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Contact: Joanne Kay or Sarah Vardigans
Email: press@lamplighters.org
Phone: 415-227-4797
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Lamplighters Music Theatre Presents Gilbert and Sullivan's

IOLANTHE

August 2 - 25

Walnut Creek, Mountain View, San Francisco, Livermore

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (28 May, 2013) – The Bay Area's own **Lamplighters Music Theatre** takes a dig at ineffectual political rivalries with this satirical story about what happens when a band of fairies take over Parliament. Featuring the tongue-twisting tour de force "Nightmare Song", a pompous and dim-witted ruling elite, and a leading man who's half a fairy – from the waist up! As always, Gilbert's satire is delivered with such elegant absurdity that all you can do is laugh at how the more things change, the more they remain the same. This "fairy opera" was written at the midpoint of Gilbert and Sullivan's collaboration, when both artists were at the peak of their creative powers. Sullivan's captivating score, unmistakably influenced by both Mendelssohn and Wagner, contains some of his most accomplished and beautiful music.

August 2-4 at Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, **August 10-11 at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**, **August 16-18 at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** in San Francisco, and **August 24-25 at the Bankhead Theatre** in Livermore. For tickets (\$15-\$59) and information, the public may call the Leshar box office at (925) 943-7469, the Mountain View Box office at (650) 903-6000, the Yerba Buena Center box office at (415) 978-2787, or the Bankhead Theatre box office at (925) 373-6800, or visit **lamplighters.org**.

STAGE DIRECTOR: Barbara Heroux

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR: Baker Peeples

CAST

The Lord Chancellor - F. Lawrence Ewing / Rick Williams

Lord Mountararat - Bill Neely / Robby Stafford

Lord Tolloller - John Brown / Mike Desnoyers

Private Willis (*of the Grenadier Guards*) - Sean Irwin / Wm. H. Neil

Strephon (*an Arcadian Shepherd*) - John Melis / Samuel Rabinowitz

Queen of The Fairies - Sonia Gariaeff / Cary Ann Rosko

Iolanthe (*a Fairy, Strephon's Mother*) - Molly Mahoney / Michele Schroeder

Celia - Stephanie Dietz / Lizzie Moss

Leila - Katelyn Neumann / Maayan Voss De Bettancourt

Fleta - Susanna Ketron / Heather Tinling

Phyllis (*an Arcadian Shepherdess & Ward in Chancery*) - Elena Galván / Alexandra Sessler

WALNUT CREEK

WHERE: Leshar Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive (at Locust)

WHEN: August 2 at 8pm, August 3 at 2pm & 8pm, August 4 at 2pm

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-54) please call **925-943-7469** or visit lesherartscenter.org

MOUNTAIN VIEW

WHERE: Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro Street

WHEN: Saturday August 10 at 8pm, Sunday August 11 at 2pm

TICKETS: For tickets (\$20-53), please call **650-903-6000** or visit mvcpa.com

SAN FRANCISCO

WHERE: Lam Research Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 700 Howard Street

WHEN: Friday August 16 at 8pm, Saturday August 17 at 2pm & 8pm, Sunday August 18 at 2pm

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

LIVERMORE

WHERE: Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street

WHEN: Saturday August 24 at 8pm, Sunday August 25 at 2pm

TICKETS: For tickets (\$22.50-47), please call **925-373-6800** or visit bankheadtheater.org

PHOTOS: High-resolution digital art can be found at
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/lamplightersmt/>

Web ready digital art is available at
http://lamplighters.org/pr_images.html

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.