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*Fort Worth Opera Wraps-Up Million Dollar Summer;
Exceeds Goal Of \$500,000 In Groundbreaking Gift Match Challenge*

Launched June 1, FWOpera's exciting three-month milestone campaign ignited the North Texas community and international artists to join in the company's journey to engage, challenge, and inspire.

FORT WORTH, TX – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) announced today the successful finale to their 90-day, million dollar gift match challenge, *Million Dollar Summer*. FWOpera's patrons united to support the local arts community throughout the campaign. The conclusion of this challenge coincides with the end of the company's fiscal year, August 31, and solidifies FWOpera's future to pioneer new operatic works that reflect the city's unique cultural mosaic.

FWOpera's success occurs in a climate where corporate support for the arts has proven challenging. FWOpera attributes the success of *Million Dollar Summer* to the city's residents who stood united under their shared passion for the performing arts, including 100 percent participation for board and staff of this milestone campaign. Now that *Million Dollar Summer* has come to a close, the company boasts a 100 percent increase to its donor base. The great addition to the donor base and increased participation in the campaign was made possible in large part by first time giving households. But the success didn't stop there. While FWOpera surpassed its immediate goal, with their forward thinking initiative they have cultivated a new generation of audiences and patrons.

"A wider base of contributed support is crucial to maintaining a fiscally stable organization. It not only demonstrates your community impact by the individuals who annually dedicate their philanthropy to you, but it also allows Fort Worth Opera to introduce a new group of passionate performing arts supporters to the inner workings of the organization," said FWOpera Director of Development Mark Saville.

“Million Dollar Summer was strategically important in doubling our donor base in just 90 days, and we could not be more grateful than to all those who decided we were well worth their investment!”

During the gift match challenge, local community leaders, business professionals, and critically acclaimed artists flocked to social media to declare their support for Fort Worth Opera.

“I have been sincerely touched by the outpouring of support from the Fort Worth Opera Festival community and incredibly moved at the hard work of the Fort Worth Opera staff in pulling off this gigantic feat,” said FWOpera General Director Darren K. Woods, “Thank you to all of our donors for making this campaign such a success.”

“Million Dollar Summer has ensured FWOpera’s financial longevity and proven its longstanding commitment and dedication to the city of Fort Worth,” said Woods, “The campaign has spread awareness of our innovative programming and increased our engagement of audiences of all ages. With one successful campaign under our belts we are looking to the future.”

Each individual on social media was given the opportunity to personalize the statement, ‘I support Fort Worth Opera Because...’ Messages ranged from “They introduce Fort Worth to the world,” “The arts unite and create stronger communities,” and “Art = Vitality.” Photos and captions of support were shared via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to promote greater awareness about the campaign, and shed light on the personal narratives of its supporters.

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Pioneering new frontiers of operatic repertoire, Fort Worth Opera has received critical acclaim over the past decade for its willingness to take risks and expand the cannon of musical storytelling to include new and rarely-performed works, both relevant and representative of the contemporary experience. Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is the oldest continuously performing opera company in the state of Texas, one of the 14 oldest opera companies in the United States, and has launched the American careers of international opera star Plácido Domingo and the late, great Beverly Sills.

In 2007, the company changed its 60-year format and fall/winter schedule to a condensed one-month long Festival in the spring, drawing international attention as a premiere destination for opera lovers and aficionados. Beginning with Thomas Pastieri’s *Frau Margot* in the company’s inaugural year as a Festival, FWOpera has featured four world premieres over the past decade, including David T. Little and Royce Vavrek’s critically lauded *JFK* (2016), Daniel Crozier and Peter M. Krask’s *With Blood, With Ink* (2014), and Jorge Martín’s triumph over suppressive brutality, *Before Night Falls* (2010).

In crafting the perfectly balanced season, FWOpera gives audiences the opportunity to savor the celebrated classics alongside contemporary tales that challenge and inspire. Throughout the years, the company has presented audiences with works both poignant and provocative, like the regional premieres David T. Little and Royce Vavrek’s *Dog Days* (2015), Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* (2014), and Tom Cipullo’s *Glory Denied* (2013). With the inclusion of Peter Eötvös’ *Angels in America* (2008) and Phillip Glass’ *Hydrogen Jukebox* (2011), FWOpera has proclaimed to the world, that modern opera is alive and thriving in North Texas.

Through FWOpera’s Hattie Mae Lesley Apprenticeship Program, the company offers year-round training program for four young artists to hone their craft, and launch their operatic careers. These exceptionally gifted artists participate in the Children’s Opera Theatre (COT), an educational program that tours fully costumed, portable operas to elementary schools across the state of Texas. In the 2013 season, FWOpera augmented its season to stretch beyond our outreach and training programs and court the attention of national composers and librettists. This renowned, new works showcase, called *Frontiers*, features works by eight composers from the Americas and has become a celebrated staple of our Festival seasons.

The company’s upcoming 2017 season kicks off Phase Two of its ten-year artistic vision *Opera of the Americas*. Titled *Noches de*

Ópera (Nights of Opera), this new phase will consist of a four-year exploration of contemporary Spanish language operas by Latino and Latina composers and librettists from across the Americas. Beginning next season with the groundbreaking mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* and extending through the 2020 Festival, *Noches de Ópera* will bring compelling and culturally relevant operas to new audiences from an often overlooked, but diversified body of works.

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.