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Montana State University opera to tour Montana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Many Montanans will have a chance to see grand opera for the first time when the Montana State University production of "The Girl of the Golden West" tours the state the latter part of March.

The Puccini opera will be presented in __________ at ______ on ________ in the _________.

In honor of the Montana Centennial, the MSU School of Fine Arts has prepared its most ambitious spring tour to date, according to Dean Charles W. Bolen. The production uses the talents of 85 singers, dancers, instrumentalists, and stage-crew workers, the largest contingent ever sent on the road by the school. The Departments of Drama, Music and Art are cooperating in the venture, the dean said.

The three-act opera, based on a story by David Belasco, the American producer, is set in California in the Gold Rush era of 1848 to 1850. Sheriff Rance, like most men near Cloudy Mountain, is in love with Minnie, owner of the Polka Saloon. When Dick Johnson enters the saloon, neither Rance nor Ashby, the Wells Fargo agent, recognizes him as Ramerrez, the notorious outlaw they are both trailing. The men depart to continue their search.

Johnson, now also smitten with Minnie, renounces his plan to rob her. She returns his love and hides him in her cabin. Then, learning his true identity, she sends him away. As soon as he leaves the cabin, he is shot, and Minnie again conceals him. His hiding place in the loft is revealed to Rance by a falling drop of blood.

(more)
Minnie plays cards with the sheriff with Johnson's life and her love as stakes; she cheats and wins. Nevertheless, soon after Johnson's recovery he is captured. Will Minnie be able to persuade the vigilantes at the ensuing lynching party that Johnson's life should be spared?

Dean Bolen says that everyone who wants to learn the answer to this question and/or who enjoys lively musical entertainment will want to see "The Girl of the Golden West."