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**LAURA OSNES, JESSICA WALTER, JAMES SNYDER AND A STARRY
BROADWAY CAST HEADLINE ONE-NIGHT ONLY BENEFIT CONCERT
OF SHOW BOAT**

*World Premiere Concert Adaptation of “Show Boat” is Marquee Event
of Bucks County Playhouse’s Annual Oscar Hammerstein Festival*



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New Hope, PA (May 17, 2018) — Bucks County Playhouse audiences will have the opportunity to revisit one of America’s most storied musicals when it presents a world-premiere concert adaptation of Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern’s legendary musical, “Show Boat,” Saturday, June 23 at 7 p.m.

Executive Producer Robyn Goodman, Producing Director Alexander Fraser and Producers Stephen Kocis and Josh Fiedler recently announced details of the benefit concert, which is part of the Playhouse's fourth Oscar Hammerstein Festival. The event, which features an all-new adaptation by Rob Ruggiero, includes a cast of top Broadway talent performing Hammerstein and Kern's score with narration by Ted Chapin, President and Chief Creative Officer of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, and direction by Josh Rhodes (BCP's Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show and Encore's "Grand Hotel"). Andy Einhorn (Broadway's "Carousel" and "Hello, Dolly!") is musical director.

Considered by many historians to be the first modern musical, "Show Boat" was groundbreaking when it first premiered in 1927. The timelessly romantic musical tale follows the lives of three generations born on the Cotton Blossom as it sails the Mississippi River from the 1880s to the 1920s.

"I first fell in love with Show Boat when I saw the remarkable 1936 film with Irene Dunne, Paul Robeson and Helen Morgan. We are thrilled to present our first Hammerstein musical at the Playhouse, and continue our study of how Hammerstein's legacy can inform future generations of musical writers," said Producing Director Alexander Fraser.

"Ever since we first arrived in Bucks County — the home of Oscar Hammerstein II during perhaps his most prolific writing period — we have dreamed of presenting "Show Boat,"" says Executive Producer Robyn Goodman. "We are very excited and proud to present Rob Ruggiero's concert adaptation with this extraordinary Broadway cast."

Two-time Tony nominee Laura Osnes (Broadway's "Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella") leads the cast as Magnolia alongside James Snyder (Broadway's "Cry-Baby," Encore's "Grand Hotel") as Gaylord Ravenal. Emmy-award winner, Jessica Walter (BCP's "Steel Magnolias" and TV's "Arrested Development") returns to the Playhouse as Parthy. The cast also includes Clyde Alves (Broadway's "On the Town" and BCP's "The New World") as Frank, Natasha Yvette Williams (Broadway's "Waitress") as Queenie and Stephanie Gibson (Broadway's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and BCP's "The Rocky Horror Show") as Ellie. Tony winner Michael McGrath ("Nice Work If You Can Get It") will play Captain Andy. Michel Bell will also reprise his Tony-nominated role of Joe, the soulful singer of "Ol' Man River," from the 1994 Broadway Revival. Additional casting will be announced shortly.

The "Show Boat" benefit concert will be the culmination of Bucks County Playhouse's Fourth Oscar Hammerstein Festival. Named in honor of the master writer Oscar Hammerstein II whose countless accomplishments during his illustrious career have included mentoring a young Stephen Sondheim at Hammerstein's Highland Farm in Bucks County — the Festival is a year-long program that offers expert mentorship to early career composers and lyricists.

This year, Bucks County Playhouse is partnering with Roundabout Theatre Company's Space Jam Program by offering two teams of composers and lyricists an artistic retreat in Bucks County. Space Jam is a playwright-support initiative designed to give writers the time and space to work through various types of solo and group writing retreats.

"Bucks County Playhouse is thrilled to partner with Roundabout Theatre Company and its Space Jam program to offer this artistic retreat during our Oscar Hammerstein Festival," says Producer Josh Fiedler. "We look forward to welcoming these songwriters as guests of honor at the benefit concert and to hearing their own work performed as part the weekend's activities."

Tickets to the benefit concert of "Show Boat" are on sale now and range from \$75 - \$100. Sponsorships, which include the concert as well as additional events during the weekend, are also available. For complete details, and

to purchase tickets, please visit buckscountyplayhouse.org, call 215-862-2121, or visit the box office at 70 South Main Street, New Hope, PA. For sponsorships, contact Mary Dina at 267-740-2090.

ABOUT BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE

Located between Philadelphia and New York, Bucks County Playhouse opened in 1939 in a converted 1790 gristmill after a group of community activists, led by Broadway orchestrator Don Walker, rallied to save the building. The Playhouse quickly became one of the country's most famous regional theaters, featuring a roster of American theatrical royalty including Helen Hayes, George S. Kaufman, Moss Hart and Kitty Carlisle, Grace Kelly, Robert Redford, Angela Lansbury, Bernadette Peters, Alan Alda, Tyne Daly, Liza Minnelli, Jessica Walter and Audra McDonald and remained in continuous operation until December 2010. In 2012, the Playhouse re-opened after a multi-million dollar restoration thanks to the efforts of the Bridge Street Foundation, the nonprofit family foundation of Kevin and Sherri Daugherty, and Broadway producer Jed Bernstein. Since that time, the Playhouse has expanded into a year-round producing and presenting organization and it continues to grow. In 2017, attendance rose more than 30% over the previous year. This fall, the Playhouse will unveil a 4,000 square foot Delaware-river facing restaurant and bar expansion.

Since its re-opening, significant productions include Terrence McNally's "Mothers and Sons" starring Tyne Daly, which moved to Broadway and was nominated for two Tony Awards, and "Misery" by William Goldman based on the Stephen King novel which also went on to a Broadway run in the 2015-16 season. Two of the Playhouse's recent productions -- "Company" starring Justin Guarini, and William Finn's "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" -- were named by Wall Street Journal to its "Best of Theatre" list for 2015. The Playhouse's productions of "Steel Magnolias" and "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story" broke box office records in 2016. Those records were broken again in 2017 with a return engagement of "Buddy" as well as a new production of "Guys and Dolls" directed by Hunter Foster. In 2017, the Playhouse produced four world premieres, including "Clue Onstage," "Rock and Roll Man", "The New World" and "Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show."

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