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**Lamplighters Music Theatre Announces New Artistic Director**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (06 February, 2013) – San Francisco’s internationally acclaimed Lamplighters Music Theatre is pleased to announce the appointment of Rick Williams as its new Artistic Director. A member of the Lamplighters company for 35 years, Rick begins his tenure on March 1, 2013. From his start in the chorus of *Ruddygore* in 1978, Rick soon graduated to become one of the company's best-loved performers. He has performed every Gilbert & Sullivan patter baritone role, often multiple times, worked as Assistant Director to the company founder, Orva Hoskinson, and directed a production of *Cox & Box* in 2000. The winner of four Bay Area Critics' Circle Awards and of one Solano County Arty Award, Rick is currently receiving rave reviews for his portrayal of King Gama in the Lamplighters’ award-winning production of *Princess Ida*.

Rick expressed his feelings upon being appointed to this position: “It is a profound honor—and deeply humbling—to accept appointment by the Board as Artistic Director of this great Company we all love so deeply. Thanks to the dedicated and tireless leadership of our retiring Artistic Director Barbara Heroux, the Company is now in great shape. It's going to be a challenge to fill her shoes. My goal is to reach the Lamplighters' 75th Anniversary in even stronger shape than we are now.”

Barbara Heroux, the current Artistic Director, steps down from that position at the end of their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season. She has been a Lamplighters company member since 1974 with 13 of those years in a management role. Barbara will concentrate on her other positions as stage director for the Lamplighters and other companies around the Bay Area, and as Executive Director of Volti, a professional choir based in San Francisco. She states, “I’ll always be a Lamplighter – you don’t resign from your family! – but it’s time for somebody else to take the reins, somebody with the passion and energy to take this wonderful company to its 70th anniversary and beyond.”

Jim MacIlvaine, the Lamplighters Board President and a company member since 1978 states, “On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank Barbara for the enormous variety of work she has contributed over the years. With her spectacular creativity, devotion to the company and respect for our audiences, Barbara has

propelled the Lamplighters to unprecedented stage presentations. We will all miss working with Barbara—although we know that she will always remain a tremendously important and respected part of the Lamplighter Family. The Board of Trustees, the Staff and I now look forward to working with Rick and to moving into our 61st season together.”

**Lamplighters Music Theatre Bio:** 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 artists, and seek to promote appreciation for the works of Gilbert & Sullivan through youth programs, school performances and other types of community outreach.