

FEBRUARY 2022



FROM THE WINGS

STARS OF TOMORROW

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

STARS OF TOMORROW KICKS OFF SEASON 24

RBTL's Stars of Tomorrow recognizes local high school musicals in true Tony Award® fashion. The program is open to schools in a 9-county area and brings much-deserved recognition to performing arts students. Participating schools are split into divisions and judges are assigned to score individual schools in over 10 categories. At the annual Stars of Tomorrow Recognition Ceremony, which will be held this year on May 5th, those schools have the opportunity to perform a selection from their musical on stage at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre. Awards of recognition are then presented to schools and students with the highest scores in each of the adjudicated categories. Learn more at rbtl.org/stars-of-tomorrow and be sure to check out the talented performers in your area! To learn more about the return of RBTL's education programs, check out our [January issue](#) of From The Wings.

'21-'22 PARTICIPATING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE WEEKENDS*:

SCHOOL	SHOW	WEEKEND OF
CAMPBELL-SAVONA	FREAKY FRIDAY	NOV 19
BRIGHTON	DISNEY'S BEAUTY & THE BEAST	FEBRUARY 10
GREECE ATHENA	42ND STREET	FEBRUARY 10
GREECE ODYSSEY	LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE	FEBRUARY 24
NEWARK	SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	MARCH 3
AVON	BIG FISH	MARCH 10
LE ROY	NEWSIES	MARCH 10
MARION	MAMMA MIA	MARCH 10
MYNDERSE	CINDERELLA	MARCH 10
PALMYRA MACEDON	LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS	MARCH 10
PENN YAN	LIGHTNING THIEF	MARCH 10
PITTSFORD MENDON	DISASTER	MARCH 10
VICTOR	FREAKY FRIDAY	MARCH 10
MIDLAKES	ELF	MARCH 10 & MARCH 17
MARCUS WHITMAN	THE WIZARD OF OZ	MARCH 17
AQUINAS	LEGALLY BLONDE	MARCH 22
CHURCHVILLE-CHILI	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	MARCH 22
EASTRIDGE	PIPPIN'	MARCH 22
GANANDA	DAMN YANKEES	MARCH 22
LYNDONVILLE / MEDINA	CINDERELLA	MARCH 22
MOUNT MORRIS	NUNSENSE	MARCH 22
WAYNE	ANASTASIA	MARCH 22
WHEATLAND-CHILI	ADDAMS FAMILY	MARCH 22
ALBION	SHREK	MARCH 31
EAST ROCHESTER	ONCE UPON A MATTRESS	MARCH 31
WARSAW	MAMMA MIA	MARCH 31

UPCOMING EVENTS:

MY FAIR LADY
FEBRUARY 22-27

ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC
YOUTH ORCHESTRA
MARCH 6

RENT
MARCH 7-8

CIRQUE INTERNATIONAL
MARCH 12

DIANA KRALL
MARCH 30



RBTL'S AUDITORIUM THEATRE
885 EAST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NY 14605
585.222.5000 - RBTL.ORG



@RBTLAUD

*See individual school websites for specific performance schedules and details.



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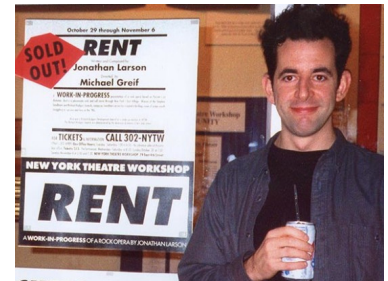
25 YEARS (13,140,000 MINUTES) OF RENT

For a quarter of a century, Jonathan Larson's Tony Award® and Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece RENT has inspired us to choose love over fear and to live without regret. Its immeasurable emotional impact has forever changed the world of musical theatre. RENT follows a year in the lives of a diverse group of artists and friends struggling to follow their dreams without selling out. This powerfully resonant phenomenon has become more than a musical – it's a cultural touchstone, a rite of passage and a source of joy and strength for millions. The extraordinary RENT fan community spans every continent and every generation – including many born over a decade after the show opened on Broadway.

Whether you've never seen RENT or have completely lost count, you can't miss it this time around – the 25th Anniversary "Farewell Season of Love" is your FINAL CHANCE to experience this illustrious touring production. Details at rntl.org, tickets at Ticketmaster.com.

As we celebrate 25 years (or 13,140,000 minutes) of RENT before next month's performances, we're taking a look back at the past two and a half decades of the production...

- RENT, a modern-day version of the opera La Bohème, is a rock musical with music, lyrics and book by Jonathan Larson. He is also known for the musical "Tick, Tick... Boom!" which was recently turned into a feature film starring Andrew Garfield. Larson died of an aortic aneurism on January 25, 1996, just hours after RENT's final dress rehearsal Off-Broadway and the day of the show's first preview performance. He was 35, just 10 days shy of his 36th birthday.
- Previews of RENT went on as planned, despite Larson's death. The show officially opened Off-Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop on February 13, 1996. It transferred to Broadway's Nederlander Theatre on April 29, 1996.
- The original Broadway cast of RENT included Anthony Rapp (Mark Cohen), Adam Pascal (Roger Davis), Daphne Rubin-Vega (Mimi Márquez), Jesse L. Martin (Tom Collins), Wilson Jermaine Heredia (Angel Dumott Schunard), Idina Menzel (Maureen Johnson), Fredi Walker (Joanne Jefferson) and Rochester's Taye Diggs (Benjamin Coffin III). Also of note: Penfield-native Nicolette Hart, long-time RBTL education program collaborator, played the role of Maureen both on Broadway and on tour.
- In 1996, RENT won the Tony Award® for Best Musical as well as the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Larson also posthumously won Tony Awards® for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score. Heredia won Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical for his role as Angel.
- Tours of RENT have played in 27 countries across six continents since 1996. RENT first came to Rochester in April of 2001. Since, it has been a part of RBTL's Broadway Season four times.
- RENT closed its Broadway run on September 7, 2008, after more than 12 years. It is the 11th longest running show in Broadway history.
- RENT's 25th Anniversary Farewell Tour alone has played five countries and more than 200 cities. Several members of the original creative team that brought the musical to Broadway were involved in recreating the show; Choreographer Marlies Yearby, Costume Designer Angela Wendt and Music Supervisor Tim Weil. Director Evan Ensigh also worked on the original Broadway production in 1996.



Final season of Love

RENT
25TH ANNIVERSARY
FAREWELL TOUR

March 7-8



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'BACK TO SCHOOL' WITH MY FAIR LADY

When RBTL goes into schools and classrooms as part of our arts education programs, along with curricular lessons and social-emotional themes, we always give participating students an in-depth look at the show they are going to see, so they are better prepared for what they will experience. Who doesn't love to go to a show feeling like they know a little more about it? It not only makes you feel more connected to the show, but you look at the piece from a more informed perspective. So, let's take a closer look at the history of MY FAIR LADY, a classic of American musical theatre and the way our ARTS Partners students are approaching their learning.

The original play, *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw, is based on Greek mythology. In Greek lore, Pygmalion was a mythical artist, who sculpted a perfect woman and then fell in love with the statue he created. Look at how eerily similar that is to what Professor Higgins does to Eliza Doolittle. Shaw wrote the play in 1912 and it did not open as the musical we know today until 1956. Shaw did not want it turned into a musical. It was a huge source of steady income for him, and he was afraid the genre of musical theatre would ruin it. It wasn't a project begun until after Shaw's death in 1950. The legendary musical team of Rodgers and Hammerstein tried first, but failed. Ultimately, the show we know today as MY FAIR LADY was created by the collaboration of Lerner and Lowe.

The show originally had two different titles prior to MY FAIR LADY. "Fanfaron" was a working title for a bit, which is a British slang term meaning 'a boaster' or 'braggart.' "Lady Liza" was the title that held for quite a while, but it is reported that Rex Harrison, who originated the role of Henry Higgins, was against a title that was based on a female leading role. The title MY FAIR LADY comes from a line in the popular nursery rhyme, "London Bridge is Falling Down". Discerning ears will briefly hear a bit of this medley in the overture of the show.

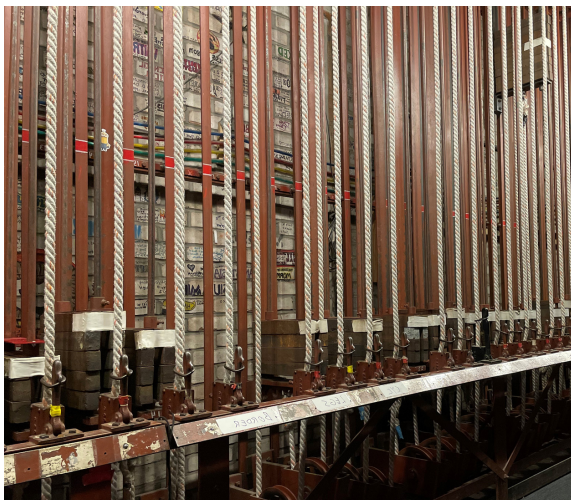
Although "The Boy Friend" was Julie Andrews's first Broadway role, it was MY FAIR LADY that quickly elevated her prominence and success in musical theatre. Originating the role at just 19-years-old, she continued as Eliza for three years on Broadway and London's West End. When the show was set to be made into a film, the role however went to Audrey Hepburn, as Warner Brothers felt they "needed a name." Ironically, the film opened the same year as the movie "Mary Poppins". MY FAIR LADY received Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Lead Actor (Rex Harrison), but it was Andrews who took home the Best Lead Actress Oscar for her role as the iconic nanny.

A show with a rich history, this production pays homage to its past. Classic movie fans cannot help but remember the stunning costumes of Cecil Beaton in the film. This production's costume designer, Catherine Zuber, won a Tony Award® for her work in this show. She plays with color in many ways - including the distinctions of social class in her choices. Jewel tones and intricate fabrics vs. dark, muted and mismatched pieces shine a light on the social mobility and differences in the show. In many ways, Zuber pays tribute to inspiration she received from the film design by Beaton. But, she also pays homage to the original Greek story of Pygmalion, as she hoped Eliza's Embassy Ball gown would "give the sense of a classical statue." One last thing to notice: Eliza comes full circle in the show in many ways, as is seen by the color choice of her final costume. It's the same color she is wearing when we first meet her in Covent Garden.

History is so exciting when we look at it through a musical theatre lens! For those of you familiar with the show, we leave you with this to think about: Why is it that a show like MY FAIR LADY is timeless, and what is it about this particular production that helps to keep that sense of immortality for Eliza and Higgins? These are among the questions our ARTS Partners students will answer after seeing the production at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre.

To learn more about RBTL's ARTS Partners or other arts education programs, visit rbtl.org. To see how you can help support our programs, visit rbtl.org/donate.





WHAT LIES BEHIND THE FLY RAIL

A "fly system" - or theatrical "rigging system" - is a system of rope lines, pulleys, counterweights and related devices within a theater, that enables a stage crew to fly (hoist) components such as curtains, lights, scenery, stage effects and, sometimes, people. Systems are typically designed to fly objects between clear view of the audience and out of view, into the large opening, known as the fly loft, above the stage. Staff Rigger, Antonio Reyes, shared closer look at the fly system at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre, which revealed some artistic secrets!

When he started working at the Auditorium Theatre, a Local 25 stagehand, Mikey O'Hara, began drawing the logos of touring shows on the brick wall behind the ropes. Over the years, he, along with touring production staff, performing artists and other stage crew members, have added to the collage, creating a rich history of past performers and performances to recall. Enjoy a peek...



BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPOTLIGHT: MILESTONES IN THEATRE

- **Shuffle Along (1921):** "Shuffle Along" made history in 1921 as the first Broadway musical entirely created by and starring Black artists. It played 504 performances at the 63rd Street Musical Hall in NYC, a record at the time. The show helped usher in the Harlem Renaissance.
- **Lorraine Hansberry:** Lorraine Hansberry was the first African American woman to write a play that was produced on Broadway. Her landmark play, "A Raisin in the Sun" (1959), earned four Tony Award® nominations and is credited with breaking down racial barriers on Broadway.
- **Tyler Perry:** Tyler Perry has a long history with RBTL. In the early 90's when Perry was struggling to launch his career, the Auditorium Theatre was among the first to host him in his groundbreaking play "I Know I've Been Changed." Over the years, RBTL has welcomed Tyler Perry back many times in such titles as "What's Done in the Dark," "Hell Hath no fury Like a Woman Scorned," "Why Did I Get Married?" and most recently, "Madea on the Run." As of 2019, Perry had developed seven TV series, 17 feature films and 20 stage plays.
- **James Earl Jones:** In 1969, James Earl Jones won Best Actor in a Play for his performance in "The Great White Hope," making him the first African American winner in any Tony Awards® category. In 2017, he was awarded a special Tony Award® for Lifetime Achievement in Theatre.