Sullivan is making her HGO debut. The British actress and choreographer works in theater, television, and film, with recent credits including *Close* (Netflix); *Crumbs* (ABC TV); *Mission: Impossible—Rogue Nation; Behind the Curtain* (Glyndebourne and U.K. Tour); *The Fairy-Queen* (Theater an der Wien); *La traviata, The Rape of Lucretia, and Don Pasquale* (Glyndebourne and U.K. tour); and *Lessons in Love and Violence, L’étoile,* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden). Sullivan has served as revival choreographer for this production of *Don Giovanni* at the Israeli Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

**ADAM NOBLE (UNITED STATES)**

*Fight Director/Intimacy Director*

Adam Noble is a movement specialist with over 20 years of experience as an actor, director, movement coach, fight director, choreographer, voice actor, stunt performer, educator, and intimacy director. He serves as the lead movement instructor for the HGO Studio and was the fight director for HGO’s *Julius Caesar* last season. He also performed the role of Captain Lawson in HGO’s world premiere of *A Coffin in Egypt* (2014). He has worked with the Kennedy Center/Washington National Opera, the Public Theater, Lincoln Center Directors Lab, the Alley Theatre, Seattle Opera, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Opera Carolina, Houston Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Ilkhom Theatre of Mark Weil, Dayton Opera, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Stages Repertory Theatre, PS. 122, OperaOmaha, the Juilliard School, the Jacobs School of Music, the Shepherd School of Music, and many more. He is the co-founder and artistic director of the Dynamic Presence Project, a company focused on the revitalization and
proliferation of movement theater and physical storytelling, and is the associate professor of acting and movement for the University of Houston’s MFA and BFA acting programs.

**RICHARD BADO**

**(UNITED STATES)**

*Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair*

Conductor and composer Richard Bado, an alumnus of the HGO Studio (1984–85), is director of artistic operations and chorus master for HGO. Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989, leading HGO’s acclaimed production of *Show Boat* at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, he has conducted at La Scala, Opéra national de Paris, New York City Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, Tulsa Opera, the Russian National Orchestra, the Florida Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony, and Wolf Trap Opera. This season, he conducted performances of *The Nutcracker* for the Houston Ballet. An accomplished pianist, Bado appears regularly with Renée Fleming in recital, including a tour this past fall. He has also played for Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Ramón Vargas, Samuel Ramey, Jamie Barton, Ryan McKinny, and Nathan Gunn. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University, and he studied advanced choral conducting with Robert Shaw. For 12 years, he was the director of the opera studies program at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. He has served on the faculties of the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Dolora Zajick Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, the International Vocal School in Moscow, and the Texas Music Festival. He received HGO’s Silver Rose Award (2013) in honor of his 25th anniversary as chorus master.

**DENISE TARRANT**

**Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair**

Concertmaster Texas native Denise Tarrant began her professional violin career at the age of 16 with the Midland-Odessa (Texas) Symphony. Afterward she studied at the University of Houston, Rice University, Trinity University (London), and the Royal College of Music (London). She became HGO’s concertmaster under the baton of Patrick Summers in 1999. Highlights of her work at HGO include the world premieres of Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The House without a Christmas Tree* (2017), Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* (2016), Carlisle Floyd’s *Cold Sassy Tree* (2000), and Tod Machover’s *Resurrection* (1999), as well as Floyd’s *Of Mice and Men* (2002) and Catán’s *Floresenca en el Amazonas* (2001), all of which have been released on CD. She further performed in the world premieres of Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players* (2016); André Previn’s *Brief Encounter* (2009); Heggie’s *Three Decembers* (2008) and *The End of the Affair* (2004); Mark Adamo’s *Lysistrata* (2005); Catán’s *Salsipuedes* (2004); and Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* (2003). She performed onstage as the solo violinist in *Julius Caesar* last season and also when the production debuted in 2003. She has been concertmaster of the Houston Ballet Orchestra since 1988 and has been featured as a violin soloist in numerous Houston Ballet productions including Stanton Welch’s *Maminyas* (Ross Edward’s Violin Concerto), *Clear* (Bach’s Concerto for Violin and Oboe), *The Four Seasons* (Vivaldi), and Natalie Weir’s *Steppenwolf* (Bruch Violin Concerto).

**RYAN MCKINNY**

**(UNITED STATES)**

*Bass-baritone—Don Giovanni*

HGO Studio alumnus Ryan McKinny (2005–08) has been seen at HGO as Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, Donner in *Das Rheingold*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and the title role in *Rigoletto*, among many other roles. He is making his role debut as Don Giovanni and returns next season to sing Jokanaan in *Salome*. This season, he made his role debut as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* at Opéra de Montréal; returned to the Dutch National Opera for the European premiere of John Adams’s *Girls of the Golden West*, the same role in which he made his San Francisco Opera debut last season; performed in Bernstein’s *Songfest* with Marin Alsop and the Juilliard Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; and sang the title role in *The Flying Dutchman* with Edo de Waart and the Milwaukee Symphony. He returns to the Bayreuth Festival this summer to reprise his acclaimed performances of Amfortas in *Parsifal*. He has been seen at the Metropolitan Opera (Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Lieutenant Ratcliffe in *Billy Budd*); Dutch National Opera (debut in Pierre Audi’s production of *Parsifal*; Los Angeles Opera (Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Stanley Kowalski to Renée Fleming’s Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Leone in Handel’s *Tamerlano* with Plácido Domingo, and Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*); and Santa Fe Opera (Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic* and Jokanaan in *Salome*), as well as Washington National Opera; Staatsoper Dresden; Hamburg State Opera; Deutsche Oper Berlin; Deutsche Oper am Rhein; Teatro Colón; and many other companies.
PAOLO BORDOGNA (ITALY)
Baritone—Leporello
Paolo Bordogna is making his HGO debut. His repertoire includes more than 60 roles from baroque to contemporary, but he specializes in the roles of Mozart, Rossini, and Donizetti. He has performed at La Scala; Opéra national de Paris; Vienna State Opera; the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Teatro Real, Madrid; Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona; Washington National Opera; Bavarian State Opera, Munich; Palau de les Arts, Valencia; Opera Australia; National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Beijing; Tchaikovsky Hall, Moscow; Mikhailovsky Theatre, St. Petersburg; Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; Maggio Musicale, Florence; Teatro San Carlo, Naples; and Teatro dell’Opera, Rome. Recently, he sang Fabrizio Vingraddito in La gazza ladra at La Scala; Belcore in The Elixir of Love at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and at Gran Teatre del Liceu; Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro and Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola at the Bavarian State Opera; the title role in Don Pasquale at ABAO Bilbao and Oper am Rhein; Bartolo in The Barber of Seville at Washington National Opera and at the NCPA; Selim in Il turco in Italia with Opera Australia in Sydney; Don Geronio in The Barber of Seville at the New National Theatre of Tokyo, Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari, and other companies; The Elixir of Love and The Love of Three Oranges at NCPA; and The Marriage of Figaro at Opera Australia of Sydney. He released his first solo album, Tutto Buffo, on the Decca label.

AILYN PÉREZ (UNITED STATES)
Soprano—Donna Anna
Ailyn Pérez has been seen at HGO as Countess Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro (2016) and Desdemona in Otello (2014). She won the 2012 Richard Tucker Award, becoming the first Hispanic recipient in the award’s 35-year history, as well as the 15th annual Plácido Domingo Award. She has performed Violetta in La traviata for Zurich Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Berlin State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, San Francisco Opera, La Scala, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Pérez also appeared at Covent Garden as the title role in Massenet’s Manon and for her role debut as Liù in Turandot. Other highlights include both Mimi and Musetta in La bohème at the Metropolitan Opera; Adina in The Elixir of Love for the Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, and Washington National Opera; Violetta and the title role in Manon on a tour of Japan with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Tatyana Bakst in the world premiere of Jake Heggie’s Great Scott and Manon for Dallas Opera; house debuts at the Bolshoi Theatre as Mimi in La bohème and at Glyndebourne as Alice Ford in Falstaff; the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro and Marguerite in Faust for Hamburg State Opera; Marguerite in Santa Fe; and Amelia Grimaldi in Simon Boccanegra at La Scala, the Berlin State Opera, and opposite Leo Nucci at Zurich Opera. This season, she made her role debut as Elvira in Ernani for La Scala and performed Mimi and Alice Ford at the Metropolitan Opera. This summer, she will sing Micaëla in Carmen with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

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

BEN BLISS (UNITED STATES)
Tenor—Don Ottavio
A 2016 recipient of Lincoln Center’s Martin E. Segal Award, Ben Bliss is making both his role debut as Don Ottavio and his HGO debut. This season, he returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Tamino in The Magic Flute, made his house debut
with Canadian Opera Company as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and performed Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* with Seattle Opera. This summer, he will return to Santa Fe Opera as Ferrando. Orchestral and recital highlights include a return to the New York Philharmonic for Mozart’s Requiem with Manfred Honeck, the Cincinnati May Festival for the tenor arias in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, *West Side Story* with Pacific Northwest Ballet, and a solo recital at Messiah College in Pennsylvania with collaborator Lachlan Glen, with whom Bliss co-founded New York classical arts production company Mise-En-Scène Studios (MESS). Recent engagements include Ferrando at the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, and Oper Frankfurt; his house debut at Opera Philadelphia as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Cassio in *Otello* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; and his role debut as Robert Wilson in *Dr. Atomic* at Santa Fe Opera, in a production directed by Peter Sellars. Concert appearances included Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic, and the tenor solos in Schumann’s *Das Paradies und die Peri* with Gustavo Dudamel, Peter Sellars, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He also returned to the Aspen Music Festival and School for two separate programs of Benjamin Britten: *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* and *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*.
First-year HGO Studio artist Daniel Noyola made his HGO debut in performances of Colline in La bohème this season. He was previously a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. He won first prize in the 2015 Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota; third place in the 2016 Meistersinger Vocal Competition in Graz, Austria; an encouragement award at the 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions New England regions; and awards with Opera Index, the Mario Lanza Competition, the Carlo Morelli National Singing Competition, and many others. His performance credits include the title roles in Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro, Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte, Colas in Bastien und Bastienne, Papageno in The Magic Flute, and Leporello in Don Giovanni. He made his debut at Tri-Cities Opera as Mustafà in The Italian Girl in Algiers. This summer, he will join Wolf Trap Opera for productions of Der Kaiser von Atlantis and L’Île de Merlin.

Kristinn Sigmundsson was most recently seen at HGO as Daland in the season-opening production of The Flying Dutchman. Other HGO roles include Fasolt in Das Rheingold (2014), Rocco in Fidelio (2011), and Sarastro in The Magic Flute (2004). He performed Dansker in Billy Budd with Den Norske Opera earlier this season; other recent engagements include the Commendatore in the Edinburgh International Festival, Daland with the Atlanta Opera, La Roche in Capriccio with La Monnaie, Melchthal in Guillaume Tell with Hamburg State Opera, Sarastro with Teatro Regio Torino, and Rocco with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He sang Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro with Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Commendatore with Budapest Festival Orchestra, and Brahms’s Ein deutsches Requiem with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. He joined the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for Hunding in excerpts of Die Walküre, Hamburg State Opera for Melchthal and the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlo, the Caramoor International Music Festival for Rocco, the Icelandic Opera for Don Basilio in The Barber of Seville, the Grant Park Music Festival for Méphistophélès in La damnation de Faust, and Los Angeles Opera for its trilogy of Beaumarchais operas as he sang Doctor Bartolo in The Marriage of Figaro, Don Basilio in The Barber of Seville, and Louis XVI in Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles, the recording of which won the 2017 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA PRESENTS

THE PHOENIX

or The Operatic Adventures of Lorenzo Da Ponte on Two Continents in Two Acts

Music by Tarik O'Regan | Libretto by John Caird

BROWN THEATER, WORTHAM THEATER CENTER

Sung in English and Italian with projected English translation

Commissioned by Houston Grand Opera

APR. 26 | APR. 28M | MAY 04 | MAY 07 | MAY 10

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Tenenbaum Jewelers is the preferred jeweler of Houston Grand Opera.
The activities of Houston Grand Opera are supported in part by funds provided by the City of Houston and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.
CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Lorenzo Da Ponte  Thomas Hampson *
Enzo Young Da Ponte  Luca Pisaroni
Patrick Kelly Bishop of Ceneda  Chad Shelton †
Giacomo Casanova Emperor Joseph II
“Opera” Taylor  Clement Clarke Moore
Faustina  Elizabeth Sutphen *
Mary Grahl  Annetta
Brigida Banti  Anna Morichelli
Emanuele Conegliano  Gabriel Magallón *
Baruch Conegliano  Stephen Hill *
Anania Conegliano  Ethan Gonzalez *

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor  Patrick Summers
Director  John Caird
Set and Costume Designer  David Farley
Lighting Designer  Michael James Clark
Choreographer / Movement Director  Tim Claydon
Chorus Master  Richard Bado †
Children’s Chorus Director  Karen Reeves
Continuo  Patrick Summers, Fortepiano
Italian Coach  Nicoló Sbuelz
Musical Preparation  Geoffrey Loff †
Stage Manager  Annie Wheeler
Assistant Director  Katrina Bachus
Supertitles by  Jeremy Johnson

CREATIVE CREDITS

Latin text by Alastair Harding
Italian text by Jonathan Brandani and Gabriele Colferai
Orchestration by Tarik O’Regan, assisted by Anthony Weeden

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Supertitles called by Meredith Morse
Performing artists, stage directors, and choreographers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, the union for opera professionals in the United States.
Scenic, costume, and lighting designers and assistant designers are represented by United Scenic Artists, IATSE, 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 IATSE, Local #51.
Wardrobe personnel provided by Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local #896.
This production is being recorded for archival purposes.

* HGO debut † HGO Studio artist ‡ Former HGO Studio artist
ACT I

1832: PARK THEATRE, MANHATTAN

OVERTURE

A new opera about the life of Lorenzo Da Ponte, entitled The Phoenix, is being given its final dress rehearsal before a handpicked audience of well-heeled New Yorkers.

The 83-year-old Da Ponte has written the libretto; his son, Enzo, has composed the music. In Act I, Enzo is to play the part of his father as a young man. In Act II, Enzo and Da Ponte will each play themselves. The other members of the cast are the seasoned opera singers Maria Malibran and Patrick Kelly, as well as two of Da Ponte’s nieces, Giulietta and Faustina, recently arrived from Italy. All four will play multiple roles in The Phoenix.

PROLOGUE

Final preparations for the rehearsal are underway. Throughout the evening, we eavesdrop on the cast, in the wings and dressing rooms, sharing their nervousness for the success of Da Ponte’s opera. They also comment on the veracity or appropriateness of the action depicted.

Just before curtain-up, Da Ponte addresses the audience. He tells them The Phoenix is based on his own memoirs. Proceeds from the performances will help him build the first-ever Italian opera house in New York City.

The rehearsal begins.

1762: CENEDA CATHEDRAL

Shortly after the death of his mother, the 14-year-old Da Ponte (born Emanuele Conegliano) is ordered to appear at the cathedral of Ceneda. Together with the rest of his Jewish family, he is converted to Christianity in order that his father can be married again, this time to a Catholic woman. Emanuele is given the Bishop’s own name, Lorenzo Da Ponte, as well as a gift: a copy of Virgil’s Aeneid.

Commenting from the wings, the present-day Da Ponte remembers the occasion with emotional perplexity. This difficult and confusing event marks the beginning of a life of conflicted identity.

1770–80: VENICE

Da Ponte is now an ordained Catholic priest, living in Venice. He is secretly involved with an aristocratic woman, Angela Tiepolo. He recognizes his duplicity but feels powerless to control himself. He soon moves on to a younger mistress, Anzoletta Bellaudi, with whom he has a baby. Da Ponte confesses to his friend and mentor, Giacomo Casanova, that he is racked with guilt, unable to continue living a double life. Casanova advises him to take art more seriously than life and suggests Da Ponte’s child should be sent to the Pietà, a local orphanage. Da Ponte convinces himself that he has no choice but to follow his friend’s advice.

In the fall of 1776, Da Ponte, Casanova, and Anzoletta are in a café discussing the United States Declaration of Independence. Da Ponte is thrilled with the notion that this revolutionary spirit could spread to Europe, leading to freedom from the oppressive powers of State and Church. He openly espouses these seditious opinions.

Reported to the Senate and Inquisition for political dissidence and immorality, Da Ponte is banished from Venice for 15 years.

1781–92: VIENNA AND TRIESTE

Da Ponte has been appointed poet and librettist to the court of the Austrian emperor, Joseph II. After a bad start with some second-rate composers, Joseph introduces Da Ponte to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who suggests they create an opera based on Beaumarchais’s scandalous play Le mariage de Figaro. The opera is a triumph at its premiere in 1786. Encouraged by this, Da Ponte sets to work on a number of new operas, including Don Giovanni with Mozart.

By the time of the first Viennese performance of Giovanni in 1788, Austria is at war. Emperor Joseph, sick and aging, is facing a serious threat to his rule. Shortly after the premiere of The School for Lovers (Cosi fan tutte) in 1790, Joseph dies and the opera company closes down. Da Ponte’s artistic enemies force him out of Vienna.

Now living in Trieste, Italy, Da Ponte is devastated to learn of the death of Mozart. A few months later he marries Nancy Grahl, an Englishwoman. Because he is still officially a priest, they cannot be married in a church. They choose instead to hold the service in a synagogue in acknowledgment of their shared Jewish heritage.

1793–1805: LONDON

Da Ponte and Nancy move to London where they start a family. Da Ponte takes up the role of poet to the King’s Italian Opera, but struggles to make a living. Beset by opera politics, the demands of a
growing family, and a mounting pile of debt, Da Ponte becomes more and more unhappy. When his debts threaten to imprison the whole family, Nancy tells him she must escape with their children to her parents, now in the United States.

Six months later in London, Da Ponte is miserable. He tears up all his unpaid bills, and secretly boards a ship for Philadelphia along with other hopeful emigrants.

At this point in the story, the 83-year-old Da Ponte and his son Enzo, trade places in the performance, each to play himself in Act II of their opera, *The Phoenix*.

**ACT II**

**1805: QUAYSIDE, PHILADELPHIA**

**ENTR’ACTE**

Da Ponte arrives in the United States after a voyage of two months. He recalls the poem he wrote on learning of the American Revolution in 1776. Along with his fellow immigrants, he relishes the prospect of living in a country free from the constraints of monarchy.

**1806: DA PONTE’S GROCERY STORE, ELIZABETHTOWN, NEW JERSEY**

In spite of all his artistic ambitions, Da Ponte has become a grocer. This is a business for which he has no talent; he can’t resist allowing his customers unlimited credit. Faced with further financial ruin, Nancy and Da Ponte decide to leave Elizabethtown for Manhattan, where they plan to open a finishing school.

**1807: RILEY’S BOOKSTORE, MANHATTAN**

While browsing in Riley’s Bookstore, Da Ponte takes the owner to task for the paucity of great Italian literature in the store. A stranger interrupts them. This is Clement Clarke Moore, a wealthy philanthropist, who high-handedly declares there are few post-Renaissance Italian writers of merit. Da Ponte begs to differ and argues his case for Italian literature so persuasively that Moore decides to invest in the Da Pontes’ new school.

**1808-10: THE DA PONTE ACADEMY, MANHATTAN**

Da Ponte teaches Italian to young gentlemen, while Nancy (assuming the name of Madame Dupont) teaches French to young ladies. She inspires them to think ambitiously about their role in the world. All seems to be going well, but from the side of the stage, Enzo and his cousins, Faustina and Giulietta, reveal that the school had to close down. The Da Pontes scandalized their students’ parents by having them perform in plays, a taboo pursuit in the polite society of that era.

The Da Pontes’ next venture is a gin distillery; it also goes broke.

**1811–18: SUSQUEHANNA, PENNSYLVANIA**

The family moves to the little town of Sunbury in the Susquehanna Valley, an idyllic retreat from city life. Here the children can grow up in peace and safety, though Da Ponte still yearns for his old life in Europe.

He opens a general store. One day, stranded on a country road with his now grown-up son Enzo, he unpacks some recent merchandise from England. On a page of newspaper wrapping, they discover a favorable review of a recent *Don Giovanni* performance. Da Ponte’s name is not mentioned. This causes him to reflect ruefully on the posthumous fame of his friend Mozart and his own relative obscurity. At the same time, Enzo muses on his own insignificance. He expresses his desire to be a great poet and composer, like his father, like Mozart. Da Ponte resolves to return to New York in order to resume his artistic and intellectual life.

**1819–30: MANHATTAN**

As time passes, Nancy looks back on their move to Manhattan, grieving for the loss of her Eden in Susquehanna. She mourns the death of two of her children, Joseph and Louisa, as well as her grandson Franklin, all victims of disease-ridden New York. News of these deaths reaches Da Ponte’s nieces, Faustina and Giulietta, back in Ceneda, Italy. They mourn with Nancy.

**1831: DA PONTE’S BOOKSTORE, MANHATTAN**

The aging Da Ponte is now running his own bookstore. He and Nancy, who is increasingly frail, receive a visit from Clement Clarke Moore. Moore brings news that Da Ponte has been appointed professor of Italian language and literature at Columbia College. This sparks a new dream in Da Ponte: to build the first-ever Italian opera house in
Manhattan. It will be funded by performances of a new opera written by himself and Enzo.

1831: THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE, MANHATTAN
Thinking it beneficial for his fundraising drive, and increasingly committed to life in his adopted country, Da Ponte takes up American citizenship in a naturalization ceremony.

1831: THE DA PONTE HOME
Da Ponte describes the citizenship ceremony to Nancy, who is now gravely ill. They pledge their undying love. Nancy dies.

1832: DA PONTE’S BOOKSTORE AND PARK THEATRE, MANHATTAN
Enzo, grieving for his mother’s death, is working on a scene for the new opera, The Phoenix. Da Ponte, bitter at the extent of his losses, inveighs against an uncaring God. He is now more intent than ever on one last artistic triumph.

Enzo asks how the premiere will be funded. Da Ponte reveals that Columbia has offered him a handsome sum for his valuable library of ancient Italian and Latin books. All alone in the bookstore, Da Ponte laments the loss of his precious library, using the words of his last great poem, “Un doloroso addio a’ miei libri” (A sad farewell to my books). The protagonists of his story join him in an anthem to the restorative power of the creative arts. The opera draws to a close.

Da Ponte addresses the audience one last time, requesting they save their applause for the opening night, and that they help him build an opera house worthy of their great city, New York.

Backstage after the rehearsal, Da Ponte gives Enzo a present. It is his most prized book, the edition of Virgil’s Aeneid that the Bishop of Ceneda gave him, 70 years before. Da Ponte bids good night to the cast and crew with the expectation of a triumphant performance on the following night.

The other singers all depart. Maria Malibran is now alone with Enzo. She declares him to be the true Phoenix; that he will rise one day from his father’s ashes. The two leave the theater arm-in-arm, and go out into the Manhattan night.
At HGO performances, the excellent natural acoustics of the theaters in the Wortham Theater Center are relied upon to convey sound from the stage and pit. Electronic sound enhancement is used only with spoken dialogue (as in The Merry Widow), in musicals (as in A Little Night Music), in sound effects (thunder), and at the composer’s direction (as in Nixon in China and The Little Prince). Visible microphones are positioned to record performances for archival purposes.

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

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

Geordie Alexander
Dennis Arrowsmith
Stephen Ash
Megan Berti
G. Leslie Biffle
Christopher Childress
Patrick Contreras
Callie Jo Denbigh
Justin Dunkle
Ashly Evans
Frankie Hickman
Julie Hoeltzel

Jon Janacek
Joe Key
Kirsten Lutz Koerner
Wesley Landry
Katie Loff
Alejandro Magallón
Keenan Manceaux
Kathleen Manley
Heath Martin
Katherine McDaniel
Jason Milam
Cristino Perez

Ardeen Pierre
Nicholas Rathgeb
Gabrielle Reed
Kendall Reimer
Hannah Roberts
Christina Scanlan
Valerie Serice
Kade I. Smith
Kaitlyn Stavinoha
Elizabeth Vickers
John Weinell
Jennifer Wright

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA
CHILDREN’S CHORUS

Karen Reeves, Director

Alina Garcia
Ethan Gonzalez
Stephen Hill
Gabriel Magallón
Sruthi Panja

SUPERNUMERARIES

Conner Borne
Domonique Champion
Jeffrey Dorman
Brian Mitchell
Gabriel Regojo
Aaron Ruiz
TARIK O’REGAN (UNITED KINGDOM/UNITED STATES)
Composer
Tarik O’Regan, born in London, is making his HGO debut. He has written music for a wide variety of ensembles and organizations, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Sydney Dance Company, Chamber Choir Ireland, BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Two of his large-scale concert works were revived this April: *Solitude Trilogy* and *Mass Observation*, by the Vancouver Chamber Choir and Houston Chamber Choir, respectively. This season also marks the second year of a three-year appointment as composer in residence with the Pacific Chorale. Recorded on over 30 albums, O’Regan’s work has been recognized with two Grammy nominations (including Best Classical Album), and both the *New York Times* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* named *Threshold of Night* among Best Classical Releases of the Year. Other honors include the NEA Artistic Excellence Award and a South Bank Sky Arts Award nomination for *Heart of Darkness*; a Gramophone Award nomination for *Scattered Rhymes*; two British Composer Awards; and recognition from *Time Out* London (Top Five Concerts of the Year), WQXR/Q2 (CD of the Week), and WNYC (Pick of the Week).

JOHN CAIRD (UNITED KINGDOM)
Librettist/Director
John Caird’s work was most recently seen at HGO in *La bohème* earlier this season (also in 2012); *Tosca* (2015, 2010); *Don Carlos* (2012); and the 2009 world premiere of *Brief Encounter*, for which he also wrote the libretto. He is an honorary associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, principal guest director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, and a freelance writer and director of plays, musicals, and operas. His National Theatre productions include *Hamlet*, *Money*, *Humbleboy*, *The Seagull*, *Stanley*, *Trelawney of the Wells*, *Peter Pan*, and *Our Friends in the North*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Les Misérables*—the last two productions winning numerous awards in the West End, Broadway, and internationally.

PATRICK SUMMERS (UNITED STATES)
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair Conductor
Patrick Summers was named artistic and music director of HGO in 2011 after having served as the company’s music director since 1998. Some highlights of his work at HGO include conducting the company’s first-ever complete cycle of Wagner’s *Ring* and its first performances of the Verdi *Requiem*; collaborating on the world premieres of André Previn’s *Brief Encounter*, Christopher Theofanidis’s *The Refuge*, Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*, *The End of the Affair*, and *Three Decembers*, Carlisle Floyd’s *Cold Sassy Tree* and *Prince of Players*, and Tod Machover’s *Resurrection*, leading the American premiere of Weinberg’s *The Passenger*, both at HGO and on tour to the Lincoln Center Festival; and nurturing the careers of such artists as Christine Goerke, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Ryan McKinny, Támara Wilson, Albina Shagimuratova, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Norman Reinhardt, Jamie Barton, and Dimitri Pittas. Maestro Summers has enjoyed a long association with San Francisco Opera (SFO) and was honored in 2015 with the San Francisco Opera Medal. His work with SFO includes conducting Jake Heggie’s *Moby-Dick*, which was recorded and telecast on PBS’s *Great Performances*. In 2017, he was awarded an honorary doctor of music degree from Indiana University. This past summer he conducted *La favorite* at Gran Teatre del Liceu, and he conducted *It’s a Wonderful Life* at SFO during the holidays. Earlier this season at HGO, he conducted *The Flying Dutchman* and *Florence in el Amazonas*.

DAVID FARLEY (UNITED KINGDOM)
Set and Costume Designer
David Farley’s set and costume designs have previously been seen at HGO in *La bohème* earlier this season and also in 2012. Credits as designer include Festival in Canada; *La bohème* in San Francisco and Toronto; *Parsifal* in Chicago; and his own musical *Daddy Long Legs* Off-Broadway, in Tokyo, and across the United States. He has directed over 20 productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar’s Opera*, *Twelfth Night*, *Peter Pan*, *Our Friends in the North*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Les Misérables*—the last two productions winning numerous awards in the West End, Broadway, and internationally. 

Who’s Who
Sunday in the Park with George in New York and the West End, winning Olivier Awards for best design and best musical production at the Wyndhams. He was nominated for costume design and set design at the 2008 Tony Awards for Sunday in the Park with George. His credits in the West End include The Comedy about a Bank Robbery, McQueen, Daddy Long Legs, A Little Night Music, and Little Shop of Horrors, and on Broadway, A Little Night Music and 13. Further credits include Flood in Hull; Snapshots, Take Flight, Travesties, and Are You There, McPhee? in the United States; and the tours of Million Dollar Quartet, Rocky Horror Picture Show, and Crush.

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

TIM CLAYDON (UNITED KINGDOM)
Choreographer/Movement Director
Tim Claydon’s work was previously seen at HGO in Don Carlos and La traviata (both in 2012), as well as The Elixir of Love (2016). He also served as revival director and choreographer in outdoor performances of The Elixir of Love in 2017. Trained in classical dance, Claydon was an aerialist/trapeze artist and worked as a principal performer in the Millennium Dome central
show, OVO. He has choreographed productions including Pyramus and Thisbe (Canadian Opera Co); Parsifal (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Andrea Chénier (Opera North); Carmen (Vlaamse Opera); La rondine and Albert Herring (Opera North); The Elixir of Love (Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and Oviedo); Falsstaff and I Capuleti e i Montecchi (Opera North, Melbourne, and Sydney); La bohème and The Bartered Bride (Opera North, Valencia, and New Zealand); and Rusalka and The Fortune of King Croesus (Opera North and Minnesota). As assistant director for Opera North, Claydon has worked on productions including The Bartered Bride, Orfeo ed Euridice, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle, The Merry Widow, Das Rheingold, La clemenza di Tito, a revival of Peter Grimes, and Gianni Schicchi, in which he also appeared in the roles of Dante and Buoso Donati. He is event producer and artistic director for an aerial production company he founded, 4D Circus.

**RICHARD BADO** (UNITED STATES)

**Sarah and Ernest Butler Chorus Master Chair**

Chorus Master

For information about Richard Bado, please see p. 46.

**KAREN REEVES** (UNITED STATES)

**Children’s Chorus Director**

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

**DENISE TARRANT** (UNITED STATES)

**Sarah and Ernest Butler Concertmaster Chair**

Concertmaster

For information about Denise Tarrant, please see p. 46.

**THOMAS HAMPSON** (UNITED STATES)

**Lynn Wyatt Great Artist 2018–19**

Baritone—Lorenzo Da Ponte

Thomas Hampson is making his HGO debut. His numerous international honors include being named a Met Mastersinger by the Metropolitan Opera Guild; being inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Gramophone’s Hall of Fame; winning the Grammy Award, Edison Award, and the Grand Prix du Disque; receiving the 2009 Distinguished Artistic Leadership Award from the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C.; serving as the New York Philharmonic’s first-ever artist-in-residence; winning the Concertgebouw Prize; and receiving a Living Legend Award in 2010 from the Library of Congress. Notable engagements earlier
this season included his debut at the Canadian Opera Company, singing the title role in the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright’s *Hadrian* and performing one of his signature roles, Scarpia in *Tosca*, at the Vienna State Opera. Later in 2019, he will return to La Scala as Altair in Strauss’s *Die ägyptische Helena*. Hampson frequently gives recitals all over the world with his longtime musical partner, Wolfram Rieger. He began his Schubert Week in January at Berlin’s Pierre Boulez Hall with an all-Schubert program; this summer, he will be seen in recital at the Opernhaus Zürich as well as the Schubertiade in Austria. Among many concert engagements this season, Hampson performed Britten’s *War Requiem* in Vienna with the Vienna Symphony under Philippe Jordan, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I.

LUCA PISARONI (ITALY)  
Bass-baritone—Enzo/Young Da Ponte  
Luca Pisaroni has been seen at HGO as Méphistophélès in *Faust* (2016) and Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* (2011). His 2018–19 schedule began with a return to the Teatro Real in Madrid to sing Méphistophélès in a new production of *Faust* by La fura dels Baus, followed by his role debut as the Four Villains in Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffmann* at the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus and his house debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu as Mustafà in *L’italiana in Algeri*. Additionally, he returned to the Metropolitan Opera for his debut in the title role of *Don Giovanni*, followed by Méphistophélès in Berlioz’s *La damnation de Faust* with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra led by Manfred Honeck. Later this season he will return to the Berlin State Opera as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and will end his operatic season at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, in his role debut as Escamillo in *Carmen*. Pisaroni also performs extensively in concert and recital: a few recent/upcoming engagements include Mozart’s C Minor Mass and Requiem at the Brucknerhaus; Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Gewandhaus Orchester conducted by Andris Nelsons, Rossini’s *Petite messe solennelle* at Royal Festival Hall in London and Schönberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw* at the Laeiszhalle; a series of recitals with pianist Malcolm Martineau at the Grand Théâtre de Genève and at the Pierre Boulez Saal; and several “No Tenors Allowed” concerts with baritone Thomas Hampson in Boston, Toronto, and Santa Fe.

Houston Grand Opera  
congratulates  
THOMAS HAMPSON  
on being the recipient of the  
2018–19 Lynn Wyatt  
Great Artist Award.
RIHAB CHAIEB
(CANADA/TUNISIA)
Mezzo-soprano—Maria Malibran (etc.)
Tunisian-born Rihab Chaieb is making her HGO debut. She is an alumna of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Program; the Canadian Opera Company’s Ensemble Studio, where she performed Sesto in La clemenza di Tito; and San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program, where she sang Cherubino in The Marriage of Figaro. With Glyndebourne Festival Opera, she sang Mercédès in David McVicar’s production of Carmen with Jakub Hrůša and Flora in La traviata with Andrés Orozco-Estrada. After a Metropolitan Opera debut as Zulma in L’italiana in Algeri, Chaieb has returned to that stage as Zerlina in Don Giovanni, Lola (Cavalleria rusticana) under Nicola Luisotti, Laura (Luisa Miller) under Bertrand de Billy, and Sandman (Hänsel und Gretel) under Donald Runnicles. Performances elsewhere include creating the role of the Fairy Prince in the world premiere of David Hertzberg’s The Wake World for Opera Philadelphia, Tebaldo in Don Carlo for her debut at Opéra national de Bordeaux, and both Juno and Ino in Semele in Toronto. She won third prize in the 2018 Operalia Competition. This season, she debuted as the title role in Offenbach’s Fantasio at Opéra et Orchestre national de Montpellier and sang Kasturbai in Satyagraha at Opera Vlaanderen. Later this season, she will sing Dorabella in Così fan tutte at Teatro Santiago de Chile and Cherubino with Cincinnati Opera.

CHAD SHELTON
(UNITED STATES)
Tenor—Patrick Kelly (etc.)
HGO Studio alumnus Chad Shelton (1997–2000) appears regularly at HGO, most recently as Pollione in Norma and Aegisth in Elektra (both in 2018); Mao Tse-tung in Nixon in China (2017); Cavaradossi in performances of Tosca (2015–16); Charles II in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s Prince of Players (2016); Froh in Das Rheingold and Fredrik Egerman in A Little Night Music (2014); and Alfredo in La traviata (2012), among many others. Earlier this season, he reprised Pollione with North Carolina Opera, Don José in Carmen on tour in Japan for a second time as a guest artist of the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy Opera Project, Roderigo in Otello at the Metropolitan Opera, and Charles II in Prince of Players with Florentine Opera (for commercial release). Future engagements include...
returns to HGO next season for his first performances of Herod in Salome and the Witch of Endor in Saul as well as Pollione with Calgary Opera. Recent performances include a return to the Grand Théâtre de Genève for his first performances of Sir Edgar Aubry in Der Vampyr, Don José in Carmen with Austin Opera, his Metropolitan Opera debut as Roderigo in a new production of Otello, and his first Erik in The Flying Dutchman with Boston Lyric Opera. With Opéra national de Lorraine, he performed the title role in Idomeneo, Giasone in Medea, Don José, Jack in The Importance of Being Earnest, and many others.

LAUREN SNOUFFER (UNITED STATES)
Soprano—Giulietta (etc.)
HGO Studio alumna Lauren Snouffer (2011–13) appears regularly at HGO, most recently creating the leading role of Addie Mills in the world premiere of The House without a Christmas Tree (2017). Other HGO roles include Cherubino in The Marriage of Figaro (2016); Ellie May Chipley in Show Boat (2013); Elvira in The Italian Girl in Algiers (2012), and Rosina in performances of The Barber of Seville (2012). This season, she sang the title role of Berg’s Lulu in a new production at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago conducted by Pedro-Pablo Prudencio and directed by Mariame Clément, appeared as Romilda in a new production of Serse for the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe directed by Max Emanuel Cencic and conducted by George Petrou. In the summer, she will sing the role of Magnolia Hawks in Francesca Zambello’s production of Show Boat for the Glimmerglass Festival. She has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago in Rusalka, La clemenza di Tito, and a new production of Orphee et Eurydice directed and choreographed by John Neumeier under the baton of Harry Bicket; made her Seattle Opera debut as La Comtesse Adèle in Rossini’s Le comte Ory conducted by Giacomo Sagripanti; performed The Magic Flute at Seattle Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City; and sang in a new production of Hasse’s Siroe at the Opéra royal de Versailles, with additional performances in Budapest and Vienna.

ELIZABETH SUTPHEN (UNITED STATES)
Soprano—Faustina (etc.)
Elizabeth Sutphen is making her HGO debut. A former member of the Opera Studio at Oper Frankfurt, Sutphen performed numerous
roles there, including her debut as Tiny in Britten’s *Paul Bunyan* (directed by Brigitte Fassbaender), Romilda in Handel’s *Xerxes*, Die Heilige Jungfrau in Honegger’s *Jeanne d’Arc au bûcher*, all new productions, and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*. She began the 2017–18 season with her debut at Kentucky Opera singing the role of Zerbinetta in Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Her season at Oper Frankfurt included representing the theater in the prestigious Stella Maris Competition, concerts around Frankfurt, and performances as Lisa in *La sonnambula*. In the summer of 2018, she made her role and company debut as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. On the concert stage, she joined the Orchestre national de Lille for performances celebrating Leonard Bernstein’s contributions to Broadway, made her Viennese debut in performances with the famed Vienna Boys’ Choir, and sang the works of Pergolesi with Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Riccardo Minasi. Earlier this season, she returned to Oper Frankfurt as a guest artist to perform Atalanta in *Xerxes* and Zerbinetta.

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—Tim Cahill, best-selling author of *Jaguars Ripped My Flesh*

“The entire point of travel is to encounter the unimaginable. Gina and Scott Gaille have collected some of the most remarkable tales to ever see the light of day. A hoot to read.”
—J. Maarten Troost, best-selling author of *Headhunters on My Doorstep*

*Book now available on Amazon!*
Peter Pasztor has been at HGO for 26 years. His job is teacher, mentor, supporter, and at times therapist to singers as they learn and polish their roles. He is one of the most respected pianist/coaches working in the U.S. opera industry and has a vast knowledge of operatic repertoire…but you would never know that from someone as quiet and unassuming as he. Artists from all over the world love coming to Houston to learn roles with him.

Perryn Leech: Peter—tell me a bit about your childhood and upbringing.
Peter: I grew up in Denver, Colorado. My mother was a homemaker and my father was a clarinet player. He played in the Denver Symphony Orchestra (which is now the Colorado Symphony) and was a huge part of my life from the very beginning. I have a sister who is about a year and a half younger than I am. She’s a professor of Latin American history at Humboldt State University in northern California. She was always more of the “brain” in the family and I was the “artist.”

So did you enjoy school and did you start early with music?
I did like school and was kind of a nerd, but I always remember having the piano and music to latch on to. My grandmother played piano, and I would stand next to her and just watch her play. I was always totally fascinated. I was also drawn to the double bass and I really wanted to try it, but my parents thought it was too big, so I ended up trying the cello for a year. I also played the flute for about four years, but I hated it! I was always pretty focused on piano.

At what point did you think of playing the piano as a career rather than a hobby?
I think piano was always what I was going to do—there was never a time when it wasn’t going to be a career. I was lucky to have a musician for a father because it was accepted as something that I could do. It was like going into the family business!

Do you think you really understood what it meant to go into the “family business”?
No. It was what I did, and I always had people who encouraged me to play. Making music with other people was always a part of what I did. You have to have blinders on to be a soloist—you spend so many hours by yourself in a practice studio. I think I knew pretty early on that wasn’t for me. I played a lot for choirs in high school and performed chamber music. I played for a solo singer for the first time when I was 14. She was entering the Miss Littleton pageant.
So after high school you continued your musical education?
Yes. I remember sending off for a Juilliard catalog and when I received it I thought—not for me! There were very few options around the Denver area, and one advantage to being connected to the music scene was that I could find out about the schools and teachers in the area. I pursued a piano performance degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder. During college I made money playing for a friend’s voice lessons, but my piano teacher didn’t like that at all. He wanted me to be practicing solo pieces. I was supposed to be practicing a minimum of four hours per day, but there were a lot of general requirements, too.

Did you play only classical music?
In high school I played for a few musicals and enjoyed it, but I focused on playing classical music. There is a wide range of styles just within the classical genre, which is helpful for development as a musician.

So you finished college and now you had to start working!
That’s right. Around the same time I was graduating and thinking about what I was going to do, there was a man in Boulder who had been making a living playing for a lot of voice lessons, recitals, and masterclasses for singers in town. He just happened to be leaving Boulder when I graduated and I was able to walk into his role. I was very fortunate. I also took a job that summer working in a department store. Looking back, it was ideal to spend all of that time playing for voice lessons and learning what singers do, what they need, and how to help them.

Did you have any training working with singers as a part of college?
No, I just learned it through application. There were some very good voice teachers in Boulder at the time.

What eventually moved you out of Colorado?
I didn’t really know what to do and had run into a wall in terms of what I could accomplish in Denver. I knew I needed to do something. Martin Katz came and gave a master class and because I was playing for all of those singers, I played for him a lot. He told me I should audition for the master’s program at Michigan and so I did—and I was accepted! It was so hard. Those were two extremely difficult years. He was an incredibly demanding teacher, but my experience at Michigan changed my life. It exposed me to an entirely new world and a new level of achievement. I will always give him credit for opening up this journey for me.

Once you finished your master’s degree, did you come straight into the HGO Studio?
Not quite. It was 1990 and I went back to Boulder and freelanced for a few more years. When I went back to Colorado, I was invited to work at the Aspen Festival on Owen Wingrave. John DeMain conducted it and he was also working at HGO at that time.

You were a répétiteur?
Yes, but there is also a piano in the score and I performed as a part of the orchestra. The theater at Aspen has a tiny auditorium with boxes on either side of the stage. There is so much percussion in that opera that they had to remove the back leg of the piano and prop it on the ledge of a box. So I was in the box and had to play like this the whole time in order to see John. But he liked me and encouraged me to audition for the HGO Studio. I came into the Studio in the fall of 1992.

When you left the Studio, did you come right on to HGO’s music staff?
No, not right away. I spent two seasons at Virginia Opera. I was the only pianist for the company and was also the chorus master. It was exhausting, but I learned so much. The most important thing I learned was that I knew more than I thought I did. It prepared me to be a better member of the music staff when I returned to HGO.

Can you tell me about the evolution of the organization since you joined the Studio?
The Studio has gotten so much busier and they’re so much more a part of what goes on at the company, which is great. I remember the first year I came back, Concert of Arias stunned me. It was a quiet affair when I was in the Studio and it’s become a huge event.

You’re now the senior pro!
It’s funny being on the other side of it. The Studio artists and pianists are so eager. I have to figure out a way to step to the side sometimes and let them step up. These experiences have to accumulate and it takes a long time. This is a point I make to the Studio artists all the time: It does not happen overnight. It takes time.

You also work with Santa Fe Opera. How did you become involved with that organization?
When I was in Virginia, I worked with a stage manager who worked at Santa Fe Opera in the summer. She connected me to a pianist there that I also knew from when I was in Boulder. I sent them a letter asking for an audition and they gave me one: I went to New York and played for founding general director John Crosby. I got the job and have been going back ever since. This summer will be my 23rd summer at The Santa Fe Opera.

How is Santa Fe different from HGO?
It’s a summer festival, so a lot of work needs to be done in a relatively short amount of time. All the departments work together to create opera in a unique venue. It’s such a beautiful place, and I’ve gotten to do a lot of repertoire there that I would never get to do anywhere else, which I really like.

What do you do in Santa Fe outside of the shows you’re working on?
I stay in the same place each year. Since I’m from Colorado, it’s a climate that I like. It’s very familiar to me. It’s a good slow-down from HGO. I stay at a guest house and the landlady is a dear friend.
It’s so serene. I don’t really spend much time downtown. It’s my quiet time, and as a big reader, I like that.

You really don’t get much of a break! There is always another show coming up. I’m always translating a show, doing score work, and practicing. I try to choose a mix of operas I already know and operas that are new to me over the course of a year—it’s less stressful that way.

Do you have a favorite opera that you’ve worked on?
Strauss’s *Daphne* is one of my favorites. I saw it for the first time the first summer I ever went to Santa Fe. About 15 years later, they performed it again and I begged to be assigned to that show. One afternoon we did a run-through of the piece and I played the entire opera. It was a dream! Then we handed it over to the orchestra, and listening to them play it, after learning it so intimately, was an incredible experience.
If you’re a regular at HGO, you’re probably aware of one of the company’s important traditions: three times each season, we present our Studio artists in recital performances at either the main campus of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, or at Rienzi, the MFAH house museum for European decorative arts. In contrast to our spectacular performances of mainstage repertoire in the Brown Theater, these events show a different side of classical singing: songs performed by a pianist and singer in an intimate space. If you haven’t yet attended a Studio recital, I urge you to join us for the experience, and I promise you’ll be hooked.

Studio recitals are typically performed in a space that accommodates fewer than 100 guests. No seat is farther than about 50 feet from the piano. The recital is one hour long, with no intermission, and a short reception is held afterwards to give the audience a chance to meet the artists. Typically, three Studio singers perform in each recital with one pianist, with each singing a solo “set” of songs; sometimes they sing duets, or a unique program is designed that follows a narrative idea. While you may not know the music, you’ll often recognize the composer, and you’ll have a copy of the poetry in English to follow along.

When classical singers and pianists perform in a recital format, they select repertoire from an extraordinary array of music, spanning centuries, languages, and a multitude of styles. Recitals are programmed to foster a deep connection to the poetry and music—which means that artists must sing songs that they love, so they can express themselves in the most honest and heartfelt way. For some, it may be contemporary American songs; others may have fallen in love with the poetry and romantic style of 19th-century German song or the immense and rich Spanish song repertoire. What matters most is that the artists feel that this music is their own.

Over the years, many of my most meaningful experiences as an audience member have been at recitals, where incredible performances by great artists have been etched in my memory. The power of great poetry, combined with the unique, expressive nature of the human voice, connects with our souls in a way that is beyond description. Hearing artists in such an intimate space can be a profound experience, as operatic voices surround you, and pianists play with a dizzying array of sounds and colors, great imagination, and extraordinary skill. In this setting, singers are able to experiment with their voices, exercising every option available to express themselves and communicate poetry with an audience that is in very close proximity. We look to music to give us a moment in time that departs from everyday life, moving us beyond ourselves and heightening our emotions.

Of course, as with all elements of the HGO Studio, these recital programs are an important part of the artists’ training. The HGO Studio is about discovery, encouraging and unlocking ideas that make each of the artists one-of-a-kind. They enter the program with extraordinary talent, passion for the art, and technique that is growing and developing every day. Recitals are the perfect opportunity for the artists to channel their daily practice into performance, push themselves to deepen their relationship with music and text, and share with an audience in a personal and intimate way. Recital work fuels them and molds them into the extraordinary talents you see on our main stage, and it is a critical part of their development.

Our next recitals are coming up soon, on May 2 and 5 at Rienzi, featuring Yelena Dyachek, soprano; Leia Lensing, contralto; Richard Trey Smagur, tenor; and Kyle Naig, piano. Tickets can be purchased on HGO’s website or by calling Customer Care at 713-228-6737. If you haven’t attended a recital, make plans now to experience an important part of HGO.

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

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Shell Lubricants (formerly Pennzoil–Quaker State Company) Fund
Tenneco, Inc., Endowment Fund
Weston-Cargill Endowed Fund

HGO STUDIO ARTISTS 2018–19

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

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

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

Thomas Glass
Baritone
Harlan and Dian Stai Fellow

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

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

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

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

Daniel Noyola
Bass
Beth Madison Fellow

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

Richard Trey Smagur
Tenor
Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow

Nardus Williams
Soprano
Nancy and Ted Haywood Fellow

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

MAY 2 & 5
Studio Recital Series
Hear HGO Studio artists in their final recital of the year in the intimate salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1406 Kirby Drive. May 2 (7:30 p.m.) and May 5 (5 p.m.). Purchase tickets through HGO.org or 713-228-6737.

MAY 17 & 18
La bohème
Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park
HGO Studio artists and alumni are featured in FREE outdoor performances of La bohème at 8 p.m. See calendar on p. 98 for details.

MAY 22
La bohème
Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands
HGO Studio artists and alumni are featured in an outdoor performance of La bohème at 8 p.m. FREE tickets available. See calendar on p. 98 for details.
Behind the Scenes with Star-Cross’d

MAKING A FILMED MINI-OPERA could be the subject of an opera in and of itself. Over the course of three weeks, HGOco went from having notes on the page and two distinct visions translated into audio recordings and days of film footage—and two new 12-minute operas were born into the Star-cross’d web opera series, themed on Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. Each episode contains a line from the Bard’s famous play about ill-fated lovers. The first episode, “Boundless,” was completed last spring.

HGOco has brought the series closer to its mission than ever with these next two stories. Houstonians will see their beloved city treated with affection, as the productions were filmed in new neighborhoods to display some of the many stunning locations in the city.

For episode two, “NOW,” by composer Avner Dorman, Houston-based film production company Bird House Productions provided film director and librettist John Grimmett with some of the top professionals in the business. Sean Maxwell, veteran director of photography, guided Grimmett’s stark black-and-white concept into stunning visuals. Little Dipper on Main Street provided a backdrop for the final day of filming on this episode, which features Chelsea Helm, Joseph Leppek, and Lucia Lucas.

Episode three is titled “A Rose,” with music by Kamala Sankaram set to a libretto she co-wrote with Misha Penton. The score fuses traditional Hindustani classical music influences with Western opera, a hallmark of Sankaram’s style.

Penton envisioned much of the film taking place outdoors, and despite unseasonably cold and wet temperatures, the cast and crew persevered. Penton’s frequent collaborator, director of photography Raul Casares, filmed almost as many shots with a handheld camera on a gimbal as he did on tripods. This episode features Summer Hassan, Alok Kumar, Pandit Suman Ghosh, and Shashikala Ghosh.

Watch the HGO website and YouTube pages for the premiers, coming soon in 2019! Visit HGO.org/star-crossed.
Throughout four weeks in January, HGOco teaching artists, staff, and volunteers served over 200 youth within the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center in a series of workshops titled “Cultivating Empathy through Storytelling and Music.” Designed to open lines of communication and build understanding, this workshop allows youth to identify their emotions and express their feelings through the safe and inviting medium of music. Christopher Garcia, the principal at the school within the facility, said, “The residents were not only engaged but participated with much enthusiasm. It is something that you have to experience to appreciate what [the program does] for the kids. One little boy became emotional and got tearful, because it was so beautiful.” Teaching artists returned to the detention center for another 16 sessions in March–April to further explore the work piloted in January.

HGOco continues its work at the Harris County Youth Village with the Create an Opera program, a residency that is the only collaboration between two arts organizations within the Theater District. HGOco teaching artist Julia Fox is leading the residency, teaming up with five teaching artists from Da Camera. Sixteen girls living at the facility will create an opera about the women they will become. This moving residency, titled “I Am My Future,” centers around building trust, identifying emotions and their connections to music, and setting positive personal goals. “There are days when there is a noticeable shift in the room because music was there,” says Fox. “Our challenge is to keep inviting the power of music into the space.” The Create an Opera residency concludes this spring with a performance of the young women's original work, performed for a group of their peers at the Harris County Youth Village.

BY ALISA MAGALLÓN
Education Manager

HGOco IN RESIDENCE

HGOco STAFF AND FACULTY

Carleen Graham
Director

Alisa Magallón
Education Manager

Hadia Mawlawi
Community Initiatives Manager

Meredith Morse
Operations Administrator

Adavion Wayne
Programs Coordinator

Emily N. Wells
Producing Manager

Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Voice Faculty
Nicole Asel
Christopher Michel
Héctor Vásquez

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

THE NEXUS INITIATIVE
HGOco programs, including Student Performances and HGO's performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre, are supported through the NEXUS Initiative, which is made possible by:

Anchorage Foundation of Texas
BBVA Compass
The Brown Foundation, Inc.
The Wortham Foundation, Inc.
Nabors Industries
Shell
The future proved extraordinarily bright at the 31st Annual Eleanor McCollum Competition Concert of Arias, chaired by Elizabeth and Richard Husseini, as a full house returned to the Cullen Theater for the live finale of a months-long journey for eight remarkable young singers. Their talent was so exceptional that the judges—guest judge Lawrence Brownlee along with Perryn Leech and Patrick Summers—required an extended deliberation while livestream host Andrea Carroll kept the interviews and entertainment rolling. Following the announcement of winners, including the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award, presented by Ms. Martínez herself, over 500 guests made their way to the Grand Foyer for Mediterranean steak roulade and seared yellowfin tuna by City Kitchen Catering, with striking contemporary décor by The Events Company. Concert of Arias supporters raised over $600,000 to benefit the HGO Studio’s ongoing efforts to identify, attract, and nurture young artists who have the potential for major careers in opera.
To celebrate the opening of Daniel Catán’s fantastical *Florencia en el Amazonas* on January 18, Sara and Gabriel Loperena hosted a post-performance party inspired by the riverboat *El Dorado*’s travels down the mysterious Amazon. Guests were welcomed to the Forest Club with live Latin jazz and Pisco cocktails and dined on manchego quince tarts, grilled octopus, and empanadas. Patrick Summers introduced the magical cast led by Ana María Martínez as the soul-searching Florencia. Andrea Puente-Catán, wife of the late composer, also joined in the special evening.
Vinson & Elkins LLP played host along with party co-underwriter Brenda Harvey-Traylor for an opening night fête celebrating the cast and artistic team of HGO’s first-ever production of Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers*. Over 200 guests enjoyed a South Asia–inspired spread by City Kitchen Catering, and the impressive space in the offices of Vinson & Elkins LLP took on vibrant orange, fuchsia, and turquoise tones inspired by Zandra Rhodes’s eye-popping set and costume designs.

Without your donation, your favorite opera would be over before the first act ended.

**DONORS MAKE GREAT ART POSSIBLE.**

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

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

For more information, please contact David Krohn, director of development, at 713-980-8685 or dkrohn@hgo.org.
Goode Company’s Armadillo Palace set the perfect scene for HGO’s Patron Family Fun Day on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Over 140 guests moseyed around the iconic Texas venue, taking in the high-stakes armadillo races, an instrument petting zoo, face painting, themed craft stations, and a BBQ feast. The afternoon highlighted HGOco’s traveling youth programs with a Storybook Opera reading of Dennis Arrowsmith’s *The Armadillo’s Dream*, underwritten by the Connie Kwan-Wong Foundation and CKW Luxe, followed by a bilingual Opera to Go! performance of *Cinderella in Spain*.
The 11th Annual Young Patrons Circle Studio Dinner at Fig & Olive was a chic gathering of Young Patrons and HGO Studio artists. Young Patrons and Studio artists filled the Galleria hot spot, noshing on farm-fresh Mediterranean cuisine and wine. This favorite annual member benefit among Young Patrons fosters great relationships with our youngest supporters and our future opera stars in training.

Bring Opera to Go! to your school or library!

Book now for the 2019-20 school year.

HGO.org/operatogo

OPERA TO GO! PRESENTS

Spend the Summer with HGO!

Register online today for one of Houston’s most in-demand summer camp series. HGOco is proud to host four unique camps for students entering grades K-12, including graduating seniors.

HGO.ORG/OPERACAMP

HGO.org 77
POWER OF THE PURSE
January 16, 2019

HGO’s annual Power of the Purse event filled the Cherie Flores Pavilion for lunch and a look at legacy giving among women. Guest speaker Patricia Annino, author and nationally recognized authority on estate planning, captivated the crowd with wisdom and anecdotes designed to empower women to create an impactful legacy. Special thanks to HGO’s Laureate Society Council for hosting this special luncheon.
Volunteer, gain new friendships, learn more about opera, make a difference, and discover a new side of yourself!

Save the dates

APRIL 20 – MAY 10, 2019
Volunteer at the Opera Boutique before and during intermissions of Don Giovanni and The Phoenix. Help set up before performances, assist customers with their purchases, and be a cashier. While working at the boutique, volunteers receive a 15% discount on full-price items and a ticket to a dress rehearsal after 2 volunteer shifts. Guild members receive a 10% discount on purchases from the boutique at any time.

MAY 17, 2019
Dinner and Opera at Miller Outdoor Theatre
Join the Guild for a box dinner at a condo near Hermann Park before the performance, then walk over to the theater where your reserved seat is waiting.

JUNE 4, 2019
Volunteer Gathering
Learn more about the many opportunities to volunteer with the HGO Guild. Join us for a light supper and a presentation by one of the HGO staff.

For more information about these and other volunteer opportunities, please visit HGOGuild.org or call 713-546-0269.

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

Let’s make beautiful music together!

Benefactors: Joyce and Trey Evans • Underwriters: Penny Prater, Donald and Ruth Gorman
Sustaining Members: Alina Dong, Lannis Kirkland, Mary Ann Shemdin
SPRING 2019

SPOTLIGHT

BOHO CHIC: HGO AND FRANCESCA’S® SUPPORT THE ARTS IN STYLE

STYLE-MAKERS, TRENDSETTERS, influencers—that’s who you’ll find at the Wortham Theater Center. Especially this fall at the opening night performance of Puccini’s La bohème when we teamed up with our new corporate supporter, francesca’s®, which proudly underwrote the production.

Since its first boutique in Houston opened in 1999, francesca’s thoughtfully curated collections of clothing, jewelry, accessories, and gifts have enchanted women everywhere, and the brand has grown to over 700 boutiques across the country.

Erik Lautier, francesca’s EVP of e-commerce and chief marketing officer, not only serves as an HGO Trustee but is a former professional opera singer himself. Erik brings his expertise and brainpower to HGO’s Marketing Committee and has helped strengthen HGO’s social media brand through fun and creative collaborations like the La bohème “Boho Chic” takeover.

Back in October, francesca’s sent a dozen social media influencers to the opening night of La bohème—after dressing them to the nines. These fashionable young women attended a pre-curtain reception in the Green Room, mingled with our Opening Night for Young Professionals group at intermission, and went backstage after the performance. All the while, they snapped photos and shared the adventure with their followers on social media.

“When picking out this fabulous beaded skirt, to making sure I was completely accessorized from my chandelier earrings, down to my sassy black heels…francesca’s was there to help me make sure I fit the image of the confident, fabulous lady I imagined in my head!” says lifestyle blogger Carrington A. Barfield (chaosandcoffee.com). “I was so honored to be outfitted by them for Houston Grand Opera! I could not have dreamed of a more lovely night, and it was an honor to represent a brand like francesca’s.”

As a generous HGO corporate supporter, francesca’s is filling our community with beauty in more ways than one. Keep an eye out for more “boho chic” at this spring’s performances of La bohème at Miller Outdoor Theatre on May 17 and 18, 2019.

AMBASSADORS FOR OPERA

Kelly Rose—senior vice president and general counsel for ConocoPhillips and a new member of the HGO Board of Directors—talks about her love for Houston and opera. Her husband, David, retired from NASA and is on HGO’s Vanguard Committee. They have been HGO subscribers since 1995 and HGO Trustees since 2015.

Do you have a favorite HGO memory? There are so many! The Ring cycle was a wonderful treat and a revelation, and I really appreciated how much HGO did to get people ready for it, like a Ring Study Day for lawyers, analyzing it from a legal perspective. And David helped consult on O Columbia, [an HGOco collaboration with Houston’s space exploration community], helping with research and making connections with people at NASA.

Have you ever “recruited” someone as an opera fan? I recruited my parents! They never really went to the opera before, and now they live here half the year and have become season subscribers and Patrons. They love it!

What do you love about Houston? This is the friendliest, most open, and most welcoming city I’ve ever lived in. People who don’t live here don’t understand how much Houston has to offer. It has everything that you would need or want in the way of culture, sports, the arts.

When you’re not at the Wortham, where are you? I wish we could go to something musical every night. We enjoy Mercury, we love traveling, reading, and enjoying Houston’s many culinary delights.

Why do you support HGO? Once people who are arts lovers have the means to support organizations like HGO, it’s so important that they do so. There’s no other way for the arts to survive except through public and individual support. The opera is something I really enjoy, and I want to do my part to make sure it continues to thrive. HGO is about way more than mainstage operas…HGOco’s educational programs enhance your understanding of how important art is to our community.

If you were a character from an opera, who would you be? I would probably be Musetta from La bohème…that’s a fun one. Or Carmen’s pretty great, too!
The Impresarios Circle is Houston Grand Opera’s premier donor recognition society. These vanguard supporters who provide annual support of at least $100,000 are instrumental to HGO’s success. For information, please contact Greg Robertson, chief advancement officer, at 713-546-0274.

Robin Angly, Chairman

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

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

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

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

BBVA COMPASS
HGO is privileged to partner with BBVA Compass, a U.S. subsidiary of BBVA, a Spain-based global financial services group founded in 1857. BBVA Compass is committed to financial education, diversity, and the arts, and supports the NEXUS Initiative, HGO’s affordability program, as well as mainstage productions like this season’s La bohème.

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

ZANE AND BRADY CARRUTH
Brady is the chief executive officer and president of Saratoga Financial Group and is a trustee of The Wortham Foundation, Inc. Zane is the President of Carson Marketing, LLC, with over 25 years of marketing experience. HGO subscribers since the 2012–13 season, Zane and Brady are members of the Founders Council for Artistic Excellence and served as the chairmen of the 2017 Opera Ball. HGO is proud to have Zane on the HGO Board of Directors. She also serves on the Marketing and Communications Committee. In 2016, HGOco presented a world premiere Storybook Opera program based on Zane’s children’s book, The World’s First Tooth Fairy...Ever.
ANNE AND ALBERT CHAO
Anne and Albert have been subscribers and supporters of HGO for the past two decades. While serving as president and CEO of Westlake Chemical Corporation, Albert finds time for numerous cultural causes. He is a member of the HGO Board of Directors and was the co-chair of Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera. Over the years, the Chaos have sponsored HGO special events, the HGO Studio, HGOco’s Song of Houston, and mainstage productions. The couple has also supported the HGO Endowment through their family foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation.

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

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

CONOCOPHILLIPS
For over 30 years, ConocoPhillips has supported various programs at HGO, from special events to mainstage productions, including the 2018–19 season-opening production, Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman. In 2009, the company gave a major multi-year grant to establish ConocoPhillips New Initiatives, a far-reaching program that allows HGOco to develop new and innovative education and community collaboration programs. Kelly Rose, general counsel and SVP, serves on the HGO Board of Directors. Janet Langford Carrig, chair of the HGO Board of Directors, is a recent retiree from ConocoPhillips and represented the company within the opera family for many years.

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

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

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

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

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

**HOUSTON ENDOWMENT, INC.**

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

**HOUSTON GRAND OPERA ENDOXREMENT, INC.**

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

**HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™**

For more than 15 years, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has supported HGOco’s arts education programs, helping more than one million Houston area students experience the magic of live opera through Opera to Go!, the Student Performance Series, and Storybook Opera. A 501(c)(3) charity, the Show has committed more than $475 million to the youth of Texas since 1932. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the world’s largest livestock show and rodeo, with more than 2.4 million attendees in 2018.

**HOUSTON METHODIST**

For over ten years, Houston Grand Opera has partnered with Houston Methodist, the official health care provider for HGO. Houston Methodist’s Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) is the only center of its kind in the country, comprising a specialized group of more than 100 physicians working collaboratively to address the specific demands placed upon performing artists. In addition to the first-rate medical care CPAM provides HGO artists, Houston Methodist also generously supports HGO’s special events and mainstage productions, is a major community partner on Seeking the Human Spirit, and is the presenter of HGO’s young professional programs. HGO is fortunate to have Dr. Barbara Bass and Dr. Mauro Ferrari, president and CEO, Houston Methodist Research Institute, serve as Houston Methodist’s corporate trustees.

**THE HUMPHREYS FOUNDATION**

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

**NANCY AND RICHARD KINDER**

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

**CLAIRE LIU AND JOSEPH GREENBERG**

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

**BETH MADISON**

This season marks Beth’s 23rd as an HGO subscriber. HGO has had the honor of her support since 2004. Past chair of the HGO Board of Directors, she currently serves on the Executive, Finance, and HGO Studio Committees, and is an active member of HGO’s Founders Council. She was the honoree at the 2017 Concert of Arias. Beth generously supports the HGO Studio, special events, and mainstage operas. Beth has been inducted into the Greater Houston Women’s Hall of Fame and serves on the University of Houston System Board of Regents.
THE JOHN P. MCGOVERN FOUNDATION

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

JANICE McNAIR

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

M.D. ANDERSON FOUNDATION

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

THE MELLON FOUNDATION

Established in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supports a wide range of initiatives to strengthen the humanities, arts, higher education, and cultural heritage. The driving force behind so many of HGO’s new commissions, The Mellon Foundation’s longstanding support of HGO helps us tell relevant new stories and add to the operatic repertoire by developing new works, like Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s The Phoenix.

MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD

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

SID MOORHEAD

Sid Moorhead is the owner of Moorhead’s Blueberry Farm in Conroe, Texas, a family business that started as his father’s hobby over 40 years ago. After working for several years as a computer analyst, Sid left the corporate world to run the farm. He’s been an opera lover since he was in college, and he joined the Opera as an HGO Trustee in 2014. Now a member of the HGO Board of Directors, Sid enjoys traveling to experience opera around the world on our HGO Patron trips. We’re thrilled to have Sid as a valued member of our HGO family.

SARA AND BILL MORGAN

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

NOVUM ENERGY

Founded in 2011 in Panama, Novum Energy is an international physical oil supply and trading company committed to industry excellence in delivery standards and customer service. Founder and President Alfredo Vilas serves on the HGO Board of Directors and has over 20 years of experience and a passion for service to the community through cultural, recreational, and philanthropic work. Novum Energy has supported a number of HGO productions, including last season’s West Side Story and the mariachi operas Cruzar la Cara de la Luna and El Pasado.
Nunca Se Termina. Alfredo and his wife, Marcia, currently serve as event chairmen for Opera Ball 2019, taking place on April 13.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**VINSON & ELKINS LLP**

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

**MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS**

Margaret, a longtime singer, possesses a deep affinity for all music, and especially opera, supporting HGO for over 30 years. Currently, Margaret continues her parents’ legacy as chairman of their foundation, where her son Charles A. Williams serves as president. HGO is humbled by Margaret’s incredible generosity and dedication to the company, both as an individual donor and through her family’s foundation. She has endowed the Margaret Alkek Williams Chair, held by HGO Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, and is a member of HGO’s Laureate Society. A valued member of the HGO Board of Directors, Margaret was the honoree of the 2009 Opera Ball and chairman of the 2014 Ball, and she generously chaired the 2018 Hurricane Harvey benefit Concert *HGO and Plácido: Coming Home*.

**THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.**

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

**LYNN WYATT**

Lynn’s generosity touches every aspect of HGO. She is a Lifetime Trustee of HGO and serves as the vice chairman of the HGO Board of Directors. She serves as vice-chair of HGO’s Governance Committee and chaired HGO’s Golden Jubilee Gala in 2005. Oscar Wyatt endowed The Lynn Wyatt Great Artist Fund in 2010, honoring Lynn’s service to the company and dedication to bringing the world’s best operatic artists to HGO, and she was the honoree at the 2010 Opera Ball. Lynn and Oscar have been lead supporters of a number of HGO productions and programs, including the multiyear company-wide initiative *Seeking the Human Spirit.*
Members of Houston Grand Opera’s Patrons Circle support the opera at a level of $5,000 or more, thereby making possible the incredible work of HGO. Members of the Society are entitled to many benefits at the Opera, including complimentary valet parking, Masterson Green Room privileges during performance intermissions, personalized ticket service, two tickets to all open dress rehearsals, Opera Guild membership, a discount on Opera Guild Boutique purchases, and more. HGO gratefully recognizes Patrons. For information on joining the Patrons Circle, please call David Krohn at 713-980-8685.

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APRIL
20, 27, 30, May 3, 5m
Performances of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 20 performance only.

26, 28m, May 4, 7, 10
Performances of the world premiere of Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s *The Phoenix*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 26 performance only.

28
*Behind the Music*: an intimate conversation about *The Phoenix* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

MAY
2 & 5
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 2 at 7:30 p.m. and May 5 at 5 p.m.

5
*Behind the Music*: an intimate conversation about *Don Giovanni* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

6, 7, 8
*Opera to Go!* presents *The Elixir of Love*. Miller Outdoor Theatre. 11 a.m. daily. Free.

18
HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital. Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University. 6 p.m. Free.

20
Transforming the Mind & Spirit: An Exploration of Creativity: Dr. Mauro Ferrari and Patrick Summers join an eclectic group of artists, musicians, and thought leaders to explore the creative process. MATCH 4, 3400 Main St., 7–9 p.m. Tickets $15; purchase at HGO.org.

JUNE
3–7
Opera Camps: HGOco presents *Create a Singer* geared for students in rising grades 4–9, and *Sing! Move! Play!* for children entering K–2. Wortham Theater Center.*

4
HGO Guild Volunteer Gathering: Find out how you can use your talents to help HGO through volunteering with the Guild. United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr., 6:30 p.m. For information, contact the Guild at 713-546-0269 or guild@hgo.org.

10–14
*Opera Camp*: HGOco presents *Create an Opera* for students in rising grades 3–8.*

10–21
*Opera Camp*: HGOco presents *Art of Opera* for students in rising grades 9–12. This two-week camp culminates in a fully staged production.*

JUNE
17–18, 8 P.M. *La bohème*
Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park
FREE tickets for covered seating may be picked up the day of the performance from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Miller Outdoor Theatre Box Office. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

MAY
22, 8 P.M. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, The Woodlands
Orchestra seats available for $20; FREE mezzanine and lawn seating courtesy of The Wortham Foundation. Visit woodlandscenter.org for information and tickets.

**SEE YOU AT THE PARKS!**
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MAY 20, 27, 30, May 3, 5m
Performances of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 20 performance only.

26, 28m, May 4, 7, 10
Performances of the world premiere of Tarik O’Regan and John Caird’s *The Phoenix*. Wortham Center’s Brown Theater. Special intermission reception for members of Opening Nights for Young Professionals at the Apr. 26 performance only.

28
*Behind the Music*: an intimate conversation about *The Phoenix* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

MAY 2 & 5
HGO Studio Recital Series: Artists of the HGO Studio perform in the intimate and elegant salon at Rienzi, the decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at 1406 Kirby Drive. May 2 at 7:30 p.m. and May 5 at 5 p.m.

5
*Behind the Music*: an intimate conversation about *Don Giovanni* immediately following the performance. Masterson Green Room. Free.

6, 7, 8
*Opera to Go!* presents *The Elixir of Love*. Miller Outdoor Theatre. 11 a.m. daily. Free.

18
HGOco presents the Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Graduation Recital. Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University. 6 p.m. Free.

20
Transforming the Mind & Spirit: An Exploration of Creativity: Dr. Mauro Ferrari and Patrick Summers join an eclectic group of artists, musicians, and thought leaders to explore the creative process. MATCH 4, 3400 Main St., 7–9 p.m. Tickets $15; purchase at HGO.org.

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 Joel Goodloe, Company Manager
 Carolyne Hall, Associate Company Manager
 Connor Howard, Artistic and Rehearsal Coordinator
 Daniel James, Music Administrator/Artistic Media Manager
 Jeremy Johnson, Dramaturg
 Kirill Kuzmin, Assistant Conductor
 Mark C. Lear, Associate Artistic Administrator *
 Geoffrey Loff, Assistant Conductor
 Joshua Luty, Music Librarian
 Peter Pasztor, Principal Coach *
 Karen Reeves, Children’s Chorus Director *

Damien Sneed, HGOco Music Director and Composer in Residence/ HGO Cover Conductor

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 Katrina Bachus, Assistant Director
 Kristen E. Burke, Production Manager *
 Katherine M. Carter, Assistant Director
 Roger Chapman, Assistant Technical Director
 Michael James Clark, Lighting Supervisor *
 Andrew Cloud, Properties Associate *
 Norma Cortez, Head of Costumes *
 Esmeralda De Leon, Costume Coordinator
 Meg Edwards, Assistant Stage Manager
 Joseph Farley, Assistant Technical Director
 Matt Farwell, Assistant Head of Properties
 Vince Ferraro, Master Electrician
 E. Reed Fisher, Assistant Director
 Mark Grady, Assistant Master Electrician/
 Lighting Board Programmer
 Andreas Hager, Assistant Director
 Eduardo Hawkins, Head Soundman *
 Joshua Horowitz, Assistant Director
 John Howard, Head Carpenter
 Clair Hummel, Costume Coordinator
 Nara Lesser, Costume Production Assistant
 Rachel Lucas, Assistant Stage Manager
 Judy Malone-Stein, Wardrobe Supervisor
 Melissa McClung, Technical and Production Administrator
 Joshua C. McIntosh, Technical and Safety Director
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 Kaley Smith, Assistant Stage Manager
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 Greg Stewart, Head Flyman
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* denotes 10 or more years of service
HOUSTON GRAND OPERA OFFERS
a wealth of services to enhance your opera experience.

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: 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 713-228-6737. You can also email customercare@hgo.org. Throughout the season, the Center will be staffed Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. During performance runs, the Center is open until 6 p.m., and on performance days, it is open until curtain time. The Center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays only when there is a performance, from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change. You can purchase tickets and make exchanges in person at the HGO Box Office, located in the Wortham Theater Center at 550 Prairie. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If there is a performance on Saturday or Sunday, the Box Office will be open from noon until curtain. Hours are subject to change.

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 and mini-package 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 the performance begins. 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. Call the Customer Care Center at 713-228-6737 to request replacement tickets. They will be reprinted and held at the Will Call window for your performance.

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 713-228-6737 for full details.

Descriptive services for persons with vision loss are available with 48-hour advance reservations. Please call 713-980-8662 for details.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES
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 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.

If you have a state-issued disability permit and need valet parking, you may purchase special passes by contacting the Customer Care Center. Parking spots for disabled ticket holders are also available in the Theater District Garage on a first-come, first-served basis.

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

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

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