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Lamplighters Music Theatre’s Artistic Director, Rick Williams, to Step Down

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (13 February 2017) – Rick Williams, current Artistic Director of the Bay Area’s acclaimed **Lamplighters Music Theatre** has announced that he will be stepping down effective April 1st, at the end of their 2016-17 Season. Rick has been a Lamplighters company member since 1978 and will continue his involvement with the Company as a performer.

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 also received rave reviews for his portrayal of King Gama in the Lamplighters’ award-winning production of *Princess Ida*.

Managing Director, Sarah Vardigans, states “We will miss Rick’s guidance in this role, and I am personally very grateful for his hard work and dedication, especially his support as we navigated through our new production of *The Mikado* last summer. Fortunately he is not going anywhere, and will remain an active and beloved member of the Lamplighter family.

“It has been my honor and privilege to serve this great Company as Artistic Director for the past 4 years,” said Williams, “In that time, I have been thrilled to achieve several longed-for accomplishments, including the first fully staged and costumed production by the Lamplighters of Gilbert and Sullivan’s final work, *The Grand Duke*. This was truly a landmark of which I am intensely proud. But it is now time for me to retire; I have reached my goals for the Company and can depart knowing it is in good hands. I will still be here, though, as a friend and member of the Company for the rest of my life!”

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. 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.