

DECEMBER 2023

FROM THE WINGS

REMAINING SHOWS IN BROADWAY SEASON, PLUS SPECIAL ENGAGEMENTS, ON SALE NOW

Just in time for the holidays, individual tickets for the remaining shows in the 2023-2024 M&T Bank Broadway Season, plus three Special Engagements, are now on sale. The four shows include "Mrs. Doubtfire" (February 20-25), "Jesus Christ Superstar" (April 8-10), "Shrek - The Musical" (May 11-12) and "TINA - The Tina Turner Musical" (June 4-9). Tickets are available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) and the Auditorium Box Office.

These shows join two others that were already on sale: "Ain't Too Proud - The Life and Times of the Temptations" (January 30-February 4) and "The Book of Mormon" (May 3-5).

You can also give the gift of more than just Broadway this holiday season. Visit [RBTL.org](https://www.RBTL.org) for a full list of upcoming events, including comedy, concerts and returning favorites.

Gift certificates are also available at [RBTL.org/gift-certificates](https://www.RBTL.org/gift-certificates) and by calling 585-222-5000. Gift certificates are redeemable for all West Herr Auditorium Theatre events.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

RPO STAR WARS

January 3

AIN'T TOO PROUD

January 30-February 4

MRS. DOUBTFIRE

February 20-25

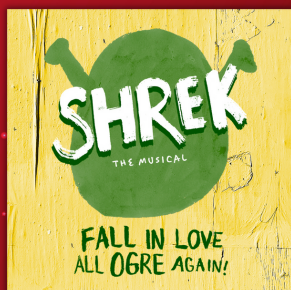
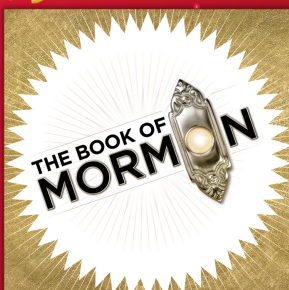
JOHN MELLENCAMP

March 8

ROCHESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL

March 9

GIVE THE GIFT OF BROADWAY



WEST HERR
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
875 EAST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NY 14605

[RBTL.ORG](https://www.RBTL.org)



@RBTLAUD

Q&A WITH THE CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN LEADERS OF RBTL'S RESTORATION AND RENOVATION PROJECT

Work is moving along to bring elevator access to the second-floor lobby of the West Herr Auditorium Theatre! It's just one part of RBTL's extensive efforts to make the building more accessible and adaptable. Pike Construction Services and LaBella Associates have been taking on the project since RBTL first announced the acquisition of the entire Auditorium Complex. Helping to lead the restoration and renovation work are Pike Construction Services Project Executive, Steve Savage, P.E. and LaBella Associates Director of Architecture and Vice President, Daniel A. Pieters. Savage has been with Pike since 2011, after spending time in Washington, D.C. working as a licensed structural engineer designing bridges. His role with this project is to work with RBTL and LaBella to develop a master plan, identify phases of work and manage the construction involved in those phases. Pieters joined LaBella in 2009 and in total, has nearly three decades of experience as a registered architect. He has taken on the role of lead designer for the project at the West Herr Performing Arts Center. We spoke to both Savage and Pieters to give us some insight into the process of transforming the newly acquired portion of the Complex and what to expect.

When you first looked at the Auditorium Complex project, what were your first impressions and thoughts?

Pieters: What an amazing building. I would have loved to be part of the original design team. It could use some TLC and I'm glad to be part of helping with that. Also, how can we get the whole building back on track to what it was initially intended for? The interior needs to breathe again. It needs to be opened back up and decluttered.

What are the characteristics of this building and what are you able to preserve and enhance?

Savage: The building has a beautiful historic aesthetic that hasn't been displayed in some time, partially a result of the various renovations over the years. Our plan is to strip back components of the building so that we can show the full potential of the original finishes.



Are there any limitations while working with a structure that was built nearly a century ago?

Pieters: We need to find a way to get back to what the building's original intent was. The building has been internally overbuilt and congested over the years because of various needs it had to offer. Now it makes sense to peel some of that away to allow it to be more efficient.

Steve, what are some of the unique challenges you encounter when working with a historic building? Does it offer opportunities and/or advantages?

Savage: When renovating historic buildings, one of the major challenges we face is the unknown of the original construction. Fortunately, we have documents that provide us with some information about that. Additionally, we have the opportunity to utilize laser scanning to help piece together information missing from those documents, such as the many renovations that have taken place since.

Dan, do you have a general design philosophy? How do you work that into what you are trying to accomplish with a historic building?

Pieters: To be efficient and effective with the resources the client has and to embellish and enhance the building. This historic building is a true jewel in the community that needs to be re-polished. We will be focused on bringing the features it offers back to life.

What are your goals for the venue?

Pieters: To help re-excite our community around this building and provide an enhanced venue space that people can't wait to be in and want to continually come back to.

(continued on page three)

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What aspect of the project are you most excited about coming to fruition?

Savage: I am most excited about exposing the public to the many areas of this building that have remained behind closed doors for years. The upper floors contain a number of large, impressive spaces with the original ornate detail that we rarely see in construction today. There is great potential for these spaces and I'm looking forward to the reveal.



What design element do you feel will be most impactful for patrons?

Savage: Each person who visits the Theatre will take away something different, which is part of the fun about a project like this. Initially, the accessibility upgrades will provide an immediate, meaningful impact to those individuals who need it most. Beyond that, I feel that the biggest impact will be exposing everyone to the original beauty of this building and displaying what has been covered up for years. There is a lot that this building has to show off.

How do you see a renovated theatre impacting the city and the surrounding neighborhoods?

Savage: This is a very exciting project for the city and surrounding neighborhood. Projects like this become a focal point of the city, typically drawing in patrons for events that lead to business for local restaurants, bars and businesses. Our team at Pike is very proud to be a neighbor, and excited for what's to come.

Pieters: This building is a very positive cultural enhancement the city has at its fingertips. As we unpeel the needed projects, it will provide for more interaction within the whole building for our area and the surrounding neighborhoods to better utilize.



Work on the elevators is expected to be completed in the new year and the construction team continues to develop the next steps in the project. That includes the potential rendering seen below. RBTL's goal is to complete these efforts by 2030, the buildings 100th anniversary.



A LOOK AT ALL THINGS EDUCATION THIS DECEMBER

December was a busy month for RBTL's arts education programs. First, gearing up for the run of "Annie," seven area schools took part in our A.R.T.S. (Arts Reaching and Teaching in Schools) Partners program. It allows teachers to integrate themes from touring Broadway productions into their curriculums. The themes of "Annie" included optimism, belonging, family, finding value and facing challenges. Some of the lessons the students explored were using and creating characters as symbols for what is needed by society, writing comics and graphic novels to capture an era of time and the history of the story. At the culmination of the program, all students working on the curriculum were given the opportunity to be fully immersed in live theatre by attending the performance at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre. Over 1,000 local students were able to have that experience!

Also, on the topic of "Annie," 12 students participated in our Broadway Boost program the week of the show's run. It's a four-day intensive centered around a touring Broadway show that helps participants gain insight as both performers and audience members. Led by three teaching artists, students learned character work, storytelling through movement and how to apply what they learned from the show to their own work as a performer. The "Annie" Broadway Boost also included a dance masterclass with ensemble member Kaylie Mae Wallace and a ticket to the performance.



On Saturday, December 16, RBTL welcomed the return of cast member talkbacks following the Saturday matinee performance. Before the COVID-19 shutdown, audience members who attended the Saturday matinees of a Broadway Season show often had the opportunity to stay after final bows and participate in a Q&A session with some members of the company. Finally, after more than three years, RBTL was able to bring back the talkbacks! Following the performance of "Annie," actors Julia Nicole Hunter (Grace Farrell), Jeffrey T. Kelly (Rooster Hannigan), Mark Woodard (FDR), Brooke Olivia Gatto (Swing) and Music Director Jennifer Christina answered questions from curious audience members. It's RBTL's hope to continue these talkbacks throughout the rest of the 2023-2024 M&T Bank Broadway Season.



Broadway Boost masterclass with Kaylie Mae Wallace.



Saturday matinee talkback with Annie cast members.

Also, in education this December, 54 people enjoyed a weekend in New York City as part of RBTL's annual Holiday Trip. The group left Rochester via bus on December 8 to head to the Big Apple. On the agenda for the weekend: a performance of "Radio City's Christmas Spectacular" and "Some Like It Hot." The rest of the weekend was spent sightseeing, shopping or watching another show on their own time before returning home on Sunday. RBTL hosts two weekend trips to New York City per year. The next will take place this Spring and includes deluxe motor coach transportation, two-night hotel accommodation and great seats for two shows. Find out more information at [RBTL.org/nyc-weekend](https://www.rbtl.org/nyc-weekend).

With questions or for more information about any of our arts education programs, contact RBTL Director of Education Holly Valentine at 585-277-3338 or holly@rbtl.org or visit [RBTL.org/education](https://www.rbtl.org/education).

RBTL PATRONS GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY DURING SEVERAL SHOWS THIS BROADWAY SEASON

RBTL patrons helped give back to the Greater Rochester community during several shows this Broadway Season!

Beginning in November, during the extended two-week engagement of "Moulin Rouge! The Musical," guests supported Foodlink. Foodlink is a Rochester-based nonprofit and, according to its website, is "dedicated to ending hunger and building healthier communities by addressing both the symptoms and root causes of food insecurity." The organization provides emergency food across a 10-county radius and runs various programs and initiatives to "empower people to make healthy choices." Overall, RBTL patrons donated 129 pounds of food to Foodlink, which equated to 107 meals for the community!



Foodlink

NOURISHING LIVES

Next, starting with the Special Engagement of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical" and continuing through the run of "Annie," the West Herr Auditorium Theatre played host to the Pirate Toy Fund. The Theatre was just one of many locations for the toy drive in the area. The Pirate Toy Fund distributes new toys year-round to children in need in the Greater Rochester region. According to the nonprofit, it has handed out almost 400,000 toys since its founding in 1995. With the help of RBTL patrons, that number has grown! In total, more than 100 toys, ranging from dolls to puzzles were donated at the Auditorium Box Office to the Pirate Toy Fund.



RBTL is thankful for the generosity of our patrons and their support of these local organizations! Like Foodlink and the Pirate Toy Fund, the Rochester Broadway Theatre League is also a 501(c)3 organization. For more than 60 years, RBTL has been entertaining audiences with Broadway performances, inspiring our community through outreach and educating children and young adults with our award-winning arts education programs.

Please consider supporting the Rochester Broadway Theatre League with your year-end donation, to help us keep these performances and programs a vibrant part of the Greater Rochester community. Find ways to donate and more information about donations at rbtl.org/support-us.

And, as always, RBTL thanks our wide range of Circle of Giving donors, who have made donations to support our arts education programs throughout the year! Our continued success is thanks to you.

HOLIDAY-THEMED SHOWS THAT HAVE PLAYED AT THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE

A Christmas Story
2017

Cirque Dreams Holidayze
2009-2016

The Hip Hop Nutcracker
2017-2018

How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical
2013

Irving Berlin's White Christmas
2007-2015

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas
2009-2021

The Nutcracker Ballet
1995-2023

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical
2023