



PRESS CONTACT: Natalie Genter-Gilmore

503.445.3765

natalieg@pcs.org

M E D I A R E L E A S E

Oklahoma! casting announced at Portland Center Stage

Chris Coleman's visionary new production opens September 23, 2011 in the Main Stage theater.

August 24, 2011 – PORTLAND, ORE. Rehearsals have begun for a fresh new look at the classic American musical [Oklahoma!](#) at Portland Center Stage. Artistic Director Chris Coleman has set the iconic musical in an all-black town in the Oklahoma territories right as the region gained statehood in 1907. ***Oklahoma!*** previews on Tuesday September 20th, opens on **Friday, September 23rd, and runs Tuesday through Sunday through October 30.** Tickets **start at \$39**, with student and under 30 discounts available. Rush tickets are \$20. Show times are 7:30 pm Tuesday through Saturday, with a 2:00 pm Sunday matinee and alternating Saturday 2:00 pm and Sunday 7:30 pm performances.

Coleman [describes](#) his approach to the show in his blog on the Portland Center Stage website. "I became intrigued by the notion of telling the story through the lens of an African American community while casting *Ragtime* two years ago. But only when I began research in earnest did I realize the resonance of this choice. When the territory was opened for broader settlement in 1889, there was a significant in-migration of African Americans fleeing the post-Civil War repressions of the Deep South. About 50 all black towns and settlements sprung up, and efforts to recruit other folks to join the parade intensified. By 1900 there were 137,000 African Americans in the territory, and the wealthiest enclave of African American residents in the country lived in Tulsa, OK."

Joining the cast of *Oklahoma!* are some new faces to Portland audiences. The role of independent cowboy Curley will be played by **Rodney Hicks**. Hicks recently appeared on Broadway in the Tony-nominated *The Scottsboro Boys*. Previously, on Broadway, he starred in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Nightshade Family*, *Jacques Brel*, *Dorian Gray* and both the original and closing casts of *RENT*. The role of Laurey will be played by **Brianna Horne**. Horne is a recent graduate of Wagner College and has previously appeared at The Arden Theater,

American Repertory Theater and Ogunquit Playhouse, among others. A familiar face to PCS audiences will be **Marisha Wallace** in the role of Ado Annie. Wallace was last seen in *One Night with Janis Joplin* as a backup singer and understudy to The Blues Singer.

Scenic design for *Oklahoma!* will be created by **William Bloodgood**, with lighting design by **Ann Wrightson** and costume design by **Jeff Cone**. Sound design is by **Casi Pacilio**. **Rick Lewis** will be the musical director and **Joel Ferrell** is choreographer.

Additional support for this production has been provided by **Ellyn Bye; Madeline Nelson and Jim Lafky; Helen and Jerry Stern; Troutman Sanders; US Bank** and **The Oregonian**.

Portland Center Stage's 2011/12 season is funded in part by **Umpqua Private Bank**, our lead corporate champion; the **Regional Arts & Culture Council** and **Work for Art**; the **Oregon Arts Commission**; the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation; Helen and Jerry Stern**; and **Tim & Mary Boyle**. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage.

[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY houses a 599-seat Main Stage and the 200-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

Oklahoma!

Fact Sheet

WHAT: Oklahoma!

Music by Richard Rodgers Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

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

Original Dances by Agnes de Mille

WHEN: September 20 – October 30, 2011 .

Tuesday through Saturday 7:30pm and Sunday matinees at 2:00pm. Saturday matinees (10/1, 10/15, 10/29) at 2:00pm. Thursday matinees (9/29 - 10/27) at Noon.

WHERE: Main Stage, Gerding Theater at the Armory 128 NW 11th Ave, Portland OR 97209

TICKETS: 503-445-3700 or www.pcs.org. Prices start at \$39

PHOTOS: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/portlandcenterstage/sets/72157627378503159/>