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**TONY NOMINATED DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER HELMS DC
RESIDENT THEATRE PREMIERE OF *ONCE* AT OLNEY THEATRE
CENTER**

Broadway musical is based on popular Oscar-winning film

OLNEY, MD — January 4, 2019 — Olney Theatre Center begins 2019 on the Mainstage with its Residential Regional Premiere of Tony Award winning musical ***Once***, running February 6 - March 10, 2019. **Marcia Milgrom Dodge**, Tony Award Nominee for the Broadway production of *Ragtime*, makes her Olney Theatre Center debut as Director and Choreographer. Press is invited to attend the performance on Saturday, February 9 at 8:00 pm.

Marcia Milgrom Dodge brings considerable experience, having Directed and Choreographed both on Broadway and off, as well as in regional theaters all across the nation. Dodge was the Director and Choreographer for the 2009 revival of *Ragtime* on Broadway and at The Kennedy Center, and was the first woman to direct a major musical produced by The Kennedy Center. *Ragtime* earned her the Tony nomination for Best Direction, and she won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Director of a Resident Musical. Dodge is also a playwright, having written both plays and musicals with her husband Anthony Dodge. Their shows have been produced in regional theaters throughout the U.S.

"It's such an honor to welcome Tony-nominee **Marcia Milgrom Dodge** to OTC, where she's going to direct *Once* with her unique blend of passion and artistry," said Artistic Director **Jason Loewith**. "She's gathered a tremendous team to bring this poignant and delight-filled celebration of love and music to life."

Based on the Oscar-winning Indie film of the same name, *Once* tells the story of **Guy**, a street guitarist on the verge of abandoning his dreams, played by **Gregory Maheu** (*Passion at Signature Theatre*). Luckily, Guy meets **Girl**, a curious woman that wants to know all about him, who helps him fall in love with the wonder of music again. **Malinda Kathleen Reese**, a multi-talented performer, YouTube sensation, and recording artist takes on the role of Girl and plays piano.

Olney Theatre Center Associate Artistic Director of Music Theatre **Christopher Youstra** plays **the role of the Emcee**, music directs and leads an ensemble composed of actor/musicians playing their own instruments live, on-stage.

The cast includes **John Sygar** (**Andrej**, playing banjo, mandolin, guitar and bass), **Carlos Castillo** (**Švec**, playing guitar, bass and drums), **Nick DePinto** (**Bank Manager**, playing guitar, mandolin and cajon), **Katie Chambers** (**Ex-Girlfriend**, Cello), **Craig MacDonald** (**Da**, playing mandolin, papoose and ukulele), **Daven Ralston** (**Réza**, playing violin), **Brian Reisman** (**Eamon**, playing guitar, banjo and ukulele), **Dave Stishan** (**Billy**, playing guitar and cajon) and **Emily Mikesell** (**Baruška**, violin and accordion). **Girl's** daughter, **Ivanka**, is played in-rotation by **Kyleigh Fuller** and **Somaya Litmon**. **Ian Geers** and **Linda Bard** serve as swings.

The creative team includes Off-Broadway veteran **Michael Schweikardt** (*The Bus* and *Gates of Gold* at 59 E 59) designing his first set at OTC, while **Frank Labovitz** (Costume Designer), **Colin K. Bills** (Lighting Designer), **Lynn Watson** (Voice and Dialect Coach), and **Matt Rowe** (Sound Designer) all return for another show at Olney.

Once

Book by Enda Walsh

Music and Lyrics by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová

Based on the motion picture written and directed by John Carney

Music Direction by Christopher Youstra

Directed and Choreographed by Marcia Milgrom Dodge

February 6 - March 10, 2019

Press Opening: Saturday, February 9, 2019 at 8:00 pm

Regular performances are Wednesday-Saturday at 8:00 pm; matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 pm; and Wednesday matinees at 2:00 pm on February 13 and 27. No Saturday matinee on February 9.

There will be an Audio-described performance for the blind and visually impaired on Wednesday, February 20 at 8:00 pm and a sign-interpreted performance on Thursday, February 28 at 8:00 pm. Audience members who wish to use these services should contact Julie Via, Patron Services Manager (jvia@olneytheatre.org) to confirm.

Tickets begin at \$42. Discounts available for groups, seniors, military and students.

Special Events:

- **Behind-the-Scenes: Building A Musical**
Saturday, February 9 at 5:00pm
\$10/Free for Olney Theatre Center Members
Join us for a conversation with *Once* director/choreographer and Broadway veteran Marcia Milgrom Dodge as she guides us through the many layers of putting together a musical theatre production.
- **Acoustic Open Mic Night at Olney Winery**

Wednesday, February 6 from 6:30pm-9:30pm. Join Olney Theatre Center for Acoustic Open Mic Night at Olney Winery and celebrate our local independent musicians. Grab your instrument and get up on stage or sit back, sip some wine, and just listen to the music. We'll also feature a couple of our favorite Olney Theatre Center artists. Admission is free.

- *Afterwords* will occur after the following Saturday matinee performances: February 16, February 23, March 2, and March 9

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces, presents and tours extraordinary performances for a diversity of audiences, and educates and inspires the next generation of theater-makers. We strive every day to unleash the creative potential of our artists and audiences, and in so doing, become a nationally-prominent destination for the most impactful theater performance and education. In the past five years, Olney Theatre has twice won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Production and produced 6 world premieres, including Andrew Hinderaker's *The Magic Play* and *Colossal* (2015 Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play or Musical), and Jennifer Hoppe-House's *Bad Dog* (2015 Steinberg Award nominee). Olney Theatre places a priority on engaging our community by ensuring that we remain affordable, accessible and inviting to new and returning audiences.

Located just north of Washington, D.C. in arts-rich Montgomery County, Maryland, is situated on 14 wooded acres in the heart of the beautiful Washington-Baltimore-Frederick "triangle," within easy access to all three cities, and is also home to National Players, America's longest-running touring company. Olney Theatre Center is led by Artistic Director Jason Loewith and Managing Director Debbie Ellinghaus. For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org.

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