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NEWS RELEASE

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**FWOpera Offers Spring Break Entertainment for the Entire Family with
Special Children's Opera Theatre Performances**

*Classic Fairy Tales The Ugly Duckling and Billy Goats Gruff
come to life in two days of colorful shows*

FORT WORTH, TX – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) is offering Spring Break fun to families across Fort Worth with two special days of Children's Opera Theatre (COT) performances on March 9 -10, 2015. In four performances offering fun and educational music, FWOpera's talented Studio Artists will bring the classic tales of *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Billy Goats Gruff* to life in specially designed shows featuring bright sets and costumes, whimsical staging, and recognizable melodies that work to expose children to the magic of opera in an accessible and engaging way. Sung in English, each performance runs approximately 40 minutes long and includes a special Q&A session with our singers and the chance to take pictures with them immediately after each show.

Additionally, the Spring Break shows provide an opportunity for Children's Opera Theatre and its patrons to give back to the community. Children's Opera Theatre will once again join forces with the Tarrant Area Food Bank in its "Food & Fund Drive" program. Parents can teach the lesson of generosity to their children by **donating one nonperishable food item. In exchange for their contribution, they will receive one free ticket to one of the subsequent Monday or Tuesday performances. All food donations will go to the Tarrant Area Food Bank** to help fight hunger in 13 counties in North Texas.

Show Times**Monday, March 9, 2015**

11:00 am: *The Ugly Duckling*

2:00 pm: *Billy Goats Gruff*

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

11:00 am: *Billy Goats Gruff*

2:00 pm: *The Ugly Duckling*

All performances will be held in the Scott Theater, inside the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (1300 Gendy Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107). Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased online at www.fwopera.org or by calling 817.731.0726.

The Ugly Duckling

Children and parents will enjoy the heartwarming story of ***The Ugly Duckling***, based on the fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen and composed by Andrew Duncan. The Ugly Duckling doesn't fit in with the other ducklings because she looks and sounds different than they do. When the Ugly Duckling saves the ducklings from the Big Bad Wolf after reading about his usual tricks, the others learn to love the Ugly Duckling for her intelligence and appreciate her for who she is. *The Ugly Duckling* promotes reading, working together, and accepting differences in other people.

Billy Goats Gruff

An adaptation of classic fairytale ***Billy Goats Gruff*** is based on scenes from operas by Mozart, Donizetti, and Rossini. An after-school game of hide and seek is ruined for three friends when a big bully blocks a bridge, and the two boy goats decide to go for help. The girl goat stays to confront the bully, but shows him kindness instead. By the end, she is able to introduce the ex-bully as their new friend. *Billy Goats Gruff* addresses the current issue of bullying, and teaches the students that compassion and understanding helps everyone get along.

ABOUT CHILDREN'S OPERA THEATRE: The foundation of Fort Worth Opera's educational initiatives, Children's Opera Theatre produces two different fully-costumed, portable operas children's operas each year and tours the productions across Texas, reaching nearly 40,000 school-aged children each year, many of whom have no other access to arts education. The artists who perform for Children's Opera Theatre are members of the Fort Worth Opera Studio, a training program founded in 2002 for opera singer apprentices. The young artists are cast from annual national auditions and they receive professional training while in Fort Worth in addition to performing in the Children's Opera Theatre productions.

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 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's 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 50,000 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.