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GILBERT & SULLIVAN AT THEIR BEST!

OPERA NEW JERSEY TO PRESENT GILBERT & SULLIVAN'S GREATEST HIT

THE MIKADO

AT McCARTER THEATRE CENTER
JULY 12, JULY 17, AND JULY 25

Princeton, NJ -- Opera New Jersey, New Jersey's largest and most prolific opera company, will present Gilbert & Sullivan's greatest hit *The Mikado* on the Matthews stage of McCarter Theatre Center for three performances, July 12 at 2pm, July 17 at 8pm, and July 25 at 8pm.

The production will be staged by Michael Scarola, Opera New Jersey's favorite comic-director extraordinaire following on the success of last summer's *La Cenerentola*.

Set in the story-book Japanese village of Titipu, this hilarious tale of love, marriage, executions, and heroics brings to life some of Gilbert & Sullivan's most colorful and popular comic characters: three little maids from school, a hilariously pompous government official, a wandering minstrel, and a Lord High Executioner. Beautiful schoolgirl Yum-Yum (Anne-Carolyn Bird), is engaged to Ko-Ko the executioner (Curt Olds), although she falls in love with the romantic minstrel Nanki-Poo (Scott Scully).

This delightful operetta features some of Gilbert & Sullivan's best-loved songs, including, "The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring," "On a Tree by a River (Tit Willow)," "Three Little Maids," and "A Wandering Minstrel, I."

Recipient of a 2008 Sullivan Foundation Award, soprano Anne-Carolyn Bird is rapidly gaining attention by major companies in her young career. Ms. Bird opened the 2007-2008 Season at the Metropolitan Opera, performing in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and closed the season in *Macbeth*. She made her debut with the MET in the 2006-2007 Season, singing two roles in a new production of *Il Trittico*, the Young Lover in *Il Tabarro*, and Novice in *Suor Angelica*.

Quickly becoming an in-demand presence on American and international stages, tenor Scott Scully's recent credits include performances with the Dallas Opera, Opera Pacific, Edmonton Opera, and Austin Lyric Opera. In the 2009-2010 season, Mr. Scully will join the roster of the Metropolitan Opera singing the roles of Remendado in *Carmen* and the Young Prisoner in *The House of the Dead*, as well as participating in productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Turandot*.

Active in both musical theatre and opera, baritone Curt Olds has been seen in productions ranging from *Don Pasquale* and *The Magic Flute*, to Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* with Donna McKechnie and *The Three Penny Opera* with Bea Arthur. He appeared in the German production of Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Cats*, and also on Broadway in *Riverdance*. He has made Ko-ko in *The Mikado*, his signature role with some 13 separate *Mikado* productions to his credit.

The cast will also feature Peter Strummer, one of America's foremost character bass-baritones, who is a frequent guest of major opera houses everywhere, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, as well as opera houses in Germany and Austria; and Kathryn Cowdrick, who has been heralded as being one of today's foremost singing actresses. Ms. Cowdrick counts among her career highlights creating the role of Julia Child in Lee Hoiby's operatic monologue for mezzo-soprano entitled *Bon Appetit*, based on an actual PBS episode of the internationally renowned chef's original television series.

In addition to *The Mikado*, The 2009 Opera New Jersey Summer Season at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton will include Donizetti's bel canto tragedy *Lucia di Lammermoor* (July 10, 18, 26) featuring Lisette Oropesa and Jonathan Boyd; and Mozart's comic masterpiece *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (*Die Entführung aus Serail*, July 11, 16, 19, 24) with Jennifer Rowley, Rachele Gilmore and Scott Ramsey. All opera performances this summer will feature the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra as Opera New Jersey's partner in music making.

Further information on Opera New Jersey's Summer Season may be obtained on Opera New Jersey's website at www.Opera-NJ.org.

Tickets for the July operas at McCarter Theatre Center are available through McCarter Theatre at (609) 258-2787; online at www.mccarter.org; and in person at 91 University Place, Princeton.

Opera New Jersey

Opera New Jersey is recognized nationally as a leader among regional opera companies, providing high quality opera performances and exceptional educational offerings. Opera New Jersey seeks to stimulate, promote and satisfy interest in opera, build a strong and diverse audience base for the art form and foster the development of emerging artists. Opera New Jersey recently received its third straight prestigious Citation of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA). The Citation is NJSCA's highest honor and recognizes arts organizations that "exhibit the highest standards of excellence in artistry, operations, governance, public benefit and fulfillment of areas of Council priority." Opera New Jersey received its first citation in 2006, during their first year of eligibility. Most recently, Opera New Jersey was honored with a prestigious National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America grant, in recognition of its outstanding educational programming. For more information: www.Opera-NJ.org. For Tickets: 609-285-2787.

This season is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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