



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Diane Rhodes Bergman
Fort Worth Opera
diane@fwopera.org
817.731.0833 x.18
Para Español: Martha Sotelo
817.731.0833 x.28

HOLIDAY CLASSIC TO INCLUDE SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

FORT WORTH – Fort Worth Opera Studio, a training program for upcoming artists, will produce *Amahl and the Night Visitors* this holiday season. *Amahl* is a family-friendly opera performed in English; but this year Fort Worth Opera is adding projected Spanish translations, often referred to as “supertitles.”

“While we’ve done some in-school children’s programs that incorporated Spanish, this is the first time we will have Spanish language supertitles at a public performance,” said Darren K. Woods, General Director of Fort Worth Opera. “We are also going to try doing Spanish and English translations for our upcoming production of *Carmen* in April.”

Fort Worth Opera Studio was established in 2002 as a training program for operatic artists beginning their professional careers. Four singers are selected through national auditions to be in residence with Fort Worth Opera from mid-September through mid-May. The group tours Texas as part of the Children’s Opera Theatre and are traditionally given smaller roles in Fort Worth Opera’s main-stage productions. As in 2007, Fort Worth Opera Studio is bringing in 12-year-old Eric Illick to perform the title role as well as supplementing the cast with guest artist Justin Hopkins, who will perform the role of King Balthazar.

PRESS PHOTOS: High resolution photos from the 2007 production are available now at www.fwopera.org, under “Press.” New photos will be posted by December 5, 2008. Contact Diane Rhodes Bergman at 817.269.9795 for the password.

BACKGROUND: *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is a Christmas story that marks two historical firsts: it was the first opera to be written for television and it was featured as the first *Hallmark Hall of Fame* special. It premiered December 24, 1951 on NBC. The composer and librettist, Gian Carlo Menotti, reigned as one of America’s most prolific operatic composers for nearly four decades; his honors include a Pulitzer Prize and a Kennedy Center Honor for lifetime achievement in the arts. Similar to the character Amahl, as a child Menotti was thought to be cured of a crippled leg after his nurse took him to a shrine.

STORY: *Amahl* tells the story of a crippled boy who by chance crosses paths with the three Wise Men on their way to visit the infant Jesus. The three men and their page need a place to stay for the night and, in spite of her poverty, Amahl’s mother generously offers her hospitality to the splendid visitors. The Kings take a liking to the energetic boy and feel pity for his mother, eventually giving her the gold originally intended for the baby Jesus, saying that the Child they seek has no need of it. Amahl and his mother are enthralled by the idea of the Child; she begs the men to take back the gold and Amahl wants to send the Child his crutch. As he lifts his crutch to hand it over, he amazingly takes a step without it. The Kings give thanks to God as Amahl dances around. Still intent on giving his crutch to the Child, Amahl joins the men on their way to meet the Child.

PRODUCTION: One act, performed in English with projected Spanish translations. Featuring the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. Approximately 45 minutes in length.

DATES/TIMES/LOCATION:

Rose Marine Theater at 1440 North Main Street

- Dec. 5, 2008 at 7:30 pm
- Dec. 6, 2008 at 3:00 pm and 7:30 pm
- Dec. 7, 2008 at 7:30 pm

PRIMARY CAST:

Amahl	Eric Illick
Mother	Ashley Kerr* and Courtney Ross*
King Kaspar	Jonathan Blalock*
King Melchior	Seth Carico*
King Balthazar	Justin Hopkins

Director & Scenic Designer	Richard Kagey
Conductor	Joseph Illick

*Fort Worth Opera Studio Artist

TICKETS:

Adult - \$18, children under 12 - \$5. Also part of a **“Family Four Pack”** that features four tickets to *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Children’s Opera Theatre’s *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Cinderella* for \$135; at least one of the ticket holders must be an adult. Available online at www.fwopera.org or by phone at 817.731.0726.

ABOUT FWOPERA: 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. In recent years, under the leadership of Darren Keith Woods, the company has gained national attention from critics and audiences alike for its artistic quality and willingness to take risks. The 2007 season marked the company’s first season to be performed in a one-month festival format and featured the company’s first major world premiere, *Frau Margot* by composer Thomas Pasatieri. Darren Keith Woods, who began his operatic career in 1982 as a character tenor, joined Fort Worth Opera as General Director in 2001. More information about the Festival and company can be found on the website: www.fwopera.org.

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