

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Joanne Kay or Sarah Vardigans  
Email: [press@lamplighters.org](mailto:press@lamplighters.org)  
Phone: 415-227-4797  
Updated: 5/16/12



**Lamplighters Music Theatre Presents Gilbert and Sullivan's Classic Hit**

***THE MIKADO***

**July 27 - August 26, 2012**

***Walnut Creek, Napa, Mountain View, San Francisco, Livermore***

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (20 April, 2012) – The Bay Area's acclaimed **Lamplighters Music Theatre** opens its **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season** with Gilbert and Sullivan's delightful tale of star-crossed lovers, ***THE MIKADO***. **July 27-29** at the **Leshner Center for the Arts** in Walnut Creek, **August 4-5** at **Napa Valley Opera House**, **August 11-12** at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, **August 16-19** at **Novellus Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** in San Francisco and **August 25-26** at the **Bankhead Theater** in Livermore. For tickets (\$15-\$59) and information, the public may call the Leshner box office at **(925) 943-7469**, the Napa Valley Opera House box office at **(707) 226-7372**, the Mountain View box office at **(650) 903-6000**, the Yerba Buena box office at **(415) 978-2787**, and the Bankhead box office at **(925) 373-6800** or visit **[lamplighters.org](http://lamplighters.org)**.

Very possibly the most popular musical comedy in the English language, ***THE MIKADO*** is a playful satire set in a fanciful (and wholly imaginary) Japan. In a time when flirting is a capital offense, wandering minstrel Nanki-Poo has fallen in love with the beautiful Yum-Yum, fiancée to the recently appointed Lord High Executioner Ko-Ko. When the honored Mikado, emperor of Japan, demands the execution of Ko-Ko, and Nanki-Poo volunteers to take Ko-Ko's place under the condition that he first be allowed to marry Yum-Yum, chaos, desperation, and comical mayhem ensue in classic Gilbert and Sullivan style, with impromptu marriages, forged death certificates, and the revelation of a prince in disguise.

**CAST**

Ko-Ko: F. Lawrence Ewing  
Pooh-Bah: Robby Stafford  
Pish-Tush: John Melis  
Mikado: Wm. H. Neil  
Nanki-Poo: Robert Vann  
Yum-Yum: Moira McManus / Lindsay Thompson Roush (double cast)

Katisha: Sonia Gariaeff  
Pitti-Sing: Molly Mahoney  
Peep-Bo: Talia Levitan

Director **Jane Erwin Hammett** returns to the Lamplighters to stage her first production of *THE MIKADO*. Hammett has directed around the Bay for several years, including productions at Pocket Opera and the San Francisco Opera Guild's Education Outreach program. For nearly four years she performed across the U.S. and in San Francisco with two national companies of *The Phantom of the Opera* (directed by Harold Prince). Her outstanding performances have been recognized with two Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards and a Drama-Logue Award.

Conductor **Monroe Kanouse** was permanent conductor of Oakland Opera from 1981 through 1986. He led over 20 productions of Sacramento Opera from 1981 to 1998, and has also conducted for Milwaukee, San Diego, Baltimore, Lake George, West Bay, and Livermore Opera companies, along with frequent appearances with the Lamplighters. A member of the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music from 1992 to 2003, he conducted the annual opera production there. He has composed a comic opera, *Gambling Jones*, and an opera, *Voices of Calafia*, dealing with California's mythic queen.

**Sir William S. Gilbert** (book and lyrics) was a British dramatist and librettist best known for his operatic collaborations with composer Arthur Sullivan. In addition to his musical theatre works, he published numerous short pieces of humor and was also a cartoonist. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, he began a career as a barrister, supplementing his income and indulging his creative side with the publication of many short illustrated poems in the magazine *Fun*, using the childhood nickname "Bab" as his pen name, and creating the popular *Bab Ballads*. In 1863, he wrote his first professional play, *Uncle Baby*, which ran for seven weeks. In 1871, John Hollingshead commissioned Gilbert to work with Sullivan to create the operetta *Thespis, or The Gods Grown Old* for the Christmas season at the Gaiety Theatre. It would be another four years before the men worked together again. Gilbert and Sullivan's real collaborative efforts began in 1875 when Richard D'Oyly Carte commissioned them to write a one-act play, *Trial by Jury*. The operetta's success was so great that the three men formed an often turbulent partnership that lasted for 20 years and 13 operettas including *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *Iolanthe* (1882), *Princess Ida* (1884), *The Mikado* (1885), *Ruddygore* (1887), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), and *The Gondoliers* (1889).

While working with Sullivan, Gilbert continued to write plays, both serious dramas (*The Ne'er-Do-Weel*, 1878) and more humorous works (*Foggerty's Fairy*, 1881). Although he announced a retirement from the theatre

after the poor initial run of his last work with Sullivan, *The Grand Duke* (1896), Gilbert continued to produce plays up until the year of his death including an opera, *Fallen Fairies*, with Edward German (1909), and a one-act play, *The Hooligan* (1911). On May 29, 1911, Gilbert suffered a heart attack while swimming to the aid of two young ladies in the middle of a lake and drowned.

**Sir Arthur Sullivan** (music) was born in Lambeth, London, in 1842 to a musical family. His father was a bandmaster at the Royal Military College and before the age of 10 Sullivan had mastered all of the wind instruments in his father's band and composed his own anthem. At age 14 he entered, as the youngest participant, and won the competition for the first Mendelssohn Scholarship. He also won scholarships at several prominent academies and conservatories, the last of which was located in Germany where Franz Liszt listened to Sullivan's final thesis. Sullivan returned to England at age 20 and wrote the orchestral suite for Shakespeare's *Tempest* at the Crystal Palace. For the next 10 years, he was a professor of music, a teacher, and an organist. Regarded as the leading composer of the day, Sullivan had many influential friends in every circle of society, including many monarchs in Europe. In addition to composing "Onward Christian Soldiers," he also composed several major choral works, including *The Light of the World*, *The Martyr of Antioch*, *The Golden Legend*, and his lone grand opera, *Ivanhoe*.

It was not until Sullivan met his collaborator W. S. Gilbert that he came into his own as a composer of comic opera, and began one of the most felicitous pairings of music and libretto in the history of opera. In 1879, Gilbert and Sullivan came to America in order to protect their copyrights. While in the country, they introduced *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, taking New York by storm. Arthur Sullivan died in London on November 22, 1900.

**Lamplighters Music Theatre** Lamplighters Music Theatre was founded in 1952 to produce the comic operas of librettist W.S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan, and is now recognized as one of the world's pre-eminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The Lamplighters' repertoire includes all the surviving works of these creative geniuses, as well as a select group of comic operas and classic musicals by other composers that exemplify their artistic vision. Critically acclaimed artistic successes for the Lamplighters include honors for Best Production and Best Director at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England and local awards in nearly every performance, direction, and design category. The hallmarks of a Lamplighters production are lavish costumes and sets, live orchestra, excellent comic acting, and gorgeous unamplified singing that showcases the beauty and purity of the human voice.

Gilbert & Sullivan created a new kind of music theatre. Their music is largely classical in style, but lyrics and music are perfectly matched; librettos are complicated, but highly literate, thought-provoking and hugely

entertaining. Between 1875 and 1896 they took the world of music by storm with their 13 comic operas, including *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Mikado*. Today, their topsy-turvy, melodic creations continue to inspire, intrigue and delight performers and audiences of all ages.

In addition to an active performance schedule, The Lamplighters provide performance and training opportunities in this unique style of classic music theatre to local theatre artists, and seek to promote appreciation for the works of Gilbert & Sullivan through youth programs, school performances and other types of community outreach.

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** The Bay Area's acclaimed **Lamplighters Music Theatre** opens its 60<sup>th</sup> season with Gilbert and Sullivan's delightful tale of star-crossed lovers, *THE MIKADO*. Very possibly the most popular musical comedy in the English language, *THE MIKADO* is a playful satire set in a fanciful (and wholly imaginary) Japan. In a time when flirting is a capital offense, wandering minstrel Nanki-Poo has fallen in love with the beautiful Yum-Yum, fiancé to the recently appointed Lord High Executioner Ko-Ko. When the honored Mikado, emperor of Japan demands the execution of Ko-Ko, and Nanki-Poo volunteers to take Ko-Ko's place under the condition that he first be allowed to marry Yum-Yum, chaos, desperation, and comical mayhem ensue in classic Gilbert and Sullivan style. Director **Jane Hammett** helms this witty and exotic production with **Monroe Kanouse** at the baton.

#### **WALNUT CREEK**

**WHERE:** Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive (at Locust)  
**WHEN:** Friday, July 27, 8pm  
Saturday, July 28, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, July 29, 2pm  
**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$20-54) please call **(925) 943-7469** or visit **lamplighters.org**

#### **NAPA VALLEY**

**WHERE:** Napa Valley Opera House, 1030 Main Street, Napa  
**WHEN:** Saturday, August 4, 8pm  
Sunday, August 5, 2pm  
**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$17.50-45) please call **(707) 226-7372** or visit **lamplighters.org**

#### **MOUNTAIN VIEW**

**WHERE:** Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro Street  
**WHEN:** Saturday, August 11, 8pm  
Sunday, August 12, 2pm  
**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$18-52) please call **(650) 903-6000** or visit **lamplighters.org**

#### **SAN FRANCISCO**

**WHERE:** Novellus Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 700 Howard Street (at Third)  
**WHEN:** Thursday, August 16, 8pm (pay your age night)  
Friday, August 17, 8pm

Saturday, August 18, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, August 19, 2pm

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$15-59), please call **(415) 978-2787** or visit **lamplighters.org**

**LIVERMORE**

**WHERE:** Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street

**WHEN:** Saturday, August 25, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, August 26, 2pm

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$22-46), please call **(925) 373-6800** or visit **lamplighters.org**

**PHOTOS:** High-resolution digital art can be found at  
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