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**RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S OKLAHOMA OPENS  
57TH SEASON AT LAKE WORTH PLAYHOUSE**

**LAKE WORTH, Florida (September 21, 2009)** – The Lake Worth Playhouse opens its 57<sup>th</sup> season with the triumphant Rogers & Hammerstein musical, *OKLAHOMA!* The show runs from October 9 through October 25, 2009 at the Playhouse, located at 713 Lake Avenue in downtown Lake Worth.

*OKLAHOMA!* is the first of the Rodgers & Hammerstein masterworks and is credited with establishing the musical play as a significant art form, paving the way for all others that came after it, including the works of Lerner & Loewe, Frank Loesser and Leonard Bernstein. After *OKLAHOMA!*, composer Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and lyricist/librettist Oscar Hammerstein, II (1895-1960) produced such vital works as *CAROUSEL*, *THE KING AND I*, *SOUTH PACIFIC* and *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*, making them the most important contributors to the musical-play form during the 1940s-1950s, the era that is considered the golden age of the medium.

*OKLAHOMA!* originally opened on Broadway at the St. James Theatre on March 31, 1943 and ran for a then-unprecedented 2,212 performances. It won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1944 and has since become the most frequently produced of all American musicals. The play centers around the love story between handsome cowhand, Curly McLain, and winsome farm girl, Laurey Williams, and features a secondary romance between the impetuous Ado Annie and her energetic cow-roping fiancé, Will Parker. Set against the backdrop of rural Oklahoma during the turn of the century (between the historic land rushes of 1889 and 1893), the play focuses on the hardships and challenges of ordinary, real-life rural folks who employed healthy amounts of hardy American optimism in order to triumph and prosper in both life and in love. *OKLAHOMA!* features a remarkable number of popular songs, including *Oh What a Beautiful Morning*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, *Kansas City*, *I Cain't Say No*, *People Will Say We're in Love* and the dynamic *Oklahoma!*, which eventually became the title song, replacing the musical's original title, *AWAY WE GO!*

The Playhouse production of *OKLAHOMA!* is directed by Shannon Jami Dolan and choreographed by Ricky Nahas, with music direction by Toni Stamos. The cast includes Tom Cooch (Curly McLain), Jeannette Thompson (Laurey Williams), Kaitrin Lynch (Ado Annie), Shane Blanford (Will

Parker), Bernice Carley (Aunt Eller) and Jonathan Woody (Ali Hakim). The set is designed by Dennis Schaber and lighting design is by Zach Phillips.

### **About Lake Worth Playhouse**

Lake Worth Playhouse is a non-profit community theatre with a diverse array of offerings, including award-winning dramas, comedies, musicals, area premieres, Broadway favorites, children's shows, ballets and operas on film, live concerts, improv comedy and alternative programming. In addition to its main stage theatrical fare, the Playhouse presents year-round independent and foreign films in the Stonzek Theatre, an intimate black-box style theatre equipped with a large viewing screen and high-definition projection. The Playhouse is proud to offer a variety of educational programs for adults and children, as well as community outreach initiatives that bring cultural programs into the neighborhoods of underserved youth and also make theatre available free of charge for disadvantaged citizens in the community.

The 57th season of the Lake Worth Playhouse will open with the classic Rodgers & Hammerstein musical **OKLAHOMA!** (October 9-25, 2009), followed by Neil Simon's bittersweet comedy **BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS** (November 20 – December 13, 2009), Broadway dance sensation **SWING** (January 22 – February 7, 2010), Agatha Christie's **THE MOUSETRAP** (March 5-21, 2010) and Andrew Lloyd Webber's **JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT** (April 16 – May 2, 2010). The Playhouse is also presenting as special Halloween production of the spine-chilling ghost story, **THE WOMAN IN BLACK** (October 30 & 31).

### **Schedule**

Opening Night for OKLAHOMA! is Friday, October 9, 2009 at **8:00 PM**. Performances take place at **8:00 PM** on October 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24; at **2:00 PM** on October 11, 17, 18, 24, 25 PM; and at **7:00 PM** on October 17. OKLAHOMA! closes Sunday, October 25.

The Playhouse Dinner & Show preview night is Thursday, October 8, 2009 and includes a pre-show dinner at Paradiso Ristorante prior to the 8:00 PM performance for a single \$50 ticket price.

### **Tickets**

Individual tickets are \$25 and \$29 and can be purchased through the Lake Worth Playhouse Box Office at **561-586-6410** or online at **lakeworthplayhouse.org**. Full-season subscriptions are available through October 25, 2009. Opening night VIP tickets are \$36 and include a pre-show reception catered by Farmer Girl Restaurant. Dinner & Show tickets are \$50 and include a three-course meal at Paradiso Ristorante.

### **Location**

Lake Worth Playhouse is located at 713 Lake Avenue in Downtown Lake Worth. It is situated on the south side of Lake Avenue two blocks east of Dixie Highway. Free, well-lighted parking is available on Lake Avenue and surrounding side streets, with free parking lots located behind the Playhouse.

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