

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE HOBBY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS  
HOUSTON EBONY OPERA GUILD: *I TOO SING, AMERICA: AMERICAN STORIES*  
Saturday, April 5**

**WHO:** The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts presents  
**WHAT:** **Houston Ebony Opera Guild: *I Too Sing, America: American Stories***  
**WHEN:** Saturday, April 5 at 7:30pm  
**WHERE:** The Hobby Center | Zilkha Hall | 800 Bagby Street | Houston, TX 77002  
**TICKETS:** Start at \$32.50. Available online at [www.TheHobbyCenter.org](http://www.TheHobbyCenter.org) and in person at the Hobby Center Box Office (800 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002).

**Houston, TX – The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts** in partnership with **Houston Ebony Opera Guild** presents a performance of *I Too Sing, America: American Stories* celebrating 40 years on **Saturday, April 5** as part of the Hobby Center's recently launched *Houston Is Inspired* initiative. Tickets on sale now at [TheHobbyCenter.org](http://TheHobbyCenter.org).

Building on the Hobby Center's mission to serve as a connector, convenor, and incubator, this program leverages the Hobby Center's technical, administrative, and promotional resources and staff to help extend partners' existing capacities and amplify their work. The resulting performances bring audiences and artists together through experiences that center connection and community.

With extended advanced infrastructure support from the Hobby Center team, partner artmakers participate in a week-long residency at Zilkha Hall to include resources like expert production, technical support, residency stipend, marketing investment, and educational presentations. The residency culminates in a public performance at Zilkha Hall, presented by the Hobby Center as part of its annual season.

2025 brings Houston Ebony Opera Guild, a company of classical singers sharing opera, traditional Negro Spirituals, and other classical music genres throughout Houston since the 1980s.

"The Houston Ebony Opera Guild was one of the local groups that was consulted about participation at the Hobby Center, even as it was being planned and built," said Dr. Jason Oby Artistic Director, Houston Ebony Opera Guild. "Celebrating our 40th anniversary and because it has been close to 15 years since we've been on the stage as a performing body, our return as a part of the *Houston is Inspired Series* is significant. All of us are looking forward to it with great anticipation."

**Houston Ebony Opera Guild | *I Too Sing, America: American Stories* | Sat, April 5, 2025 at 7:30pm**  
*A landmark concert celebrating Houston Ebony Opera Guild's 40th Anniversary*

This evening of extraordinary music pays tribute to the Guild's founder, Robert A. Henry, and key figures who played pivotal roles in advancing and sustaining the organization's legacy.

The first half of the concert will feature a fully staged performance of *Highway 1, USA*, a one-act opera

by William Grant Still. This powerful work, last performed by the Guild nearly 25 years ago, will be presented with an exceptional cast of local operatic soloists. The vivid and passionate music of Still, "the dean of African American composers," accompanies this dramatic post-war tale of an ungrateful young man's exploitation, attempted seduction and near-murder of his brother's wife. All of this and more in the roadside service station owned by the victims: a loyal, hard-working couple.

The second half of the concert will showcase a selection of choral and solo works inspired by Robert Henry and other influential figures who have contributed to the Guild's artistic and organizational growth. Each piece reflects their musical passions, from opera and choral masterworks to large-scale spiritual arrangements.

This evening will be a celebration of legacy and artistry, ensuring that HEOG's impact resonates for years to come.

Opera Soloists:

Ardeen Pierre as Mary

Antoine Griggs as Bob

Bernard Kelly as Nate

Houston Ebony Opera appears as part of the Hobby Center's new annual residency initiative that celebrates and supports local artists who broaden our city's cultural fabric and embody the iconic idea that *Houston is Inspired*.

Later in the Spring *Houston Is Inspired* will welcome veteran operatic lyric-spinto and Grammy Award® winning soprano Ana María Martínez with renowned Broadway music director and conductor Andy Einhorn on Saturday, May 31 with **Ana María Martínez with Andy Einhorn**.

**TICKETING:** Tickets for **Houston Ebony Opera Guild: *I Too Sing, America: American Stories*** start at \$32.50 and are on sale now online at [www.TheHobbyCenter.org](http://www.TheHobbyCenter.org) and in person at the Hobby Center Box Office (800 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002). Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more by calling 713-315-2525, option 4. A limited number of \$10 student tickets will be available to purchasers with a valid student ID.

Patrons can become a "Hobby Center Insider" by signing up at [thehobbycenter.org/news/stay-connected](http://thehobbycenter.org/news/stay-connected) where they receive perks such as access to purchase tickets before the general public.

### **About Houston Ebony Opera Guild**

Houston Ebony Opera Guild ("the Guild"), a company of classical singers based in Houston's African American community is committed to the expansion of opportunities for participation in and exposure to opera, traditional Negro Spirituals and other classical music genres. Its singers are selected by audition, talent, formal training and experience: important prerequisites for the Guild singers. Founded by the late Dr. Robert A. Henry (1916-1996), the Guild presented occasional concerts in Houston and elsewhere during the late 1980's. During its early years, the Guild was well known nationally for the large number of outstanding professional soloists included in its membership. In 1992, the Guild became a formal, tax-exempt organization and produced *Porgy and Bess*, its very first opera at the Miller Outdoor Theater. All cast members of the production were local singers. Since then, productions have come to include superb artists from Houston and around the United States. Today, the Guild is acclaimed by audiences and critics for its productions.

The Guild's ability to satisfy the demands of such complex programmatic agendas has been greatly enhanced by the services of several distinguished conductors. Robert A. Henry (1984-1996), founding conductor and artistic director nurtured and served the Guild from its inception until his death. In 1997,

Dr. Jason Oby joined the organization, serving in several other capacities before becoming the artistic director, a position he continues to hold today. Subsequent opera and concert conductors have included Barbara Baker, Roland M. Carter, Charles Clency, Melissa Dightman, Moses Hogan, Clyde Owen Jackson, R. DeAndre Johnson, Gregory McDaniel, Robert L Morris, Jason Oby, A. Jan Taylor and Willie Anthony Waters.

The Guild has limited administrative personnel and is heavily supported by volunteers. In addition to the Board of Directors, the primary source of essential volunteer power is its auxiliary - The Friends of Houston Ebony Opera Guild (FHEOG). Mary Marks Guillory was the Founder and 1<sup>st</sup> Chairperson of FHEOG, which was founded in November 1991 for the purpose of making the excellent programs of the Guild available to diverse audiences. The governing body of the Guild is The Houston Ebony Music Society, Inc., (“HEMS”) incorporated in December 1990 and is governed by a board of directors. Because HEMS is a 501(c)(3) organization, contributions to the Guild are tax-deductible.

**The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts** serves as a connector, convenor and incubator for all Houston audiences, artmakers and arts organizations. Opened in 2002, the campus houses two theaters including the 2,650-seat Sarofim Hall and the 500-seat Zilkha Hall. Delivering a best-in-class patron experience, the Hobby Center welcomes over 400,000 audience members annually to engage with high-quality arts programming including the Memorial Hermann Broadway at the Hobby Center series. The Hobby Center is also home to a full season of musical theatre produced by Principal Resident Company Theatre Under the Stars, as well as a variety of diverse performances from both Houston-based and touring artists and companies. Education and accessibility initiatives are central to the Hobby Center’s impact in Houston through programs like the ExxonMobil Discovery Series that welcomes thousands of students to performances every season. Please visit [TheHobbyCenter.org](http://TheHobbyCenter.org). Follow the Hobby Center on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

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