

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**The Dallas Opera Takes
KIDS OPERA BOOT CAMP Online
Five Episodes Beginning June 29, 2020
Free program may be viewed on the
TDO Education Portal at dallasopera.org**

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**Kristian Roberts Promoted to  
Director of Education**

DALLAS, JUNE 23, 2020 - **The Dallas Opera** is taking its highly regarded summer program **Kids Opera Boot Camp** online for the very first time, offering a newly created summer series free of charge, beginning **Monday, June 29** at [https://dallasopera.org/tdo\\_education\\_portal/](https://dallasopera.org/tdo_education_portal/).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting the camp virtually ensures the safety of the students participating, as well as that of the artists and educators involved in creating its content. This new format also makes TDO's original educational programming easily accessible to all, regardless of location.

School districts now have the option to incorporate TDO’s virtual Kids Opera Boot Camp into their summer curricula. Parents, students and teachers who register for the upcoming camp sessions can access content at any time this summer, which is especially important for families with limited internet access.

Enthusiastic artists will introduce students to opera by means of a familiar story from The Brothers Grimm, *The Bremen Town Musicians*. Students will learn what it takes to create an opera through a combination of hands-on activities, fun facts, and engaging characters.

Of course, opera wouldn’t be opera without singing, so students also will be taught to sing vocal warm-ups and an excerpt from this charming musical score.

The final boot camp episode will culminate in an actual performance of *The Bremen Town Musicians* performed by Dallas Opera Education Artists, who have been in the process of recording their roles separately.

This complex operation involves social distancing for artists and tech crews, sanitizing, synchronizing, and maintaining 24 hours between studio recording sessions—efforts of a team led by recently-appointed **Director of Education, Kristian Roberts**.

“Traditional forms of watching and experiencing opera are having to take a pause. During this pause, we can still use the power of the art form to address meaningful issues,” explains Ms. Roberts.

“The story’s theme of using your unique skills and working together with those who are different to reach a common goal is more relevant now than ever,” she adds. “Everyone—kid or adult—can relate to this message in some way and learn important lessons that can be applied to their own lives.”

Education initiatives are front and center at The Dallas Opera. Last year, TDO Education and Community Outreach programs reached more than 77,000 people across North Texas.

While it is still currently a work in progress, The Dallas Opera's new online Education Portal eventually will act as a one-stop shop for schools, teachers, and parents wishing to learn about or sign up for Spring 2021 in-person programs. These include student matinees in the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, afterschool programs, TDO's touring opera program, and mainstage dress rehearsal access for upper-level students and their teachers.

The portal also will provide an opportunity to participate in virtual education programs (like Kids Opera Boot Camp) and to utilize a variety of online learning resources, such as cross-curricular classroom materials and activities.

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Director of Education **Kristian Roberts** has a rich history with The Dallas Opera, including her ongoing work as a performing artist in The Dallas Opera Chorus, beginning with Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in 2008 and as the popular co-host of The Dallas Opera's acclaimed outdoor live simulcast series.

Ms. Roberts joined TDO's administrative staff twelve years ago and was most recently the company's senior education manager. She leads the company's multi-pronged education efforts, overseeing programs designed for grades K-12—including Kids Opera Boot Camp—as well as college-level initiatives.

With Education and Company Culture Manager **Quodesia "Quo" Johnson**, Kristian Roberts co-hosts one of the most talked-about programs on TDO Network: *Taking the Stage with Kristian and Quo*, designed to create meaningful conversation about the arts, education, inclusion, and more on a weekly basis.

Kristian Roberts became TDO's director of education in March 2020.

"I am especially proud to promote Kristian Roberts," says **Ian Derrer, The Kern Wildenthal General Director and CEO**. "Her commitment and imaginative leadership as The Dallas Opera's Senior Education Manager made Kristian the natural choice for an expanded role as our director of education.

"While none of us can predict the educational challenges ahead," Derrer adds, "I am confident in Kristian's ability to respond to them all with excellence, creativity, integrity and foresight, along with her hallmark professionalism."

Ms. Roberts currently serves as a member of the influential Advisory Board and Arts Council for Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. She also serves on OPERA America's ALAANA Network Steering Committee, seeking racial equity, diversity and inclusion in all sectors of the music industry.

She earned a Master of Music in Vocal Performance, with additional studies in Music History, from Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Earlier, Ms. Roberts graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Baylor University.

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### **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 including 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.

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