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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Wolf Trap Offers Five Musical Theater Productions in 2008 with the Filene Center Debut of *Les Misérables*, an *Idol* Star-Studded *Rent*, and Wolf Trap Favorites**

**Vienna, VA**—The 2008 summer musical theater schedule at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts features a long-awaited debut and several longtime favorites for a total of five musical productions. To the overwhelming delight of Washington, D.C. area audiences, one of Broadway's longest running shows, *Les Misérables*, makes its highly anticipated Wolf Trap debut **Friday, August 29** through **Sunday, August 31** and **Tuesday, September 2** through **Sunday, September 7**. *Rent*, starring *South African Idol* winner **Heinz Winckler** and *American Idol* top 10 contestant **Anwar Robinson** comes to the Filene Center **Friday, June 27** through **Sunday, June 29**. And returning to the Filene Center for the 11<sup>th</sup> time in 12 years, Washington, D.C.-area favorite *Riverdance* lights up the stage with its incendiary celebration of Irish step dance, world music, and athletic artistry on **Thursday, May 29** through **Sunday, June 1**. The **New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players** bring *H.M.S. Pinafore* on **Friday, June 20** and *The Gondoliers* on **Saturday, June 21**.

As Broadway's second longest-running show, Boubil and Schönberg's *Les Misérables* makes its Wolf Trap debut in late August. The show opened on March 3, 1987, garnered 12 **Tony Award** nominations, and took home eight, including **Best Musical** and **Best Original Score**. Since its dramatic opening year, more than 37,000 professional performances have been played to more than 49 million people worldwide. This story of an outcast's experience at a second chance at life features an unparalleled score with songs such as "I Dreamed a Dream," "On My Own," "A Heart Full of Love," and "One Day More." **Performances run Friday through Sunday, August 29 – 31, 2008 and Tuesday through Sunday, September 2 – 7, at 8 p.m. Matinees on Saturday and Sunday, August 30 – 31 and September 6 – 7 at 2 p.m. Tickets are priced between \$25 and \$80, depending on day, time, and seat location.**

Making its first appearance on the Filene Center schedule since 1999, Broadway sensation *Rent* returns boasting two rising stars in this year's Wolf Trap performances: 2004 *American Idol* contestant **Anwar Robinson** as Tom Collins and 2002 *South African Idol* winner **Heinz Winckler** as Roger Davis. With music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson, *Rent* has remained a cultural icon since 1996, when it won the **Pulitzer Prize in Drama** and the **Tony Award** for Best Musical. The show is a modern-day version of Puccini's 100-year-old opera *La bohème*, substituting the backdrop of Paris with the East Village in New York, and Tuberculosis with AIDS. *Rent* takes audiences on the journey of a group of inspiring artists as they wrestle with tumultuous life experiences. Attracting post-college and 20-something coming-of-age audiences, *Rent* has helped reinvigorate an entire generation's interest in musical theater. **Performances run Friday through Sunday, June 27 – 29 at 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, June 28 and 29 at 2 p.m. Tickets are priced between \$25 and \$80, depending on day, time, and seat location.**

Performed by the popular **New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players**, *The Gondoliers* returns to Wolf Trap for the first time in 30 years. A classic Gilbert and Sullivan piece featuring a riveting tale of love, conquest, and mysterious nobility, this witty comedic opera features dazzling music, brilliant costumes, and exuberant choreography. The show premiered at the Savoy Theatre on December 7, 1889, and is regarded as Gilbert and Sullivan's last big blockbuster. The **New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players** have been returning annually to Wolf Trap since 1995. A single **performance of *The Gondoliers* will be presented on Saturday, June 21 at 8 p.m.** **Tickets are priced between \$8 and \$48 depending on seat location.**

A day prior to *The Gondoliers*, romantic sailors, sisters, cousins, and aunts sing and dance their way across the deck of a fanciful British naval ship when the **New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players** perform the classic *H.M.S. Pinafore*, a satire on love between different social classes. Through buffoonery, a rousing ensemble, and a unique blend of popular music and operatic elements, *H.M.S. Pinafore* strives to impart that laughing at one's own foibles is one of life's most precious gifts. One **performance will take place on Friday, June 20 at 8 p.m.** **Tickets are priced between \$8 and \$48, depending on seat location.**

The energy, sensuality, and breathtaking spectacle of *Riverdance*, the original Irish step dance and music powerhouse, graces Wolf Trap in all of its glory **Thursday through Sunday, May 29 – June 1 at 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, May 31 and June 1 at 2 p.m.** The *Toronto Sun* writes, "*Riverdance* weaves a powerful spell that can leave an audience breathless." **Tickets are priced between \$20 and \$70, depending on day, time, and seat location.**

Tickets for all Wolf Trap performances can be purchased at the Wolf Trap Box Office located at the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts at 1551 Trap Road, Vienna, Virginia; by calling 1 (877) WOLFTRAP; or online at [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org).

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