

PRESS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

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THE 2018 FORT WORTH OPERA FESTIVAL:

An Epic Blockbuster Fantasy, a Riotous Cinematic Comedy,
and a Surrealistic Tango Opera are Set to Dazzle Audiences Next Season

FWOpera's 71st Company Season includes:

FWOpera Premiere of **Das Rheingold**, from Wagner's Legendary Ring Cycle;
Donizetti's hilarious comedy **Don Pasquale** set in glitzy Tinseltown;
Piazzolla's tango opera **María de Buenos Aires**;
and the sixth season of new works showcase **Frontiers**

FORT WORTH, TX – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) announced today details of the company's full line-up of thrilling productions scheduled to take the stage during the 2018 season, running April 27 – May 13.

In 2018, the company will offer opera lovers an entirely new Festival experience with the first production of Richard Wagner's magnificent fantasy opera **Das Rheingold**; Gaetano Donizetti's hysterical bel canto gem, **Don Pasquale**; and composer Astor Piazzolla's genre-defying tango opera, **María de Buenos Aires**. The Festival will also usher in the sixth year of Fort Worth Opera's critically-lauded new works showcase, **Frontiers**, featuring eight unpublished operas from some of the most talented composers and librettists in the 21st-century.

"As Fort Worth Opera begins a new chapter we reflect on the past 71 years with much pride and joy," stated FWOpera's Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mike Martinez. "We realize, however, that as one of the longest running companies in the United States, and the longest in the State of Texas, the opera world and our audiences have high expectations. Therefore, as we embark upon the upcoming Festival and the years to come, we dedicate and commit ourselves to producing first class performances. We will also continue our long-standing tradition of delivering exceptionally beautiful sights and sounds that amaze our audiences and encourage them to be a part of our bold and valiant future."

Fort Worth Opera's unwavering commitment to cutting-edge works, little-known operatic jewels, and classic warhorses continues in 2018, as the company delivers another perfectly-balanced season with three distinctly unique offerings. Twenty years ago, FWOpera staged **Richard Wagner's** ghostly nautical tale, *The Flying Dutchman*, to much acclaim, but for the first time in the company's history, an opera from his colossal cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, will be presented to Fort Worth audiences in all its magnificent glory.

A breathtaking feast for the senses, *Das Rheingold* is a riveting saga of gods, giants, dwarfs, and water-nymphs, featuring a fiery dragon and a mystical gold ring that gives its owner ultimate, unbridled power – a gift which comes at a price. When this state-of-the-art production premiered during Minnesota Opera’s 54th season, it dazzled critics and audiences alike, with a thrilling, 78-piece orchestra onstage, ingenious multi-tiered set design, three Rheinmaidens “swimming” in the orchestra pit, and jaw-dropping visual effects created by award-winning film director, writer, and theatrical multi-media designer **David Murakami**.

Brian Staufenbiel will direct this futuristic vision of *Das Rheingold*, featuring some of the most astounding voices in the operatic world, and a heroic narrative inspired by Norse mythology. A cunning dwarf named Alberich vies for the attention of three beautiful Rheinmaidens who guard a cache of gold deep in the river below. He quickly learns from them that if he renounces love forever he will gain possession of this prized treasure. Spurned and ridiculed by his advances, Alberich forswears love, steals their gold, and forges it into a ring to rule the world. When Wotan, King of the Gods, snatches the powerful ring for himself, the cunning dwarf curses it and all who wear it from here to eternity.

Opera buffa lovers are in for an uproarious treat next season, as visionary director **Chuck Hudson** joins forces with maestro **Joe Illick** for a sparkling, bubbly production of Donizetti’s bel canto romp, *Don Pasquale*. Audiences will be transported to the golden era of Hollywood in the 1950s, as Pasquale, an aging silent film star -- sets off to resurrect his ailing career and find a wife and heir to his fortune. He gets more than he bargained for once he weds, or thinks he weds, the gold-digging starlet Norina.

The laughs come fast and furious in Hudson’s ode to cinema, as Dr. Malatesta hatches a plot on behalf of Norina and Pasquale’s nephew Ernesto to bring them together and teach the Don a lesson. Tinseltown turns Technicolor in this lively classic, with sight gags galore and a riotous parade of pop culture icons, like Carmen Miranda, Jackie Gleason, Lucille Ball, Marilyn Monroe, and Elvis Presley, played to perfection by FWOpera’s incredible chorus members.

The 2018 season marks the second year of Fort Worth Opera’s bold initiative, **Noches de Ópera** (Nights of Opera), Phase Two of its historic, 10-year commitment to contemporary works, entitled Opera of the Americas. A vibrant celebration of Spanish language operas, Latino and Latina composers and librettists, *Noches de Ópera* honors Fort Worth’s diverse community, culture, and heritage, while telling new stories for new generations. This spring, the company looks to inspire and stir the hearts of Festival-goers with the poignant mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. Next season, FWOpera is dialing up the heat and delivering a sensual operatic experience like no other.

Never before has composer **Astor Piazzolla** and librettist-poet **Horacio Ferrer**’s sexy, tango opera, **María de Buenos Aires**, been presented by an opera company in North Texas – until now. Festival audiences will be invited to step onto the stage of Bass Performance Hall and into the intoxicating underworld of Buenos Aires, as a sultry, young woman named Maria finds herself seduced by the sounds and rhythm of tango.

Set in a surrealistic red light district and hell itself, this sizzling, immersive production places audiences only inches away from the red-hot, steamy action. Brilliant young stage director, choreographer, and librettist **John de los Santos** (*Frontiers*, *Carmen*, *Salome*) returns to Fort Worth Opera to bring his singular vision of *María* to life.

The final week of the 2018 Festival will include, **Frontiers**, the company’s pioneering new works showcase. Six to eight composers and librettists will be in residence at the Festival during the last week, and their unpublished works will be presented in 20-minute performances sung by artists of the Festival, accompanied by piano, May 9 – May 10, 2018.

Composers will receive feedback on their work by the Frontiers jury panel during the week, and workshops will be recorded, so that these creative teams can study the recording to assist in their compositional process. Final performances will be offered in two separate showcases of four works each on Wednesday, May 9, 2018, at 7:30 pm, and Thursday, May 10, 2018, at 7:30 pm.

Schedule of 2018 Festival Performances

Friday, April 27	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>María de Buenos Aires</i>
Saturday, April 28	2:00 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Don Pasquale</i>
Saturday, May 5	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Das Rheingold</i>
Sunday, May 6	2:00 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>María de Buenos Aires</i>
Sunday, May 6	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Don Pasquale</i>
Tuesday, May 8	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>María de Buenos Aires</i>
Wednesday, May 9	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Frontiers</i>
Thursday, May 10	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Frontiers</i>
Friday, May 11	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>María de Buenos Aires</i>
Saturday, May 12	2:00 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>María de Buenos Aires</i>
Saturday, May 12	7:30 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Don Pasquale</i>
Sunday, May 13	2:00 p.m.	Bass Hall	<i>Das Rheingold</i>

TICKETS: Current subscribers can renew their subscription seats for 2018 now by phone, or in person at Fort Worth Opera, 505 Pecan Street, Suite 100, Fort Worth, Texas, 76102. Season subscriptions range from \$36 to \$379 while single tickets range from \$17 to \$195 (*prices subject to change*). New subscribers may reserve 2018 subscriptions by calling 817.731.0726, and will be contacted to choose their seats after the renewal deadline has passed. Subscriptions are available now and single tickets go on sale July 31, 2017.

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. The organization has received national attention from critics and audiences alike for its artistic excellence, pioneering spirit, and steadfast willingness to take risks. From its first world premiere, *Frau Margot* in 2007, to 2016's critically-acclaimed new work *JFK* -- a co-commission with American Lyric Theater and Opéra de Montréal by creative duo of David T. Little and Royce Vavrek -- FWOpera continues to augment its worldwide reputation as a trailblazing, civically minded arts institution.

Known throughout the operatic world as a champion of new and rarely-performed works, FWOpera has taken a leadership role in engaging audiences beyond the operatic stage, while producing cutting-edge, contemporary operas. Beginning in 2017, FWOpera launched the second phase of its landmark, 10-year Opera of the Americas initiative with *Noches de Ópera* (Nights of Opera), a groundbreaking campaign which introduces powerful operas, each reflecting the diverse cultures of new American audiences.

The 2018 FWOpera Festival will include a mind-blowing fantasy epic, Wagner's legendary *Das Rheingold*; Astor Piazzolla's tango opera, *María de Buenos Aires*, a surreal, immersive theatrical experience unlike anything in FWOpera's history, and Donizetti's hysterical bel canto comedy *Don Pasquale*, set in the golden age of Hollywood. The Festival will also usher in the sixth year of Fort Worth Opera's critically-acclaimed new works showcase, *Frontiers*.

Fort Worth Opera is sponsored in part by awards from **The Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County, The City of Fort Worth**, and the **Texas Commission on the Arts**. Additional Fort Worth Opera sponsors include: the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**; the **Amon G. Carter Foundation**; **American Airlines**; **Art & Seek**; **Crystelle Waggoner Charitable Trust**, **Bank of America, Trustee**; **The Pangburn Foundation**, **J.P. Morgan Chase, Trustee**; the **Sid W. Richardson Foundation**; **Star-Telegram**; and **WFAA Channel 8**.