



**Houston Grand Opera Announces New Album: Massenet's *Werther*
Starring Matthew Polenzani and Isabel Leonard**

*Full recording of rare masterpiece to be released on November 15, 2024,
with a single from the album available starting today*

HOUSTON—September 27, 2024—Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is proud to announce the release of a new album, a full recording of Massenet's rarely performed masterpiece, *Werther*. The recording captures a star-studded performance of the 1892 French opera at the Wortham Theater Center's Brown Theater, presented by HGO as part of its mainstage repertoire in winter 2023. Recorded by Soundmirror and released by EuroArts, the full *Werther* album will be available for streaming on November 15, 2024. A new single from the album, the Act I Prélude, is available to stream starting today on the company's partner platform, [Apple Music Classical](#), as well as on [Spotify](#) and [Amazon Music](#).

Based on Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Massenet's opera tells the story of tortured young poet Werther, whose lovesick yearnings for the unavailable Charlotte lead to heartbreaking tragedy. HGO's album features world-renowned conductor Robert Spano at the podium, joined by an incredible cast that includes tenor Matthew Polenzani, one of the most gifted performers of his generation, as Werther; three-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as Charlotte; radiant soprano Jasmine Habersham as Charlotte's sister, Sophie; and remarkable baritone Sean Michael Plumb as Charlotte's betrothed, Albert.

"This is a stunningly gorgeous, extremely difficult opera that demands musicianship at the very highest levels," says HGO General Director & CEO Kori Dastoor. "When we secured one of the country's foremost musical minds in conductor Robert Spano, with two virtuoso superstars, Isabel Leonard and Matthew Polenzani, as our Charlotte and Werther, we not only knew that this production would be extraordinary, but also that we needed to invest in recording it. The world-class artistry on display from the full cast and HGO Orchestra, combined with the superb quality of the recording itself, makes for a truly unparalleled listening experience. We cannot wait to share this new album with audiences in Houston and across the world."

HGO's *Werther* recording is part of the company's renewed focus on building and sharing its catalogue of recordings—both new and remastered—of major performances and company-commissioned additions to the repertoire. In October 2023, a Spatial Audio remastered recording of the company's iconic 2011 production of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* became the company's inaugural release on its partner platform, Apple Music Classical. Audiences can expect additional recordings to be released in future seasons.

HGO was able to produce its recording of *Werther* thanks to the generosity of Mercedes T. Bass and Robin Angly & Miles Smith.

Link to images that can be used with coverage of HGO's new recording of Massenet's *Werther* can be found [here](#). Images are courtesy of HGO unless otherwise indicated.

About Houston Grand Opera

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. General Director and CEO Khorl Dastoor assumed leadership of the organization and responsibility for its strategic vision in 2021. HGO was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year in the 2019 International Opera Awards, and the only American company to be nominated twice. In fulfilling its mission to advance the operatic art, to serve the Houston community, and to be a global leader in the future of opera, HGO has led the field in commissioning and producing new works (76 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO's pioneering Community and Learning initiative has served as a model for other arts organizations. The company invites all Houstonians to experience superlative opera without the barrier of price through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and three Emmy awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

Media Contact: Mireya Reyna, Elmore, 832-459-7761, Mireya@elmorepr.com

Media Contact: Catherine Matusow, Houston Grand Opera, 713-546-0293;
CMatusow@HGO.org

HGO.org

Facebook.com/HoustonGrandOpera

X.com/HouGrandOpera

Instagram.com/hougrandopera

Linkedin.com/Houston-grand-opera