



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Erica Hobbs  
(313) 237-3403  
ehobbs@motopera.org

**Michigan Opera Theatre to Present "The Grapes of Wrath"**

*Contemporary production turns Great American Novel into Great American Opera*

*May 11-19 at the Detroit Opera House*

DETROIT, April 30, 2019 – Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) will present "The Grapes of Wrath," a modern opera composed by Ricky Ian Gordon with a libretto by Michael Korie. Based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck, the production concludes MOT's series of operas based on great works of literature.

Set during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, the story follows the Joad family on their quest for survival, traveling from drought-ridden Oklahoma to the farms of California. Along with hordes of other migrant workers, the Joads struggle to find work and living wages, constantly facing starvation and injustice.

MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord said the opera is a distinctly American story with music, sets and costumes reminiscent of the 1930s.

"The rawness and the realism of this production make this novel come to life, bringing an historic American experience relatable to modern day patrons," he said. "It puts a lot into perspective."

He said the music echoes the opera's American story with elements of musical theater, folk and music from the time period.

"It's full of catchy tunes and lively choruses," he said. "It's very memorable."

The opera features Katharine Goeldner as Ma Joad, Tobias Greenhalgh as Tom Joad, Deanna Breiwick as Rosasharn, Deborah Nansteel as Granma, Geoffrey Agpalo as Jim Casy and Michael Day as Al Joad. Grammy-winning conductor Michael Christie makes his MOT debut and James Robinson directs.

It concludes MOT's opera series based on masterworks in literature following "Hansel and Gretel," "Candide" and "Eugene Onegin."

The opera is sung in English with English supertitles projected above the stage. MOT will offer a free opera talk one hour before the performance.

This production is made possible by 2019 Spring Opera Season Sponsor, General Motors with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Conductor Sponsor Elaine Fontana.

Ticket prices range from \$39 to \$160. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org), by calling (313) 237-7464 or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit).

For full casting and additional information visit <https://michiganopera.org/season-schedule/the-grapes-of-wrath/>.

### **"The Grapes of Wrath"**

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon, libretto by Michael Korie, based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck

Performed at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit

Saturday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 17, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 19, 2:30 p.m.

###

### **About Michigan Opera Theatre**

Michigan Opera Theatre, 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 by Dr. David DiChiera, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. The organization is led by President and CEO Wayne S. Brown, Principal Conductor Stephen Lord and Chairman of the Board Rick Williams. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).