

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 16, 2020

Contact: Suzanne Calvin 214.443.1014

suzanne.calvin@dallasopera.org

The Dallas Opera Institutes Salary Cuts and Furloughs in Response to Financial Ramifications of COVID-19 Pandemic

DALLAS, APRIL 16, 2020 – **Ian Derrer**, general director and CEO of **The Dallas Opera**, today announced pay cuts and furloughs for administrative and artistic staff, as well as salary reductions for other company members in response to the financial effects of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, which forced the company to cancel three of the five operas scheduled in its 2019/2020 Season.

“It is with a heavy heart that I announce these painful cuts,” Derrer said, “but they are necessary to stabilize the financial health of our great company for the future. An opera company that is unable to produce opera has no choice but to constrict, even if only temporarily.”

Cancellation of the 14 mainstage opera performances and the Songs for Dallas Community Concert resulted in a revenue loss of \$1.6 million in ticket sales, Derrer said.

The Dallas Opera Guild Biennial Lone Star Vocal Competition was cancelled, along with 41 education programs, 21 community engagement programs, and 24 donor events.

Derrer stated that he and Music Director Emmanuel Villaume are both voluntarily taking a 25% salary reduction, acknowledging the ramifications could be ongoing. Salary reductions for the staff, which commence May 1, range from 10 to 25 percent based on a combination of salary levels and immediate work needs. Some staff will be furloughed from May 1 through June, but will maintain health benefits.

Other company members negatively impacted by the cancellations include orchestra musicians, choristers, stagehands, stitchers, dressers, wig and make-up artists, and production staff, who

will receive a 50% wage reduction in light of not being able to provide services for the cancelled performances.

Derrer said that he was heartened that many ticket buyers who had purchased tickets for the now-cancelled 2019/2020 events were choosing to either donate the value of their tickets, or apply the amount to their 2020/2021 subscriptions.

“Our audiences are clearly as eager to enjoy the life-enhancing magic of great opera as the company is to bring it to them,” Derrer stated.

~~~~~

### **ABOUT THE DALLAS OPERA**

One of the leading opera companies in the country, The Dallas Opera has an extraordinary legacy of world-class productions and thrilling premieres featuring the greatest operatic artists of our time. Inaugurated in 1957 with a concert featuring the incomparable Maria Callas, TDO is known for the notable U.S. debuts of a host of legendary artists including Plácido Domingo, Dame Joan Sutherland, Jon Vickers, Franco Zeffirelli, and Sir David McVicar. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives like the Hart Institute for Women Conductors, free public simulcasts, acclaimed art song recitals, the national vocal competition, special concerts, and outstanding family and award-winning education programs. TDO’s home is the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, a jewel in the Dallas Arts District. As one of the largest performing arts employers in North Texas, TDO is proudly committed to diversity, onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region.

### **2019/2020 SEASON SPONSOR**

#### **The Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Family**

The Dallas Opera is supported, in part, by funds from: **Elsa von Seggern Foundation;**  
**Texas Instruments;** the **City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture;**

The **Texas Commission on the Arts** and the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).**

**American Airlines** is the official airline of The Dallas Opera.

**Lexus** is the official vehicle of The Dallas Opera.

Advertising support from ***The Dallas Morning News.***

**NorthPark Center**, the official shopping center of The Dallas Opera

The Dallas Opera is a proud member of **OPERA America**

###