



AMERICAN TRADITIONS COMPETITION ANNOUNCES CELEBRITY EMCEE AND PLANS NEW KICKOFF PARTY

SAVANNAH, GA – January 19 2016 The 23rd American Traditions Competition (ATC) is just around the corner, and all the event details and logistics are falling smoothly into place. The judging panel has been established, contestants have officially been named, venues are chosen and tickets to the competition's various performances and contests are now available.

The nonprofit ATC, established as a world-renowned arts institution 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. In 2016, it runs from Feb. 21-25 at various locations, including Skidaway Island and the Savannah Theatre.

An exciting addition to this year's competition is the appointment of Celeste Headlee, Georgia Public Broadcasting celebrity and professional singer, as the emcee of the finals which will take place on the evening of Thursday Feb. 25 at The Historic Savannah Theatre on Bull Street. Headlee has worked in public radio since 1999, as a reporter, host and correspondent. She was the Midwest Correspondent for NPR before becoming the co-host of the PRI show "The Takeaway" and has guest hosted a number of NPR shows. Headlee also anchored election coverage for PBS World in 2012 and was a regular guest on CNN. She holds multiple degrees in music, still performs as a professional opera singer and appears on gospel artist Lea Gilmore's CD, "Classically Blue."

The competition gets under way at 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, with the Judges and Winners concert at the Skidaway Island United Methodist Church. This initiative builds on the traditional Judges concert of previous years. Immediately following the concert, a new kickoff party will be held at The Landings Plantation Club on Skidaway Island. Guests will be able to meet the judges and contestants before enjoying dueling piano performances by ATC pianist, Anastasia Victory and her husband Michael O. Mitchell. Tickets for this fun filled evening cost \$35.

Victory, returns to the ATC as a talented accompanist for a fifth year, is a Russian-born pianist, music director, composer, arranger, orchestrator, songwriter and singer known for her

ability to proficiently play multiple music styles. As a member of the 3 Mo' Divas group, she was featured on a televised PBS special, DVD release and an album broadcasted in the United States and Canada. She is also known as the voice of AñaVañA a Pop/Rock band signed to Australian Zip Records. Victory's music is featured on MTV reality show "Made." She boasts an impressive array of Broadway credits and achievement awards. Victory honed and refined her spectacular musical abilities at the Juilliard School of Music, the School of Sound and Audio Engineering, the LaGuardia School of Performing Arts, the Lucy Moses School of Music, and the Moscow Music Conservatory of Tchaickovsky Pre-School.

Mitchell, an accomplished musician, is the music director for Amateur Night at the world's famous Apollo Theater. He also is music team for NBC's The Wiz Live! He has a multitude of impressive Broadway credits and has performed with Grammy winners Bob Mintzer, Michael J. Fox, Billy Porter, Joan Jett and many others. Since graduating from DePauw University with a degree in Music Business, Mitchell has composed, arranged, performed and produced several albums nationally and internationally. He continues to perform around the world and is currently working on a solo project that incorporates jazz, gospel, classical, soul and blues genres.

"To have Celeste Headlee as the emcee for our finals and Anastasia and Michael's participation in a dueling pianos segment at our kickoff party is an absolute honor. These two incredibly accomplished and well-known musicians will undoubtedly keep the audience riveted with an entertaining mix of well-known tunes, humor and some crowd involvement," ATC Artistic Consultant Vale Rideout said. "This is the perfect way to kick off the 2016 American Traditions Competition and all the associated festivities. We expect a wonderful week."

Ticket costs are unchanged from last year. Quarterfinals attendees can buy one \$15 ticket for one session or one \$25 ticket for two sessions. Semifinals admission is \$20 for one session or \$35 for two sessions. General seating for the Judges and Winners concert is \$35 or \$50 for premium seating. The same pricing structure holds true for the finals. Five Day passes are available starting at \$125.

To buy American Traditions Competition tickets or for more information on the events or the kickoff party, please visit www.americantraditionscompetition.com

Or call the Savannah Theatre Box Office at 912-233-7764

- ENDS -

For media inquiries, interviews and photography, call Lesley Francis at 912-429-3950 or Ashley Roberts at 912-220-2976 or email lesley@francis.com or ashley@lesleyfrancispr.com.

Editor's Note

Celeste Headlee is the host and executive producer of GPB Radio's talk show "On Second Thought," airing weekday mornings [at 9:00](#). With nine television stations, 18 radio stations and a multi-faceted web presence, GPB strives to educate, entertain and enrich the lives of our viewers and listeners with

programming that includes statewide radio news, current affairs, high school sports, enriching local series and documentaries about our state and educational resources for teachers and students.