



F O R T W O R T H
O P E R A

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TUOMAS HILTUNEN STEPS DOWN AS FORT WORTH OPERA'S GENERAL DIRECTOR

FORT WORTH, TX — Fort Worth Opera's Board of Trustees announced today that they have accepted the submitted resignation of General Director Tuomas Hiltunen. Mr. Hiltunen joined Fort Worth Opera in July of 2017. During his tenure, he established security and growth by streamlining expenditures, reducing administrative costs and overhead, and maintaining a balanced operating budget.

"Fort Worth Opera is grateful for Tuomas' leadership over the past two seasons and we wish him well in his future endeavors," said Nelson E. Claytor, Ph.D., Chair of the Board of Trustees. "As we move forward, our top priority is, and always has been, ensuring that the financial health of the company is secure for decades to come."

Building upon his prior experience in the world of theater, Mr. Hiltunen was instrumental in establishing Fort Worth Opera's Relaxed Performances program, which created a welcoming opera environment for audience members with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and learning disabilities. Presented in tandem with Fort Worth Opera's Children's Opera Theatre program, these modified performances offered a friendly, calming, and supportive environment for children with sensory differences to enjoy opera with their families. The company will continue to work with the Fort Worth ISD and local organizations throughout Tarrant County as this inspiring program evolves.

Preparations for Fort Worth Opera's thrilling 2020 Festival (April 17 – May 3) are well underway. This season features star-studded performances of Puccini's romantic masterpiece *La Bohème*, a riotous Roaring Twenties comedy, *Revenge of the Bat* (*Die Fledermaus*), and the world premiere of swashbuckling adventure *Zorro*. The company is eager to announce the 2021 line-up for its exhilarating 75th anniversary season in the months ahead. Fort Worth Opera looks toward a bright future as it proudly forges ahead as the oldest continually operating opera company in the state of Texas.

Until a successor is appointed, Nelson E. Claytor, Ph.D., has assumed the role and duties of Acting General Director. Visit fwopera.org.

ABOUT FORT WORTH OPERA: Founded in 1946, Fort Worth Opera is the oldest continually-performing opera company in Texas, and one of the 14 oldest opera companies in the United States. The organization has received national acclaim from critics and audiences alike for its artistic excellence. Beginning in 2017, Fort Worth Opera launched the second phase of its landmark, 10-year Opera of the Americas initiative with *Noches de Ópera* (*Nights of Opera*), a groundbreaking campaign that introduces powerful operas, each reflecting the diverse cultures of American audiences.

Fort Worth Opera is sponsored in part by awards from The Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County, The City of Fort Worth, and the Texas Commission on the Arts. Additional Fort Worth Opera sponsors include: the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the Amon G. Carter Foundation; American Airlines; Visit Fort Worth; Autobahn; Crystelle Waggoner Charitable Trust, Bank of America, Trustee; Web Maddox Trust, J.P. Morgan Chase, Trustee; the Sid W. Richardson Foundation, Arts and Culture Texas Magazine; and many others.