



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MOONLIGHT STAGE PRODUCTIONS OPENS 30th ANNIVERSARY
SEASON WITH RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S "OKLAHOMA!"
JULY 14-31 AT THE MOONLIGHT AMPHITHEATRE**

VISTA, CA – To open its 30th anniversary summer season, Moonlight Stage Productions presents the most American of American musicals, **Rodgers and Hammerstein's OKLAHOMA!** from July 14-31 at the Moonlight Amphitheatre. This ground-breaking production kicks off the Moonlight's three-show season also consisting of the Gershwin musical comedy **CRAZY FOR YOU** (August 11-28) and the stunning theatrical spectacle **MISS SAIGON** (September 8-25). Tickets, priced \$22-\$45, are on sale through the VisTix Ticket Office at (760) 724-2110 and online at moonlightstage.com. The creative team for **OKLAHOMA!** consists of Moonlight Producing Artistic Director Kathy Brombacher who is directing; Roger Castellano who is choreographer; and Elan McMahan who is musical director and conductor of Moonlight's 20-piece **OKLAHOMA!** orchestra.

Opening on Broadway at the St. James Theatre on March 31, 1943 and running for five years and nine months, **OKLAHOMA!** is a celebration of the American pioneer spirit. Based on Lynn Riggs play *Green Grow the Lilacs*, **OKLAHOMA!** is set on Indian territory now known as the state of Oklahoma at the turn of the 20th century. The fierce rivalry between the local farmers and the cowboys provide a colorful background against the romance between the handsome cowboy Curly and the winsome farm girl Laurey. The road to love is complicated with the hired-hand Jud and his intentions of attempting to win Laurey's heart. Groundbreaking in its day, **OKLAHOMA!** was the first musical (or as one critic called it, a "folk opera") that wove all creative elements (music, story, and dance) together creating a unified and cohesive whole.

OKLAHOMA!, the first collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, opened new ideas for the American musical theatre. From the outset, the collaboration between Rodgers and Hammerstein would be different: Hammerstein would first write the lyrics, and then Rodgers would set them to music. The team also partnered with Agnes de Mille, who added brilliant choreography to the show. In the decade before the production opened, not a single hit show ran for more than 500 performances. When **OKLAHOMA!** premiered, audiences around the world clamored for its magic. The show broke existing box office records – for length of run and for receipts – and after it closed a national company toured the United States for ten years. Companies were formed to present the musical in Europe, South Africa, Scandinavia, Australia and also for the Armed Forces during the last years of the Second World War. Hollywood released a movie version in 1955 starring Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones where it won two Academy Awards. The New York Drama League named the original Broadway **OKLAHOMA!** the Best Musical of the Century.

The cast of **OKLAHOMA!** features **Brent Schindele** (Los Angeles) as Curly, **Michaelia Leigh** (Upland) as Laurey, **Bets Malone** (Los Angeles) as Ado Annie, **Carlos Martin** (Santa Ana) as Will Parker, **Joey De Benedetto** (Las Vegas, NV) as Jud Fry, **Sandra Ellis-Troy** (Vista) as Aunt Eller, **Jason Maddy** (Escondido) as Ali Hakim, **Ralph Johnson** (San Diego) as Andrew Carnes, **Stephen Branch** (El Cajon) as Ike Skidmore, **Tom Brault** (Oceanside) as Cord Elam, and **Karla Ruth Gilbert** (Los Angeles) as Gertie.

The creative and production team for **OKLAHOMA!** includes Costume Coordinators **Carlotta Malone** and **Roslyn Lehman**, Lighting Designer **Chrissie Munich**, Sound Designer **Peter Hashagen**, Stage Manager **Stanley Cohen**, Assistant Stage Manager **Sarah Ahlquist**, and Properties Coordinator **Sue Givens**.

The Moonlight Amphitheatre christened a new state-of-the-art stage house with improved theatre amenities in 2009 after presenting musicals, concerts, and special events on its original stage for 28 years. The Amphitheatre is one of the most unique theatre-going experiences in the region by offering two types of seating: lawn-style seating and reserved seats. In what has become a favorite summer tradition, audiences are welcome to bring their own picnic suppers into the Amphitheatre before the performance then enjoy the show right from their picnic spot. Chairs are provided by theatre with the purchase of a lawn ticket. For those wanting a traditional experience, reserved seats are also available for purchase. Dining options include a pre-show buffet dinner on the Moonlight Patio, as well as traditional

fare offered from concessionaire “Feliccias at the Moonlight.” For Buffet Dinner reservations, call (760) 758-9167.

Moonlight Stage Productions is the cultural arts program of the City of Vista and is partially funded by its non-profit fund-raising arm the Moonlight Cultural Foundation. Moonlight is an award-winning theatre company receiving accolades from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and the Patté Awards for Theater Excellence among others. In addition to its popular Summer Season outdoors at the 2000-person capacity Moonlight Amphitheatre, the company moves indoor each winter to present a three-show season of intimate plays and musicals at the 300-seat AVO Playhouse located in the Vista Village.

PRINCIPAL CAST/PRODUCTION BIOS

BRENT SCHINDELE* (Curly McLain) Broadway-National Tour: JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (Peter, Simon the Zealot, Keyboards), WEST SIDE STORY (Tony). Off-Broadway: THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS - THE MUSICAL! (the Leading Man). Recent L.A. Stage: SOUVENIR at Garry Marshall's Falcon Theatre, BUDDY at McCoy-Rigby, SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD at Long Beach PAC, SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE (dir. Jason Alexander), CITY OF ANGELS and NO STRINGS at Reprise!, AND THE WINNER IS at Laguna Playhouse; Romeo in ROMEO & JULIET, Cinderella's Prince/the Wolf in INTO THE WOODS, and the title role in THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL. Also Billy in ANYTHING GOES, Tommy in BRIGADOON, Cliff in CABARET, Joseph in DREAMCOAT, and the Guy in Sondheim's MARRY ME A LITTLE. Film/TV: COLD CASE, IT IS WRITTEN, THIRTEEN DAYS with Kevin Costner. All-Ivy League water polo at Dartmouth, and two L.A. Drama Critics' Circle Awards (Acting, Music Direction).

MICHAELIA LEIGH (Laurey Williams) is thrilled to be reprising the role of Laurey, and to be making her Moonlight debut! Southern California credits include MISS SAIGON (Ellen), HAIR (Sheila, Ovation nominee – Best Musical, LADCC nominee Best Ensemble), Scarlet Pimpernel (Marguerite), FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Hodel), SEUSSICAL (Mayzie), OKLAHOMA! (Laurey), ANYTHING GOES (Hope), and ROMEO AND JULIET (Juliet), among others. Most recently she appeared as Hermia in Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities' A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM at the Hermosa Beach Playhouse. She has performed throughout the United States as well as all over Europe. She thanks the Moonlight family for welcoming her, and her own family and friends for all of their support.

BETS MALONE* (Ado Annie Carnes) is thrilled to be back at the Moonlight where she began her theatrical journey the very year the theatre opened. Patrons here have seen her in such shows as EVITA, INTO THE WOODS, ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, CHILDREN OF EDEN, CAROUSEL, and THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES among others adding up to over thirty productions. Last year Bets originated the role of Suzy in the Off-Broadway production of THE MARVELOUS WONDERETTES and recorded the original cast album. She can also be heard as Talulah the monkey in BARBIE, AS THE ISLAND PRINCESS. As daughter of the brilliant Jim and Carlotta Malone - and surrogate to the astounding Kathy Brombacher - working at the Moonlight simply means coming home. Husband and Moonlight favorite Steve Glaudini and Bets are

beyond grateful to the Moonlight for shaping our careers.

CARLOS MARTIN* (Will Parker) Moonlight Appearances: EVITA, CRAZY FOR YOU, RAGTIME, FOOTLOOSE; Moonlight's AVO Playhouse appearances: FOREVER PLAID (Smudge). Favorites elsewhere: LIFE COULD BE A DREAM, Milwaukee Rep (Skip, Original Cast), MAN OF LA MANCHA North Coast Rep (Pedro); ZOOT SUIT ROMEO AND JULIET, East La Classic Theater (Mercurio); CUBICLES Alliance Rep (Hugh Stark, Original Cast) Others: WIZARD OF OZ (Tin Man); PHANTOM (Eric); JOSEPH (Pharaoh); ALTAR BOYZ (Juan); THE FANTASTICKS (El Gallo); SINGING IN THE RAIN (Cosmo); PAJAMA GAME (Sid). (AEA) Wonderful to be back on the hill. It always feels like home. Appears next at Cesars Palace in Las Vegas August 6th to marry his best friend Kami Seymour.

SANDRA ELLIS-TROY (Aunt Eller) Moonlight Amphitheatre debut. Favorite AVO Playhouse appearances: DRIVING MISS DAISY and ON GOLDEN POND. Selected elsewhere: A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, MATCHMAKER, Cygnet Theatre (Resident Artist); THE WAVERLY GALLERY, BULRUSHER, New Village Arts (Ensemble Member); AUNTIE MAME, RABBIT HOLE, NCRT (Resident Artist); EDITH STEIN, Lambs Players Theatre (Associate Guest Artist); GINGERBREAD LADY, Renaissance Theatre; CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, Sierra Rep; LIGHT UP THE SKY, PCPA; THE BURNING DECK, La Jolla Playhouse; BARGAINS, Old Globe Theatre and THE SNOW BALL, Boston's Huntington Theatre, both directed by Jack O'Brien. A recipient of seventeen performance awards, Sandra's upcoming appearances are: INTO THE WOODS, New Village Arts; and SUPERIOR DONUTS, San Diego Rep. (AEA-Resigned, SAG, AFTRA).

JOEY DEBENEDETTO (Jud Fry) is excited to be making his Moonlight Debut. From Las Vegas, Nevada. Joey has been seen in THE LAST FIVE YEARS (Jamie) 1776 (Thomas Jefferson) JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (King Herod) MISS SAIGON (Chris), soloist in the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic Holiday Pops Concert, BAT BOY (Bud/Pan), HAIR (Berger Cover), ANYTHING GOES (Purser), and the world premiere of two new shows: WHISPER, LOVE and PAINTED (Cincinnati Fringe Festival). Up next you can see Joey as Moose in Moonlight's production of CRAZY FOR YOU. Joey is a senior musical theatre major at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

JASON MADDY (Ali Hakim) Recent Moonlight appearances: YOU NEVER CAN TELL. Favorites elsewhere: I LOVE YOU BECAUSE, THE DRESSER, BABY, and most recently VOICE OF THE PRAIRIE at North Coast Repertory Theatre, WHITE CHRISTMAS and FIDDLER ON THE ROOF at the Welk Resort Theatre, and GUYS AND DOLLS with San Diego Musical Theater. Favorites outside of San Diego include: the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and Kingsmen Shakespeare Festival. Jason Holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

KATHY BROMBACHER (Producing Artistic Director/Director of "Oklahoma!") has helmed the artistic vision of Moonlight Stage Productions, since 1981 when the first musical was produced in the Moonlight Amphitheatre. Almost thirty years later, she has seen major milestones: last year, the completion of the new Amphitheatre stage house constructed in just nine months was a 20-year dream realized by the City of Vista. The City's renovation of the AVO Playhouse from a 1948 movie theatre to a producing rental theatre space in 1995 was another milestone which reflected the community's support for Moonlight's programs.

It has been a privilege to work with the directors, designers, stage managers and actors who come to create magic on our stages. Married to Robert C. Brombacher, D.D.S., Kathy has been honored by the San Diego Theatre Critics' Circle with a Craig Noel Award for "Theatrical Trailblazer" in 2005, and a Patté Award for Theater Excellence for Lifetime Achievement in 2006. Favorite directing projects: THE MAGIC FIRE, RAGTIME THE MUSICAL, THE GOODBYE GIRL, THE SPITFIRE GRILL, LOST IN YONKERS, NOISES OFF, and THE MOST HAPPY FELLA, to name a few.

ROGER CASTELLANO (Choreographer) Roger is happy to be back at Moonlight Stage Productions and working with Kathy Brombacher and the incredible staff, crew and cast. Theatrical Awards include LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award Nominee for best choreographer (JEKYLL & HYDE – Cabrillo Music Theatre), LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award Nominee for best choreographer (THE ANDREWS BROTHERS – Musical Theatre West), Los Angeles Time's Critic's Pick (ME & MY GIRL – Musical Theatre West), Drama Logue's Critic Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre – "Best Choreography" (A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC – The Center Theatre Group), Drama Logue's Critic Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre – "Best Choreography" (LA CAGE AUX FOLLES – The Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities), Drama Logue's Critic Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre – "Best Choreography" (OLIVER – The Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities), Inland Theatre League Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre – "Best Director" (SUESSICAL – Performance Riverside), AriZoni Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre – "Best Choreography" (A CHORUS LINE – The Phoenix Theatre.)

ELAN MCMAHAN (Musical Director/Conductor) has been involved with music at the Moonlight since 1982. This production of OKLAHOMA! marks her 38th as Musical Director for Moonlight Stage Productions. In addition to nine Robby Award nominations, she has received two Robby Awards for Best Musical Direction for Moonlight's productions of A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC and RAGTIME. Elan holds music degrees from BYU and the St. Louis Conservatory of Music.

* denotes member of Actors' Equity Association.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

Oklahoma!

Music by Richard Rodgers

Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Presented by Moonlight Stage Productions

July 14-31 at 8:00 pm

Moonlight Amphitheatre

1200 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista

Tickets: \$22-\$45

Tickets/information: (760) 724-2110

Website: www.moonlightstage.com

Box Office at the Amphitheatre opens at 6:00 pm

Gates open for picnicking and dining at 6:30 pm

Production Dates

July 14 at 8:00 pm

July 15 at 8:00 pm

July 16 at 8:00 pm

July 17 at 8:00 pm

July 18 at 8:00 pm

July 21 at 8:00 pm

July 22 at 8:00 pm

July 23 at 8:00 pm

July 24 at 8:00 pm

July 25 at 8:00 pm

July 29 at 8:00 pm

July 30 at 8:00 pm

July 31 at 8:00 pm

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