



# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: December 11, 2023

## LAMPLIGHTERS MUSIC THEATRE

*Application No.:* LBR-2023-24-003  
*Business Name:* Lamplighters Music Theatre  
*Business Address:* 469 Bryant St.  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Arie Singer, Trustee  
*Nomination Date:* August 7, 2023  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Lamplighters Music Theatre is the oldest theater company in San Francisco, founded in 1952. Its mission is to be the premier producer of the art of Gilbert & Sullivan, as well as other compositions of comparable wit, eloquence, and musicality. Lamplighters Music Theatre is recognized as one of the world's pre-eminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The company has produced the entire Gilbert & Sullivan canon as well as other light opera and musical theater classics such as *Candide*, *The Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *My Fair Lady*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *A Little Night Music*, among others. Since 1952, Lamplighters Music Theatre has put up approximately 320 distinct productions, with a total of approximately 1,000 performances. Lamplighters is a semi-professional arts organization that uses a union orchestra for its performances.

Lamplighters Music Theatre has become a family tradition for generations of San Franciscans, with long-time audience members raising their children, and grandchildren, attending Lamplighters shows. Lamplighters Music Theatre has performed in at least 21 venues in the city of San Francisco, with six of these venues representing regular venues over the years: The Crossroads, Theatre Arts Colony, the Stern Grove Festival, the Harding Theatre, Presentation Theatre, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Herbst Theater.

Lamplighters Music Theatre has demonstrated its commitment to the community through its many outreach programs, including its schools and education programs. Lamplighters has partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District, other independent schools, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the San Francisco Opera. These programs bring music and theater to the children of San Francisco through Summer Music West and mini-residency programs and bring fun, accessible, and creative music and English language lyrics to the community's youngest members.

### CRITERION 1

**Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, Lamplighters Music Theatre has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

No base of base of operations for office work, etc. from 1952 to 1959 (7 years)  
226 McAllister St. from 1959 to 1961 (2 years)  
Harding Theater at Divisadero St. and Hayes St. from 1961 to 1968 (7 years)  
68 Julian Ave. from 1968 to 1982 (14 years)

**Legacy Business Program**  
Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





333 Dolores St. from 1982 to 1989 (7 years)  
1355 Fitzgerald St. from 1984 to 1998 (14 years)  
Presentation Theatre at 2350 Turk St. from 1989 to 1993 (4 years)  
630 3rd St. from 1994 to 1999 (5 years)  
85 Bluxome St. from 1999 to 2000 (1 year)  
469 Bryant St. from 2001 to Present (22 years)

## CRITERION 2

**Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, Lamplighters Music Theatre has contributed to the history and identity of the South of Market neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The organization is associated with the musical theater and operetta tradition.
- Lamplighters Music Theatre is associated with the great masters Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan, whose 14 comic operettas built the foundation for modern musical theater as we know it today, and whose music is present in such iconic popular culture settings as The Simpsons, Curb Your Enthusiasm, and Hamilton.
- Lamplighters Music Theatre is associated with national stars such as Geoff Hoyle (Zazu from The Lion King on Broadway) as Alfred P. Doolittle, Omari Tau (Banzai from The Lion King) as the Chevalier St. Georges, and local celebrities such as the Countess Katya Smirnoff-Sky (J. Conrad Frank) and Jennifer Mitchell, the last actress to perform the role of Snow White at San Francisco's iconic Beach Blanket Babylon.
- Lamplighters Music Theatre has been referenced innumerable times in print/visual media since its inception. Lamplighters has been featured in reviews, news articles, and newspaper advertisements from every decade from the 1950s on, including a 2009 KRON 4 News interview of Geoff Hoyle, the actor playing Alfred P. Doolittle about his role in My Fair Lady, and the use of language and accents in theater arts.
- In 1996, Lamplighters Music Theatre was awarded "Best of Festival" at the International Gilbert & Sullivan festival in England, beating out performance troupes from all over the world including from England and Japan, and solidifying the company as one of the world's preeminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The cast of that show closed out their award-winning performance by singing "Theme from San Francisco," in homage and gratitude to the company's home.
- Lamplighters Music Theatre has continually demonstrated its commitment to its local community, whether through partnerships with the San Francisco Unified School District to bring music and theater to the children of San Francisco or through raising money for The Park View Hotel, which provides single room occupancy housing to formerly homeless and very low-income adults.

## CRITERION 3

**Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, Lamplighters Music Theatre is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

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## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Lamplighters Music Theatre qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Musical theater company providing theatrical productions of wit, eloquence, and musicality.

## **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Theater.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Lamplighters Music Theatre currently located at 469 Bryant St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
Legacy Business Program

### **Legacy Business Program**

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# Small Business Commission

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

December 11, 2023

## LAMPLIGHTERS MUSIC THEATRE

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*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### **Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Lamplighters Music Theatre, currently located at 469 Bryant St.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 11, 2023, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Lamplighters Music Theatre in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Lamplighters Music Theatre.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Musical theater company providing theatrical productions of wit, eloquence, and musicality.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Lamplighters Music Theatre on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Theater.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on December 11, 2023.

---

Katy Tang  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes –  
Nays –  
Abstained –  
Absent –

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<h1>Legacy Business Registry</h1>	<h1>Application Review Sheet</h1>
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**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?  
 Yes       No

No base of base of operations for office work, etc. from 1952 to 1959 (7 years)  
 226 McAllister St. from 1959 to 1961 (2 years)  
 Harding Theater at Divisadero St. and Hayes St. from 1961 to 1968 (7 years)  
 68 Julian Ave. from 1968 to 1982 (14 years)  
 333 Dolores St. from 1982 to 1989 (7 years)  
 1355 Fitzgerald St. from 1984 to 1998 (14 years)  
 Presentation Theatre at 2350 Turk St. from 1989 to 1993 (4 years)  
 630 3rd St. from 1994 to 1999 (5 years)  
 85 Bluxome St. from 1999 to 2000 (1 year)  
 469 Bryant St. from 2001 to Present (22 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?  
 Yes       No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?  
 Yes       No

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** November 8, 2023

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
 Legacy Business Program

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City and County  
of San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,  
District 6

**MATT DORSEY**

麥德誠

August 7, 2023

Director Katy Tang, *Via email* <[Katy.Tang@sfgov.org](mailto:Katy.Tang@sfgov.org)>  
San Francisco Office of Small Business  
City Hall, Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Tang,

It would be my pleasure to nominate Lamplighters Music Theatre for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry. Lamplighters Music Theatre (LMT) serves a cross-generational community consisting of its audiences and performers. Both these groups value the Lamplighters' tradition of local musical and artistic excellence. In San Francisco, Lamplighters productions have been enjoyed by its audiences at the Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts, the Herbst Theatre, the Presidio Theatre, the Palace of Fine Arts, the Cowell Theatre at Fort Mason, and the Palace of the Legion of Honor, among others.

Lamplighters has become a family tradition for generations of San Franciscans, with long-time audience members raising their children, and grandchildren, attending Lamplighters shows. Since 1952, Lamplighters Music Theatre has put up approximately 320 distinct productions, with a total of approximately 1,000 performances. These productions have constituted an uninterrupted series of performance seasons encompassing 71 years.

Lamplighters has demonstrated its commitment to the community through its many outreach programs, including its schools and education programs which have partnered with SFUSD, other independent schools, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the San Francisco Opera. LMT would benefit from being included in the Legacy Business Registry, and it is my pleasure to nominate them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dorsey".

MATT DORSEY



# Legacy Business Registry Application



## Business Information

**Business name:** Lamplighters Music Theatre

**Business owner name(s):** Lamplighters Music Theatre is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization  
*Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business*

**Current business address:** 469 Bryant St, San Francisco, CA 94107

**Telephone:** ( 451 ) 227 - 4797      **Email:** info@lamplighters.org

**Mailing address (if different than above):**

**Website:** https://lamplighters.org/

**Facebook:** https://www.facebook.com/Lamplighters      **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/LamplightersMT

**7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN):** 0 3 7 1 0 5 8

**Do any of these describe your business?** (select all that apply)  
*Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by Person with a Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ+-Owned Business    | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned Business            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Business* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woman-Owned Business   |

*\*Minority is defined as on or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

## Contact Person Information

**Contact person name:** Arie Singer

**Contact person title:** Trustee

**Contact telephone:** (   ) -      **Contact email:**



## Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

**Original San Francisco address:** 226 McAllister St. (First non-residential business office) **Zip Code:** 94102

**Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):** Y

**Dates at this location: From:** 1959 **To:** 1961

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**Other address (if applicable):** Harding Theater at Divisadero St. and Hayes St. **Zip Code:** 94117

**Dates at this location: From:** 1961 **To:** 1968

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**Other address (if applicable):** 68 Julian Ave. **Zip Code:** 94103

**Dates at this location: From:** 1968 **To:** 1982

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**Other address (if applicable):** 333 Dolores St. **Zip Code:** 94110

**Dates at this location: From:** 1982 **To:** 1989

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**Other Address (if applicable):** 1355 Fitzgerald St. **Zip Code:** 94124

**Dates at this location: From:** 1984 **To:** 1998

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**Other address (if applicable):** Presentation Theatre, 2350 Turk St. **Zip Code:** 94118

**Dates at this location: From:** 1989 **To:** 1993

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## Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

**Original San Francisco address:**  **Zip Code:**

**Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):**

**Dates at this location: From:**  **To:**

---

**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location: From:**  **To:**

---

**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location: From:**  **To:**

---

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---

**Other address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location: From:**  **To:**

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## Applicant Disclosures

### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

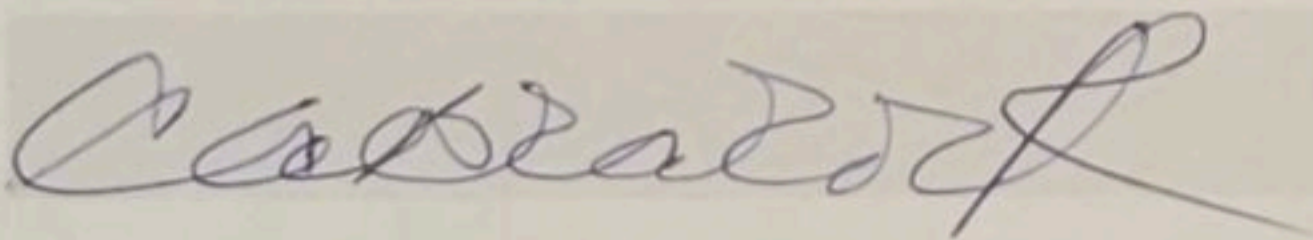
In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name: Cheryl Blalock

Signature:



Date:

7/17/23

# LAMPLIGHTERS MUSIC THEATRE

## Written Historical Narrative

### INTRODUCTION

#### a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

The mission of Lamplighters Music Theatre is to be the premier producer of the art of Gilbert & Sullivan, as well as other compositions of comparable wit, eloquence, and musicality. Lamplighters Music Theatre is recognized as one of the world's pre-eminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The company has produced the entire Gilbert & Sullivan canon as well as other light opera and musical theater classics such as *Candide*, *The Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *My Fair Lady*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *A Little Night Music*, among others. In addition to in-person and online performances, Lamplighters has an arts education program that consists of interactive school assemblies and mini residencies focusing on musical theater and opera. Lamplighters is a semi-professional arts organization that uses a union orchestra for its performances.

#### b. Describe whom the business serves.

Lamplighters Music Theatre serves a cross-generational community consisting of its audiences and performers. Both these groups value the Lamplighters' tradition of local musical and artistic excellence. These stakeholders are residents of the City and County of San Francisco, and also residents of the broader Bay Area. Since 2020, Lamplighters has been reaching ever further through its Patreon subscribers across America and even in other countries around the world.

In San Francisco, Lamplighters productions have been enjoyed by its audiences at the Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts, the Herbst Theatre, the Presidio Theatre, the Palace of Fine Arts, the Cowell Theatre at Fort Mason, and the Palace of the Legion of Honor, among others. In the San Francisco Bay Area, performances are held at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts in Mountain View, the Dean Leshner Theatre at the Leshner Center for the Performing Arts in Walnut Creek, the Bankhead Theatre in Livermore, and the Lincoln Theatre in Yountville.

Lamplighters has become a family tradition for generations of San Franciscans, with long-time audience members raising their children, and grandchildren, attending Lamplighters shows.

A survey of Lamplighters company members, including staff, orchestra, performers, and auditioners was conducted in 2020 and showed that the overall demographics of those served by the company are 48 percent female identifying, 39 percent male identifying, and 13 percent non-binary or prefer not to answer. Respondents are 45 percent under 55 and 55 percent 55 or older. Respondents to the survey were 65 percent white, 29 percent BIPOC, and 6 percent unspecified.

**c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.**

World-class musical theater.

**CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years**

**a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.**

Since 1952, Lamplighters Music Theatre has put up approximately 320 distinct productions, with a total of approximately 1,000 performances. These productions have constituted an uninterrupted series of performance seasons encompassing 71 years as of 2023.

Lamplighters was originally registered as a Charitable Corporation under the name “Opera West Foundation” at the address 2950 Vallejo St. in San Francisco on April 26th, 1965. The Articles of Incorporation of the Opera West Foundation were filed in the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of California on July 29, 1964. The articles of incorporation were amended and restated to certify that the name of the corporation is **Lamplighters Music Theatre** on February 11, 2010 (the documents were signed on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

As a performing arts organization, the product of Lamplighters Music Theatre’s business (musical theater performances), takes place in contracted theaters/performing arts venues. According to the existing programs from performances beginning in 1952, Lamplighters has performed in at least 21 venues in the City and County of San Francisco, with six of these venues representing repeated/regular/“home” venues over the years: The Crossroads, Theatre Arts Colony, the Stern Grove Festival, the Harding Theatre, Presentation Theatre, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Herbst Theater.

Due to the nature of the product that Lamplighters Music Theatre produces, these contracted venues are separate from the business’s base of operations for office work, rehearsals, costume shop, and some scenic construction and storage. The history of residence for that side of operations is as follows:

- 226 McAllister St. (1959-1961)
- The Harding Theater at Divisadero St. and Hayes St. (1961-1968)
- 68 Julian Ave. (1968-1982)
- 333 Dolores St. (1982-1989)
- Presentation High School, 2350 Turk St. (1989-1993)
- 630 Third St. (1994-1999)
- 85 Bluxome St. (1999-2000)
- 469 Bryant St. (2001-Present)

The company also owned a scene shop and warehouse at 1355 Fitzgerald St. in the Bayview, which was purchased on March 1, 1984, and sold on April 28, 1998.

**b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.**

As a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, Lamplighters Music Theatre is not “owned.” The leadership of the organization rests with the Board of Trustees, the term limit for whose members is currently a total of eight years. The trustees listed on the 1964 Articles of Incorporation are Adrian D. McNamara, Spencer S. Beman, John J. Vlahos, Charles A. Fraccia, Ann Pool MacNab, Gregoire Calegari, and John Latona. The Board of Trustees, as of the writing of this application, include Arie Singer, Terrance Kelly, Dan Rabinowitz, Kathryn Ma, Baker Peeples, Jen Kiernan, Chris Uzelac, Miriam Lewis, Sara Kuentler, Steven Renwick, Marti Berg Ritto, and Rose Waldman. The running of the business, and day-to-day organizational decisions, rest with the Executive (or “General”) Director and the Business (or “Office”) Manager.

The position currently known as Executive Director has been known by various titles since 1952, including “Managing Director,” “General Manager,” “Company Manager,” and “General Director.” Sometimes the position has been combined with the post of Artistic Director, and sometimes these have been separate positions. The history of succession of this position since the company’s inception is as follows:

- 1952-1966: Ann Pool MacNab
- 1966-1986: Spencer Beman
- 1987-Early 1990s: Alan Harvey
- Early 1990s-1999: John Alecca
- 1999-2003: Barbara Heroux
- 2003-2005: Daniel Howard
- 2005-2007: Barbara Heroux
- 2007-2017: Sarah Vardigans
- 2017-Present: Cheryl Blalock

**c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.**

Theater programs exist for shows by Lamplighters Music Theatre starting in October 1952 and running through the present with no gaps longer than six months, factoring in one month (typically a minimum amount) of rehearsal time. Even in 2020, when San Francisco’s theaters shut down for the COVID pandemic, the last in-person show closed at the end of February 2020, and the first live, virtual show took place in April of that year.

**CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community**

**a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.**

Since 1952, Lamplighters Music Theatre has contributed to the history of San Francisco with its unique status as the oldest theater company and one of the oldest performing arts organizations in the city (following only the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Ballet, and the San Francisco Symphony). Lamplighters has contributed to the identity of its neighborhood, community, and San Francisco by being synonymous with high quality musical theater and operetta globally, while providing educational outreach locally.

**b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?**

Lamplighters is synonymous with the great masters Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan, whose 14 comic operettas built the foundation for modern musical theater as we know it today, and whose music is present in such iconic popular culture settings as The Simpsons, Curb Your Enthusiasm, and Hamilton. In a more modern sense, Lamplighters has acted as a training ground for generations of young musicians and performers who have gone on to shape the landscape of classical music, and has featured national stars such as Geoff Hoyle (Zazu from The Lion King on Broadway) as Alfred P. Doolittle, Omari Tau (Banzai from The Lion King) as the Chevalier St. Georges, and local celebrities such as the Countess Katya Smirnoff-Sky (J. Conrad Frank) and Jennifer Mitchell, the last actress to perform the role of Snow White at San Francisco's iconic Beach Blanket Babylon.

**c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Lamplighters Music Theatre has demonstrated its commitment to the community through its many outreach programs, including its schools and education programs. Lamplighters has partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District, other independent schools, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the San Francisco Opera. These programs bring music and theater to the children of San Francisco through Summer Music West and mini-residency programs and bring fun, accessible, and creative music and English language lyrics to the community's youngest members. Lamplighters also has a long history of free public performances at Stern Grove, the San Francisco Symphony, and Opera in the Park at Mission Dolores Park.

For [GivingTuesday](#), Lamplighters has raised money for its neighbors at The Park View Hotel at Jack London Alley and Tabor Place in San Francisco. The Park View, part of Mission Housing, provides Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing to 40 formerly homeless and very low-income adults. One hundred percent of funds raised went toward providing residential services to these neighbors.

In August, 2021, Lamplighters Music Theatre sponsored and organized the "Welcome Back to the Performing Arts" festival at Yerba Buena Gardens (a stone's throw from the 469 Bryant Street company headquarters), which was a free outdoor presentation that brought together

eight of the Bay Area's midsize music, theater, and dance organizations in a stylistically diverse showcase. Date Book coverage of the festival can be found here:

<https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/music/bay-area-music-and-dance-groups-celebrate-reopening-with-a-communal-showcase>, and the festival can be viewed in its entirety here: <https://vimeo.com/663386368>.

Lamplighters has long been a proving ground for students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, who have developed their skills and resumes working with Lamplighters. The company also has a tradition of mentoring and growth on its technical side, including a technical theater apprenticeship program and partnerships with local community college costuming classes.

**d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?**

Lamplighters Music Theatre has been referenced innumerable times in print/visual media since its inception. In addition to maintaining a nearly-complete collection of performance programs (housed between Lamplighters Headquarters at 469 Bryant Street and the Museum of Design and Performing Arts), and holding over 100 square feet of archival photographs at 469 Bryant, Lamplighters has often appeared in other forms of media. For example:

Newspaper:

Lamplighters has been featured in reviews, news articles, and newspaper advertisements from every decade from the 1950s on.

Television:

During the 2009 production of *My Fair Lady*, KRON 4 News interviewed Geoff Hoyle, the actor playing Alfred P. Doolittle about his role in the musical and the use of language and accents in theater arts. The interview can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAEc16vAiWM>

Radio:

A search on <https://www.kqed.org/> for "Lamplighters" offers six articles and interviews about the company, from just the past eight years (2015 to 2023).

**e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?**

In 1996, Lamplighters was awarded "Best of Festival" at the International Gilbert & Sullivan festival in England, beating out performance troupes from all over the world including from England and Japan, and solidifying the company as one of the world's preeminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The cast of that show closed out their award-winning performance by singing "Theme from San Francisco," in homage and gratitude to the company's home.

**f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**



San Francisco Mayor London Breed has said, “Our artists and cultural institutions are at the heart of who we are as a City and a community.” San Francisco and Lamplighters Music Theatre have grown up together. Together, they have traveled through some of the most significant periods locally and globally – the beatniks of the 1950s, the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, the tech boom/bubble burst of the 1990s and 2000s. Throughout it all, Lamplighters Music Theatre has been performing, providing opportunities for generations of San Franciscans to entertain and be entertained, and turned a mirror back on the society and culture as it was shaped by the city.

In the modern era, Lamplighters Music Theatre continues to be a reflection of the city it calls home. Just like San Francisco, Lamplighters Music Theatre is simultaneously an artifact of the Victorian Era and at the forefront of technological and progressive achievement. Just as the iconic Victorian architecture of San Francisco is admired by the world for its beauty, frivolity, refinement, and unique style, the operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan (and works of comparable wit) exhibit these same Victorian qualities. And, just as San Francisco has established itself as a world leader in social and technological advancement, Lamplighters has been recognized by Opera America as one of the earliest community theatre companies in the country to transition to online content during the pandemic, and has thrown its developmental weight behind a commitment to accessibility and equity in its own community and beyond.

Mayor Breed’s office recognizes the importance of the arts to the city’s landscape, and has provided over \$14 million funding for arts organizations. Rejuvenating the arts is seen as an imperative part of the revitalization of the city’s downtown and financial district, and as a local cultural institution Lamplighters’ continued existence in the city is a key component to that rejuvenation.

Were the company forced to close or relocate out of the city, not only would San Francisco lose one of its oldest performing arts companies, Lamplighters would functionally cease to exist. Due to the centrality of the city as a coming-together point for the greater Bay Area and to how enmeshed the company’s identity is with its city origins, the outlook for continued operations after an involuntary relocation is not positive. In short, Lamplighters would not be Lamplighters without San Francisco, and the company would like to assert that San Francisco would not be San Francisco without Lamplighters.

### **CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business**

**a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?**

Since 2001, Lamplighters Music Theatre World Headquarters has been located in SoMa at 469 Bryant Street. The building is an instantly recognizable landmark to thousands of local residents and commuters on their way over the Bay Bridge or on their way to the ballpark, as the entire front of the building has been painted with a Union Jack - the British Flag.

Lamplighters productions are ubiquitously advertised on SF Muni busses, street pole banners, KQED, in the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Classical Voice, and The San Francisco Examiner.

Since 1952, Lamplighters has claimed many of the premier and historical San Francisco performing arts spaces as its performance home, such as the Harding Theatre, Presentation Theatre, Archbishop Riordan High School, Herbst, Presidio YBCA Stern Grove, Theatre Arts Colony, and Crossroads Theatre, among others. Many of these locations have also played host to historically recognized groups (the Grateful Dead played at the Harding, and San Francisco Opera has performed at Presentation).

**b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.**

Musical theater company providing theatrical productions of wit, eloquence, and musicality.

**c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?**

As a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, Lamplighters Music Theatre is not "owned." The leadership of the organization rests with the Board of Trustees, the term limit for whose members is currently a total of eight years. The Board of Trustees has a robust recruitment process, including a Nominating and Governance committee that meets bi-monthly to identify, review, and recruit potential candidates, and to attend board match and other non-profit leadership events.

The running of the business rests with the Executive Director. The current Executive Director is Cheryl Blalock. In the instance of Ms. Blalock's retirement or departure, the Board of Trustees is responsible for hiring her replacement. The Board of Trustees has a proven track record of recruiting and hiring for the Executive Director position. Effort has been put into creating a pipeline of potential successors - the current Artistic Director and Music and Multimedia Director, as well as past General Directors who may wish to rejoin the company would be in an ideal position to carry the Lamplighters Legacy into the future. In the interest of fair hiring practices, the Board is committed to holding an open recruitment for the position, to allow both these candidates and those as yet unknown the opportunity to compete for the job.

The Board of Trustees is also interested in ensuring that the day-to-day operating workflows of the Executive Director and Office Manager are documented with clear succession plans, to ensure a smooth transition at such time as that is a necessity.

#### **d. What challenges is the business facing today?**

Lamplighters faces the same challenges that many small, nonprofit arts organizations in the Bay Area are facing. These challenges include, among others:

- The continued loss of audiences since the COVID pandemic.
- The struggle to raise awareness about the company and its mission with newcomers to the area to keep audiences diverse and vibrant.
- The difficulty of affording rent on its base of operations at 469 Bryant Street, and the threat of the loss of this building when the building is transferred as an inheritance.
- The exploding costs of performance venues.
- The unintended impacts of [ABS](#) on performing arts.
- The incompatibility between covering costs and keeping ticket prices affordable.
- The reduced funding opportunities for established arts organizations, including the drop in City funding due to the loss of tourist revenue.

---

#### **Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:**

##### **a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.**

Musical theater company.

##### **b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 469 Bryant Street is “B - Unknown / Age Eligible.” Built in 1922, the building is a 2-story brick masonry industrial structure designed in an early 20th-Century Industrial style. The rectangular building, clad in brick with concrete infill, is capped by a flat roof. The primary façade faces north and includes three bays. The entrance includes a flush wood door. Typical fenestration includes fixed and awning steel-sash windows. The building appears to be in good condition.



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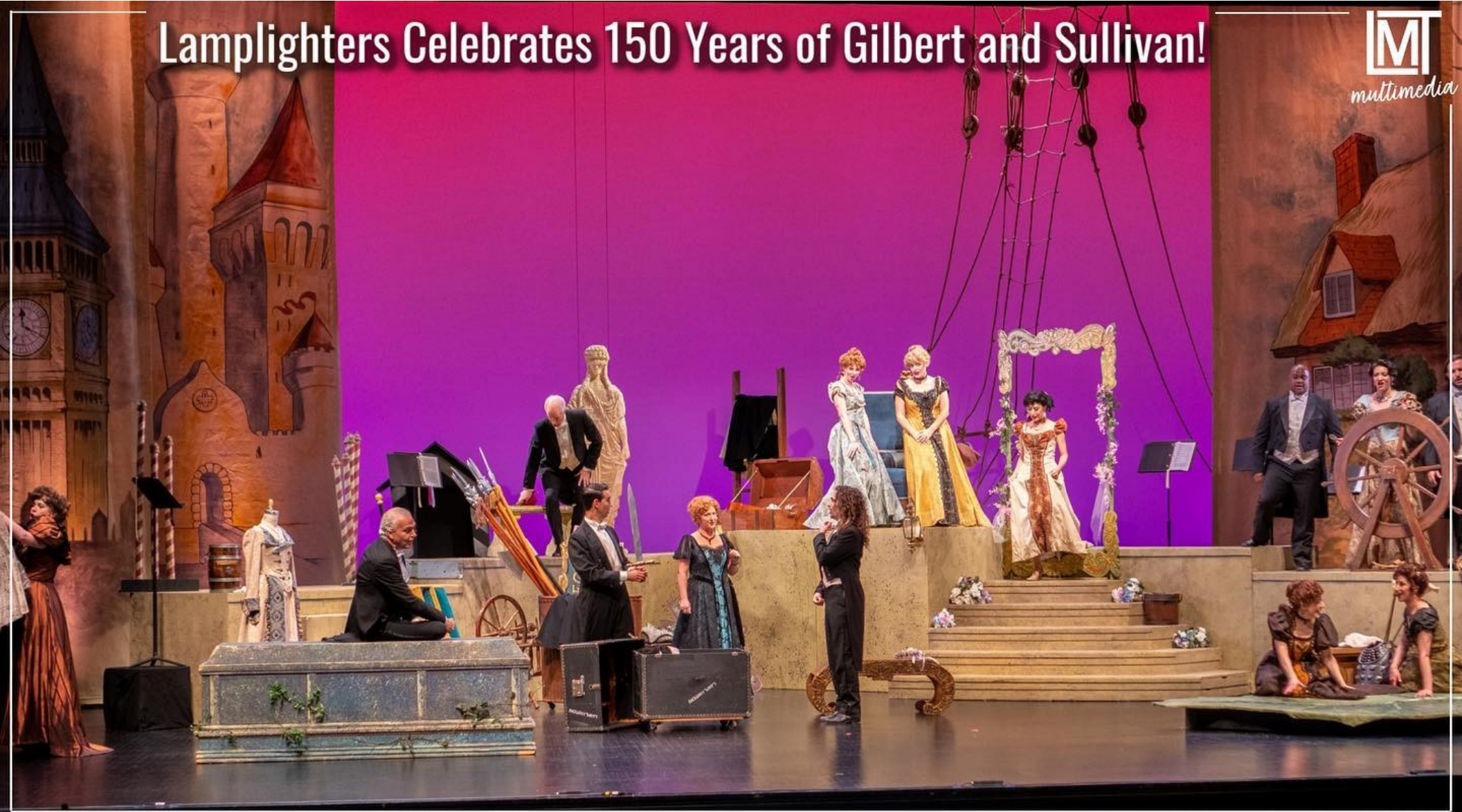






# Lamplighters Celebrates 150 Years of Gilbert and Sullivan!

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Advertisement for the Lamplighters production of "Pirates of Penzance" in the SF Chronicle on 3/31/1957



Lamplighters poster for a 1961 production of "The Gondoliers" designed by Rex May

# FRIDAY

Vincent Price (1969) ★★

## 9 P.M.

**4 ③ ⑧ Nero Wolfe:** A former underwater striptease artist is murdered and the prime suspect is her boyfriend, who is also the coroner

**5 ⑩ ⑫ ④ The Dukes of Hazard:** Luke and Bo have their first real fight when Bo, for the love of a pretty carnival owner, agrees to jump their car over 32 others

**⑦ Sacramento Week in Review**

**7 ⑪ ⑬ Movie: "The Child Stealer,"** Beau Bridges. A divorced mother searches for her two young daughters, who were kidnapped by her ex-husband. (1979) ★★□

**⑨ Pledge Break:** Programming may be delayed

**⑪ Esta Es La Vida**

**⑫ Great Decisions**

**⑬ Movie: "The Lonely Profession,"** Harry Guardino (1969) ★★

## 9:15 P.M.

**⑨ San Francisco Lamplighters Perform:** Producer-director Roi Peers collaborates with Spencer S. Beman for a studio production of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury"

## 9:29 P.M.

**⑥ Pledge Break:** Programming may be delayed

## 9:30 P.M.

**⑥ Movie: "Midnight Lace,"** Doris Day (1960) ★★★

**⑫ Colorina**

**⑫ Alfred Hitchcock Presents**

**⑫ The Black Hole (STV)**

**⑬ Christopher Closeup**

**⑬ Over Easy:** Stanley Kramer □

**⑬ Dick Cavett**

## 10 P.M.

**2 ④ News**

**4 ③ ⑧ NBC Magazine With David Brinkley**

**⑫ Noche a Noche**

**⑫ Movie: "The Revenge of Frankenstein,"** Peter Cushing (1958) ★★

**⑬ Jim Bakker**

**⑬ MacNeil-Lehrer Report**

**⑬ National News**

**⑬ Movie: "Rose of Washington Square,"** Al Jolson (1939) ★★★

**⑬ Captioned ABC News**

## 10:30 P.M.

**⑬ 24 Horas**

**⑬ Captioned ABC News**

**⑬ Best of Groucho**

**⑬ MacNeil-Lehrer Report**

## 10:45 P.M.

**⑬ Movie: "Psych-Out,"** Susan Strasberg (1968) ★★

## 11 P.M.

**2 Odd Couple**

**4 ⑤ 7 ③ ⑧ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭**

**News**

**⑫ Dick Cavett**

**⑬ High Chaparral**

**⑭ Benny Hill**

**⑭ Twilight Zone**

**⑭ Soundstage □**

## 11:20 P.M.

**⑭ Noticiero**

## 11:30 P.M.

**2 Movie: "The Death Policy,"** Robert Powell (1973) ★★

**4 ③ ⑧ Tonight**

**5 ⑫ ⑭ Movie: "Phantasm,"** Michael Baldwin (1979) ★★

**7 ⑪ ⑬ Fridays**

**⑩ Movie: "Revenge of the Zombies,"** John Carradine (1943) ★

**⑭ Spanish Movie**

**⑭ Game of Death (STV)**

**⑭ Movies: "Spencer's Mountain,"** Henry Fonda (1963)

★★★ "In a Lonely Place," Humphrey Bogart (1950) ★★★ "Destroyer," Edward G. Robinson (1943) ★★

**⑭ Tales of the Unexpected**

## 11:50 P.M.

**⑥ Captioned ABC News**

## MIDNIGHT

**⑨ Movie: "Gilbert and Sullivan,"** Robert Morley (1953)

**⑫ Mission: Impossible**

**⑬ Alfred Hitchcock Presents**

**⑭ 700 Club**

**⑭ Captioned ABC News**

## 12:30 A.M.

**4 ③ ⑧ Midnight Special:** Patti Davis, host

**⑩ News**

**⑭ MacNeil-Lehrer Report**

## 12:40 A.M.

**7 Videowest**

**⑪ Movie: "Tales of Terror,"** Vincent Price (1962) ★★

**⑬ Bold Ones**

**⑬ Movie: "The Story of David,"** Timothy Bottoms (1976) ★★★

## 1 A.M.

**2 News**

**⑫ Outer Limits**

**⑬ Movies: "The Secret War of Harry Frigg,"** Paul Newman (1969) ★★★ "Foreign Exchange," Robert Horton (1969)

★★★ "War Arrow," Maureen O'Hara (1954) ★★

## 1:10 A.M.

**7 Hollywood Heartbeat**

## 1:30 A.M.

**5 Movies: "Attack of the Monsters,"** Nobuhiro Kajima (1969)

★★ "Blackbeard, the Pirate," Robert Newton (1952) ★★

## 1:40 A.M.

**7 ⑬ News**

## 2 A.M.

**③ Movies: "Parrish,"** Troy Donahue (1961) ★★★ "Nana," Anna Sten (1934) ★★

**4 Let's Rock**

## 2:30 A.M.

**4 Face the Music**

## HOME BOX OFFICE

### P.M.

**5:30 Mary Poppins (G)**

**8:00 Magnum Force (R)**

**10:00 He Knows You're Alone (R)**

**11:30 Superman: The Movie (PG)**

### A.M.

**2:00 The Dark (R)**

## SHOWTIME

### P.M.

**3:30 Black Magic**

**5:30 Showtime in Hollywood**

**6:30 The Peking Opera**

**8:00 Magnum Force**

**10:00 Dogs (R)**

**11:30 The Passion of Dracula**

### A.M.

**1:30 Hide in Plain Sight (PG)**

## SPORTS CHANNEL

### A.M.

**10:00 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

### P.M.

**12:00 Baseball: Portland vs. San Jose State**

**2:30 Boxing from Olympic**

**3:30 Aerobic Superstars**

**4:00 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

**6:00 Sports Center**

**6:30 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

**8:30 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

**10:30 Sports Center**

**11:00 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

### A.M.

**1:00 NCAA Basketball: National Championship Regional Semifinal**

# TRIAL BY JURY



A Gilbert & Sullivan comic gem performed by San Francisco's very own Lamplighters. A KQED Performing Arts Special Simulcast on KQED-FM 88.

TONIGHT AT 9:15



# Spirited Gilbert And Sullivan

By Hewell Tircuit

Major productions require major efforts, particularly when they center on wellknown repertory. And that is exactly what Lamplighters has brought to its elaborate revival of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance," which opened Saturday evening in the Presentation Theater.

Now in its 25th season, this is Lamplighters 191st production. The mind boggles at the thought.

Since the vast majority of those 191 productions have been devoted to the service of Gilbert and Sullivan, the company definitely knows what they are about. That's obvious of course, but the rewards in terms of integrated ensemble and unity of purpose were incalculable Saturday evening, especially in terms of the Opening Night syndrome.

The precision of the chorus rather dominated the splendor of the whole. Even in the fast chattering choruses — like the brainless weather chorus, "How beautifully blue the sky" — things were kept as light and crisp as snow flakes. The mock patriotic exhortations were done with great verve, and absolutely straight-faced. That made them all the more funny.

Soloists were good to excellent. In the later category, one should notice the vocal strength of Rosemary Bock and Robert Wood as the lovers Mabel and Frederic. John Ziaja was very strong as the Pirate King, and acted expertly too. One could say the same of William Neil in the relatively minor but important Act II role of the Police Sergeant.

Mary McMahon Brown, always a strength, was the Pirate Maid-of-all-work Ruth. The three leading sisters of the General's 21 charming daughters were handsomely sung by Elizabeth Hayward, Wendy Hoggatt and Ellena Reisler.

Which brings us to the one disappointment, the Major General of Norman Roberts. That was a surprise, for Roberts has performed many a general major role and the Major General should fit easily into his pocket. It was not "bad," mind you, but a bit nervous in business and voice alike. Less fidgeting would have helped.

Great praise is due conductor Gilbert P. Russak for the spirit and finesse of the orchestral support. He kept things moving and the volume down to the proper support level. Also, the playing level of quality, like the clarity of the chorus was high all evening.

As Lamplighter productions have gone, this one is especially comely. Andrew DeShong's sets and Richard



Mary McMahon Brown, Robert Wood and John Ziaja Jr. in 'Pirates of Penzance'

Battle's costumes were consistently striking, especially in the ruined chapel scene of act II.

The show of marvels will play weekends through April 16. The evening began well and got better as it went along. One hardly hopes as much for the general production, since the opening performance left little room for improvement.



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*Tony and Grammy* AWARD-WINNING

# SULLIVAN: *The (New) Mikado*

Westley, Schroeder, Allee, Gariaeff; Martin, Gates, Ewing, Neely, Neil. Lamplighters Music Theatre, Peoples. No texts. Lamplighters (2)

ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS' website, there was a time when one could see a performance of *The Mikado* every day somewhere in the English-speaking world. Whether or not that's true, the opera is considered the duo's masterpiece and has always enjoyed unparalleled popularity—until recently. Gilbert set the action in Japan, which in 1885 had just opened to the West, but he always intended the plot to be a satire of English society, as all the Savoy operas are. But as the world has become globalized and more culturally sensitive, some aspects of *The Mikado* have become difficult to countenance. Companies who produce it now are challenged to find a way to remain faithful to Gilbert's ultimate objective without offending

people, particularly of Japanese origin. New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players reset the action in Victorian England, adding a prologue to explain Gilbert's fascination with Japan and excusing any remaining infelicities by casting the whole thing as a concussive fever dream.

Lamplighters Music Theatre of San Francisco went a step further in their 2016 production, captured here, transplanting the action to Renaissance Milan. It's an elegant solution that barely changes the scripted material. (This further suggests that most of the objectionable elements come from direction and design.) Only the opening number, "If you want to know who we are," requires fully rewritten lyrics. After that, the changes are minor and countable. The Mikado's entrance music, formerly "Miya sama," cleverly imports the text of "O fortuna," from *Carmina Burana*. "Seized him by his little pigtail" becomes "seized him by the scruff of his neck," a perfectly reasonable and, in fact, more easily pictured image. Both Japanese and Italian use pure vowel sounds, so all the names have found euphonious counterparts. The Mikado is Il Ducato, Nanki-Poo is Niccolò, Yum-Yum becomes the almost identical-sounding Amiam, Pitti-Sing is Pizzi, Peep-Bo is Pippa, etc. The town of Titipu is now the tastier-sounding Tirmisu.

Curiously, the result of this reconception proves both sides of the current argument. As G&S purists insist, *The Mikado* was never intended to make fun of Japanese culture, and as the Asian community asserts, the show can still work set somewhere else. As evidenced here, all it takes is a talented cast who can spin out Sullivan's beautiful melodies and who understand the style and subtlety of Gilbert's satire. Director Ellen Brooks steers her cast toward well-informed line readings (dialogue is included), keeping the pacing quick and the stakes high. F. Lawrence Ewing's superb Coco is firmly in the tradition of the great D'Oyly Carte patter men. He offers a richly comic performance that also inspires sympathy for what is, on the page, a fairly ridiculous plight. After the traditional first verse of his "little list" song, he launches into some ingeniously contrived substitute lyrics, taking aim at California drivers, clueless Brexit voters and Gilbert



himself: “All the cultural appropriators putting on a show / who use exotic countries as a way to make some dough.”

Vocal honors go to Patricia Westley’s radiant Amiam. She mines the considerable humor in her dialogue and delivers “The sun whose rays” with a perfect balance of lyricism and textual clarity. Mason Gates partners her as an appealingly boyish and mellifluous Niccolò. Michele Schroeder contributes a saucy Pizzi, and Wm. H. Neil makes Poobà a growly but likable curmudgeon. Sonia Gariaeff is a little forced as Catiscià, which diminishes her impact, particularly against Charles Martin’s gleefully imperious Ducato. William Neely and Autumn Allee offer strong points of view as Piccia Tuccia (Pish Tush) and Pippa. The orchestral playing and choral singing are a bit unpolished, and the placement of the microphone amplifies the nearest single chorus voice, throwing the balance into disarray. But overall the recording makes a strong case for Lamplighters’ rework, and any company looking to produce *The Mikado* would do well to give it a listen. —*Joanne Sydney Lessner*

CLASSICAL

# Review: Lamplighters' new operetta brings an 18th century Black prodigy to comic life



Joshua Kosman | May 7, 2023 Updated: May 15, 2023, 1:44 pm



Omari Tau (Chevalier) brought vocal splendor and physical charisma to the title role of "By Georges!," a new operetta by Charles Vincent Burwell and James D. Sasser.

Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

The musical and verbal world of Gilbert and Sullivan is a distinctive thing, rooted in the time and place of Victorian England. What would happen if someone were to try updating that sensibility to the contemporary world?

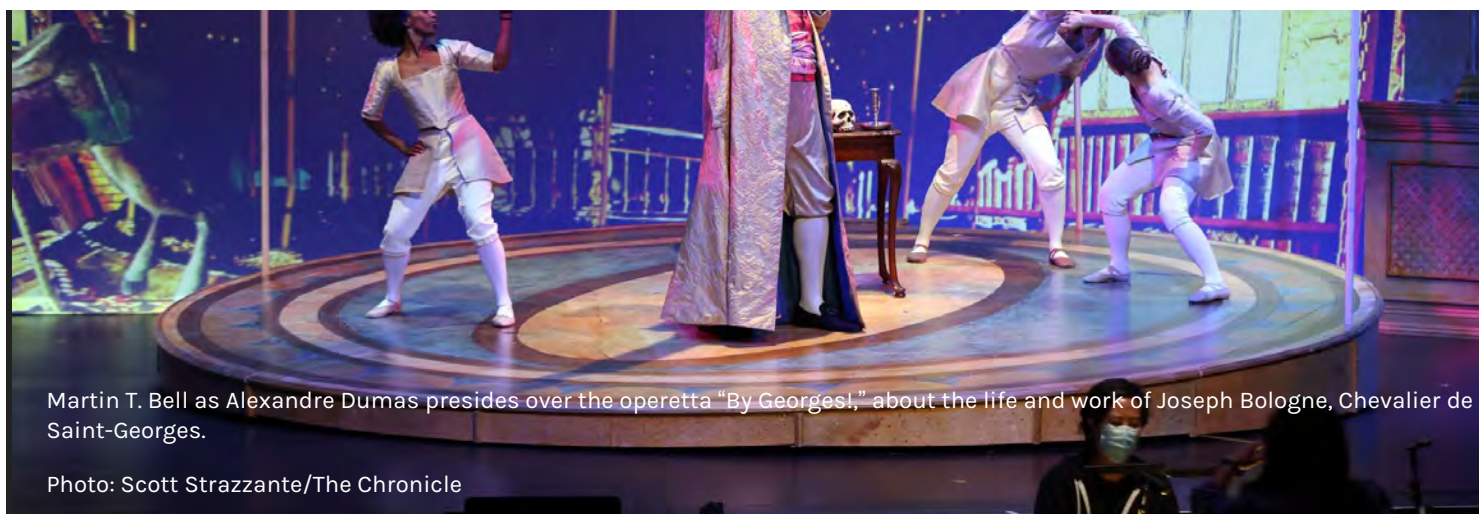
The result might sound very much like “By Georges!,” the smoothly engaging new operetta by composer Charles Vincent Burwell and librettist James D. Sasser, which had its world premiere over the weekend with Lamplighters Music Theatre, which commissioned it.

This 75-minute one-act show is a portrait of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the Black composer, violinist, swordsman and revolutionary who traced a dashing figure across 18th century France before being largely lost to history for centuries. “By Georges!” is part of the current revival of interest in Saint-Georges’ life and work, along with the recent feature film “Chevalier.”

But whereas the cinematic biopic takes a valorizing approach to his life, turning the Chevalier into a sort of musical and racial superhero, “By Georges!” treats its subject with a light and whimsical touch – just as Gilbert and Sullivan might have done under analogous circumstances.

During its second performance on Saturday, May 6, at the Presidio Theatre in San Francisco, “By Georges!” traced a zippy course across a single fictional day in the protagonist’s life. In three broadly sketched episodes, we see Saint-Georges struggle to find a patron wealthy and committed enough to back the production of his opera; we watch him dispatch a couple of hapless opponents in one-sided duel; and we observe with satisfaction as his opera and his love life both take a turn for the better in time for the final curtain.





Martin T. Bell as Alexandre Dumas presides over the operetta "By Georges!" about the life and work of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

Presiding over all of this is the novelist and playwright Alexandre Dumas, whose namesake father was in fact an associate of the Chevalier's. Dumas (Martin T. Bell) reminds us that everything here is a benign fiction, designed to chase away the audience's mundane doldrums.

So the struggles of a Black man against the racist strictures of pre-Revolutionary society are touched on but not illuminated very sharply, and the machinations of the royal court are played for laughs in director Céline Ricci's carefree staging. Marie Antoinette's long-awaited first entrance in particular is a hilarious coup de theatre, one among many.

Of course, this constitutes its own kind of superhero story. In this telling, Saint-Georges — embodied with vocal splendor and physical charisma by Omari Tau — emerges as a lithe, untouchable sprite, hopping nimbly over obstacles and conquering every challenge as easily as he triumphs on the dueling ground.

Burwell's score, conducted by Mary Chun, is a fascinating combination of past and present. The performance began with a taste of Saint-Georges' own music, a gallant movement for string quartet, just to orient the audience stylistically.





Leslie Katter (left), Krista Wigle, Amy Foote and Omari Tau (Chevalier) in "By Georges!"

Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

The rest of the piece moves assuredly back and forth between faux 18th century strains for the stately, bewigged white Parisians, and a fluid, hip-hop style for Saint-Georges when he's alone with his own thoughts. Here the echoes of "Hamilton" are unavoidable, but "By Georges!" holds its own in the comparison.

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### More Information

**"By Georges!":** Lamplighters Music Theatre. 2 p.m. Sunday, May 6-7. Presidio Theatre, 99 Moraga Ave., S.F. • May 20-21. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. \$60-\$80. 415-392-4400. [www.lamplighters.org](http://www.lamplighters.org)

[Read More](#)

The production boasted excellent performances by Leslie Katter as the soprano who helps Saint-Georges achieve his artistic vision, by Amy Foote as the self-infatuated (and openly racist) soprano Blanche de Pompeuse, by Deborah Martínez Rosengaus as Marie Antoinette, and especially by Krista Wigle in a blazingly virtuosic turn as Saint-Georges' first, short-lived patron.

In keeping with the demands of the period, Lamplighters has staged the piece with an eye to ornate display, featuring vivid costumes (Miriam R. Lewis), sets and projections (Peter Crompton) and choreography (Antoine Hunter, a.k.a. Purple Heart Crow).

In addition to its immediate pleasures, "By Georges!" represents the beginning of an answer to a ticklish question: How long can organizations like Lamplighters, built around the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan and their few relevant colleagues (Johann Strauss, Franz Lehár) continue to thrive on the same small body of work?

Cheryl Blalock, the company's forward-looking interim artistic director, had the right idea, which is to back the creation of new works that can be added to that pool of possibilities. Hopefully "By Georges!" will mark the first step in an even broader expansion.

Reach Joshua Kosman: [jkosman@sfchronicle.com](mailto:jkosman@sfchronicle.com); Twitter: [@JoshuaKosman](https://twitter.com/JoshuaKosman)



**Joshua Kosman**

Follow:  

Joshua Kosman has covered classical music for the San Francisco Chronicle since 1988, reviewing and reporting on the wealth of orchestral, operatic, chamber and contemporary music throughout the Bay Area.

He is the co-creator of the weekly cryptic crossword puzzle "Out of Left Field," and has repeatedly placed among the top 20 contestants at the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament.

## More In Classical



## Related Events





# LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2023**

**Filing Date:** November 8, 2023  
**Case No.:** 2023-010583LBR  
**Business Name:** Lamplighters Music Theatre  
**Business Address:** 469 Bryant Street  
**Zoning:** Central SoMa Mixed Use-Office (CMUO) Zoning District  
Central SoMa Special Use District  
45-X Height and Bulk District  
**Cultural District:** SoMa Pilipinas  
**Block/Lot:** 3775/081  
**Applicant:** Arie Singer  
469 Bryant Street  
**Nominated By:** Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
**Located In:** District 6  
**Staff Contact:** Elizabeth Mau – (628) 652-7583  
[Elizabeth.Mau@sfgov.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Mau@sfgov.org)

**Recommendation:** Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

## Business Description

Lamplighters Music Theatre is the oldest theater company in San Francisco, founded in 1952 with the mission to be the premier producer of the art of Gilbert & Sullivan, as well as other compositions of comparable wit, eloquence, and musicality. Lamplighters Music Theatre is recognized as one of the world's pre-eminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The company has produced the entire Gilbert & Sullivan canon as well as other light opera and musical theater classics such as *Candide*, *The Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *My Fair Lady*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *A Little Night Music*, among others. Since 1952, Lamplighters Music Theatre has put up approximately 320 distinct productions, with a total of approximately 1,000 performances. Lamplighters is a semi-professional arts organization that uses a union orchestra for its performances.

Lamplighters Music Theatre has become a family tradition for generations of San Franciscans, with long-time audience members raising their children, and grandchildren, attending Lamplighters shows. Lamplighters Music

Theatre has performed in at least 21 venues in the City and County of San Francisco, with six of these venues representing regular venues over the years: The Crossroads, Theatre Arts Colony, the Stern Grove Festival, the Harding Theatre, Presentation Theatre, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Herbst Theater.

Lamplighters Music Theatre has demonstrated its commitment to the community through its many outreach programs, including its schools and education programs. Lamplighters has partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District, other independent schools, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the San Francisco Opera. These programs bring music and theater to the children of San Francisco through Summer Music West and mini-residency programs and bring fun, accessible, and creative music and English language lyrics to the community's youngest members.

The business' primary location at 469 Bryant Street is in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure on the southeast side of Bryant Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets in the South of Market neighborhood. It is within the CMUO (Central SoMa Mixed Use-Office) Zoning District and a 45-X Height and Bulk District; the Central SoMa Special Use District; and the SoMa Pilipinas Cultural District. 469 Bryant Street was included in several survey areas, including the South of Market Area Historic Resource Survey (2011), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "7R" (identified in reconnaissance level survey: not evaluated), and the South of Market Area Plan Survey (2005), where it was rated as "Not Significant." However, despite these former evaluations, none have been conclusive, and the property maintains a Planning Department status of "B" (Unknown / Age Eligible).

## Staff Analysis

### Review Criteria

**1. When was business founded?**

The business was founded in 1952.

**2. Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?**

Yes. Lamplighters Music Theatre qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Lamplighters Music Theatre has operated continuously in San Francisco for 71 years.
- b. Lamplighters Music Theatre has contributed to the history and identity of the South of Market neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Lamplighters Music Theatre is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

**3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?**

Yes, the business is associated with the musical theater and operetta tradition.



**4. Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?**

Yes, Lamplighters Music Theatre is associated with the great masters Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan, whose 14 comic operettas built the foundation for modern musical theater as we know it today, and whose music is present in such iconic popular culture settings as *The Simpsons*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and *Hamilton*.

Lamplighters Music Theatre is associated with national stars such as Geoff Hoyle (Zazu from *The Lion King* on Broadway) as Alfred P. Doolittle, Omari Tau (Banzai from *The Lion King*) as the Chevalier St. Georges, and local celebrities such as the Countess Katya Smirnoff-Skyy (J. Conrad Frank) and Jennifer Mitchell, the last actress to perform the role of Snow White at San Francisco's iconic Beach Blanket Babylon.

**5. Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?**

No.

**6. Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?**

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

**7. Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?**

Yes. Lamplighters Music Theatre has been referenced innumerable times in print/visual media since its inception. Lamplighters has been featured in reviews, news articles, and newspaper advertisements from every decade from the 1950s on, including a 2009 KRON 4 News interview of Geoff Hoyle, the actor playing Alfred P. Doolittle about his role in *My Fair Lady* and the use of language and accents in theater arts.

In 1996, Lamplighters Music Theatre was awarded "Best of Festival" at the International Gilbert & Sullivan festival in England, beating out performance troupes from all over the world including from England and Japan, and solidifying the company as one of the world's preeminent Gilbert & Sullivan companies. The cast of that show closed out their award-winning performance by singing "Theme from San Francisco," in homage and gratitude to the company's home.

## **Racial and Social Equity Analysis**

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and

social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Lamplighters Music Theatre has continually demonstrated its commitment to its local community, whether through partnerships with the San Francisco Unified School District to bring music and theater to the children of San Francisco or through raising money for The Park View Hotel, which provides single room occupancy housing to formerly homeless and very low-income adults.

### **Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business**

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

Current Locations:

- 469 Bryant Street (2001 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 226 McAllister Street (1959 – 1961)
- 616 Divisadero Street (1961 – 1968)
- 68 Julian Avenue (1968 – 1982)
- 333 Dolores Street (1982 – 1989)
- 1355 Fitzgerald Street (1984 – 1998)
- 2350 Turk Street (1989 – 1993)
- 630 3rd Street (1994 – 1999)
- 85 Bluxome Street (1999 – 2000)

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Musical theater company providing theatrical productions of wit, eloquence, and musicality

#### **Additional Recommended by Staff**

- None

### **Basis for Recommendation**

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative

- Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
- Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
- Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. ###

**HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2023**

*Case No.:* 2023-010583LBR  
*Business Name:* Lamplighters Music Theatre  
*Business Address:* 469 Bryant Street  
*Zoning:* Central SoMa Mixed Use-Office (CMUO) Zoning District  
 Central SoMa Special Use District  
 45-X Height and Bulk District  
*Cultural District:* SoMa Pilipinas  
*Block/Lot:* 3775/081  
*Applicant:* Arie Singer  
 469 Bryant Street  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Located In:* District 6  
*Staff Contact:* Elizabeth Mau – (628) 652-7583  
[Elizabeth.Mau@sfgov.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Mau@sfgov.org)

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR LAMPLIGHTERS MUSIC THEATRE CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 469 BRYANT STREET, BLOCK/LOT 3775/081.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 6, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Lamplighters Music Theatre qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Lamplighters Music Theatre.

*Location(s):*

Current Locations:

- 469 Bryant Street (2001 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 226 McAllister Street (1959 – 1961)
- 601 Divisadero Street (1961 – 1968)
- 68 Julian Avenue (1968 – 1982)
- 333 Dolores Street (1982 – 1989)
- 1355 Fitzgerald Street (1984 – 1998)
- 2350 Turk Street (1989 – 1993)
- 630 3rd Street (1994 – 1999)
- 85 Bluxome Street (1999 – 2000)

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:*

- Musical theater company providing theatrical productions of wit, eloquence, and musicality

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission’s findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business December 6, 2023.

Jonas P. Ionin  
*Commission Secretary*

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: December 6, 2023