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**COVID-19 CONCERNS FORCE
THE DALLAS OPERA TO
POSTPONE ITS ENTIRE 2020/2021 SEASON
UNTIL SPRING OF 2021**

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***ORFEO ED EURIDICE* CUT AND  
*DON CARLO* REPLACES *LOHENGRIN***

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NINE PERFORMANCES CANCELLED

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**STAFF LAYOFFS AND ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE  
CUTBACKS ANNOUNCED**

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**DALLAS OPERA EMERGENCY RELIEF (DOER)
FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN IN PROGRESS WITH A
GOAL OF RAISING \$4 MILLION
BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

DALLAS, JUNE 4, 2020 – Ian Derrer, the Kern Wildenthal general director and CEO of The Dallas Opera, today announced major changes to the company’s 2020/2021 Season brought about by the serious ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The entire season will be consolidated into spring of 2021 with four opera productions presented, instead of the original five. Nine mainstage performances will be cut from TDO's 2020/2021 schedule—a 38% reduction. Verdi's *Don Carlo* will replace Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* will be eliminated.

The 2020/2021 Season, which was to have opened on October 9, 2020, will now begin on Friday, March 5, 2021, with the world premiere of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, composed by Joby Talbot with libretto by Gene Scheer. There will be two additional performances of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, followed by three performances of Verdi's *Don Carlo* cancelled in 2019 because of COVID-19, four performances of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and five performances of Puccini's *Tosca*.

Full Series subscribers will have the opportunity to replace their fifth opera with seats to the Joyce DiDonato "VIVA DIVA!" concert and gala on May 10, 2021; donate the prorated value of their fifth-opera tickets to TDO's fundraising efforts; apply the credit to their 2021/2022 Season tickets; or receive a refund.

"This virus is a serious threat to all the hallmarks of grand opera, which include amassing huge forces on stage and in the pit, bringing large crowds together in our theaters, assembling casts from all over the world, and listening to singers, sometimes in passionate embrace, filling the hall with powerful voices and glorious sound without the use of microphones," Derrer said.

“Our mission at The Dallas Opera has always been to give our audiences thrilling, world-class opera, but the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to re-position our operations, at least for the near future. Safety concerns for our audiences, artists, and staff; travel restrictions for artists; new social distancing needs both on stage and in the theater—the myriad uncertainties and restrictions caused by this pandemic have led us to the difficult decision that we cannot open in October 2020, as originally scheduled.”

The season has been reduced by one production to work within the existing dates of TDO’s rehearsal and performance calendar, with the intent of preserving as many of the already advertised performance dates as possible.

Regarding repertoire changes to the season’s mainstage offerings, Derrer said that both he and Emmanuel Villaume, TDO’s Mrs. Eugene McDermott music director, were committed to bringing Wagner’s rarely performed *Lohengrin* to Dallas audiences. “But given the large number of forces required to produce this monumental masterpiece and unpredictable travel restrictions for our international artists, we are postponing its presentation until we can assure our audiences of the highest artistic experience,” Derrer explained. “Also, with so much of Verdi’s magnificent *Don Carlo* already rehearsed, a cost saving for TDO—and with many original cast members—it seemed appropriate to give *Don Carlo* a second chance, knowing that *Orfeo ed Euridice* can easily be programmed in a future season.”

As well as programming changes and a realignment of performance dates, consolidating the season into spring has necessitated some changes in casting, which

will be updated on the company website at dallasopera.org/2021Season on an ongoing basis.

Derrer also stated that staging modifications are being anticipated in light of COVID-19 concerns. “Audiences can still expect to enjoy a full theatrical experience,” he said, “even though our creative and production teams may be adapting the originally planned productions.”

Derrer said that while a constriction of performances was a necessity in 2021, the company remained committed to presenting and creating quality educational experiences—both online and in person—for students and educational partners throughout North Texas.

While live performances will not resume until the spring, the company will continue to engage its audiences via its digital platform, the [TDO Network](#), which offers a wide variety of programming viewed to date by more than 5 million people in 50 different countries.

Derrer also said that he deeply regretted that the financial ramifications of the pandemic have forced the company to introduce layoffs and make further staff cutbacks. Effective today, five administrative staff members will be laid off, six fulltime positions will become part-time or seasonal, and two positions will be furloughed. TDO’s fulltime administrative and artistic staff has been reduced from 40 to 26. Previously announced salary reductions remain in place.

TDO has already suffered the loss of \$1.6 million in projected revenue from cancelled performances in the 2019/2020 Season, and ticket revenue for the 2021 Season will be reduced because of the constriction of the season. Fewer performances translate to less available work for many parts of the company, including orchestra, chorus, stage personnel, seasonal staff, as well as administrative personnel.

The company is in contract negotiations with two of its major unions—the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), which represents the orchestra; and the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), which represents principal artists, chorus, dancers, and production staff.

Derrer said that a special fundraising effort was in full swing to address the financial ramifications of COVID-19 and sustain the company for the future. The Dallas Opera Emergency Relief (DOER) Fund has a goal of \$4 million with an end date of September 30, 2020. “We are counting on our loyal donors to come through for us as they always have, because the long-term viability of our company is truly at stake.”

A new fundraising initiative will follow in October 2020. An extension of the current DOER campaign, it will be a three-year effort to solidify TDO's financial foundation for stable and continued growth, and will position the company to weather future unexpected events.

Operas and Events for TDO’s spring 2021 Season are as follows:

Mainstage Operas:

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly / Joby Talbot, music; Gene Scheer, libretto

March 5, March 7(matinee), March 13

Casting and artistic team remains the same as originally advertised.

Don Carlo / Verdi / March 27(matinee), March 31, April 3(matinee)

*New casting marked with **

Phillip II – David Leigh*
Don Carlo – Gwyn Hughes Jones*
Elizabeth de Valois – Leah Crocetto
Princess Eboli – Jamie Barton
Rodrigo – Lucas Meachem
The Grand Inquisitor – TBA
Conductor – Emmanuel Villaume
Director – Edward Berkeley

The Marriage of Figaro / Mozart / April 9, April 11(matinee), April 14, April 17

*New casting marked with **

Figaro – Kyle Ketelsen*
Susanna – Madison Leonard*
Countess Almaviva – Sara Gartland*
Count Almaviva – Andrei Bondarenko
Cherubino – John Holiday*
Dr. Bartolo – Kevin Burdette
Marcellina – Lucy Schauer
Don Basilio – David Cangelosi
Conductor – Lidiya Yankovskaya*
Director – Kyle Lang

Tosca / Puccini / April 16, April 18(matinee), April 21, April 24; May 2(matinee)

Casting and artistic team remains the same as originally advertised.

Concerts and Special Events:

Joyce DiDonato VIVA DIVA! concert and gala / Monday, May 10, 2021

Benjamin Appl, baritone / Robert E. and Jean Ann Titus Art Song Recital / January 31, 2021

Hart Institute for Women Conductors Showcase Concert / February 19, 2021

TDO National Vocal Competition / May 1, 2021

TDO Family Series

***Doctor Miracle* / March 6, 2021**

***Jack and the Beanstalk* / March 14, 2021**

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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 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.

### **SEASON SPONSOR**

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