Walter B. Rudolph is the featured guest for Utah State University’s 2017 Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture in Logan on Sept. 28.

Each year in conjunction with the Leonard Arrington Mormon History Lecture, the Library sponsors a writing contest. Students can win cash prizes up to $1,000 for attending the lecture and writing an essay.

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Opera has a unique way of strengthening character, developing empathy, releasing emotions and touching one’s soul according to Walter B. Rudolph, retired general manager of Classical 89, KBYU-FM and featured guest for Utah State University’s 2017 Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture in Logan.

Rudolph presents “Opera and its Voices in Utah” with a performance by American tenor Stanford Olsen, Thursday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m., at the Logan LDS Tabernacle, 50 North Main Street. The lecture is free and open to all.

The annual lecture honors Arrington, whose papers were donated to Utah State University’s Special Collections and Archives, a division in USU’s University Libraries. Part of the gift agreement was to offer an annual lecture on some facet of Mormon history.

“Opera initially did not cross the plains with the Mormon pioneers, nor did classical music,” Rudolph said. “But singing was a very important part of the pioneer heritage and everyday lives.”

Rudolph earned a bachelor’s in music and a master’s in musicology from Brigham Young University. He started a career in performance and teaching in the mid-1970s before turning to public radio. KBYU-FM became the noted source of classical music and arts support throughout the Wasatch front under Rudolph’s leadership.

Olsen, professor of voice from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, will perform during the lecture. One of the most successful and versatile artists of his time, his career spans more than 1,200 performances on five continents over the course of 30 years. Since his professional debut, he has performed more than 160 times with New York’s Metropolitan Opera.