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**MAMMA MIA!, DISNEY'S THE LITTLE MERMAID, SWEENEY TODD AND JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR  
ANNOUNCED FOR PARAMOUNT'S BLOCKBUSTER 2016-17 BROADWAY SERIES**

**SUBSCRIPTIONS AS LOW AS \$88 FOR "BETTER THAN BROADWAY"  
FOUR-SHOW, BUY TWO, GET TWO FREE SERIES**



AURORA, March 28, 2016 – In just five years, Paramount Theatre has transformed one of Chicago's most glamorous Art Deco stages into a regional musical theater powerhouse, amassing a loyal audience of more than 30,000 subscribers for its critically-acclaimed Broadway Series by presenting Broadway-quality musicals in a convenient setting, for the right price.

What's more, the Paramount has not only radically altered the suburban musical theater scene, but all of Chicago's, snaring more large musical Jeff Awards than any other Chicago theater last season, launching a New Works department, boasting the largest live orchestras in all Chicagoland, and building a strong reputation for culturally sensitive, inclusive casting.

Today, Paramount officials announced the theatre's expanded, 2016-17 Broadway Series four-play line-up: ***Mamma Mia!*** (Sept. 7-Oct. 30, 2016), ***The Little Mermaid*** (Nov. 23, 2016-Jan. 8, 2017), ***Sweeney Todd-The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*** (Feb. 8-Mar. 19, 2017) and ***Jesus Christ Superstar*** (Apr. 19-May 28, 2017).

Just as it has from the start, Paramount will offer the same "Buy Two Shows, Get Two Shows Free" subscription offer, with four-play packages starting as low as \$88. The rewards are ample – four amazing, Broadway-quality musicals at one of the most majestic theaters in the Midwest, all for less than the price of one show downtown.

Renewals for Paramount's 2016-17 Broadway Series go on sale today at 10 a.m. During the renewal process, friends and family members of subscribers, as well as the general public, can participate in the Broadway Series Reservation. Reservations allow new subscribers to pre-pay for their four-play series before they go on sale to the general public. Reservations can be made online only until April 4 at [ParamountAurora.com](http://ParamountAurora.com).

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After April 4, New Subscriber reservations can be purchased online, over the phone, or in person at the Paramount box office through May 8. The Paramount box office will contact new subscribers for their seating preferences before May 8. Beginning in mid-June, after the renewal period is over for current subscribers, new subscribers will be contacted in the order their subscription request was made to confirm their series and actual seats. For more information, visit [ParamountAurora.com](http://ParamountAurora.com), call **630.896.6666**, or visit the Paramount Theatre box office, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in downtown Aurora.

## More About Paramount's 2016–17 Broadway Series

Artistic Director Jim Corti – director of Paramount's current smash hit *West Side Story*, winner of the 2015 Jeff Award for Best Director and Best Musical for *Les Misérables*, and the only Chicago theater artist to win Jeff Awards for directing, choreography and acting – will stage Paramount's ABBA-infused season opener *Mamma Mia!* and *Sweeney Todd*, Stephen Sondheim's beautiful, yet terror-filled musical.

Amber Mak, who staged Paramount's 2016 hit *Hairspray–The Broadway Musical* and is the theater's newly tapped New Works Development Director, will direct and choreograph *Disney's The Little Mermaid*. Making his Paramount debut for the season finale *Jesus Christ Superstar* is director Ron Kellum, a director and producer with experience ranging from major sporting event half-time shows, to film, TV and theater including *Chicago*, *The Color Purple*, *Dreamgirls*, *Once On this Island*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Smokey Joe's Café*.

Per usual, Paramount will tap only the highest caliber talent in every aspect of production with actors, designers, creative and technical teams. Music director and conductor Tom Vendrafreddo, who has helmed the Paramount Orchestra for the theater's last seven consecutive productions, returns as Music Director for Paramount's entire 2016–17 Broadway series. As always, each production will also boast Broadway orchestrations performed live by the Paramount Orchestra.

Behind the scenes, *West Side Story* choreographer William Carlos Angulo will return for his second collaboration with Jim Corti on *Mamma Mia!* Chicago A-list scenic designers Kevin Depinet and Jeff Kmiec will design two sets each next season at Paramount. Costume designer Theresa Ham is on three design teams, with Paramount's longtime costume shop manager Matt Guthier designing costumes for *Mamma Mia!* Top Chicago lighting designers Greg Hofmann and Jesse Klug will alternate crafting lighting for two shows each next season as well.

"It is hard to imagine a more disparate, contrasting season of music for Paramount Theatre's Broadway Series Season Six," said Corti. "The happiest of lighthearted family fare to the ultimate in passion and drama, 70s pop rock to the sublimely orchestrated, we continue to serve on our promise to present the highest caliber of theatre artists onstage and behind the scenes, delivering on the acclaim perpetuated by critics and audiences alike over the last five years; fresh, bold productions you will never forget!"

"To keep up with demand, we've expanded the number of weeks in each run and the number of performances next season. For context, last year we presented 22 weeks of Broadway shows, for a total of 180 performances. In 2016–17, we will present 27 weeks of Broadway shows and 220 performances," added Tim Rater, President and CEO of Paramount Theatre. "But perhaps my favorite statistic of all is 30,856 – the number of subscribers for our current season, yet another benchmark of unprecedented growth and success, and a number we look forward to surpassing once again in 2016–17."

## **2016–17 Broadway Series: More about the shows**

### ***Mamma Mia!***

**Music and Lyrics by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus**

**Some songs by Stig Anderson**

**Book by Catherine Johnson**

**Additional Material and Arrangements by Martin Koch**

**Directed by Paramount Theatre Artistic Director Jim Corti**

**With Music Director/Conductor Tom Vendrafreddo**

**Choreography by William Carlos Angulo, Sets by Kevin Depinet, Costumes by Matt Guthier, Lights by Greg Hofmann and Sound by Adam Rosenthal**

**September 7–October 30, 2016 Press opening Saturday, September 10, 8 p.m.**

**Suggested rating: PG**

Paramount kicks off its sixth season with the show that turned musical theater on its ear. Over 60 million people in 40 different countries on six different continents have reveled in *Mamma Mia!* – and it's still going strong.

It's the story of Sophie, a 20-year-old bride-to-be preparing for her wedding. Unbeknownst to her mother, she finds her mom's diary and reads about her love-filled summer 20 years before with three different men. Sophie is convinced one of the men is her father, and she's determined to find out who. She sends a wedding invitation to each of the men, forging her mother's signature on each note. When the men arrive the day before the ceremony, Donna, her mom, is shocked at their presence while Sophie is elated to finally meet her father. Quickly, each of the men realizes why they've been asked to the nuptials, and each is ready to walk their daughter down the aisle.

*Mamma Mia!* is a story of love and friendship, of lost dreams and that last chance to make it all right. Best of all, the entire show is set to the music of one of the most popular bands in world – ABBA. From “Dancing Queen” to “Take a Chance,” from “SOS” to “Knowing Me, Knowing You,” *Mamma Mia!* is an international phenomenon, boasting one hit song after another.

### ***Disney's The Little Mermaid***

**Music by Alan Menken**

**Lyrics by Howard Ashman & Glenn Slater**

**Book by Doug Wright**

**Based on the Hans Christian Andersen story and the Disney film written and directed by John Musker and Ron Clements**

**Directed and Choreographed by Amber Mak**

**With Music Director/Conductor Tom Vendrafreddo**

**Sets by Jeff Kmiec, Costumes by Theresa Ham, Lights by Jesse Klug, Sound by Adam Rosenthal,**

**Puppets by Jesse Mooney-Bullock**

**November 23, 2016 –January 8, 2017 Press opening Sunday, November 27, 5:30 p.m.**

**Suggested Rating: G**

Perfect for the young, and the young at heart, the blockbuster Disney movie comes to life in this awe-inspiring Paramount production.

Ariel lives 20,000 leagues under the sea with her royal family and father, King Triton. Despite the beauty of her aqua surroundings, the young mermaid only dreams of what lies above. During one of her top-side expeditions with her loyal companions – Sebastian the crab and Scuttle the seagull – the turbulent waters cause some precious cargo, Prince Eric, to be tossed into sea. Ariel swims to his rescue and gets the Prince to safety. When he awakens, he has no recollection of how he got ashore. Determined to risk it all for her chance at true happiness, Ariel makes a deal with Ursula the sea witch. She uses her black magic to transform the love-struck princess into a human. But Ariel has only three days to get her true love to kiss her. As part of the deal, while on land, Ariel will not have the ability to make a sound. If she fails at her quest, her soul and her beautiful voice become the property of Ursula.

*Disney's The Little Mermaid* is the kind of production that has the Paramount creative team chomping at the bit. Bringing the underwater surroundings to life, creating the costumes that transform humans into creatures, developing a system that will allow mermaids to swim and arranging a score for the Paramount orchestra that will give audiences chills are exactly the challenges they thrive on. No matter your age, no matter your experience with the story, no matter if you believe in mermaids or not, when that curtain goes up, you will want to be in your seats to experience this production.

***Sweeney Todd–The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***

**Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim**

**Book by Hugh Wheeler**

**Directed and Choreographed by Jim Corti**

**With Music Director/Conductor Tom Vendrafreddo**

**Sets by Jeff Kmiec, Costumes by Theresa Ham, Lights by Jesse Klug, Sound by Adam Rosenthal**

**February 8–March 19, 2017 Press opening Saturday, February 11, 8 p.m.**

**Suggested Rating: PG–13**

Some call *Sweeney Todd* Sondheim's most perfect score, filled with ravishing beauty. Others have described it as a pitch-black comedy filled with thrills and terrors, while others have heralded it as one of the single greatest achievements of American musical theater in the last 50 years.

It's just another day in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England, and Benjamin Barker has returned home. The only thing is, it's been 15 years since the once fresh-faced barber has seen his family. He was unjustly sentenced to prison on trumped up charges by the corrupt Judge Turpin, who had his leering eyes on the barber's beautiful wife. Upon his arrival to the pie shop – where he and his family once lived above – his old friend and confidant Mrs. Lovett unravels the events of the past decade. She explains about the seduction of his wife by the Judge, which led her to take her own life. And to sharpen that pain of his loss, she breaks the news that the Judge adopted his daughter and is raising her as his own. Barker vows revenge for these atrocities and turns to the tools and skills with which he'll exact his plan: a razor and a barber chair. While the ensuing events are unfortunate for some, others – including Mrs. Lovett, her struggling pie shop and her customers – quickly prosper from the body count.

Based on a Victorian Penny dreadful, *Sweeney Todd* has been nominated for Tony Awards in three different decades. The original 1979 production was nominated for nine Tony Awards, bringing home eight including Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book. The 1990 revival saw four more Tony nominations; while in 2006, the New York production received six Tony nods.

***Jesus Christ Superstar***

**Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber**

**Lyrics by Tim Rice**

**Directed and Choreographed by Ron Kellum**

**With Music Director/Conductor Tom Vendrafreddo**

**Sets by Kevin Depinet, Costumes by Theresa Ham, Lights by Greg Hofmann, Sound by Adam Rosenthal**

**April 19–May 28, 2017 Press opening Saturday, April 23 at 8 p.m.**

**Suggested Rating: PG**

A rock star stands center stage, awash in lights while tens-of-thousands of adoring fans repeat every word she sings. An endless sea of bodies stands for hours shivering in the freezing temps just to say they were there when the new leader of the free world was sworn in. We love and celebrate our idols; we always have...that is, until we move on to our next idol.

*Jesus Christ Superstar* is not just the story of the last seven days of the greatest idol in history. It's the story of the close friend who tried to save him and why that friend eventually betrayed him. This is a story of love and fear, a story of kindness and greed, a story of expectations and what happens when those expectations are not met. This is an energized rock opera that delves into the internal struggles of those mortals, those humans – including Jesus himself – as they drew closer to one of the most pivotal moments in history. It's an emotionally-charged journey in which, in the end, each person discovers something about themselves when the stakes are at their highest.

What began as a rock opera concept album (which dominated the U.S. charts upon its 1970 release) transformed into a global stage phenomenon that garnered seven Tony Award nominations in the U.S. and endless awards overseas in its 40-plus years. And while thousands of productions have taken the stage in 31 different countries, rest assured, Paramount's is the production the theater community in Chicago and around the country will be talking about next spring.

Paramount's 2016–17 Broadway Series is sponsored by **BMO Harris Bank, The Dunham Fund, Rush–Copley Medical Center and Gerald Kia.**

**Why Subscribe?**

In addition to the lowest major theater subscription prices anywhere in Illinois, exclusive benefits for Paramount Broadway subscribers have never been better. Only Broadway series subscribers are given first choice of the same seats for all four shows, free ticket exchange privileges and first notice of added shows and special events, all delivered with a smile by Paramount's Subscriber Services Concierge Department.

Broadway subscribers also receive first notice and exclusive pre-sale discounts of 10% off single tickets for all other performances presented at the Paramount in the 2016–17 season, including major concerts by internationally acclaimed music artists, comedy, dance, holiday shows, movies and family presentations. Look for an announcement of the balance of the Paramount's 2016–17 season in June.

## About The Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre ([ParamountAurora.com](http://ParamountAurora.com)) 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, located in downtown Aurora at 23 E. Galena Blvd., is nationally recognized for the quality and caliber of its presentations, superb acoustics and historic beauty.

The Paramount opened on September 3, 1931. Designed by 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 self-produces its own Broadway Musical Series, presents an eclectic array of comedy, music, dance and family shows, and on most Mondays, screens a classic movie.

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, 173-seat Copley Theatre located directly across the street from the Paramount at 8 E. Galena Blvd., as well as RiverEdge Park, downtown Aurora's 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 theatre and music professionals.

For tickets and information, go to [ParamountAurora.com](http://ParamountAurora.com) or call (630) 896-6666.

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