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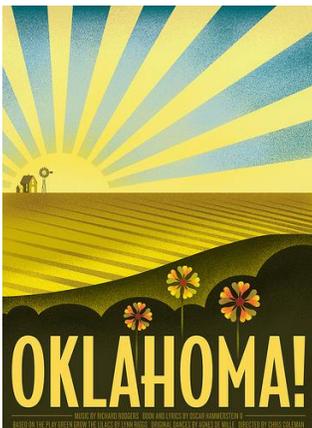
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M E D I A R E L E A S E

Get ready for a boot-stompin' good time!

Chris Coleman's visionary new production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma! opens September 23, 2011 in the Main Stage theater.



September 2, 2011 – PORTLAND, ORE. There's a bright golden haze filling the theater! [Oklahoma!](#) opens September 23 at Portland Center Stage. Artistic Director Chris Coleman has set this beloved all-American 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.

In a fresh new century, on the cusp of the creation of a brand new state, the hopes of the American dream soar in, *Oklahoma!* Coleman's choice to set the story in an all-black town brings new resonance to the classic show. "Having an African American cast tell this story, for me, feels fresh, legitimate and perhaps newly resonant. For a musical that always risks feeling syrupy sweet, or cornnnnnnnny – grounding it in a real place and time, with real people who are building a life for themselves out of the land, and succeeding at a modest level – feels like it has the prospect of letting the whole thing breathe," says Coleman [on the PCS blog](#). The setting, while being artistically interesting, is also historically accurate. At the turn of the 20th century, more than 50 all-black towns thrived in the Oklahoma Territories as African Americans fled the oppressive Jim Crow laws and rampant discrimination in the American south. They migrated to Oklahoma and found new hope for peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, a burgeoning cattle industry needed hearty seasonal workers to work the rigorous cattle drives through the region. It's estimated that as many as one in three cowboys working in the early 1900's was African American, Mexican or Native American.

Joining the cast of *Oklahoma!* are some new faces to Portland audiences. The role of independent cowboy Curly will be played by **Rodney Hicks** and Laurey will be played by **Brianna Horne**. A familiar face to PCS audiences will be **Marisha Wallace**, most recently seen in *One Night with Janis Joplin*, taking on the role of Ado Annie. The full cast includes Joy Lynn Matthews-Jacobs, Troy Valjean Rucker, Don Kenneth Mason, Timothy Ware, Jarran Muse, Justin Lee Miller, Jonathan Raviv, Kelcy Griffin, Sheila Jones, Berwick Haynes, Tyrone Roberson, Gregory J. Hanks, Kembra Anika Shannon, Sumayya Ali, Bianca Burgess, and Marlene Villafane.



Rodney Hicks and Brianna Horne in *Oklahoma!*

Photo by Patrick Weishampel

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
Directed by Chris Coleman
- 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/>
(Photos of dress rehearsal will be available at the above link by September 22)