

Livermore Valley Opera NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2021

Photos attached

Livermore Valley Opera Named 2021 Winner of “The American Prize” in Professional Opera Division

LIVERMORE, CALIF. – The Tri-Valley’s own professional opera company the Livermore Valley Opera, celebrating its 30th Anniversary season, is the 2021 winner of The American Prize in the Professional Opera division for its March 2020 performances of Zemlinsky’s *A Florentine Tragedy* and Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*. The American Prize is the nation's most comprehensive series of non-profit competitions in the musical and theater arts.

"The Livermore Valley Opera is thrilled to have been selected as the winner of the 2021 The American Prize in Professional Opera Performance, for *A Florentine Tragedy* and *Gianni Schicchi*," says Erie Mills, LVO Artistic Director. "The entire double-bill production was a labor of love and skill for all involved. It rarely happens when all the elements of a production share equal value. This time the magic really worked!"

The American Prize is unique in scope and structure, designed to recognize and reward the best performing artists, ensembles, composers, conductors and directors in the United States based on submitted recordings. The American Prize was founded in 2010 and is awarded annually in many areas of the performing arts.

The winning two one-act operas – one a tragedy, one a comedy, are rarely performed together. Based on fragmentary tales by two literary giants Oscar Wilde in the first case, Dante Alighieri in the second, *A Florentine Tragedy* tells a tale of jealousy and commerce, while *Gianni Schicchi* is a farcical tale of a Mediterranean family as they fight over a dead relative’s will, ultimately bonding over their love of money and hatred of Schicchi, who proves far smarter than all of them.

"Every once in a while, the perfect production is handed to you," says Layna Chianakas, Stage Director for the double-bill operas, "and this was one of those moments. The perfect cast and production team was assembled and the synergy was palpable. I am confident enough to know that I had a large hand in the success of the piece, but modest enough to realize that without the incredible cast, Jean Francois Revon's set design, Alex Katsman's deftness in front of the orchestra, Erie Mills' great leadership and countless

others' skill and guidance, this prize would not have been awarded to this deserving company. I feel very blessed to have been a part of that perfect moment in time."

David (Volosin) Katz, founder and chief judge for The American Prize shared his congratulations with Erie Mills on September 10, when the 2021 winners were announced:

"We hope that your selection as a winner of The American Prize will be as much of an inspiration to you as your music-making was to us. May it help bring additional attention to your company's considerable musical gifts."

Baritone Robert Mellon, who debuted for LVO as the leads in both operas, is returning to LVO to perform in *Celebrate! An Evening of Favorite Operatic Ensembles*, October 9 and 10, at the Bankhead Theater. Also returning for *Celebrate!* is *soprano* Liisa Dávila who sang Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*.

The winning performances of *Gianni Schicchi* and *A Florentine Tragedy* are available on-demand on [LVO's YouTube Channel](#).

About the The American Prize

The American Prize National Nonprofit Competitions in the Performing Arts is the nation's most comprehensive series of contests in the classical arts. The American Prize is nonprofit, unique in scope and structure, and is designed to evaluate, recognize and reward the best performers, ensembles, composers, directors and administrators in the United States, based on submitted recordings. There is no live competition. The American Prize has attracted thousands of qualified contestants from all fifty states since its founding, has awarded nearly \$100,000 in prizes in all categories since 2010, and is presented annually in many areas of the performing arts.

About LVO

Livermore Valley Opera was founded in 1992, and presents fully-staged operas at Livermore's Bankhead Theater in the spring and fall. This gem of a theater features excellent lines of sight and acoustics, helping the opera to attract talented singers and stage directors for their performances.

LVO is a professional opera company and a 501(c) 3 non-profit charitable arts organization. For more information, visit LVOpera.com.

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