

DAVID GOCKLEY, GENERAL DIRECTOR

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# HoustonGrandOpera



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2002-2003 Season

*Renée  
Fleming*

*sings her first La Traviata.*

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# Divas, divas, divas!

Houston Grand Opera celebrates "The Year of the Diva."

**Renée Fleming** will at long last sing her first Violetta—and, where might this anticipated debut happen? The Met? La Scala? Vienna? No, Renée has chosen to premiere this significant role here at Houston Grand Opera. In a year of firsts—**Susan Graham's** first *Ariodante* and *The Merry Widow* and **Elizabeth Futral's** first *Manon*—Ms. Fleming's Violetta will be a defining moment in the world of opera.

The season begins with the return of **Ana Maria Martinez** as Mimi in Puccini's beloved *La Bohème*. **Laura Claycomb**, the young Texas soprano who had audiences on their feet in this season's *Rigoletto*, will return in Donizetti's Scottish masterpiece, *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The season closes with the world premiere of *The Little Prince*, when Oscar-winning composer **Rachel Portman** turns Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's much loved novel into a magical and moving opera.

Extraordinary singers in extraordinary productions. As a full season subscriber, you get 7 operas for the price of 6. That means you can see Renée Fleming's debut as Violetta for free! I urge you to take advantage of this offer, it's the only way we can guarantee you a seat.

See you at the opera!

~David Gockley



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To guarantee your seat for Renée Fleming's debut as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**



Ana Maria  
Martinez



Roberto  
Aronica



Sebastian  
Lang-Lessing



Ainhoa  
Arteta



Susan  
Graham



Christopher  
Hogwood



Umberto  
Chiummo



Alexandra  
Coku

Houston Grand Opera's

# 2002–2003 Season

Featuring the  
Houston Grand Opera  
Orchestra and Chorus

FALL REPERTORY

Puccini

## LA BOHÈME

October 25–November 10, 2002; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00  
Opening—October 25, 7:00 p.m.

Poverty and true love collide in Puccini's classic tale, *La Bohème*. This joint production with New York City Opera and Glimmerglass moves the tale of starving Parisian artists to the start of WWI. As bodies returning from the front, our young Bohemian heroes lose both their innocence and idealism. **Ana Maria Martinez** returns to HGO as the ill-fated Mimi. **Roberto Aronica**, fresh from his HGO success as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, sings Rodolfo. Internationally renowned **Sebastian Lang-Lessing** conducts.

*Sung in Italian with English Surtitles*

Handel

## ARIODANTE

November 1–17, 2002; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00

**Susan Graham** makes her long-awaited HGO debut in this highly theatrical production from English National Opera. Handel's story of honor lost and regained is baroque opera at its finest. And who more capable to wield the baton than **Christopher Hogwood**, founder of The Academy of Ancient Music. *Ariodante* is, above all, a singer's opera, full of dazzling vocal gymnastics that convey a full range of human emotions. You can look forward to the seamless, creamy voice of Susan Graham, the power of **Umberto Chiummo**, and the grace of **Alexandra Coku**. Without a doubt, a night of old-world magic and vocal brilliance.

*Sung in Italian with English Surtitles*  
Corporate Guarantor: NL Industries, Inc.

WINTER REPERTORY

Donizetti

## LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

January 23–February 2, 2003; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00

HGO is offering *Lucia* this season for one reason—**Laura Claycomb**. Her performance as Gilda in last season's *Rigoletto* stopped the show and brought the audience to its feet. You can expect fireworks when she reaches the famous "Mad Scene." This is the world of Sir Walter Scott—a world of rival Scottish clans, strategic alliances, madness and murder. **Vinson Cole** portrays Edgardo, the man Lucia loves but is forbidden to marry. **Chen-Ye Yuan** sings Enrico, the brother who forces Lucia to marry Arturo, whom she murders in her bridal chamber. Music Director **Patrick Summers** conducts.

*Sung in Italian with English Surtitles*  
Corporate Guarantor: Lyondell Chemical Company

Lehár

## THE MERRY WIDOW

January 31–February 16, 2003; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00

We return to the world of Viennese operetta for what promises to be a night of pure pleasure and humor. This gorgeous production is filled with can-can girls, tuxedos, light waltzes and tune after memorable tune. We are in Paris at the dawn of the 20th century. The wealthy widow Hanna must wade through a sea of suitors to winnow out the greedy from the sincere. **Susan Graham**, one of the great beauties in opera today, sings her first Hanna. HGO favorite **Bo Skovhus** is Count Danilo, the man who will do anything to hide his love for the widow. Music Director **Patrick Summers** conducts.

*Sung in English with Surtitles*  
Corporate Guarantor: ExxonMobil

SPRING REPERTORY

Verdi

## LA TRAVIATA

April 17–May 4, 2003; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00  
Special—May 2, 8:00 p.m.

At long last, **Renée Fleming** sings her first Violetta—and she has chosen HGO for that honor! Verdi's most accessible and poignant opera tells the story about a Parisian courtesan pressured into sacrificing her own hard-won love. **Paul Charles Clarke** sings Alfredo, the lover Violetta is forced to abandon. **Dwayne Croft**, in his long-awaited HGO debut, portrays Alfredo's conniving father Germont. Music Director **Patrick Summers** conducts this night for romantics and traditionalists.

*Sung in Italian with English Surtitles;*  
Corporate Grand Guarantor: Shell Oil Company Foundation  
Corporate Guarantor: Anadarko Petroleum Corporation

Massenet

## MANON

April 25–May 11, 2003; Evenings 7:30, Matinees 2:00

The bewitching **Elizabeth Futral** is Manon, an adorable but fickle coquette who can't resist wealth. Join her as she rips a path through the hearts and wallets of 18th-century France. From the glitter of gambling halls to the austere halls of an abbey, Manon toys with the heart of the man who truly loves her, Chevalier des Grieux, sung by **Marcello Giordani**. It is only in the face of arrest, deportation and death that she finally realizes her love for him. Futral's gorgeous, limpid vocalism makes this a must-see production. Acclaimed French conductor **Emmanuel Joel** makes his HGO debut.

*Sung in French with English Surtitles*



Laura Claycomb

Patrick Summers

Susan Graham

Bo Skovhus

Dale Travis

# 7 Operas for the price of 6

## English surtitles projected above the stage.

What if you don't speak Italian? Or understand French? Houston Grand Opera provides English surtitles for all operas. An English language translation is projected just above the stage so you won't miss a word.

*Surtitles underwritten by BMC Software*

## Special provisions offered.



The Wortham Center features easy wheelchair access to both theaters. An infrared listening system, generously underwritten by Pennzoil-Quaker State Company, is available free of charge at all performances. For complete details, call the Subscription Office at 713-546-0246 or 1-800-346-4462 or contact us online at [www.houstongrandopera.org](http://www.houstongrandopera.org). Descriptive services for the visually impaired are available with 48-hour advance reservations. For details, contact the Education and Outreach Department at 713-546-0708.

## Your opportunity to ensure excellence onstage and off.

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George Hixson

## OperaVision

Dear Mr. Gockley:

*What on earth is OperaVision? I can't find it in my dictionary! Is it something you guys made up? My wife suggested I ask you about it and stop being a grump.* —A Concerned Opera Goer

Dear Mr. Goer:

Your wife sounds very wise. OperaVision is HGO's state-of-the-art plasma and projection screen system designed to bring Balcony and Grand Tier patrons a close-up view of the surtitles and the action on stage. Watch Rodolfo's eyes as Mimi dies in his arms! Watch the can-can girls in *The Merry Widow* as if you had front row seats with Toulouse-Lautrec! Thanks to OperaVision's Balcony screens and Grand Tier monitors, you'll never miss a nuance. Ever. Enjoy! —David Gockley

OperaVision is funded by the Bill and Sara Morgan Family Foundation.

**WORLD PREMIERE** By agreement with the Saint-Exupéry Estate and Gallimard

Rachel Portman

## THE LITTLE PRINCE

May 30–June 22, 2003; Evenings 8:00, Matinees 2:30

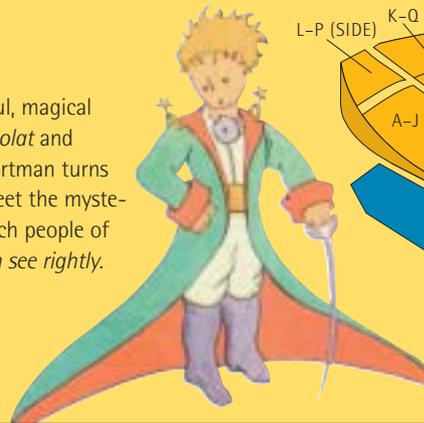
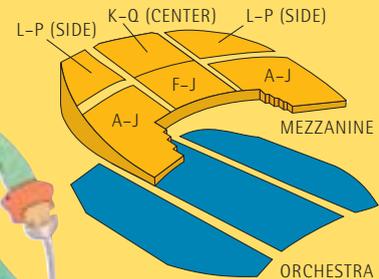
Rachel Portman brings Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's beloved novel to life in beautiful, magical and amusing music. Having received Oscar nominations for her film scores to *Chocolat* and *Cider House Rules*, and winning the Academy Award for her score to *Emma*, Ms. Portman turns her attention to this classic tale of a pilot who crash lands in the Sahara only to meet the mysterious and riddle-prone little prince. This profound and deeply moving story will touch people of all ages with its important and timely message: *It is only with the heart that we can see rightly.*

*Sung in English with Surtitles*

Performance Corporate Guarantor: BP America

Production made possible by a challenge grant from The Edgar Foster Daniels Foundation

## CULLEN THEATER



Artwork by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



Renée Fleming

Paul Charles Clarke

Dwayne Croft

Patrick Summers

Elizabeth Futral

Marcello Giordani

Emmanuel Joel

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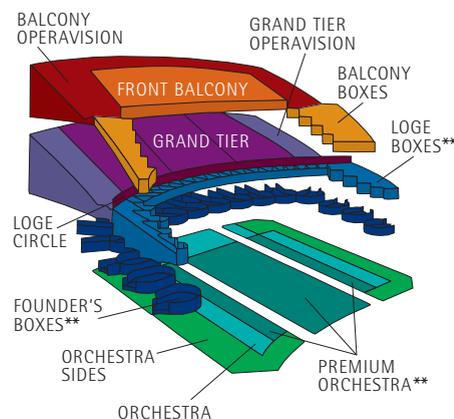
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|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>La Bohème</i>            | Oct. 25            | Oct. 27                     | Oct. 30              | Nov. 2              | Nov. 8            | Nov. 10           | Nov. 2             |
| <i>Ariodante</i>            | Nov. 1             | Nov. 3                      | Nov. 12              | Nov. 9              | Nov. 15           | Nov. 17           | Nov. 3             |
| <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>  | Jan. 16            | Jan. 19                     | Jan. 22              | Jan. 25             | Jan. 31           | Feb. 2            | Feb. 2             |
| <i>The Merry Widow</i>      | Jan. 30            | Feb. 9                      | Feb. 11              | Feb. 1              | Feb. 7            | Feb. 16           | Feb. 1             |
| <i>La Traviata</i>          | Apr. 17            | Apr. 20                     | Apr. 23              | Apr. 26             | May 2             | May 4             | Apr. 26            |
| <i>Manon</i>                | Apr. 25            | Apr. 27                     | May 6                | May 3               | May 9             | May 11            | Apr. 27            |
| <i>The Little Prince*</i>   | May 30             | June 1                      | June 4               | June 7              | June 13           | June 15           | June 22            |
| Front Balcony (BF) ♦        | \$185              | \$200/\$175+                | \$200/\$175+         | \$230               | \$230             | \$230             | \$230              |
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| Orchestra (OR)              | \$645              | \$595/\$560+                | \$595/\$560+         | \$675               | \$675             | \$675             | \$675              |
| Orchestra Sides (OS)        | \$440              | \$420/\$385+                | \$420/\$385+         | \$480               | \$475             | \$470             | \$480              |

## BROWN THEATER WORTHAM CENTER



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## *Sincere Thanks*

The 2002–2003 season is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Houston through the Cultural Arts Council of Houston and Harris County, and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts through the Cultural Arts Council.

*La Traviata* photo: San Francisco Opera, Ken Friedman  
Cover and inside photo of Fleming: Andrew Eccles; Inside photos of Patrick Summers' hands, George Hixson

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