

AKENA'S PAGE

for american theater

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THE PLAY

Step right up! It's 1908, and Billy Bigelow is the best carousel barker on the New England coast. Billy is the macho guy that every man wants to be and every woman wants to be with. Then, the innocent Julie Jordan catches his eye, and, against the odds, these opposites attract. Soon after, Julie is thrown out of the carnival by Billy's jealous boss, Mrs. Mullin, and ordered to never return.

Meanwhile, Julie's best friend, Carrie Pipperidge, is madly in love with Enoch Snow, and they intend to marry. That is, until one of Billy's notorious associates, Jigger Craigin, shows up at the annual clambake.

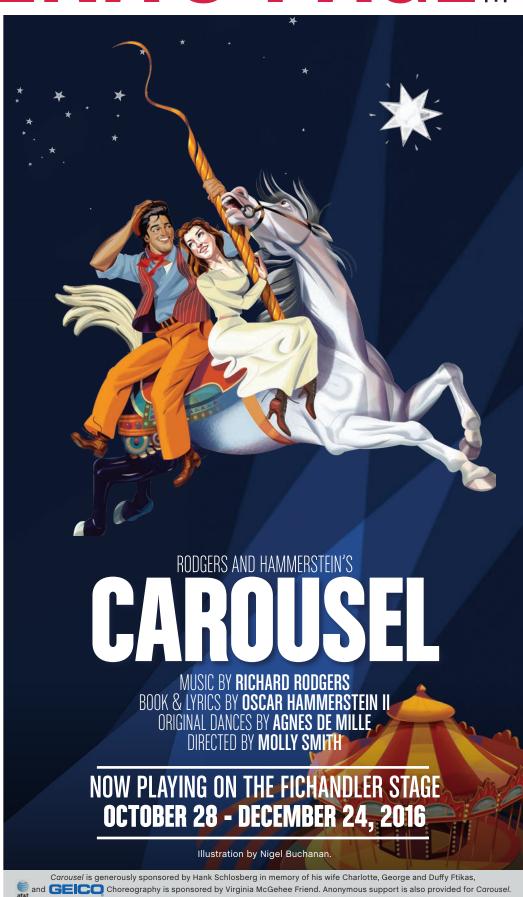
The course of true love never did run smooth, and both couples must fight for their "happily ever after." Billy, in particular, is faced with a desperate choice. Can he find redemption for his past mistakes? Is there grace on the other side?

Through music, betrayal and misunderstandings, Carousel explores our struggles with love and honor and the wrongs we do each other.

barker - a person who stands outside a theater, carnival or sideshow to draw an

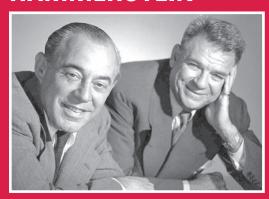
know what it is. You look up at like you trusted me."

audience with colorful sales talk You're different all right. Don't me with that little kid face like... — Billy, Carousel



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MEET RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN



Richard Rodgers, the composer, and Oscar Hammerstein II, the lyricist, comprise the award-winning duo, Rodgers and Hammerstein.

At 6 years old, Rodgers developed a love of piano and started composing in his early teens. He studied at Columbia University, where he met Hammerstein. Hammerstein's father and grandfather were important innovators and supporters of German and Victorian theater. Despite this, Hammerstein's father did not want his son to work in theater. However, Hammerstein followed his heart, and the pair made some of America's most well-known and lucrative shows.

Some of Rodgers and Hammerstein's most notable works include *Oklahomal*, *The Sound of Music*, *Carousel* and *Cinderella*. Originally a made-for-TV movie starring Julie Andrews, *Cinderella* was remade in 1996 starring Brandy and Whitney Houston.

MAKING MUSICAL THEATER HISTORY



In 2010, Arena Stage opened the Mead Center for American Theater with a wildly popular production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!

Rodgers & Hammerstein's legendary success started with *Oklahoma!*, their groundbreaking first production in 1943.

While early musicals showcased songs and dances, they tended to have weak storylines. *Oklahoma!* was the first musical to use text, music and dance together to develop characters and tell a story. With Rodgers & Hammerstein's new approach, when a character is overcome by emotion they sing. When singing fails, a character dances. These elements can also blend. Sometimes music continues to play under dialogue and before and after songs.

After 2,212 performances, Oklahoma! was a tough act to follow. Theater Guild, which produced Oklahoma!, suggested the duo turn Ferenc Molnar's play Liliom into a musical. Liliom is a Hungarian play about a carousel barker who falls in love with a young woman, but succumbs to his desires and pride. They decided to use the charming New England coast for their adaptation. The show proved to be another hit, introducing now-classic songs like "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "June is Bustin' Out All Over."

ARENA STAGE'S CAROUSEL

In this production of *Carousel*, the director, Molly Smith, was inspired by *Our Town*, a play about simple American life that uses minimal set and props. The actors in *Carousel* were given homework the first week of rehearsal: identify every object they would use in the show and practice miming them. The actors then participated in pantomime workshops, which is unusual in a rehearsal process.

This is also the first time the production will be done with only 12 instruments, highlighting the score and the text of the show.

The music director, Paul Sportelli, is writing all the instrument parts, in addition to teaching the cast the music and conducting them.

The design elements (the sets, lights, costumes and props) are inspired by the sun-drenched feeling of summer on the New England coast.

miming - portraying an imaginary object, character, idea or narration through gesture and movement.

Carousel is based on a Hungarian play, Liliom. This costume, worn by Billy Bigelow, is influenced by the costume designer's own Hungarian heritage. Design by Ilona Somogyi.



A VISIT TO THE CAROUSEL



On a summer night young, old, rich and poor alike would flock to the carnival. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, working people spent their days laboring in factories, homes, farms and harbors. The dazzling sights, rides and unique carnival folk coupled with the wafting smell of popcorn and echoes of children's laughter made the carnival a perfect escape from everyday life.

Aside from the rides, one of the main attractions was the sideshow of human oddities and "freaks." Young and old flocked to see the bearded lady and wolf boy. We now know that most of these performers were suffering from physical illnesses, which they used as their livelihood or others used to exploit them.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

Molly Smith

With Carousel, I'm directing the Hamlet of musical theater.

I love this story because it's real. Billy and Julie are complex — we don't always understand their motivations even when we root for them. Don't we know many in our own lives that we don't completely understand? There are people we spend years trying to figure out-and Billy and Julie are two of these people. On the Fichandler Stage, with everyone no more than nine rows from the actors, we

will get inside their minds and hearts. Remember this was musical created right after World War II, a time of devastation, joy and fear for the whole country. Somehow I think this musical was a healing act for those who had lost so many friends and family.

The reason Rodgers and Hammerstein's musicals have lasted so long is because they are about something meaningful: South Pacific attacks racism; Oklahoma! explores the fears and triumphs of forging a territory. Carousel is about personal redemption. At its heart it's a story of morality and spirituality.



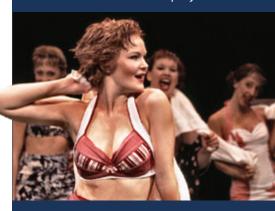
What are some annual events the people in your neighborhood look forward to? Research the

history of this event and why it takes place. Can't think of any? Come up with your own event and why your neighborhood should do it annually.



ON THE SET OF CAROUSEL

In Carousel a gazebo has shingles. Those shingles weren't just bought and put on the roof. They are the result of careful research. Once the setting and color palette were established, Tony Award-winning set designer Todd Rosenthal gathered images of weathered roofs in New England. He provided swatches of peeling paint and textures with the renderings (drawings) of the set. Our charge scenic artist replicated this research when he painted the set. This attention to detail is in all the design elements, which come together to create the world of the play.



Molly Smith has also directed Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma! and South Pacific (pictured). She specializes in reimagining musicals in-the-round. In this configuration, the audience surrounds the stage. Golden-age American musicals usually feel like a storybook. Working in-the-round turns them into a sculpture gallery.

THE WORLD OF THE MUSICAL: NEW ENGLAND, 1908

For centuries a woman's place had been the home, cleaning, cooking and taking care of children. However, after the Industrial Revolution began, it became more common for lower-class, single women to work. A common job for young women (and children) was factory or mill work, tedious painstaking jobs that required small hands and long hours. Some young women would live together in company-owned housing, supervised by their boss' wife. These homes had strict rules and curfews. Young women were expected to have strong morals, especially when it came to men. Young women who were perceived as promiscuous or loose were called "chippies."

While some men also did mill work, others were fishermen or whalers. Whalers would go on dangerous hunting expeditions to kill whales, which were valuable. The song "Blow High, Blow Low!" is sung by the whalers about their life at sea.

Life on the coast was not all work. Every once in a while there was a special occasion, like a clambake. At a clambake, clams, lobster, other seafood and vegetables are cooked over an open fire and devoured by picnickers. People wade in the water and play games, enjoying a day of freedom.









How can you tell when someone truly loves you?



What would you do if given the chance to change or redeem your past?

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THEATER AUDIENCES

As an audience member at the theater, YOU are part of the show! Just as you see and hear the actors onstage, they can see and hear you in the audience. To help the performers do their best, please remember the following:

- · Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- · Visit the restroom before the show starts.
- · Sit in the exact seat on your ticket. Ask the usher for help finding it.
- Before the show begins, turn off your phone, watch alarms and any other electronic devices. If anything rings by accident, turn it off immediately.
- Do not use your phone for texts, calls, games or pictures.
- · You cannot take pictures or make recordings in the theater, even before o after the play.
- · There is no food allowed in the theater.
- · Do not talk, whisper, sing or hum, unless invited by the performers to do so.
- · Keep your feet on the floor and off the seat in front of you.
- Avoid getting up during a show. If you must leave, wait for a scene change and exit quietly and quickly.
- · Respond to the show; you can laugh, cry and gasp. However, don't repeat lines out loud or talk to the performers on stage.
- · Be sure to applaud at the end!

RESOURCES

Rodgers & Hammerstein www.rnh.com

Samuel French, Inc.: *Liliom* www.samuelfrench.com/p/2513/liliom

The Human Marvels
www.thehumanmarvels.com

Whale and Dolphin Conservation us.whales.org



What makes a story or song a classic? Choose three modern books, movies or songs, and explain why they are destined to be classics.



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