FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 2, 2014
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NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC TO PRESENT KERN & HAMMERSTEIN’S
TONY AWARD–WINNING MUSICAL
SHOW BOAT

STARRING VANESSA WILLIAMS as Julie,
JULIAN OVEN DEN as Gaylord Ravenal, and
LAUREN WORSHAM as Magnolia

Conducted and Directed by TED SPERLING

November 5–8, 2014

The New York Philharmonic will present a semi-staged production of Kern & Hammerstein’s Tony Award–winning musical Show Boat, November 5–8, 2014. Vanessa Williams will star as Julie, Julian Ovenden will star as Gaylord Ravenal, and Lauren Worsham will star as Magnolia, all in their Philharmonic debuts. Additional casting will be announced at a later date. The performances will be conducted and directed by Ted Sperling, whose other Philharmonic appearances include Gala New Year’s Eve Concert with Audra McDonald (December 2006), Classic Broadway featuring Kelli O’Hara and Nathan Gunn (2011), and Anywhere I Wander: The Frank Loesser Songbook (2012 Spring Gala).

Based on a bestselling novel by Edna Ferber, Show Boat tells the 40-year story of the lives of performers, stagehands, and dock workers who are the denizens of the Cotton Blossom, a Mississippi River show boat. The New Yorker noted that the show “was a radical departure in musical storytelling, marrying spectacle with seriousness,” moving beyond the light and airy plots of previous operettas and musical comedies with its serious subjects of racial prejudice and tragic love. Highlights include “Ol’ Man River,” “Make Believe,” and “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.” Broadway’s most revived and revised work, Show Boat was the first musical ever performed by an opera company — by New York City Opera in 1954. Recent productions have garnered the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical (1995) and the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival (1991).

The New York Philharmonic presented condensed concert versions of Show Boat as part of its all-Kern & Hammerstein Stadium Concerts at Lewisohn Stadium from 1952 through 1954, all featuring baritone William Warfield as Joe. Hammerstein attended the 1952 performance, his 57th birthday, and addressed the audience of 19,000 people, the largest audience of the season to date. The New York Times reported that “as the singers employed dialogue before launching into

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their songs, the full continuity of the play was thereby assured… A mighty fine ‘Show Boat’ was the result.” Paul Robeson — for whom Kern and Hammerstein created that character — performed “Ol’ Man River” at Stadium Concerts in July 1932, June 1940, and June 1941, by which time he was a major star of stage and screen. Frank Sinatra performed “Ol’ Man River” with the Orchestra at a Stadium Concert in August 1943. Andre Kostelanetz led the Orchestra in arrangements of Show Boat selections at Carnegie Hall in December 1959, at Avery Fisher Hall in May 1963, and at Carnegie Hall and on a U.S. tour in May–June 1976; the Orchestra also performed Show Boat selections at Avery Fisher Hall in November 1977, led by Arthur Fiedler.

**Artists**

**Ted Sperling**’s recent collaborations with the New York Philharmonic include *Broadway Night with the Philharmonic at Bravo!* Vail in July 2013; *An Enchanted Evening with Paulo Szot*, the 2013 Spring Gala; and *Anywhere I Wander*: The Frank Loesser Songbook, the 2012 Spring Gala. He conducted Brian Stokes Mitchell in the original Broadway productions of *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Ragtime*. Mr. Sperling was recently appointed the artistic director of the Collegiate Chorale; he has led the chorale in performances of *The Firebrand of Florence, The Grapes of Wrath, The Mikado*, and *Song of Norway*, all at Carnegie Hall. This season he will also be performing with the Chicago, Pittsburgh, Westchester, Phoenix, and Detroit symphony orchestras, as well as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. As a regular guest at 92nd Street Y’s *Lyrics and Lyricists* series, Mr. Sperling hosted a program about Fanny Brice in May 2014. He has frequently worked with Victoria Clark, Deborah Voigt, Audra McDonald, Nathan Gunn, Paulo Szot, Kelli O’Hara, and Vanessa Williams. Mr. Sperling won the 2005 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his orchestrations of *The Light in the Piazza*, for which he was also music director. Other Broadway credits include the Tony Award–winning revival of *South Pacific, Guys and Dolls, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Full Monty, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Angels in America, My Favorite Year, Drood, Les Misérables, and Sunday in the Park with George*. Ted Sperling was an original cast member of the Broadway musical *Titanic*, playing bandleader Wallace Hartley. His Off-Broadway credits include *A Man of No Importance, Wise Guys, A New Brain, Saturn Returns, Floyd Collins, Falsettoland*, and *Romance in Hard Times*. Mr. Sperling’s directing credits include the World Premieres of *The Other Josh Cohen, See What I Wanna See, Charlotte: Life? Or Theater?*, and *Striking 12*, as well as a revival of *Lady in the Dark*. For the Public Theater, he directed gala performances of *The Pirates of Penzance* with Kevin Kline, Glenn Close, Martin Short, and Eric Idle, and *Cabaret* with Anne Hathaway, Harvey Feierstein, Linda Lavin, Raúl Esparza, and Eddie Redmayne. He has conducted the scores for the films *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Everything Is Illuminated*, and directed the short film *Love Mom*, starring Tonya Pinkins. He is creative director of the 24 Hour Musicals and a consultant to the Public Theater. Ted Sperling most recently led the Orchestra in *A Broadway Christmas with Brian Stokes Mitchell* in December 2013. He is scheduled to appear with the Philharmonic at Colorado’s Bravo! Vail in July 2014.

**Vanessa Williams** made her film debut in 1986 in *Under the Gun*, and subsequently starred in features such as *Eraser, Hoodlum, Soul Food, Dance with Me, Light It Up, Shaft*, and *Johnson Family Vacation*. More recent credits include the independent features *My Brother, Somebody Like You* and Disney’s *Hannah Montana: The Movie*, and she most recently appeared in Tyler (more)
Perry’s Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor. Ms. Williams starred in ABC’s critically acclaimed, hit series Ugly Betty, for which she earned three Emmy nominations as Wilhelmina Slater. In the fall of 2010 she joined the cast of ABC’s Desperate Housewives as Renee Perry. Her albums The Right Stuff, The Comfort Zone, and The Sweetest Days earned multiple Grammy nominations; her single “Colors of the Wind” won an Academy Award; and her most recent album, The Real Thing, garnered an NAACP nomination for Outstanding Jazz Artist. In 1994 Ms. Williams appeared on Broadway in Kander & Ebb’s Kiss of the Spider Woman, and in 2002 she received a Tony nomination for her performance as The Witch in the revival of Stephen Sondheim’s Into the Woods. She also appeared with Cicely Tyson in the Tony-nominated The Trip to Bountiful, in which both actresses reprised their roles from Lifetime’s television adaptation. Vanessa Williams most recently appeared in After Midnight, the musical revue set in Harlem’s legendary Cotton Club. In 2007 she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and in December 2010 the International Press Academy awarded her the Mary Pickford Award for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to the Entertainment Industry. In April 2012 she and her mother, Helen, landed on The New York Times bestseller list after publishing the memoir You Have No Idea: A Famous Daughter, Her No-Nonsense Mother, and How They Survived Pageants, Hollywood, Love, Loss (and Each Other). These performances will mark Vanessa Williams’s New York Philharmonic debut.

Julian Ovenden has appeared on stage, on screen, in concert, and in the recording studio. He is currently starring in the critically acclaimed hit Downton Abbey, in which he portrays Charles Blake. Other notable television series in which he has appeared include Foyle’s War, Person of Interest, Smash, Poirot, Cashmere Mafia, The Forsyte Saga, Any Human Heart, Family Guy, and, most recently, the ABC mini-series The Assets. On stage he has recently starred in My Night with Reg at London’s Donmar Warehouse. Other notable stage appearances include the first French production of Stephen Sondheim’s Sunday in the Park with George at Paris’s Théâtre du Châtelet, Michel Legrand’s Marguerite in London’s West End, Butley opposite Nathan Lane on Broadway, Death Takes a Holiday for the Roundabout Off-Broadway, Finding Neverland for the Weinstein Company, Irving Berlin’s Annie Get Your Gun at London’s Young Vic, and both Grand Hotel and Sondheim’s Merrily We Roll Along for Michael Grandage at London’s Donmar. In 2011 Mr. Ovenden signed a recording agreement with Decca and soon after released his debut album If You Stay. He enjoys a close working relationship with the John Wilson Orchestra, with whom he collaborated on a Rodgers & Hammerstein project for EMI. He made his Carnegie Hall debut earlier this year and performs regularly at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall and in many other of the U.K.’s prestigious concert venues. These performances will mark Julian Ovenden’s New York Philharmonic debut.

Lauren Worsham is a Brooklyn-based actress and singer who recently made her Broadway debut originating the role of Phoebe in A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, for which she garnered a Tony nomination, Drama Desk Award, and Theatre World Award. Other favorite roles include creating the part of Lisa in Dog Days at Montclair Peak Performances (directed by Robert Woodruff), Flora in Turn of the Screw at New York City Opera (directed by Sam Buntrock), Amy in Where’s Charley at New York City Center (directed by John Doyle), Cunegonde in New York City Opera’s Candide, and Olive in the first national tour of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Other credits include La Perichole at New York City
Opera, *Carnival* (Lili) at Goodspeed Opera House, *Into the Woods* (Cinderella) at Kansas City Rep, *Master Class* (Sophie) at Paper Mill Playhouse, and *The Light in the Piazza* (Clara) at Weston Playhouse. Ms. Worsham also performs in concert frequently, including shows at Carnegie Hall, Caramoor, Merkin Concert Hall, Oregon Bach Festival, Joe’s Pub, Galapagos Art Space, and New York City Opera’s VOX Contemporary American Opera Lab. Lauren Worsham was the 2009 second-place award winner of the Kurt Weill Foundation’s Lotte Lenya competition. She is the co-founder and executive director of the downtown opera company The Coterie, along with librettist Royce Vavrek, and is also the lead singer for the Brooklyn-based indie-rock band Sky-Pony, which she fronts with her husband, Kyle Jarrow. These performances will mark Lauren Worsham’s New York Philharmonic debut.

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**Tickets**

Tickets for *Show Boat* start at $89. Tickets are available now through July 11 only to 2014–15 New York Philharmonic subscribers online at nyphil.org or by calling (212) **875-5656**, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets will become available to the general public on July 14, at which time tickets may be purchased online at nyphil.org, by calling (212) 875-5656, or at the **Avery Fisher Hall Box Office**. The Box Office opens at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and at noon on Sunday. On performance evenings, the Box Office closes one-half hour after performance time; other evenings it closes at 6:00 p.m. To determine ticket availability, call the Philharmonic’s Customer Relations Department at (212) **875-5656**. [Ticket prices subject to change.]

For press tickets, call Lanore Carr in the New York Philharmonic Marketing and Communications Department at (212) 875-5714, or e-mail her at carrl@nyphil.org.

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SHOW BOAT

Avery Fisher Hall

Wednesday, November 5, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, November 6, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, November 7, 2014, 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 8, 2014, 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 8, 2014, 8:00 p.m.

Ted Sperling, conductor and director

Cast to include (in alphabetical order):
Julian Ovenden* (Gaylord Ravenal)
Vanessa Williams* (Julie)
Lauren Worsham* (Magnolia)

KERN & HAMMERSTEIN  Show Boat (semi-staged)

* denotes New York Philharmonic debut

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