

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Summer of Eugene O'Neill continues for Artists Rep
with playwright's only comedy, the "sweet valentine" of his works
*Ah, Wilderness!***

PORTLAND, OR – August 23, 2010 – With success and excitement generated by *Long Day's Journey Into Night* still reverberating through the Portland arts community, Artists Rep is thrilled to immediately offer the comic counterpart *Ah, Wilderness!* Previews begin September 7, 2010, just two days after *Long Day's Journey Into Night* closes. Opening Night is Friday, September 10, 2010. Advance tickets \$25-\$47 available at www.artistsrep.org or 503.241.1278.

While O'Neill's autobiographical *Long Day's Journey Into Night* paints in dark detail the reality of his family, *Ah, Wilderness!*, his only comedy, shows us the family he wished he'd had, and yet characterizes the boy he imagined himself to be. The pairing of the two plays back-to-back provides an intriguing opportunity to explore a cherished American playwright's most well-known drama, and his only comedy, in tandem.

"*Ah, Wilderness!* is a fantasy of O'Neill's – life as he thought it should have been, compared to *Long Day's Journey Into Night* which was his life as it was." said Director Pat Patton. A veteran of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with 50-plus directing credits to his name, Patton said he is thrilled to have the opportunity to direct a play that is "a sweet valentine to a simpler time in America."

The creative team includes Jeff Seats (Set Designer), Jacqueline Davis (Costume Designer), Larry Larsen (Lighting Designer), Kollodi (Props Designer), Rodolfo Ortega (Sound Designer) and Michael Fisher-Welsh (Fight Choreographer).

The 2010/11 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by U.S. Bank. The 2010 print media sponsor is The Oregonian, the season radio sponsors are KINK.FM and All Classical 89.9. Season Hotel Sponsors are Hotel deLuxe and Mark Spencer Hotel. *Ah, Wilderness!* is supported by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, OPSIS Architecture and Bob & Janet Conklin.

Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest running professional theater company in Portland. Artists Rep strives to challenge artists and audiences with plays of depth and vibrancy in an intimate setting. Artists Rep explores the strengths, frailties, and diversity of the human condition primarily through regional premieres, commissioned works and selected classics appropriate to contemporary issues.

(more)

:: JUST THE FACTS ::

Ah, Wilderness!

by Eugene O'Neill

Directed by Pat Patton

Dates: September 7 - October 10

Performances: Wednesday - Sunday @ 7:30pm; Sunday @ 2:00pm

9/29 - Wednesday matinee @ 11:00am

Opening Night is Friday, September 10

Location: Artists Repertory Theatre's Alder Stage (1515 SW Morrison St.)

Tickets: Advance tickets \$25-\$47; Students \$20. Rush Tickets \$20.

503.241.1278 or www.artistsrep.org

On the Web: [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

Description: Set amid an idyllic life during a bygone era, *Ah, Wilderness!* harkens to a time when young love was defined by poetry and family life was picnics and Sunday drives. In Eugene O'Neill's only comedy, we spend an endearing 4th of July with the members of the Miller family bursting with idealistic youth, cultural conventions, political angst and the comedic pitfalls of a young man's coming of age and romance at any stage. While Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical *Long Day's Journey Into Night* paints in dark detail the reality of his family, *Ah, Wilderness!*, his only comedy, shows us the family he wished he'd had.

:: DRAMATURGICAL NOTES AND QUOTES ::

The play takes place on July 4, 1906. There had yet to be any World Wars or Great Depression. The Wright brothers had just started flying and Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company. The world's first radio broadcast occurred and an 8.25 earthquake devastated San Francisco.

In *Ah, Wilderness!* the characters conjure an idyllic life at the beginning of this century. Ned Miller owns the local, small-town newspaper. His wife Essie runs their middle-class household, which includes not only four children, but also his spinster sister Lily and her life-of-the-party ne'er-do-well brother, Sid. Teenage son Richard – almost surely representing O'Neill himself – is the center of attention. Richard's youthful exuberance over all things love, poetry and politics both challenges the family's conventions and embraces the turning tide of the times.

"It is an upbeat, coming-of-age story about familial love without being overly sentimental or overplayed," said **Pat Patton, Director** of *Ah, Wilderness!*. It is the simplicity implicit in this play that Patton said he wants to respect: "It is easy to go campy and over the top," he said. "It is important not to force it."

In a letter to his son Eugene Jr., Eugene O'Neill said of *Ah, Wilderness!*: "It has a very little plot. It is more the capture of a mood, an evocation [of] the spirit of a time that is dead now with all its ideals manners and codes... Perhaps if I give you a subtitle you will sense the spirit of what I've tried to recapture in it: 'A Nostalgic Comedy of the Ancient Days when Youth was Young, and the Right was Right, and Life was a Wicked Opportunity.'"

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