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For Immediate Release

**PARAMOUNT PROMISES A HIGH-FLYING *MARY POPPINS* FOR THE HOLIDAYS  
  
RACHEL ROCKWELL TO STAGE THIS MOST DELIGHTFUL OF MUSICALS, NOV. 26, 2014-JAN. 4, 2015**

      
Paramount’s production of ***Mary Poppins***, directed by (from left) **Rachel Rockwell**, will star **Emily Rohm** as Mary Poppins and **Matt Crowle** as Bert, **Michael Lindner** and **Cory Goodrich** as George and Winifred Banks, and in alternating performances, **Charlie Babbo** and **Jake Helm** as Michael, and **Eloise Lushina** and **Peyton Shaffer** as Jane.

AURORA, October 9, 2014 – Here’s how to celebrate the holidays in the most delightful way: take the entire family to an absolutely eye-popping, song-and-dance-filled, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious production of **Disney and Cameron Macintosh’s** ***Mary Poppins*** atthe beautiful Paramount Theatre in downtown Aurora.

Chicago’s hottest musical theater director, **Rachel Rockwell**, fresh from her Goodman debut with ***Brigadoon***, returns to Paramount to direct and choreograph a huge production that has Paramount’s creative team’s collective imagination soaring. Expect beautiful scenery that takes audiences all over Victorian England, statues that come to life, enormous dance numbers on the ground and rooftops of London performed by Chicago’s top musical theater professionals and lush orchestrations for such iconic songs as “Spoonful of Sugar” and “Chim Chiminey.”   
  
And yes, to answer the #1 most asked question, Paramount’s ***Mary Poppins*** will fly.

But that’s not the only magical moment that will leave audiences flying high. Featuring an A-list cast headed by **Emily Rohm** as Mary Poppins and **Matt Crowle** as Bert, Paramount’s ***Poppins*** not only brings the excitement of musical theater but also instills important life lessons for kids and adults alike. With parents trying to make ends meet, busy schedules that have family members passing in the halls and no one taking the time to even notice, ***Poppins*** is the story that every family can relate to. And just in time for the holidays, it takes a stranger with a warm heart to remind everyone that the most important things in life are family and love.

Bring the family and see for yourself when ***Mary Poppins*** begins its run onNovember 26. **Press opening is Sunday, November 30 at 5:30 p.m.** The production plays through January 4 at the Paramount Theatre,   
23 E. Galena Blvd. Regular show times are Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Thursday at 7 p.m.; Friday at   
8 p.m.; Saturday at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Tickets are only $41 to $54. To purchase, go to [**ParamountAurora.com**](http://www.paramountaurora.com/), call **(630) 896-6666**, or visit the Paramount box office Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and 2 hours prior to evening performances. ***Mary Poppins*** is rated G.

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**More about Paramount’s *Mary Poppins***As always, Paramount is working with the highest caliber of professional talent in every aspect including actors, musicians, creative and technical teams. The stars of the show are **Emily Rohm** as Mary Poppinsand **Matt Crowle** as Bert. **Rohm** returns to Paramount after her dazzling turn as Marian the librarian in ***The Music Man*** and as Grace in ***Annie***. Fresh from the Goodman’s ***Brigadoon***, Rohm’s beautifully soaring soprano voice promises to captivate Paramount audiences just as she did in Drury Lane’s ***Sweeney Todd*** and ***Les Misérables***. **Crowle**, previously in Paramount’s ***42nd Street***, is a consummate song and dance man with an elegant, warmhearted flair and comic chops to boot, which were in evidence in the role of Patsy in ***Spamalot*** both on Broadway and at Drury Lane.

The head of ***Mary Poppins’*** “first family” is **Michael Lindner** as the father, George Banks. Lindner, currently in Chicago Shakepeare’s ***King Lear***, was seen in Paramount’s ***The Music Man*** as Marcellus, has toured nationally in ***Mamma Mia!***, and returns to Paramount hot from his successes at Chicago Shakespeare in ***Road Show*** and playing the title role in ***Shrek***. The mother, Winifred Banks, is played by **Cory Goodrich**, Jeff Award-winning Mother in ***Ragtime*** at Drury Lane and Theatre at the Center’s June Carter Cash in ***Ring of Fire***. Their children are cast in alternating performances: **Charlie Babbo** and **Jake Helm** as little Michael, and **Eloise Lushina** and **Peyton Shaffer** as Jane. The ensemble includes **William Carlos Angulo**, **Marilynn Bogetich**, **Courtney Cerny**, **Carl Draper**, **Cameron Edris**, **Adam Fane**, **Don Forston**, **Allyson Graves**, **Matthew R. Jones**, **Glory Kissel**, **Tommy Lucas**, **Amber Mak**, **James Nedrud**, **Maggie Portman**, **Todd Rhoades**, **Laura Savage**, **Will Skrip**, **Holly Stauder** and **Lauren Villegas**.

Paramount’s ***Mary Poppins*** production team includes **Rachel Rockwell**, director and choreographer; **Tom Vendafreddo**, music director and conductor; **Amber Mak**, associate director and choreographer; **Kevin Depinet**, set; **Theresa Ham**, costumes; **Greg Hofmann**, lights; **Mike Tutaj**, projections; **Palmer Jankens**, sound; **Sarah E. Ross**, props; **Katie Cordts** and **Lauren Cecil**, wigs and make-up. **Rose Marie Packer** is Production Stage Manager and **Rebecca Louise Fischer** is Assistant Stage Manager.

As always, the 16-member Paramount Orchestra, headed by **Tom Vendafreddo**, will play the full, original Broadway orchestrations for ***Mary Poppins***.

Says director/choreographer **Rachel Rockwell**, “I’m incredibly excited. This is my first time directing ***Mary Poppins***, but the original *Poppins* books by P.L. Travers were among my childhood favorites and I feel I know the stories and these characters so intimately. Our challenge with this production is also our opportunity – to deliver on the visual expectations the movie has instilled in audiences, while introducing them to the wonderful new songs that add so much to the theatrical version’s beautiful score.”

**Behind-The-Scenes of Paramount’s *Mary Poppins***

**Rachel Rockwell** (director/choreographer) returns to the Paramount after her smash hit stagings of ***42nd Street****,* ***In the Heights****,* ***Annie***, ***The Music Man*** and ***Hair***. Other directing/choreography credits: ***Brigadoon*** at the Goodman Theatre; ***Enron*** at TimeLine Theatre (Chicago premiere, Jeff nomination – Best Play in a Midsize Category); ***Les Misérables****,* ***Oliver!***(Jeff nomination – Best Musical, Best Director), ***Sweeney Todd*** (Jeff nomination – Best Musical and Best Director), ***The Sound of Music*** (Jeff nomination – Best Musical, Best Director), ***Ragtime*** (Jeff Award – Best Musical, Best Director) and ***Miss Saigon*** (Jeff nomination – Best Musical and Best Director) at Drury Lane Theatre; ***42nd Street*** (Jeff nomination – Best Musical, Best Director), ***Shout!*** (Jeff nomination – Best Revue), ***The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*** (Jeff nomination – Best Musical) at the Marriott Theatre; and ***Shrek***, ***Disney’s Beauty and the Beast***, ***SS! Romeo and Juliet***, ***SS! The Taming of the Shrew***, ***The Adventures of Pinocchio*** and ***The Emperor’s New Clothes*** at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Rockwell served as choreographer for Drury Lane Oakbrook’s production of ***The King and I*** (Jeff nomination) and ***A Chorus Line*** (Jeff nomination) at the Marriott Theatre. She was named the 2012 Chicagoan of the Year in Theatre by the *Chicago Tribune*, Best Director of 2010 by *Chicago Magazine,* and was recently honored by the Sarah Siddons Society.

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**Tom Vendafreddo** (music director/conductor) made his Paramount debut with ***In the Heights***, and will be returning right after ***Mary Poppins*** to music direct Paramount’s ***The Who’s Tommy*** and ***Les Misérables***. Recent credits include ***On the Town*** (Marriott Lincolnshire), ***Shrek the Musical***(Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), ***Sweet Charity***(Writers’ Theatre), ***The Wedding Singer***(Red Mountain Theatre Company), ***Gifts of the Magi***(Porchlight Music Theatre), ***The Spitfire Grill***(Jeff Nomination: Musical and Music Direction - Bohemian Theatre Ensemble), ***Pump Boys and Dinettes***(Metropolis Performing Arts Centre), ***Into the Woods***(Stage 48 Productions) and ***Urinetown: The Musical***(Harper Theatre Ensemble). Other regional credits include ***Odyssey***(Old Globe Theatre), ***RENT*** (San Diego Musical Theatre), ***It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play***(Cygnet Theatre) and ***Zanna, Don't!***(San Diego State University).

**Disney’s and Cameron Mackintosh’s *Mary Poppins*** isbased on the stories of P.L. Travers and the iconic 1964, five-time Academy Award-winning Walt Disney film starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. Original music and lyrics are by **Richard M. Sherman** and **Robert B. Sherman**. The book is by **Julian Fellowes**. New songs and additional music and lyrics are by **George Stiles** and **Anthony Drewe**. Fun facts: London’s West End original production, which debuted in 2004, did not allow children 3 and under into the theater. At the time, the producers felt the show was too scary for children that young. ***Mary Poppins*** debuted on Broadway in 2004, and was nominated for seven Tony Awards including Best Musical.

Paramount’s 2014-15 Broadway Series is sponsored by the **Dunham Fund**, **BMO Harris Bank** and **PACE** (**Paramount Arts Centre Endowment**). Broadway Series Lighting Sponsor is **ComEd**. Broadway Series Costume Sponsor is **Gerald Auto Group**. ***Mary Poppins*** is also sponsored by **Comfort Suites Aurora**.

**More about Paramount’s 2014-15 Season**

In just three seasons, the Paramount Theatre’s bold new Broadway musical series has wowed critics, audiences and skeptics alike. To date, more than 24,000 subscribers have signed up to take advantage of Paramount’s 2014-15 “Buy Two Shows, Get Two Shows Free” subscription offer. They already were amply rewarded with the amazing season opener, ***CATS***. Following ***Mary Poppins***, Paramount Artistic Director **Jim Corti** will stage the company’s winter production ***The Who’s Tommy*** (Jan. 14-Feb. 15, 2015) as well as Paramount’s blockbuster spring season finale, ***Les Misérables*** (Mar. 18-Apr. 26, 2015).

**Note:** To meet continued audience demand, Paramount has already extended the runs of each production from last season’s four weeks to five weeks for ***CATS*** and ***Tommy***, and six weeks for ***Mary Poppins*** and ***Les Misérables***.

In addition to its popular Broadway series, Paramount’s 2014-15 season also boasts an already SOLD OUT performance by **Penn & Teller** (Oct. 17), **Jim Brickman: The Platinum Tour "Celebrating 20 Years"** (Oct. 18), **Home Free,** winners ofNBC-TV’s *The Sing-Off* (Oct. 19), ***SPANK! The Fifty Shades Parody*** (Oct. 24), **Jerry Lewis** (Oct. 26), Vegas sensation **Recycled Percussion** (Nov. 1), **Kix Brooks** of Brooks & Dunn (Nov. 8), **Under the Streetlamp,** Chicago’s favorite former Jersey Boys (Nov. 9), **Ballet Folklorico Quetzalcoatl** (Nov. 14), ***The Morning Show Comedians*** (formerly The Chicago Comedy Tour) with WGN’s **Ana Belaval**, **Pat Tomasulo** and **Mike Toomey** (Nov. 22, in the Copley Theatre), ***The Second City Dysfunctional Holiday Revue*** (Dec. 5-21, in the Copley Theatre), **Vicki Lawrence & Mama: A Two Woman Show** (Feb. 22), Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe winner **John Lithgow** in his one-man show ***Stories by Heart*** (Mar. 7), ***Defending the Caveman*** (Mar. 13-29, in the Copley Theatre), **An Evening with David Sedaris**, one of the top humorists of our time (Apr. 28), the internationally acclaimed, shape-shifting dance troupe **Pilobolus** (Apr. 30), and gal pal favorite ***Menopause the Musical*** (May 6-Jun. 28, in the Copley Theatre). For tickets and information, go to [**ParamountAurora.com**](http://www.paramountaurora.com/) or call **(630) 896-6666**.

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**About The Paramount Theatre**

The Paramount Theatre is the center for performing arts, entertainment and arts education in Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois. Named "One of Chicago's Top 10 Attended Theatres" by the League of Chicago Theatres, the 1,888-seat Paramount Theatre, located in the heart of downtown Aurora at 23 E. Galena Blvd., is nationally renowned for the quality and caliber of its presentations, superb acoustics and historic beauty.

The Paramount Theatre opened on September 3, 1931. Designed by nationally renowned theater architects C.W. and George L. Rapp, the theater captures a unique Venetian setting portrayed in the art deco influence of the 1930s. The first air-conditioned building outside of Chicago, the Paramount offered the public a variety of entertainment, including "talking pictures," vaudeville, concerts and circus performances for more than 40 years.

In 1976, Aurora Civic Center Authority purchased the Paramount and closed the theater for restoration. The $1.5 million project restored the Paramount to its original grandeur. On April 29, 1978, the Paramount Arts Center opened, offering a variety of theatrical, musical, comedy, dance and family programming. In 2006, a 12,000-square-foot, two-story Grand Gallery lobby was added, with a new, state-of-the-art box office, café and art gallery.

Today, the Paramount produces its own, self-produced Broadway Musical series and presents an eclectic array of comedy, music, dance and family shows. For tickets and information, go to [**ParamountAurora.com**](http://www.paramountaurora.com/) or call **(630) 896-6666**.

The Paramount Theatre is one of three live performance venues programmed and managed by the Aurora Civic Center Authority (ACCA). ACCA also oversees the Paramount’s “sister” stage, the intimate, 216-seat Copley Theatre located directly across the street from the Paramount at 8 E. Galena Blvd., as well as RiverEdge Park, downtown Aurora’s new summer outdoor concert venue.

The Paramount Theatre continues to expand its artistic and institutional boundaries under the guidance of **Tim Rater**, President and CEO, Aurora Civic Center Authority; **Jim Corti**, Artistic Director, Paramount Theatre; a dedicated Board of Trustees and a devoted staff of live theater and music professionals.

For more information, visit [**ParamountAurora.com**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001FViLyPbJ7QBxzfvP97vDAifWr34TfzGJUywYg43tecB0gjsnZQGugQyiT16hqygPS40wQCw5SdddFEd22VMh0wZF0rExueIznz_vwSHONEQ4LMfrMvhFQA==).      
  
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