



REPORTING ARTS AND CULTURE

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The Voice of the Brigham Young University Community



Director's Note:
Oklahoma! in the
Golden Age of Musicals



Dramaturg's Note:
An American
Simulacrum



Company Bios



Study Guide



Orchestra

RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S HOMA!

Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Books and Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN
Based on *Green Grow the Lilacs* by Lynn Riggs
Original Dances by Agnes de Mille

Directed by Tim Threlfall Music Direction by Gayle Lockwood Choreographed by Lisa Stoddard Conducted by Eric Hansen

Setting: Oklahoma Territory, 1906



ACT I Evening

Scene 1: The front of Laurey's farmhouse

Scene 2: The smoke house

Scene 3: Somewhere on Laurey's farm

ACT II A week later, early morning

Scene 1: The Skidmore farm

Scene 2: The Skidmore barn

Scene 3: The front of Laurey's farmhouse



ACT III Two weeks later, late afternoon

Oklahoma! is presented through special arrangement with R & H Theatricals, 1065 Avenue of The Americas, Suite 2400, New York, NY 10018. www.rnhtheatricals.com



The Cast



Production Staff

Director	
Music Director	Gayle Lockwood
Choreographer	Lisa Stoddard
Conductor	Eric Hansen
Rehearsal Pianist	
Production Stage Manager	
Assistant Stage Manager	
	Pamela Leavitt
Dramaturg	Kayela Seegmiller
Scenic Designer	
Scenic Faculty Advisor	Rory Scanlon
Costume Designer	
Costume Design Consultant	Janet Swenson
Assistant Costume Designer	Jennifer Tobey
Hair and Makeup Co-designers	Becca Bailey, Chelsea Toler
Assistant Hair and Makeup Designer	
Makeup and Hair Running Crews	
Lighting Designer	
Assistant Lighting Designer	
Technical Crew	
Dialect Coach	
Fight Choreographer	
2 18th Chorcographer	Dellows

A special thanks to the School of Music and the Department of Dance for their contributions and support of this production.



Musical Numbers

- "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning"
- "Pore Jud Is Daid"
- "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"
- "Lonely Room"
- "Kansas City"
- "Out of My Dreams"
- "I Cain't Say No"

- "The Farmer and the Cowman"
- "Many a New Day"
- "All Er Nothin"
- "It's a Scandal! It's a Outrage"
- "Oklahoma!"
- "People Will Say We're in Love"

An American Simulacrum

by Kayela Seegmiller, Dramaturg

And so it is that a few square miles of countryside and a few imagined men and women are transformed out of their original dullness and become symbols of what is lovely and inspiring: a few miles in Oklahoma become morning sun and joy and green fields in every part of every state of the Union (Clark, ix).

klahoma! opened on a stormy night in March, 1943, to a skeptical crowd. The production team was not promising—a director who hadn't worked on Broadway since 1935, a lyricist with a recent record of producing flops, and an unknown choreographer who had only recently begun not to be a failure. The cast was unknown, and the subject of the play suspect. Despite this inauspicious beginning, Oklahoma! went on to run for 2,248 nights; a record run for a Broadway musical that remained unbroken for two decades (Jones. 141). What about this musical carried it from probable flop to being one of the all-time favorite golden age musicals? By contemporary standards, both the plot and character development seem to fall short, but somehow that doesn't diminish ticket sales. It's not an easy production to do well. In fact, it's not an easy production to do at all. The dream ballet poses problems for lessskilled dancers, and the unique dialect requires effort too. The sheer number of actors required is also daunting. And yet high schools and community theatres

around the country put this play on their seasons. Why do we keep producing *Oklahoma!*, and why do we keep coming to see it?

To answer this question, we can turn to the work of Jean Baudrillard, a contemporary theorist who explores questions of reality and how we represent reality. In his essay entitled "Simulacra and Simulations," Baudrillard outlines four levels of representation that build upon each other. The first is a faithful reflection of a simple reality. A photograph would fit into this category. It is not the actual object but it displays the object in perfect detail. The second level Baudrillard explores is one that masks and perverts the reality it is claiming to represent. A painting of happy slaves picking cotton in a field could be an example of this. The third level masks the fact that there never was a reality. Baudrillard's example of this is Disneyland. For him, Disneyland is a "frozen infantile world" that exists in order to hide the childishness that occurs in the "real" world all around it. In allowing people to play out their fantasy of childhood, Disneyland

keeps people from examining their own behavior and realizing that it is in fact childish. The fourth level of representation occurs when the representation no longer has any connection to the reality it is reflecting. It becomes something separate. Baudrillard terms this a pure simulacrum. For instance, there is a stereotypical image of medieval princesses who wear pointy hats with tulle streaming out the back of them. That fact has nothing to do with whether actual princesses wore actual pointy hats. We expect the simulacrum, we expect princesses to wear pointy hats when they are represented, and if it's not that way it doesn't seem quite as real to us.

It is this last category that has allowed *Oklahoma!* to become so popular today. In fact, few theatres produce the actual text of *Oklahoma!* and that's not

what audiences are interested in anyway. Instead we come to see our idea of what *Oklahoma!* should be, the beliefs we created from seeing the movie in childhood or having been in the production in high school. We expect certain costumes and the reading of some of the lines to be the ones we have listened to many times before, and theatres generally provide that. *Oklahoma!* represents a generation's belief in American ideals more than it does the story of Curly and Laurey.

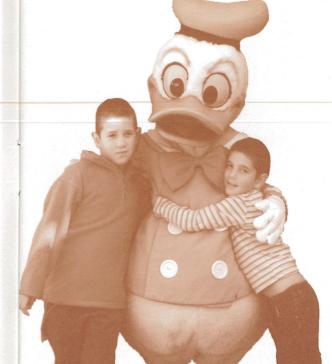
This shouldn't demean the value of the production. This discussion is meant, instead, as an invitation for us to be more aware of our own expectations as we watch the play tonight. Is this particular production of *Oklahoma!* a realization of that cultural creation or does it force us to question the simulacrum and

to find a new realization of a forgotten reality? In this way, we can reexamine our own values and perhaps reconnect with some of the beliefs that have been obscured by the process of representation.



Clark, Barrett H. and William H. Daveport, ed. *Nine Modern American Plays*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951.

Poster, Mark, ed. *Jean Baudrillard:* Selected Writings. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.



COMING SOON



THE CAST

Brittany Andersen (Ado Annie), Orem, UT, is a junior in the MDT program. Credits include Sandy in Grease, Maggie in Brigadoon, and Eponine in Les Misèrables.

Katie Anderson (Gertie Cummings), Monrovia, CA, is a senior in the MDT program. Her first performance at BYU was in Crazy for You. Other credits include Pioneer Theater Company's Beauty and the Beast, The Scarlet Pimpernel, Brigadoon, and Savior of the World. She performed with the Young Ambassadors in Circle of Life.

Lisa Baugh (Vivian), Pleasant Grove, UT, is a junior in therapeutic recreation minoring in theatre studies. Recent credits include Cookie in Rumors, the Queen in Rumpelstiltskin, and ensemble in The Music Man.

Annalece Boothe (Armina), Spanish Fork, UT, is a junior with a double major in MDT and broadcast journalism. Some of her favorite roles have been the title role in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* and Sandy in *Grease*. She is a current member of the BYU Young Ambassadors.

Sarah Burroughs (Sylvie), from Virginia Beach, VA, is a junior majoring in dance. She recently performed in Tuacahn's South Pacific and Peter Pan. Credits include Aida and Smokey Joe's Café at BYU, Bye Bye, Birdie; The Wiz, and Pippin. Sarah has also performed two semesters on BYU's dancEnsemble, a student choreographed company.

Austin Dorman (*Chalmers*), Puyallup, WA, is a freshman with an open major. Recent credits include Waldo in *Wonderful Town* with the Fifth Avenue Theatre Company, Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes*, Leon Tolchinsky in *Fools*, Jesus in *Godspell*, and Barnaby Tucker in *Hello*, *Dolly!*

Tanner Garrett (*Jess*), Beaverton, OR, is a freshman in the MDT program. Favorite roles include Riff in *West Side Story* and Barnaby Tucker in *Hello*, *Dolly!*

Kevin Goertzen (*Curly*), Orem, UT, is a senior in the acting program. Recent credits include Bobby Strong in *Urinetown* at the Egyptian Theatre Company, Archibald Craven in *The Secret Garden* at the Provo Theatre Company, Beast understudy in *Beauty and the Beast* at Tuacahn, Radames in *Aida*, and Will in *Bus Stop*, at BYU.

Holly Hancock (Ballet Lauri), Orem, UT, is a freshman in the MDT program. She has been a member of the Ballet Showcase Company at BYU. Recent credits include Liza in Seven Brides for Seven Brothers and the title role in Little Mary Sunshine.

Chris Hartman (Dream Curly), Ogden, UT, is a junior in the MDT program and a member of the Young Ambassadors. He has performed professionally in Jackson Hole. He has been seen in BYU's Aida, Footloose, Parade, Once on This Island and many others.

Kara Jones (Louise), Seattle, WA, is a junior majoring in MDT and statistics. Recent credits include Audrey in Little Shop of Horrors, Kim in Bye Bye, Birdie; Duffy in Annie, and Bianca in Kiss Me, Kate. She is a current member of the BYU Young Ambassadors.

The Company

Brannon Killgo (Andrew Carnes), Indianapolis, IN, is a sophomore in the MDT program. Recent credits include Paul/Pilate in Rockspell at the American Cabaret Theater, a quartet cowboy in Anne, Get Your Gun at the Scottish Rite Cathedral Theater, an Aggie in The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas with Footlite Musicals, and Diesel in West Side Story at the Dance Magic Summer Theater.

Kaitlyn Lunt (Girl), Spanish Fork, UT, is a 5th-grader studying dance at The Dance Club in Orem. She and her sister Karissa have been involved in many Exposure Workshops and trained in voice performance.

Karissa Lunt (Girl), Spanish Fork, UT, is a 2nd-grader studying dance at The Dance Club in Orem.

Julie Mack (Ellen), San Jose, CA, is a senior in the MDT program. Recent credits include chorus in Trojan Women and student/dancer in Footloose: The Musical.

Oren Mauldin (Jud Fry), Darrington, WA, is a senior graduating in theatre arts studies with an emphasis in directing. Recent credits include directing Blood Brothers for Mask Club and assistant directing The Two Gentlemen of Verona last year for BYU. Acting credits include Fred Gram in Kiss Me, Kate; opera scenes, Shakespearean plays, and being a chorus member in operas Abinadi and La bohème here at BYU.

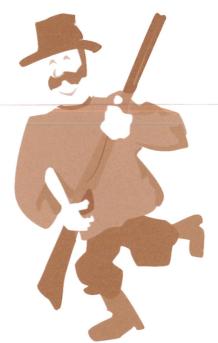
Courtney Nelson Pew (Virginia Skidmore), is a junior majoring in MDT and theatre education, and a current member of the Young Ambassadors. Recent credits include Wendy Jo in Footloose, Jessie in Box

Car Children, Maggie in Working, Leading Player in Pippin, and Adelaide in Guys and Dolls.

Jeff Pew (*Ike Skidmore*), is a sophomore in the MDT program. Recent credits include Ken in Smokey Joe's Cafe and Marius in Les Misèrables. He is a former member of the Young Ambassadors.

Geoff Reynolds (Will Parker), Provo, UT, is a senior in the MDT and theatre education program. Recent credits include BYU's Dancers' Company and BYU's Young Ambassadors.

Preston Sadleir (Ali Hakim), Salt Lake City, UT, is a sophomore. Recent credits include Chuck in Footloose, and Michael in Smokey Joe's Café and Edmund in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, both at BYU. He is a current member of the BYU Young Ambassadors.





Study Guide: By Kayela Seegmiller

Brigham Young University College of Fine Arts and Communications Department of Theatre and Media Arts January 24–February 3, 2007 de Jong Concert Hall Harris Fine Arts Center

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COLLABORATION

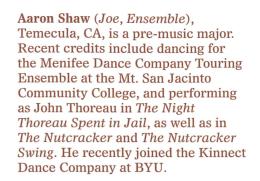
he first serious problem that faced us involved a conflict of dramaturgy with showmanship. As we planned our version, the story we had to tell in the first part of the first act did not call for the use of a female ensemble. The traditions of musical comedy, however, demand that not too long after the rise of the curtain the audience would be treated to one of musical comedy's most attractive assets—the sight of pretty girls in pretty clothes moving about the stage, the sound of their vital young voices supporting the principals in their songs... After trying everything we could think of, and rejecting each other's ideas as fast as they were submitted, after passing through phases during which we would stare silently at each other unable to think of anything at all, we came finally to an extraordinary decision. We agreed to start our story in the real and natural way in which it seemed to want to be told... I cannot say truthfully that we were worried by the risk. Once we had made the decision, everything seemed to work right and we had that inner confidence people feel when they have adopted the direct and honest approach to a problem (Flinn, 219)."

This quote from Oscar Hammerstein summarizes the process that allowed these people to collaborate in the creation of this piece. Perhaps it was the expectation of failure that allowed the artists to push the limits of the genre. There was a confidence or at least recklessness among the players that allowed for the kind of freedom that occurs only rarely in theatrical productions. It is this that made *Oklahoma!* the kind of success that makes it so commonly produced today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jones, John Bush. Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theatre. London: Brandeis University Press, 2003. Mordden, Ethan. Beautiful Mornin': The Broadway Musical in the 1940s. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Grant, Mark N. The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004. Clark, Barrett H. and William H. Davenport, ed. Nine Modern

American Plays. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951.



Alyssa Simmons (Aggie), is a freshman in the MDT program. Recent credits include Inspector Bowden in Whodunnit, Dolly Levi in Hello, Dolly!; Mrs. Vann Dan in The Diary of Anne Frank, Rebecca Hilliker in The Laramie Project, and Judith Bliss in Hay Fever.

Murphy Smith (Cord Elam), is a junior in the acting program and also studying ballroom dance at BYU. He is a member of the BYU lacrosse team.

Emily Summerhays (*Aunt Eller*), Salt Lake City, UT, is a senior in the MDT



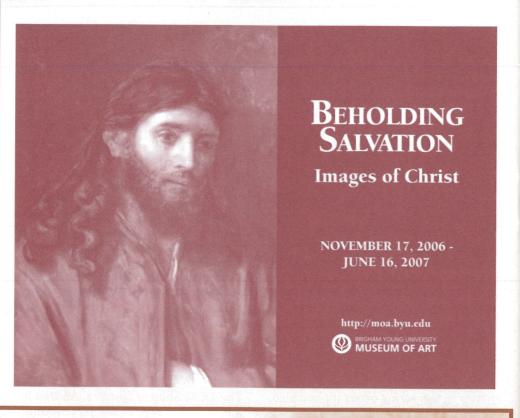
program. Recent credits include Cheyenne Rose in *The Ballad of Cat Ballou* at the Jackson Hole Playhouse, Ethel Toffelmier in *The Music Man* at BYU, the Narrator in *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and Lead Storyteller in *Once on This Island*.

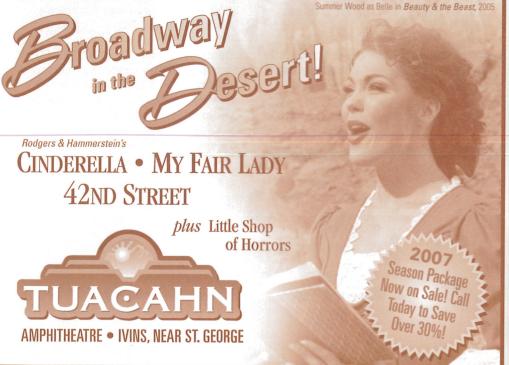
Andrew Veenstra (Mike), Rochester, NY, is a sophomore majoring in acting. Favorite credits include Nick Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Lumiere in Beauty and the Beast, Henry Higgins in Pygmalion, Romeo in Romeo and Juliet, and Boy Scrooge in A Christmas Carol.

Andrea Williams (Laurey), Indio, CA, is a senior in the MDT program with a minor in home and family living. Recent credits include Peggy Sawyer in 42nd Street and Crystal in The Little Shop of Horrors. Andrea is a former member of the BYU Young Ambassadors and was America's Junior Miss in 2003.

Devin Williams (Fred), Orem, UT, just began the masters accounting program at BYU. He is a former member of the Young Ambassadors. Other credits include Tommy Keeler in Annie Get Your Gun and Benjamin in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the Hale Center Theater in Orem.

Jessica Woahn (Kate), Pleasant Grove, UT, is a sophomore in the MDT program with a minor in business. Some of her favorite credits include Eve in The Children of Eden, the French Princess in Unsinkable Molly Brown, Martha in The Secret Garden, the title role in Anne of Green Gables, and Anne in The Diary of Anne Frank.





PRODUCTION STAFF

Matthew Bellows (Fight Choreographer), is a senior in the acting program. Recent credits include Marshall in The Little Foxes, Radames in Aida, and Beast in Beauty and the Beast. Matt has been featured on WB's Everwood and can also be seen in the feature films Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration, Forever Strong and Heber Holiday. Matt is a certified actor combatant for the Society of American Fight Directors.

Brittany Foster (Assistant Stage Manager), Houston, TX, is a senior in theatre education. She is currently doing her student teaching.

Ashley Lane (Production Stage Manager), Little Rock, AR, is a senior



majoring in theatre arts studies. Recent work includes production stage manager for Sarah, Plain and Tall, assistant stage manager for Aida, and scenic crew for The Music Man, all at BYU.

Priscilla Hao (Costume Designer), Phoenix, AZ, is a recent MFA graduate in theatre production design and currently teaches for TMA. Recent design credits include Peter Pan at Tuacahn, and The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Handing Down the Names, and Copenhagen, all at BYU.

Gayle Lockwood (Musical Director), is teaching voice for her twentysecond in the MDT program. She has served as musical director for several musicals including She Loves Me; Chess; A Day In Hollywood, A Night in The Ukraine; and My Fair Lady. Other directing credits include Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, The Sound of Music, and Oklahoma! at Tuacahn Summer Theatre, and many community productions in Utah and California.

Jennifer Mortensen (Scenic Designer), Astoria, OR, is a senior majoring in theatre arts studies with an emphasis in scenic design. Recent scenic design credits include BYU's Getting Married and Sarah, Plain and Tall, and Provo Theatre Company's Barefoot in the Park. Aside from designing. Jennifer is also the head scenic artist for all BYU and Provo Theatre Company shows. She is also a scenic artist for the LDS Motion Picture Studio.

The Company

Lisa Stoddard (Choreographer), holds a MA in choreography from BYU and a BA in performance from UNLV. Recent credits include The Music Man, Smokey Joe's and Crazy for You. She won the New York City Dance Alliance choreography award in 2002, 2005, and 2006. Her piece "Strings" was given the prestigious honor of performing in the NYCDA Closing Night Gala. She has won many other national awards for her contemporary, character and lyrical style.

Tim Threlfall (Director), was Artistic Director at Seattle Civic Light Opera before coming to BYU. He directs regularly at Tuacahn in St. George and is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.





Full-time Faculty

Rodger D. Sorensen Department Chair

Janet L. Swenson Associate Chair

Sharon L. Swenson Associate Chair

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