



AMERICAN TRADITIONS VOCAL COMPETITION TO PREMIERE SPECIAL SAVANNAH CHRISTMAS SONG AT JOHNNY MERCER BIRTHDAY BASH

SAVANNAH, GA – November 14, 2016 – The American Traditions Vocal Competition’s second annual Johnny Mercer Birthday Bash “Hooray for Hollywood” will include a special Savannah-centric Christmas song this year.

The concert will celebrate the 107th birthday of Savannah’s favorite son, Johnny Mercer, which makes it the perfect event for premiering a holiday tune written for and inspired by the Hostess City, ATVC’s home for 24 exciting years.

The song, dubbed “Christmas in Savannah,” was written by former ATVC judge Jim Wann, who said his work and experience with American Traditions is largely what compelled him to pen the lyrics.

“Originally, I had a melody and a different set of words – it was a Christmas song, but not yet Christmas in Savannah. I re-lyricized it to be Savannah-specific and sent it last year to some folks I know at the Savannah Philharmonic,” Wann said.

Philharmonic Conductor and Artistic Director Peter Shannon liked the song and thought it would be a nice addition to the Philharmonic’s annual Holiday Pops concert, which was already set to feature the vocal stylings of 2015 ATVC Gold Medal-winner Alexander Edgemon.

“Alexander sang it, and it was great, but I was inspired to go forward with a new arrangement to be more piano-based and to include more voices,” Wann said.

“So, I talked to David Shenton, who has been an ATVC accompanist and

someone I worked on the Judges Concert with. He arranged it for four voices and a piano and, over the summer, we met up in the studio and recorded it with other past ATVC contestants Mikki Sodergren, Michael Maliakel, Jonathan Estabrooks and David's wife, Erin Shields. David conducted the session and played the piano."

That autumn, Sodergren and Maliakel even traveled to New York's Hudson Valley and sang "Christmas in Savannah" with Wann at a Doctors Without Borders benefit concert he had arranged.

"People loved it. People who don't know anything about Savannah really did like it, so that gave me a good feeling," Wann said, "especially because I was inspired by the beautiful voices I'd heard at ATVC through two years as a judge, and by David Shenton's creativity. This new four-part vocal quartet version they're going to premiere is essentially a new version of the song, and it is very specifically connected to the American Traditions Vocal Competition."

Johnny Mercer Birthday Bash "Hooray for Hollywood" is scheduled for 6:30-9:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, at The Landings Plantation Club, 71 Green Island Road, Savannah.

The evening will feature a Hollywood 1930s art-deco theme, and attendees are encouraged to dress elegantly. Plans for the night include dinner, dancing, entertainment, a 50/50 raffle, contestant sponsorship, and a member/cash bar. 2001 American Traditions Vocal Competition Gold Medal winner Kim Michael Polote, 2006 Gold Medal winner and ATVC Artistic Consultant Vale Rideout, and 2014 Gold Medal winner Mikki Sodergren will delight attendees by performing some of Mercer's classics.

Space is limited, but a few tickets are still available. Tickets to this event cost \$85 per person. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the American Traditions Vocal

Competition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and world-renowned arts institution dedicated to providing a forum for showcasing tomorrow's vocal talents and superstars in Savannah. The ATVC's next season runs from Feb. 20-24, 2017.

To purchase tickets, please contact Maddie Harwood at 912-508-1133 or maddie@cemamerica.com.

To learn more about ATVC, please visit www.americantraditionscompetition.com.

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