

Summer 2025

BACKSTAGE BULLETIN

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends,

The summer issue of *Backstage Bulletin* always gives us an opportunity to step back and reflect on our mid-year progress and look ahead to the remainder of the year.

In June, we closed our much buzzed-about production of *Cats*, which received national attention due to its unique staging of the beloved classic. Our School of the Arts presented its Third Annual Performance Camp, *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* at the end of June. We celebrated the one-year anniversary of Stolp Island Theatre. We opened *True West* in Copley Theatre, which, according to *Chicago Tribune*'s Chris Jones, "has it all going on."

As you're already aware, *True West* is the first and last Bold Series show of our 2025-2026 season. We had to make the difficult decision to place the Bold Series on hiatus due to a loss in funding, a decision we as a Board made with heavy hearts.

Even though we've had to make difficult decisions in respect to the Bold series, we continue to look forward to our 2025-2026 Broadway Season. We'll kick things off with *Come From Away* and mark the occasion with our fifth annual **TOAST: Cheers to Paramount**, adding to the opening night celebrations on Friday, August 29.

As always, these important programs wouldn't be possible without support from all of you. You continue to champion Paramount and the arts in our community, and now, more than ever, we need your support. On behalf of everyone at Paramount—thank you!

With Gratitude, Jonathan Hylton

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**NOW THROUGH
AUGUST 31**

True West
at Copley Theatre

AUGUST 20 – OCTOBER 12

Come From Away
at Paramount Theatre

AUGUST 29

Fifth Annual
TOAST: Cheers to Paramount

AUGUST 2025

Make-A-Will Month



PARAMOUNT
THEATRE

DONOR DIGEST

Rep. Barbara Hernandez on the Importance of Funding the Arts

Here at Paramount Theatre, we have been incredibly fortunate to form a partnership with State Representative Barbara Hernandez. She was appointed as the 50th District State Representative in 2019 and has since worked tirelessly for her constituency and the city of Aurora.

Thanks to her advocacy for the arts and belief in our organization and mission, Rep. Hernandez has helped Paramount secure \$800,000 in state funding for capital projects needed to help our organization maintain a safe and accessible environment for our guests and our community.

We sat down briefly with Rep. Hernandez to ask her what motivates her support of our theatre and its role within the community.



What motivated you to support funding for Paramount Theatre?

As a child my dad always showed me the importance of theater and although growing up it was financially difficult to go to plays, he would find ways to still introduce them to me through film and free library discussions. Paramount Theatre was the first place I was able to experience a live play and I want children and families to have an opportunity to sit inside a theater and get inspired the same way I did.

How do you believe this funding will impact the local community economically and culturally?

The Paramount Theatre is the heart of Downtown Aurora. Families travel from many different parts of the state to witness the award-winning plays and patronize local businesses. Downtown Aurora has a lot to offer—Paramount and all its venues help bring more people to shop, eat and spend time in Aurora.

What role do you see the arts playing in public education, and how does Paramount contribute to that mission?

Paramount Theatre provides opportunities for kids to see what it takes to put on a play and engage them in exploring a potential career in theater. Paramount also creates opportunities for students to learn through Paramount School of the Arts and various volunteer activities and programs they offer in the community.

In times of budget constraints, what compels you to allocate public funds to the arts?

While government funding is currently uncertain, it is crucial to support our arts and give people the opportunity to enjoy it through programs like Pay What You Can at Paramount—offering families an opportunity to see a play and pay what they are able to helps tear down financial barriers to quality art.

Third Spark Lab Series Reading of 2025 Brings a Bilingual Musical to Paramount

Our brand-new program, the Spark Lab Series, part of our New Works department, continued to do important work and provide emerging artists and projects with important resources to have their art seen and heard. In May, we presented our third project in the Spark Lab Series, a bilingual (Spanish and English) musical in development, *Mija*. The workshop week for the creative team culminated in a concert reading performance of the script and score on May 17th, presented as a free offering thanks to our sponsors Aurora Women's Empowerment Foundation and Healing Illinois. The presentation welcomed over 100 attendees, including the author team of Grammy Award-winner Gaby Moreno, Portland singer-songwriter Anna Gilbert, Broadway artist Evynne Hollens and Seattle playwright Rebecca Touriño Collinsworth. The co-directing team featured two local Chicago directors, and the cast was made up of a mixture of local as well as Broadway talent.

Paramount New Works is excited to present its 4th Spark Lab event of the year this fall. Integrating technology, improvisation, and audience participation into a narrative storyline, this upcoming work-in-progress will be a unique theatrical experience open to the public to attend at no cost. More information coming soon!



Lightning Strikes on Stage for Paramount School of the Arts



Paramount School of the Arts held its third annual Summer Performance Camp *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* on the Paramount stage, which was generously supported by GreenState Credit Union.

The PSA Performance Camp is a four-week program which culminates in a weekend of performances at Paramount Theatre. This year, more than 50 students, aided by professional staff at Paramount Theatre, performed three shows for our audiences on Friday, June 27 and Saturday, June 28. Thank you to everyone who came out to support our PSA students and those of you who support the school through your generous giving!



ENCORE OF A LIFETIME

MAKE A WILL AND SECURE YOUR LEGACY!

If you've held one of our Playbills in your hand over the past five years, you may have noticed a group of our donors recognized as a part of the Encore Society. The Encore Society is comprised of a group of Paramount donors who have made a life-long commitment to Paramount through a gift in their estate plans.

Every year in August, we mark Make-a-Will Month, which serves as a timely reminder of the importance of planning for the future. Taking the time to create or update a will ensures that your wishes are respected, and your loved ones are cared for after you're gone.

Planned giving, an integral part of estate planning, allows individuals to leave a lasting legacy. By including

charitable gifts in your will, you can support causes close to your heart well into the future. We'd like to encourage you to get started planning for your future and consider making Paramount a part of your life's legacy.

This August, reflect on how a well-planned will and charitable giving can shape a better tomorrow and become a part of the Encore Society at Paramount!

For more information about Planned Giving, as well as other ways to support Paramount, reach out to Ljiljana Milojevic, Senior Director of Development, via ljiljanam@paramountarts.com.



ON SALE NOW *Spring and Summer
Paramount on Tour 2026 Dates*

MAY 15 – 18 • JUNE 12 – 15

Dates for fall and winter to be announced soon!

FOR MORE INFO

Contact Paula Rae Brown at 331.684.1457 or paularaeb@paramountarts.com