

**CONTACT:**

Holland Sanders, Director of Marketing and Communications  
817.288.1228; [holland@fwopera.org](mailto:holland@fwopera.org)  
Christina Allen, Marketing and Communications Manager  
817.288.1218; [christina@fwopera.org](mailto:christina@fwopera.org)

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **FWOpera Set to Bust the Myths of Opera for Thousands of Mansfield Middle School Students**

*FWOpera proves that opera is familiar and accessible when FWOpera Studio Artists take to the stage for a fun and engaging Mythbusters performance.*

**FORT WORTH, TX – Fort Worth Opera’s (FWOpera) talented Studio Artists will dispel the myths of opera for thousands of Mansfield ISD middle school students in a special performance of their exciting, interactive show Opera Mythbusters on Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at the community’s state of the art Center for the Performing Arts.** In the fun and engaging style of a variety show, FWOpera’s Studio Artists will combine a mixture of live performances, multi-media presentations, and musical improvisations based on the audience’s suggestions to prove that the genre of opera is not as unfamiliar as it may seem. This special afternoon of music education follows on the heels of last year’s successful Mansfield ISD-wide Children’s Opera Theatre performances which introduced throngs of third grade students to opera.

In announcing the performance, FWOpera Director of Education Hannah Guinn commented, “We are thrilled to be continuing our partnership with the Mansfield ISD, and it is our privilege to help introduce opera in a fun and accessible way to so many bright, young minds. It has been proven that students who receive arts education stay in school, have better test scores, and are better equipped for the careers of the future. We’re excited and grateful that Mansfield ISD is allowing us to help educate the district’s students and expand their horizons.”

**Opera Mythbusters** debuted during the 2013-2014 school year and features arias, duets, and ensembles from familiar operas and musicals to engage the audience. Comparing opera to popular music, Broadway, and movies that the audience is sure to know, guests will learn about the basics of the art form including voice types, ensemble sizes, and how to understand pieces in foreign languages. At the end of the show, audience members will be able to warm up their own vocal chords and have the opportunity to sing a famous Italian opera chorus.

For more information, please contact FWOpera Director of Education Hannah Guinn at 817.288.1219 or via email at [Hannah@fwopera.org](mailto:Hannah@fwopera.org).

**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*. 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*, *Glory Denied*, and *With Blood, With Ink* are available on the Albany label.

The company's upcoming 2015 season, 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 regional premiere of David T. Little and Royce Vavrek's critically acclaimed ***Dog Days***, based on the Judy Budnitz short story of the same title. Reinforcing its leadership role in contemporary opera, the 2015 Festival includes the third season of its annual new works program, ***Frontiers***, showcasing new works by composers from the Americas. The company will also feature fresh productions of Verdi's timeless tale of love and sacrifice ***La Traviata***, and Ambroise Thomas' soaring grand operatic masterwork ***Hamlet***.

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 as many as 40,000 children a year, many of whom have no other access to arts education. Since 2007, attendance of Festival performances by out-of-town audiences has grown almost 5%. The local economy has also benefitted, with over 1,900 hotel rooms booked for the 2012 Festival alone. The company has balanced its budget for the eighth consecutive year.

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