



## AMERICAN TRADITIONS COMPETITION ALREADY PREPARING TO LAUNCH 24<sup>TH</sup> SEASON

**SAVANNAH, GA- August 22 2016** -The Savannah VOICE Festival may be over, but there's no need for Coastal Empire area music lovers to fret. The American Traditions Competition (ATC) launches its 24<sup>th</sup> season with a Judges' Concert at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, 2017. The concert, to be held at Skidaway Island United Methodist Church, will feature performances by ATC new judges Andrew Lippa and Judy Kaye, and returning judge Kurt Ollmann.

Applications for the 24<sup>th</sup> season, which is slated to run Feb. 20-24, 2017, are being accepted online at [www.americantraditionscompetition.com/Apply.html](http://www.americantraditionscompetition.com/Apply.html). All interested vocal artists are encouraged to apply before the Oct. 20 deadline. Contestants will be announced Thursday, Nov. 3, and all 28 of the chosen participants will be awarded cash prizes.

Official preparations for the upcoming contest got under way in May with the Season Kickoff Fundraiser at Bryson Hall in downtown Savannah. Guests enjoyed cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a 50/50 raffle and musical entertainment provided by previous Gold Medal award winners Michael Maliakel and Mikki Sodergren, who were accompanied by Justin Addington.

Since the spring launch, organizers have been busy putting all the pieces in place to ensure the 24<sup>th</sup> ATC is the smoothest and most successful yet. The event will include some crowd-favorite components, as well as new and exciting features, such as a collaboration with the Savannah VOICE Festival. The Sherrill Milnes American Opera Award will be awarded to the contestant who sings the best American Opera aria during the ATC, securing for the winner the opportunity to sing in the SVF's 2017 season and a \$500 prize.

This latest award adds another level of excitement to the American Traditions Competition, which already boasts a Ben Tucker Jazz Award, Johnny Mercer Award and prize money to vocalists of over \$44,000 including the Gold medal award with a prize of \$12,000. The ATC is also delighted to once again have the support of the Savannah Friends of Music who are sponsoring the fifth place award in 2017.

ATC Board of Directors President Daniel Cohen said the board and event administrators are working hard behind the scenes and have been receiving positive feedback from everyone who will be involved with the weeklong celebration.

“The 24<sup>th</sup> season, like so many others, will feature a great mix of longtime favorite events and some new initiatives, performances and partnerships. We work hard to keep the competition exciting while maintaining the standards of excellence our established fans have come to expect. We’re certain that audiences – newcomers and returning supporters alike – will be quite impressed by everything we have planned,” Cohen said.

For more information on the American Traditions Competition, please visit [www.americantraditionscompetition.com](http://www.americantraditionscompetition.com).

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