For Immediate Release
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PARAMOUNT
THEATRE
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MY! MY! ABBA MUSICAL *MAMMA MIA!* IS PARAMOUNT THEATRE'S 2016-17 BROADWAY OPENER, SEPTEMBER 7-OCTOBER 30

Mamma Mia!, directed by (top row, from left) Paramount Theatre Artistic Director **Jim Corti** and choreographed by **William Carlos Angulo** with **Tom Vendafreddo** as music director and conductor, stars (bottom) **Amy Montgomery** as Donna Sheridan, **Kiersten Frumkin** as Sophie Sheridan, **Sara Sevigny** as Rosie, **Jennifer Knox** as Tanya, **Jeff Diebold** as Sam Carmichael, **Steve O'Connell** as Bill Austin, **Michael Gillis** as Harry Bright and **Ryan McBride** as Sky. Click **here** for hi-res.

AURORA, July 20, 2016 – More than 60 million people in 40 countries on six different continents have reveled in ***Mamma Mia!***, the iconic musical about love and friendship, of lost dreams and that last chance to make it right, all set to the music of ABBA, one of the most popular bands in the world.

This fall, 30,000+ Chicago musical theater fans will boost those stats even higher when Aurora's Paramount Theatre kicks off its sixth Broadway season with a fresh, sparkling new production of the feel-good international phenomenon that turned musical theater on its ear.

Directed by Paramount Artistic Director **Jim Corti** with musical direction by **Tom Vendafreddo** and choreography by **William Carlos Angulo**, Paramount's can't-miss, catchy take on ***Mamma Mia!*** promises a ton of fun with the show's touching story of a happy family wedding, while cataloguing one famous ABBA pop hit after another, including "Dancing Queen," "Take a Chance," "SOS" and "Knowing Me, Knowing You." Previews start September 7. **Press opening is Saturday, September 10 at 8 p.m.** Regular performances continue through October 30. 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 $44 to $59.

Even better, there's still time to take advantage of Paramount's "Buy Two Shows, Get Two Shows Free" 2016-17 Broadway subscription offer. For less than the cost of a ticket to one show downtown, patrons can see three more Broadway-quality musicals: ***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). Four-play packages start 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.

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The Paramount Theatre is located at 23 E. Galena Blvd., in the heart of downtown Aurora, which is rife with affordable parking options, plus new restaurants popping up left and right for pre- or post-show dining options. For subscriptions, single tickets and information, go to **ParamountAurora.com**, call **(630) 896-6666**, or visit the Paramount box office Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and two hours prior to evening performances. ***Mamma Mia!*** is rated PG.

Behind-the-scenes of Paramount's *Mamma Mia!*

Mamma Mia! is 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 them 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 invited, and each is ready to walk their daughter down the aisle.

Principal cast members are **Amy Montgomery** as Donna Sheridan, **Kiersten Frumkin** as Sophie Sheridan, **Sara Sevigny** as Rosie, **Jennifer Knox** as Tanya, **Jeff Diebold** as Sam Carmichael, **Steve O'Connell** as Bill Austin, **Michael Gillis** as Harry Bright and **Ryan McBride** as Sky. ***Mamma Mia!*** also features **Aubrey Adams**, **Heather J. Beck**, **Nick Cosgrove**, **Aaron Patrick Craven**, **Devin DeSantis**, **Adam Fane**, **Michael Ferraro**, **Allyson Graves**, **Kayla Kennedy, Ron King**, **Christopher MacGregor**, **Courtney Mack**, **Mallory Maedke**, **Jake Morrissy**, **Travis Porchia**, **Sara Reinecke**, **Haley Jane Schafer**, **Danni Smith**, **Janelle Villas** and **Robert Wilde**.

Jim Corti (director) was hired in 2011 to be the first-ever Artistic Director in the Paramount's 80+ year history. He was instrumental in launching Paramount's inaugural Broadway Series and directed and choreographed Paramount's first self-produced Broadway show, ***My Fair Lady***, which played to rave reviews. Corti's 2013 Paramount production of ***Fiddler on the Roof*** was a smash hit, and his ***Miss Saigon*** was the only musical to make the *Chicago Tribune's* Top Ten Shows of 2013. ***RENT*** in 2014 was a critical and box office success, followed by consecutive productions of ***The Who's Tommy*** and ***Les Misérables*** which collectively garnered five Jeff Awards for Paramount in its first year of eligibility, including Best Production – Musical – Large for ***Les Misérables*** and Best Director – Musical for Corti. He also staged Paramount's 2015-16 opener, ***Oklahoma!***, and closer, ***West Side Story***, both critically acclaimed. Before Paramount, Corti was a seasoned Broadway veteran, appearing in the New York casts of ***Ragtime, A Chorus Line*** and ***Candide*** and national tours of ***Urinetown, Cabaret*** and Bob Fosse's ***Dancin'***. Career highlights over three decades include being the only director in Chicago to have two productions at the same time in the *Chicago Tribune's* list of 10 Best Shows in 2009 – Drury Lane's ***Cabaret*** and Writers Theatre's ***Oh, Coward!*** He remains the sole honoree to have garnered a Jeff Award as an actor (in Marriott's ***Grand Hotel***), a choreographer (Drury Lane's ***Singin' in the Rain***) and director (Paramount's ***Les Misérables***, Drury Lane's ***Sweet Charity*** and Northlight's ***Blues in the Night***).

William Carlos Angulo (choreographer) made his choreographic debut with Paramount last season with ***West Side Story***. He also served as assistant choreographer and ensemble member in Paramount's ***The Who's Tommy*** and ***Oklahoma!*** and performed in ***In the Heights***, ***42nd Street*** and ***Mary Poppins***. Elsewhere, he choreographed ***Far From Heaven*** last season for Chicago's Porchlight Theatre and was

assistant choreographer of ***Billy Elliott: The Musical*** at Drury Lane Theatre. Performance credits also include **Irving Berlin's** ***White Christmas***, ***Beaches***, ***Sunset Boulevard*** and ***Singin' in the Rain*** at Drury Lane, ***Brigadoon*** at the Goodman and ***Mary Poppins*** and ***Cats*** at Marriott.

Tom Vendafreddo (music director and conductor) is helming his seventh consecutive musical at Paramount, preceded by ***In the Heights***, ***Mary Poppins***, ***The Who's Tommy***, ***Les Misérables***, ***Oklahoma!, A Christmas Story, The Musical***, ***Hairspray – The Broadway Musical*** and ***West Side Story***. Other credits include ***Company*** and ***Sweet Charity*** (Writers Theatre); ***On the Town*** and ***Godspell*** (Marriott Lincolnshire); ***Road Show*** and ***Shrek: The Musical*** (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); ***The Spitfire Grill*** (BoHo Theatre – Jeff Nomination for Music Direction); and ***Pump Boys and Dinettes*** (Metropolis Performing Arts Center). Regional credits include ***RENT*** (San Diego Musical Theatre), ***Odyssey*** (Old Globe Theatre), ***Forever Plaid*** (Chestnut Fine Arts) and ***It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play*** (Cygnet Theatre). As a cabaret artist, Tom has performed in Chicago, New York, San Diego and Melbourne. In 2014, he became the Founding Artistic Director of the Chicago Artists Chorale, a choral ensemble of working professionals in the Chicago theatre community. He received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and Music Education from Eastman School of Music and a Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre from San Diego State University. **tomvendafreddo.com**

Paramount's production team for ***Mamma Mia!*** also includes **Trent Stork**, associate director; **Kory Danielson**, assistant music director/associate conductor; **Kevin Depinet**, scenic designer; **Matt Guthier**, costume designer; **Greg Hofmann**, lighting designer; **Christopher Ash**, projection designer; **Adam Rosenthal**, sound designer; **Katie Cordts**, wig, hair and make-up designer; **Amanda Relaford**, properties manager; **Amber Johnson**, stage manager; and **Cody Westgaard**, assistant stage manager.

In true Paramount tradition, the nine-member Paramount Orchestra will play the full, original Broadway orchestrations for ***Mamma Mia!***, which features music and lyrics by **Benny Andersson** and **Björn Ulvaeus**, former members of ABBA, with some songs by **Stig Anderson**. The book is by **Catherine Johnson**, with additional material and arrangements by **Martin Koch**. More than 60 million people have seen the show since its debut in 1999. Its Broadway incarnation closed in September 2015 after a 14-year run, effectively making it the eighth longest-running show in Broadway history. A film adaptation starring **Meryl Streep**, **Colin Firth**, **Pierce Brosnan**, **Amanda Seyfried**, **Christine Baranski**, **Stellan Skarsgård** and **Julie Walters** was released in 2008.

Paramount's 2016-17 Broadway Series is sponsored by **BMO Harris Bank** and **The Dunham Fund.** Broadway Series Orchestra Sponsor is **Rush-Copley Medical Center**. Broadway Series Lighting Sponsor is **ComEd**. Broadway Series Costume Sponsor is **Gerald Kia**. ***Mamma Mia!*** is also sponsored by **Kevin Fitzpatrick.**

More about Paramount's 2016-17 Season

Paramount's 2016-17 season line-up is anchored by its acclaimed 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 the theater's now-familiar Buy Two, Get Two offer, or four Broadway-caliber musicals for no more than $29.50 per show.

In addition to its Broadway series, Paramount's 2016-17 season also includes its annual **Season Kick-Off Party** followed by the **Happy Together Tour** (Aug. 19), **Elvis & Me: An Afternoon with Priscilla Presley** (Aug. 21), ***The Second City's Free Speech! (While Supplies Last)*** (Aug. 27), **Ballet Folklorico Quetzalcoatl** (Nov. 4), **Engelbert Humperdinck** (Nov. 5), **Under The Streetlamp** (Nov. 6), **Billy Gardell** (Nov. 12), **Garrison Keillor** (Nov. 13), ***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), **Home Free** (Mar. 24), **Madeleine Peyroux and Rickie Lee Jones** (Mar. 25), **Golden Dragon Acrobats** (Mar. 26), **Riverdance: 20 Years** (Mar. 31-Apr. 2, five shows), ***Piano Men: A Tribute to Elton John and Billy Joel*** (Jun. 10) and ***Barbra and Frank: The Concert That Never Was...*** (Jun. 11).

Back in 2016-17 is the **Classic Movie Monday** series, presenting everyone's favorite flicks 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). For subscriptions, single tickets or more information, go to ParamountAurora.com, call **(630) 896-6666**, or stop by the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora.

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 renowned 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 with a 1930s art deco influence. The first air-conditioned building outside of Chicago, the Paramount offered a variety of entertainment, including "talking pictures," vaudeville, concerts and circus performances for over 40 years. In 1976, Aurora Civic Center Authority purchased the Paramount, closed the theater for restoration and restored the Paramount to its original grandeur. The Paramount Arts Center reopened in 1978, 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**.