

FEBRUARY 2023



# FROM THE WINGS

## RBTL TO ACQUIRE AUDITORIUM CENTER

The Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL) is ecstatic to announce it is acquiring the entirety of the Auditorium Center. With the purchase, RBTL will now operate the full complex, located at the corner of East Main Street and Prince Street in Rochester's Neighborhood of the Arts. RBTL has owned the Auditorium Theatre portion of the building since 2004.

The acquisition will allow for much needed improvements to community accessibility and amenities. While both beautiful and historic, the complex as it sits, provides for many challenges. RBTL will partner with PIKE, LaBella, LeChase and the Rochester Preservation Board to augment the existing space in the most optimal way.



Restoration and renovation priorities will focus on enhancing the theatre-going experience for both patrons and performers.

The Auditorium building, which currently makes up RBTL's Auditorium Theatre and The Auditorium Center, was originally the Masonic Temple of Rochester, serving Masons across the Northeast. In addition to the main Theatre space, among other spaces, the complex also contains four former ceremonial meeting rooms. Under the new ownership, these rooms will be renovated and made available to community entities and will allow for the expansion of RBTL's nationally-recognized and award-winning education programs.

RBTL CEO and Board Chair, Arnie Rothschild, says, "For a very long time, Rochester has deserved a multi-stage venue, especially one of quality and historic significance. We feel very fortunate that the timing is right for us to create this opportunity for our community! Once refurbished, this will be an amazing showcase project for Rochester."

Phase one of the renovation, which will focus on reconfiguring the main floor of the Auditorium Center portion of the building, is anticipated to begin later this year. Renovations will be funded in part by capital campaigns, sponsorships, operating surplus, state and local grants and foundations and other aid. With improvements and forward thinking, the complex, including its nearly 2,500 seat venue, will be viable for generations to come. RBTL's goal is to complete renovations by 2030, the building's 100th anniversary.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

BLUEY'S BIG PLAY

March 10-11

HADESTOWN

March 14-19

BLUES IS ALRIGHT TOUR

March 25

ROYAL COMEDY TOUR

March 31

DISNEY'S ALADDIN

April 11-16



RBTL'S AUDITORIUM THEATRE

885 EAST MAIN STREET

ROCHESTER, NY 14605

585.222.5000 - [RBTL.ORG](http://RBTL.ORG)



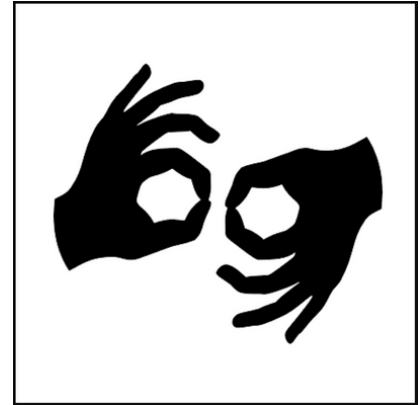
@RBTLAUD

# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT HOW ASL INTERPRETERS PREPARE TO SIGN LIVE THEATRE PERFORMANCES

Those who have been to a Thursday evening performance during RBTL's Broadway Season, probably noticed two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters standing on a platform at the side of the stage facing Orchestra Right. For years, RBTL has been offering Sign Interpretation at certain performances, reflecting a commitment to providing an enjoyable theatre-going experience for our diverse audiences.

Much like a Broadway show, Sign Interpretation takes hours of preparation. In fact, for RBTL's Broadway performances, interpreters are sent the script as far as eight weeks in advance. Meaning, it isn't as easy as just listening to the spoken words and translating it to ASL.

Cat Hardesty has been coordinating and interpreting for RBTL since 2016. We sent her a list of questions and she inquired with a group of interpreters for us (who rotate performances at the Auditorium Theatre) about their preparation routines. They say that research is the most important aspect. They need to make sure that they understand the characters, linguistic nuances and the vocabulary in order to develop an equivalent translation to ASL. Their preparation begins first by reading, analyzing and memorizing the script, followed by previewing the show before the interpreted performance. For interpreting a concert, there are some added steps and a bit more research. Once they obtain the set list they need to watch YouTube videos of the songs being performed to get a sense of the music.



Hardesty says there is also a vast difference between signing spoken dialogue and musical numbers. "With music you incorporate more body language, following the rhythm and flow of the music. We tend to use up more space (signing bigger or smaller depending on the lyrics and the speed of the song). And the most important part is having a love of music, as this is reflected in your interpretation."

Even though the interpreters have memorized the script ahead of the performance, hearing and listening are still necessary while interpreting. That can also be the biggest challenge of a live performance. "Sometimes ad-lib comments get muffled, headsets don't work, or enthusiastic patrons yell and drown out the speaker or the music is louder than the speaker," said the group of interpreters.

When signing a musical or play at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre, there are usually two interpreters standing to the side of the stage. This means each of them are responsible for interpreting multiple characters' lines. "There is a term called role shifting, which means that the interpreter turns their body from right to left (slightly) to indicate this is a new character, accompanied by the turning of the head and eye gaze," said Hardesty. "For example, if it is an adult speaking to a child, then the adult character would look down to the right at the child and the child character would look up to the left at the adult, etc."

Overall, a lot of work goes into interpreting live performances accurately and it's all in an effort to make the theatre accessible. "There is something delicious about the theater; be it magic shows, comedians, music, plays... any form of entertainment and we all need to have equal access to these venues," said Hardesty. "It lifts spirits and entertains and we all need to be able to experience this either through spoken language or ASL."

While ASL Interpretation is offered at most Thursday evening subscription performances of the Broadway Season, Sign Interpretation can be requested for other events by calling 585-222-5000 or emailing [mail@rbtl.org](mailto:mail@rbtl.org).

Here is the remaining Sign Interpretation schedule for the 2022-2023 Broadway Season:

➤ "Hadestown"  
Thursday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m.

➤ "SIX"  
Thursday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m.

➤ "Aladdin"  
Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m.

➤ "To Kill A Mockingbird"  
Thursday, June 15 at 7:30 p.m.

To learn more about other accessibility services at RBTL's Auditorium Theatre, visit [rbtl.org/accessibility-services](https://rbtl.org/accessibility-services).

# THE ANCIENT GREEK MYTHS, INTERTWINED TO TELL "HADESTOWN"

"Hadestown," which is making its Rochester debut March 14-19, tells the story of two Ancient Greek myths. It's an original and inventive take on the tales of young dreamers; Orpheus & Eurydice and Hades (God of the Underworld) & Persephone. While knowledge of Greek mythology is not necessary before seeing the show, here is a little refresher on these couples' stories.

Greek myths were told in Ancient Greece as a way to understand the larger world, such as natural phenomena, the development of humanity and the creation of the universe. For example, the story of Hades and Persephone illustrates why we have the four seasons.

The legend goes like this: Hades, brother of Zeus (God of the sky), rarely left the Underworld. But the few times he did, he saw Persephone, the daughter of Zeus and Demeter (Goddess of the harvest). Hades instantly fell in love with Persephone, who is the Goddess of flowers, fruit and grain. So, Hades went to Zeus, who had promised him one of his daughters in marriage. Zeus obliged when Hades told him he wanted to marry Persephone. However, Zeus knew that Demeter would never allow her daughter to marry Hades, so the brothers hatched a plan that would see Hades' wish granted.

Zeus had an enchanting narcissus flower planted, which Persephone was immediately drawn to. When she bent to pick it, the ground split open and out of a huge crack came Hades and his chariot, taking Persephone back down to the Underworld with him. Demeter was so distraught in her endless search for her daughter that she neglected her duties to tend to the earth. Plants withered, animals died and famine ravaged. Zeus knew that in order to save humanity, he had to intervene. He sent Hermes, messenger of the gods and conductor of souls, to the Underworld to retrieve Persephone.

Upon arriving, he found her happy and in love with Hades, who treated her with respect and compassion. As Queen of the Underworld, Persephone helped the spirits of the dead cross over. Persephone was conflicted about her return from the Underworld, wanting to stay with the one she loved, but also deeply missing her mother.



*Matthew Patrick Quinn, Chibueze Ihuoma and Maria-Christina Oliveras in Hadestown North American Tour 2022.  
Photo by T Charles Erickson*



*Nathan Lee Graham and company in Hadestown North American Tour 2022.  
Photo by T Charles Erickson*

Hades was terrified that Persephone would choose to leave him, so he gave her pomegranate seeds to eat. In Greek Mythology, it was believed that if one ate food provided by a captor, they would always return. Persephone ate six seeds, so Zeus decided that she would spend six months of the year in the Underworld and the remaining half with her mother above ground. Thus many believe that this explains the seasons. While Persephone is away from her mother, Demeter causes the earth to wither and die (autumn and winter) and when her daughter returns, earth becomes fruitful again (spring and summer).

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Hades and Persephone play a part in Orpheus and Eurydice's story. Orpheus was a singer, poet and lyre player (a stringed instrument like a U-shaped harp with strings fixed to a crossbar). It was said that no one could resist his melodies and that when he played, objects would come to life. One day, Orpheus was in the forest playing the lyre, when he noticed Eurydice, a beautiful wood nymph. It was love at first sight for the couple, who were soon married.



*Belén Moyano, Chibueze Ihuoma, Hannah Whitley, Nyla Watson and Dominique Kempf in Hadestown North American Tour 2022.  
Photo by T Charles Erickson*

This is where the tale takes a turn. Eurydice's beauty was apparent to more than just Orpheus. A shepherd took notice and wanted Eurydice for himself, so he hid in the bushes and waited for her. His plan: kill Orpheus and take Eurydice as his own. But as they fled from the shepherd, Eurydice was bitten by a venomous snake and died instantly.

Orpheus could only sing his grief and in his desperation to see his wife again, he journeyed to the Underworld. It was a feat no one had done before and survived, but Orpheus was protected by the gods, being a son of one himself. Once he arrived and met the King and Queen of the Underworld, Orpheus played his lyre and sang a song so heartbreaking even Hades, God of the dead,

felt compassion. Hades agreed to let Orpheus take Eurydice back above ground on one condition: he had to lead her out, but could not look back at her until she was out of the dark and in the light of the world again. If he turned to her before then, Eurydice would be condemned to the Underworld forever.

If you wish to know the ending to their saga, come see "Hadestown" this March. Tickets are available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or the Auditorium Box Office.



*Matthew Patrick Quinn, Maria-Christina Oliveras, Chibueze Ihuoma, Nathan Lee Graham, Hannah Whitley and company in Hadestown North American Tour 2022.  
Photo by T Charles Erickson*



*Nathan Lee Graham in Hadestown North American Tour 2022.  
Photo by T Charles Erickson*

## WHILE YOU'RE AT THE SHOW: ENTER OUR GREEK GIFT BASKET RAFFLE

**\$5 EACH**  
or  
**3 FOR \$10**

*Proceeds benefit RBTL's Arts Education Programs.*

Raffle tickets available for purchase in the lobby at each performance.

### PRIZE INCLUDES:

Mythology  
Restaurant  
Gift Card

Assortment of  
Mediterranean  
Food

Illustrated  
Treasury of  
Greek Myths

Narcissus  
Bulb  
Growing Kit

# LOCAL STUDENTS PARTAKE IN "BEETLEJUICE" BROADWAY BOOST

The second ever Broadway Boost session, one of RBTL's newest education programs, took place the week the "Beetlejuice" National Tour was in town. Between February 13 and 17, ten local students participated in the four-day intensive, which was centered around the musical.

Broadway Boost, led by three local teaching artists, focuses on character work, storytelling through movement and exploring the themes of the featured show. Included with Broadway Boost is a ticket to see the featured musical. This helps allow the students apply what they learn from the show to their own work as a performer. In this session, the teens even had the opportunity to learn from a "Beetlejuice" cast member. Ensemble member Trevor Michael Schmidt taught a masterclass the evening of February 15 prior to them watching him perform on stage. He was able to share his singing, dancing and acting techniques and what it's like to work on a Broadway tour.



There are three remaining Broadway Boost sessions this Season:



MARCH 13-17



APRIL 10-14



MAY 15-19

To learn more and register go to [rbtl.org/broadway-boost](http://rbtl.org/broadway-boost).

## RBTL WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Guglielmo (Guglielmo Sauce) & Robert Cieslica (M&T Bank) have joined the RBTL board alongside:

Arnie Rothschild

James D. Brown

Frank Hagelberg

Robert Mann

Robert Porretti

Richard Kaplan

Michael Cooper

Michael Haymes

Jennifer Novak Weidner

Naomi Silver

Philip J. Puchalski

Elizabeth Cordello

Jennifer Lake

Mary Ognibene

Eric Smith

Bill Sullivan

Hilda Rosario Escher

Miguel Llano

Tyler O'Reilly

Phil Smith

Lydia Boddie-Rice

Mike Gurowski

John Magee

Janelle Plumb

Kristin Weber