

# BACKSTAGE BULLETIN

Spring 2024



## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Dear Friends,

What an exciting year we have ahead of us at Paramount! It is a year slated to bring an amazing new development to our community. Before I dive into the coming months, I'd like to reflect on a few things from last year.

Recently, we shared our Philanthropy Report from 2023 where we celebrated the accomplishments driven by your philanthropy. We continued to see an upward trend in our subscriptions and donations from the year prior. These are promising statistics considering the overall national trends affecting performing arts venues. I know we can continue that trajectory with you behind us.

You are the reason Paramount is continually setting records and exceeding industry standards. Your trust and loyalty make our work and mission possible – and we hope we can continue counting on you.

The team at Paramount will bring you another year of quality entertainment and programming starting off with an exciting new venue. Stolp Island Theatre will transport you to another place in time with our reimagined production of *Million Dollar Quartet*. You can read about all the Stolp Island Theatre developments inside this issue.

Paramount's mission to make theater accessible for all continues to be a top priority. We continue to increase programming focused on bringing our community into the theater and the theater into our community. Programs like Pay What You Can, Theatre for Young Audiences (more info inside), Student Matinees and more, are experiencing steady growth. Your philanthropy makes the dreams in our community a reality.

Your generosity allows us to keep pushing boundaries. On behalf of everyone at Paramount, thank you for your support.

*With gratitude, Jonathan Hylton*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**APR. 24 – JUN. 16**

Beautiful:  
The Carole King Musical  
at Paramount Theatre

**APR. 29**

2024 / 2025 BOLD Series  
Single Tickets on Sale

**MAY 6**

Paramount School of the Arts  
Spring Showcase

**JUN. 14 – 15**

Blues on the Fox  
at RiverEdge Park

**JUN. 17**

2024 / 2025 Broadway Series  
Single Tickets on Sale



PARAMOUNT  
THEATRE

# PARAMOUNT UPDATES



Stolp Island Theatre, Rendering by Jeffrey D. Kmeic

**IN PAST ISSUES OF BACKSTAGE BULLETIN**, we've written about Theatre for Young Audiences and Stolp Island Theatre. These two projects are coming to fruition in 2024 and we're excited to share an update on their developments.

## STOLP ISLAND THEATRE

Construction at Stolp Island Theatre, located at 5 E. Downer Place, is ongoing, and the theater is slated to open this summer. The theater will be Paramount's fourth venue – designed to provide an intimate atmosphere within a 98-seat theater that will transport you to a moment in time.

The first show to debut in the new space is *Million Dollar Quartet*. This new venture would not be possible without the support of our friends at Verano Zen Leaf and the City of Aurora. Subscriber pre-sale begins May 1. *Million Dollar Quartet* opens July 10.



From Left: Jonathan Jensen (Paramount), Chris Fotopoulos (Verano Zen Leaf), Tim Rater (Paramount), and Steve Maezika (Verano Zen Leaf).



## THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES: *BRIGHTER FUTURES*

In February, our Theatre for Young Audiences program kicked off a tour to local schools in Aurora. During this time, we visited five area schools where we staged nine free performances of the original work *Brighter Futures*, serving an estimated audience of 3,730 middle school and high school-aged students.

We learned from some of those schools that they have been on a "field trip halt" for the past few years, so this program is a particular treat for the students. One of the teachers said, "For many disadvantaged students, this program represents the only time they may ever see any live performances in their youth. Since Covid, most schools have allocated funds towards technology, and less and less towards the arts."

We're inspired to continue bringing performing arts to members of our community and help bridge this gap. Thank you to the National Endowment for the Arts, Aurora Women's Empowerment Foundation, and Waubensee Community College for bringing this program to life.

**Thank you to our Brighter Futures Sponsors!**



## BRIGHTER FUTURES AROUND TOWN



From Left: Laura Quiñones, Maxel McCloud Schingen, and Isis Elizabeth in *Brighter Futures* at Copley Theatre



From Left: Isis Elizabeth, Darian Goulding, Maxel McCloud Schingen, Nolan Robinson, and Joryhebel Ginorio in *Brighter Futures* at Waldo Middle School



*Brighter Futures* at Bednarcik Jr. High School

**"When [the character] Xoe was talking about her expectations from her mom, I really relate to that... I cried a little bit... you feel like they feel."**

– Aurora, student at East Aurora High School

**"It was not what I was expecting it to be and the elements of AI and how it was done was really unique."**

– Charlie, student at Bednarcik Junior High

## PARAMOUNT SPOTLIGHT



We're elated to introduce you to Denise Farrugia, a loyal Paramount subscriber, donor, and volunteer usher. Many of you have certainly seen her at Paramount, as Denise has generously volunteered since 2018. On average, our ushers volunteer approximately 8,000 hours

annually of their time and are an essential part of our Paramount Family.

Denise is a triple threat as a loyal Paramount subscriber, donor and volunteer usher. Denise let us know that for years she would hear about Paramount from her husband Ronald Burgess, who made a frequent trek from Warrentville to Paramount in order to watch movies shown on our big screen. They've been patrons for over 40 years.

Denise retired on May 26, 2018. Three days later she was trained and ready to start ushering at Paramount. Volunteering at Paramount brings Denise great joy. She loves being able to see the shows many different times and enjoys chatting to patrons about Paramount and the shows on the stage. Her favorite part is seeing the awe on the faces of Paramount's patrons during performances and the ability to escape into the wonder of each production.

Denise has many reasons why she loves Paramount – for one she thinks the theater is "absolutely beautiful." The excellence and quality of the Broadway and BOLD Series shows inspire Denise and Ron to keep making the 35-minute drive to the theater season after season. She especially takes great pride in introducing Paramount to her friends. She and Ron have supported Paramount through donations for about 30 years. Their main motivation for supporting Paramount is "to ensure the joy we have experienced over the years will continue. We are grateful for the donors before us that made it possible and are inspired to pay it forward."

We are honored to have so many dedicated and loyal supporters, like Denise, who inspire us to keep pushing boundaries and drive our mission.

Thank you, Denise.



# INFORMED CHARITABLE GIVING

## HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR GIVING DURING TAX SEASON

### IRA ROLLOVER

Are you required to withdraw a minimum distribution from your individual retirement accounts? Starting in 2024, anyone who has an IRA and is 73 years or older is required to withdraw a minimum annual distribution (RMD). Eligible donors have until December 31 to make that withdrawal from their IRA – or until April 1 if it's your first RMD. If you fail to withdraw the full amount of the RMD by the due date, you run the risk of being subjected to a 50% excise tax.

Your RMD distributions are taxable, however there is a special exception which makes any money from an IRA that is paid directly to a qualified nonprofit – like Paramount – exempt from being taxed. This year, all individuals aged 70 ½ and older can donate up to \$105,000 to charity, tax-free, through Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from their IRA funds. As a result, you, the donor, can avoid being pushed into a higher income tax bracket and optimize the tax benefits of giving.

We know that giving through an IRA is not an option for everyone, or that it may not be the right time for you personally, but we'd like to encourage you to start thinking about diversifying your charitable giving and planning for future tax seasons. Read on for other ways you can diversify your giving and maximize its benefits during tax season.

### DONATE APPRECIATED STOCK

When you give through shares of stock directly to a qualified nonprofit, you avoid paying a capital gains tax at the time of the sale and the nonprofit benefits from getting the full market value of the stock. That means that you as a donor get the deduction on the full market value, which is a win for your tax bill.

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are getting ready to sell a business, real estate or other appreciated assets, you may also wish to make a charitable contribution to lessen or avoid the tax burden from that sale. Additionally, when you donate cash to a qualified 501c3 you can generally deduct up to 60% of your adjusted gross income to offset current tax year liabilities.

The options to make your mark through charitable giving and maximize your financial benefits are plentiful and we're happy to work with you to make sure you're getting the most out of your giving while supporting Paramount and our mission.

To further discuss all of the ways you can make an impact at Paramount, please contact our *Director of Individual Giving*, Sarah Tesch by calling 630-723-2479 or at [saraht@paramountarts.com](mailto:saraht@paramountarts.com).



PARAMOUNT  
ON TOUR



### ARE YOU READY TO GO ON AN ADVENTURE THIS YEAR?

Join us for Paramount on Tour this fall in New York City. Spend a weekend seeing the sights and Broadway shows in the company of others who love theater and Paramount!

#### AVAILABLE DATES

Oct. 4 – 7

Dec. 6 – 9



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Scan the QR code or contact Madison Wakefield via [madisonw@paramountarts.com](mailto:madisonw@paramountarts.com).