Arts and Culture

Houston is one of few U.S. cities with resident companies in all four major performing arts — drama, ballet, opera and orchestra.

- The famed **Alley Theatre** was founded in 1947 and is one of the few American theater companies that support a company of actors, designers, artisans and craftspeople throughout the year. Recipient of the 1996 Special Tony Award for outstanding achievement by regional theatre, the Alley performs year-round with a resident company of actors in its two-theater complex, the 824 seat Hubbard Stage and the 310 seat Neuhaus Stage, in downtown Houston. On these two stages, the Alley usually presents 11 major productions per season. Productions are built and rehearsed in a 75,000 square foot state-of-the art facility, one of the largest of its kind, adjacent to its two-theatre complex. The company has toured 40 U.S. cities and abroad. The Alley is also home to educational programs for students and teachers, including the Young Performers Studio, From Stage to Page, HYPE (Houston Young Playwrights Exchange) and Playwright 360°.

- **Houston Ballet**, founded in 1955 and established as a professional company in 1969, is the nation's fourth largest ballet company, with annual budget of more than $22 million and 53 dancers, many of whom have won medals at major international competitions. Houston Ballet has toured to critical praise in Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Orient (including the People's Republic of China) and cities throughout the United States. Most recently, the company presents some 96 performances (79 in Houston, 17 touring).

- The internationally renowned **Houston Grand Opera** performs October through May each year at the Wortham Theater Center downtown. Founded in 1955, the company is known worldwide and enjoys a reputation for commissioning and presenting new works by important contemporary composers, including 47 world and six U.S. premieres since 1973. Its tours have included the U.S., Japan, Italy, Egypt, Scotland and France. HGO is the only opera company to have won a Tony Award, two Grammy Awards and two Emmy Awards. Its performances are broadcast nationally and internationally over the WFMT Radio Network New York City's WQXR, the European Broadcasting Union, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. In addition to its mainstage season, HGO is home to the Houston Grand Opera Studio, an acclaimed professional development program for young singers, and HGOco, an education and audience development initiative designed to bring company and community together in collaborative performing arts projects.

- The **Houston Symphony**, founded in 1913, has an annual budget of more than $24 million and maintains an internationally acclaimed orchestra and chorus. Some 350,000 attend its season of more than 170 classical, pops, educational and family concerts. The symphony's free summer concerts at Miller Outdoor Theatre have been a tradition since 1940. The symphony's long tradition of touring in recent years has included Europe, Japan, Singapore and many U.S. cities. Each season, musicians reach more than 22,000 Houstonians in schools, hospitals, retirement homes, shelters and community centers.

- **Theatre Under The Stars** offers musical theater productions, both new works and revivals, in a winter subscription season and in popular free summer productions at Hermann Park's Miller Outdoor Theatre. It also operates the Humphreys School of Musical Theatre.

- Located in midtown Houston is the **Ensemble Theatre**, established in 1976 — the only professional theater in the Southwest devoted to the African-American experience — with two stages and a full season of productions.