



Dear Fort Worth Opera Community,

It is with profound sadness that, after two impactful - and in many ways life-changing - years with Fort Worth Opera, I announce my formal resignation as General and Artistic Director. I am starting a new chapter in my career that will be announced soon, and my last day with FWO will be November 23.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the people of Fort Worth and Tarrant County by leading the turnaround of a beloved historic institution, which most people thought had its better days behind it. In the process, I've gained so many dear colleagues, friends and mentees along the way, especially as we navigated the additional challenges brought on by the global pandemic.

In 2020, when I was appointed General Director, I set out to create an organization by which the community of Fort Worth felt safe, seen, respected and comfortable when engaging with us. My goal was to build **The People's Company**. Because of the hard work of our staff, Fort Worth Opera has seen tremendous growth in its local and national footprint. We have increased and diversified our audiences, our board, our donors, our funders, our external partners and, most importantly, we have built a company that is truly reflective of the community we serve. A company every Fort Worthian can be proud of.

We've launched new programming and civic engagement initiatives that elevated Fort Worth Opera's existing outreach efforts and built an intentional practice of inclusion, to reflect the growing and diverse Fort Worth community. By creating productions such as "*A Night of Black Excellence*," initiating the return of *Noches de Ópera*, FWO's Hispanic Heritage engagement initiative, and developing *FWOGO!*, together we have provided performance opportunities beyond Fort Worth, expanded Children's Opera Theatre to include youth opera that serves over 30,000 students across North Texas, and ushered in a new era of our Hattie Mae Lesley Resident Artist program, which includes a new relationship with TCU's School of Music, launched fall 2022.

Fort Worth Opera is now, more than ever, **The People's Company**. Our 76th season opened on October 21, 2022, with *Noches de Zarzuela*, followed by *El Fuego de Una Mujer*. Please join us for the remainder of our season. Upcoming, we are honored to present the world-premier of ***Stand Up!*** and an afternoon of dynamic storytelling with ***Of Thee I Sing!***, a recital presented by Karen Slack and Michelle Cann. For details about the rest of the 2022-2023 season, visit fwopera.org.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for what has been a period in my career I will never forget.

Until soon, with gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Afton Battle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Afton Battle