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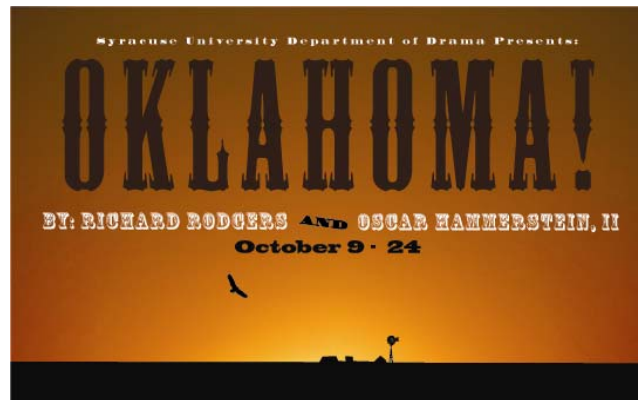
Tuesday, September 22, 2009

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Syracuse University Department of Drama presents

Oklahoma!

The Groundbreaking Musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein



Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Music by Richard Rodgers

Based on the play *Green Grow the Lilacs* by Lynn Riggs

Directed by David Lowenstein

Musical Direction by Nathan Hurwitz

Choreography by David Wanstreet

ARTHUR STORCH THEATRE at SYRACUSE STAGE

Opens: October 9 Closes: October 24

(Syracuse, NY)—There's a bright golden haze on everything about this landmark musical, from Richard Rodgers' vibrant score, to Oscar Hammerstein's delightful lyrics and book, to the sparkling characters that populate a particular slice of the Oklahoma Territory. Add a Box Social, a surrey with a fringe on top, and some eye-popping choreography, and all you can say is "Oh, what a beautiful play!" Presented by the Department of Drama at Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), *Oklahoma!* runs October 9-24. For tickets, call 315-443-3275 or visit www.vpa.syr.edu/drama.

Oklahoma!, the first collaboration between legendary musical theatre duo Rodgers and Hammerstein, debuted on Broadway on March 31, 1943, with original choreography by dance pioneer Agnes de Mille. The production has been widely acknowledged for setting a new musical standard, groundbreaking in its seamless integration of story, score and dance.

Since its inception, the musical has had three Broadway revivals, three London productions,

two films and countless other productions. The classic 1955 film adaptation won two Oscars, while the stage version has earned more than 25 nominations and awards including a special Tony Award for the 50th anniversary in 1993. In 1944, Rodgers and Hammerstein received a Special Pulitzer Prize for "Special Awards and Citations - Letters."

The SU production of *Oklahoma!* is directed by David Lowenstein, with musical direction by Nathan Hurwitz and choreography by David Wanstreet. Said Lowenstein, "The last time this show was done in SU's Department of Drama, I was in it." In the 1982 production, Lowenstein played the roles of Slim and Dream Judd. "It's been exciting to revisit this material at the place where it was first introduced to me." For this production, Lowenstein points to the scenic design as an area of particular interest, noting, "It's an abstract look at the vast landscape of *Oklahoma!*, in contrast to the towns that began to appear."

By the early 1900s, Oklahoma Territory, which was then still partially Indian Territory, was on the verge of becoming a state. The government had opened the land for settlements in the late 19th century, holding six land runs between the years of 1889 and 1895. Americans and new immigrants quickly arrived to stake their claims. The new farms and towns were built over the land that had been used as cattle ranges since the end of the Civil War. Oklahoma Territories became even more valuable when oil was discovered. The black gold encouraged the growth of cities like Tulsa and Oklahoma City, and solidified the territory's place in the union. Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

SYNOPSIS

Set in Oklahoma territory just after the turn of the century, the high-spirited rivalry between the local farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a winsome farm girl, play out their love story. Although the road to true love never runs smooth, with these two headstrong romantics holding the reins, love's journey is as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road. That they will succeed in making a new life together we have no doubt, and that this new life will begin in a brand-new state provides the ultimate climax to the triumphant *Oklahoma!*

CREATORS

In 1943, Richard Rodgers joined forces with lyricist and author Oscar Hammerstein II. *Oklahoma!* (1943) marked a milestone in the development of the American musical, and the beginning of the most successful partnership in Broadway musical history. It was followed by *Carousel* (1945), the movie musical *State Fair* (1945), *Allegro* (1947), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951), *Me and Juliet* (1953), *Pipe Dream* (1955), the TV musical *Cinderella* (1957), *Flower Drum Song* (1958), and *The Sound of Music* (1959). Collectively, the Rodgers & Hammerstein musicals earned 34 Tony Awards, 15 Academy Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes and two Grammy Awards. In 1998 Rodgers & Hammerstein were cited by Time Magazine and CBS News as among the 20 most influential artists of the 20th century; in 1999 they were jointly commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp.

As producers, Rodgers & Hammerstein presented plays, musicals and revivals, including John van Druten's *I Remember Mama*, Anita Loos' *Happy Birthday*, Irving Berlin's blockbuster *Annie Get Your Gun*, the national tour of *Show Boat* (1947-49), and six of their own stage musicals (from the Pulitzer winning *South Pacific* 1949 to the Tony winning *The Sound of Music* ten years later. They also produced the motion picture version of *Oklahoma!* and founded their

own music publishing firm, Williamson Music, basing the name on the fact that both of their fathers were named William.

Richard Rodgers (*Music*) was the recipient of countless awards, including Pulitzers, Tonys, Oscars, Grammys and Emmys. He wrote more than 900 published songs and forty Broadway musicals. His collaborations with Lorenz Hart include *Poor Little Ritz Girl*, the film *Love Me Tonight* starring Maurice Chevalier, Billy Rose's circus extravaganza *Jumbo*, *On Your Toes* (1936), *Babes In Arms* (1937), *I'd Rather Be Right* (1937), *I Married an Angel* (1938), *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938), *Too Many Girls* (1939), *Higher and Higher* (1940), *Pal Joey* (1940), and *By Jupiter* (1942). The Rodgers & Hart partnership came to an end with the death of Lorenz Hart in 1943, at the age of 48. Despite Oscar Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers continued to write for the Broadway stage. His first solo entry, *No Strings* (1962) earned him two Tony Awards for music and lyrics, and was followed by *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965) with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, *Two by Two* (1970) with lyrics by Martin Charnin, *Rex* (1976) with lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, and *I Remember Mama* (1979) with lyrics by Martin Charnin and Raymond Jessel. Richard Rodgers died at home in New York City on December 30, 1979 at the age of 77. On March 27, 1990, he was honored posthumously with Broadway's highest accolade when the 46th Street Theatre, owned and operated by the Nederlander Organization, was renamed The Richard Rodgers Theatre, home to The Richard Rodgers Gallery, a permanent exhibit in the lobby areas which honors the composer's life and works. In 2002, the Richard Rodgers Centennial was celebrated around the world, giving testament to the enduring popularity of Richard Rodgers and the sound of his music.

Oscar Hammerstein II (*Book & Lyrics*) was a member of the board of directors of many professional organizations, including the Dramatists Guild and the Screen Writers' Guild. He received many personal honors and awards including five honorary degrees, two Pulitzer Prizes, two Academy Awards and five Tony Awards. Hammerstein found his niche with some of the greatest composers of his day, breathing new life into the moribund artform of operatta with such classics as *Rose-Marie* (music by Rudolf Friml), *The Desert Song* (Sigmund Romberg), *The New Moon* (Romberg), and *Song of the Flame* (George Gershwin). With Jerome Kern, Hammerstein wrote eight musicals, including *Sweet Adeline*, *Music in the Air* and their masterwork, *Show Boat*. His last musical before embarking on an exclusive partnership with Richard Rodgers was *Carmen Jones*, the highly-acclaimed 1943 all-black revision of Georges Bizet's tragic opera *Carmen*. Hammerstein's last musical was *The Sound of Music* written with Rodgers in 1959; his last song was "Edelweiss," written for that musical during its Boston tryout. Oscar Hammerstein II died at his farm in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, on the morning of August 23, 1960. In 1995 Hammerstein's centennial was celebrated worldwide with commemorative recordings, books, concerts and an award-winning PBS special, *Some Enchanted Evening*. A biography, *Getting to Know Him* by Hugh Fordin, was first published by Random House in 1977. A revised edition of Hammerstein's Lyrics, edited by his son William Hammerstein and containing an introductory essay by the lyricist plus a preface by his protege Stephen Sondheim, was published by Hal Leonard Publishing in 1985. *The Complete Lyrics of Oscar Hammerstein II* was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 2008. Based on the 1931 play "Green Grows the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs.

DIRECTION

David Lowenstein (*Director*) is a graduate of SU's Department of Drama, now serving as an Assistant Professor, after having worked professional for the past 25 years. For the Drama Department he choreographed *Lucky Stiff* two seasons ago. He started his performing career

touring the country in several National Tours including *On Your Toes* and *42nd Street*. David made his Broadway debut in the multi Tony Award-winning *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. Other Broadway credits include: *1776*, *On The Town*, *Seussical!*, and *The Frogs*. During his successful performing career, he honed his teaching skills at New York University's Musical Theatre program CAP 21, and he directed and choreographed many regional, stock and Off-Broadway productions. He choreographed the Drama Desk Award-winning Off-Broadway review *Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Do!* and most recently co-created and choreographed *Shout, The Mod Musical* which was produced in London, had an Off-Broadway run, and is currently on tour and in regional theatres across the country.

Nathan Hurwitz (*Musical Director*) joined the SU Department of Drama faculty in 2006 after a lengthy career as a conductor/arranger/keyboard player. With a BFA from NYU, an MA from Northwestern University and his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Hurwitz has studied acting (Stella Adler), directing (Jack Garfein), and conducting/orchestration (Lehman Engel). Credits include: Broadway: *Blood Brothers*, *Dream* and *Phantom of the Opera*; international tours: *Phantom*, *West Side Story* and *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, and U.S. tours: *Blood Brothers*, *Company*, *The Who's 'Tommy'* and *Annie*. Regional credits include: The Williamstown Theatre Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre and The Pittsburgh Public Theatre. For the SU Drama Department Nathan has musical directed: *Urinetown*, *Little Women*, *My One and Only*, *Sweeney Todd* and has directed and musical directed *Lucky Stiff*. For Syracuse Stage, Nathan has musical directed *A Christmas Carol* and *Menopause: The Musical*, and appeared as the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*. He will direct and musical direct *The World Goes 'Round* for the Department of Drama this spring.

David Wanstreet (*Choreographer*) is an assistant professor of musical performance and choreography in the Department of Drama at Syracuse University. His professional career as a performer, choreographer and director includes musical theatre productions in regional theatres throughout the eastern United States. His choreography credits include *Damn Yankees*, *Oklahoma!*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Anything Goes*.

CAST

Neal Andrus (*Andrew Carnes*) is a transfer senior Acting major from Binghamton, NY. **Jon Baldauf** (*Joe*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Marion, OH. **Lily Ann Carlson** (*Ellen*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Olney, MD. **Brendan M. Cullen** (*Jud Fry*) is a senior Acting major from Danvers, MA. **Seth Danner** (*Curly, Dream Curly*) is a senior Musical Theatre major from Tipp City, OH. **Gregory Dasonville** (*Slim, u/s Will Parker*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from West Hartford, CT. **Lauren Devine** (*Aggie, Dance Captain, u/s Laurey*) is a senior Musical Theatre major from Franklin, MA. **Chris Dwan** (*Mike, u/s Andrew Carnes*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Canton, MI. **John Garry** (*Will Parker*) is a senior Musical Theatre major from Forestburgh, NY. **Aisling Halpin** (*Silvie, Dream Laurey*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Cortland, NY. **Jacob Heimer** (*Ali Hakim*) is a senior Acting major from Connecticut. **Mary Claire King** (*Armina*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Columbus, IN. **Christian Leadley** (*Pete*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Rochester, NY. **Toby Marks** (*Mary*) is a sophomore Acting major from Calgary, AB, Canada. **Mia Michelle McClain** (*Female Swing*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from New Orleans, LA. **Matthew Hazen McGuire** (*Cord Elam*) is a junior transfer Musical Theatre major from Miami, FL. **Jenaha McLearn** (*Virginia*) is a junior transfer Musical Theatre major from Eureka, CA. **Maggie McVey** (*Gertie Cummings*) is a senior Musical Theatre major from St. Louis, MO. **Kenny Metzger** (*Chalmers*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Trumbull, CT. **Eric Meyers**

(*Sam*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Dayton, OH. *Mary Kate Morrissey (Ado Annie)* is a junior Musical Theatre major. *Justin Nichols (Ike Skidmore)* is a junior Musical Theatre major from Tewksbury, MA. *Sarah O'Connor (Kate)* is a junior Musical Theatre major from Wayne, NJ. *Sarah Olbrantz (Aunt Eller)* is a senior Musical Theatre major, originally from the Pacific Northwest. *Marcelo Pereira (Jess)* is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from San Francisco, CA. *John Quertermous (Fred)* is a junior Musical Theatre major from Murray, KY. *Emma Ritchie (Laurey)* is a senior Musical Theatre major from Huntington Woods, MI. *Amanda Varcelotti (Vivian)* is a senior Musical Theatre major from Pittsburg, PA.

PRODUCTION

Mary Olin Geiger (Scenic Designer) is a junior Set and Costume Design major from Orlando, FL. *Evan Gannon (Lighting Designer)* is a senior Lighting Design major from Northport, NY. *Doreen Sayegh (Costume Designer)* is a senior Costume Design major from Los Angeles, CA. *Jonathan R. Herter (Sound Designer)* is the resident sound designer for Syracuse Stage and an adjunct faculty member for SU's Department of Drama. *David Huber (Sound Designer)* is the Assistant Audio Engineer for Syracuse Stage and the Head Audio Engineer for SU.

Stephanie Holmes (Stage Manager) is a senior Stage Management major from Manchester, CT.

Elizabeth Gleason (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a sophomore Design/Tech major from Syracuse. *Ryan Shaules (Assistant Scenic Designer)* is a sophomore Design/Technical Theatre major from Homewood, IL. *Kara Ramlow (Assistant Lighting Designer)* is a sophomore Design/Technical Theatre major from Wilmette, IL. *Jordan Rosin (Assistant Director)* is a junior Drama major from Seattle, WA. *Chelsea Jennings (Assistant Stage Manager)* is a junior Stage Management major from Springfield, OR. *Emily Springer (Assistant Stage Manager)* is a junior Stage Management major from Greensburg, PA. *Brian Zeilinger (Assistant Stage Manager)* is a freshman Stage Management major from Cleveland, OH.

TICKETS

Tickets for the Syracuse University Department of Drama's production of *Oklahoma!* are \$18 for adults and \$16 for students and seniors. \$7 rush tickets are available at the door, one hour before curtain. Wednesday, October 14 is "Pay What You Can" night" for valid SU ID holders. For tickets and more information, contact the Department of Drama box office at 315-443-3275 or visit <http://vpa.syr.edu/drama>.

VPA AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

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Gregory Dasonville (*Slim*)

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Chris Dwan (*Mike*)

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Performances: October 9 - October 24

October 9 - 8 p.m.
October 10 - 8 p.m.
October 11 - 2 p.m.
October 14 - 8 p.m.
October 15 - 8 p.m.
October 16 - 8 p.m.
October 17 - 2 p.m.
October 17 - 8 p.m.
October 18 - 2 p.m.
October 21 - 8 p.m.
October 22 - 8 p.m.
October 23 - 8 p.m.
October 24 - 8 p.m.

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