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Fort Worth Opera Awarded Generous Grant from City of Fort Worth in Celebration of its 70th Anniversary Season.

Fort Worth Promotion and Development Fund grants opera company \$25,000 in support of the 2016 Festival and the world premiere of JFK.

FORT WORTH, TEXAS – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) proudly announced today that it has been named the recipient of a special one-year grant of \$25,000 from the City of Fort Worth’s Promotion and Development Fund. This marks the second time FWOpera has received this award since the company ushered in its internationally-acclaimed spring Festival in 2007. The grant will support the company’s 70th anniversary season and the world premiere of FWOpera’s commissioned opera *JFK*, by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek, opening the 2016 FWOpera Festival at Bass Performance Hall on April 23, 2016.

Renowned for its exciting and varied repertoire, FWOpera has established a reputation for the exceptional caliber of its annual productions, which in its current three-show format includes one traditional grand opera, one rarely-performed work from the operatic canon, and a cutting-edge modern work from a contemporary composer. Following its transition to the Festival format in 2007, FWOpera produced two world premieres and four regional premieres. In 2013, the company announced the first phase of its *Opera of the Americas* initiative – a 10-year commitment to the production of new operas by composers from North, South, and Central America. To date, this initiative has resulted in the production of the professional world premiere of *With Blood, With Ink* (2014), and the regional premieres of *Silent Night* (2014), and *Dog Days* (2015). Phase One of the *Opera of the Americas* program culminates in 2016 with the highly-anticipated world premiere of David T. Little and Royce Vavrek’s *JFK*. A second 2016 *Opera of the Americas* production *Buried Alive | Embedded* – two one-act operas based on the short stories of Edgar Allen Poe will be staged as

part of the company's alternative venue series *Opera Unbound*, while Rossini's classic comedy *The Barber of Seville* will delight audiences with its lush, traditional staging.

In announcing the grant from the City of Fort Worth's Promotion and Development Fund, FWOpera General Director Darren K. Woods stated, "We are truly grateful to Mayor Betsy Price and the City of Fort Worth for this generous grant. We have worked tirelessly to bring our community the finest operatic experiences possible each year, and to establish Fort Worth as a destination city for opera lovers from around the world. Our 2016 Festival, and in particular *JFK*, will shine an international spotlight on our Fort Worth and its culture of warmth and hospitality. This investment in our company from the Mayor and the City tells me that they believe Fort Worth Opera is producing work that has a lasting, positive impact on our city. This is an exciting time for us as we celebrate our 70th anniversary and welcome *JFK* to the stage. "

ABOUT *JFK*: *JFK* is an opera about John F. Kennedy's final night and subsequent morning in Fort Worth, Texas, on November 22, 1963. We became fascinated with dreaming up, quite literally, the private hours spent both asleep and sleepless by the President and First Lady in their suite at the Hotel Texas, in the hours prior to his assassination. It is a work that digs into the psychology of a couple who play the part of American royalty, but who struggle with both physical and emotional pain, symptoms of a bad back, infidelity, the loss of a child, and deep regret. It is the story of the forces that push us ever closer to our destiny, and of the final moments—real or imagined—that are shared with people who define our character. — Royce Vavrek and David T. Little

Major Project Support Includes:
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
OPERA America's The Opera Fund

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. Known throughout the operatic world as a champion of new and rarely-performed works, the company has taken a leadership role in producing contemporary operas. In 2007, when the company changed its fall/winter schedule to a condensed one-month long Festival in the spring, FWOpera staged its first world premiere, *Frau Margot*, and followed up the next season with *Angels in America*, *Dead Man Walking* in 2009, the world premiere of *Before Night Falls* in 2010, and *Hydrogen Jukebox* in 2011. The 2012 Festival staged the regional premieres of Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata* and Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers*, the first time the two composers' works have been co-programmed, and the 2013 season featured the regional premiere of Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*, as well as the inaugural season of its new works showcase, *Frontiers*, featuring works by eight composers from the Americas. In 2014, the company presented the professional world premiere of Daniel Crozier and Peter M. Krask's *With Blood, With Ink*, as well as the regional premiere of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night*. Fort Worth Opera's CD recordings of *Frau Margot*, *Before Night Falls*, and *Glory Denied* are available on the Albany label.

Fort Worth Opera's CD recordings of *Frau Margot*, *Before Night Falls*, and *Glory Denied*, and *With Blood, With Ink* are available on the Albany label.

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.

Established in 2002, the Fort Worth Opera Studio is a year-round training program for emerging young artists who are cast from annual national auditions. In addition to receiving professional training while in Fort Worth, the singers also perform in the Children's Opera Theatre, the company's educational program that tours fully costumed, portable operas to elementary schools. COT performances span the whole state of Texas and reach thousands of children a year, many of whom have no other access to arts education.

Fort Worth Opera is sponsored in part by awards from **The Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County**, **The City of Fort Worth**, the **Fort Worth Promotion and Development Fund**, **The National Endowment for the Arts**, and the **Texas Commission on the Arts**. Additional Fort Worth Opera sponsors include: **American Airlines**; **Art & Seek**; **Crystelle Waggoner Charitable Trust**, **Bank of America, Trustee**; **The Pangburn Foundation**, **J.P. Morgan Chase, Trustee**; **Star-Telegram**; and **WFAA Channel 8**.

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