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**OPERA NEW JERSEY AND NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCE
GROUND-BREAKING ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIP**

February 19, 2009 PRINCETON, NJ - Opera New Jersey and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra will mark an exciting milestone with the announcement that these two leading New Jersey arts organizations have joined forces to collaborate on three productions this July in Princeton and to co-produce a production of *Carmen* at three venues across the state next February.

As reported in *The Star-Ledger*, the arrangement represents the cutting edge of a trend in the nonprofit arts industry. Facing hard times, arts organizations are learning that they must share if they want to grow.

“Collaboration is essential to the viability and fiscal health for smart arts organizations,” said André Gremillet, President & CEO of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. “The NJSO is thrilled to partner with ensembles of the caliber and excellence of Opera New Jersey and is pleased to have an increased artistic presence in the Princeton area and throughout the state by virtue of this collaboration.”

While many arts organizations are contracting or struggling to maintain artistic quality, the partnership between Opera New Jersey and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra means growth and continued artistic excellence for both. It will enable both organizations to reach new audiences and to demonstrate a heightened cultural relevance throughout New Jersey.

The two organizations share a common mission but are different in size and history. The 7-year-old Opera New Jersey, based in Princeton, runs on an annual budget of about \$1.7 million. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra is in its 86th season, with an annual budget of \$14 million.

Under this new partnership, Opera New Jersey will hire the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra for this summer’s three productions: Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The Mikado*, and Mozart’s *Abduction from the Seraglio*. The operas run in repertory at McCarter Theatre Center July 10-26.

Opera New Jersey and New Jersey Symphony Announce Ground-Breaking Collaboration

Next winter, the partnership deepens as both organizations and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark co-produce Bizet's *Carmen* featuring superstar mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves in Newark, New Brunswick, and Princeton.

"Adding an established orchestral sound enhances the grand nature of opera and will create an even better experience for our audience," said Scott Altman, General and Artistic Director of Opera New Jersey. "And ultimately, a better experience for the audience means a better result for our institutions, donors, grantors, and everyone that helps to bring world-class opera to New Jersey."

Talks began about 10 months ago on these projects. *The Abduction from the Seraglio* will be performed at McCarter's Berlind Theatre, an intimate space that accommodates a chamber-sized orchestra. *The Mikado* and *Lucia di Lamermoor* will be presented in the 1,100-seat Matthews Theatre, a first for Opera New Jersey during the summer, with a full orchestra.

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 American grant, in recognition of its outstanding educational programming. For more information www.opera-NJ.org.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra is comprised of some of the country's finest musicians, led by Music Director Neeme Järvi. Artistic excellence, innovative programming and community engagement are hallmarks of its mission. To best serve the people of New Jersey, the orchestra brings its programs to eight different venues throughout the state. Education and outreach programs enrich the listening experience for children and adults alike. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Broadcast Series airs regionally and on the Internet by 96.3FM WQXR (New York) and is a syndicated program carried throughout North America.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, visit www.njsymphony.org or e-mail information@njsymphony.org. Tickets are available for purchase by phone 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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