

YOHAN PARTAN APPOINTED ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR AND CHORUS MASTER

Modesto, California – August 30, 2016

Townsend Opera is pleased to announce that Yohan Partan has been appointed to the position of Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master of Townsend Opera. A graduate of the Stanislaus State Department of Music, Mr. Partan returned to the region after receiving his Master of Music degree at the University of Southern California and working as a chorus director for several organizations in Los Angeles. Mr. Partan currently serves as the Choir Director at Pitman High School.



Ryan Murray, Music Director of Townsend Opera, said: “I am excited to welcome Yohan to the company. Not only does he have a strong background in preparing and leading choruses, he has also spent considerable time conducting orchestras, which will contribute greatly to our rehearsal process for our main stage operas.”

Mr. Partan’s duties will include rehearsing and preparing the Townsend Opera Chorus for main stage opera productions, assisting Music Director Ryan Murray with orchestra and staging rehearsals, covering for Mr. Murray in case of absence or illness and providing musical support to the staff and cast of an opera production.

Mr. Partan’s first production with the Company will be Ned Rorem’s *Our Town* in January 2017.

About Yohan Partan

Yohan Partan currently serves as Choir Director at Pitman High School and as a private music teacher. He previously served as choir director of Hermosa Beach Youth Music, music director of the San Fernando Valley Youth Chorus, and Director of Music at the Los Altos United Methodist Church in Southern California.

Mr. Partan has a Master of Music degree in Choral Music, having studied under Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe, Dr. Nick Strimple, Dr. Christian Grases, and Don Brinegar at the University of Southern California. His orchestral conducting coaches at USC included Dr. Lucinda Carver and Larry Livingston.

During his graduate studies, Mr. Partan conducted the Apollo Men's Chorus and the Thornton Opera Chorus. He also prepared *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Mussorgsky under the coaching of Larry Livingston, conducting the USC Thornton Symphony. Additionally, he served as guest conductor and chorus master for Center Stage Opera.

Mr. Partan received a Bachelor of Music degree with a Student Achiever Award in choral music education and vocal performance at California State University, Stanislaus.

About Townsend Opera

Townsend Opera has thrived artistically under the leadership of Matthew Buckman, named the company's first Executive Director in February 2008 and General Director since July 2012, and Ryan Murray, Principal Conductor in July 2008 and Music Director since July 2013. The company has significantly increased its role in the community by establishing ground-breaking partnerships with CSU Stanislaus and the Modesto Junior College, which allows students to participate actively in the artistic activities of the company and expanding the company's mission of providing performance opportunities for the members of its community. A new artistic partnership has brought the resident singers of San Francisco Opera to Modesto to perform with the company on a regular basis, giving residents of Modesto and the surrounding region the opportunity to hear some of the best singers in the country in a live performance.

A new artistic initiative called Opera Remix was launched in the 2011/12 season to reconnect opera with the 21st century. Since that time, many events have explored new modes of presentation and performance styles to great success, with attendance at these events surpassing past opera events. The philosophies behind the Opera Remix initiative have been implemented throughout the organization, including updating the standard repertoire to take place in modern times, performing new or little performed American opera, bringing patrons behind the scenes like never before, and breaking down the traditional social barriers commonly found in opera. This work culminated in the world premiere of an African American folk opera in May 2014.

Townsend Opera was founded in 1983 by Modesto native Erik Buck Townsend, a graduate of Modesto High School, who had a successful international career as an opera singer. Buck Townsend worked tirelessly to lead the company for 25 years, often directing, conducting, or singing in performances, building sets, and organizing costumes. After being diagnosed with cancer in 2007, Buck and then-Board President Carl Bengston led an initiative to establish second-generation leadership to ensure the company would continue beyond his lifetime and thrive in its new home at the Gallo Center for the Arts. Matthew Buckman became the company's first Executive Director in February 2008, and worked with Buck until his passing in September 2008 to establish a long-term strategic plan that has led to new artistic achievements for the company.

The company moved to the larger Mary Stuart Rogers Theater at the Gallo Center for the Arts, marking the last step of a complete redesign of the company's business model. This transition resulted in a 32% growth in audience in the 2010/11 season and provided cost savings that have made possible an unprecedented increase in artistic quality during a sustained period of economic difficulty.

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