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For Immediate Release

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PARAMOUNT THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2016-17 GENERAL SEASON



Engelbert Humperdinck, Garrison Keillor, Rickie Lee Jones, Riverdance, The Second City and Priscilla Presley just a few of the major acts to play the Paramount next season

AURORA, IL, June 13, 2016 – Paramount Theatre President and CEO Tim Rater announced today another exciting, jam-packed schedule of major stars, live music acts, top comedians and family performances guaranteed to keep the Paramount filled with capacity crowds year-round in 2016-17.

Already announced in March is the Paramount's 2016-17 Broadway musical series, including *Mamma Mia!* (Sept. 7-Oct. 30, 2016), *Disney's 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). Paramount anticipates more than 30,000 subscribers will take advantage of Paramount's now-familiar Buy Two, Get Two offer, or four Broadway-caliber musicals for no more than \$29.50 per show.

Today, Rater unveiled the balance of the Paramount's 2016-17 schedule, with big names including **Priscilla Presley, Engelbert Humperdinck, Garrison Keillor, Rickie Lee Jones, Madeleine Peyroux, Riverdance, Golden Dragon Acrobats, Under The Streetlamp, The Second City and Billy Gardell**, just to name a few, all performing live on the beautiful Paramount stage in the heart of downtown Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois.

The Paramount's 85th season officially launches Friday, August 19 with the annual **Season Kick Off-Party** that raises money for a great cause – kids. For just \$20, guests will sample food from around the Aurora area, bid on incredible silent auction prizes and enjoy a fully-stocked cash bar, all in the beautiful, new Meyer Ballroom directly across the street from the Paramount.

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Following the party is perennial favorite **Happy Together Tour 2016** at 8 p.m., with a line-up that literally brings classic radio back to life with **Chuck Negron** from Three Dog Night, **Gary Puckett & The Union Gap**, Chicago's very own **The Cowsills**, **The Grassroots**, **Mark Lindsay** from Paul Revere & The Raiders, **The Spencer Davis Group**, and of course, **Flo & Eddie** from The Turtles.

Paramount's 2016–17 season continues (in chronological order) with ***The Second City's Free Speech! (While Supplies Last)*** (Aug. 27), ***Mamma Mia!*** (Sep. 7–Oct. 30), **Ballet Folklorico Quetzalcoatl** (Nov. 4), **Engelbert Humperdinck** (Nov. 5), **Under The Streetlamp** (Nov. 6), **Billy Gardell** (Nov. 12), **Garrison Keillor** (Nov. 13), ***Disney's The Little Mermaid*** (Nov. 23–Jan. 8), ***The Second City's Nut-Cracking Holiday Revue*** (Dec. 2–23, in Paramount's Copley Theatre), ***Defending the Caveman*** (Jan. 20), **God Save The Queen** (Jan. 21), ***Sweeney Todd–The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*** (Feb. 8–Mar. 19), **Home Free** (Mar. 24), **Madeleine Peyroux and Rickie Lee Jones** (Mar. 25), **Golden Dragon Acrobats** (Mar. 26), **Riverdance** (Mar. 31–Apr. 2, five shows), ***Jesus Christ Superstar*** (Apr. 19–May 28), ***Piano Men: A Tribute to Elton John and Billy Joel*** (Jun. 10) and ***Barbra and Frank: The Concert That Never Was...*** (Jun. 11).

Also back in 2016–17, Paramount's popular **Classic Movie Monday** series, presenting everyone's favorite flicks in one of Chicago's top former movie palaces on a two-story screen, for just \$1. Paramount also serves the community with low-cost children's shows designed to entertain while they educate: ***Jigsaw Jones and the Case of the Class Clown*** (Nov. 2), **Doktor Kaboom** (Nov. 3), ***Miss Nelson is Missing*** (Mar. 22) and ***Laura Ingalls Wilder*** (Mar. 23).

"Paramount is proud to host the biggest stars, the best comedians, top music acts and fantastic family shows, all at an affordable price, without the inconveniences associated with seeing shows downtown," said **Tim Rater**, President and CEO of Paramount Theatre. "Couple our expanded 2016–17 Broadway series with the slate of presented shows announced today, and the Paramount is arguably the busiest theater in Chicago, with the deepest array of programming and the most loyal – and growing – audience in the Midwest."

Current Paramount subscribers get first dibs on tickets and the best seats during the exclusive subscriber pre-sale starting today, Monday, June 13 at 10 a.m., through Sunday, June 26 at 9:59 a.m.

Paramount's General Season shows go on sale to the general public Thursday, June 30 at 10 a.m. To subscribe or to purchase single tickets, visit ParamountAurora.com, call the box office at **630-896-6666** or stop by in person at the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in downtown Aurora.

Last season, Paramount's Broadway productions were nominated for a record-breaking 16 Joseph Jefferson Awards and took home 5 wins, including Best Large Musical with ***Les Misérables***. In addition, critics rave "Paramount productions belong on Broadway." But it's not just what's taking place on stage that has people talking. In addition to the lowest major musical theater subscription prices anywhere in Illinois, subscriber benefits have never been better: the best seats, free ticket exchange privileges, 10% discounts on every additional shows, first notice of added shows and special subscriber events and exclusive access to our Broadway Series Premium Guest Experience (including pre-show hors d'oeuvres and an open bar, plus private intermission bar service.)

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Following are details about Paramount's 2016–2017 season, in chronological order:

2016–17 Season Kick-Off Party and Fundraiser

Friday, August 19, 5–7 p.m.

Tickets: \$20

Paramount kicks off its 2016–17 season with food, drinks and auctions raising money for the theater's Dreams Do Come True program, benefitting kids and families in the area. Sample food from around the Aurora area, check out silent auction prizes and enjoy a cash bar in the Paramount's Meyer Ballroom, directly across the street from the theatre, before **Happy Together Tour 2016** (tickets sold separately).

Happy Together Tour 2016

Friday, August 19, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$59.50

Right after the Season Kick-Off Party, take a trip through the golden age of rock-and-roll with the artists behind all those 1960's and 70's favorites. In one rockin' night, the **Happy Together Tour 2016** is bringing your radio to life with Chuck Negron of Three Dog Night, Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, Chicago's own The Cowsills, Mark Lindsay from Paul Revere & The Raiders, The Spencer Davis Group starring (you guessed it) Spencer Davis himself and, of course, Flo & Eddie from The Turtles, all live on the Paramount stage.

An Afternoon With Priscilla Presley: An Open Conversation

Sunday, August 21, 4 p.m.

Tickets: \$65 and \$75; VIP packages also available

Priscilla Presley offers audiences an extremely rare opportunity to gain insight into a world only a few have entered. Journey with her through her fascinating life in an intimate interview format where she will answer audience questions and share stories that will spark curiosity and conversation. Guests of this unique experience will be intrigued, surprised and entertained by Priscilla herself, live on stage in this open conversation.

The Second City's Free Speech! (While Supplies Last)

Saturday, August 27, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$35, \$45

Let's face it, Republicans, Democrats, Independents and Green Partiers: we'll never get along, but we sure can laugh at the 2016 election together! Known as the alma mater of today's most famous political satirists like Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert and Keegan-Michael Key, The Second City brings us ***Free Speech! (While Supplies Last)***. This all-new (and timely) show pokes fun at the Electoral College, parodies your favorite political propoganda...we mean, "commercials" and gives audiences an irreverent look at America's partisan persuasion. Whether you swing elephant, donkey or something in between, don't miss your chance to see Chicago's best and brightest performing scenes and songs fresh from the writer's room. Rated R for adult language and content.

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

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

Tickets: \$44–\$59 (Buy a season subscription; the most you'll pay is \$29.50 per show)

As she prepares for her wedding day, 20-year-old Sophie is determined to find out just who her dad really is. Over 60 million people in 40 different countries on six different continents have reveled in ***Mamma Mia!*** – and it's still going strong. Set to the music of one of the most popular bands in the world – ABBA, it's one hit song after another that will have you mouthing the words, dancing in your seats and touching your heart. Experience the musical that is an international phenomenon. Experience ***Mamma Mia!*** Suggested rating: PG

Ballet Folklorico Quetzalcoatl

Friday, November 4, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$25 & \$28 adult, \$18 & \$20 children 12 & under

It's become a tradition in the Fox Valley to honor the area's rich Mexican culture with Ballet Folklorico – that tradition continues. Ballet Folklorico celebrates the traditional Mexican folklorico with colorful costumes, wonderful music and electrifying, elegant and beautiful choreography. Feel your spirits rise and eyes light up as this celebrated group shares an important piece of their culture.

Engelbert Humperdinck

Saturday, November 5, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$55, \$65

With four Grammy nominations, a Golden Globe for "Entertainer of the Year," 24 platinum records, 150 million albums sold and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, superstardom doesn't get much brighter than Engelbert Humperdinck's. Over the last 40 years, the "King of Romance" has recorded some of the greatest love songs ever, like "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "After The Lovin'" and the classic, crooning "Quando Quando Quando." He has collaborated with music royalty like Sir Elton John, Elvis Presley and Willie Nelson. His smash hit "Release Me" even held The Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" from hitting #1. Join the millions of fans worldwide who have experienced this performer's incredible, three-octave vocal range (yep, you read that right), live in concert.

Under The Streetlamp

Sunday, November 6, 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$49, \$59

See why Under the Streetlamp's annual visit to the Paramount has become an Aurora tradition. Made up of former *Jersey Boys* cast members, this charming "Modern Day Rat Pack" brings audiences along for an electrifying ride through the American radio songbook. Take a trip back to the era of slicked hair, fast cars and martini shakers when they perform doo-wop jams, Motown classics and rock-n-roll staples. And don't even get us started on their smooth dance moves.

Billy Gardell

Saturday, November 12, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$55, \$65

Whether you recognize him as the lovable Mike from CBS's 13-million-viewers-per-week *Mike & Molly*, know him as Umpire Haze in the baseball comedy *Undrafted* or remember his, let's say, unforgettable scene with Billy Bob Thornton in *Bad Santa*, Billy Gardell knows how to bring funny to the screen – and stage. On top of his successful acting career, Gardell has toured his one-man stand-up comedy show for years, cracking audiences up with totally relatable stories of childhood, wild teenage years and raising a family. Comedy Central and Showtime both premiered his stand-up specials on air, broadcasting his shows to millions of fans. Get ready for joke after joke when Gardell takes the spotlight (and stool) on the Paramount stage.

Garrison Keillor

Sunday, November 13, 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$40, \$55

Each week, more than 4 million people hear this “King of the Mic” introduce musical artists on *A Prairie Home Companion*. He has published more than two-dozen books, spanning poetry collections to children's stories to political essays. He has won some of the most prestigious awards in radio, including a Grammy, a Peabody, 2 ACEs and countless more. Now, the eclectic, intelligent, hilarious Garrison Keillor is headed back to Aurora for one-night-only. He'll share stories, advice, a couple jokes and maybe even a song or two, and he'll do it all with the captivating charisma and witty humor we know and love. Psst: we've heard some rumblings about this tour being his last – don't miss what could be your final chance at seeing this storytelling legend live.

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

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

Tickets: \$44–\$59 (Buy a season subscription; the most you'll pay is \$29.50 per show)

The blockbuster Disney movie comes to life in this awe-inspiring Paramount production that is perfect for the young and the young at heart. Join Ariel on her quest for love and life on land, with the help of her friends Sebastian the crab and Scuttle the seagull, as she fights off the evil sea witch Ursula. 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. Suggested Rating: G

The Second City's Nut-Cracking Holiday Revue

Held in the Copley Theatre, located directly across the street from the Paramount Theatre in the North Island Center, 8 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora

December 2-23: Thur. at 7:30 p.m.; Fri. at 8 p.m.; Sat. at 8 p.m.; Sun. at 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$36

What do drunk cousins, overbooked flights and awkward interactions with your boss at the company party have in common? The holidays are full of them. Blow off some of that seasonal steam with ***The Second City's Nut-Cracking Holiday Revue***! These ladies and funnymen have made it an annual end-of-year tradition to bring their festive hilarity to Paramount's 173-seat Copley Theatre, and in a theatre that intimate, you're never more than 70 feet from all those Second City songs and skits. Psst...these guys sold out almost every single show last year. Don't wait to get your tickets! Rated R for strong adult language and content.

Defending the Caveman

Written by Rob Becker

Friday, January 20, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$35

Couples are sure to be roaring with laughter while asking "Could comedy give couples therapy a run for its money?" With hilarious insight on feminism, masculine sensitivity and the erogenous zone, ***Defending the Caveman*** mines the common themes in relationships that go straight through the funny bone and into the heart. ***Defending the Caveman*** makes us laugh at ourselves, about all the ways that men and women fight, laugh and love. Make it a date night, and don't miss this hilariously, insightful and prehistoric look at the original battle of the sexes. Suggested Rating: PG

God Save The Queen

Saturday, January 21, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$35, \$45

God Save The Queen pack Queen's biggest hits like "We Are the Champions," "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Somebody to Love" into one huge set, and they do it with the over-the-top theatricality that made Queen one of the best-known bands in music history. From the incredible lighting to the epic anthems to lead singer Pablo Padin's spot-on resemblance (both in voice and looks) to the late, great Freddie Mercury, ***God Save The Queen*** will rock you.

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

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

Tickets: \$44-\$59 (Buy a season subscription; the most you'll pay is \$29.50 per show)

After 15 years away, barber Benjamin Barker learns the corrupt Judge Turpin seduced his wife, which led to her suicide, and adopted his daughter. Barker vows revenge using the tools he knows best: a razor and a barber chair. Some call this Sondheim's most perfect score. Others have described it as a pitch-black comedy filled with thrills and terrors; while others have called it one of the single greatest achievements of American musical theater in the last 50 years. Decide for yourself and experience Paramount's ***Sweeney Todd***. Suggested Rating: PG-13

Home Free

Friday, March 24, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$35, \$40, VIP: \$125

VIP includes ticket to the show; pre-show Q&A, photograph and autograph session with the band, pre-show crowd-free merchandise shopping, signed copy of the new Home Free album, exclusive show laminate and poster.

Pitch Perfect fan? Sing a capella in college? Just really into music? If you checked “yes” to any of the above, get ready to have your mind blown by Home Free. This pop-meets-country quintet’s high-energy a capella shows and quick-witted, warm personalities on and off the stage won them NBC-TV’s *The Sing-Off* crown and a devoted fan following in 2013. Since then, they’ve covered Top 40 hits like Andy Grammar’s 2015 smash “Honey, I’m Good” and classic country standards like Johnny Cash’s “Ring of Fire” with a sound so rich, you’ll forget there aren’t any instruments on stage. Oh, did we mention Home Free’s racked up a whopping 50 million views on YouTube? Check out their music videos for just a taste of what these guys can do.

Madeleine Peyroux/Rickie Lee Jones

Saturday, March 25, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$45, \$55

This show is giving a whole new meaning to the term “girl power.” Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones has been called “an original,” “a cult heroine” and “one of the best-if-not-the-best-artist of her generation.” But it’s not only her hits songs like “Chuck E’s in Love,” “Last Chance Texaco” and “On Saturday Afternoons in 1963” that made Jones a star. Her hip, poetic style, both on and off the stage, turned Rickie Lee Jones into a cultural icon.

When an Atlantic Records A&R rep first heard Madeleine Peyroux play, he said her set was “some of the most exciting, viscerally moving minutes of my music-listening life.” Discovered in a New York nightclub, Peyroux (or, as some critics like to call her, the Billie Holiday of the 90’s) is known for melding jazz, blues and pop into songs, like her haunting rendition of Leonard Cohen’s “Dance Me to the End of Love” that leave listeners in total awe.

Golden Dragon Acrobats

Sunday, March 26, 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$25 children 12 and under; \$35 adults

Immerse the whole family in the colorful, intense, theatrical world of Chinese acrobatics. The Golden Dragon Acrobats may have been touring for 30 years, but they represent a tradition that began more than 25 centuries ago. Led by world-renowned producer Danny Chang and award-winning choreographer Angela Chang, this troupe blends ancient dance, spectacular costumes, contemporary music and incredible athleticism into a full-on extravaganza of movement. They glide across the stage with unimaginable gracefulness. They twist and contort their bodies in ways you didn’t think were possible. They perform stunts that will simultaneously make your heart thump and mesmerize you. On top of all that, this is an awesome opportunity to introduce the kids in your life to a rich, 2,500 year-old culture.

Riverdance

March 31–April 2

Five shows: Fri. at 8 p.m., Sat. at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sun. at 1 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$40, \$60

The Washington Times put it best: “Riverdance is quite simply incredible...a phenomenon of historic proportions.” This internationally-acclaimed group of foot-tapping men and women is celebrating two decades of reels, jigs and just downright spectacular performances, so they’re dominating the Paramount stage for a full weekend of nothing but Irish dance and music. Whether you’ve seen Riverdance before or only heard about their high-energy live shows, you’ll want to see what they’ve put together for this 20th anniversary tour. Let’s just say it gives the phrase “the luck of the Irish” a whole new meaning.

Jesus Christ Superstar

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lyrics by Tim Rice

Directed and Choreographed by Ron Kellum

With Music Director/Conductor Tom Vendrafreddo

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

Tickets: \$44–\$59 (Buy a season subscription; the most you’ll pay is \$29.50 per show)

This energized rock opera delves into the story and internal struggles of the last seven days of the greatest idol in history – Jesus. What began as a rock opera concept album (dominating 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, this is the production Chicago will be talking about. Be a part of the conversation. Suggested Rating: PG

Piano Men: A Tribute to Elton John and Billy Joel

Saturday, June 10, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$35, \$45

Do you remember when rock was young? We do, so we’re dedicating a full day of shows to celebrate two of the greatest pianists and performers of our time. Musicians Craig A. Newman and Donnie Kehr go “Face to Face” by channeling the flair, charisma and outright talent of Sir Elton John and Billy Joel, and there’s nothing like it. They’ll hammer those keys and play all those classic pop favorites like “Crocodile Rock,” “Uptown Girl,” “Candle In The Wind” and so many more. Plus, they’ll do it all so well, you’ll hardly be able to tell the difference between them and the superstars they’re portraying.

Barbra and Frank: The Concert That Never Was...

Sunday, June 11, 3 p.m.

Tickets: \$35

Two of the biggest voices in music history never had the opportunity to perform together, live in concert. Now, this is your chance to experience what it would have been like to see Ol’ Blue Eyes and Babs share the stage. The two performers paying tribute to these legends – Sharon Owens and Sebastian Anzaldo – sound like Frank and Barbra, they look like Frank and Barbra, and man, will they blow your mind. They’ll cover everything from “Don’t Rain on My Parade” to “The Way You Look Tonight” and so many more of those classic tunes you know and love in this glamorous, heart-warming and spectacular show you won’t want to miss.

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Classic Movie Mondays

Most Mondays, year-round

Doors open at 6:15 p.m. Show starts at 7 p.m.

Tickets: \$1

We've got the perfect cure for those "case of the Mondays" – your favorite classic films in a venue that was built to showcase those silver screen gems. Don't miss out on the classics projected on a two-story screen, popcorn freshly popped in the Grand Gallery, a full bar with something for everyone, convenient nearby parking and an atmosphere that can't be beat. The best part? Just \$1 per ticket gets you a seat to see your favorite flick. Go to ParamountAurora.com for a full schedule.

About The Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre (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 or call (630) 896-6666.