



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS JOHN STEINBECK'S STIRRING CLASSIC "OF MICE AND MEN," MARCH 5-26

TUCSON, Ariz. (Feb. 24, 2016): Arizona Theatre Company's (ATC) powerhouse season continues with one of the most celebrated works in American literature, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, the emotional and stirring account of migrant workers George and Lennie who dream of settling down on a farm where the land stretches forever and the soft rabbits need tending, March 5-26 at the Temple of Music and Art, 333 S. Scott Ave. I. Michael and Beth Kasser are Arizona Theatre Company's 2015-16 Season Sponsors.

A compelling tale of friendship and survival, *Of Mice and Men* follows George and Lennie as they drift from job to job across the fields and farms of central California during the hardship of 1920s America. In a time when dreams seemed a thing of the past, these two unlikely friends dare to believe in a better life. This timeless tale of friendship, loneliness, loyalty, sacrifice, and the human connections that are our bedrock for survival in desperate times are as vibrantly resonant and relevant now as ever before.

"Steinbeck's novella and play, *Of Mice and Men*, is one of the most beloved works in all of American literature," said ATC Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein. "While the characters and situations have achieved iconic status, it is always surprising to revisit this intimate tale of friendship and dreams onstage where it has such a yearning immediacy. The themes of striving,

dreaming and self-identity have echoes in the works of other playwriting giants of the American stage like O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller or August Wilson. ***Of Mice and Men*** has a cathartic power that is ever fresh, ever impactful and ever current.”

A co-production with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, ***Of Mice and Men***, winner of the NY Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play, is directed by Milwaukee Rep Artistic Director Mark Clements, who most recently directed ATC's smash hit ***Five Presidents***.

Called “a thrilling evening in the theatre!” by National Public Radio, the Philadelphia Inquirer wrote that “Mark Clements’ impeccable production mines all its human qualities ... takes your breath away.”

Tickets for ***Of Mice and Men*** start at \$23 and are available at the Temple of Music and Art Box Office, 333 S. Scott Ave., by calling (520) 622-2823 or by visiting

www.arizonatheatre.org.

Of Mice and Men will be followed by the witty Arizona premiere of Scott Carter's new play, ***The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*** (May 5-22).

For more information call (520) 622-2823 or visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

BIOGRAPHIES

John Steinbeck (Playwright) John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. (1902-1968) was born February 27, 1902 in Salinas, California to Episcopal parents – a retired teacher and manager of a flour mill – as the third of four siblings. His first true success and claim to fame came in 1935 with the positive reception of *Tortilla Flat*, a novella about “paisanos” (countrymen) living out their lives following World War I. Steinbeck's California Novels, *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) displayed a transition from his previous stories of his home to tales involving labor issues. *The Grapes of Wrath* originated journalistically after the *San Francisco News* asked him to investigate migrant camps near Bakersfield. While this novel is considered to represent the upper echelon of his work – it won him the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction – and was the top-selling novel of 1939, the controversy surrounding its politics led to its ban and a boom of unwanted fame, which in turn led to the decline of Steinbeck's health and marriage. Steinbeck, while patriotic, was denied a commission in the armed forces during World War II due to suspected communist leanings, and he took to writing war propaganda instead. Some examples include *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (1942) and *The Moon is Down* (1942). In 1943, he was hired by the *New York Herald Tribune* to report on the war, and his correspondences during this time were published in the collection *Once There Was a War*. Afterwards, he published *Cannery Row* (1945) and *The Pearl* (1947). Some later works of his career included *East of Eden* (1952), his self-named magnum opus, *Travels with Charley* (1960), and *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961). He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 to some controversy as critics felt his work was one-note and crowded with pitiable philosophy; it was revealed in 2012 that he was a compromise winner of a shortlist that was considered to be of poor quality. Due to the critical outcry and condemnation, he ceased writing fiction. John Steinbeck died on December 20, 1968 from heart failure due to smoking and was cremated and buried in Salinas, California: the town of his birth. Today, Steinbeck is regarded as one of the great American writers due to his truthful (and sometimes experimental) voice representing the common man and concern with social movements and protest. His writings are also considered

an excellent account of American history during the Great Depression, which supply interesting insight into America itself, as seen in his later works. Many of his stories are required reading for public high schools, therefore allowing his influence to reach the younger generation. He has been commemorated in multiple ways such as the preservation of his old homes, the renaming of Ocean View Avenue to Cannery Row, and the creation of the National Steinbeck Center Museum. Steinbeck also enjoyed a string of acclaimed Hollywood adaptations of his works with major stars including *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Tortilla Flat*, and *East of Eden*, all of which are still lauded today. By Chloe Loos, ATC Dramaturgy Intern

Mark Clements (Director) is the Artistic Director of Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. He returns to ATC, where he directed *Five Presidents* and *Clybourne Park*. He is an award-winning international theatre director whose work has appeared in over 100 major theatres throughout Europe and the United States. Recent productions include: *Dreamgirls*, *Five Presidents*, *The Color Purple*, *The History of Intolerance*, *End of the Rainbow*, *Ragtime*, *Clybourne Park*, *Assassins*, *Othello*, *Next to Normal*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Bombshells*, and *Cabaret*. He has also been Associate Director for New End Theatre and New Players Theatre, both in London, Royal Theatre in Northampton, and Torch Theatre in Wales. Additionally, Mr. Clements served as Artistic Director of the award-winning Derby Playhouse in the U.K. from 1992 to 2002. He serves on the National Advisory Board for the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship Program at Ten Chimneys in WI.

Scott Greer (Lennie) is a 20-year veteran of Philadelphia theatre, he has worked for the Arden Theatre Company, 1812 Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, The Wilma Theater, People's Light and Theatre Company, InterAct, Theatre Exile, Lantern Theatre Company, and many more. Regionally, he has worked for Actors Theatre of Louisville, Round House Theatre, Cape May Stage, Gulfshore Playhouse, and the Pearl Theatre in New York. He has won five Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre, including the prestigious F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Theatre Artist, and he was named 2014's "Best Theatre Talent" by *Philadelphia Magazine*.

Jonathan Wainwright (George) recently completed his fourth season as Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, where he has also been seen as Roderigo in *Othello*, and Doalty in *Translations*. Other favorite roles include Bobby in *Coyote on a Fence*, Cliff in *Sideman*, and Sloan in *Entertaining Mister Sloane*.

James Pickering (Candy) has appeared in 42 seasons at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, including in *The Seafarer*, *Copenhagen*, *The Front Page*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, and Ebenezer Scrooge in 14 iterations of *A Christmas Carol*, during which he performed the role 450 times. In recent seasons at American Players Theatre, he played Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shamraev in *The Seagull*, and The Ghost/Player King/Gravedigger in *Hamlet*. In Milwaukee, he has been seen at Renaissance TheatreWorks, and Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. He is a former trustee at Ten Chimneys, a former Milwaukee Outstanding Artist, and as narrator of the Emmy Award-winning *The Making of Milwaukee*.

Chike Johnson (Crooks) most recently appeared at American Players Theatre, where he played Othello, Winston, and Pistol, and in Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. His New York and Broadway credits include *A Time To Kill* and Manhattan Theatre Club's *Wit*. Off-Broadway: *Lost In the Stars*, produced by New York City Center's Encores!, and *Ruined*, co-produced by Manhattan Theatre Club and the Goodman Theatre. Chicago credits include: Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Other regional credits include Yale Repertory Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and First Stage Children's Theater. Some of

Mr. Johnson's film credits include *Friends with Benefits*, *Sleepwalk with Me*, and *The Machinist*, and his television credits include *Law & Order*, *Girls*, *Veep*, and *Prison Break*.

Bernard Balbot (Curley) Chicago credits include Northlight Theatre, Writers Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare, Victory Gardens Theater, Jackalope Theatre, American Theater Company) and Drury Lane Theatre. Regional credits include: American Conservatory Theater, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, Hangar Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. TV/Film: *Chicago Fire/Warrior*. Mr. Balbot is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama and NTI's Moscow Art Theatre Program.

Jonathan Gillard Daly (Boss) has been a member of resident acting companies at Repertory Theatre of St. Louis (1977-81), Great Lakes Theater Festival (1982-84), PCPA Theaterfest (1984-97), Milwaukee Repertory Theater (1998-2012) and the Great River Shakespeare Festival (2004-13). Some of his favorite classical roles include Prospero in *The Tempest*, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Falstaff in *Henry IV Part One*, and *King Lear*. He has appeared over the years in plays at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Repertory Theatre of Saint Louis, Actors Theater of Louisville, Clarence Brown Theater, American Players Theater, Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey, and PCPA Theaterfest.

James Farruggio (Slim) is making his ATC debut. Previous plays include: *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Steppenwolf, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Gift Theatre), Infamous Commonwealth Theatre) and Griffin Theatre. Film and television credits: *Batman Dark Knight*, *The Beast*, *Prison Break*, *Crisis*, *Chicago P.D.*, and *The Playboy Club*.

Kelly Faulkner (Curley's Wife) regional credits include *The Mousetrap*, *Harvey*, *Noises Off*, *Ragtime*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Cabaret*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, *Assassins*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The History of Invulnerability* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); *Proof* (Theatre-Fest); *Oliver!*, and *State Fair* (Walnut Street Theatre); *All Shook Up* (Fireside Theatre). National Tour: *Big*. She can be seen/heard in numerous commercials, industrials, and voiceovers.

Sean Patrick Fawcett (Carlson) most recently appeared as Brian in *Avenue Q* at Mercury Theatre in Chicago. Other favorite theatre credits include Emerald City/First Stage, The Hypocrites, Timeline, A Red Orchid, Sans Culottes, New Leaf, Syracuse Stage, Collaboraction, and Mason Street Warehouse. He was briefly seen on NBC's *Chicago Fire* choking during a botched children's magic show.

Riley O'Toole (Whit) is making his ATC debut. Regional credits: Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Guthrie Theater, Great River Shakespeare Festival. Training: University of Minnesota/ Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program.

CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Design: Todd Edward Ivins

Lighting Design: Jesse Klug

Costume Design: Rachel Laritz

Sound Design and Original Composition: Joe Cerqua

Fight Director: Jamie Cheatham

Associate Director: Leda Hoffman

Production Stage Manager: Glenn Bruner

Tickets for *Of Mice and Men* start at \$23 and are subject to change depending on time, date and

section, and are available at www.arizonatheatre.org or by calling the box office at (520) 622-2823. Discounts are available for seniors and active military. A \$10 student ticket pricing is now available for all performances. Half-price rush tickets are available for balcony seating for all performances one hour prior to curtain at the ATC box office (subject to availability). **Pay What You Can** performance is Tuesday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available for a suggested \$10 donation. (Tickets must be purchased at the Temple of Music and Art starting one hour prior to curtain. Tickets are first-come, first served. *Cash only*. Two tickets maximum per person.) For discounts for groups of 10 or more, call (520) 622-2823.

Arizona Theatre Company offers accessibility services for patrons with disabilities for select performances. **Audio Description** provides patrons with vision loss a running audio description of the movement and activities onstage through an infrared broadcast system. An Audio-Described performance is offered on Thursday, March 24 at 2 p.m. Interested patrons with vision loss may request a tactile tour one hour prior to curtain. **American Sign Language Interpretation** is presented by professional, theatrically-trained ASL-interpreters for people who have deafness or hearing impairment. An ASL-interpreted performance is offered on Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m. **Open captioning** allows patrons to read the play's dialogue on an LED screen as the play progresses. An open captioned performance is offered on Thursday, March 24 at 2 p.m. For open-captioned or ASL-interpreted performances, patrons should request seats best suited to ASL interpretation or captioning when purchasing tickets. Large print and Braille playbills and infrared listening amplification devices are also available at every ATC performance with reservation. TTY access for the box office is available in Tucson at (520) 884-9723 or via Arizona Relay at (800) 367-8939 (TTY/ASCII).

Fact Sheet:

Of Mice and Men

Written by John Steinbeck

Directed by Mark Clements

Venue:

Temple of Music and Art

333 S. Scott Ave.

Tucson, Arizona

Previews Begin: Saturday, March 5 at 8 p.m.

Opening Night: Friday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Closing Performance: Saturday, March 26 at 8 p.m.

Ticket Info:

Ticket prices currently start at \$23-\$63 and are available in-person at the Temple of Music and Art box office, via phone at (520) 622-2823 or online at www.arizonatheatre.org.

Contact:

Steve Carr, The Kur Carr Group, Inc., (602) 317-3040

About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 49th

season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein, and a dedicated Board of Trustees.