

*"It is a law of our civilization that as soon as a man proves he can contribute to the well-being of the world, there be created an immediate conspiracy to destroy his usefulness, a conspiracy in which he is usually a willing collaborator. Sometimes he awakens to his danger and does something about it.
That is the story of ALLEGRO."*

-- Oscar Hammerstein II

*"Of all the musicals I ever worked on that didn't quite succeed,
ALLEGRO is one I think most worthy of a second chance."*

-- Richard Rodgers

MASTERWORKS BROADWAY PROUDLY RELEASES

Rodgers & Hammerstein's

Allegro

First Complete Recording

MUSIC BY RICHARD RODGERS

LYRICS BY OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

CD AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE FEBRUARY 3, 2009

All-Star Studio Cast Includes:

**Laura Benanti • Norbert Leo Butz • Liz Callaway • Nathan Gunn
Judy Kuhn • Audra McDonald • Marni Nixon • Patrick Wilson**

The **Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization** is thrilled to announce that the first complete recording of Rodgers & Hammerstein's **ALLEGRO** will be released by **Sony Masterworks Broadway** on February 3, 2009. The CD is produced by **David Lai, Bruce Pomahac** and **Ted Chapin**.

A cast of stars from the worlds of Broadway and opera was assembled for this unprecedented studio recording. Featured on the CD are **Patrick Wilson** as Joe Taylor, Jr.; **Nathan Gunn** and **Audra McDonald** as Joe's parents; **Marni Nixon** as Joe's Grandma; **Judy Kuhn** as Beulah; **Liz Callaway** as Emily; **Laura Benanti** as Jennie; and **Norbert Leo Butz** as Joe's best friend, Charlie.

ALLEGRO also features solos by **Judith Blazer, Maureen Brennan, Ashley Brown, Danny Burstein** and **Kathy Morath**, as well as a full chorus and a children's chorus. The CD features a host of noteworthy cameos including former New York City Cultural Affairs Commissioner **Schuyler Chapin**; Senior Minister of All Souls Unitarian Church **Galen Guengerich**; Lincoln Center Theater Executive Producer **Bernard Gersten**; theater scribes **Howard Kissel** and **John Simon**; Broadway veterans **Ray DeMattis, Harvey Evans** and **Kurt Peterson**; and **ALLEGRO**'s 1947 production assistant, **Stephen Sondheim**.

Larry Blank conducts the 50-piece Istropolis Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring the original orchestrations by **Robert Russell Bennett** and dance arrangements by **Trude Rittmann**. **Bruce Pomahac** is the musical director and **Ben Whiteley** is the choral director (with choral arrangements by **Crane Calder**).

ALLEGRO, Rodgers & Hammerstein's fourth work together, debuted in 1947 preceded by the Broadway musicals *OKLAHOMA!* and *CAROUSEL*, and the film *STATE FAIR*. A somewhat controversial work, the show ran for a season and earned some rave reviews, but nevertheless was their first musical to be less than a blockbuster hit. **ALLEGRO** divided critics and challenged audiences with an unusual style of storytelling, and a groundbreaking approach to musical staging. In the words of Stephen Sondheim, the production marked "the first really good experimental show."

An original musical, **ALLEGRO** tells the story of an earnest country doctor, Joseph Taylor, Jr. and follows his life from cradle to adulthood. His journey -- both literal and moral -- spans from small town to big city, and back again. The score is unconventional: fragments of song move in and out of the action like passing thoughts; melodies flit by in one scene only to take hold and blossom in the next. Major songs are given to minor characters, while the central character has comparatively little solo work. A chorus provides spoken commentary and sings aloud inner thoughts. Original director/choreographer Agnes de Mille's extended ballet sequences are reflected in intriguing orchestral pieces.

"Along with the innovations of the original production, **ALLEGRO**'s score has its own innovative qualities, most of which are simply unknown," says Ted Chapin, President of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. He continues, "To do justice to the show that Rodgers and Hammerstein created, I have long wanted to capture the score in a way that explains to us all how the musical tapestry of **ALLEGRO** was conceived. It is almost through-composed, using elements of songs in distinct, dramatic ways, which has led people to assume -- incorrectly -- that it is a lesser work. To the contrary: **ALLEGRO** is extraordinary, landing chronologically between *CAROUSEL* and *SOUTH PACIFIC*, when the team was at its zenith. My hope is that this recording will introduce this compelling work to musical theater lovers in the best way possible -- and I am thrilled that we have been able to attract such a stellar group of artists to join us."

"It has taken a very long time to give the score of **ALLEGRO** the full attention it deserved," concludes Chapin, "We've taken a lot of care to make it sound as close as possible to the way Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein intended it to over sixty years ago."

In addition to this release of the new **ALLEGRO** recording, **Masterworks Broadway** is pleased to announce the upcoming 50th Anniversary special edition of the Original Broadway Cast Recording of **THE SOUND OF MUSIC** (due Fall 2009), and the label will celebrate its unparalleled catalogue of Rodgers & Hammerstein cast recordings with special new digital-only editions of classic recordings in the year ahead. The first group of digital releases (*CAROUSEL*, *OKLAHOMA!*, "VICTORY AT SEA" -- details below) will be available on all digital service providers, including iTunes and Amazon MP3 stores on Tuesday, February 3 coinciding with the release of **ALLEGRO**. CDs, complete with each album's original cover art and liner notes, available for burn-on-demand exclusively through ArkivMusic.

ABOUT THE MASTERWORKS BROADWAY DIGITAL RELEASES:

- The 1965 Music Theater of Lincoln Center recording of **CAROUSEL**, featuring its original star **John Raitt**, will be extended with tracks from Raitt's 1952 studio recording of excerpts from *CAROUSEL*, as well as a 1955 studio recording of the musical with opera stars **Robert Merrill** and **Patrice Munsel**, led by one of Broadway's most authoritative maestros, **Lehman Engel**. Digital booklet to include exclusive rare recording session photographs shown for the first time.
- Available for digital download for the first time will be a classic 1952 studio recording of **OKLAHOMA!** with a cast led by the legendary operetta star **Nelson Eddy**, also with Lehman Engel conducting. Bonus tracks on this recording will include the first release since the LP era of John Raitt's studio recording of excerpts from *OKLAHOMA!*
- Making its first appearance since the LP era is what may be composer Richard Rodgers' only major recording as a conductor of his own music, leading the New York Philharmonic in 1954 performances of selections from his score for the TV documentary series "**VICTORY AT SEA**," the "Carousel Waltz" from *CAROUSEL*, "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" ballet from *ON YOUR TOES*, the "March of

the Siamese Children” from *THE KING AND I* and an arrangement of his greatest waltz melodies. Bonus material will include an audio interview with Rodgers conducted by record producer **Goddard Lieberson**.

For updates and more news on the first complete recording of *ALLEGRO*, please visit www.feature.masterworksbroadway.com/allegro.

ABOUT MASTERWORKS BROADWAY

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ABOUT THE RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN ORGANIZATION

Founded by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II in 1944, R&H today represents a wide variety of entertainment copyrights, primarily in the musical theater and featuring works by dozens of writers including Irving Berlin, Duke Ellington, Adam Guettel, Sheldon Harnick, Lorenz Hart, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Stephen Schwartz, Charles Strouse, and Kurt Weill, as well as Rodgers and Hammerstein. R&H is represented on Broadway this season with Rodgers & Hammerstein's *SOUTH PACIFIC* (winner of 7 Tony Awards including Best Musical Revival), *PAL JOEY* by Rodgers & Hart, and Irving Berlin's *WHITE CHRISTMAS*. For more information visit www.rnh.com. Ted Chapin is President and Executive Director.