



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Texas Opera Alliance launches the Teen Opera Club of Texas**

*Opera organizations from across the Lone Star State join forces to make opera more accessible and provide teens a exclusive experience with access to artists and creatives*

**TEXAS—October 27, 2020**—The [Texas Opera Alliance](#) (TOA) is proud to announce the launch of the **Teen Opera Club of Texas**. In early October, Austin Opera (AO), The Dallas Opera (TDO), Fort Worth Opera (FWO), Houston Grand Opera (HGO), and OPERA San Antonio (OSA) announced the creation of TOA to advance and protect the future of the art form in Texas. In the spirit of this alliance, and during a time when outreach to schools is limited, education representatives from each company have joined forces to create this new initiative.

The Teen Opera Club of Texas (TOCT) provides free opportunities for any teen 13-19 years of age to learn about and engage with opera happening in Texas. The club includes access to opera artists and administrative personnel from each organization who will share insights and expertise on a variety of topics. Participants will learn about opera performance, production and design, the creation of new opera, and conducting opera orchestras. As members, students will receive monthly invites to virtual gatherings and watch parties on platforms such as Zoom, Squad, and YouTube channels hosted by each opera company.

“Fort Worth Opera education department is proud to stand alongside these amazing companies and form a creative alliance as big as Texas itself,” says Manager of Education and Community Engagement at FWO Sheran Keyton.

“While each education department has presented stellar educational outreach programs on their own, this project allows the youth in Texas to experience a one-of-a-kind opportunity to work with other companies outside of their area. The possibilities are limitless!”

“Austin Opera is thrilled to collaborate with the education leaders from the Texas Opera Alliance companies to provide this new opportunity for teens,” says Debra Erck, director of education at AO. “Whether members of the Teen Opera Club dream of performing onstage, have a passion for the creative process behind the scenes, or just appreciate a great performance, we could not be more excited to support and nurture this special group of young people.”

The club will meet monthly, with the first gathering on Thursday, October 29 at 6:30 p.m. CDT. Members will meet to watch HGO’s 69<sup>th</sup> world premiere *Katie: Strongest of the Strong* by Faye Chiao, composer, and Anton Dudley, librettist. After the performance, HGO will host the teens for a special Q&A with the cast of the opera including composer, Faye Chiao and soprano, Chabrelle Williams.

“During a time where we all feel distanced and are missing live performances, it is such an honor to partner with these incredible organizations and bring great art to a broader audience,” says Carleen Graham, director of HGOco, HGO’s community and learning arm. “We value what each company brings to this collaboration and are confident that Texas teens will enjoy a rich and varied experience with access to great art. What a great opportunity to help connect teens from across the state and teach them about the many facets of opera!”

The second gathering, hosted by OSA, will take place on Thursday, November 19 at 6:30 p.m. CST. OSA's General & Artistic Director E. Loren Meeker takes the members on a visual adventure exploring how the creative team for her production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* constructed scenic and costume designs to bring the "fantastical tale of nature meets humanity" to life.

"By igniting passion and enthusiasm for this powerful art form we will have a lasting impact on the next generation," says OSA Education Coordinator Madeline Elizondo. "Opportunities to connect and unify teens from across the globe are limitless thanks to this incredible new partnership. We look forward to empowering the youth of today with a love for opera through experiences that are relevant and engaging for young opera fans."

Any student who meets the age criteria and interested in the club is welcome to join by filling out a brief form [here](#). No background in music is required to participate.

"The Dallas Opera Education Department is delighted to join forces with our esteemed colleagues in the Texas Opera Alliance to provide this arts experience for teens across Texas and beyond," notes TDO director of education Kristian Roberts. "Thanks to advanced technology, which allows connection and creation in virtual spaces, young people will have the opportunity to engage with five opera companies to explore the many aspects of this unique art form without the geographical limitations that may have prevented them from doing so before. That is incredibly exciting!"

For more information about the club or the Texas Opera Alliance, visit: <http://texasoperaalliance.org>

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### **About Austin Opera**

Serving Central Texas since 1986, Austin Opera inspires audiences with its trademark blend of innovation and artistic excellence. With the leadership of General Director & CEO Annie Burrige and the Sarah and Ernest Butler Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor Timothy Myers, Austin Opera presents a curated season of grand opera productions at the Long Center, the crown jewel of Austin performing arts venues. Combining the finest American and international stars with the outstanding local talent of our Orchestra and Chorus, Austin Opera's productions include accessible takes on classic operas as well as challenging new works that reinforce the continuing relevance of opera.

Opera ATX, powered by Austin Opera, brings groundbreaking new works, emerging artists, exciting composers, and dynamic directors to Austin. By tapping into our city's live music DNA, Opera ATX reflects the spirit of the city and the pioneering image it's known for. We create the conditions for operatic experiences completely new to Austin, and perhaps completely new to the art form, by exploring alternative venues and unique local partnerships. Driven by Austin Opera's love of opera, love of audiences, and love of Austin, Opera ATX shows how Austin is shaping its opera company and inspiring innovative experiences.

Austin Opera is also a force in hundreds of classrooms across Central Texas, nurturing the next generation of opera audiences through its award-winning education programs. We work directly with educators, community leaders, students, and parents to make opera relevant, educational, and entertaining for students of all ages.

### **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. The company has long been an industry leader and innovator through groundbreaking initiatives including the Hart Institute for Women Conductors, TDO Network, 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, both onstage and off, and is a major contributor to the economic vitality and international cultural reputation of this region.

### **About Fort Worth Opera**

Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is poised to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2021. For the last fifteen years, FWO has become one of the leading American companies dedicated to nurturing and performing new opera, in addition to producing performances of traditional repertoire with rising American stars. Our acclaimed Frontiers program is going online this fall with our first digital Libretto Workshop. Our Children's Opera Theatre typically reaches about 60,000 students across North Texas each season with live, interactive performances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FWO has created online educational curriculum for local music students to supplement their in-school studies, and COT can also now serve entire families and communities beyond the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Fort Worth Opera is committed to celebrating all North Texans, and through our ongoing Nôches de Opera program, the company offers exciting community-driven events and powerful operas that represent the diverse cultures of all of the Americas.

### **About Houston Grand Opera**

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the largest, most innovative, and most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. HGO was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year in the 2019 International Opera Awards. In fulfilling its mission to advance the operatic art to serve an ever-evolving audience, HGO has led the field in commissioning new works (69 world premieres to date) and in training and nurturing promising young artists and administrators. The company contributes to the cultural enrichment of Houston and the nation through a diverse and innovative program of performances, community events, and education projects that reaches the widest possible public. HGO's pioneering community engagement initiative, HGOco, has served as a model for other arts organizations.

The NEXUS Initiative is HGO's multi-year ticket underwriting program that allows Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy opera without the barrier of price. Since 2007, NEXUS has enabled more than 250,000 Houstonians to experience superlative opera through discounted single tickets and subscriptions, subsidized student performances, and free productions.

HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony, two Grammy awards, and three Emmy awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

### **About OPERA San Antonio**

OPERA San Antonio's mission is to produce opera of uncompromising artistic quality and to enrich our community through educational outreach and social engagement. The company is committed to preserving and sharing opera as an art form that is relevant, inspirational, and accessible to residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds. The civic premise of OPERA San Antonio is that the community needs, and the citizens deserve, access to the major performing arts.



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