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**AFTER 1-WEEK DELAY, THE ROYALE BEGINS PERFORMANCES
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2 AT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER
Jay Frisby joins the cast as Wynton**

OLNEY, MD – For Immediate Release – Olney Theatre Center and 1st Stage’s co-production of *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez and directed by Paige Hernandez begins its delayed run on Wednesday, October 2 at 1:45pm. The original first week of performances were cancelled when the actor had to withdraw for medical reasons just prior to the first scheduled performance. **Jay Frisby**, last seen at Olney Theatre as the doctor in *Roald Dahl’s Matilda the Musical*, steps into the role of Wynton, the trainer of aspiring heavyweight boxer, Jay “The Sport” Jackson. **Press is invited to review performances beginning Thursday, October 3 at 7:45pm. Please email kerwin@olneytheatre.org to reserve a seat.**

Olney Theatre Artistic Director Jason Loewith says, “Paige and her cast have worked so hard to create a physical, poetic, and kinetic production of *The Royale*. When we lost a cast member, it became clear to my producing partner, Alex Levy at 1st Stage and myself that we owed it to the artists to take the time we needed to integrate a new actor into the ensemble. Jay Frisby is one of the nicest, smartest, hardest-working actors I know, and we are so grateful that he has undertaken this challenge.”

About the play

In 1905, Jay “The Sport” Jackson (Jaysen Wright) dreams of becoming the first African American boxer to fight for the heavyweight championship. Despite racking up a string of vicious knockouts, racial segregation and his white manager’s own reservations stand in the way. Inspired by the true story of Jack Johnson, *The Royale* breaks new ground by taking us inside the fighter’s mind where the disciplined brutality of boxing reveals itself in theatrically-unforgettable choreo-poems. At stake is more than wins or losses, but equality and survival.

Jaysen Wright, who starred in 1st Stage’s productions of *Take Me Out* and *Now Comes the Night* stars as Jay “The Sport” Jackson, a boxer desperate to prove himself in 1905 by fighting

for the heavyweight title against the white champion. **Jay Frisby** returns to OTC where he has been seen in *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*, *South Pacific*, *Annie*, and *Mary Poppins*, to play Jay's trainer, Wynton. **Clayton Pelham, Jr.** who appeared in 1st Stage's production of *The Brother Size*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Helen Hayes nomination for "Outstanding Lead Actor") and *Hero's Welcome* is Jay's sparring partner Fish. **Chris Genebach**, an OTC regular last seen in *Mary Stuart*, plays Jay's white manager who simultaneously seeks to exploit and protect the boxer's tremendous talent. **Lolita Marie**, recipient of a Helen Hayes Award for her performance in 1st Stage's *Doubt*, rounds out the cast as Nina, Fish's sister, an unwelcome tie to his past.

The Royale

By Marco Ramirez

Directed and Choreographed by Paige Hernandez

At Olney Theatre Center: October 2 - October 27, 2019

At 1st Stage Tysons: January 30, 2020 - February 23, 2020

At Olney Theatre Center, regular performances are Wednesday-Saturday at 7:45 pm; matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 1:45 pm; Wednesday matinee on October 2 at 1:45 pm.

There will be an Audio-described performance for the blind and visually impaired on Wednesday, October 9 at 7:45 pm. There will be a Sign-interpreted performance on Thursday, October 17 at 7:45 pm.

Tickets begin at \$54. Discounts available for groups, seniors, military and students.

● **Night at the Movies: Creed (2015)**

Saturday, October 19 at 8:15pm

Free

Historic Theatre

Adonis Johnson (Michael B. Jordan) never knew his famous father, boxing champion Apollo Creed, who died before Adonis was born. However, boxing is in his blood, so he seeks out Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) and asks the retired champ to be his trainer. Rocky sees much of Apollo in Adonis, and agrees to mentor him, even as he battles an opponent deadlier than any in the ring. With Rocky's help, Adonis soon gets a title shot. but whether he has the true heart of a fighter remains to be seen.

● **Post-show discussions** will occur after the following Saturday matinee performances:

○ October 5, 12, 19 and 26

An additional release will be sent with details about the 1st Stage run, closer to their press night on February 1, 2020.

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Mission

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.

Vision

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.

History

Once a summer stock retreat in rural Maryland, Olney Theatre Center is now an award-winning, year-round regional theatre surrounded in a 15-mile radius by 1.6 million people representing three of the most ethnically diverse counties in America. Since our founding in 1938, some of the biggest names in theatre have appeared on our stages: from "Golden Era" stars like Helen Hayes and Tallulah Bankhead to contemporary artists like Sir Ian McKellen, Robin De Jesús, and many others. OTC welcomed Artistic Director Jason Loewith and Managing Director Debbie Ellinghaus in 2013 and 2014, respectively, who established a new artistic strategy to broaden programming with the goal of nurturing a diversity of voices and audiences. Olney Theatre Center now produces musicals and plays under the three rubrics of Classic, Contemporary and Family programming. Since 2013 Olney Theatre Center has twice won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Production, the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play and presented six world premieres. Complementing this work, OTC fulfills its mission as a teaching theater with educational programs like the Our Play program in local 5th grade classrooms, a summer camp and a year-round professional apprentice program. National Players, now in its 70th Season, is the hallmark outreach program of OTC, a unique ensemble touring innovative theater to communities large and small across the United States.

For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org.

Follow Olney Theatre Center on Twitter and Instagram @olneytheatre and on Facebook at facebook.com/olneytheatre.

ABOUT 1ST STAGE

Now in its 12th Season, 1st Stage Theatre is an award-winning professional theatre in the heart of Tysons, Virginia. The company serves as a cultural hub for the community producing first-rate theatrical productions as well as hosting professional musicians, orchestras, and visual artists, and providing educational opportunities for the community. Awards include the American Theatre Wing National Theatre Company award, Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Production of a Musical in 2019, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play in 2018, Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Play in 2017 and 2016, Outstanding Director of a Musical and Outstanding Lead Actor in 2015, and the John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company in 2010. In 2019, 1st Stage was nominated for 22 Helen Hayes Awards— the second most of any theatre in the DC region. Additionally, 1st Stage is a member of the Catalogue for Philanthropy class of 2016-2017. In September 2016, *The Wall Street Journal* called 1st Stage “one of America’s most impressive smaller regional companies.” Learn more about 1st Stage and Season 12 at www.1stStage.org.

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