

## **RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN!**

### **MUSICAL CELEBRATIONS SURROUND THE SUBURBS IN APRIL AND MAY!**

Bucks County, PA (March 28, 2017) – From Bucks County Playhouse’s Third Annual Oscar Hammerstein Festival that includes such luminaries as Shirley Jones, who will be inducted into the Playhouse’s Hall of Fame, to local talent performing in Yardley and in Glenside, the sounds of these glorious composers will be filling the hills!

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. During the weekend, there are workshops and seminars and special events all devoted to musical theatre. The benefit concert on Saturday, April 22 at 8 p.m. features Ashley Brown (“Mary Poppins”), Max von Essen (“An American in Paris”), Malcom Gets (“A New Brain”) and Carmen Cusack (“Bright Star”). They join previously announced Bucks County Playhouse Hall of Fame honoree, Shirley Jones. It will be hosted by Ted Chapin, President and Chief Creative Officer of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, with Josh Rhodes (“Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella”) as director and choreographer and musical direction by David Dabbon (“Disaster”).

### **BROADWAY STARS JOIN SHIRLEY JONES FOR BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE’S THIRD OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN FESTIVAL APRIL 22, 2017 – 8 P.M.**

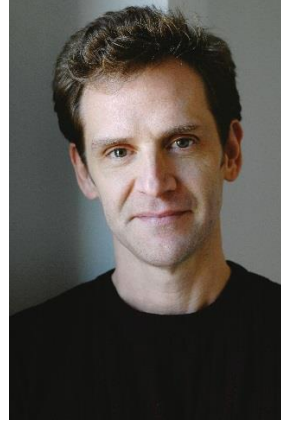
**ASHLEY BROWN, CARMEN CUSACK, MALCOLM GETS AND MAX VON ESSEN  
TO PERFORM “HAMMERSTEIN IN HOLLYWOOD”**



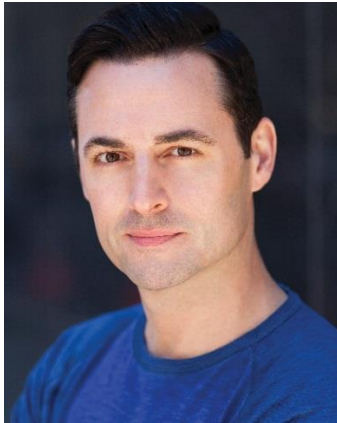
**Ashley Brown**



**Carmen Cusack**



**Malcom Gets**



**Max Von Essen**

New Hope, PA (March 20, 2017) – Bucks County Playhouse’s Executive Producer Robyn Goodman, Producing Director Alexander Fraser and Producers Stephen Kocis and Joshua Fiedler announced casting for the Third Oscar Hammerstein Festival’s Benefit concert, “Hammerstein in Hollywood,” at Bucks County Playhouse on Saturday, April 22 at 8:00 pm.

The benefit concert cast features Ashley Brown (“Mary Poppins”), Max von Essen (“An American in Paris”), Malcom Gets (“A New Brain”) and Carmen Cusack (“Bright Star”). They join previously announced Bucks County Playhouse Hall of Fame honoree, Shirley Jones. It will be hosted by Ted Chapin, President and Chief Creative Officer of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, with Josh Rhodes (“Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella”) as director and choreographer and musical direction by David Dabbon (“Disaster”).

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.

Over the course of two days, The Oscar Hammerstein Festival features special events all devoted to musical theatre. The Playhouse offers Festival Passes for attendees to enjoy all events that can be purchased online or at the box office. Single tickets may also be purchased for the “Hammerstein in Hollywood” benefit concert. Tickets for the Benefit Concert and Post-Show Reception are \$150. Concert only tickets are \$75 for orchestra and \$45 for rear orchestra. Passes are also available. Passholders receive admission to all of the weekend events.

Among the other programming scheduled for this year’s festival is a workshop featuring excerpts from “The New World,” an outrageously funny new musical that will debut at the Playhouse this fall. Composer Gary Adler (“Altar Boyz”) and lyricist Phoebe Kreutz (“Awesomer & Awesomer”) will take Festival pass holders into the evolution of their new musical and chat about some of the changes as they ready the musical for production. New York Post theater columnist, Michael Riedel, will also present at the festival — giving insight into the current and past state of Broadway with a talk based on his book, “Razzle Dazzle: The Battle for Broadway.” Riedel’s book tells the tale of the men whose contentious battle for the Broadway theater district turned 1970s Times Square into today’s mecca for theatergoers and tourists.

Passholders will enjoy these and other seminars featuring artists and experts within the musical theater field. They also will network with other passholders and presenters at an informal farewell brunch on Sunday at the historic home of Bucks County Playhouse Producing Director Alexander Fraser.

**Ashley Brown** originated the title role in “Mary Poppins” on Broadway and its subsequent national tour. She also appeared on Broadway as Belle in “Beauty and The Beast.” She starred in Jack O’Brien’s national tour of “The Sound of Music” and Disney’s “On The Record.” Brown has starred in Chicago Lyric Opera’s productions of “Oklahoma” and “Showboat.”

**Max von Essen** earned a Tony nomination for best featured actor for his work in “An American in Paris,” Other Broadway credits include “Evita,” “Les Miserables,” “Dance of the Vampires” and “Jesus Christ Superstar.” Other New York credits include “Yours Unfaithfully” (The Mint Theater), Maury Yeston’s “Death Takes a Holiday” (Roundabout), Michael John LaChiusa’s “Hello Again,” “Jerry Springer: The Opera” at Carnegie Hall, and “Finian’s Rainbow” (Irish Repertory Theatre).

**Malcom Gets** received a Tony nomination for “Amour.” Other New York credits include “Steve,” “Allegro,” “Irma La Douce,” “Macbeth,” “The Story of My Life,” “A New Brain,” “The Molière Comedies,” “Merrily We Roll Along,” “The Two Gentlemen of Verona,” “Hello Again,” “Boys and Girls,” “Finian’s Rainbow,” “Polish Joke,” “Juno,” and Encores! “The Boys From Syracuse” and “The Apple Tree.” He is best known to TV audiences for his role of Richard on NBC’s “Caroline in the City.”

**Carmen Cusack** received a Tony nomination for her Broadway debut in “Bright Star.” Most recently, she performed the one-woman show, “Do This” at Gulfshore Playhouse and appeared in “Sunday in the Park with George” at City Center. She was seen Off-Broadway in “Carrie” and in the national tours of “Wicked” and “South Pacific.” She appeared in “For the Record: Scorsese” (The Wallis), “The First Wives Club” (Oriental Theatre), and “Sunday in the Park with George” (Chicago Shakespeare Theater) and in London’s West End in “Over the Rainbow,” “Les Misérables,” “The Secret Garden,” “Personals,” “Phantom of the Opera.”

**Josh Rhodes** (Director) choreographed the Broadway productions of “Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella,” “It Shoulda Been You,” “First Date,” and “Bright Star.” He choreographed City Center Encores!: “Zorba” and

“Big River, ” as well as “Company” starring Neil Patrick Harris (PBS) and “Sondheim: The Birthday Concert” (PBS). In London’s West End, he choreographed “Sweeney Todd” starring Emma Thompson.

For more information or to purchase either tickets to the benefit concert or a Weekend Festival Pass, please visit: [www.buckscountyplayhouse.org](http://www.buckscountyplayhouse.org) or call 215-862-2121.

### **ABOUT BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE**

**Bucks County Playhouse**, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is the oldest and largest professional Equity performing arts center in Bucks County. Under the direction of Tony Award-winning producers, Alexander Fraser and Robyn Goodman, the Playhouse provides first class professional theatrical entertainment as well as community events, partnerships and arts education programming for visitors and residents of New Hope, Doylestown, Lambertville and the Delaware Valley.

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, Kitty Carlisle, George S. Kaufman, Grace Kelly, Robert Redford, Bert Lahr, Walter Matthau, Angela Lansbury, Bernadette Peters, Alan Alda, Tyne Daly, Liza Minnelli and Audra McDonald and remained in continuous operation until December 2010. In 2012, the Playhouse re-opened thanks to the efforts of the Bridge Street Foundation, the nonprofit family foundation of Kevin and Sherri Daugherty.

Since its renovation, 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 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.

#####