

The World's Sexiest Star
in Broadway's Sexiest Musical-Comedy

Ann-Margret Makes Her Theatrical Debut in
The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Legendary Star of Film, TV and the Concert Stage
Launches Coast to Coast Tour in Her First Stage Role Ever

Having achieved superstardom in the worlds of film, television, recording and the concert stage, the legendary Ann-Margret makes her theatre debut in a spectacular new multi-million dollar production of the Broadway musical-comedy smash *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. The show launches a coast to coast tour February 13, 2001 at the ctnow.com Oakdale Theatre in Connecticut and is already booked in 29 cities. *Whorehouse* is produced by Manny Kladitis.

Frequently courted by Broadway producers, Ann-Margret had searched years for the right vehicle for her theatre debut before choosing the role of the tough, loving brothel madam Mona Stangley in the Tony-winning *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. This brand new production will feature new music written for Ann-Margret and lavish new costumes designed by Bob Mackie. Two-time Tony winner Thommie Walsh – the show's original co-choreographer – directs and choreographs. The show features music and lyrics by Carol Hall and a book by Larry L. King and Peter Masterson.

One of the world's most glamorous stars, Ann-Margret is also one of the most honored, with two Academy Award nominations, (Mike Nichols' *Carnal Knowledge* and *Tommy*), six Emmy nominations (including *Life of the Party: the Pamela Harriman Story*, *The Two Mrs Grenvilles* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*), five Golden Globe awards and three "Female Star of the Year" awards from the United Motion Pictures Association. Among her many other credits are the films *Bye, Bye Birdie*; *Viva Las Vegas*; *Grumpy Old Men* and *Any Given Sunday* and the TV films *Scarlett*, Showtime's *The Happy Face Murders* and NBC's mini-series *The Tenth*

Kingdom. Her latest film, *The Last Producer* starring Burt Reynolds is scheduled for release this year.

Whorehouse is the rousing musical tale of Miss Mona's Chicken Ranch brothel, a "lil' bitty pissant country place," and a welcome neighbor in tiny Gilbert Texas for more than a century. When a puritanical TV reporter discovers the Chicken Ranch and demands its closing, the state's hypocritical politicians (and frequent Chicken ranch customers) are pitted against Miss Mona and her "girls."

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas originally opened off-Broadway in April 1978, receiving such acclaim it moved immediately to Broadway that June. There it received seven Tony nominations (including Best Musical and Best Choreography), won two Tony Awards and two Drama Desk Awards and played to sold-out houses for nearly 4 years.

Ann-Margret had long been sought for the role of Miss Mona by the show's writers. Co-writer Peter Masterson said of the casting coup, "I wanted Ann-Margret to do *Whorehouse* since 1983; that's how long I've been thinking about her playing Miss Mona."

"The role of Miss Mona is not only that of a glamorous madam," says composer/lyricist Carol Hall, "it's a woman with a sly sense of humor and a great deal of wisdom. I've always wanted to see Ann-Margret in the part." Book writer Larry L. King, whose magazine article inspired the musical, said, "I think the melding of the role and an actress-singer-dancer as accomplished as Ann-Margret is a blessing for all of us - including the lucky audience."

Based on the remarkable true story of Edna Milton and the closing of her Chicken Ranch brothel in La Grange, Texas in 1973, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* was created by a quartet of transplanted Texans - Hall, King, Masterson and co-director/choreographer Tommy Tune. The show began life as a 1974 *Playboy* magazine article by King, which was developed into a musical at the venerable Actors Studio, then grew to its off-Broadway and Broadway incarnations.

The show has fueled controversy since its inception. During its original Broadway run, three of New York's seven TV stations refused to run commercials with the show's title in them, making for a commercial that never once mentioned the product it was selling. Later, the New York City Transit Authority – bowing to pressure from the Catholic Archbishop – ordered the removal of bus ads proclaiming, "Have Fun at the Whorehouse!" Long a target of religious groups, the show still faces occasional censorship. Just 2 years ago, Wentworth College outside Boston closed down a student production of the show, deeming it "dangerous."

The new production promises to retain the ingeniously inventive staging, hailed by the *New York Times* as "brilliant," and the good-natured sexuality of the show, while bringing a franker, contemporary sensibility.

CAROL HALL (*Music/Lyrics*) received two Drama Desk for *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. Its song "Hard Candy Christmas" won an ASCAP Award as one of the most performed Country Songs of 1983. Hall was a major writer on the Emmy-winning special "Free To Be..You and Me" and was a contributing editor and songwriter on its sequel "Free To Be...A Family." Other work includes the Off-Broadway musical *To Whom It May Concern*; contributions to *A...My Name is Alice* and *A...My Name is Still Alice* and ten years of songs for "Sesame Street." Her cabaret evening *The Songs of Carol Hall* won two Bistro Awards and a Manhattan Association of Cabaret award and continues to be booked on an ongoing basis at the Firebird Café. She is currently working on a musical entitled *Technicolor: Ten Love Stories*.

LARRY L. KING (*Book*) won a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical for *Whorehouse*. He has written several produced plays, including the award-winning *The Night Hank Williams Died*, *The Kingfish*, *The Golden Shadows Old West Museum* and most recently, *The Dead Presidents Club*, which finds Nixon, LBJ, Harry Truman and Calvin Coolidge in Purgatory and trying to bargain their way into see God and plead for slots to Heaven. A native

Texan, Mr. King is also the author of 13 books, hundreds of magazine articles, several TV documentaries, two screenplays and numerous short stories.

PETER MASTERSON (*Book*), after years as an actor on Broadway and film, co-wrote and directed the original Broadway and London productions of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, winning the 1978 Drama Desk Award for Best Director and receiving Tony nominations for both Director and Libretto. Also on Broadway, he co-wrote and co-directed *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public* in 1994. Off-Broadway: *The Last of the Knucklemen* (1981), *The Cover of Life* (1994) and *The Young Man from Atlanta* (1995), which received a Pulitzer Prize. In the last several years he has directed nine feature films, including the Academy award-winning *The Trip to Bountiful* as well as *Full Moon in Blue Water*, *Convicts* and *The Only Thrill*.

THOMMIE WALSH (*Director/Choreographer*) burst onto the Broadway scene creating the role of Bobby in the original company of *A Chorus Line*. His choreographic debut on Broadway was *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* with Tommy Tune for which they received a Tony nomination. He went on to choreograph the Broadway productions of *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* with Tune (winning Tony and Drama Desk Awards), 1982's Best Musical *Nine, Lunch Hour, My One and Only* with Tune (Tony and Drama Desk Awards) and *My Favorite Year*. He co-authored the book *On The Line, Creating A Chorus Line* in 1990.

Following its premiere engagement at Oakdale, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* is scheduled to play 28 more U.S. cities, including Boston, Philadelphia and Atlanta.

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