



NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Worth Opera's Annual Festival Celebrates Fifth Season with Series of Firsts

2011 Festival ranges from epic to edgy with Company's new production of the ever-popular *Mikado*; its first Baroque opera, Handel's *Julius Caesar*; its largest production to date, Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and its first Philip Glass piece, *Hydrogen Jukebox*

FORT WORTH – Spanning 266 years, Fort Worth Opera's 2011 season ranges from Handel's magnificent *Julius Caesar*—the company's first Baroque-era opera—to the gritty 1990 chamber work *Hydrogen Jukebox*, a collaboration between composer **Philip Glass** and Beat Poet **Allen Ginsberg**, and rounds out with Verdi's larger-than-life *Il Trovatore* and a new production of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic farce *The Mikado*. Ten principal singers make their debuts with Fort Worth Opera's 2011 season, which runs **May 14 – June 5, 2011**.

The season opens with the light-hearted, witty *Mikado* in a new production set in modern-day Japan. Soprano Jessica Cates (Yum-Yum), mezzo-soprano Meaghan Deiter (Katisha), and tenor Logan Rucker (Nanki-Poo) make their company debuts in this new take on a favorite classic directed by John de los Santos and conducted by Joe Illick.

Il Trovatore, the "grand opera" of the 2011 season, is also the largest production ever programmed on the Festival. Featuring Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and McCammon winner soprano Marjorie Owens (Leonora), Victoria Livengood (Azucena), Dongwon Shin (Manrico), and Malcolm MacKenzie (Count di Luna) in his company debut, the production includes traditional costumes and sets new to Fort Worth. David Lefkovich directs and Joe Illick conducts.

The first Glass opera staged by FWO, *Hydrogen Jukebox* is performed not in the internationally renowned Bass Performance Hall as is the rest of the FWO 2011 Festival, but in the intimate Hardy and Betty Sanders Theatre in the Fort Worth Community Arts Center. The company has built new seating, so that audience members will face each other across the stage, creating an immersive, experiential night in the theater. The 99-seat black box theater offers a visceral audience experience of this gritty, complex, modern work. The nine-performance production's cast features sopranos Rosa Betancourt and Corrie Donovan, mezzo-soprano Amanda Robie, and baritone Dan Kempson in their company debuts, with tenor Jonathan Blalock and bass Justin Hopkins returning. *Hydrogen Jukebox* is directed by Lawrence Edelson and conducted by Steven R. Osgood, both in their FWO debuts.

Already well-known for its commitment to new works, new technology, and growing new audiences, Fort Worth Opera's fourth production of the season, Handel's *Julius Caesar*, underscores the company's commitment to the full operatic canon. It is the first fully-staged Baroque opera produced by FWO. The cast features the first countertenors to perform at FWO – Randall Scotting, Michael Maniaci, and José Álvarez.

Contralto Meredith Arwady is also makes her company debut, and Texas native Ava Pine returns to sing her first Cleopatra.

ABOUT THE OPERAS

* denotes Fort Worth Debut Season; + denotes member of Fort Worth Opera Studio

The Mikado: Music by Arthur Sullivan and libretto by W. S. Gilbert

- May 14, 22, 27 and June 4, 2011 at Bass Performance Hall, Fort Worth
- In English
- New Production, developed on a larger scale from a concept workshopped at Seagle Music Colony

The witty, mischievous comedy *The Mikado* contains some of the most popular, beloved tunes Gilbert and Sullivan created. Two young lovers try every trick in the book to circumvent a decree demanding that they either marry other people or face a hasty execution. In the end, the executions are called off and love conquers all! Fort Worth Opera's new production will be true to the original, but the setting has moved to modern-day Japan for a clever new take on a favorite classic.

Conductor: **Joe Illick**; Director: **John de los Santos**; Sets: **Richard Kagey**; Costumes: **Linda Cho***; Lighting: **Chad R. Jung**; Audio Designer: **Ian Kagey***; Primary Cast: **Jessica Cates*** as Yum-Yum; **Meaghan Deiter**** as Katisha; **Logan Rucker**** as Nanki-Poo; **Matthew Young** as The Mikado

Il Trovatore: Music by Giuseppe Verdi and libretto by Salvatore Cammarano

- May 21, 29 and June 3, 2011 at Bass Performance Hall, Fort Worth
- In Italian with projected English and Spanish translations

This grand-scale production features traditional sets and costumes new to Fort Worth, as well as Fort Worth Opera's largest chorus and orchestra of the season bringing the well-known "Anvil Chorus" to life. The plot is a rich labyrinth of revenge, dueling rivals, long-lost brothers, and self-sacrificing love.

Conductor: **Joe Illick**; Director: **David Lefkowich***; Sets: **Dejan Miladinovic***; Costumes: **Milanka Berberovic***; Lighting: **Chad R. Jung**; Primary Cast: **Marjorie Owens** as Leonora; **Victoria Livengood** as Azucena; **Dongwon Shin** as Manrico; **Malcolm MacKenzie*** as Count di Luna

Julius Caesar: Music by George Frideric Handel and libretto by Nicola Francesco Haym

- May 28 and June 5, 2011 at Bass Performance Hall, Fort Worth
- In Italian with projected English translations

Experience Fort Worth Opera's first fully-staged Baroque-era opera with the epic *Julius Caesar* in a sumptuous production featuring three countertenors and period instruments. Cleopatra will go to any lengths to claim the Egyptian throne, but when Julius Caesar arrives, the Roman emperor conquers her heart.

Conductor: **Daniel Beckwith**; Director: **David Gately**; Sets: **Ming Cho Lee***; Costumes: **Robert Perdziola***; Lighting: **Chad R. Jung**; Primary Cast: **Randall Scotting*** as Julius Caesar; **Ava Pine** as Cleopatra; **Meredith Arwady*** as Cornelia; **Michael Maniaci*** as Sextus

Hydrogen Jukebox: Music by Philip Glass and poetry by Allen Ginsberg

- May 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, June 1, 2, 4, and 5, 2011 at Sanders Theatre, Fort Worth Community Arts Center
- New Production; In English

Hydrogen Jukebox is a rarely-performed chamber work based on the controversial work of Beat Poet Allen Ginsberg. It is a portrait of a divided America spanning the 1950's through the 1980's, covering Ginsberg's views on the anti-war movement, the sexual revolution, drugs, eastern philosophy, and environmental awareness. Performed in a 99-seat theater, it promises to be an intimate, gritty theatrical experience. (Contains adult subject matter; parental discretion advised.)

Conductor: **Steven R. Osgood***; Director: **Lawrence Edelson***; Production: **Anya Klepikov***; Projections: **C. Andrew Bauer**; Lighting: **Lisa Miller**; Audio Designer: **Ra Byn Taylor**; Primary Cast: Soprano: **Rosa Betancourt****; Soprano: **Corrie Donovan***; Mezzo-soprano: **Amanda Robie***; Tenor: **Jonathan Blalock**; Baritone: **Dan Kempson***; Bass: **Justin Hopkins**

TICKETS: Tickets can be purchased by phone or in person at Bass Performance Hall or at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center. Season subscriptions range from \$29 to \$327 while single tickets range from \$14 to \$159. Student and Military ticket prices start at \$7 on the day of the show. For more information or tickets, visit www.fwopera.org or call 817.731.0726 or 1.877.396.7372.

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Fort Worth Opera was founded in 1946 and 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 Keith Woods since 2001, the company 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, FWO staged its first world premiere, *Frau Margot*, and followed up the next season with *Angels in America* (which resulted in *More Life*, a community-wide collaboration amongst organizations in the performing and visual arts, children's education, medicine, and social services), *Dead Man Walking* in 2009, and the world premiere of *Before Night Falls* in 2010. The company's CD recordings of *Frau Margot* and *Before Night Falls* are available on the Albany label.

ABOUT FORT WORTH: Fort Worth boasts a unique mix of western culture, urban sophistication, and fine art. The city is home to world-renowned arts organizations such as the Kimbell Art Museum, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Amon Carter Museum and the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. On the other end of the spectrum, the city sponsors daily cattle drives through its "Stockyards" district, hosts equestrian and livestock events throughout the year, and is home to the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. Downtown Fort Worth is a lively spot for residents and tourists; attractions include fine dining, shopping, nightclubs, and the opera house, Bass Performance Hall.

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Schedule of 2011 Festival Performances

****NOTE: Evening performances now begin at 7:30 p.m.****

Saturday, May 14	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Mikado</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Saturday, May 21	7:30 p.m.	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Sunday, May 22	2:00 p.m.	<i>The Mikado</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Tuesday, May 24	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Wednesday, May 25	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Thursday, May 26	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Friday, May 27	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Mikado</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Saturday, May 28	2:00 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Saturday, May 28	7:30 p.m.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Sunday, May 29	2:00 p.m.	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Sunday, May 29	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Wednesday, June 1	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Thursday, June 2	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Friday, June 3	7:30 p.m.	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Saturday, June 4	2:00 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre
Saturday, June 4	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Mikado</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Sunday, June 5	2:00 p.m.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Bass Performance Hall
Sunday, June 5	7:30 p.m.	<i>Hydrogen Jukebox</i>	Sanders Theatre