



NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Worth Opera Announces *Frontiers*, a New Works Showcase

Inaugural Program Will Occur during the 2013 Opera Festival Featuring Unpublished 21st Century Operatic Works

Deadline for Composers' Submissions is May 31, 2012

FORT WORTH, Texas – Fort Worth Opera expands its reputation as a champion of new and rarely performed works and as a leader in producing contemporary operas with the establishment of *Frontiers*, an exciting annual program to be launched May 6-11, 2013, during the last week of the 2013 Opera Festival. The program will showcase unpublished works by composers from the Americas. *Frontiers* aims to give voice to original 21st-century compositions, shining a spotlight on unpublished contemporary operatic works.

In addition to giving composers valuable exposure for their work through live performance, Fort Worth Opera's *Frontiers* program also will provide composers with opportunities for introductions to industry professionals. Artistic directors of opera companies, artist managers, classical music publishers, funding organizations, and conductors will be invited, along with the Fort Worth public, to attend performances by artists featured in the 2013 Fort Worth Opera Festival during the final weekend of the Festival. A post-performance discussion with the composers about their respective works will follow.

Composers whose works are selected to be part of *Frontiers* will be in residence at the Festival. Each composer will attend the showcase and participate in the aforementioned post-performance discussion, and will also participate in the final rehearsals, which will be open to the public. Composers will also 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 the compositional process.

In announcing the program, Fort Worth Opera General Director **Darren K. Woods**, who will chair the *Frontiers* panel, stated, "Fort Worth Opera has become a leader in producing contemporary opera, both regional and world premieres; this is the logical next step in our company's mission to champion new works and their composers. Composing opera is a herculean task, and we hope to aid in composers' development and exposure by giving their undiscovered operas a platform to be heard by the public, critics, and the opera industry."

Woods continued, "I am very proud of the caliber of talent that we've assembled for the panel. It was extremely important to me that the panelists represent the full gamut of 'voices' so the composers could benefit from feedback given by a variety of new music constituents: opera administrators, stage directors, conductors, press, and audience. It's crucial for new operas to pass the litmus test not just for industry professionals but for their eventual public, which includes press and audience. My Fort Worth Opera colleagues **Joe Illick** (Music Director), **Kurt Howard** (Producing Director and *Frontiers* Curator), and **Keith Wolfe** (Managing Director) will be joined by composer **Mark Adamo**, stage director and opera incubator organization American Lyric Theater founder **Lawrence Edelson**, stage director **Candace Evans**, Fort Worth Opera board member **John Forestner**, music critic, journalist, and author **William V. Madison**, conductor **Steven Osgood**, and Leadership FWOpera member **Edward Willey**.

Frontiers Curator **Kurt Howard** remarked, “Three challenges typically hamper today’s composers: getting a high-quality performance and recording of their pieces; obtaining thoughtful, informed feedback on their work while the piece is still revealing itself; and getting exposure to industry professionals who can commission pieces or arrange for performances of their works. *Frontiers* will address all three of these challenges.”

Fort Worth Opera Music Director and panelist **Joe Illick** added, “After each of our productions of *Dead Man Walking*, *Before Night Falls*, *Angels in America*, and *Hydrogen Jukebox*, our audiences have voiced their fascination with contemporary opera and their desire to learn more about the process of developing and nurturing new works, so this is a stellar opportunity for the public to get a peek behind the curtain at how contemporary opera is born.”

Composers from the Americas (citizens or residents of North, Central and South America, as well as associated territories) are invited to submit 15-25 minutes of one unpublished (or self-published) work, utilizing one to six singers (no chorus) in any language, by May 31, 2012. Only works that can be performed with solo piano accompaniment will be accepted for the showcase; no additional instruments will be provided. One composition per composer, blind submission. Six to eight works will be selected for the showcase. Fort Worth Opera will provide each composer with lodging and round-trip travel to Fort Worth. The works and composers chosen to participate in *Frontiers 2013* will be announced in September 2012. Additional submission requirements are listed below the panel info.

About the panel:

Since **Darren K. Woods** (Panel Chair) became general director of Fort Worth Opera in July 2001, subscription and donor bases have increased while the company has established a reputation for high-quality, dynamic productions. In May 2007, the yearlong season changed format to a spring festival and the company staged its first mainstage commissioned work, *Frau Margot* (composer: Thomas Pasatieri; librettist: Frank Corsaro). In 2010, Fort Worth Opera produced its second world premiere, Jorge Martín’s *Before Night Falls*; both premieres were released on CD. Under Woods’ guidance, the Fort Worth Opera Studio launched in 2002, which has expanded to include four young artists beginning their professional careers and four apprentice artists undergoing college training. In 2011, Woods was appointed vice chairman for the board of Opera America, the national service organization for the art form. Before becoming an opera administrator, Woods performed as a professional operatic tenor for twenty years. He is in great demand to lead master classes and to adjudicate vocal competitions.

Kurt Howard (Curator) was named producing director of Fort Worth Opera in 2010, as he started his seventh season with the company. He has led the FWOpera production team through the transition into a repertory/festival format as both a production manager and stage manager, and continues in a role which puts him directly responsible for all aspects of production. His duties include both artistic team management as well as budget development and management – overseeing over \$2.25 million in expense per season. The company has premiered two new works in the last four years (*Before Night Falls* and *Frau Margot*), as well as developed new productions and co-productions of contemporary works and pieces from the core of the opera canon.

Mark Adamo’s (Panelist) début opera, *Little Women*, after the Louisa May Alcott novel, premiered at Houston Grand Opera (HGO) in 1998 and was revived there in 2000. *Little Women* has since enjoyed over sixty distinct U.S. and international engagements and is one of the most frequently performed North American operas of the last decade. In 2001, it was telecast by PBS/WNET on *Great Performances* and released on CD by Ondine, and in 2010, Naxos released it on DVD. His second opera *Lysistrata, or the Nude Goddess* (adapted from Aristophanes’ comedy) premiered at HGO in March 2005 with additional performances at New York City Opera in 2006. Adamo’s first concerto, *Four Angels: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, was commissioned and premiered in 2007 by the National Symphony Orchestra and released by Naxos on an all-Adamo CD in 2009. Adamo is currently at work on his third opera, commissioned by San Francisco Opera for premiere in 2013.

Lawrence Edelson (Panelist) is the founder and producing artistic director of American Lyric Theater (ALT) in New York City, where he created the Composer Librettist Development Program, the only full-time mentorship program for emerging operatic composers and librettists in the U.S. He was responsible for the commissioning and development of *The Golden Ticket*, which premiered at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2010, and is currently overseeing the development of four new operas at ALT. An accomplished stage director and choreographer, his critically acclaimed productions include *Hydrogen Jukebox* (Fort Worth Opera), *La Traviata* (Minnesota Opera), the American premiere of Telemann’s *Orpheus* (Wolf Trap Opera), a double bill of *La Serva Padrona* and *Trouble in Tahiti* (Opera Santa Barbara), Fauré’s *Pénélope* (Manhattan School of Music), *Così fan tutte* (BU Opera Institute), and the world premiere of *The ToyMaker* (off-Broadway as part of the New York Musical Theater Festival).

Candace Evans (Panelist) is making her Fort Worth Opera debut this spring directing a new production of *Three Decembers*. Among her directorial credits are Teatro Colón, Santa Fe Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Dallas Opera, and Madison Opera, with three of her productions being honored as Top Ten Classical Events of the year. Her background includes an MFA in classical theatre and direction, training as an opera singer, and dancing as a member of the Wisconsin Ballet. Her upcoming engagements include Indiana University, Arizona Opera, and Florentine Opera. She has taught in the music and theater departments of Southern Methodist University and guest-lectured across the country. Evans has directed/choreographed over seventy operas, musicals, and plays, including the regional and world premieres of *Jane Eyre* and *Children’s Letters to God*.

John Forestner (Panelist) is a physician from a musical family, whose lifelong interest in opera began with a systematic exploration of the St. Louis Public Library's opera recordings, exposure to the Metropolitan Opera's radio broadcasts and tours, and eight years of school in Chicago where he subscribed to the Lyric Opera. In St. Louis, he became involved with Opera Theatre, serving on the Board and later chairing the National Patrons' Committee for ten years. Following a move to Texas, he has served on the Fort Worth Opera board for 23 years, as Secretary, President, and Endowment Committee chair, and he is currently leading a reorganization of the Opera Endowment. He has given pre-performance lectures and authored program notes for the Opera and the Van Cliburn Concert Series. Forestner also sits on the boards of the Cliburn, the Fort Worth Symphony, and the Chamber Music Society of Fort Worth. He travels extensively to see opera performances in the U.S. and throughout Europe.

Joe Illick (Panelist) has been music director and principal conductor of Fort Worth Opera since 2002. He has served as artistic director of the Lake George Opera Festival, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, and Shreveport Opera. He has also conducted for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Carolina, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, San Francisco Opera (Merola), Skylight Opera, Wiener Kammeroper, Stadttheater Aachen, Teatro Lirico d'Europa, Augusta Opera, Greater Miami Opera, Naples Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, Santa Fe Pro Musica, Mid-Columbia Symphony, Miami Symphony, Nevada Opera Theater, and Opera Omaha. He conducted the world premiere recordings of Thomas Pasatieri's *Frau Margot*, the same composer's *Before Breakfast*, and Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls*, all released on Albany Records. He was the artistic director and pianist for the Dallas-based contemporary music ensemble Voices of Change. Currently, he is also the executive and artistic director of the Santa Fe Concert Association, one of the major presenting organizations in the Southwest.

Native Texan **William V. Madison** (Panelist) is a writer and critic based in New York and Paris. The authorized biographer of actress Madeline Kahn (publication pending), he is a contributor to and former associate editor of *Opera News*, as well as the author of a blog on cultural themes, *Billevesées* (billmadison.blogspot.com). While a producer at CBS News in the 1990s, he collaborated with Dan Rather on several books, including *Deadlines & Datelines*, a *New York Times* bestseller. In 1986, he was the lone production assistant on the Broadway musical *Rags*, starring Teresa Stratas. Madison holds degrees from Brown University and Columbia University's School of the Arts.

Steven Osgood's (Panelist) work has become known for its distinct musical incisiveness and dramatic insights. He has worked extensively with contemporary composers, conducting the world premieres of Tan Dun's *Peony Pavilion*, Missy Mazzoli's *Song from the Uproar*, and Xenakis' *Oresteia*, as well as major revivals of Philip Glass' *Hydrogen Jukebox*, John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Tan Dun's *Marco Polo*, Lee Hoiby's *Summer and Smoke* and *A Month in the Country*, and Stephen Schwartz's *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*. He has been an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera since 2006, mounting the world premiere of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, and productions of *Satyagraha* and *Nixon in China*. He has conducted standard opera repertoire at Edmonton Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Chautauqua Opera, and Opera Memphis, among others. As artistic director of American Opera Projects from 2001 until 2008, he created the company's Composers and the Voice Workshop Series. Osgood conducted Glass' *Hydrogen Jukebox* at the 2011 Fort Worth Opera Festival.

Edward Willey III (Panelist) is a corporate attorney and a lifelong musician. He is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, Franklin and Marshall College, and the Perpich Center for Arts Education, the cutting-edge statewide arts high school in Golden Valley, Minnesota, where he worked with composer Jan Vandervelde and where he performed the music of Eric Stokes under his direction. Willey plays violin, piano, and organ in his free time and is a part-time section leader in the chancel choir at Dallas' Church of the Incarnation, a large church with a robust music program. He is on the board of directors of Orpheus Chamber Singers, the development committee of Fort Worth Opera, and Leadership FWOpera (the company's group for young professionals). Willey is a past member of the Dallas Symphony Chorus and the Steering Committee of Amici di Opera at Dallas Opera.

Keith A. Wolfe (Panelist), managing director and artistic administrator of Fort Worth Opera, has served a critical role in developing training programs for young artists, including the development of the Fort Worth Opera Studio, a partnership program with Texas Christian University, and formulating "The Ten Commandments of Auditions" with General Director Darren K. Woods, which was featured in *Classical Singer* magazine. Recent programs include strategic planning for singers in master classes and seminars, and serving as a panelist for Opera America. Previously, Wolfe was general manager for seven years of the Seagle Music Colony in upstate New York, the U.S.'s oldest young artist training program, where he has since returned to conduct Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata*, and workshops of Jorge Martin's *Before Night Falls* and Joe Illick's *Bliss*. Prior to moving into arts administration, he performed with the Virginia Opera, the Washington Opera, the Virginia Symphony, the Shreveport Symphony, and the Virginia Pro Musica.

Frontiers 2013 Submission Information:

Deadline: May 31, 2012. Receipt Type: Postmark or registered mail receipt

Please contact Kurt Howard, Curator, at frontiers@fwopera.org for submission address and information. For the anonymous submission, remove or mask all indications of the composer's name on scores, recordings, synopsis, and libretti. Submissions shall be assigned numbers randomly by the administrator to be used by the panel in the review process. Only 15-25 minutes of a composition will be considered. Send 2 bound copies and 1 unbound copy of the piano/vocal score and 1 CD recording of the selection. MIDI recordings are permissible; recordings of piano and vocals are also acceptable. Electronic submission of the synopsis and libretto of the complete work are preferred; otherwise 3 copies of each should be included with submission. Works not in English should include an English translation of the synopsis and libretto, if available. Also, in a sealed, blank envelope include the composer's name, address, telephone number, email (to be used for administrative purposes only), and a bio of the composer and associated artistic personnel. If you want your materials returned, enclose a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper postage. Fort Worth Opera is not liable for accidental loss or damage to materials. A non-refundable entry fee of \$25US is due on submission. A check payable to Fort Worth Opera must be included with submission. Fort Worth Opera retains the

right to select fewer than 6 works for the showcase. Entry fees will be returned if no selections are selected or if the showcase is cancelled. More details are available at www.fwopera.org/frontiers.

Fort Worth Opera's upcoming 2012 Festival season runs May 12-June 3, and offers Puccini's passionate blockbuster *Tosca*, Mozart's effervescent romantic comedy *The Marriage of Figaro*, and two regional premieres: Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata* (based on the ancient Greek comedy) and a new production of Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers* (based on Terrence McNally's play, *Some Christmas Letters*).

2012 Festival artists include sopranos Andrea Carroll (house debut), Jan Cornelius (house debut), Janice Hall, Ashley Kerr, Ava Pine, Emily Pulley (house debut), and Carter Scott; mezzo-sopranos Alissa Anderson, Meaghan Deiter, and Wallis Giunta (house debut); tenors Roger Honeywell and Scott Scully; baritones Jonathan Beyer (house debut), Michael Chioldi, Michael Mayes, and Matthew Worth (house debut); and bass-baritones Seth Mease Carico and Donovan Singletary. Conductors include FWOpera Music Director Joe Illick, Christopher Larkin, and Stewart Robertson, with Eric Einhorn (house debut), Candace Evans (house debut), David Gately, and Daniel Pelzig directing.

Tickets for the 2012 Festival can be purchased online, by phone, or in person at the Fort Worth Opera Box Office inside the Fort Worth Community Arts Center at 1300 Gendy St., Fort Worth, Texas, 76107. Season subscriptions start at \$70 while single tickets start at \$15. For more information, please visit www.fwopera.org or call 817.731.0726 or toll-free at 1.877.396.7372. To purchase tickets online, go to www.fwopera.org.

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 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, FWOpera staged its first world premiere, *Frau Margot*, and followed up the next season with *Angels in America* (which resulted in "More Life: the Art and Science of AIDS", a community-wide collaboration amongst organizations in the performing and visual arts, children's education, medicine, and social services), *Dead Man Walking* in 2009, the world premiere of *Before Night Falls* in 2010, and *Hydrogen Jukebox* in 2011. The company's CD recordings of *Frau Margot* and *Before Night Falls* are available on the Albany label. Performances are held at Bass Performance Hall and at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center. 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 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.

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, night life, and the opera house, the world-renowned Bass Performance Hall.

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