

NEWS RELEASE

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New Jersey State Council on the Arts Doubles Funding to New Jersey Opera and Awards Second Citation of Excellence

PRINCETON, NJ – **New Jersey Opera** announces yet more triumphs in an already brilliantly successful month. In addition to a Citation of Excellence and a 100% funding increase from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA), every one of the 11 opera performances at McCarter Theatre in Princeton was sold out for their 2007 Summer Season, which ended on Sunday, June 29.



For the second straight year, Princeton-based **New Jersey Opera** (NJOpera) has received the prestigious Citation of Excellence from the NJSCA. The citation, NJSCA's highest honor, was presented to NJOpera and 28 other organizations at the Council's recent annual meeting in Trenton.

The Citations of Excellence recognize arts organizations that "exhibit the highest standards of excellence in artistry, operations, governance, public benefit and fulfillment of areas of Council priority" according to the Council.

In addition to the Citation, NJSCA nearly doubled the grant awarded to NJOpera at the previous annual meeting. At the 2007 meeting, NJOpera was awarded \$64,000, which was up from the \$32,500 awarded at the previous annual meeting in 2006. This is one of the largest increases handed out by NJSCA this year.

"This vote of confidence from the state is a great honor," said Lisa Altman, Executive Director of New Jersey Opera. "It is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the entire NJOpera family of performers, board, staff, volunteers, supporters and friends of NJOpera."

Beyond those seated at the July season performances, several dates sold a large number of standing room tickets in order to accommodate audiences eager to see NJOpera's performances of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*), Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*.

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Future events for New Jersey Opera include a Gala at the Hyatt Regency in Princeton on October 13 and three semi-staged performances of *Rigoletto* in February 2008 at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, State Theatre in New Brunswick and Community Theatre in Morristown. The July 2008 Summer Season at McCarter will feature performances of Verdi's *La traviata*, Bernstein's *Candide* and Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella). Ticket information can be obtained at www.NJOT.org or by calling (609) 799-7700.

About New Jersey Opera

New Jersey Opera (NJOpera) is earning national recognition as a leader among regional opera companies, providing high quality opera performances, exceptional educational offerings and related activities. NJOpera 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. **New Jersey Opera** recently received its second 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." NJOpera received its first citation in 2006, during their first year of eligibility.

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.

Photo: The Major-General's Daughters in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* (NJOpera Summer Season 2007). Credit: Jeff Reeder

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