



For Immediate Release

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## Michigan Opera Theatre Announces 2017-2018 Studio Artists

*Tenor Michael Day, Soprano Monica Dewey, Baritone Harry Greenleaf and Bass Erik Van Heyningen Join Returning Mezzo-soprano Briana Elyse Hunter for 2017-18 Season*

Detroit, May 25, 2017 - Michigan Opera Theatre is pleased to announce the 2017-2018 Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artists. The roster includes tenor, Michael Day; soprano, Monica Dewey; baritone, Harry Greenleaf; bass-baritone, Erik Van Heyningen; and returning Studio Artist mezzo-soprano, Briana Elyse Hunter.

Entering its third year, the MOT Studio is the product of MOT Founder Dr. David DiChiera's long and passionate commitment to providing opportunities for talented young singers. Studio Artists receive up to two years of advanced training and performance opportunities as they hone their skills through master classes and individual work with an array of world-class professionals, guest artists, and coaches.

"As part of our mission, MOT is committed to supporting the next generation of opera talent," said MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord. "Every artist was once a student, and we are excited to continue to do our part in preserving and supporting our beloved art form."

Celebrated American tenor Richard Leech continues to lead the program as Director of Resident Artist Programs with the support of coach/accompanist Tessa Hartle.

"Our first two years have brought some wonderfully talented artists to Detroit, each of whom is now taking their next steps on their path to a successful career," Leech said. "We are eager to build off that momentum to bring these opportunities to even more exciting young artists."

Supported by a major grant from the William Davidson Foundation, the program also serves as a central component of MOT's enhanced presence in the community through productions in the Detroit Opera House and community venues, as well as through concerts and special events. In addition to providing performance opportunities in its main stage productions,

MOT now produces a full-scale production dedicated to the Studio Artists. This season's Studio production will be Ricky Ian Gordon's "27" in March of 2018.

"Our Studio Artists provide us opportunities to perform and engage with the community on a more intimate level," said MOT President and CEO Wayne S. Brown. "We are excited to share this incredible new talent with the region."

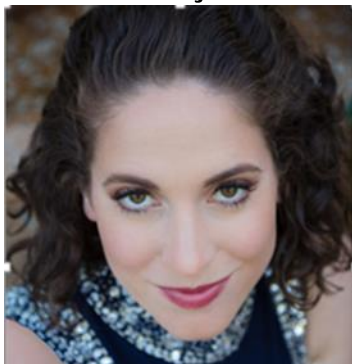
### The 2017-18 Studio Artists:

#### **Michael Day**



Tenor Michael Day joins the MOT Studio from his hometown of Rockford, Ill. His performance credits include singing with Indiana University Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Indianapolis Pro Musica, the Bloomington Chamber Singers and Utah Festival Opera, where he worked as a young artist. He holds a bachelor's degree in music education and vocal performance from Indiana University and is currently completing a master's degree from the university. He will return to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis this summer as a Richard Gaddes Festival Artist, singing the role of Al Joad in a new performing version of "The Grapes of Wrath." Next season, he will perform Don Basilio in "The Marriage of Figaro," Pablo Picasso and F. Scott Fitzgerald in "27" and Spoletta in "Tosca" at MOT.

#### **Monica Dewey**



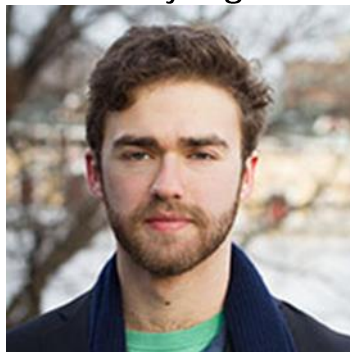
Atlanta native Monica Dewey joins the MOT Studio as its resident soprano. Monica has been a young artist with Chautauqua Voice Institute, Lyric Opera Studio Weimar and Harrower Opera Workshop as well as a Richard Gaddes Festival Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In 2016, Monica was the second place winner in the Central Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She received her Master of Music degree from Indiana University's acclaimed Jacobs School of Music and a dual bachelor's degree in Music and Arts Administration from the University of Kentucky. This summer marks Monica's second season with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis where she will make her role debut as Servilia in "Titus (La Clemenza di Tito)." In October, she will make a debut with San Francisco Opera singing Poussette in "Manon." She will perform the role of Alice Toklas in MOT's "27" in March.

### Harry Greenleaf



Baritone Harry Greenleaf is a native of Wixom, Mich. who made his debut with MOT in 2016 in the role of Top in "The Tender Land." His credits with MOT also include Le Bret in "Cyrano," Jack Wallace in "The Girl of the Golden West" and Morales in "Carmen." He has been a Studio Artist with the Wolf Tap Opera Company and an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera and a Young Artist with the Glimmerglass Festival. He holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and is an alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music. Future performances include working as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival this summer. Next season, Harry will perform with MOT as Marullo in "Rigoletto," Sciarrone in "Tosca" and the roles of Leo Stein and Man Ray in "27."

### Erik Van Heyningen



A native of Poway, Cal., bass Erik Van Heyningen makes his debut at MOT as a Studio Artist. He has sung with opera companies across the country, including performing as a Richard Gaddes Festival Artist and Gerdine Young Artist with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Erik holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance at Boston University and is completing a Certificate in Opera Performance from the university's competitive Opera Institute. This summer, Erik will join the Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Artist. Next season, Erik will perform Count Ceprano in "Rigoletto," Figaro in "The Marriage of Figaro" (cover), Balthazaar in "Amahl and the Night Visitors," Ernest Hemingway et. al in "27" and Angelotti and the Jailer in "Tosca" at MOT.

### Briana Elyse Hunter



Originally from Malvern, Penn., Briana Elyse Hunter returns for her second year as MOT Studio's resident mezzo-soprano. Her MOT credits include Wowkle in "The Girl of the Golden West," Jo March in "Little Women," Madeleine Audebert in "Silent Night" and Mercedes in "Carmen." She has been on the rosters of Santa Fe Opera, Knoxville Opera, American Opera Projects, Opera in the Heights, I SING BEIJING, Sarasota Opera, El Paso Opera and Music Academy of the West. She holds a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music in vocal performance and a bachelor's degree in theater from Davidson College. This summer, Briana will perform the role of Annie in "Porgy and Bess," and cover Arsameses in "Xerxes" at The Glimmerglass Festival. She will perform the role of Giovanna and cover Maddalena in MOT's October production of "Rigoletto" and star as Gertrude Stein in MOT's March production of "27."

For more information visit <http://www.michiganopera.org/opera/michigan-opera-theatre-studio/>.

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### **About Michigan Opera Theatre**

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Stephen Lord, Principal Conductor; Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).