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NEWS RELEASE
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***Fort Worth Opera Board of Directors
Extends General Director's Contract for Third Consecutive Time***

*FWOpera's General Director Darren K. Woods will continue leading
the pioneering company through 2020*

FORT WORTH, TX— During their most recent meeting, the Fort Worth Opera Board of Directors voted to extend the contract of General Director Darren K. Woods until June 30, 2020. This marks the third extension to Woods' contract in his 14 years as General Director.

Since assuming the role in 2001, Woods has successfully led the company through radical changes to its production format – transitioning FWOpera from a traditional year-long season to its current multi-week Festival format – as well as advancing its artistic mission through the programming of powerful and thought-provoking contemporary works. Under his current contract, which ends in June 2016, Woods has implemented FWOpera's thrilling *Opera of the Americas* initiative, instituted its critically-acclaimed new works program *Frontiers*, and has expanded the company's reputation as a leader in innovative new works with his commissioning of Libby Larsen's *A Wrinkle in Time* (production TBD) and next season's highly-anticipated *JFK* by the celebrated creative team of composer David T. Little and librettist Royce Vavrek.

Making the announcement, Chairman of the Board Dr. Natalie Murray said, "The FWOpera Board of Directors is proud to announce Darren K. Woods' third consecutive contract continuation. Under his leadership, FWOpera has reached new heights in the field of opera. His vision continues to help us achieve national and international acclaim for the company's innovative and world-class programming and has established Fort Worth Opera as a center for the development of young talent. We look forward to supporting Darren as General Director and continuing to champion his vision for the art form and his mission of making FWOpera a preeminent destination for extraordinary opera."

In response to the contract extension, Woods commented, "I am grateful to the Board of Directors for renewing my contract and once again trusting in my vision for the company. Together with my talented staff, I look forward to bringing *JFK* to life next year in culmination of the first phase of *Opera of the Americas*, and embarking on the second stage of the initiative which will bring the magical world of opera to an even larger audience in our community."

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 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***.

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