



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CALENDAR INFORMATION

What: Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*

Presented by: Woodminster Summer Musicals by Producers Associates, Inc.

When: 8 pm on July 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 2018

Where: Woodminster Amphitheater, Joaquin Miller Park, 3540 Sanborn Drive, Oakland

Tickets: 510-531-9597 or www.woodminster.com or at the box office before any performance

Nikita Burshteyn* as Curly and Jennifer Mitchell* as Laurey

PRESS RELEASE

Woodminster Summer Musicals Opens 52nd Season July 6 With *Oklahoma* Production Celebrates 75th Birthday of Classic Rodgers & Hammerstein Musical

July 3, 2018, Oakland, CA -- Producers Associates opens the 52nd season of the Woodminster Summer Musicals with *Oklahoma*. This popular classic will be performed July 6-15 at Woodminster Amphitheater in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park, located on Joaquin Miller Road at upper Sanborn Drive. *Oklahoma*, which opened on Broadway 75 years ago, was the first collaboration for Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, arguably the greatest writing partnership in the history of American Musical Theater.

Oklahoma is set in a Western territory just after the turn of the 20th century, where the high-spirited rivalry between the local farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a headstrong farm girl, play out their love story. Rodgers and Hammerstein's first collaboration is also one of their most memorable scores, with songs like "Oh What A Beautiful Morning," "Surrey With the Fringe On Top," "People Will Say We're In Love," "Kansas City," and the triumphant title song, "Oklahoma!"

Oklahoma won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1944, and ran for 2,212 performances on Broadway. It was revolutionary for the time because it combined elements of operetta with old-style musical comedies to produce the first full-fledged musical play, where all elements contribute to character development and story line. It was not only revolutionary in the way it fused story, songs, and dance, but it also introduced the choreography of Agnes DeMille's Dream Ballet to reveal the hidden desires and fears of the principal characters. It was also the first Broadway musical to have every major number recorded by the full original cast and orchestra, and introduced the idea of the Original Cast Album, released of course on 78 RPM vinyl. This show established new expectations for musicals that were followed for decades and are still familiar today.

Says director Joel Schlader, "*Oklahoma* is an absolute must-see for musical theater lovers. In many ways, it set the direction for American Musical Theater that has been followed and expanded by people like Andrew Lloyd Webber and Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose shows we're doing later this summer. It's hard to overestimate how important this show was, which is why just this year, The New York Times called *Oklahoma* 'the Hamilton of World War II.' We're excited to celebrate its 75th birthday with a big blow-out production, with nearly 50 in the cast plus a live professional orchestra."

Tickets are available by phone, at 510-531-9597, online at www.woodminster.com, or in person at Woodminster Amphitheater 10-4 weekdays and 10-2 weekends, or at the box office 2 hours before any performance. Performances are July 6 (opening), July 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 15, all at 8 p.m.



Oscar Tsukayama as Will Parker and Gina Velez as Ado Annie

Tickets for summer musicals at Woodminster Amphitheater range from \$32 to \$69, with a \$2 discount for seniors 62 and older. Since the beginning, one of Producers Associates' missions has been to make live theater affordable for families in the local community, and the organization offers many ticket discount programs with that in mind. They include:

- Season tickets and flex passes (about a 15% discount)
- Group rate 25+ (about half price, specific performances)
- Group rate 12+ (about 15% off, any performance)
- Oakland residents (about half price, opening night of each show)
- Millennials 17-30 (about half price, at the door any performance)
- Kids Come Free (up to 16 yrs, 1 free with 1 paying adult, at the door any performance)
- K75 (up to 16 yrs, about 75% off, 5 discounted kids with 1 paying adult, pre-sales okay, any performance)

The production is directed by Joel Schlader, with music direction by Mark Dietrich and choreography by Harriet Mason, assisted by Sarah Pon. Woodminster shows are performed with live orchestras, and musicians are members of Musicians Local No. 6.

The role of Curly is played July 6-8 by Nikita Burshteyn, last seen on the Woodminster stage in 2014 as Frank Abagnale Jr. in *Catch Me If You Can*. On July 12-15, the role of Curly will be played by Gary Stanford Jr., in his Woodminster debut. Curly's love interest, Laurey, will be played by Jennifer Mitchell, who played Belle in 2017's *Beauty and the Beast*. Also, in last year's *Beauty and the Beast* (as Cogsworth) was Dwight Mahabir, who will portray the menacing farmhand, Jud Fry July 12-15. The comedic "dancing" couple, Will Parker and Ado Annie, will be played by Oscar Tsukayama and Gina Velez. The cast of 47 includes both Equity (AEA member) and non-Equity performers.

After *Oklahoma* the 52nd season of the Woodminster Summer Musicals will continue with Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice's *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor® Dreamcoat* August 3-12 and Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegría Hudes' *In The Heights* August 31-September 9.

Over the last 52 years, Producers Associates has presented 160+ productions, entertaining over a million Woodminster Summer Musicals ticket holders. The shows have been performed by more than 5000 actors, over 20% of them members of Actors Equity Association, making the organization one of the Bay Area's most reliable employers of professional actors. The musicals have always been performed with live professional orchestras, which have included 23 different conductors and over 1800 members of Musicians Local #6. In addition, the organization has employed 26 professional set designers, 17 lighting designers, 25 costume designers, 6 sound technicians, 18 choreographers, 6 directors, and over 1,500 young backstage interns.

Woodminster Summer Musicals are performed under the stars at Woodminster Amphitheater, an open-air performance facility in Joaquin Miller Park high in the Oakland Hills. The park's spectacular views and serene woodsy environment made it the perfect setting for the amphitheater, cascades, reflecting pool, and paths that were originally built as a WPA project in 1939-40. For many East Bay families, it is a long-standing summer tradition to enjoy a picnic in the park and then see a musical at Woodminster.

For more information about the 2018 season or the history of the organization, visit www.woodminster.com.