



AMERICAN TRADITIONS VOCAL COMPETITION GEARING UP FOR 2017 SEASON

SAVANNAH, GA – January 19, 2017 – The American Traditions Vocal Competition (ATC) returns for its highly anticipated 24th season on Feb. 20-24, 2017. With a stellar line up of contestants selected from an unprecedented number of applications, this year's performances are sure to be of the highest quality.

This year will bring one returning judge as well as two new judges, and a new pianist. Newcomer judges, Sylvia McNair – opera and musical theater star who is considered to be one of the leading interpreters of the Great American Songbook and Andrew Lipka – American composer, lyricist, book writer, performer, and producer, will join distinguished baritone - Kurt Ollmann, who returns to the panel for a second year. Pianist Dan Gettinger will join the ATC 2017 season with veteran ATC pianists Anastasia Victory and Wilson Southerland.

Dr. Bill Lavonis, who made his professional singing debut at New York's Avery Fisher Hall with the American Symphony Orchestra, will emcee this year's competition. He holds degrees in voice, opera and musical theatre has performed over 100 leading and supporting roles in opera and musical theatre throughout the United States.

The nonprofit ATC, established as a world-renowned vocal competition, based in Savannah, celebrates standard, classic American music. The vocal contest evolved from Savannah Onstage, which was established in 1992 and was the predecessor of the Savannah Music Festival. It attracts internationally acclaimed artists, judges and accompanists by offering significant prizes to the winning singers. The ATC is also committed to a program of community outreach throughout the year and a free master class is part of every February's competition week.

The 2017 competition kicks off at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20 with the Judges Concert at Skidaway Island United Methodist Church, 54 Diamond Causeway. Guests will enjoy the evening with a performance by the ATC judges: Tony- and Grammy-nominated composer Andrew Lipa, two-time Grammy-winner and regional Emmy-winner Sylvia McNair, and Grammy-winner Kurt Ollmann. For the first time all three ATC judges will be performing at the Judges Concert. Tickets for the evening's festivities cost \$25 each for the concert only or \$50, to include a meet the judges reception after the concert at the church.

At 4 and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21 and Wednesday, Feb. 22, the 28 quarterfinalists will perform three songs each at Skidaway Island UMC in the hopes of advancing to the semifinals. The first half of the contestant pool competes on Tuesday, and the remaining contestants will put it all on the line Wednesday. Day passes for the quarterfinals cost \$20 each.

The twelve artists who are selected from the quarterfinal rounds will sing their next set of three songs at the semifinals, slated for 4 and 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb 23, at Skidaway Island UMC. Semifinals passes for the day cost \$30.

The cream of the crop will compete for top honors and prizes during the finals at 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, at the Historic Savannah Theatre, 222 Bull St. General seating tickets cost \$35 and premium seating costs \$50 a piece to see these five finalists sing their hearts out to win the coveted medals.

This year's contest also will include an outreach Master Class, slated for 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, also at the Savannah Theatre. This class, which is free and open to the public, provides ATC fans and supporters with an opportunity to watch the three ATC judges in action as they each work with one selected quarter or semi-finalist to demonstrate their different styles of teaching.

Each ATC applicant must choose nine songs, each from a different genre, and divide them up into three programs of three songs each. The competition focuses on two genre definitions: genres of style and genres of association. Established musical styles – such as blues, jazz, modern cabaret, opera, art song, folk, gospel, and country and western – and selected songs may fall into any one of those categories.

The association genre includes songs listed under classifications like musical theater, Hollywood, Great American Songbook and The Songs of Johnny Mercer. Songs from these genres fall into any of the aforementioned styles and can be sung in different arrangements.

All 28 contestants chosen for the ATC will be awarded a cash prize. Every quarterfinalists receives \$300 for being selected by the ATC and semifinalists each receive \$600. The first-round quarterfinals are sponsored by Beckett and Jim Spreng, and Mary and Howard Morrison sponsor the second quarterfinals round, while Anne Lytle sponsors the third and fourth quarterfinal rounds. Alice and Bob Jepson are the semifinals sponsors.

The first-place ATC Gold Medal Award winner receives \$12,000 and is sponsored by the Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation. The runner-up is awarded the Patricia and Heyward Gignilliat Silver Medal Award and receives \$6,000. The third-place Bronze Medal Award of \$3,000 is sponsored by EnMark Stations, Inc. The fourth prize of \$1,200 and is donated by Kay and Don Gardner, and the fifth-place prize of \$1,200 is given by the Savannah Friends of Music. The Johnny Mercer Award is presented for the best performance of a Johnny Mercer song, in either the quarterfinals or semifinals. This \$750 award is presented by the Friends of Johnny Mercer, Inc. and Armstrong State University. New for 2017, The Sherill Milnes American Opera Award is presented for the best performance of an American opera aria in either the quarterfinals or semifinals and this winner receives \$500. The \$500 Ben Tucker Jazz Award is presented for the best performance of a jazz song in either the quarterfinal or semifinal rounds and is given by the David A. and Margaret L. Cohen Foundation. The Richard Chambless People's Choice Award, sponsored by Swann Seiler, is given to a promising quarterfinalist and semifinalist who does not advance to the finals and is chosen by the audience. He or she receives \$500.

At the helm of the ATC is the Board of Directors, which is led by President Daniel C. Cohen. Cohen previously served as the nonprofit's secretary and co-president. Heyward Gignilliat is currently the vice president of endowments while Justin Addington is vice president of the board. Barbara Jenks serves as treasurer; Colleen Reynolds holds the executive director position; and Vale Rideout is the nonprofit's artistic consultant. The remaining board members include Alderman Carol Bell, Patty Gignilliat, Maddie Harwood, Dr. Allen Henderson, Eric Kennedy, Susan Kleine, Ann Lytle, Susan Whitaker, Elizabeth Oxnard, Amy Inglis Peirsol, , Beckett Spreng, Dick Wallace, Jim Wann, Debby Warner, and Mike Zaller.

“The 2017 competition is bound to be our most exciting season yet with our stellar panel of judges, extremely gifted pianists and, of course, our lineup of amazing vocal talent,” Cohen said. “Each year of the ATC is better than the last and we owe it all to exceptional array of contestants and our incredibly supportive Savannah community. We could not be more appreciative for the opportunity to bring this unique competition to such a beautiful city, year after year.”

To learn more about the ATC or to purchase tickets, please visit www.americantraditionscompetition.com or www.hostsouthes.com/atc/. Online ticket sales close four hours prior to the start of each event. For last-minute ticket purchases, please call the box office at The Savannah Theatre at 912-233-7764.

-ENDS-

For media inquiries, please contact Hollie Barnidge at hollie@lesleyfrancispr.com or 912-272-8651 or Lesley Francis at lesley@francis.com at 912-429-3950 or the team at 912-417-LFPR (5377).

ATC 2017 SCHEDULE

JUDGES CONCERT – Monday, February 20 – 7:00 p.m.

Skidaway Island UMC

54 Diamond Causeway

Savannah, GA 31411

\$25 Concert only | \$50 Includes after-party

QUARTERFINALS PART I – Tuesday, February 21 – 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Skidaway Island UMC

54 Diamond Causeway

Savannah, GA 31411

\$20 All-day pass

QUARTERFINALS PART II – Wednesday, February 22 – 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Skidaway Island UMC

54 Diamond Causeway

Savannah, GA 31411

\$20 All-day pass

SEMIFINALS – Thursday, February 23 – 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Skidaway Island UMC

54 Diamond Causeway

Savannah, GA 31411

\$30 All-day pass

MASTER CLASS – Friday, February 24 – 3:00 p.m.

The Historic Savannah Theatre

222 Bull Street

Savannah, GA 31401

Free and open to the public.

FINALS – Friday, February 24 – 8:00 p.m.

The Historic Savannah Theatre

222 Bull Street

Savannah, GA 31401

General Seating - \$35 | Premium Seating - \$50

2017 ATC CONTESTANTS

Jessica Baldwin retains a master's in classical voice pedagogy, 7 years of training in contemporary and commercial music and voice pedagogy, and 25 years of collaborative piano experience. She inhabits diverse musical worlds in the recording studio and on stage, singing soul, funk, jazz, Americana, musical theatre, classical, and more. She appeared on NPR's Mountain Stage in 2013, was a quarterfinalist in the 2015 ATC, and won Best Cover Song in the 2015 Ohio Music Awards. In addition to her performing and recording schedule, Baldwin runs a full private studio, is the creator and editor of CommercialVoiceResources.com and teaches contemporary and functional vocal pedagogy at colleges, conferences and workshops across the country.

Jessica Ann Best recently made her debut with the Center for Contemporary Opera in their production of *Jane Eyre* in New York City. This is her third world premiere in 2016 – a privilege she cherishes. This summer she returned to the Savannah VOICE Festival, singing the title role in *Alice Ryley* by Michael Ching. In June, she performed in *Shot!* With Nickel City Opera and *Bastianello* with the Rochester Lyric Opera. Her credits include: Gotham Chamber Opera, The Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program, Savannah Music Festival, Opera Tampa, Finger Lakes Opera, and The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Melissa Brobeck is a singer-actress-musician and voice teacher who wants to make art with her friends and embolden her students to sound their voices. She studied opera at Eastman School of Music (.B.M) and UNCG School of Music, Theatre and Dance (M.M) before returning to musical theatre. She is currently performing in her one-woman show, *My Favorite Sings: Showtunes & Stories*. Melissa teaches private voice at the Athens Community Music School and Hocking College and is a proud member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Alexis Cole has performed with the Boston Pops and New York Philharmonic on stage at venues from Avery Fisher Hall to the Kennedy Center and Dizzy's Club to the Jazz Standard. She records for Motéma Music, NY, Chesky Records, NY and Venus Records, Japan. Cole was a winner of the NY Jazzmobile and Montreux Jazz Festival vocal competitions. She studied voice and piano at the University of Miami and William Paterson University, and holds a Masters

of Music from Queens College. She has also trained in Indian Classical singing at the Jazz India Vocal Institute in Mumbai. Cole won the Johnny Mercer Award during the 2016 ATC.

Katie Dixon currently tours with The Victory Belles, an Andrew Sisters Tribute group through the National WWII Museum, and is a company member of the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players. She holds a Master of Music Degree in Voice from Mannes School of Music. she has recently been seen as Jellylorum and Grizabella in Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of *Cats* for Broadway at Sea. Katie starred on the stages of NYC's Lincoln Center and New World Stages, Opera Hong Kong, and Opera Naples. She's traveled to the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh Scotland to portray Lily in the award-winning production of *The Secret Garden*, and was also featured with the Disney Philharmonic Concert Series.

Stephen Dobson has called Savannah home since 1991. He studied Vocal Performance at Mercer University, and was a member of honor choirs for Mercer and Armstrong Atlantic State University. He was a member of the Georgia All State College Choir, Savannah Symphony Choir, toured with the Continental Singers, and performed at Carnegie Hall. Stephen served in the Air Force and Air National Guard. He joined the cast of The Savannah Theatre in 2010. Stephen was honored and thrilled to have the opportunity in 2013 & 2014, to play the lead role in *Les Misérables*. 2017 marks Stephen's third year competing in the ATC, having won the Silver Medal in 2015.

Jonathan Estabrooks holds a Masters of Music from the prestigious Julliard School in NYC and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Toronto. Discovered by 5-time Grammy Award winning producer Dave Reitzas (Groban, Streisand, Buble), he joined forces with 4-time Grammy Winning producer Dave Reitzas and Broadway orchestrator Oran Eldor, traveling to the famed Westlake Studios in Hollywood to record his debut classical-crossover album 'These Miles' with the Macedonia Radio Orchestra. He has been likened to that of a young Ron Howard, on the Concert, Opera and Musical Theatre stage by the *NY Times*.

Erica Everett has competed in various competitions and festivals, and has performed throughout the continental United States and abroad. She holds a Bachelor's in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Oakwood University and went on to receive her Master of Music in Performance:

Voice from the University of Michigan. Among her other accomplishments, she is a songwriter and recording artist contributing to various projects.

Grace Field has performed in multiple productions across the country at theatres including Off Broadway's June Havoc Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Theatre, The Fulton Theatre and many more. She has also had the privilege to work with Broadway's Stephen Schwartz, Rebecca Luker, Seth Rudetsky, and Tim Lacynzki among others. She received a double major from Rice University in Visual Arts and Performance and continued her artistic studies at Texas State University. Her favorite roles include Cosette (*Les Miserables*), Magnolia (*Showboat*), Laurey (*Oklahoma*), Nellie (*South Pacific*), Sandy (*Grease*) and Cinderella (*Into the Woods*).

Brian Giebler performs regularly with the GRAMMY® Award-winning Conspirare of Austin and the GRAMMY® nominated Seraphic Fire of Miami; he also is a member of the GRAMMY® nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street in Manhattan, where he most recently sang the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. He has been heard singing diverse repertoire around the world. A "faultless high tenor" (*Seattle Times*) with "great elegance of tone and phrasing" (*Baltimore Sun*), Giebler has been a soloist with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, American Classical Orchestra, New York City Chamber Orchestra, and this season he will make his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall.

Kristin Gornstein sings with some of the most exciting and innovative companies in the classical world in cities throughout the U.S. and beyond. Most recently, she premiered the role of Paul in Kurt Vonnegut's only opera, *Happy Birthday Wanda June*, with Indianapolis Opera. In 2015, Kristin was a vocal fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, performing works by Bach, Korngold, and Golijov. She also debuted the role of Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Loft Opera in Brooklyn, New York, and the title role in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, both to critical acclaim. This May, Kristin will sing the role of Ramiro in a co-production of Mozart's *The Secret Gardener* with The Atlanta Opera and NYC's On Site Opera.

Jocelyn Hansen is currently pursuing a DMA in voice performance. Adept in both opera and musical theatre, she enjoys spanning the two genres. In the past she has worked with Arbor Opera Theatre, Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, College Light Opera Company, and Lyric Stage Irving. Some past roles include The Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Poppea in

L'incoronazione di Poppea, Liesl in *The Sound of Music*, Sgt. Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls*, Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*, and Jo March in *Little Women*, Elsie Maynard in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and Babette in *Beauty and the Beast*. Jocelyn was recognized as a national semifinalist for both the Classical Singer (2015) and NATS (2014) musical theatre competitions, and is a returning ATC contestant.

Gillian Hassert is a singer and an actor who earned her B.F.A. in Vocal Performance from Carnegie Mellon University. She has performed in cabarets, workshops and readings at the Players Club, Studio 54 and the Laurie Beechman, among others. Collaborating with new composers has become almost an obsession, and some favorite projects include works with composers Eric Dietz and Hurley & Osborne. Currently she is traveling with the national tour of "Fame" playing the lovable and soulful Mabel Washington. She is looking forward to a production of *Side by Side* by Sondheim in March with Resonance Works in Pittsburgh, and is thrilled to be back at the ATC in 2017.

Katherine Henly has performed with Virginia Opera; Hawaii Opera Theatre; New York Musical Theatre Festival; New York International Fringe Festival; O'Neill National Music Theater Conference; The Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman; and as a young artist with Utah Festival Opera, Ash Lawn Opera and The Glimmerglass Festival. As a soloist, Katherine has performed with Worcester Symphony Orchestra; The Valery Ponomarev Jazz Big Band; Utah Lyric Opera; Utah Valley Symphony Orchestra; The Ramsey Wind Symphony; Palisades Virtuosi; and in concert at Mechanics Hall and Carnegie Hall. She made her off-Broadway debut as Elsa in Sheldon Harnick's musical *Dragons* at The York Theatre, and can be heard on the studio recording with Tony Award-winner Michael Cerveris. She is a graduate of Ithaca College (B.M.) and Brigham Young University (M.M.).

Kisma Jordan most recently sharing her fusion project *OperaSoul* with audiences at TEDxDetroit 2016, has enjoyed performances which include features with Michigan Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Annapolis Opera, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, and Omaha Symphony Orchestra. Among her honors are the Jensen Vocal Competition and The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Amy Justman's career as a crossover soprano has spanned musical theater, classical music, jazz and beyond. Her Broadway credits include the revival of *Company* (also as a pianist in the

actor-orchestra), *Phantom of the Opera*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, and *White Christmas* and the off-Broadway revival of *Passion*. Concert highlights include *The Mikado* (Carnegie Hall), *Disney on Classic* (Tokyo Philharmonic), *Mahagonny Songspiel* (Ravinia Festival), and works such as Bernstein's *Mass* (recording on Naxos), *Carmina Burana*, and Bach's *St. John Passion*. She can be heard on several jazz recordings as well as Tania León's Grammy-nominated *Inura*. Justman is a winner of the Kurt Weill/Lotte Lenya Competition and received her MM from Manhattan School of Music and her BA from Yale University.

Sarah Mesko makes her Metropolitan Opera debut as the Second Lady in *The Magic Flute* in the 2016-2017 season. She will also be heard in recitals with the Dallas Opera at the Dallas Museum of Art; at the University of Arkansas and Henderson State University in Arkansas; and with tenor Paul Appleby for the George London Foundation at the Morgan Library in New York City. She will also sing Dejanira in Handel's *Hercules* with the Oregon Bach Festival and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Mercury Orchestra in Houston.

Aundi Marie Moore has captured the hearts of many audiences and critics alike with her rich warm expressive tones. Celebrated for being a 2016 winner of the American Traditions Vocal Competition in Savannah, Georgia and 2015 winner of the American Prize in Voice. Career Highlights on the opera stage include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with L'Opéra de Monte Carlo for her international operatic debut, Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Sarasota Opera, Soprano 2 in *Facing Goya* with the Spoleto Festival USA, Serena in *Porgy and Bess* with Atlanta Opera, Young African American Soprano in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *Rappahannock County* with Virginia Opera, and Odessa Clay in the World Premier of *Approaching Ali* with Washington National Opera.

Christia Nastasi versatile repertoire encompasses opera, art song, oratorio, musical theater, and jazz. She has been heralded by the National Metropolitan Opera Competition resulting in six first place titles as well as being a National Semi-finalist. Her most performed operatic roles include Puccini's Liu in *Turandot*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Verdi's Desdemona in *Otello*, among others. Highlights from her theater repertoire include Sharon Graham in *Master Class*, Laurie in *Oklahoma*, Princess Winnifred in *Once Upon a Mattress*, and Maria in *The Sound of Music*. Ms. Nastasi, raised in Nashville, TN, has been a featured soloist at the historic Ryman Auditorium as well as a member of the Jazz Vocal Workshop led by the acclaimed jazz pianist, Lori Mechem.

Brittany Proia is an accomplished singer, actor and songwriter and performs regionally and Off-Broadway with The York Theatre Company, Peterborough Players, Frog and Peach Theatre Co, Ozark Actors Theatre, Nebraska Shakespeare, New Jersey Rep, Urbanite Theatre and the Asolo Repertory Theatre. She is a graduate of NYU's Steinhardt School with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training where she holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Acting.

Megan Schubert has performed world premieres at Carnegie Hall; music by Stockhausen for an audience under umbrellas in a torrential downpour; with robots while locked inside a giant Van de Graaff Generator; on a bike flying by the audience at McCarren Park Pool; as an evil video game character; with a master of Cambodian Classical dance; for inmates at a maximum security prison in Ossining, NY; with puppets at E 4th Street Fab! Fest; for Elliot Carter at a celebration of his 100th birthday; in Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler's film opera *River of Fundament*; shared the stage with such luminaries as Meredith Monk, Bang On a Can Allstars, and with many ensembles championing new art music and experimental jazz of today.

Bradley Smoak, who is known for his compelling presence on both the operatic and concert stages, continues to delight audiences with his charismatic charms and unique versatility across a wide variety of musical styles and theatrical characterizations. Currently a third-year member of the prestigious Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, he has had critically-acclaimed success with Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Wexford Festival Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Opera Omaha to name a few.

Brad Standley is an actor/singer/songwriter and semi-professional bacon enthusiast living in NYC. After graduating with his BFA, he toured Europe with the musical *Hair*. He began writing songs and formed Brad Standley & The Foxflies, which toured Europe, and had a residency in Las Vegas (Spotify/iTunes). Last year he was in the world premiere musical, *The 12*, with book by Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert Shenkan (DCPA). He is currently completing his new solo album and debuted as a Musical Theatre composer this summer with a staged reading of *Taming Lions*.

Nikki Switzer holds a B.F.A in Musical Theatre from Millikin University. She has performed all over the country while on tour with Spelling Bee (Rona) as well as numerous roles regionally.

Some favorites include Roz (9 to 5), Tarot Lady in the world premiere of Nightmare Alley, Narrator in Joseph... (3 times), Maggie (42nd Street) and many more. She has appeared on Louie (FX), Guiding Light (CBS) and filmed several TV pilots for Fox and CBS. She has taken some time to pursue other things that life has to offer as of late and is currently writing a book on personal finance for actors as well as teaching a course on getting debt free and financially fit in NYC.

Dara Tucker made her national U.S. television debut on "The Tavis Smiley Show" on Public Television in 2015 and opened for Grammy award-winning jazz vocalist Gregory Porter in 2016. Tucker has performed at The Blue Note (NYC), Smoke (NYC), San Jose Jazz Festival and The International Festival of Arts and Ideas (New Haven, CT). Tucker was named Best Jazz Vocalist at the 2016 Nashville Industry Music Awards. She has released 3 studio projects, and is slated to release her 4th album, "Oklahoma Rain" in the spring of 2017.

Brenda Marie Turner received formal vocal training at Stetson University in Deland, Florida. She has been the soprano soloist for several staple oratorios with organizations throughout the country. Brenda has performed with Orlando Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Treasure Coast Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Mainstreet Opera, and multiple small companies throughout the south and mid-west. Brenda is also the Founder/Artistic Director of Opera Ouvert and produced its inaugural production, *La Boheme*, in May 2016. She is currently a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus and is engaged to do solo work with small orchestras and choral groups in Atlanta and Chicago in the near future.

Missy Wise was the first female winner of the National Association of Teachers of Singing's National Musical Theater Competition. Her Chicago acting credits include: Guys & Dolls (Martha/Adelaide), Legally Blonde (Elle's Mom; Judge), Hair (Dionne/Tribe), Zanna, Don't! (Karla/Cindy), Amour (Claire/The Whore). Other regional credits include: Into The Woods (The Witch), Bonnie & Clyde (Blanche Barrow) Ragtime (Mother), The Civil War (Sarah/Performer), Evita (Eva Peron), Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida (Amneris), The Old Maid and the Thief (Miss Todd), The Medium (Madame Flora). In addition to musical theater, she has two albums on iTunes, the most recent release topping out at #12 on the Singer/Songwriter charts.

Jordan Wolfe most recently starred as James in Pasek and Paul's '*James and the Giant Peach*' and Harold Bride in '*Titanic*' with Slow Burn Theatre Co. at Broward PAC. NY/Off-Broadway: *Richard III*, *Love's Labors Lost* (NY Classical Theatre), '*Trouble: A New Rock Musical*' (MIFT),

Prospect Theatre, Musicals Tonight!, Manhattan Rep, and four appearances with the New York Musical Theatre Festival. Regional: 'Camelot' (Mordred, Gretna Theatre/Westchester Broadway Theatre), 'The Secret Garden' (Dickon), 'The Chosen' (Reuven), 'Grease' (Doody), 'She Loves Me' (Arpad), 'A Funny Thing...Forum' (Hero), 'Dracula' (Jonathan Harker - World Premiere,). TV: *Law & Order: CI*.

BIOGRAPHIES OF 2017 ATC JUDGES



ANDREW LIPKA, Tony and Grammy nominee

Andrew Lipka wrote the Tony-nominated music and lyrics for the Broadway musical “The Addams Family” as well as the music and lyrics for numerous other productions including “The Social Network,” “A Few Good Men,” “Big Fish,” “The Farnsworth Invention,” and Outer Critics Circle Award-winning “The Wild Party.” Lipka has also won the Drama Desk Award for best music in addition to the Outer Critics Circle Award for best Off-Broadway musical. The accomplished singer is

proud to have been the music director for Kristin Chenoweth for many of her concerts since 1999 and has conducted the San Francisco, Chicago, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, among others, for Chenoweth. His recordings include Julia Murney’s “I’m Not Waiting,” “The Wild Party,” “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown” which earned him a Grammy Award nomination, “A Little Princess,” and many more. Lipka, who serves on the council of The Dramatists Guild, is thrilled to participate as a judge for the 2017 ATC.



SYLVIA MCNAIR, two-time Grammy winner and regional Emmy winner

Sylvia McNair’s three-decade career has spanned the musical realms of opera, oratorio, cabaret, and musical theater while taking her from the Metropolitan Opera to the Salzburg Festival, from the New York Philharmonic to the Rainbow Room, from the pages of *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* to the *London Times* and the cover of *Cabaret Scenes*. She has been a soloist multiple times with nearly every major opera company

and symphony orchestra in the world. In 2000 McNair sang the Back B-minor Mass with the

Vienna Philharmonic for Pope John Paul II at The Vatican. She has earned a Master's degree with Distinction from the Indiana University School of Music, the Ohio Governor's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Entertainment, and the Indiana Governor's Arts Award. Her engagements include ten seasons at the Ravinia Festival performing with Broadway legends, a three-season national tour of Gershwin's "Here To Stay," and her one-woman show 'Subject To Change.' McNair is honored to judge this year's competition.



KURT OLLMANN

Kurt Ollmann, a baritone, has established a wide-ranging international career in recital, concert and opera. A distinguished orchestral soloist, he has sung with the London Symphony Orchestra, L'Orchestre de Paris, Rome's Accademia de Santa Cecilia, the New York Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the orchestras of Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia and San Francisco, among many others. Ollmann has presented song recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and in Paris, Barcelona, Montreal, New York, Washington D.C., Chicago and at Tanglewood as well as various other European and North American cities and festivals. He has also sung in Lebanon, Kuwait, El Salvador, Honduras and Bolivia. Among Ollmann's many recordings are Gounod's "Roméo et Juliette." Gershwin's "Oh, Kay!," and a Grammy award-winning version of Bernstein's "Candide" as well as "On the Town," and Ravel's "L'Heure Espagnole." Ollmann is excited to return to the competition this year.

ATC BOARD MEMBERS

Daniel C. Cohen, President, is a well-respected attorney in Georgia and South Carolina.

Cohen is a full time Mediator and Team Leader at Miles Mediation, and is a partner at Brannen, Searcy & Smith, LLP in Savannah. Danny was an ATC participant 2002-2004, majored in voice performance in college, is on the Advisory Board for the Savannah VOICE Festival, and is a frequent soloist in the Savannah area.

Heyward Gignilliat, Vice President, Endowments, has an extensive Savannah presence.

Gignilliat's career includes Sales for Coca Cola and Owner of Gignilliat Realty & Management Company. Heyward's volunteer positions and accreditations are Vice President of St. John's Hunt Club in Burkley, SC, President for St. John's Hunt Club, Board Member of the GA Society Colonial Wars, Board Member at St. Andrew's Society, Past Vice Chair for Savannah Transit Authority, Past President for the Mental Health Association of Savannah, Past President of The Oglethorpe Club, Past Secretary of The Society of Cincinnati of Georgia, Delegate for the General Society of Cincinnati and Past Board Member of the Civitan Club.

Justin Addington, Vice President, has served as Director of Music and Worship for Skidaway Island United Methodist Church since June of 2010. A SIUMC, Justin conducts the 50 voice Chancel Choir, two adult handbell groups, and one of three Children's Choirs. In addition to these duties, he serves as organist, manages the church's concert series, and oversees all aspects of the church's worship life. Justin received a bachelor's degree in Music Education and graduated with honors from Limestone College in 2007. At Limestone, Justin was the recipient of the Katherine Pfohl Music Scholarship, and won first place in the Musical Theatre division of the South Carolina NATS competition. After graduation, he was honored as the 2012 Young Alumnus of the Year, and currently serves on the college's Presidential Advisory Council. Justin recently completed a master's degree in Sacred Music from Concordia University Wisconsin with an emphasis in Choral Conducting. Justin is a member of the Music Educator's National conference, the Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians, The Hymn Society of America, The American Guild of Handbell Ringers, The American Choral Directors Association, The Charles Wesley Society, and is immediate past Dean of the Savannah Chapter of the American Guild of

Organists. He is also active in community and professional theatre, having been an actor and Musical Director/Pianist for many shows.

Barbara Jenks, Treasurer, is a licensed CPA and holds a MBA. Jenks Volunteer positions and accreditations include Past Board Member for Savannah Choral Society, Treasurer for Savannah Friends of Music and Treasurer for the Special POPS Tennis.

Colleen Reynolds, Interim Executive Director, was recently appointed as interim executive director. For the previous few years she provided administrative support to the ATC in her role as the Senior Vice President of HostSouth – Savannah’s Event Planning, Production and Trade Show Company of over 30 years. Colleen has extensive client service and project management experience in Event Planning, Hospitality and the Interior Design Industry, both in Savannah and in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. She has served on PTA School Board for several years in the capacity of Communications, Events and Membership. Colleen is excited to continue to support the ATC as interim executive director and in event fundraising roles.

Vale Rideout, Artistic Consultant, a 2006 ATC Gold Medalist, continues his duties as the organization’s Artistic Consultant. American tenor Vale Rideout has garnered critical acclaim for his musical artistry and superb stagecraft throughout the United States and Europe. In addition to many credits in musical Theater and opera, including two years as Raoul in the Hamburg, Germany production of The Phantom of the Opera. He has sung with opera companies such as San Francisco Opera, Lost Angeles Opera, Minnesota opera, Nashville Opera, Central City Opera and Boston Lyric Opera championing roles by Mozart, Britten, Gounod, Donizetti and many living American composers. Vale has sung with major symphonies around the nation as well, such as The Lost Angeles Philharmonic, The Dallas Symphony, The Nashville Symphony, The New York Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony and the Pacific Symphony. The Colorado native can be heard on the recently released live recordings of Elmer Gantry (on Naxos, winner of two Grammy awards (2012), and voted No. 1 by Opera News “Best of the Year”), and Rio de Sangre (Albany Records), both produced by Florentine Opera. He is the tenor soloist in a live recording of Carmina Burana with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. He can also be heard on the Newport Classics recording of The Ballad of Baby Doe, the world premiere recording of Kurt Weill’s The Eternal Road and David Schiff’s Gimpel the Fool (both on Naxos), The Inspector by John Musto and the role of Robert MacNamara, in Steven Stucky’s August 4th,

1964, with Jaap Van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. He is featured on the upcoming first recording of Carlisle Floyd's *Wuthering Heights* with Florentine Opera and his first solo CD recording of Benjamin Britten and Gerald Finzi's song cycles.

Carol Bell became the first African American female manager for the City of Savannah and has served local government as Central Services Director for over thirty years. She has taught several courses in the graduate program in Public Administration at Savannah State University and has conducted numerous workshops on "problem solving", "strategic planning" and "budgeting" and conducts leadership training for managers. Bell owns her own business, Professional Arrangements, which includes leadership coaching and training, artist booking and management, special event planning and grant writing. Mrs. Bell is also extremely active in the gospel music industry, serving as Co-Chair of the Women's Division of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, a member of the Board of Bobby Jones Gospel and one of the show's co-hosts. As Business Manager of the Georgia Mass Choir, she assisted in coordinating the appearance of the Choir in the filming and appearance of Touchtone Pictures' "The Preacher's Wife", starring Whitney Houston and Denzel Washington.

Patty Gignilliat, an independent author and composer, Patty completed three historical creative nonfiction plays for children and is currently working on another piece. Her work has been performed on a number of Florida stages. She founded Patrician Productions and has provided writing, production and talent to area enterprises from real estate to the U.S. Military. She won a state award for a video on a new development that promoted the economic interests of a growing North Florida region.

Maddie Harwood, past Vice President, Committees, has established an illustrious career as President & CEO for Conference and Exhibits Management and a member of the Board of Directors for The Landings New Neighbors Board.

Dr. Allen Henderson, versatile artist, teacher, arts administrator and baritone. Allen Henderson is currently Executive Director of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the world's largest professional association of voice teachers, supervising a talented staff in promoting continuing education for voice teachers; publishing a recognized scholarly journal, *Journal of Singing*; and promoting voice education among a wide array of constituencies, from recreational singers to voice educators and medical doctors. He is also Professor of Music at

Georgia Southern University where he teaches voice and foreign language diction. He holds degrees from Carson Newman College (BM) where he was the outstanding graduate in music, The University of Tennessee (MM), and the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati (DMA) where his minor was in Arts Administration and he was winner of the prestigious Corbett-Treigle Opera Competition. As baritone soloist, Dr. Henderson has appeared in concert, opera, and oratorio across the USA.

A district winner and regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera auditions, Henderson was winner of the 1995 National Federation of Music Clubs Artist Awards and since has appeared throughout the US in recitals under the auspices of the NFMC. Henderson has presented papers on his research at national and regional professional conferences and has been a consultant for the Yamaha Corporation. AS a church musician, Henderson has served both full and part-time as a minister of music at churches in Oklahoma, Ohio, Georgia, and Tennessee and currently serves as Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Statesboro, Georgia.

Eric Kennedy has more than twenty years of experience as a senior executive and consultant in a wide range of industries. Having worked in various corporate and boutique environments in the financial industry as an executive, consultant and entrepreneur, Mr. Kennedy brings a multi-faceted experience to managing organizations. Kennedy is currently the owner of HostSouth, an event rental business in Savannah.

Susan Kleine, career includes a meeting and event planner, educator for 25 years and project manager for Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. Kleine is Past President of the Rotary Club of Skidaway Island, a Trustee for the Georgia Rotary Student Program and is President for the Savannah Newcomers Club.

Elizabeth (Ann) Lytle, is a native of Pittsburgh, PA who has found a beloved home in Savannah. Ann is a steadfast Steelers fan, an emerging Bulldogs fan and was appointed to the Board of the American Traditions Competition in 2015. She loves music and young people and sees how the ATC has positively impacted singers (and listeners!) lives and wants to play a part. Ann enjoys being with people, and walking in our beautiful city

Susan Whitaker, was born and raised in Akron, Ohio. She attended The College of Wooster in Ohio and graduated with a degree in Social Work. She met husband Ron there and moved with

him to 7 states during his career. They moved to The Landings in 1998. During the “vagabond” days Susan had full time positions as a social worker at the Akron (Ohio) General Medical Center and later as the Regional Coordinator for Head Start in the New Hampshire/Vermont region. In Akron, Susan was a member of the Junior League and a volunteer at the Akron General Medical Center, Planned Parenthood and the PTA. She also taught English as a second language while there. Community service included two years as the President of the Upper Main Line YMCA Swim team in Berwyn, Pennsylvania and was elected to be a Commissioner of the Hennepin County Park Board in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Before moving to Savannah, Susan was active in Hospice Atlanta. In Savannah, Susan is a volunteer at America’s Second Harvest, Park Place Outreach, Savannah Philharmonic, Interfaith Hospitality Network and Landings Landlovers. She serves as a member of the board at American Traditions Competition, Savannah Hospice and the Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra. Susan is also a member of The One Hundred, benefitting Children’s Hospital at Memorial University Medical Center.

Elizabeth Oxnard, has a career that includes an assistant position with Sugar Co. in Mobile, AL, Sugar Trader at Trade House, NY, NY and a Trust Officer in Savannah, GA. Oxnard was Past President for the ATC, Treasurer for The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Georgia – National Headquarters, Secretary for the Historic Savannah Foundation, President of the Savannah Symphony Guild, a board member for Savannah Symphony, Vice President & President for the Lucas Theatre Restoration, Board member with Hospice Savannah, Inc., Chairman for the Hospice Savannah Foundation, Board Member with the Savannah Book Festival, Board Member at Savannah Country Day School, a member of Savannah Friends of Music and a proud graduate of Trust School in Birmingham, AL.

Amy Inglis Peirsol, past co-president’s career includes Certified Wealth Strategist with twenty years of experience providing fiduciary, wealth, legal and tax advisory services designed to create a significant competitive advantage to business development teams seeking to acquire and retain HNW clientele. Senior Vice President & Private Wealth Advisor, J.D., LL.M. South State Bank (2011 – present). V.P. & Trust and Fiduciary Trust Specialist, J.D., LL.M., Wells Fargo Private Bank (2007-2011). V.P. Manager of Charitable Tax, J.D., LL.M., Wachovia (2005-2007). Vice President & Senior Financial Advisor, J.D., Robertson Banking Company (1994-2005). Peirsol’s volunteering positions include the following: Board Member & Chair, Hospice Savannah Foundation (2009 – present); Board Member, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church

Endowment, Skidaway Island (2013- present); Savannah Estate Planning Council (2007 – present); The Rotary Foundation – Paul Harris Fellow Award (2005); Alabama Bankers Association – Trust Division, Member of Executive Committee (2005), President (2002) and Member of the Board (1996-2005) as numerous other positions.

Beckett Spreng, has extensive work and volunteer experience: 1974-1975 Assistant to Editor of Senior Scholastic Magazine, New York City, 1975-1979 Media Placement Specialist with Carlson, Rocky & Associates – a New York City Public Relations Firm, 1994-2006 Sales Associate of Laura of Pembroke Fine Clothing and Furnishings, Canton, OH, 2011-president co-owner of the Lake Erie Freedom Boat Club and Reservations Manager for Lake Erie Freedom Boat Club. Spreng's volunteer experiences include previous ATC board positions: VP of Marketing and Public Relations, 2012-2014, 2002-2007 Board Member of Quest Alcohol and Rehabilitation Services, Canton, OH, chairing several committees during these years including their major fundraiser raising \$200,000 for Quest, 1994-2007 Board Member of Women's Board for Aultman Hospital, Canton, OH, chairing several committees during these year including their major fundraiser raising \$400,000 for Aultman Hospital, 1988-2007 Board Member of Canton Museum of Art, chairing several opening night galas for exhibits for the museum, 1984-2001 Junior League, chairing over 10 committees during these years, including three of their major fundraisers raising over \$125,000 for the Junior League.

Dick Wallace, is an associate broker at Celia Dunn Sotheby's International Realty. A former developer and builder, he moved in 1981 to Savannah, where he has worked as a stockbroker and mortgage banker. Dick holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from George Mason University. On Saturday evenings, he hosts "Music Americana," a weekly fold music program on Georgia Public Broadcasting heard on more than 16 stations.

Jim Wann, a native of Chattanooga, TN, and the lead composer/lyricist for the Tony-nominated (Best Musical) *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, also originated the role of "Jim" in the 1982-1983 Broadway hit, a pioneering work for actor-musicians that has been presented across the country and around the world. In 2014, the *New York Times*' Charles Isherwood, reviewing the Summer Encores production at NY City Center, wrote that Pump Boys "hums along like a vintage Mustang." Wann's off-Broadway highlight included 1995's *King Mackerel & the Blues Ar Running: Songs and Stories of the Carolina Coast*; and 2007's *The People vs. Mona: A Musical Mystery Screwball Comedy*, written with his wife, Patricia Miller (from Vidalia), and set in

southeast Georgia. In 2010, the Carolina Chamber Music Festival commissioned *A New Bern Romance*, a song cycle composed by Wann and performed by Ron Raines (baritone) and String Quartet to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of New Bern, NC. Wann's cds include *Pardon My Southern Accent: Jim Wann Sings Johnny Mercer*. He and Patricia live on Tybee Island and in the Hudson Valley.

Deborah H. Warner, enjoys a career that includes Bradley Engraved Stationery Company in Tampa, FL, Tampa Bay Steel, Tampa, FL, Burton & Associates Private Investigators, Tampa, FL, and Deborah H. Warner Interiors, Tampa, FL. Warner graduated from University of Georgia and has held volunteer positions with Amaryllis Garden Club, Tampa, Florida, Junior League of Tampa and Young Life, Tampa, Florida.

Mike Zaller is an original cast member, as well as one of the owners, of the Savannah Theatre. He has performed many roles locally and nationally including a National Tour of *The Will Rogers Follies* as Will Rogers. Zaller is currently a licensed Life Insurance agent, working with Northstar Financial Partners, Inc.