

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Managing Director Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

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**RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S OKLAHOMA!  
RETURNS TO ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER  
AFTER BREAKING BOX OFFICE RECORDS DURING SOLD-OUT RUN  
AS THE INAUGURAL PRODUCTION OF THE MEAD CENTER**

\*\*\* Single tickets on sale Friday, March 4, with limited number of \$50 tickets available that day only \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) After shattering all box office records in Arena Stage's 60-year history, **Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*** will once again delight audiences at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater when it returns to the Fichandler Stage **July 8–October 2, 2011**. Directed by **Artistic Director Molly Smith**, the production will feature many of the same cast members as in the original production, which *The Washington Post* called “**an enchantment**,” *Bloomberg News* called a “**turbo-charged, romantic revival**” and *New Yorker* included as one of the **Top 10 Performances of 2010**.

Tickets will be available to supporters of Arena Stage **Tuesday, February 22**, to subscribers **Monday, February 28**, and to the general public **Friday, March 4** with a 24-hour sale featuring limited special offer \$50 tickets. These \$50 tickets will be available in person at the box office and by phone at 202-488-3300 from 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. and online at [www.arenastage.org](http://www.arenastage.org) from 12:00 a.m.–11:59 p.m. March 4.

“When we first opened *Oklahoma!* last fall, audiences couldn't get enough of it, and it was difficult to have to turn people away at the box office,” shares Managing Director **Edgar Dobie**. “Even though it was playing to an average of 99% capacity each performance, we couldn't extend to meet demand this winter due to the next incoming show in the Fichandler. However, we're so pleased to bring it back again this summer.”

**Smith** adds, “The optimism and drive of the characters exploring a new frontier matched the ambition Arena Stage staff felt as we opened our new theater complex. It was thrilling that audiences shared that enthusiasm and supported our inaugural production in our new home.”

Inspired by the toughness of the prairie, Smith sets her production in the robust world of territory life filled with a dynamic cast as rich and complex as the tapestry of America itself. With Rodgers and Hammerstein's timeless score under the musical direction of **George Fulginiti-Shakar**, Smith's *Oklahoma!* celebrates the vigor of America's pioneering spirit with athletic dance and boot-stomping energy through **Parker Esse's** choreography. Tony Award-winning designers **Eugene Lee** and **Martin Pakledinaz** round out the dynamic sets and costumes respectively.

“I had no idea what to expect from Molly's production—‘not your mother's *Oklahoma!*’? What did that mean?—and I was quite blown away when I saw it,” contributes **Ted Chapin**, president and executive director of Rodgers & Hammerstein: An Iagem Company. “She makes the show contemporary by honoring what Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote while providing a modern look at the casting and direction. I am thrilled that more people will be able to see it.”

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## Arena Stage revives Molly Smith's production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*

Page 2

Full casting and creative teams to be announced at a later date. For further information please e-mail [press@arenastage.org](mailto:press@arenastage.org).

In Arena Stage's 2010/11 Season, *Oklahoma!* set the following records:

- **Highest single-ticket sales for a production by opening night.** By opening night, Arena Stage had 54% more in advanced single-ticket revenue than the previous record holder, the 2010 production of *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*.
- **Highest single-ticket sales for a single production in a 24-hour period,** surpassing Molly Smith's 2002 production of *South Pacific* by a 50% increase in revenue.
- **Highest-grossing, non-extension production in Arena Stage history.** Previously held by the 2010 production of *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*, the record for the highest single-ticket sales for a non-extension run was exceeded by more than \$100,000 by opening night.
- **Highest single-ticket sales for a single production in one week.** *Oklahoma!* broke this record twice; first during the week of November 1-7, 2010, when Arena Stage surpassed the previous record set by *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies* by selling more than 4,000 tickets, and then again the following week, when Arena Stage sold nearly 6,000 tickets.

What the critics had to say:

"You just can't say no to Arena's *Oklahoma!*...simply irresistible." – *The Washington Post*

"*Oklahoma!* revival generates awfully loud Broadway buzz" – *The New York Times*

"An inspired remounting...beautifully directed by Molly Smith" – *The Toronto Star*

"An exceptional production...a visionary take on a classic" – *New Yorker*

"Just about perfect!" – *Bloomberg*

"Infectiously spirited performances" – *Baltimore Sun*

"Four Stars—this *Oklahoma!* is A-OK!" – *Washingtonian*

"Every inch a rousing crowd-pleaser" – *Washington City Paper*

"Leaves you humming long after you left the theater" -- *TheaterMania*

"Stunning...a must see production!" – *Washington Life*

"An old-fashioned hoedown has never felt so thrilling" – *DCist*

"Pitch Perfect" – *DC Theatre Scene*

"Outstanding talents" – *Metro Weekly*

"Excels on numerous levels...a superb cast" – *Washington Times*

"Fresh, charming and bursting with energy" – *CurtainUp*

*Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater* is a national center dedicated to the production, presentation, development and study of American theater. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Managing Director Edgar Dobie, Arena Stage is the largest company in the country dedicated to American plays and playwrights. Arena Stage produces huge plays of all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays through the American Voices New Play Institute. Now in its sixth decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of about 300,000. [www.arenastage.org](http://www.arenastage.org).

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