

RYAN MURRAY WINS THE AMERICAN PRIZE FOR OPERA CONDUCTING

Modesto, California – March 20, 2017

Townsend Opera is excited to announce that Artistic Director Ryan Murray is the 2016/17 winner of *The American Prize* for Opera Conducting. Ryan's dynamic performance of *A Streetcar Named Desire* first captivated audiences in 2015, and has now been awarded the highest honor by *The American Prize*. Of the award, Ryan said, "I'm incredibly humbled and honored to receive this award. It represents the hard work and dedication of the entire opera community in the central valley and I'm truly grateful to all who were a part of making this such a fantastic production."

"The Board of the Townsend Opera is thrilled and proud that our Artistic Director Ryan Murray has received the 2016 American Prize for Opera Conducting. This nod from leading professionals in musical performance only confirms what Townsend Opera and Modesto have known for some time: Ryan Murray is one of the finest young conductors working today. Our company and our community are enriched by his artistry and dynamism." – Hillari DeSchane, Governance Chair, Board of Directors, Townsend Opera

Mr. Murray is quickly gaining prominence as a leading young conductor, widely recognized for his interpretations of both new American opera and the standard repertoire. Ryan is a past winner of the Vienna Philharmonic's prestigious Ansbacher Fellowship for Young Conductors, and was a 2016 semi-finalist for the Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music.

In addition to his recent appointment as Artistic Director of Townsend Opera, Ryan is also the Associate Conductor of the Modesto Symphony Orchestra, Music Director for the Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and Resident Conductor and Choral Director of Music in the Mountains. He previously served as a conductor for BASOTI and The Opera Academy of California in San Francisco.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN PRIZE

The American Prize is a series of national competitions in the performing arts providing regional, national and international recognition for the best recorded performances by individuals and ensembles each year. Administered by Hat City Music Theater, Inc., The American Prize was founded in 2009 and is awarded annually. The competitions of The American Prize are open to all U.S. citizens, whether living in this country or abroad, and to others currently living, working and/or studying in the United States of America, its protectorates and territories. Judges include award-winning composer and conductor David Katz, renowned Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano, Susanne Mentzer, and internationally acclaimed Metropolitan Opera dramatic soprano, Sharon Sweet.

Townsend Opera Contact:

Charla Jeanne Lawson

209.523.6426

clawson@townsendoperaplayers.com

PO Box 4519

Modesto, CA 95353