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2009 RHODE ISLAND
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Adam M.K. Short, Producing Director
adams@film-festival.org • 401.861-4445

“THE TOPSY TURVY WORLD OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN”
PREMIERES APRIL 4TH
Concert Revue Salutes Founders Of Ocean State Light
Opera And Features Original Cast Members

WHAT: Concert revue: "The Topsy Turvy World of Gilbert & Sullivan" Premiere

WHEN: Saturday, April 4, 2009; 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Bell Street Chapel, 5 Bell Street, Providence

WHO: The newly formed Flickers G&S Ensemble, produced by Flickers Arts Collaborative, producer of the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)

HOW MUCH: \$20, \$15 for seniors/students/former OSLO cast members; \$10 for RIIFF members. For more information, please call 401.861-4445.

WHY: To celebrate the original Ocean State Light Opera (OSLO), its founders and its artists! Monies raised by this program will support high school and college students to study film and media arts. RIIFF is a 501-C(3) non-profit organization. *Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

PROVIDENCE, RI (March 9, 2009) – On Saturday, April 4th at 7:30 p.m. at Bell Street Chapel, Providence, the newly formed Flickers G&S Ensemble will celebrate the works of Gilbert and Sullivan in an original semi-staged concert revue, dedicated to the memories of Scott Withrow, Ted Tuttle, and Ocean State Light Opera (OSLO), long a popular staple in Rhode Island's musical scene.

In "The Topsy-Turvy World of Gilbert & Sullivan", quirky characters, silly improbable plots, and gorgeous music collide for a unique opera experience. Gilbert and Sullivan take their musical inspiration from many sources – legit opera, opera parody, folk music of the British isles, Music Hall camp, and Anglican church music -- creating a distinctly "British" art form, that has entertained opera and theater audiences for more than a hundred years.

The newly formed Flickers G&S Ensemble, under the artistic directorship of Eric R. Bronner, features original OSLO cast members including Bronner; Mary Beth Kim, soprano/co-director; Roberta Janelle, mezzo-soprano; Gabriel Alfieri, baritone; Edgar Edwards, patter

baritone; with Melissa Jacobson, piano/musical director.

The revue includes music from *Pirates*, *Pinafore*, *Mikado*, *Patience*, *Yeomen*, *Iolanthe*, *Ruddigore*, and *Gondoliers*. Act I, "What's it all about?" presents favorite selections that introduce the typical G&S character types and the variety of G&S musical styles. Act II takes its inspiration from Anna Russell's "How to Write Your Own Gilbert and Sullivan Operetta" in a new work called "Mix 'n Match (or a New Gilbert & Sullivan Operetta made from 95% recycled materials)," compiled from the G&S and written by Eric Bronner and Mary Beth Kim with additions by Roberta Janelle.

The event will take place at the historic Bell Street Chapel, 5 Bell Street, Providence. Tickets are \$20 general admission with discounts for seniors, students and RIFF members. A special discount offer is offered to former OSLO cast members, who are invited to bring a program from an Ocean State Light Opera production with their name in the cast list, to receive a \$5 discount.

Tickets are on sale at the RIFF website (<http://www.film-festival.org/G&SEnsemble.php>) or by calling 401.861.4445. Tickets will also be sold at the door the night of the performance.

"The Topsy Turvy World of Gilbert & Sullivan" is produced by Flickers Arts Collaborative, now in its 27th year, founders and producers of the annual Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIFF).

ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIFF)** discovers and empowers filmmakers. Held in Providence, and locations throughout the state of Rhode Island, RIFF is one of only a handful of festivals worldwide that is a qualifying event for the Academy Awards (i.e. "Oscars"). RIFF incorporates gala celebrations, premiere screenings, VIP guests, industry seminars, educational programs, and award ceremonies into a weeklong extravaganza. Cited as one of the "Best International and Short Film Festivals in the United States," RIFF is New England's largest film festival, screening a record 200 films. Its innovative programming, cultivated industry ties, and loyal audiences have made the Festival a strategic and desirable platform for film premieres, drawing hundreds of independent filmmakers from around the globe. This year's Festival takes place August 4-9, 2009.

The Rhode Island International Film Festival is generously supported by *WJAR TV 10*, *The City of Providence*, *the Providence Tourism Council*, *Clear Channel Communications*, *Columbus Theatre Arts Center*, *The Providence Phoenix*, *Amtrak*, *the University of Rhode Island* and individual contributions.

For more information, write RIFF, PO Box 162, Newport, RI 02840. Telephone: 401-861-4445, e-mail: info@film-festival.org, website: www.RIFilmFest.org.

CELEBRATING THE LOST HISTORY OF OCEAN STATE LIGHT OPERA

The history of opera in Rhode Island is littered with the stories of companies that, for myriad reasons, disappeared. This Flickers G&S Ensemble program celebrates one company (and its two founders) who, for almost a decade, "got it right". Beginning in

1990, Ocean State Light Opera (OSLO), had an artistically and financially successful eight year run of critically acclaimed and often sold out performances.

Before OSLO, many Rhode Islanders may remember the G&S productions of Cabot Street Players (CSP), a popular community theater group founded in 1972. In 1990, Judy Shroeder, CSP Artistic Director, decided to retire her company. That very same summer, Cabot Street founding member Ted Tuttle (artistic director) and Scott Withrow (musical director) formed a new and separate company, Ocean State Light Opera. OSLO's maiden voyage, "Iolanthe," was embraced by enthusiastic audiences and critics alike.

With its home performance base in the theater of the Wheeler School on the East Side of Providence, OSLO continued for nearly a decade, performing G&S as its primary staple. In later years, OSLO productions regularly toured to theater festivals in Newport, Martha's Vineyard and Wolfboro, NH.

As conceived by Ted Tuttle and Scott Withrow, OSLO celebrated Rhode Island's professional classical singer community, casting leads from among the state's prominent singers and voice teachers. Minor roles and chorus parts gave aspiring music undergraduates and community singers a chance to perform onstage. Indeed, many of the lead performers in OSLO's later years began in the chorus of earlier seasons. Each summer season of OSLO brought the RI classical singer community closer together as teachers and students embraced the unique opportunity of working together as peers.

Also essential to Ted and Scott's plan was that all members of the cast were paid for their contributions. Performers were compensated in a profit-sharing co-op system. Once expenses were covered, cast members received shares (e.g. leading roles at three shares, secondary roles at two shares, and chorus members at one share).

In 1993, the company lost one of its leaders when music director Scott Withrow died of cancer. Co-founder Ted Tuttle passed the artistic director mantle to company member Marilyn Levine. Under Ted's direction, productions were very traditional, incorporating time-honored D'Oyly Carte conventions and humor. Marilyn brought a fresh eye to the standard repertoire. She used creative concepts and unexpected settings to highlight Gilbert's timeless themes and wit. After two seasons of ad-hoc music directors, Marilyn appointed conductor Ann Danis company music director. Under Ann's guidance, the accompaniment increased from a single piano to a small chamber orchestra.

As OSLO's success grew, Marilyn took advantage of the growing roster of professional singers to expand the company repertoire to include opera scenes concerts and one-act works by Menotti and Puccini. This began the transition from Ocean State "Light" Opera to Ocean State "Lyric" Opera.

In 1998, Marilyn Levine stepped down and Kathryn Jennings took the helm of the company under its new name Ocean State Lyric Opera, which was eventually renamed Opera Providence.

The passing of Ocean State Light Opera has left a vacancy in Rhode Island's music community. It is our wish that while OSLO may be "gone," it will not forgotten. We present this program in loving memory and celebration of Ted Tuttle and Scott Withrow and all those who shared in the joy of what was Ocean State Light Opera.

OSLO Production History

1990

Iolanthe

1991

Die Fledermaus

The Mikado

1992

Christopher Columbus
The Gondoliers

1993

The Pirates of Penzance
The Yeomen of the Guard
Amahl and the Night Visitors

1994

The Pirates of Penzance (Newport)
Sister Angelica/Trial by Jury
Midsummer Cabaret
Patience
Amahl and the Night Visitors/Jacob's Grace

1995

Ruddigore (Newport)
Ruddigore
The Pirates of Penzance (Martha's Vineyard)
HMS Pinafore
Cox & Box/Ballroom Scenes from Operas

1996

HMS Pinafore (Newport)
Iolanthe
Mid-Summer Cabaret
HMS Pinafore (Martha's Vineyard)
The Sorcerer
OSLO at First Night Fall River

1997

Opera Showcase
The Mikado
The Mikado (Martha's Vineyard)
Princess Ida
Withrow Cabaret

1998

(Ocean State "Light" Opera becomes Ocean State "Lyric" Opera)
The Pirates of Penzance (Operatunity)
The Gondoliers
Rigoletto

Postlude

Ocean State "Lyric" Opera becomes Opera Providence

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