


Presenting
THE THEATRE GUILD
NATIONAL COMPANY
of

 *Oklahoma!*

A Musical Play
Based on "GREEN GROW THE LILACS" by LYNN RIGGS

Music by
RICHARD RODGERS
Book and Lyrics by
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2d

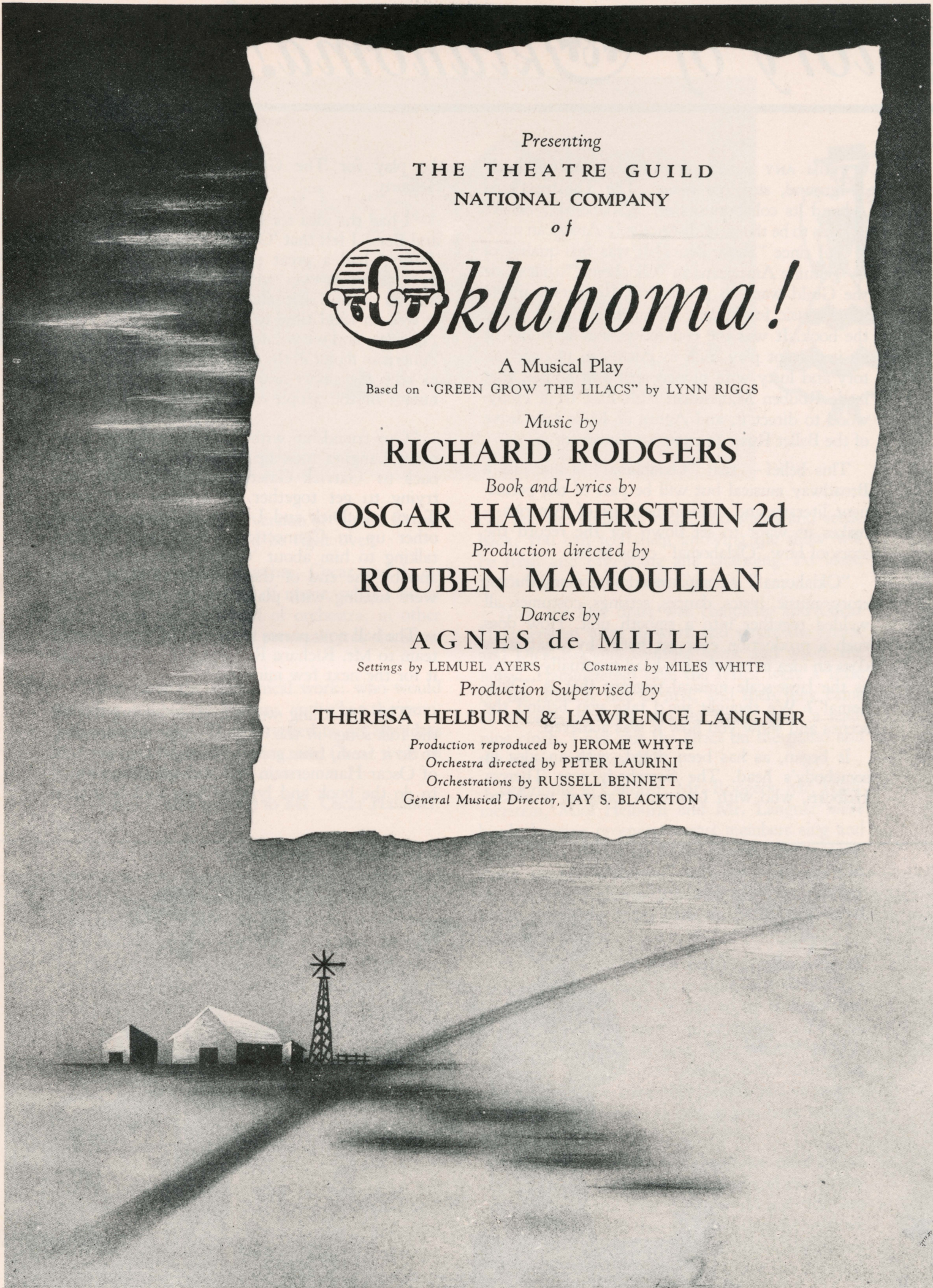
Production directed by
ROUBEN MAMOULIAN

Dances by
AGNES de MILLE

Settings by LEMUEL AYERS Costumes by MILES WHITE

Production Supervised by
THERESA HELBURN & LAWRENCE LANGNER

Production reproduced by JEROME WHYTE
Orchestra directed by PETER LAURINI
Orchestrations by RUSSELL BENNETT
General Musical Director, JAY S. BLACKTON



Story of Oklahoma!

FROM ANY POINT of view, whether of background, story or music, The Theatre Guild and its collaborators on "Oklahoma!" believe this to be the most distinctively American musical since "Show Boat." It was this quality of genuine Americana in "Oklahoma!" that made the Guild want to produce it, Rodgers want to write music for it, and Hammerstein eager to do the book. It was the conviction that it would be an important play, rich in American pioneer history and lusty with pioneer grit and humor, that made Rouben Mamoulian rush East from Hollywood to direct it, and Agnes de Mille take leave of the Ballet Russe to compose dances for it.

This belief — that "Oklahoma!" is not just a Broadway musical but will be part of the permanent literary and musical heritage of America — makes us want to set down for the record the story of how "Oklahoma!" came to be.

"Oklahoma!" is compounded of so many things: story, music, lyrics, dances, settings, costumes, all welded together into a smooth unit. How does such a production ever get born? by what steps does an idea in somebody's head eventually emerge as the large-scale musical pageant that is "Oklahoma!"? We thought we'd take you behind the scenes and show you how it was achieved.

It began, as has been noted, with an idea in somebody's head. The Somebody was Theresa Helburn, who with Lawrence Langner produced

the play for The Guild. We give you Miss Helburn:

"I had the idea for it ever since we did 'Porgy and Bess.' I felt that 'Green Grow the Lilacs,' like 'Porgy,' had a great native flavor, and dances. So I talked it over with Lawrence and he was just as enthusiastic about it as I. We thought it was an ideal time to do a musical play about America, and we wanted to recapture that special American flavor in the original script. We wanted to keep the gaiety and freshness, the poetry and humor of the people in Lynn Riggs' play."

"Our friendship with Richard Rodgers," Lawrence Langner took up the story briefly, "dated back to 'Garrick Gaieties' days and we'd been trying to get together on a show ever since. Terry and Dick and I were all living near each other up in Connecticut. Terry and I began talking to him about 'Green Grow the Lilacs,' and by the end of the summer all three of us were sizzling with plans."

The ball now passes from the Helburn-Langner team to Mr. Richard Rodgers who will run with it for the next few minutes:

"The first thing we did, after tossing out all the folk-songs in the original script and deciding to do it fresh, from start to finish, was to get hold of Oscar Hammerstein 2nd and ask if he wanted to do the book and lyrics. Oscar said he'd been





planning to do a musical version of 'Green Grow' for two years, and would be right over.

"Then we decided together, Oscar and I, on the viewpoint: what kind of music, what kind of lyrics, what size and kind of orchestra; in other words, we tried to set the personality of the show we wanted to create.

"Then came the mechanical work: who would do what number, and where, and what the number would be like. Then I retired to get my ideas in order and begin composing, and Oscar went to work on the book."

The ball is now thrown to Mr. Oscar Hammerstein 2d:

"First I cut the original script, to make room for the music. Then I wrote in a sub-plot and added some characters. In a musical, you want to vary the numbers as much as possible, so you must vary the characters—get characters that are right for the numbers you want. We put in 'Will,' who wasn't in the original; we built up 'Ado Annie' and the peddler; they were people we needed for comedy numbers. 'Curly' and 'Laurey' we left alone; they were perfect as they were. So, of course, was 'Aunt Eller.'

"Then we had a first draft of the book, but no music and no lyrics—except for one set: before I did anything else, I wrote the lyrics to the first song in the show. That was for Dick and me—to set the mood of the show for us. And to set the mood for the audience, too. When 'Curly' begins to sing offstage as the curtain goes up, and then wanders into the front yard of Laurey's farmhouse singing: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'," you

can feel the audience relax, and smile, and settle back; you can feel them knowing the show will be fresh and easy-going and charming. At least, that's what we aimed for."

Now the first draft was complete, and Oscar Hammerstein went to work and wrote the lyrics, and Dick Rodgers went to work and wrote the music. Hammerstein says the lyrics were a little on the difficult side at first, and then they came all at once. Rodgers says the music was "a lead-pipe cinch. I just put the lyrics on the piano and the music wrote itself."

Beginning in October, Mr. Rodgers, Mr. Hammerstein, Miss Helburn and Mr. Langner were busily hearing prospective cast members sing and read. Then Agnes de Mille entered the picture. And, since "Oklahoma!" was not being done in the traditional chorus-line-and-specialty number musical comedy style, Miss de Mille was faced with quite a task.

"I got a group of girls and men who were all dance soloists in their own right, but who could also act. A good dancer has to be a comedian, tragedian, pantomimist—everything. And we didn't want a chorus line. We wanted people. Boys and girls you'd remember when the show was over, as you remember people you've met in any small community: as friends you hope to meet again sometime.

"So we aimed at the big thing: we tried to get our dancers to walk and move and feel like Westerners. We knew that if we could get that sun and that drawl and that good life they live—if we could get them to look and feel like Oklahomans—we wouldn't have to worry about the dancing.

All of them were just naturally dancers to their fingertips: that's why they were there!"

Once past that hurdle, composing the dances was easy, according to Miss de Mille. It was simple to make the dancing part of the story "because that's how it was in those days. Those people danced as naturally as they breathed. They threw themselves into it, lurching and careening round the place till they dropped of exhaustion."

And now it remained to find a courageous genius to achieve the Herculean task of fusing the elements into one progressive, dramatic and musical unit. The gentleman with that headache was Rouben Mamoulian, who by now had arrived from Hollywood to take charge of the over-all production. Let Mr. Mamoulian explain how he did it: "It has always been my strong conviction that the ideal theatre should combine within itself drama and music interwoven to compose one rhythmic and dramatic pattern. That was the principle I was governed by in directing 'Porgy and Bess' on the stage and 'Love Me Tonight' and 'The Gay Desperado' on the screen.

"Almost invariably the production of a musical comedy is built around one or two big stars. Everything is keyed up to the personality of the star, who usually becomes the focal point of interest and attraction to the audience. In 'Oklahoma!' the whole show, with all its talented performers is itself the star. To sustain the reality of the play, properly balanced with the elements of song and dance, was a difficult problem. But we

didn't mind the hard work because we believed very much in 'Oklahoma!' We believed in the spirit of it, so warm, so American, so sturdy. That is a good spirit to put on the stage today; we wanted to do it justice."

During all this time, two other gentlemen were hard at work. Lemuel Ayers pored over prints and history books till he could feel the Southwestern sun and smell the wheat and squint across the prairie, so that the settings would seem to have been stolen out of an Oklahoma town one night when nobody was looking.

And Miles White brooded happily over ancient Sears & Roebuck catalogues to find out what patterns Milady of Prairie Ridge was working over in the long quiet evenings of 1900. (Mr. White was also turning quietly gray, trying to obtain shoes, dyes, cloths and sundry other priority-ridden commodities; but despite shortages and freezes, he managed to turn out a set of trousseaux prettier than any 1900 Oklahoma belle ever dreamed of.)

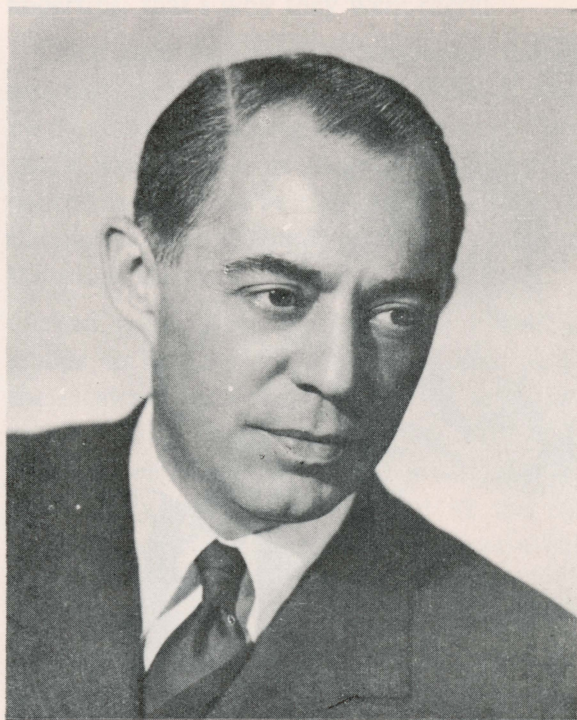
And so at last all these good people congregated in the back of an empty theatre, to watch a dress rehearsal. And very much among those present and concerned, was one ex-Sergeant Lynn Riggs who back in 1931 started the whole thing by writing a play called "Green Grow the Lilacs."

Thus was "Oklahoma" born, and these are the people to whom all of New York's drama critics voted their thanks, on the morning of April 1, 1943, for having created it.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY VANDAMM



Richard Rodgers

IT IS NOW twenty-seven years since a very young Richard Rodgers came hesitantly to The Theatre Guild headquarters with the late Lorenz Hart to work on a modest amateur show called "The Garrick Gaieties." He was an unknown composer then — but that was twenty-seven years ago! Today Dick Rodgers is the topflight music maker of the land.

But there was one thing that happened back in the old amateur show days that almost ended the Rodgers career before it really began to flower; a well meaning relative offered him a job with a steady salary and the temptation almost proved too great.

Two reasons prompted Rodgers to take on another of the long line of they-almost-never-pay-off amateur shows. First, he was told he would get a chance to meet the board of directors of The Guild.

"But the real reason," Rodgers explained, "was that Larry Hart and I wanted to do a jazz opera and we thought that a nice artistic group like The Guild would let us do it as a finale for the show. They let us do it but when the 'The Gaieties' opened the first thing that came out was the jazz opera. It was simply awful!"

The now historic "amateur show" spawned a

dozen brilliant theatre careers; top rank, however, went to the stalwarts who had joined forces for the first time to do Varsity shows for their alma mater, Columbia. The credit line "Music and lyrics by Rodgers and Hart" made musical history on Broadway. Since those early days a parade of hits remembered mostly for their music have gone into the record books bearing the Rodgers name, among them: "Dearest Enemy," "Peggy-Ann," "The Girl Friend," "A Connecticut Yankee," "Present Arms," "Spring Is Here," "Jumbo," "On Your Toes," "Babes In Arms," "I'd Rather Be Right," "I Married An Angel," "The Boys From Syracuse," and "By Jupiter."

The Rodgers musicals have one thing in common: they are based on stories which are not run-of-the-mill musicals.

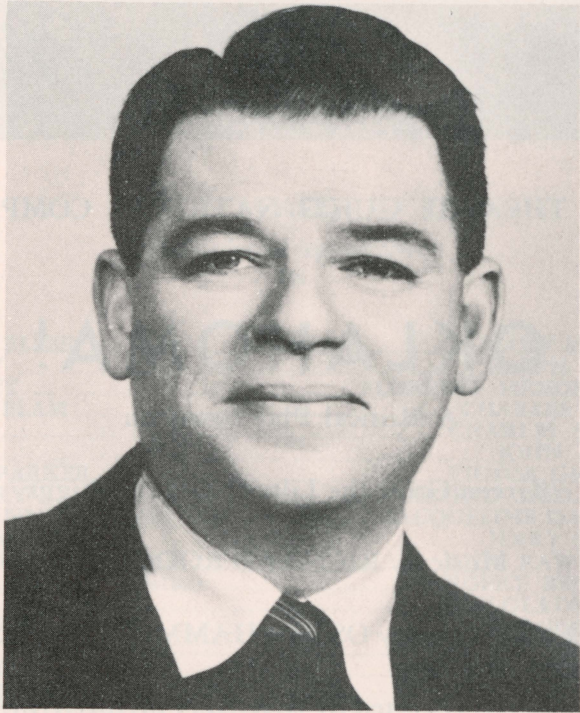
"The best way to write music," he explains, "is to weave it into a story rather than to try pulling hit tunes out of thin air. You get much better songs and music when you have a plot with a villain, a heroine, good situations and colorful backgrounds; it gives you sources for ideas and a peg to hang your songs on."

The musical recipe must be a good one because it has turned out such ear-tickling tunes as "Thou Swell," "Where Or When," "This Can't Be Love," "My Heart Stood Still," "Everything I've Got," "The Lady Is A Tramp," and many others.

When Rodgers was a Freshman up at Columbia he submitted an entry for the Varsity show; one of the members of the show committee who liked the music and held out for the freshman author was a graduate student named Oscar Hammerstein 2d. They've been friends ever since.

Since "Oklahoma!" they have gotten together for four more musicals—"Carousel," based on Ferenc Molnar's "Liliom," "Allegro," "South Pacific" and "The King and I."

Among the song hits that have come from their inspired pens are "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'," "People Will Say We're In Love," "Surrey With the Fringe On the Top," "Many A New Day" and "Out Of My Dreams,"—from "Oklahoma!;" and "If I Loved You," "June Is Bustin' Out All Over," "What's the Use of Wonderin'," "You'll Never Walk Alone" and others—from "Carousel;" "Some Enchanted Evening," "Younger Than Springtime," "I'm in Love With a Wonderful Guy," "Bali H'ai" from "South Pacific," and "I Whistle A Happy Tune," and "Hello Young Lovers" from "The King and I."



Oscar Hammerstein 2nd

STICK A PIN into Oscar Hammerstein 2d and it comes out dripping with theatrical family tradition.

Down through the years the hits of Hammerstein have flashed like beacons in the lighthouses of Broadway and other citadels of entertainment. Most prominent is the bright glow of "Oklahoma!" which has meant safe haven to theatre mariners these past two years. Now the keeper of the light is adding more fuel to his lamp with still other musical masterpieces.

Smiling down on the stage proceedings will be the gent who started the Hammerstein clan on their theatrical wanderings. Oscar Hammerstein I has reason to smile because his grandson, Oscar II, is a chip off the old block. Grandpa started it all when he left Germany back in 1863 to come to America. He became a powerful influence in grand opera in his adopted country and built the famous Manhattan Grand Opera House.

Continuing the chain was Oscar's son William, father of the prolific author and lyricist. The second of the theatrical Hammersteins spent his life

in the entertainment world as a director of the famous vaudeville house, Hammerstein's Victoria.

Like so many other families of the footlights, the Hammersteins decided Oscar should not be of the theatre. He was to be a lawyer.

Young Oscar dutifully pursued a law course at Columbia University, but his heart wasn't in it. He kept dabbling in the thing he loved best—show business. While at college he wrote the annual Varsity show.

When his father died, he had a talk with his uncle, producer Arthur Hammerstein. They decided Oscar should follow in the Hammerstein footsteps. He went to work for his uncle as assistant stage manager; however, the great talent of the Hammerstein clan wouldn't stay down. A few small attempts and then in 1922 he and Otto Harbach wrote the first of the great shows to carry the Oscar Hammerstein 2d name. It was "Wildflower." The echoes of that hit had hardly died down when, in association with Harbach and Rudolph Friml, he wrote "Rose Marie." Two of the songs from that show swept the country; "Rose Marie" and "The Indian Love Call." Young Hammerstein was on his way.

With Jerome Kern he wrote "Sunny." Time out to do "The Desert Song" with Sigmund Romberg, and then Kern and he were to write "Show Boat." Then came "New Moon," "Music In The Air", "Sweet Adeline" and a host of others.

It was just about five years later that he teamed up with another Columbia alumnus, Richard Rodgers, to write the tuneful musical known all over the world—"Oklahoma!" Since then they have collaborated on "Carousel," "Allegro," "South Pacific" and "The King and I."

One thing more. Oscar Hammerstein 1st, doesn't have to worry about the dynasty he started. His great-grandson, Billy, son of Oscar 2d, is a promising young composer and Billy's sister, Alice, writes lyrics. Their younger brother, Jimmy, has also decided to be a composer but their father, Oscar 2d says, "They'll all have to show the public first."

Program

THE THEATRE GUILD NATIONAL COMPANY

of

OKLAHOMA!

A Musical Play based on

"Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs

Music by RICHARD RODGERS

Book and Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, 2nd

Production Directed by ROUBEN MAMOULIAN

Dances by AGNES De MILLE

Settings by Lemuel Ayers Costumes by Miles White

Produced under the supervision of

Theresa Helburn and Lawrence Langner

Production Reproduced by Jerome Whyte

Orchestra Directed by Peter Laurini

General Music Director Jay Blackton

Orchestrations by Russell Bennett



CAST

(In order of appearance)

AUNT ELLER	MARY MARLO
CURLY	RALPH LOWE
LAUREY	FLORENCE HENDERSON
CORD ELAM	CHARLES HART
FRED	CHARLES SCOTT
SLIM	JOHN ADDIS
WILL PARKER	VICTOR GRIFFIN
JUD FRY	ALFRED CIBELLI, JR.
ADO ANNIE CARNES	JACQUELINE DANIELS
ALI HAKIM	JERRY MANN
GERTIE CUMMINGS	JUDY RAWLINGS
ELLEN, (Laurey in Ballet)	MARGERY BEDDOW
KATE	DAVIE GLADSTONE
SYLVIE	JEAN BLEDSOE
AGGIE	ANITA BERMAN
ANDREW CARNES	OWEN MARTIN
CHALMERS, (Curly in Ballet)	VICTOR REILLEY
MIKE	BOB LORD

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

TIME

Just after the turn of the century

PLACE

Indian Territory (now Oklahoma)

ACT I

Scene 1.—The front of Laurey's farm house

Scene 2.—The smoke house

Scene 3.—A grove on Laurey's farm

ACT II

Scene 1.—The Skidmore ranch

Scene 2.—Skidmore's kitchen porch

Scene 3.—The back of Laurey's farm house





Rouben Mamoulian

ROUBEN MAMOULIAN is getting to be quite an institution with The Theatre Guild. The program records him as the helmsman of ten of that organization's productions.

The Mamoulian-Guild association goes back to the middle of the Prohibition era. It was in 1927 that he came down from Rochester, where he had gained quite a local reputation as producer of opera and operettas, to take over the helm on "Porgy," the Du Bose Heyward play. Later, when that memorable saga of Negro life was turned into a folk opera by the late George Gershwin under the title of "Porgy and Bess," The Guild called on Mamoulian to take charge again.

The Hollywood phase of Mr. Mamoulian's career started with the film "Applause" which was hailed as outstanding for its progressive use of camera and sound. His later screen productions included "City Streets," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr.



Hyde," which won the first prize as the best film of the year at the International Competition in Venice in 1932, "Love Me Tonight," for which a gentleman named Richard Rodgers wrote the music, "Song of Songs," "Queen Christina" with Garbo, "Becky Sharp," the first full-length motion picture in the then new technicolor process, and "The Gay Desperado," which won Mamoulian the coveted New York Critics' Award for the best direction of the year.

He also directed "Mark of Zorro" and "Blood and Sand," another technicolor film which won the Academy of Arts and Sciences Award for the best color photography in 1941.

As to how Mamoulian returned to Broadway: The Guild had been sending him scripts, he explained, "But I couldn't find the one that was right for me. Then one day I got a script called "Oklahoma!" which without being solemn or pretentious made you glow with a consciousness of the lusty vigor of our country. When I laid the script down I knew I was on my way back to Broadway and the theatre."

The association embraces six straight dramas: "Porgy," "Marco Millions," "Wings Over Europe," "The Game of Love and Death," "R.U.R." and "A Month In The Country." The musicals he has done for the Guild are "Porgy and Bess," "Oklahoma!" "Carousel," and "Arms and the Girl."



Agnes de Mille

AGNES DE MILLE is generally given credit for having single-handedly revolutionized the ballets of the modern musical theatre.

The change over from the stock musical dance, usually fitted in to fill in a stage wait while the principals changed costumes, or to make the audience forget a poorly placed pun, to the "Oklahoma!" form, in which dances for the first time served to move the plot of a story, was so complete and radical that it burst like a bombshell on delighted critics who quickly took up the de Mille banner and pinioned it high among the theatre's celebrated standards.

For the lady in question, acceptance of a story ballet did not come as a great surprise. To her it meant simply the fruition of ideas which were formed long before and in whose behalf she had worked with tireless—and what must have seemed endless—zeal.

Everyone knows now what happened. The



musical was "Oklahoma!" and the morning after the premiere Broadway buzzed with the wonder of a new kind of musical and with praises for a new form of ballet. A flock of offers came from producers far and near and the name of Agnes de Mille was firmly fixed in the theatrical firmament. It was the de Mille magic that subsequently breathed so much life into "One Touch of Venus," as well as "Oklahoma!," "Bloomer Girl," "Carousel," "Brigadoon," and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes."

The chain of events which led to her present eminent position in the dance world actually began when she returned from a short joust with the London stage to try her luck in New York. Two musicals, Ed Wynn's "Hooray For What," and "Swingin' The Dream" introduced the de Mille touch to Broadway and then she joined the Ballet Theatre as staff choreographer. For them she created and danced "Black Ritual" and "Three Virgins And A Devil"; then came an invitation from the Ballet Russe to compose a ballet.

The result was "Rodeo," an overnight sensation which won her twenty opening night curtain calls for the double triumph as choreographer and dancer of the principal role. Most important, it won the plaudits of Theresa Helburn and Lawrence Langner, devotees of the dance and administrative directors of The Theatre Guild. They invited her to stage the dances for the forthcoming play, a musical based on the early American scene.



RALPH LOWE

RALPH LOWE . . . (Curly) . . . was born in Gloucester, Mass. His music schooling was interrupted by two years in the air forces as armorer-gunner, but even in the armed forces he gained experience as an entertainer by singing concerts at camp shows. He returned to his studies in earnest after the war, also taking up dramatics under Ben Bard at the Ben Bard Playhouse. Coming to New York he was engaged by "Where's Charley?" which led to radio appearances as performer and announcer. He is also a writer; one of his books "The Anguished Years," was published recently by the Pageant Press of New York. Lowe likewise claims distinction as a composer-lyricist, and his current ambition is to write a Broadway musical on his own.



JERRY MANN

JERRY MANN . . . (Ali Hakim) . . . His background dates back to Vaudeville . . . Radio found him early in 1938 and he did such shows as "The Rudy Vallee Show," "Kate Smith," "Hammerstein Music Hall," "Manhattan Merry Go Round." During World War 2 he was overseas for more than 29 months with his own "Jerry Mann Show" when he toured thru Newfoundland, Bermuda, Caribbean Area, South America, Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, France, North Africa and finally the Azores. Then came the Chesterfield Supper Club with Perry Como for 38 weeks, followed by a tour with Frankie Carle and his orchestra. Then a writing hitch for several studios in Hollywood and that is where he was discovered for "Oklahoma!"



VICTOR GRIFFIN

VICTOR GRIFFIN . . . (Will Parker) . . . is a native of Pittsburgh. His theatrical experience began at the age of fourteen when he was teamed up with Ina Ray Hutton in an act for Gus Edwards. He later appeared in Billy Rose's Aquacade at New York's World's Fair. He appeared in such shows as "High Kickers," "Count Me In" and "Ziegfeld Follies" which starred Milton Berle. After two years in the army he was hired by the Theatre Guild for the New York company of "Oklahoma!" He has since played in the National and London companies of this great hit. Recently he did the choreography on the Celanese Television Program and appeared on the Robert Q. Lewis show. Mr. Griffin is the ballet master of the "Oklahoma!" company.



OWEN MARTIN

OWEN MARTIN . . . (Andrew Carnes) . . . has seen service in long-run Broadway hits. To prepare for "Oklahoma!" which he joined at its outset, he cavorted through the season long runs of such hits as "The Boys From Syracuse," "Three Men on a Horse," "Room Service," "Brother Rat," "Boy Meets Girl" and "Strip for Action."



JUDY RAWLINGS

JUDY RAWLINGS . . . (Giggling Gertie) . . . was born in Jamshedpur, India and began to study music at the age of 11. She attended Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem, Pa., and after graduation came to New York and found work modeling. She joined "Oklahoma!" in 1947, has has been with the show ever since, taking time out only for some motion picture work.

CHARLES HART . . . (Cord Elam) . . . made his stage debut in Chicago. He came to Broadway in 1912 in "The Spring Maid." He sang leading tenor roles in grand opera companies in this country and abroad. "Oklahoma!" marks his sixth engagement for the Theatre Guild, previous ones being "Sing Out Sweet Land", "The Iceman Cometh", "Girl of the Golden West", "The Silver Whistle", "Come Back Little Sheba" and "As You Like It" with Katharine Hepburn.



CHARLES HART

FLORENCE HENDERSON . . . (Laurey) . . . was born in Dale, Indiana. She attended high school in Owensboro, Kentucky and played the lead in her school operetta as well as in other musical productions put on by young people's groups. After her formal school, she studied singing with Christine Johnson, and last year she came to New York in search of Broadway employment. There she attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and soon after was auditioned for the new musical "Wish You Were Here," and was given a role. Soon afterward she was engaged by the Theatre Guild for the part of Laurey in "Oklahoma!"



FLORENCE HENDERSON

MARY MARLO . . . (Aunt Eller) . . . created the role of Aunt Eller for the National Company of "Oklahoma!" in 1943, the year that it opened on Broadway. She later created the role in London when the famous musical opened at the Drury Lane Theatre and appeared in the Royal Command performance there. One of her notable successes was in "Naughty Riquette" and she appeared in several productions of Earl Carroll's "Vanities." While playing Aunt Eller, she has appeared at numerous military camps and hospitals for the men and women in the Armed Services. This year she was selected, with other members of the company to present "Oklahoma!" at the Berlin Festival.



MARY MARLO

JACQUELINE DANIELS . . . (Ado Annie Carnes) . . . comes from a family of show people. This year she is celebrating her 18th anniversary in show business; starting at the age of five with her brother, Bill, age 7, as a song act in radio, she stayed in this medium until World War II, when Bill enlisted in the Army. Miss Daniels joined the U.S.O. She toured the Army Camps throughout the United States. She later appeared as Mary Skinner in "Life with Father," and then in "Apple of His Eye" starring Walter Huston. In 1947 she opened in London with "Oklahoma!" and has since been with the New York Company, and the national company, and has logged a total of more than 1,000 performances as Ado Annie.



JACQUELINE DANIELS

ALFRED CIBELLI . . . (Jud Fry) . . . is one of the original members of the national company of "Oklahoma!" In addition he has played in the London company. He has appeared in several dramatic shows and concerts in London and on the continent. Since returning to the United States, he has appeared in various TV shows. Mr. Cibelli's father was a soloist at the Metropolitan Opera Co. of New York for many years.



ALFRED CIBELLI .

MARJORIE BEDDOW . . . (Laurey in Ballet) . . . started dancing professionally at 17 in the road company of "High Button Shoes." She has appeared in television on the Jack Haley show, "Startime," "Say it with Acting" and "All Star Revue." She has danced with the Slavenska Ballet Variant. She appeared in "Two on the Aisle" on Broadway, recently.

VIC REILLEY . . . (Curley in Ballet) . . . started dancing in Charles Gaynor's Revue at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, while attending the University of Pittsburgh. After graduation he went to study at the American Theatre Wing in New York. He has appeared in concert, TV, and musical comedy. His last two shows were "Where's Charley?" and "Two on the Aisle." Mr. Reilley and Miss Beddoe, his partner in the ballet are husband and wife in real life.



MARJORIE BEDDOW
AND VIC REILLEY

"Simple and Rapturous"

By Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times*

Citizens who have been deprived of their inalienable right to see "Oklahoma!" any time they want to now have nothing to complain about. For the national company which has been touring since 1943, has settled down at the Broadway Theatre, where it opened last evening.

If "Oklahoma!" never had been staged before, it could not have had a fresher performance. You may not be familiar with the names of anyone in the cast. But that is not because any of them is untalented . . . Go straight through the cast and you will not find a performer who has not caught the exultation and magic of the Rodgers and Hammerstein show.

* * *

It is a good thing to see "Oklahoma!" every now and then to keep a firm hold on standards. So much has happened in and out of theatre since it was produced in 1942 you may have forgotten just how simple and rapturous it is. Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Hammerstein have done some finer work in the last nine years. Having once mastered the theatre, they have made their musical dramas considerably more eloquent. "Carousel," "South Pacific" and "The King and I" are all more mature; they have greater range and depth.

But that is only because they began so perfectly with a romantic folk-tale and some glorious music that has now become part of the common speech of America. No one can ever sing any of the exuberance and loveliness out of "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'," "The Surrey With the Fringe on the Top," "Many a New Day" and "People Will Say We're in Love." They are classics not merely

because they have been sung so often. They are classics because they are romantically true.

* * *

Apparently there is no end of young singers who also can act. That seemed to be the case when the national company of "Carousel" put in an appearance in New York after a long tour; and it is certainly true of the current Oklahomans. All the boys are genial and healthy. All the girls have satin complexions and happy smiles. Since they have led clean lives, eaten nourishing food and gone to bed early every night, their energy is inexhaustible and they enjoy themselves in the flattering rhythms of Mr. Rodgers' music.

The plot Lynn Riggs originally provided in "Green Grow the Lilacs" is congenial; Mr. Hammerstein's workmanship has a purity of style that is becoming; and Miss de Mille's native ballets and Mr. Mamoulian's spirited, idiomatic direction are in the perfect keys, respectively. No wonder the performance goes with such effortless grace and good humor.

* * *

If the current production is not new the management has taken pains to make it look as though it had just been built. Lemuel Ayers' wide, handsome sets with their bold masses of color and simple lines are as enchanting as ever; and so are the gay and lovely costumes Miles White designed. If there were any justice in this world, or if time went on forever, every performer in the cast would get an individual gold medal this morning. Every one deserves a special vote of thank for preserving the lyrical innocence of a theatre work that we all have great affection for. There ought to be many a new day for such a cheering festival.



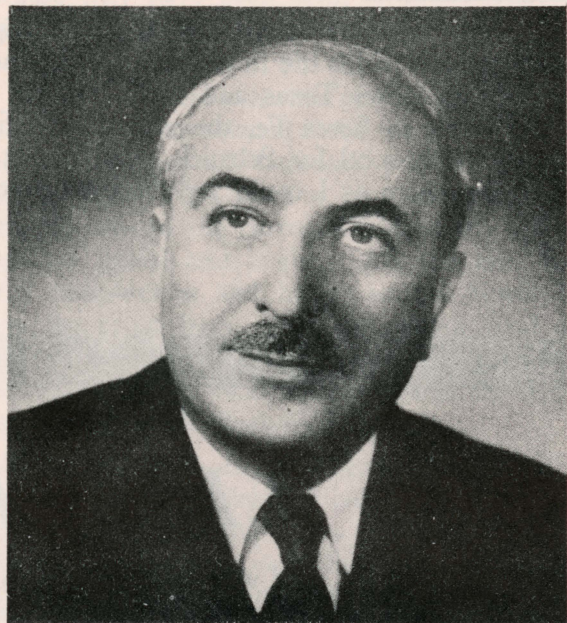
JEROME WHYTE is one of America's top-ranking luminaries in the musical field. No one has been associated with more smash hits. His impressive list of successes include such musical classics as "The King and I," "Oklahoma!," "Carousel," "Of Thee I Sing," "As Thousands Cheer," "Jubilee," "Face the Music," "The Boys From Syracuse," "Beat the Band," "Pal Joey," "Too Many Girls" and "Best Foot Forward."

The Theatre Guild assigned him to the original production of "Oklahoma!" when it opened at the St. James Theatre on Broadway in March 1943 and he has been with that organization ever since. When the National Company of "Oklahoma!" was formed he reproduced that company as well as "Carousel" which toured for two years. He is responsible of course, for the excellent London companies of these fabulous musicals. In addition to his duties with the Guild, Mr. Whyte is also performing the same capacity for Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd and his prodigious efforts in reproducing "South Pacific" at Drury Lane have brought him additional accolades.

The Theatre Guild



THERESA HELBURN



LAWRENCE LANGNER

THE THEATRE GUILD has never been known to do things by halves. In its thirty-two years on Broadway, it has become the undisputed leader in the field of straight play production. With "Oklahoma!" eight years ago, it picked up the musical banners it had flourished intermittently throughout its history, only this time it held them higher than ever.

Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn, administrative directors of The Theatre Guild, have always been keen on the musical adventures of The Guild. They played important roles in the presentation of the first of the Guild's musicals, back in 1925, when an exuberant Sunday night frolic turned into "The Garrick Gaieties." One of the results of that classic musical was the introduction of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart.

The second and third musicals sponsored by the Theatre Guild were later editions of "The Garrick Gaieties," which lumped together ran a total of 560 performances. From among the ranks of "Gaieties" performers sprang such now well-known figures as Rosalind Russell, Libby Holman, Romney Brent, Sterling Holloway, Imogene Coca, Lee Strasburg, E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, Aaron Copland and, of course, Rodgers and Lorenz Hart.

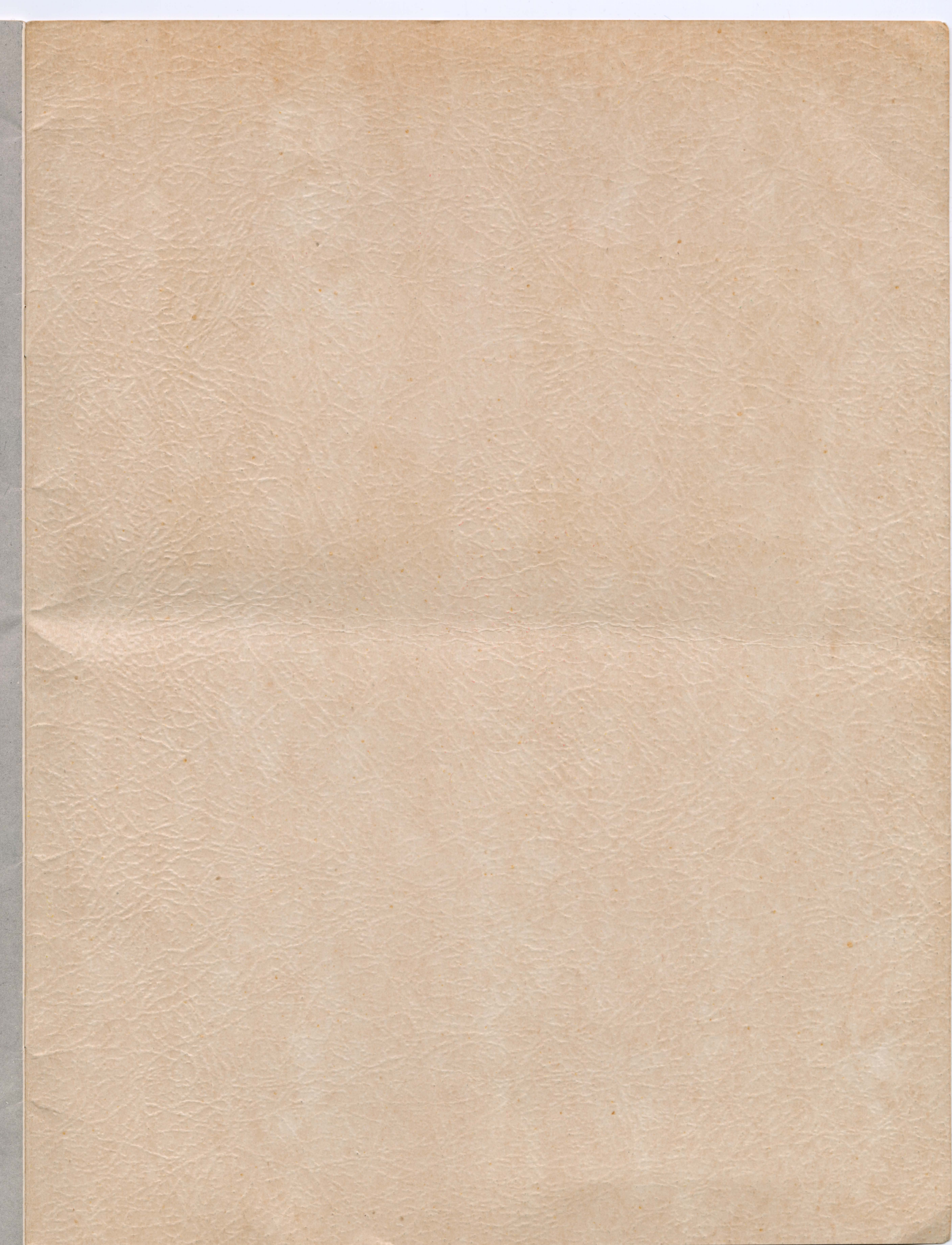
Fourth on the Guild's musical list was "Parade," a musical experiment that came and went

in 1934. The following year saw the memorable production which started The Guild on the idea of transforming more of its own dramatic successes into musicals. It was the Dorothy and DuBose Heyward "Porgy," which George Gershwin turned into a masterpiece of modern music-making, "Porgy and Bess."

"Porgy and Bess" also launched Rouben Mamoulian's musical kinship with Mr. Langner and Miss Helburn, which eight years later turned "Green Grow the Lilacs" into "Oklahoma!" Once again it was a Guild play, by Lynn Riggs, which proved itself the best material for the tuneful treatment of Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2d.

"Oklahoma!" set Broadway on the paths of the ballet and of Americana. Whereupon The Guild set off to conquer fresh fields: authentic American musical history was used to form the basis for "Sing Out, Sweet Land!" written by Walter Kerr.

Without waiting for time to elapse, the seventh Guild musical reached the boards—"Carousel," based on that Guild classic, "Liliom," by Ferenc Molnar (as adapted by Benjamin F. Glazer), but transferred from Budapest to New England by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2d. Then followed "Allegro," and "Arms and the Girl." Another accolade was bestowed upon "Oklahoma!" in September 1951 when it was selected as the only American play to represent this country at the famous Berlin Arts Festival.



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1944

