WILL ROGERS STAGE FOUNDATION™

2026

HISTORICAL IMPACT:

Building a Foundation of Arts and Education

The Will Rogers Stage Foundation (WRSF) operates in a complex environment of industry practices, bringing quality professional entertainment to the greater Tulsa community while simultaneously strengthening the performing arts infrastructure at the historic Will Rogers College Middle and High School.

The idea to form this entity originated in 2016 from a conversation with the then-Principal, who lamented that security restrictions often closed the campus, preventing the public from experiencing the splendor of the school's stunning Art Deco architecture. We concluded that staging **professional entertainment shows** in the auditorium would serve as a crucial draw, opening the

venue to the general public on scheduled occasions and raising the stature of Will Rogers High School in the community. The earnings from these events are dedicated to benefiting the school.

A Volunteer Model for Maximum Efficiency

The WRSF operates primarily as an organization of **volunteers** who handle the literally "hundreds of moving parts" involved in our productions. There is **no paid staff**. Our key leaders, including Founder and President Richard "Dick" Risk, are volunteers. We pay only for essential professional and technical services such as accounting, stagecraft, and, most importantly, the fees for our professional performers.

We maintain a **crucial partnership with Tulsa Public Schools** (TPS): we do not pay facility rental charges, but we reimburse TPS for custodial, services provided by district employees working extra hours, stagecraft, and uniformed security. We also cover utilities when our rehearsals and performances require heating and air conditioning outside of regular school hours, and we maintain general liability insurance coverage, naming the school district as an additional insured. This efficient structure ensures the maximum amount of donor dollars goes directly to artistic costs.

Artistic Milestones and Productions

Our history is defined by successfully executing increasingly ambitious productions, proving our capability to manage large-scale artistic projects.

- **Early Successes:** Under the auspices of the Will Rogers High School Community Foundation (the precursor entity), we gained valuable experience by bringing The Kingston Trio twice in 2016. In collaboration with Teresa Knox and The Church Studio, we produced two sold-out tribute concerts in 2019 and 2022 to honor Will Rogers alumnus and Rock & Roll Hall of Famer **Leon Russell**. These concerts confirmed our ability to **fill every seat** in the auditorium.

- **The Orchestral Era:** For concerts such as the *Classics of Rodgers & Hammerstein* (2023) and the *Classics of Lerner & Loewe* (2023), we assembled our own professional **Will Rogers Stage Orchestra and Chorus**, often comprising 36 instrumentalists and 16 choristers. These efforts required complex logistics, including renting music from publishers, securing ASCAP licenses for performance rights, and hiring a theatre organist for patron walk-in/exit music.

- **Professional Talent:** Our soloists for these concerts are **professionals in high demand**, and we pay competitive fees, including airfare, lodging, and ground transportation for those coming from out of town.

- **The Full Musical Leap:** Building on the success of two musical classics concerts, we took our ambition one step further in 2025 by producing an entire musical. To manage the expense and

stage limitations, we successfully produced Rodgers & Hammerstein's ***Carousel*** in a critically acclaimed, semi-staged concert version with projected scenery. An ensemble from **Tulsa Ballet's Center for Dance Education** performed an original ballet set to the beautiful Richard Rodgers score following Oscar Hammerstein's stage directions. This ambitious production demonstrated our capacity to deliver entire Broadway musicals effectively.

Digital Reach and National Visibility

Part of our historical mission was recording selected productions for television, showcasing Tulsa Public Schools on a national stage. While our strategy is evolving to leverage cost-effective digital platforms, our track record of wide reach is proven.

- **PBS Broadcast Success:** Our program, *The Kingston Trio: Holiday Cheers* (2016), was made available to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). The program was aired on the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA) network and, most notably, was shown **some 346 times nationwide** according to TRAC Media Services, including in major markets such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia over a six-year period. Another program sent to PBS, *Leon Russell: the Tribute*, was shown **175 times** in the first eight months after its February 2024 release date, in 69 markets.

- **Promoting Educational Value:** During these broadcasts, "pledge breaks" were often used as a vehicle to promote the college-credit offerings at Will Rogers High School, demonstrating the positive image enhancement generated by our work.

- **Transition to Digital:** We successfully recorded and packaged the *2019 Leon Russell: The Tribute* (released nationwide in 2024), and subsequent concerts by the **Folk Legacy Trio, Xtreme Queen** and legendary blues guitarist and alumnus **Elvin Bishop** have also been captured for distribution. We are now strategically shifting to promote this recorded content via **YouTube and Facebook/Meta** to engage a worldwide audience more cost-effectively, moving away from the expensive distribution model of PBS.

Direct Educational Investment: Gifting Equipment

Another cornerstone of our mission is the direct contribution of funds and equipment to support the theatre arts program at Will Rogers High School.

- **Theatre Organ Replacement:** Our initial major fund drive in 2021-2022 secured the purchase of a **custom-made 3-manual, 42-rank Allen electronic theatre organ**, replacing the defunct instrument in the auditorium. This instrument was formally gifted to Tulsa Public Schools.

- **State-of-the-Art Upgrades:** Beyond the organ, we have donated significant equipment that

enhances student learning and school productions, including:
  - Four self-powered wedge monitor speakers.
  - A 4K video camera, audio splitter, and multitrack digital audio recorder.
  - An ultra-short throw laser projector and 150-inch ambient light-rejecting screen, which was instrumental in providing background scenery for our *Carousel* production.

- **Community Access:** We have ensured the use of this gifted equipment benefits the community through free public events, such as the inaugural concert featuring world-class organist **Mark Herman**, who improvised a soundtrack for the 1922 silent film, *The Ropin' Fool,* produced by and starring Will Rogers. We also sponsor Broadway veteran keyboardist and tour conductor **Mike Huffman** as Artist-in-Residence to perform on the Allen organ for student and public events designated by the principal.

Operational and Financial Integrity

We understand that our donors demand transparency and security. The WRSF is committed to operating under the highest ethical and financial standards.

- **Official Status:** The Foundation is recognized as an official **Oklahoma school foundation** (70 OK Stat § 5-145), requiring us to operate independently but exclusively for the benefit of Tulsa Public Schools.

- **Oversight:** This special status guarantees that our financial records and documents are **fully available to auditors** performing audits of the school district. We are fully compliant with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, ensuring all contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- **Bylaws:** The Foundation's Bylaws, which control the structure and operation of our organization, are available for inspection.

- **Policies:** The Foundation has adopted and embraced written policies on Conflicts of Interest, Whistleblower Protection, Antidiscrimination and Inclusion, and Director, Officer, Staff and Volunteer Responsibility, which are available for inspection.

- **Expert Management:** Our treasurer is an **Enrolled Agent** of the Internal Revenue Service—the highest credential the IRS awards—ensuring strict adherence to ethical and financial standards.

Our historical success—measured by the quality of our shows, the reach of our recorded content, and our direct investment in the school's performing arts equipment—serves as the secure foundation upon which we build our future.

PROJECTED IMPACT:

Anchoring the Future of Will Rogers Stage

The Will Rogers Stage Foundation (WRSF) has made impressive strides in its first three years, establishing itself as a premier producer of high-quality, professional, and family-oriented entertainment in Tulsa. Our unique dual mission—bringing professional arts to the community while serving as an **official Oklahoma School Foundation**—positions us not just as a cultural contributor, but as a vital educational partner.

For 2026, we are requesting your support to deliver a robust and impactful season of **two to four major public events**, securing our financial foundation and expanding our reach locally and globally.

The 2026 Artistic Vision

We are committed to maintaining the high artistic standard set by our acclaimed semi-staged concert production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Carousel* in 2025. Our planning for 2026 is built on two core pillars: preserving classic American musical theatre and expanding our audience demographic.

1. Main Production: *South Pacific*

We plan to produce Rodgers & Hammerstein's immensely popular musical, ***South Pacific***, again in our signature concert version. This approach—featuring minimal staging and projected scenery—allows us to focus the majority of our resources on a **full professional cast and orchestra**, delivering an emotionally potent and musically spectacular event without the prohibitive cost of fully staged sets.

2. Audience Expansion and New Formats

We recognize the need to continually adapt and appeal to a broader audience. While we guarantee at least two major productions, your support will enable us to stage **up to four public events** in 2026.

- **New Ensemble Development:** We are actively exploring the concept of commissioning an ensemble of talented local musicians whose repertoire would **appeal to a younger audience**. The intent is to develop an event that is funded in large part by ticket revenue, reducing reliance on foundation support for this format and building a new, sustainable customer base.

- **Targeting Core Demographics:** We will continue to appeal to our **dedicated senior audience**, including potentially considering a big band concert of classics with crooners, alongside our commitment to Broadway concert productions.

Strategic Reach and Digital Sustainability

We are making a strategic shift to maximize the reach and efficiency of our recorded content. By leveraging our digital platforms, we can engage with a worldwide audience in a more immediate and cost-effective manner than traditional distribution.

- **Global Digital Distribution:** We are moving away from the costly process of reformatting and distributing content through PBS. Instead, we will professionally record and edit selected performances, **promoting this high-quality content directly on YouTube and Facebook/Meta**. This allows us to build a global community of followers, share our work instantly, and capture worldwide attention for Tulsa Public Schools and the historic Will Rogers High School.

- **Targeted Marketing Initiatives:** We will efficiently use paid digital advertising (e.g., Facebook ads) alongside strong, no-cost marketing efforts, including developing articles for publication, securing public service announcements, and arranging appearances on local television and radio.

Operational Sustainability and Fiscal Responsibility

We understand that our donors deserve to know that their contributions are being managed wisely. Our resolutions for 2026 are focused on maximizing the impact of every dollar without sacrificing artistic quality.

- **Financial Stewardship:** We operate with **no salaried employees and minimal overhead**. I am a volunteer, as are all other key leadership personnel. Your donation goes directly to artists, production costs, and equipment.

- **Cost Reduction without Compromise:** We are committed to reducing production costs where feasible by:
    - Focusing on engaging **local talent with their own following**, which reduces the significant expense of transportation and housing and allows for more accessible rehearsal dates.
    - Reducing the size of our orchestra, comparable with efficient pit orchestras in touring Broadway shows.
    - Continuing the **"in concert" concept** with minimal staging and highly effective use of **projected scenery**, which eliminates the enormous cost of building elaborate set pieces.

Empowering Students: Our Unique Educational Impact

The most profound and unique impact of the WRSF is our direct benefit to the students at Will Rogers College Middle and High School, which has historically produced famous entertainers and literary figures like **Leon Russell, David Gates, Elvin Bishop, Anita Bryant, Gailard Sartain, Russell Myers, and S.E. Hinton**.

Why Your Gift Matters Today for Students:

1. **Invest in Infrastructure:** Your funding directly supports the **purchase of professional-grade equipment** for the stage, including lighting, sound, and other stagecraft tools. This ensures students involved in school productions train on the same high-caliber resources used in our professional events.

2. **Nurture Inherent Talent:** We will develop **student-centered programs** in direct collaboration with Will Rogers staff to identify, mentor, and foster students with inherent talent, providing them with real-world exposure and guidance needed to seek careers in the performing arts.

3. **Restore Stability:** Our large-scale productions, like the acclaimed *Carousel*, often cost more than ticket revenue generates. While we cover the deficit with reserves, we urgently need to **rebuild our operating capital**. This reserve ensures we can contract artists, secure rights, and guarantee that our **two-to-four public events in 2026** remain high quality and accessible.

We are proud to be a **501(c)(3) nonprofit** and an **official Oklahoma school foundation**, meaning your gift qualifies as a charitable donation and is guaranteed to directly benefit both the arts community and the students at Will Rogers College Middle and High School.

Today, we're asking you to continue that journey with us. Please consider making a generous donation to support the continuation of quality entertainment in this smoke-free, alcohol-free, drug-free, and weapon-free environment, and with plenty of free parking.

- **Bring shows like *South Pacific* to life** in 2026 with full cast and orchestra.
- **Present movie theme songs** on the Will Rogers Theatre Organ and Grand Piano.
- **Support national PBS broadcast production**, sharing our work with viewers across the country.
- **Invest in student-centered upgrades** like lighting, sound, and stage equipment to enhance the experience of students who are involved in the school's stage productions.
- **Develop student-centered programs** with Will Rogers staff to nurture those students with inherent talent to seek careers in the performing arts.
- **Rebuild our reserve**, ensuring every performance remains high quality and accessible to the ticket-buying public.

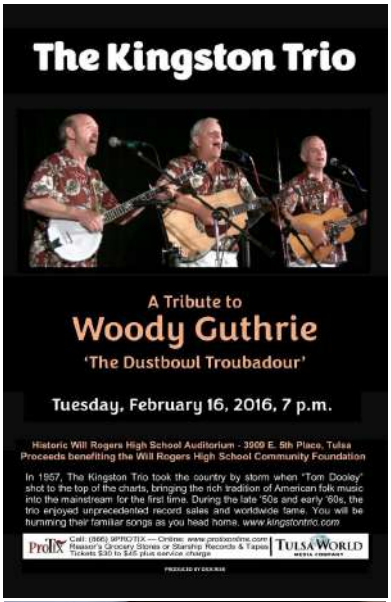
We do all of this with no salaried employees and minimal overhead—your donation goes directly to performances, artist fees, production costs, insurance, and equipment that supports both students and the public.

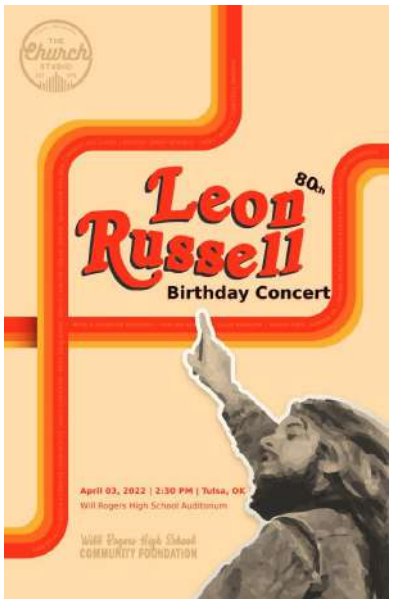
Will Rogers Stage Foundation, Inc.
2840 East 51st Street, Suite 205 • Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105
(918) 740-5470 • EIN: 88-2246506 • www.WillRogersStage.com

The Will Rogers Stage Foundation, Inc., is organized under the provisions of the Oklahoma General Corporation Act and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, as set forth in its articles of incorporation (the "articles of incorporation"). It has received a Letter of Determination qualifying it as a nonprofit entity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended ("26 U.S.C." or the "Code"). The foundation is also organized pursuant to 70 O.S. § 5-145 (or its successor or as may be amended), which encourages the formation of "local foundations" as supplements to basic school district programs publicly funded. The foundation is registered with the Oklahoma Secretary of State pursuant to the Oklahoma Solicitation of Charitable Contributions Act, Title 18, Section 552.1a of the Oklahoma Statutes.

THE KINGSTON TRIO
Holiday Cheers
Saturday, December 17, 2016, 2 p.m.
The Historic Will Rogers Auditorium
5th Place (Will Rogers Boulevard) and Pittsburg Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Back by popular demand, The Kingston Trio will perform their exquisite arrangements of holiday music like you have never heard before, plus several of their familiar classic hits. Don't miss this!
Produced by the Will Rogers High School Community Foundation, an I.R.C. § 501(c)(3) organization. All proceeds benefit Will Rogers College High School.
ProTix
Call: (866) 9PROTIX — Online: www.protixonline.com
Brady Theater Box Office — Starship Records & Tapes

LEON RUSSELL
PIANO DEDICATION & TRIBUTE CONCERT
Saturday, February 9, 2019, 2 p.m.
Will Rogers High School
5th Place & Pittsburg Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma
All seats reserved
Tickets $25, $35, $50 plus fee
www.leonrussell.yapsody.com


The Kingston Trio
A Tribute to
Woody Guthrie
'The Dustbowl Troubadour'
Tuesday, February 16, 2016, 7 p.m.
Historic Will Rogers High School Auditorium - 3909 E. 5th Place, Tulsa
Proceeds benefiting the Will Rogers High School Community Foundation
In 1957, The Kingston Trio took the country by storm when "Tom Dooley" shot to the top of the charts, bringing the rich tradition of American folk music into the mainstream for the first time. During the late '50s and early '60s, the trio enjoyed unprecedented record sales and worldwide fame. You will be humming their familiar songs as you head home. www.kingstontrio.com
ProTix
Call: (866) 9PROTIX — Online: www.protixonline.com
Reasor's Grocery Stores or Starship Records & Tapes
Tickets $30 to $45 plus service charge
TULSA WORLD


Leon Russell
80th
Birthday Concert
April 03, 2022 | 2:30 PM | Tulsa, OK
Will Rogers High School Auditorium
Will Rogers High School
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

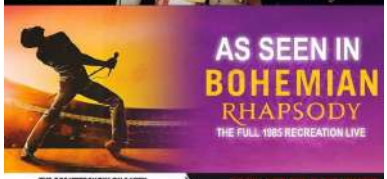
WILL ROGERS STAGE FOUNDATION™

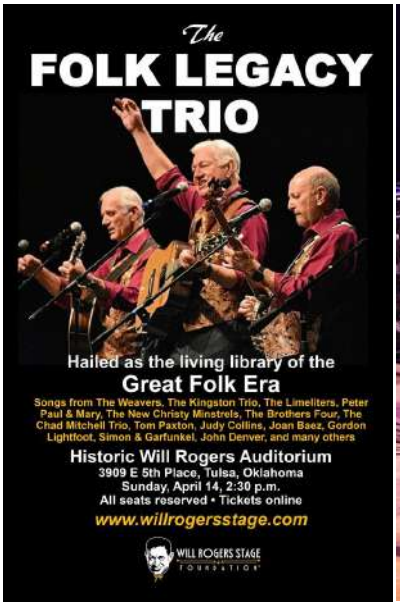
The following individuals, trusts, and foundations—many of them representing alumni—gave toward the acquisition of the 3-manual, 42-rank Will Rogers Theatre Organ, Allen model TH-323, which was installed on August 5, 2022, replacing the 1955 Shaw Memorial Organ that was retired in 1985. Excess funds and additional donations allowed for the creation of the Will Rogers Stage Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit entity dedicated to support the theatre arts at historic Will Rogers High School (by its traditional name). Donors are listed in descending order of their contribution amounts. The fund campaign was led by Richard Risk, Class of 1959, through the Foundation for Tulsa Schools.

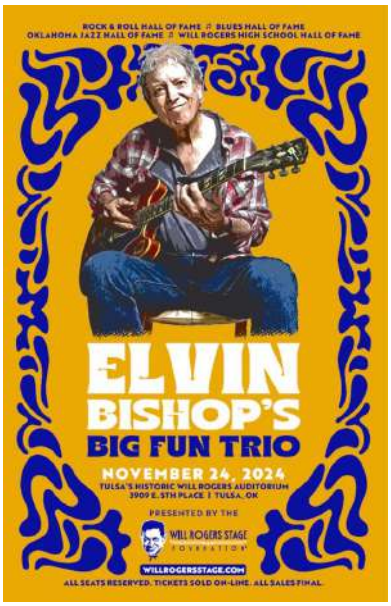
H.I. Bart" & Claudia Bartlett (Edward & Helen Bartlett Foundation)
Ron Woods (Ron & Carole Woods Foundation)
Richard "Dick" & Carroll Risk
Gordona Duca (L.J. & G.D. Heiliger)
Dan J. & Jane Barrett Hill
The Oxley Foundation
Stephen & Dollie Chesebro'
Paula LeFan Stover (The Stover Living Trust)
Don & Anna Lea Brixey Seago (The Seago Family Trust)
William "Bill" & Karen Pitts
Jo Anne Meade Lewis (Will Rogers High School Community Foundation 55 Fund)
Jack Millikan (Millikan Living Trust)
James C. Bottomley
Wendell Alumbaugh
Judy K. Bostock Frederick, in memory of Nancy Bostock, '54
Glenn R. Beustring
John Baumert & Barbara Jean Turner
M. Paul & Georgann H. Martin
Nancy Holloway Henry
Catherine "Cathy" Risk Siegel
Garry Plunkett
Judith Morgan
Aleta Lubbers
Will Rogers High School Class of 1958
Carol R. Burns James, in memory of Dr. Donald Ray Burns, '62, and honor of Dr. David Stewart James, '58
K. Wiley Cox
Robert "Bob" & Betty Dupree (Dupree Family Fund), from Will Rogers' graduates Robert Dupree, Betty Lawson Dupree, Barbara Lawson Gorrell, Kathy Lawson McElhattan, Karen Lawson Koller, and Rommie Gorrell
Terry J. Sanderson
Wahleah Faulkner Davis
Gene & Carol Ann Schmidt
Robert E. Moses
Phillip Butler
Gayle Risk, in memory of John Langeland Risk, '66
Beth Shoemaker Davis (M.E. Davis & B.L. Davis)
Donna L. Polite Gantt
Constance J. Wong
Roberta Scott Hamilton
Charles "Tony" Bacher
William "Bill" McKenzie
Larry A. Kelley
Sherrie A. Hinkle
Rebecca "Becky" Thompson Ogle
Verle G. & Beth C. Randolph
John Owen
Judith "Judy" Culp James
Charlotte Heth
Cecil Sterne (The Sterne 2014 Trust)
Thomas W. Anderson, in memory of Nancy Bostock, '54
Janet Bryan, in memory of Harry Lynn Bryan, '61
Michael D. Collins
Mona Geraldine "Garry" Goins
Walter Lipke
Linda Puryear Dominick
Thomas F. & Linda K. Bailey
Robert Ritschel
Mike Bingham
Stephen Kirkland
Will Rogers High School Class of 1950
Joan T. Mays
James "David" Rader
Judith Linville
Sally Flora French
Betty Bard Hatchett
James K. "Jim" & Peggy Mitchell Ellington
Gayla Kenslow Reynolds
Priscilla Langenderfer
David B. Martin & Loraine K. Rickard-Martin
Charles & Ruth Anne Wilcox
Ronald & Janet Ellison
James & Barbara Dunn
Bobby Miller
Sharon Klingaman

This Program is Made Possible By

EDWARD AND HELEN BARTLETT FOUNDATION
STEPHEN AND DOLLIE CHESEBRO'
GORDONA DUCA
MERKEL FAMILY FOUNDATION
THE OXLEY FOUNDATION
DONALD AND ANNA LEA BRIXEY SEAGO
PAULA LEFAN STOVER

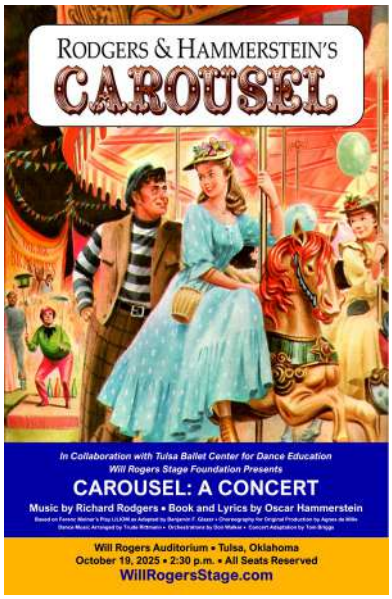



The
FOLK LEGACY
TRIO
Hailed as the living library of the
Great Folk Era
Songs from The Weavers, The Kingston Trio, The Limeliters, Peter Paul & Mary, The New Christy Minstrels, The Brothers Four, The Chad Mitchell Trio, Tom Paxton, Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Gordon Lightfoot, Simon & Garfunkel, John Denver, and many others
Historic Will Rogers Auditorium
3909 E 5th Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Sunday, April 14, 2:30 p.m.
All seats reserved • Tickets online
www.willrogersstage.com
WILL ROGERS STAGE FOUNDATION


ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME • BLUES HALL OF FAME
OKLAHOMA JAZZ HALL OF FAME • WILL ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME
ELVIN
BISHOP'S
BIG FUN TRIO
NOVEMBER 24, 2024
TULSA'S HISTORIC WILL ROGERS AUDITORIUM
3909 E. 5TH PLACE | TULSA, OK
PRESENTED BY THE
WILL ROGERS STAGE FOUNDATION
WILLROGERSSTAGE.COM
ALL SEATS RESERVED. TICKETS SOLD ON-LINE. ALL SALES FINAL.

THE GREAT ZIEGFELD
POWELL LOY RAINER
Hermann Huffman

WILL ROGERS STAGE FOUNDATION
Hermann & Huffman
celebrate Music of the Movies
A Duo Concert on Theatre Organ & Grand Piano
16 November
2:30 p.m.
Sunday | 2025
Will Rogers Auditorium
3909 East 5th Place, Will Rogers Blvd, Tulsa, OK 74112
www.WillRogersStage.com
All seats reserved. All tickets sold online beginning Sept. 15, 2025, 12:01 a.m.


RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S
CAROUSEL
In Collaboration with Tulsa Ballet Center for Dance Education
Will Rogers Stage Foundation Presents
CAROUSEL: A CONCERT
Music by Richard Rodgers • Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein
Will Rogers Auditorium • Tulsa, Oklahoma
October 19, 2025 • 2:30 p.m. • All Seats Reserved
WillRogersStage.com