



February 3, 2016

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LANDMARK EVENT RECREATES ONE OF FORT WORTH'S MOST FAMED COLLABORATIONS

“Caruso in Cowtown” A one-night only gala concert experience benefiting Fort Worth Opera and The Friends of the Cowtown Coliseum with performance from Metropolitan Opera favorite, Stephen Costello

FORT WORTH, Texas (February 3, 2016) – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) and Friends of the Cowtown Coliseum will present “Caruso in Cowtown” the ultimate evening of “Cowboys and Culture” Thursday, April 7, 2016, at Cowtown Coliseum. This special one-night-only, black-tie gala will recreate famed tenor Enrico Caruso’s historic 1920 Fort Worth concert, brilliantly showcasing how the city’s deep western roots complement the thriving cultural mecca it is today.

Guests will enjoy a Fort Worth-inspired menu, while stars of the 2016 FWOpera Festival productions take the stage with special preview performances. **World-renowned tenor and Metropolitan Opera favorite Stephen Costello** will headline the evening with a recreation of Caruso’s repertoire

Mayor Betsy Price stated, “We are proud to have organizations like the Fort Worth Opera and Stockyards Championship Rodeo partner together to model what it means to be the City of Cowboys & Culture. The reenactment of Caruso’s historic performance is a fantastic example of how Western heritage and fine arts have long shaped our wonderful city.”

Since the early part of the Twentieth Century, the Cowtown Coliseum has served as a rich cultural center for the city of Fort Worth, beyond its historical legacy as both a home for livestock exhibitions and the World’s first indoor rodeo. Iconic artists such as Bob Hope, Doris Day, Willie Nelson and Elvis Presley have all graced the coliseum’s stage, but few know that international ballet companies danced under its roof, and full operas were once performed within the walls of this revered auditorium. From Tamaki Miura’s *Madama Butterfly*, Diaghileff’s Ballet Russe and the Chicago Opera Company’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Faust*, the coliseum has a diverse background as legendary as Caruso’s, sold-out performance that night in 1920, to a standing-room-only crowd.

“It’s an honor to partner with Cowtown Coliseum to bring such an amazing night of entertainment to the people of Fort Worth and North Texas. I have always been captivated by the story of Caruso’s visit to Fort Worth as it emphasizes the city’s long tradition of recognizing and celebrating its distinct blend of Western culture and world class art,” said FWOpera General Director Darren K. Woods.

Cowtown coliseum General Manager Hub Baker added, “What we are doing here is truly great. We are always striving to let the world know how important this building was to this nation in western and cultural heritage, and it’s a real step forward bringing back the past. Fort Worth Opera is a great partner and we are proud to be home, once again, to honoring Caruso’s great history. The meaning of this event is greater than one night.”

Following Mr. Costello’s performance, guests are invited to partake in a honky-tonk inspired After Party. Guests will two-step on the Coliseum’s dirt floor while guests bid on silent auction items. All proceeds from the evening will benefit FWOpera and the Friends of the Cowtown Coliseum.

Tables start at \$2,000 and individual dinner tickets available for purchase at \$200. For more information on table benefits, prices, and reservations, contact FWOpera Events Manager Emily Weir at emily@fwopera.com or 817.288.1214.

Event Details:

“Caruso in Cowtown”

Thursday, April 7, 2016

6 :30 p.m. -- Cocktail réception

7:30 p.m. -- Dinner with performances from the stars of the 2016 FWOpera Festival

8:15 p.m. -- Stephen Costello recreates Enrico Caruso’s 1920 Cowtown Coliseum performance

9:00 p.m. – After Party

ABOUT FORT WORTH: Known as the “City of Cowboys and Culture,” Fort Worth is a destination shaped by a rich Western heritage and a commitment to urban renewal. The city’s highly acclaimed cultural institutions are deeply rooted in its humble beginnings, with many world-class collections courtesy of cattle barons and oil tycoons. Today, Fort Worth lays claim to the only Michelangelo in the Americas, home of the world’s first indoor rodeo, and home to the oldest continually performing opera company in Texas.

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is the oldest continually performing opera company in Texas, and one of the 14 oldest opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of General Director Darren K. Woods since 2001, the organization has gained national attention from critics and audiences alike for its artistic quality and willingness to take risks. The company’s upcoming 2016 season, the culmination of part of Phase One of its recently announced ten-year artistic vision *Opera of the Americas* — funded in part by support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation — includes the world premiere of David T. Little and Royce Vavrek’s commissioned opera *JFK*, Rossini’s hilarious comic romp *The Barber of Seville*, as well as the regional premiere of two one-act operas *Buried Alive | Embedded*, based on the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe.

ABOUT THE COWTOWN COLISEUM: The Cowtown Coliseum located in the heart of the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District has a rich history steeped in Rodeo and the West. The Cowtown Coliseum was built in 1908 to house the world famous Fort Worth Stock Show. In 1918 Cowtown Coliseum became host to the world’s first indoor rodeo. In addition to the first rodeo, the Cowtown Coliseum holds many firsts in the world of rodeo. In 1923 the world’s first live radio broadcast of rodeo was Broadcast live on WBAP. In 1934 Bull Riding was introduced as a competitive sport here at the Coliseum. Currently the Cowtown Coliseum continues its legend of rodeo as home to The Stockyards Championship Rodeo, The world’s only year round rodeo, every Friday and Saturday night at 8pm. The Friends of Cowtown Coliseum prides itself in preserving the history and authenticity of the Legendary Cowtown Coliseum. Our history shows us not only where we have been, but what our future holds. Combining the cultural and western history of Fort Worth shows we are truly a city of Cowboys and Culture, and have been from the beginning.

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