



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“VONNEGUT’S WORLD,” A WEEKLONG FESTIVAL TO EXPLORE WHAT MADE VONNEGUT, VONNEGUT

Set to Launch September 7-14, with an Array of Readings, Screenings, Performances and Special Events Leading up to Indy Opera WORLD PREMIERE of *HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WANDA JUNE*

Celebration Coincides with Hoosier State’s Bicentennial Events

INDIANAPOLIS [August 10, 2016] – “Vonnegut’s World,” a new week-long celebration of Vonnegut-themed special events leading up to the **World Premiere event of “Happy Birthday, Wanda June” at Indianapolis Opera**, was announced today and will be held at an array of Indianapolis venues from September 7th-14th. Presented by Indy Opera in partnership with Indianapolis Art Center, Butler University, Indy FilmFest, Bluebeard Restaurant, and Indy Reads, the festival represents a unique collaboration of area arts organizations and local venues to explore the many facets of the famed Hoosier and iconic literary figure. The schedule of events includes an opening reception, panel discussion, film screening, reading, “brunch of champions,” special music performances, and final dress rehearsal of the new opera, written by Kurt Vonnegut and composed by Richard Aldon Clark. Vonnegut completed the libretto just weeks before his death in 2007.

[Happy Birthday, Wanda June](#) will be performed at The Schrott Center for the Arts, 610 W. 46 Street, Indianapolis on September 16, 17 & 18, with curtain times at 8:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m., and 2:30 p.m., respectively. The opera has an embargoed surprise ending to be revealed on opening night of the World Premiere. The piece is a joint project between Kurt Vonnegut and Richard Aldon Clark, Butler University’s Director of Instrumental Activities and Manhattan Chamber Orchestra’s founder, conductor and longtime Artistic Director, who worked on it together for some years in Vonnegut’s New York brownstone. Directed by Metropolitan Opera Stage Director Eric Einhorn, the work has received the endorsement of the Indiana Bicentennial Commission as a Legacy Project. Indianapolis Opera, under the leadership of General Director Kevin Patterson, is pleased to celebrate the Hoosier state’s 200th anniversary with a work by one of its greatest citizens. For information about the production, performance, cast and crew, to become a member, or to purchase single season tickets, visit www.IndyOpera.org.

Happy Birthday, Wanda June began life as a play by Kurt Vonnegut in October 1971 at New York’s Theater de Lys. The play was Vonnegut’s first attempt at a stage work. Written to protest the Vietnam War in 1970, the play blends the sacred and the profane to produce off-the-wall and strangely funny satires. Wanda’s plot is based loosely on the Greek legends of Odysseus and Penelope – it involves the unexpected return of a mercenary career soldier/hunter named Harold Ryan and his wife, Penelope. When Harold left Penelope, she was a ditzy carhop; when he returns after eight years lost in the Amazon, he finds that she has gone to college, majored in English lit and changed her attitude about the macho man she married.

“VONNEGUT’S WORLD” FESTIVAL – A FACT SHEET AND SCHEDULE OF DAILY EVENTS

WHAT: **PANEL DISCUSSION AND OPENING CELEBRATION**
WHEN: Wednesday, September 7, 2016; 5:30 reception; 6 p.m. panel
WHERE: Indianapolis Art Center Auditorium, 820 E. 67th Street, Indianapolis
WHO: Panelists for the event include: Indianapolis Opera General Director Kevin

Patterson, HBWJ Stage Director Eric Einhorn, Butler University faculty member and Composer Richard Aldon Clark, and Vonnegut Memorial Library Director of Education Max Goller.

WHY: Learn of the many facets of creating and producing a world premiere. Celebrating the world premiere of “**Happy Birthday, Wanda June**,” an opera by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Richard Aldon Clark, guests will learn how the project came to be from the creators, producers and designers.

HOW: The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required as seating is limited. Tickets will be available through www.IndyOpera.org.

WHAT: **BUTLER UNIVERSITY THEATRE DEPARTMENT (Play Reading)**

WHEN: Thursday, September 8, 2016 at 7 p.m.

WHERE: Howard L. Schrott Center for the Arts on the campus of Butler University, 610 W. 46th Street, Indianapolis

WHO: Butler University Professor of Theatre William Fisher reading of Vonnegut’s 1971 play *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*.

WHY: Offered as a collaborative event leading up to Indianapolis Opera’s world premiere of the opera by Vonnegut and Butler University School of Music Professor Richard Aldon Clark, the stage reading of the Broadway play opens Butler University’s 2016-2017 season. The staged reading will be local professional Equity actors and Butler Theatre students.

HOW: The event is free and open to the public. For updated information, check butler.edu.

WHAT: **SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5 (film screening)**

WHEN: Friday, September 9, 2016 at 8 p.m.

WHERE: Basile Opera Center, 4011 N. Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis

WHO: Indy Film Fest presents this film based on Vonnegut’s novel by the same name.

WHY: Just another way community members can understand the many facets of the acclaimed literary icon born and raised in Indianapolis.

HOW: Tickets are available for \$10 each via www.IndyOpera.org.

WHAT: **BUTLER UNIVERSITY PERFORMS THE MUSIC of KURT VONNEGUT**

WHEN: Saturday, September 10, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Basile Opera Center, 4011 N. Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis

WHO: Happy Birthday Wanda June composer Richard Aldon Clark leads the Butler University Orchestra through music inspired by Vonnegut’s works from *Mother Night and Breakfast of Champions* composed by Howard Cass and *Cosmos Cantata* composed by Seymour Barab.

WHY: Community members will have the opportunity to hear other Vonnegut works set to music.

HOW: Tickets will be available through The Midtown Box Office via www.IndyOpera.org.

WHAT: **BRUNCH OF CHAMPIONS**

WHEN: Sunday, September 11, 2016, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

WHERE: Bluebeard, a trendy space with bookish style in a 1924 warehouse dishes up Italian-inspired fare & share plates, located at 653 Virginia Avenue, Indianapolis.

WHO: The cast of *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* dines and talks about the creative process, Vonnegut and music.

WHY: Enjoy the Vonnegut inspired décor while meeting the cast of Indianapolis Opera’s world premiere of *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*. Brunch consists of a three-course meal including dessert and a specialty cocktail.

HOW: Purchase tickets at www.IndyOpera.org.

WHAT: **VONNEGUT ROUND TABLE PERFORMANCE**
WHEN: Monday, September 12, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.
WHERE: Indy Reads Books, 911 Massachusetts Ave., Indianapolis
WHO: Indianapolis Opera Resident Artists perform Vonnegut-inspired songs and operatic favorites.
WHY: Celebrating the upcoming world premiere of Happy Birthday Wanda June, Indianapolis Opera and Indy Reads Books bring Vonnegut and Music together.
HOW: The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required. Tickets will be available through www.IndyOpera.org.

WHAT: **FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL (“HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WANDA JUNE” OPERA)**
WHEN: Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 6 p.m. pre-talk; 7 p.m. rehearsal.
WHERE: Howard L. Schrott Center for the Arts, 610 West 46th Street, Indianapolis
WHO: Attention teachers of music, English, art, theatre, and creative writing: bring your students to this rehearsal to get a flavor for *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*.
WHY: Students will enjoy a pre-rehearsal talk with Indianapolis Opera General Director Kevin Patterson before the final dress rehearsal.
HOW: Contact Director of Community Engagement at 317-283-3531 to make your reservations now.

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