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Lamplighters Music Theatre Presents Gilbert and Sullivan's

THE SORCERER

March 16 - 24

Walnut Creek, San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (10 January, 2013) – The Bay Area's acclaimed **Lamplighters Music Theatre** closes out its **60th Anniversary season** with Gilbert and Sullivan's twisted tale of love, bewitchery... and why the two should never meet, ***THE SORCERER***. When you're in love you just want to share the joy so young Alexis hires a sorcerer to spike the punch at his engagement party with a love potion. It doesn't work out so well ... except for those of us who love Gilbert's humor and Sullivan's melodies! Last presented in 1996, it was high time to bring back the magic of *The Sorcerer*. This semi-staged Jewel Box production brings the wonderful Lamplighters Orchestra onstage and showcases Melissa Wortman's gorgeous costumes.

March 16 at **Leshner Center for the Arts** in Walnut Creek and **March 23 & 24** at the **Herbst Theatre** in San Francisco. For tickets (\$15-\$54) and information, the public may call the Leshner box office at **(925) 943-7469**, the City box office at **(415) 392-4400**, or visit **lamplighters.org**.

STAGE DIRECTOR: Jane Erwin Hammett

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR: James Campbell

CAST

Aline - Lindsay Thompson-Roush

Constance - Rose Frazier

Lady Sangazure - Megan Stetson

Mrs. Partlet - Kelly Powers

Alexis - Robert Vann

John Wellington Wells - Chris Uzelac

Dr. Daly - Baker Peeples

Sir Marmaduke - Robby Stafford

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.

WALNUT CREEK

WHERE: Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive (at Locust).
WHEN: March 16, 8pm
TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-54) please call **925-943-7469** or visit **lamplighters.org**

SAN FRANCISCO

WHERE: Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Avenue
WHEN: Saturday, March 23, 8pm
Sunday, March 24, 2pm
TICKETS: For tickets (\$15-44), please call **415-392-4400** or visit **lamplighters.org**

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