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**THE 5TH SADDLES UP FOR
RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S OKLAHOMA!
WITH SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER**

*Music by Richard Rodgers; Book & Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
Directed by Peter Rothstein, Choreographed by Donald Byrd
February 3 – March 4, 2012*

(Tuesday, January 10, 2011 – SEATTLE, WA) The 5th Avenue Theatre is bringing the wide open plains to Seattle this February with a big-hearted high-kicking reimagining of **Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!** Tony-nominated choreographer **Donald Byrd** and his Spectrum Dance Theatre are joining forces with director **Peter Rothstein** to take this grand all-American musical back to basics, exploring everything from race and romance to the hopes of a young and growing nation, filled with possibility. *Oklahoma!* features Seattle star **Eric Ankrim** as Curly opposite **Alexandra Zorn**, a radiant up-and-comer in the role of Laurey. **Kyle Scatliffe** takes on the menacing role of Jud Fry. Also joining the cast are 5th Avenue veterans **Anne Allgood, Allen Fitzpatrick, Matt Owen**, and **Daniel C. Levine** alongside local rising star **Kirsten deLohr Helland**.

Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma! plays **February 3 – March 4, 2012** (*press opening February 9*) at **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle). Tickets (starting at \$29.00) may be purchased at www.5thavenue.org, by phone at 206-625-1900, or at the Box Office at 1308 5th Avenue in downtown Seattle.

The 5th Avenue will take a new look at this beloved American treasure. "*Oklahoma!* is truly the quintessential American musical," said Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong. "The beautiful story and score by Rodgers and Hammerstein have become a deeply engrained part of our culture. Our production will honor that great tradition while keeping the show fresh and exciting. We'll be approaching this script as though it is the first time anyone has seen it." To that end, the show will try to reflect the state of race in America at the turn of the century. In 1906, the Oklahoma Territory had one of the largest populations of free blacks in the country. The 5th Avenue Theatre production will feature an interracial cast including African American performer Kyle Scatliffe as Jud Fry.

About the Choreographer

It is fitting that the Tony Award-nominated choreographer **Donald Byrd** should take on the beautiful dance sequences in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* The stunning dream ballet

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was originally choreographed for the stage by the celebrated dancer Agnes de Mille, the same iconic choreographer who told Byrd his dance belonged in New York. Prior to his current decade-long tenure as the artistic director of Seattle's Spectrum Dance Theatre, he was the artistic director of Donald Byrd/The Group, a critically acclaimed contemporary dance company based in Los Angeles and New York, which toured extensively nationally and internationally. He has created more than 80 modern dance works for his own troupes as well as for the Alvin Ailey Company, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Philadelphia Dance Company (Philadanco), among others. He has worked with some of the most prestigious theater and opera companies in the U.S., including New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Intiman Theater, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, New York City Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, Aterballetto, MaggioDanza diFirenze, and Oregon Ballet Theater.

Byrd has served on the faculty of the California Institute for the Arts and taught at Wesleyan University, the School of Visual Arts, Harvard Summer Dance Center, California State University Long Beach, and the University of California at Santa Cruz. He was a fellow at The Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard for three years. Byrd also served for three terms on the Seattle Arts Commission. In 2006, he received a Tony nomination for his choreography for *The Color Purple*. Most recently, he was awarded a Mayor's Arts Award for his sustained contributions to the City of Seattle, he has been selected as one of the first group of Fellows to the American Academy in Jerusalem, and he was selected by United States Artists for a 2012 Fellowship Award.

About the Cast

Northwest native **Eric Ankrim** is taking center stage as the handsome cow hand Curly. Ankrim has previously been seen on The 5th Avenue stage in *Into the Woods*, *Miss Saigon*, and *The Rocky Horror Show*, and touring with The 5th Avenue Theatre's Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company. Ankrim, who recently directed *Spring Awakening* with Balagan Theatre Company and performed in ACT's *A Christmas Carol*, will also star in the world premiere of *First Date* this March in a co-production between ACT and The 5th Avenue Theatre. This rising musical theatre star has performed all over the Seattle area including Seattle Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Empty Space, and Village Theatre.

Radiant starlet **Alexandra Zorn** joins the cast as Laurey. Zorn starred as Maria in *West Side Story* at New York's Gateway Playhouse and was featured in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Arkansas Repertory Theatre. **Kyle Scatliffe** plays Jud Fry. The Lotte Lenya Competition Finalist has performed in theatres around the country including at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina and the Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, as well as part of Town Hall New York's Broadway's Rising Stars. Additionally, Scatliffe played Jafar in a new production of *Aladdin* for Disney Cruise Lines.

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Joining the cast as Aunt Eller is Seattle favorite **Anne Allgood**. Allgood's list of performance credits is extensive. Her 5th Avenue productions include *A Christmas Story*, *Candide*, *Company*, *Gypsy*, *The Secret Garden*, *Memphis*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. She has toured regionally in *Urinetown*, *Evita* and *Floyd Collins*, and nationally in tours of *Parade* and *Beauty and the Beast*. On Broadway, she performed in *The Most Happy Fella*, *Carousel*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sound of Music* and *Imaginary Friends*. Allgood's Seattle credits include roles at ACT, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Village Theatre, and Seattle Children's Theatre.

Ado Annie, Will Parker and Ali Hakim (*Oklahoma!*'s light-hearted love triangle) are played by **Kirsten deLohr Helland**, **Matt Owen** and **Daniel C. Levine**, respectively. Helland is making her main stage debut at The 5th as Ado Annie after touring as the star of *Rosie the Riveter* with Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company. A recent graduate of Pacific Lutheran University, Helland has made a splash on the Seattle theater scene performing with Village Theatre, Tacoma Musical Playhouse and Contemporary Classics. Kirkland native Matt Owen is returning to Seattle to play the love-struck Will Parker. He was last seen here as Chip in *On the Town*. He has eleven 5th Avenue productions on his résumé including *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Mame*, *Gypsy*, *Pippin*, *Wonderful Town*, *1776*, and *Anything Goes*. He has also performed extensively in New York and Los Angeles. Daniel C. Levine returns to The 5th Avenue Theatre to play the wily peddler Ali Hakim. Levine has previously been seen at The 5th as Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*, as well as in *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Company*. His Broadway credits include *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Chicago*. Other national credits include The Dentist in *Little Shop of Horrors*, as well as roles in *Mamma Mia!*, *Les Misérables*, and *Tommy*.

Other Seattle sensations who pepper the cast include **Allen Fitzpatrick** as Andrew Carnes and **David Pichette** as Ike Skidmore. Fitzpatrick returns immediately to The 5th after closing *Cinderella*. He has appeared previously in *Sweeney Todd*, *Candide*, *On the Town*, *Memphis*, and *Cabaret*, among many others. His Broadway credits include *Les Misérables*, *42nd Street*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *Memphis*. David Pichette's resume is one for the record books, with multiple credits in every major theater in town. His 5th Avenue credits include *1776*, *My Fair Lady*, *Wonderful Town*, and most recently *Candide*.

Kicking up their heels in the ensemble are **Blaine Boyd**, **Jared Michael Brown**, **Jeanette D'Armand**, **Sarah Rose Davis**, **Kevin Douglass**, **Mary Jo Dugaw**, **Eric Esteb**, **Kassandra Haddock**, **Mallory King**, **Jonathan Paul Lee**, **Sonya Meyer**, **Christie Murphy**, **Daniel Oakden**, **Ben Sasnett**, and **Carolyn Willems Van Dijk**, with **Josh Spell** and **Kara Walsh** featured in the dream ballet as Curly and Laurey. Joining the 5th Avenue ensemble are Spectrum Dancers **Jeraboam Bozeman**, **Ty Alexander Cheng**, **Derek Crescenti**, **Jade Solomon Curtis**, **Donald Jones Jr.**, **Vincent Michael Lopez**, **Amber Nicole Mayberry**, **Shadou Mintrone**, **Kate Monthy**, and **Briley Neugebauer**. *Oklahoma!* will also feature a children's ensemble with **Nicholas Hayes**, **Cameron Washington**, and **DeChé Washington**.

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About the Director

After the rousing success of last season's *Guys and Dolls*, **Peter Rothstein** returns to Seattle to direct another Golden-Age sensation. Rothstein works extensively as a director of theater, musical theater, opera and new work development. He is the founding artistic director of Theater Latté Da, a Twin Cities-based company dedicated to new musical theater. Rothstein directs regularly for the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, and the Minnesota Opera. He is the creator of *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* and *Steerage Song*, both created in partnership with Minnesota Public Radio. Rothstein has been named one of Minnesota's Artists of the Year by the *Star Tribune*, Theater Artist of the Year by *Lavender Magazine*, and Best Director by *City Pages*. He has been awarded grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Theater Communications Group, and the Minnesota State Arts Board. He holds degrees in music and theater from St. John's University and an M.F.A. in directing from University of Wisconsin, Madison.

About the Music Director

Having just completed the 2011 national tour of *A Christmas Story*, The 5th Avenue's own **Ian Eisendrath** will raise his baton as the music director for *Oklahoma!* Eisendrath was recently tapped to lead The 5th Avenue's New Works Program as the Alhadeff Family Director of New Works. His extensive work at The 5th includes *A Christmas Story*, *On The Town*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *West Side Story*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Into the Woods*, *Company*, *Cabaret* and *Miss Saigon*. A graduate of the University of Michigan, he was music director for the world premiere of *A Christmas Story* at the Kansas City Rep and *Cabaret* at Theatre Under The Stars in Houston, American Musical Theatre of San Jose and the Ordway Center in St. Paul. He has also conducted three seasons of *The Nutcracker* at Pacific Northwest Ballet.

The Design Team

The design team for *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* includes **Matthew Smucker** (Set Design), **Lynda L. Salsbury** (Costume Design), **Tom Sturge** (Lighting Design), **Ken Travis** (Sound Design), and **Mary Pyanowski** (Hair & Makeup Design). Also featured are fight choreography by **Geoffrey Alm** and orchestrations by **Robert Russell Bennett**.

About Rodgers & Hammerstein

In 1943, Richard Rodgers (composer, 1902-79) and Oscar Hammerstein II (librettist/lyricist, 1895-1960) collaborated for the first time on the smash success *Oklahoma!*, establishing the most consistently fruitful and successful partnership in American musical theater. Across many years, the distinguished duo earned a collective 26 Tony Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes and two Grammy Awards for a seemingly endless stream of hits. Following their massive success on *Oklahoma!*, they worked together to create *Carousel* (1945), *Allegro* (1947), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951), *Me and Juliet* (1953), *Pipe Dream* (1955), *Flower Drum Song*

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(1958) and *The Sound of Music* (1959). The team also wrote one musical for the movies, *State Fair* (1945; adapted to the stage in 1995), and one for TV, *Cinderella* (1957).

More about Spectrum Dance Theater

Spectrum Dance Theater was founded by Seattle dancers in 1982 to make dance more accessible to diverse communities. Under Donald Byrd's visionary artistic leadership since 2002, Spectrum has emerged as a company of regional and national significance. The organization has attracted world-class dancers and produced thrilling and challenging works in contemporary dance to critical acclaim. SDT ignites audiences thanks to the ambitious artistic agenda of Donald Byrd, whose appetite to explore the arts knows no boundaries. The *enfant terrible* of the New York dance scene in the 1980s and '90s achieved international visibility for the creation of his *Harlem Nutcracker* and for his Tony-nominated choreography for the Broadway smash, *The Color Purple*. No less ambitious in the 21st century, Byrd leads his company through programming themes that give audiences insight into his far-ranging artistic ambition.

The School at Spectrum Dance Theater reflects the rigorous artistic standards set forth by Donald Byrd, exemplified by the motto "Dance for All." The School offers classes in a variety of styles from ballet to contemporary, at all levels, and to all ages. And the Academy Program, Spectrum's curriculum for students interested in a professional career, offers opportunities to study with Donald Byrd and the Company, and to become a Company apprentice for upper level dancers. For more about Spectrum Dance Theater performances and programs, visit www.spectrumdance.org.

More about The 5th Avenue Theatre

The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musical theater. Since 1995, the celebrated company has produced 14 new musicals. Five have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 14 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). The 5th Avenue Theatre is also known for its world class, critically acclaimed productions of musicals chosen from both the contemporary canon and the Golden Age of Broadway.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernadine Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of more than 287,000 and ranks among the nation's largest and most respected musical theater companies.

In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its extensive educational outreach program which includes: The Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company, The 5th Avenue

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Awards Honoring High School Musical Theatre, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit www.5thavenue.org.

Special thanks to The 5th Avenue Theatre 2011-2012 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank, and media sponsor *The Seattle Times*. Additional thanks to ***Oklahoma!*** production sponsors KCTS and The National Endowment for the Arts.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: There's a bright golden haze in Seattle, and it's coming from the lights of **The 5th Avenue Theatre!** The famed home of Broadway-quality musicals in the Pacific Northwest is partnering with Tony Award-nominated choreographer **Donald Byrd** and his acclaimed **Spectrum Dance Theater** to bring a glorious reinvention of ***Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!*** to big-hearted, high-kicking life. Packed with much-loved favorites such as "Oh What a Beautiful Mornin'," "I Cain't Say No," "People will Say We're in Love," and of course, "Oklahoma," this joyous musical is a wholesome slice of Americana, a celebration of a young and growing nation filled with possibility. ***Oklahoma!*** is directed by **Peter Rothstein** and will feature a host of 5th Avenue favorites including **Eric Ankrim** as the charming cowhand Curly, **Anne Allgood** as Aunt Eller, and **Matt Owen** as Will Parker.

WHEN: **February 3 – March 4, 2012**
Previews: February 3-February 8, 2011
Opening Night: February 9 (press night), 8:00 PM
Show times vary; please visit the website for details.

WHERE: **The 5th Avenue Theatre** (1308 5th Avenue, Seattle)

TICKETS: Single tickets start at \$29.00. For information, please visit www.5thavenue.org or call the Box Office at (206) 625-1900. Tickets may also be purchased at (888) 5TH-4TIX.

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