



BROADWAY CELEBRITY SIGHTING

HEATHER HEADLEY VISITS PARAMOUNT THEATRE



Above: Heather Headley and Jim Corti;
Top: Heather Headley with the cast of *Fun Home*;
Right: Heather Headley outside Paramount Theatre;

Tony Award-Winner, Heather Headley (*Aida*) recently stopped by Paramount Theatre for a surprise visit. She spent time meeting the cast of *Fun Home*—opening at Copley Theatre on August 3—and reconnected with Jim Corti with whom she shared the stage in the Broadway cast of *Ragtime*.

Heather just wrapped her run as the Witch in *Into the Woods* at the New York City Center. When she is not on the stage you can catch Heather on your TV screens in Netflix's *Sweet Magnolias*.

Thank you for stopping by Heather!



PARAMOUNT ON TOUR: ADVENTURES IN NEW YORK

Our Development Department staff was joined in New York this May and June by a group of over 30 donors, on each trip, for a weekend of Broadway shows and New York adventures. We were treated to *Moulin Rouge*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and the season's hottest ticket — *The Music Man*!

To learn additional information about Paramount On Tour and book a future trip, please reach out to Will Skrip, Donor Relations & Stewardship Manager at wills@paramountarts.com.

2023 PARAMOUNT ON TOUR DATES

May 19 - 22
September 29 - October 2
December 1 - 4

Summer 2022

BACKSTAGE bulletin

Scene from *Hand to God*

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS



Hello There!

We have officially kicked off Season 4 of camp and class offerings at Paramount School of the Arts. A summer full of music, dance, design and more is radiating through our halls and the artists in our community.

As I write this we have over 30 students participating in our Paramount Experience camp where we welcomed Paramount's own Melody Betts, Leryn Turlington, and Christopher Kelley as guest teaching artists. Students are busy learning scenes, songs, and choreography from past Paramount hit productions and will be performing them on the Paramount Theatre stage at the end of camp.

There is so much to be thankful for this year as we continue to provide accessible arts education to our community which wouldn't be possible without your generous and continued support. We are proud to share that we awarded over \$7,500 in scholarships in the past 18 months to more than 40 students.

Another highlight of this year was our first ever Spring Showcase, *Come Alive!*, which took place on Monday, May 9. During the showcase, 73 students (ages 5-adult) performed to an audience of over 800 family members and friends. This experience was at no cost to the students, or the audience members, and served as an opportunity for the students themselves to step into the spotlight on the Paramount stage. We look forward to celebrating our students' hard work and creativity in this annual showcase for many years to come.

It is an honor to make such a lasting impression on the young artists in our community. We couldn't do the work we do without your continued kindness, enthusiasm, and dedication to growing the arts in Aurora. Thank you.

Big hugs,

Jessica M Duplessis

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AUGUST 1 - 31

Make-A-Will Month

AUGUST 3 -
SEPTEMBER 18

Copley's BOLD Series
Production of *Fun Home*

AUGUST 31 -
OCTOBER 16

Paramount's Broadway Series
Production of *Dreamgirls*

SEPTEMBER 9

Dreamgirls Opening Night

SEPTEMBER 16-19 &
OCTOBER 21-24

Paramount On Tour
New York Trips



BMO is proud to be a long-time supporter of Paramount Theatre. Performing arts entertain and engage, positively impact our economy and provide important arts education to our area's children.

— Alma L. Velasquez,
Community Giving Manager
at BMO Harris Bank



The team from BMO Harris Bank joined the Paramount earlier this year during two Pay What You Can performances for Rock of Ages. As a season sponsor of the Broadway Series, their partnership helps us bring the arts to thousands of area residents who otherwise would not have access to our programs.

Their investment in the community doesn't stop there. BMO has a vision to Boldly Grow the Good in business



and life. That's why BMO is constantly seeking opportunities to accelerate positive change in communities that have faced barriers. This work ranges from community-based financial education programs and financing for first-time home buyers to major urban redevelopment projects, which provide housing and jobs. It's part of how they're helping build a society with zero barriers to economic inclusion.

Alma Velasquez, Community Giving Manager, shared, "BMO is proud to be a long-time supporter of Paramount Theatre because the performing arts have a real and meaningful effect on the lives of thousands of people in the Chicagoland area. Performing arts entertain and engage, positively impact our economy and provide important arts education to our area's children."

We are so thankful for BMO's investment in Paramount and the community we serve.

PARAMOUNT SPOTLIGHT:

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JIM CORTI RECEIVES PORCHLIGHT'S GUY ADKINS AWARD



Porchlight Music Theatre Artistic Director Michael Weber, Jim Corti and Porchlight Music Theatre Executive Director Jeannie Lukow

This May our Artistic Director Jim Corti was awarded the 2022 Guy Adkins Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Music Theatre from Porchlight Music Theatre in Chicago. Named for the late Chicago actor Guy Adkins, Porchlight gives the annual honor to "an artist who has made an exceptional and lasting contribution to the state of the art of Chicago music theatre."

We are fortunate to witness Jim's excellent work, dedication, and direction on our Paramount stage every season. Under his artistic direction Paramount became Jeff Award Eligible in 2015 and since secured 84 nominations and 21 wins, including winner of Best Large Musical three years in a row.

"Jim is an ambassador for everything Chicagoland theatre represents," said Porchlight Artistic Director Michael Weber. "He started as an actor and then went to Broadway in New York and then national tours, known for his roles in the original cast of A Chorus Line and originating the role of Houdini in Ragtime. But then, Jim opted to come back to Chicagoland to continue his incredible career and also foster the careers of so many other talents."

For Jim, "advancement is utmost right now in our collective consciousness to do better in a changing and troubled world. May we all take heart and be the change!"

Congratulations Jim—you make us Paramount Proud!

INCEPTION PROJECT

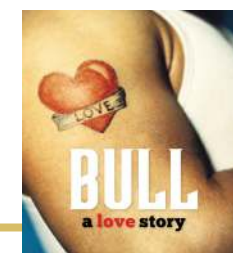
BRINGING NEW SHOWS AND VOICES TO PARAMOUNT!

In 2020 Paramount established a new initiative—The Inception Project—in order to expand the current American theatre cannon to a more inclusive space where underrepresented voices can take center stage. The Inception Project is a part of Paramount's New Works Department which is led by Amber Mak, New Works Development Director. Amber, along with Paul-Jordan Jansen—Jeff Award-Winning actor and one of Paramount's favorite leading-men—helped launch this new initiative and guide its artistic vision. This project was made possible—in part—by a grant from the Aurora Women's Empowerment Foundation to support this program and our Theatre for Young Audiences initiatives.

In May, of this year we hosted our first in-person table read and a writer's retreat of a New Works show *Iobairt*. While we hosted two other online readings of different shows in the past, as a part of this initiative, this was the first one we were able to host on site.

Iobairt—meaning sacrifice in Gaelic—is an original musical about belonging and exploration of mixed-race identity and culture, written by Broadway veteran actors Christian Thompson and Maria Wirries. While reflecting on his time during the weekend-long retreat, Christian acknowledged that the Inception Project has been "fundamental in development of this [*Iobairt*] project."

The Inception Project provides writers with necessary tools and a supportive space which allows them to continue nurturing and telling their stories. Special thank you to everyone who has supported the Inception Project since it's debut.



To see the efforts of Paramount's Inception Project realized on stage be sure to check out our BOLD Series show *BULL: a love story* which will have its world premiere in October at Copley Theatre.

The Inception Project provides writers with necessary tools and a supportive space which allows them to continue nurturing and telling their stories.

Christian Thompson during the table read of *Iobairt*.

