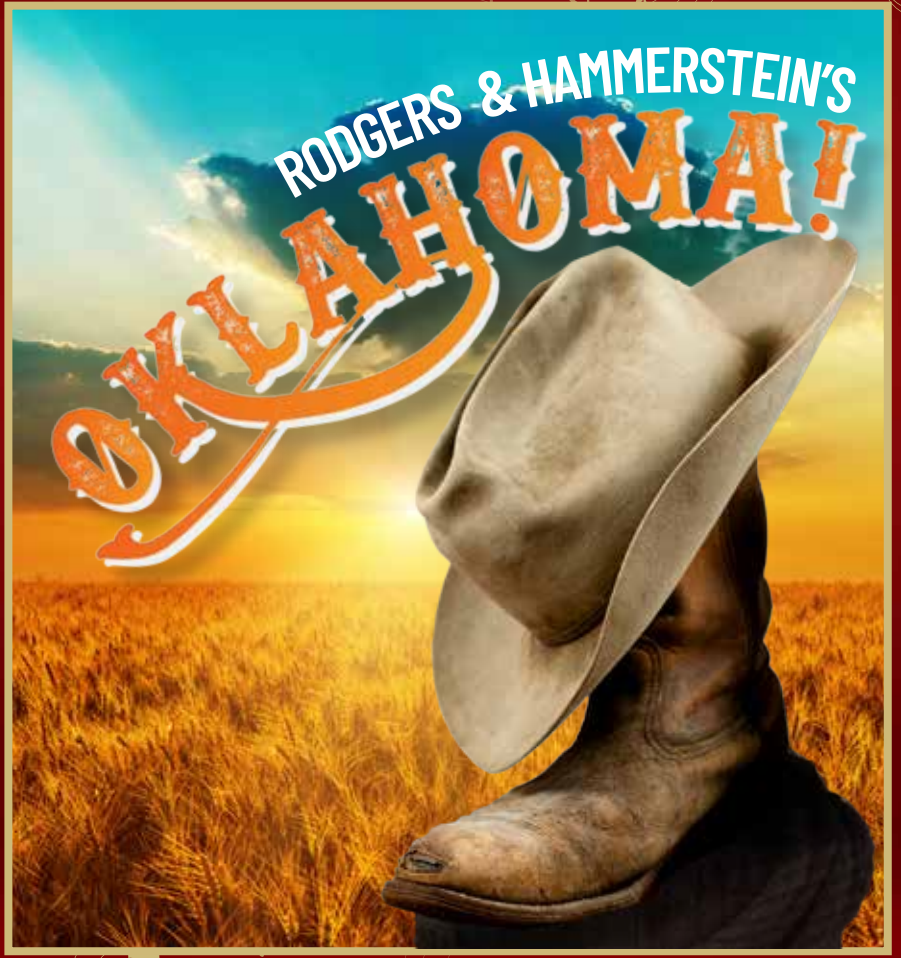
The Madison Theatre

at MOLLOY UNIVERSITY



516.323.4444

MADISONTHEATRENY.ORG

optimum.

ABOUT

RODGER'S & HAMMERSTEIN'S
OKlahoma!

Music by
RICHARD RODGERS

Book and Lyrics by
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

Based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs
Original Choreography by Agnes de Mille

OKLAHOMA! is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. www.concordtheatricals.com

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PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

Friday, November 19th, 8pm
Saturday, November 20th, 2pm & 7pm
Sunday, November 21st, 3pm

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director
Dustin Ballard

Choreographer
Kristyn Pope

Music Director
Brandon Scott Grayson

Fight Director
Shannon Michael Wamser

Dialect Coach
Peter Marciano

Scenic Designer
Catie Bartlett

Costume Designer
Jessica Irvin

Lighting Manager
Kaia L. Merrell

Sound Designer
Jabbath Roa

Props Designer
Megan Cohen

Production Stage Manager
Mel Hardy

Technical Director
Eli Reid

Asst. Stage Manager
Camillah Khan

Production Manager
Ally Namishia

USA 829 UNITED SCENIC ARTISTS

CAST

Laurey ..... Isabella Varela- Prendergast
Ado Annie ..... Sofia DiCicco
Curly ..... Chase Bolduc
Will Parker ..... Nick Lemza
Jud Fry ..... Caden Silvis
Gertie Cummings ..... Georgia Sharp
Aunt Eller ..... Emily Burg
Ali Hakim ..... Emilio Andres Grimaldo
Andrew Carnes ..... Jonah Ramis
Ike ..... Caleb Geary
Cord, Dream Curly Cover ..... Gabriel Cortes
Ensemble ..... Giselle Alcala
Ensemble, Laurey Cover ..... Kenzie Allis
Ensemble, Gertie Cover ..... Callie Audia
Ensemble ..... Noemi Bolano
Ensemble ..... Valeria Camino
Ensemble, Dream Laurey ..... Drea Campbell
Ensemble, Dream Curly Cover ..... Allison Clark
Ensemble, Dance Captain ..... Rylie Clore
Ensemble ..... Anya Colliou
Ensemble ..... Annika Gustafson
Ensemble, Will Parker Cover ..... Kai Darling
Ensemble ..... Gracie Kennett
Ensemble, Ali Hakim Cover ..... Aayan Khan
Ensemble, Aunt Eller Cover ..... Natalie Kissingford
Ensemble, Ado Annie Cover ..... Avery Marie
Ensemble ..... Juliette Salerno
Ensemble, Dream Curly ..... Andrew Schulien
Ensemble ..... Mara Stein
Ensemble, Jud Fry Cover ..... Sean Stoner
Ensemble, Curly Cover ..... Matthew Trombley

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

Overture – Orchestra
1. Opening Act I: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'" – Curly
2. "Laurey's Entrance" – Laurey
3. "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top" – Curly, Laurey and Aunt Eller
4. "Kansas City" – Will, Aunt Eller and the Boys
5. "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top (Reprise)" – Curly
6. "I Cain't Say No!" – Ado Annie
7. "I Cain't Say No! Encore" – Ado Annie
8. "Entrance of Ensemble" – Will, Ado Annie and Ensemble
9. "Many A New Day" – Laurey and the Girls
10. "Many A New Day Dance" – Orchestra
11. "It's A Scandal! It's A Outrage!" – Ali Hakim, Boys and Girls
12. "People Will Say We're In Love" – Curly and Laurey
13. Change Of Scene – Orchestra
14. "Pore Jud Is Daid" – Curly and Jud
15. "Lonely Room" – Jud
16. "Change Of Scene" – Orchestra
17. "Dream Sequence" – Orchestra
17a. "Melos" – Orchestra
17b. "Out of My Dreams" — Laurey and Girls
17c. "Interlude to Ballet" – Orchestra
17d. "Dream Ballet" – Orchestra

Act II

18. "Entr'acte" – Orchestra
19. "Opening Act II: "The Farmer and The Cowman" – Carnes, Aunt Eller, Curly, Will, Ado Annie, Slim and Ensemble
20. Farmer Dance – Orchestra
21. Change Of Scene – Orchestra
22. "All Er Nothin'" – Ado Annie and Will
23. "Change Of Scene" – Orchestra
24. "People Will Say We're In Love (Reprise)" – Curly and Laurey
25. "Change Of Scene" – Orchestra
26. "Change Of Scene" – Orchestra
27. "Oklahoma" – Curly, Laurey, Aunt Eller, Ike, Fred and Ensemble
28. "Oklahoma: Encore" – Curly, Laurey, Aunt Eller, Ike, Fred and Ensemble
29. "Finale Ultimo" – Full Company
30. "Exit Music" – Orchestra

BIOS

CAST:

Isabella Varela-Prendergast (Laurey) is a senior in the Molloy/CAP21 Musical Theatre Program and is incredibly grateful for these last three years. Bella is thrilled to be working with this magical team and to bring this classic piece to life. She hopes this show opens your hearts like it does hers!

Sofia DiCicco (Ado Annie) is a senior at Molloy/CAP21, she is so excited to return to the Madison Theatre stage. You may have seen her in last year's production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*. She would like to thank her teachers and family for supporting her! She cain't wait for you to see the show!!

Chase Bolduc (Curly) is ecstatic to be making his mainstage debut! Boston native, his favorite credits include Ren (*Footloose*), Warner (*Legally Blonde*), & Billy Flynn (*Chicago*). His hobbies include hiking, playing board/card games (especially cribbage), and watching movies with a giant bowl of popcorn. All my love to Mom and Dad. @chasebolduc1

Nick Lemza (Will Parker) is thrilled to perform his third show here at Molloy/CAP21! Favorite credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Demetrius), *Seussical* (Wickersham Brother) & *Spring Awakening* (Hanschen). He expresses immense gratitude to the talented cast and crew, and cannot wait to continue his performing journey. Always thankful to Mom and Dad!

Caden Silvis (Jud Fry) is ecstatic to play this role and make his mainstage debut in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* Caden is a junior at Molloy/CAP21 and can't wait for you to experience this show! He is grateful to his friends and family for their love and support.

Georgia Sharp (Gertie Cummings), a Molloy/CAP21 senior, is overjoyed to portray Gertie Cummings in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* Previous credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Snout) and *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Ensemble). She thanks the cast and creative team, as well as her teachers, family, and friends for their guidance and support!

Emily R. Burg (Aunt Eller) is a senior at Molloy/CAP21. Recent performances include: Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Molloy/Cap21), Queen Aggravain in *Once Upon A Mattress* (Sharon Playhouse), Toffee's Mom in *Zombie Prom* (Sharon Playhouse), and the ensemble in *Something Rotten* (Madison Theatre). Emily hopes you enjoy the show!
insta:@_emilyrburg_ @emburg.dance

Emilio Andres Grimaldo (Ali Hakim) (he/him) is a proud Latino performer from Tampa, Florida and he is beyond thrilled to be part of this stunning show! He is currently a senior in the Molloy/CAP21 Musical Theatre Program and is so incredibly grateful to be part of such a fierce program. Recent shows include *Guys and Dolls* (Great Plains Theatre), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (The Madison Theat re), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Molloy/CAP21), and *Seussical* (Molloy/CAP21). All the love to his wonderful family, friends, and professors - especially his mom and dad. Everything he does is for them. Enjoy the show y'all! YEE-HAW!!! @emilio.grimaldo <3

Jonah Ramis (Andrew Carnes) (he/him), originally from Toronto, Canada (go leafs!), is a junior at Molloy/CAP21, and this is his first time performing at the Madison Theatre! He is thrilled! Jonah would love to thank the creative team, his family, and his cat Stormy. Enjoy the show! insta: @circuitboard2brain

BIOS

Caleb Geary (Ike) is thrilled to be playing Ike Skidmore in this production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* He has performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Flute), *Cinderella* (Pageboy), and starred in *Once Upon a Mattress* (Dauntless) at the Trentino Music Festival last year. He hopes you have a great time at the box social!

Gabriel Cortes (Cord, Dream Curly Cover) is so excited to be playing Cord Elam in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* He's currently a Junior at Molloy/CAP21. He has been featured in the Madison Theatre's *Christmas Show Celebration*, and will be in the Molloy/CAP21 class of 28's upcoming production of *Macbeth*! He would like to thank his friends and family, and anyone who has ever supported him to get to where he is today.

Giselle Alcala (Ensemble) is a junior at Molloy/CAP21 and is thrilled to be performing in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*. Her favorite credits include Mimi in *Rent*, Rizzo in *Grease*, and Moana in *A Dream Is a Wish* at the Madison Theatre. She is grateful to share the stage with such a talented cast!

Kenzie Allis (Ensemble, Laurey Cover) (she/they) is just tickled to be performing in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*. Recent performances include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Something Rotten*, R*odgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Kiss Me, Kate!*, and more. NYC appearances: Carnegie Hall, Green Room 42, Don't Tell Mama. Upcoming B.F.A. Class of 2027: Molloy/CAP21.
IG: kenzie_allis_

Callie Audia (Ensemble, Gertie Cover) is delighted to be joining the wonderful world of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* She is a senior at Molloy/CAP21 Program. Past credits: *Zombie Prom* (Sharon Playhouse), *Seussical* (Molloy/CAP21). Thank you to Mom, Dad, Liv, and the incredible cast and creative team for all of their love and support!
IG: @callie.audia

Noemi Bolano (Ensemble) is a current junior at Molloy/CAP21 and is ecstatic to be a part of this production. Some of her recent credits include Give Our Regards to Broadway (2026) or The Madison Theater's *Christmas Celebration* (2025). Thank you mom and dad for everything! Enjoy the show!

Valeria Camino (Ensemble) is delighted to be featured in the beloved musical *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma*! She is a Junior at Molloy/CAP21 and will later play Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and appear in The Madison Theatre's *Christmas Celebration*. She thanks her castmates, crew, friends, and family for their continued love and support throughout her journey.

Drea Campbell (Ensemble, Dream Laurey) is a senior at Molloy/CAP21 and is so excited to be performing in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* with her friends and fellow classmates! She was previously in the Madison Theatre *Christmas Celebration* and *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*. She'd like to thank the cast and production team for making this so special!

Allison Clark (Ensemble) is a current junior in the Molloy/CAP21 Program and is thrilled to be making her mainstage debut in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma*! She is endlessly grateful for her family and friends for their support!!

Rylie Clore (Ensemble, Dance Captain) is so excited to dance around *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* this semester! She recently Assistant Stage Managed The Madison The-

BIOS

atre's *Something Rotten* and has last been seen in Molloy/CAP21's *Seussical* and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Yeow! @rylie_c_22

Anya Colliou (Ensemble) is overjoyed to be a part of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* She is currently studying musical theatre at Molloy/CAP21 and has just started her Senior year! When not performing, she enjoys writing songs and hiking. She hopes you enjoy the show! YEOW!

Annika Gustafson (Ensemble) is happier than a tick on a fat dog to be boot-scootin in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*! Some of her favorite performances have been Helga in *Cabaret*, Velma in *Chicago*, and sharing the stage with a handful of Broadway legends at Carnegie Hall. Annika thanks her loved ones and everyone involved in *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* for making this show a possibility for her.

Kai Darling (Ensemble, Will Parker Cover) is a musical theatre performer, model, and senior at Molloy/CAP21 and is ready to give y'all a rowdy show! Other credits here include *Midsummer Nights Dream* and *Seussical the Musical*. He's always wanted to perform in R*odgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* so sit back and enjoy the show. YEOW! @kai_.darling

Gracie Kennett (Ensemble) is a Junior at Molloy/CAP21 and is thrilled to be in this show! She has recently been seen at the Madison Theater in *Something Rotten!*, *Joseph and The Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *GORB 25'* and *26'.* She gives love to her friends and family who always support her! @gracielovekennett

Aayan Khan (Ensemble, Ali Hakim) is a junior at Molloy/CAP21! He is absolutely thrilled to be a part of *Oklahoma!* and would like to thank his family, friends, and teachers for their continued love and support. He hopes you enjoy the show! also… YEEHAW!!

Natalie Kissingford (Ensemble, Aunt Eller Cover) is simply chuffed to be among such a talented, delightful ensemble! Credits: Sophie Sheridan- *Trauma Mia* (Frigid NYC), Rosalind- *As You Like It* (UpstART Theater), Titania- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Molloy/CAP21). Love to Kate and John Kissingford, Jesse Hartley, Alijah Gopalakrishnan, Luke Hampshire for their unending support.

Avery Marie (Ensemble) as a small town girl, Avery Marie is very excited to go back to her roots for *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* This is Avery's first show at Molloy/CAP21. She has had so much fun singing and dancing to these classic songs, and hopes you have a wonderful time watching the show!

Juliette Salerno (Ensemble) is thrilled to be doing her first mainstage show at Molloy/CAP21! Recent credits include *Legally Blonde* (Store Manager/Prof Lowell/Whitney/DA Joyce Riley) in Italy, and *GORB: Anything Can Happen in the Theater* (Soloist) at the Madison Theatre. Find her on Instagram at @jewel.salerno

Andrew Schulien (Ensemble, Dream Curly) is so excited to be back at The Madison Theatre in this wonderful production! He was recently seen in *Something Rotten!* and *Joseph…Dreamcoat* at The Madison! Enjoy the show! YEEHAW!! Everything happens for a reason :D.
Instagram: @andrewschulien

Mara Stein (Ensemble) Yee-ow! Mara is beyond excited to make her Molloy/CAP21 Mainstage debut with this amazing cast! This summer, Mara had the privilege of performing as Fred Tinker at Santa's Village with RWS Global. Credits: *Anastasia* (Anastasia), *Spelling Bee*

(Logainne), & *Freckleface Strawberry* (Freckleface Strawberry). I love you, Mom & Dad! @mara.stein_

Sean Stoner (Ensemble, Jud Cover) is thrilled to be in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*, and make his Molloy/CAP21 Mainstage Debut! Recently, Sean played Joseph in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* here at the Madison Theatre. Other Credits: *Something Rotten!* (Shylock), *The Betrothed* (Captain Spavento). Sean would like to thank his parents for their continued support!

Matthew Trombley (Ensemble, Curly Cover) is thrilled to be making his Madison Theatre debut as Ensemble/Curly McClain u/s in Molloy/CAP21's production of *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* Other recent credits include *Footloose!* (Cowboy Bob), and the upcoming Madison Theatre's *Christmas Celebration*. He would like to thank his family, friends, Molloy/CAP21 faculty, and the entire team behind *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*

CREATIVE TEAM:

Dustin Ballard (Director) is a theatre artist who is thrilled to be directing this production of Oklahoma at Molloy/CAP21 with this incredible cast and production team. He has directed for Kean Theatre Conservatory, Middlesex College, McCarter Theatre Center, and George Street Playhouse Education. Some of his past productions include *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *John Proctor is the Villain,* and *Significant Other*. A proud member of Actors Equity, he has appeared on many stages including Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Two River Theatre, and Premiere Stages. He was the 2009 Region 2 Winner and National Finalist for the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship from the American College Theatre Festival. His most recent role was Carl in Steven Dietz's *Lonely Planet* at Luna Stage directed by Melissa Firlit. As a writer, his play *Bend in the River* premiered at the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and he was also 2025 alumni winner of the Bauer-Boucher New Play Festival from Premiere Stages for his play *Wayfarers*. He is also the co-creator and cohost of the acclaimed outdoors podcast *Gaze at the National Parks*.

Kristyn Pope (Choreographer) is grateful for this creative space. Much gratitude to Molloy/CAP21, Dusty, Brandon, Ally, James, and the Rogers's & Hammerstein's Oklahoma! family for this opportunity and experience. "You have to take risks…We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen." ~Paulo Coelho. Now & always, in loving memory of her mom and dad. AgapePs100.

Brandon Scott Grayson (Music Director) (he/him) past productions at Molloy/CAP21 include *9 to 5*, *Cabaret*, *Anything Goes*, and *Seussical*. Other music directing highlights include 9 seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Compositional works include *Madame X*, *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, *Best Foot Forward!*, *Clown Bar 2*, and more.

Shannon Michael Wamser (Fight Director): Recent Fight Direction credits: *West Side Story*, *Romeo & Juliet* (Interlochen Arts Academy), *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Theatre Raleigh), Other Molloy/CAP21 productions include *Cinderella*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Galaxy Quest*, *As You Like It*. He teaches Movement, Shakespeare and Stage Combat with Molloy/CAP21.

Peter Marciano (Dialect Coach) is an actor, director, and teacher. He serves as the Head of

BIOS

Voice and Speech at Molloy/CAP21 Musical Theatre BFA Program. He has taught voice, movement, and acting at the MFA programs at University of Southern California and Pace University, The Linklater Voice Centre, American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York Film Academy, KIMEP University in Kazakhstan, and the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre. He cowrote the book Authentic Voice and Speech: A Nonprescriptive, Student-Centered Approach. He has coached actors on Broadway, off-Broadway, and National Tours. He is a Designated Linklater Teacher and Certified Colaianni Speech Practitioner. Peter holds an MFA in Acting from The Actors Studio Drama School.

Caitlynn Barrett (Set Designer) is a set designer, art director, and fine artist based in New York City. She's grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with all of the artists who helped put this production together.

Jessica Irvin (Costume Designer) a Maryland born, New York City raised Costume Designer, is currently the Costume Shop Manager at Queensborough Community College. She has worked as a Costume Designer on several productions throughout her 11-year career. She is excited to be returning, to design her second show with Molloy University. #Phil413

Kaia L. Merrell (Lighting Designer) (she/they) is a New York based Lighting Designer. Recent work: *The Maltese Falcon* (NY Stage & Film); *The Monsters* (Portland Theatre Festival); *Something Rotten* (Cap21 & Molloy University); *New York Aerial Dance Festival* (Fly By Night Dance); *Mini Me* (The Chain); *AARON* (Vulcan Theatre). MFA: NYU Tisch. @kaiamerrelldesign

Jabbath Roa (Sound Designer) is a sound designer and music producer. Graduated as Music Composer specializing in electroacoustics. Mentored by Morton Subotnick he toured sharing stages with Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson Ministry among many of his heroes. Roa creates cinematic soundscapes and sonic experiences for audiences, both studio and live. => jabbath.com

Megan Cohen (Props Designer) is thrilled to be designing props for Molloy University. Other Molloy/CAP21 prop credits include: *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Anything Goes*, *The Wild Party* and *Cry Baby*. Current prop work is featured at the John W. Engeman Theater. Thanks to family and friends for the support. Follow at meganmcqueeney.com

Mel Hardy (Production Stage Manager) is a New York City based Stage Manager, designer, and technician. Favorite credits include: *FISA*, *Life & Trust*, *Gwangju!*, *Cocktail Magique*, *The Hour* and more! When not at the theater, she loves to spend time with her dog and top supporter, Nimi.

Camillah Khan (Assistant Stage Manager) (he/they) (she/they) - is an access-forward freelance stage manager/stagehand based in NYC. A recent graduate from CUNY City Tech, Camillah's recent credits include *La Ventana de los Chevere* at Teatro LATEA, *Broadway Bares*, and Action play's *Now's The Time*.
Contact: camillah.business@gmail.com.

Richard Rodgers' contribution to the musical theatre of his day was extraordinary, and his influence on the musical theatre of today and tomorrow is legendary. His career spanned more than six decades, his hits ranging from the silver screens of Hollywood to the bright lights of Broadway, London and beyond. He was the recipient of countless awards, includ-

ing Pulitzers, Tonys, Oscars, Grammys and Emmys. He wrote more than 900 published songs and 40 Broadway musicals.

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895-1943) wrote their first shows together when both were still students attending Columbia University. Their breakthrough came with the score for a 1925 charity show, *The Garrick Gaieties*, which introduced the classic valentine to their hometown, "Manhattan."

Over the next five years they wrote 15 musical comedies for Broadway and London's West End before relocating to Hollywood in 1930, where they contributed songs and wrote the scores for several movie musicals, most notably *Love Me Tonight*, starring Maurice Chevalier.

In 1935 they returned to New York to write the score for Billy Rose's circus musical Jumbo, launching a golden era that included *On Your Toes*, *Babes In Arms*, *I'd Rather Be Right*, *I Married An Angel*, *The Boys From Syracuse*, *Too Many Girls*, *Higher And Higher*, *Pal Joey* and *By Jupiter*. In 1943 the partnership disbanded temporarily when Rodgers collaborated with Oscar Hammerstein II on *Oklahoma!*, but it resumed with a revision of their 1927 hit *A Connecticut Yankee*, which opened on November 17, 1943 – less than a week before Lorenz Hart's death.

For the next two decades Richard Rodgers collaborated exclusively with Oscar Hammerstein II on such musicals as *Carousel*, *Allegro*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Pipe Dream* and *The Sound of Music*. Collectively, their musicals have garnered dozens of awards, including Pulitzer Prizes, Tonys, Oscars, Emmys, Grammys, and Drama Desk, Drama Critics' Circle, Outer Critics Circle, Laurence Olivier and Evening Standard Awards.

After Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers continued to write for the musical stage, including *No Strings*, and collaborations with Martin Charnin, Stephen Sondheim and Sheldon Harnick. His fortieth, and final, Broadway musical, *I Remember Mama*, opened on Broadway less than eight months before his death on December 30, 1979.

The Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway was renamed in his honor, and Rodgers and Hart were each commemorated on a US postage stamp at the end of the 20th century.

Oscar Hammerstein II was born on July 12, 1895 in New York City. His father, William, was a theatre manager and for many years director of Hammerstein's Victoria, the most popular vaudeville theatre of its day. His uncle, Arthur Hammerstein, was a successful Broadway producer and his grandfather, Oscar Hammerstein, a famous opera impresario.

Hammerstein started writing lyrics for the Columbia University Varsity shows while studying law. His earliest works included musical comedies written with a Columbia undergraduate seven years his junior named Richard Rodgers. (The 1920 varsity show, *Fly With Me*, was composed by Rodgers with lyrics by both Hammerstein and a fellow classmate of his named Lorenz Hart.) Withdrawing from Columbia Law School after his second year to pursue a career in theatre, Hammerstein took a job with his uncle as an assistant stage manager.

In 1919, Hammerstein's first play, *The Light*, was produced by his Uncle Arthur; it lasted four performances. Undaunted, he continued to write both lyrics and librettos, principally with Otto Harbach as his collaborating author. His first success, with Harbach, Vincent Youmans and Herbert Stothart, was *Wildflower* in 1923. Hammerstein found his niche with some of the greatest composers of his day, breathing new life into the moribund artform of op-

eretta 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*.

During the years that Hammerstein was redefining the terms of operetta, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart were challenging the accepted norms of musical comedy with shows that set new standards for wit, sophistication and innovation. The Rodgers & Hammerstein partnership began with *Oklahoma!* (1943). Like Hammerstein's *Show Boat* and Rodgers & Hart's *Pal Joey*, the first Rodgers & Hammerstein musical was a groundbreaking milestone, blending musical comedy and operetta into a whole new genre – the musical play. *Oklahoma!* was also the start of the most successful partnership in Broadway history and was followed by *Carousel*, *Allegro*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Me and Juliet*, *Pipe Dream*, *Flower Drum Song* and *The Sound of Music*. Rodgers & Hammerstein wrote one musical specifically for the big screen – *State Fair* – and one for television – *Cinderella*. Collectively, their musicals have garnered dozens of awards, including: Pulitzer Prizes and Tony, Oscar, Emmy, Grammy, Drama Desk, Drama Critics' Circle, Outer Critics Circle, Laurence Olivier and Evening Standard Awards.

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* in 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.)

Oscar Hammerstein II 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.

His last musical was *The Sound of Music,* written with Richard 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*. The ultimate tribute came the following season, when Oscar Hammerstein II had three musicals playing on Broadway simultaneously: *Show Boat* (1995 Tony Award winner, Best Musical Revival), *The King and I* (1996 Tony Award winner, Best Musical Revival) and *State Fair* (1996 Tony Award nominee for Best Score.)

"The Careful Dreamer," a Time Magazine cover story on Oscar Hammerstein II, was published on October 20, 1947. 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.

BIOS

Agnes de Mille (1905-1993) seemed destined to perform on Broadway, since her paternal grandfather, father, and uncle, Cecil B. de Mille, were all successful writers and actors involved in the theater, she avoided the easy path to Great White Way. Instead, she struggled in obscurity and poverty, courageously pursuing a career as a dancer and choreographer. When her amazing talent was finally recognized, and she made her way to the stage, she transformed the world of musical comedy forever.
De Mille was born in Harlem in 1905, but moved with her family to Hollywood when she was still a young girl. Always very dramatic, de Mille and her sister gave piano recitals and staged drama productions for their friends, but her parents refused to let her take dancing lessons. It was widely believed in those days that dancers were slightly disreputable. She did have the opportunity to see a dance performance, however, by Anna Pavlova. The performance inspired in young Agnes the desire to become a famous dancer.

When de Mille's sister's arches in her feet fell, her doctor recommended that she take dancing lessons. Agnes convinced her parents to allow her to do the same, but recalled later that she was considered "a perfectly rotten dancer."

A professor de Mille had at UCLA told her that she was too fat to become a dancer, but commended her on her acting ability. This did not dissuade de Mille in the least. Upon graduating from UCLA, she moved to New York, where she struggled to make a living as a dancer. Her first real job came when she was hired as a dancer-choreographer in Christopher Morley's revival of a 19th-century melodrama, *The Black Crook*, in Hoboken.

In 1932, de Mille moved to London, where she received extensive dance training at Madame returned to the United States to take odd jobs. She danced in her uncle's staging of *Cleopatra* in 1934, and she choreographed for the Leslie Howard/Norma Shearer film version of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1936. Most of her time, however, was spent battling poverty in London while trying to become an original choreographer.

De Mille's career made a change for the better in the late 1930s and 1940s. In 1939, she was invited to join the American Ballet Theatre's opening season. Here, she created her first ballet, *Black Ritual*, in 1940. This ballet became the first ever to use black dancers. In 1942, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, a company that came to the United States because of World War II, invited de Mille to choreograph a ballet for their repertory. She created *Rodeo*, a highly energetic work with a uniquely American spirit that captured its opening night audience so much that it received 22 curtain calls. One critic called it "refreshing and as American as Mark Twain." Also in 1942, de Mille choreographed her ballet, *Three Virgins and a Devil*, for the American Ballet Theater. The following year, she joined Rodgers and Hammerstein to create the triumphant *Oklahoma!*, a musical that revolutionized the art form by integrating its choreographic numbers with the plot in a way that had not been done before.

De Mille went on to choreograph some of the biggest Broadway hits in the 1940s and 1950s, such as *One Touch Of Venus* in 1943, *Carousel* in 1945, *Brigadoon* in 1947, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* in 1949, and *Paint Your Wagon* in 1951. She also furthered her innovative style with *Tally-Ho* in 1944 and Fall River Legend, a haunting version of the Lizzie Borden axe murder case, in 1948.

Throughout the 1950s, de Mille embarked on a variety of endeavors. In 1952, she published the first volume of her autobiography, *Dance to the Piper*. The following year, she founded the Agnes de Mille Theater and toured with them in 126 cities from 1953 through

1954. In 1955, she choreographed the numbers for a film version of *Oklahoma!*. She also made her way to the world of television when she narrated and directed two hour-long programs on the dance for the *Omnibus* series the very next year. De Mille published the second volume of her autobiography, *And Promenade Home*, and choreographed the musical *Goldilocks*, both in 1958. In 1959, she supplied the dances for the musical Juno.

During the 1960s, de Mille continued to produce many memorable ballets, including *The Bitter Weird* (1962), *The Wind In The Mountains* (1965), and *The Golden Age* (1967). She also found time to publish several more dance books, such as *To a Young Dancer* (1962), *The Book of the Dance* (1963), and *Lizzie Borden Dance of Death* (1968).

From 1973 to 1974, the tireless de Mille founded and toured with the Agnes de Mille Heritage Dance Theater. She suffered a debilitating stroke in 1975, but fought her way back to health in time to receive the Handel Medallion, New York's highest award for achievement in the arts, in 1976.

In 1979, she helped in staging a revival of *Oklahoma!*, and she engrossed television viewers with her lecture on the history of American dance in *Conversations About the Dance*, a PBS program which included dancing by the Joffrey Ballet. She also published her tenth book, *American Dances*, an intriguing and vivid account of how the different varieties of dance have grown and developed in the United States. De Mille continued to be very actively involved with artistic endeavors up until her death in 1993.

Lynn Riggs was the author of Green Grow the Lilacs, originally produced by the Theatre Guild in 1931 and later used by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II as the basis for their musical *Oklahoma!*. The original play had a New York run of 64 performances, while its musical adaptation had an original Broadway run of 2,202 performances.

Riggs' first play to receive a New York production was *The Big Lake*, which was presented by the American Laboratory Theatre. As a result, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship and spent a year in France, where he wrote *Lilacs*.

Born in Claremore, Oklahoma, Riggs studied for three years at the University of Oklahoma. As a youth, he worked various jobs, including singing in a musical film house. He later moved to New York, where he worked as a proofreader and clerked for Macy's department store and the American Express Company.

Riggs' other plays include *The Lonesome West*, *The Cream In The Well*, *Laughter From A Cloud*, *Russet Mantle* and *Borned In Texas*.

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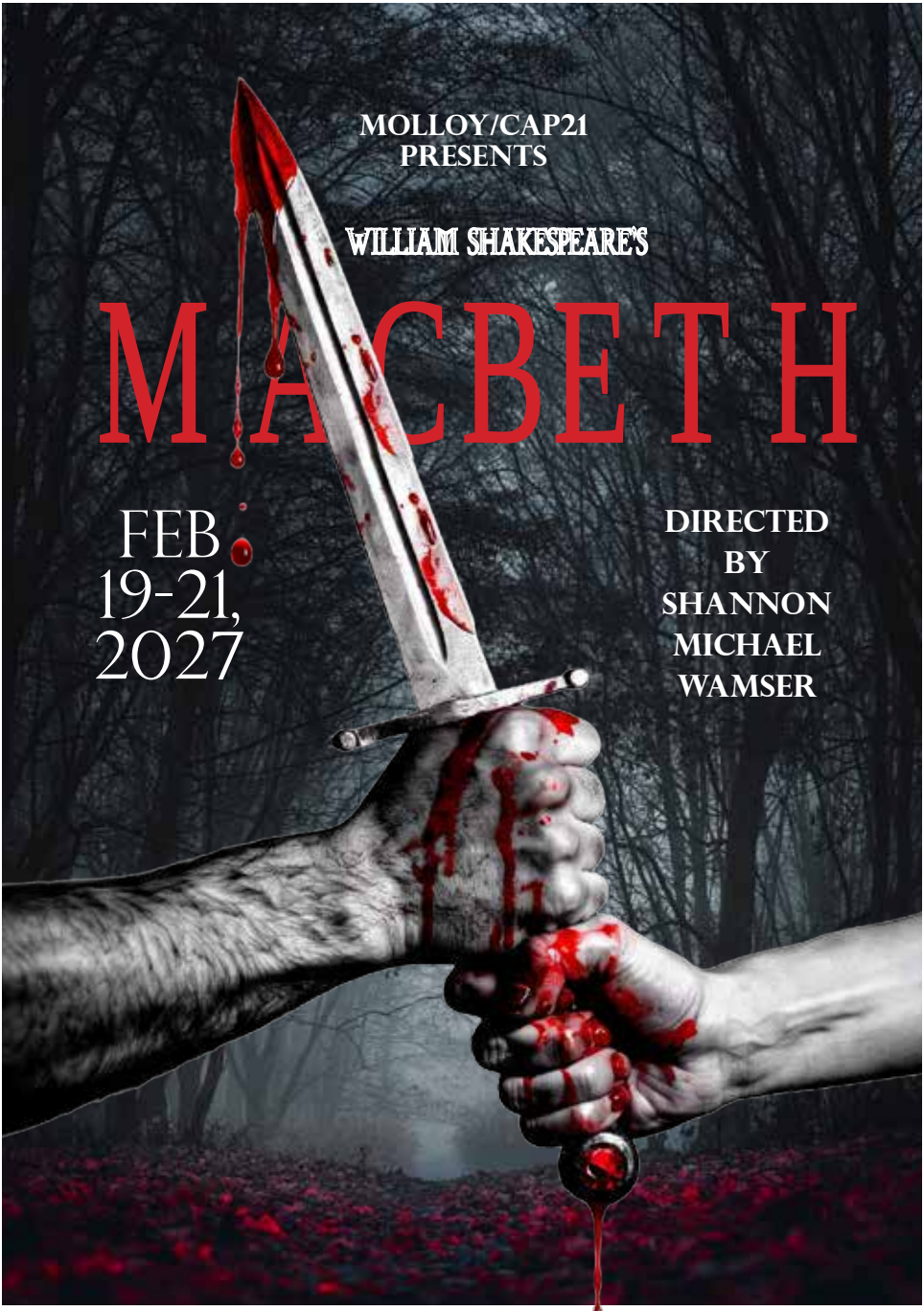
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