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PRESS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

April 18, 2018

FORT WORTH OPERA PROUDLY ANNOUNCES ITS THRILLING 73RD SEASON FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF A BOARD OF TRUSTEES-DRIVEN, TWO-YEAR MATCHING DONATION CHALLENGE, THANKS-A-MILLION!

FORT WORTH, TX – Fort Worth Opera (FWOpera) announced today details of the company's line-up of productions scheduled to take the stage during the 2019 season, following the recent launch of the company's future-forward, two-year matching donation challenge, *Thanks-a-Million!* Next year's season will include internationally renowned opera director Francesca Zambello's celebrated production of *Porgy and Bess*; an emotionally stirring mariachi opera set on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, *El Pasado Nunca se Termina (The Past Is Never Finished)*; and an exciting weeklong workshop followed by a public showcase of the company's 2020 world premiere *El Ultimo Sueño de Frida y Diego (The Last Dream of Frida and Diego)*. The season will also usher in the seventh year of Fort Worth Opera's acclaimed new works showcase, *Frontiers*. *Porgy and Bess*, *El Pasado Nunca se Termina*, and *Frontiers* will be performed during the Festival (April 26 – May 12), with the showcase of *El Ultimo Sueño de Frida y Diego* to be held during the final week of May 2019.

In addition to Fort Worth Opera's season announcement, the company recently launched a Board of Trustees-driven campaign, *Thanks-a-Million!* This two-year matching donation challenge by Trustee Mr. Ed Schollmaier offers new, lapsed, and increased gift donors an opportunity to double their investment. As FWOpera enters its 73rd year, the company is dedicated to building its community footprint based on sustainable partnerships with leading businesses in North Texas, so that the creative class continues to grow and deliver more value to Fort Worth's diverse arts scene. *Thanks-a-Million* not only strengthens FWOpera's financial health and supports its community-driven educational outreach programs, but it is a long-term investment in the cultural and economic vibrancy of Fort Worth.

"I'm very excited about our 2019 season! We will bring Francesca Zambello's vibrant production of *Porgy and Bess* that has been a sensation in Washington D.C. and Chicago." said FWOpera Artistic Director Joe Illick. "In addition to featuring some of the best-known songs of all time, this is a rich and complex love story with gigantic heart. Our other main stage Bass Hall production next year will be *El Pasado Nunca se Termina* with music by the late José "Pepe" Martínez and a libretto by opera director Leonard Foglia.

Frontiers promises to deliver more wonderful new pieces, operas-in-progress that are often thought-provoking, funny, moving, and always entertaining. At the end of May 2019, in anticipation of our 2020 world premiere, *El Ultimo Sueño de Frida y Diego*, by Gabriela Lena Frank and Nilo Cruz, we will present an orchestral showcase of scenes from the opera with the Fort Worth Symphony and four singers. Gabriela is a former composer-in-residence of the Fort Worth Symphony, and this is a reunion to celebrate!"

FORT WORTH OPERA

Considered one of the most important operas written in the 20th-century, George Gershwin's beloved *Porgy and Bess* has captivated audiences across the globe for over 80 years. Next season, opera director Garnett Bruce brings Zambello's acclaimed revival to life on the stage of Bass Performance Hall, with spectacular new scenery created by British set designer Peter J. Davison. Based upon DuBose Heyward's 1925 novel *Porgy*, the opera follows the impoverished residents of the neighborhood of Catfish Row on the shores of Charleston, South Carolina.

This tragic love story, featuring iconic arias like "*Summertime*" and "*I Got Plenty of Nothing*," centers on a disabled beggar named Porgy and his efforts to save the troubled Bess from a life of shame, addiction, and ruin. This audacious work, with its masterful blend of opera, jazz, blues, spirituals, ragtime, and folk will be presented in English, in its original version with restored orchestrations and recitatives.

During the 2019 season, FWOpera will continue its ongoing series, *Noches de Ópera*, a celebration of contemporary Spanish-language operas and engaging community outreach programs. Following this season's tango opera, *María de Buenos Aires*, and the 2017 Festival production of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, the company will present the world's second mariachi opera, *El Pasado Nunca se Termina (The Past is Never Finished)*, a stunning bilingual family drama blending the folk tradition of mariachi music with opera.

Set on the eve of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, this stunning bilingual family drama follows a forbidden relationship between a wealthy European landowner's son and an indigenous Mexican girl whose family works and lives on the estate. As the violent bloodshed rises around them, their passionate love will alter the destiny of their families forever. Some will emerge to change the face of Mexican history, while others will become the new face of the American Dream. Featuring the same exciting creative team as *Cruzar*, the plot of *El Pasado* is as poignant as any classic opera with stirring melodies that linger long after the curtain has fallen.

In the spring of 2020, FWOpera will present the world premiere of *El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego (The Last Dream of Frida and Diego)*, a Spanish language opera exploring the passionate relationship of iconic Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz and Latin Grammy winner, pianist, and classical composer Gabriela Lena Frank, this celebratory new work is set in 1957 during the Mexican holiday of El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead).

The first full libretto reading of the opera was held on August 24, 2017, at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, and this fall, co-commissioner San Diego Opera will conduct a piano-vocal workshop to further develop the piece. In May of 2019, following FWOpera's spring Festival, the company will hold a weeklong orchestral-vocal workshop, culminating in a showcase of scenes from the opera for the entire community to enjoy. Audiences will receive an exclusive sneak peek of this exhilarating new work, the first opera written by a woman to be produced by the company.

Next year will also include the seventh season of *Frontiers*, the company's popular showcase for new operatic works. Six to eight selected composers and librettists will present their works in 20-minute performances sung by young artists of the 2019 Festival. Each creative team will attend the showcase and participate in an enlightening discussion. Composers will receive feedback on their work through private meetings with the *Frontiers* jury panel. In addition, the workshops will be recorded, so the composers can subsequently study the recording to assist in the completion of their compositional process. Final performances will be offered in two separate showcases. Times, dates, and locations to be determined.

Submissions for the 2019 *Frontiers* program open on May 1, 2018 and close on July 31, 2018. For more information on how to submit materials, please contact FWOpera at frontiers@fwopera.org.

FORT WORTH OPERA

Porgy and Bess

Music by George Gershwin; libretto by Dubose Heyward and Ira Gershwin

April 26, 28, 30, 2019

Bass Performance Hall, downtown Fort Worth

In English with supertitles in Spanish and English

El Pasado Nunca se Termina

Music by José "Pepe" Martínez; libretto by Leonard Foglia

May 10, 12, 2019

Bass Performance Hall, downtown Fort Worth

In Spanish and English with supertitles in Spanish and English

***El Ultimo Sueño de Frida y Diego* - Showcase**

Music by Gabriela Lena Frank; libretto by Nilo Cruz

May 30, 31, 2019

TBD; In Spanish

Frontiers

TBD

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.

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 American audiences.

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; and WFAA Channel 8.