

rbtl FROM THE WINGS

RBTL ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH ROCHESTER MUSIC HALL OF FAME AT WEST HERR PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Earlier this month, RBTL announced that the Rochester Music Hall of Fame (RMHF) will be the first new arts organization to take up residence at the West Herr Performing Arts Center, since its renaming and reimagining. The partnership will provide RMHF with permanent exhibition space for public viewing for the first time in its 15-year history.

As stated when RBTL acquired the entirety of the Auditorium Complex in 2023, the vision is to restore and revitalize the six floors of the historic West Herr Performing Arts Center, and create a new, multi-stage, mixed-use venue for community arts organizations. This is coming to life through the ongoing efforts of PROJECT RESTORATION, which aims to secure a dynamic future for the



RBTL CEO Arnie Rothschild and RMHF Board of Directors President Jack Whittier.

arts in the Greater Rochester region, establishing a cultural legacy and inspiring generations to come. The Rochester Music Hall of Fame's commitment to making use of creative space at the West Herr Performing Arts Center marks the beginning of realizing RBTL's significant objective.

"A Performing Arts Center is a place to celebrate all of what we call the arts and entertainment, and the Rochester Music Hall of Fame is exactly the kind of presence that should be here and celebrated," said Rochester Broadway Theatre League CEO and Board Chair, Arnie Rothschild. "Great musicians need a place where their talent and hard work can be honored, and RBTL hopes to provide that."

RMHF recognizes those with ties to Rochester, whose talents, efforts, perseverance and creativity have contributed to the creation of musical excellence. To date, the Rochester Music Hall of Fame has inducted 68 local musicians, bands and industry professionals. By teaming up with RBTL, RMHF hopes to have a physical display at the West Herr Performing Arts

UPCOMING EVENTS:

THE WIZ

February 22-28

DON QUIXOTE

March 8

INSIDIOUS

March 12

RIVERDANCE

March 25-26

FUNNY GIRL

April 8-13



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

RBTL.ORG



@RBTLAUD

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Center by early 2026, highlighting its inductees through photographs, videos and music, as well as showcasing memorabilia from these exceptional artists.

"Rochester Music Hall of Fame is thrilled to have been invited to collaborate with Rochester Broadway Theatre League, as the West Herr Performing Arts Center opens its grand doors to arts organizations and the community," said Jack Whittier, President of Rochester Music Hall of Fame Board of Directors. "This is a dream being realized, as we will now have a home to present exhibitions that celebrate the legacy of Rochester music and our inductees. We also look forward to music filling the magnificent performance spaces being uncovered and restored by RBTL, which is a major undertaking that we commend and enthusiastically support."

"I applaud RBTL and Rochester Music Hall of Fame for coming together in celebration of Rochester's rich musical heritage," said RMHF and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Lou Gramm, whose impressive career with Foreigner was sparked at the Auditorium Theatre when he met Mick Jones backstage after a concert. "I look forward to having a front-row seat to the many experiences that evolve from this exciting collaboration."

The partnership will also allow for the two organizations to further expand their arts education programs. RBTL currently offers several opportunities for local students in conjunction with its Touring Broadway shows, and RMHF board members regularly detail Rochester's rich local music history and industry job possibilities to area youth. Discussions for collaboration are already underway, which will include theatre-going school groups to be immersed in the forthcoming exhibits.

The West Herr Performing Arts Center was already home to RBTL/West Herr Auditorium Theatre, A Magical Journey Thru Stages, the Rochester Theater Organ Society and the Rochester Musicians' Association when RBTL acquired the Complex. RBTL is pleased to now welcome the Rochester Music Hall of Fame to the WHPAC arts and entertainment family!



A drum head belonging to RMHF 2018 inductee, drummer Steve Gadd and Chuck Mangione's (RMHF class of 2012) horn were displayed during RBTL & RMHF's joint press conference on January 13. (Photo by Renee Veniskey)



A guitar, signed by many area musicians and industry professionals, could be seen at the press conference held in Cathedral Hall at the West Herr Performing Arts Center.



Fred Costello, RMHF 2023 inductee and Rochester Red Wings organist, who has been entertaining fans since 1977, signs his photo during the press conference. (Photo by Renee Veniskey)

TAKING SHAPE: CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ON REAR/WEST ENTRANCE AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER LOBBY

Some more visible changes are being seen at the West Herr Performing Arts Center as restorations progress on the Rear/West Entrance and Performing Arts Center main lobby.

Framing can be seen going up along the outside of the building, where the accessible entrance/exit will be located. Inside, the stark hallway once decorated with blue carpeting is being expanded. In the lobby, the non-original drywall that boxed in the stairwell has been removed and replaced with metal framing and glass. The progress can be seen in the photos below:

Rear/West Entrance



First Day of Demolition

Hallway



Hallway Before

WHPAC Lobby



Stairwell Before



Currently



Hallway Currently



Currently



Rendering



Potential Rendering



Rendering

To keep up-to-date on the latest renovation progress, as part of **PROJECT RESTOURATION**, follow West Herr Performing Arts Center on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) or [LinkedIn](#). You can also see ongoing construction pictures at WestHerrPAC.org.

THE WIZ TECHS AND RE-LAUNCHES TOUR IN ROCHESTER THIS FEBRUARY

"The Wiz" will make its debut in Rochester, February 22-28 at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre. This groundbreaking twist on "The Wizard of Oz," which in turn was based on L. Frank Baum's children's book, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," changed the face of Broadway – from its iconic score packed with soul, gospel, rock and 70s funk to its stirring tale of Dorothy's journey to find her place in a contemporary world. The L.A. Times said, "For a generation of Black Americans, this was the first time they saw people who spoke, sung and moved the way they did in a Broadway production, and later, a big-screen musical. It has become a kind of rite of passage for the black community." Conjuring up an Oz unlike anything ever seen before, this production is a dynamite infusion of ballet, jazz and modern pop that will bring a whole new groove to easing on down the road.

"The Wiz" company will arrive in Rochester early for technical rehearsals prior to opening night. This will be a re-launch of the tour, which first performed a 13-city run before re-opening on Broadway in April of 2024. As this is the first tour of "The Wiz" in almost 40 years, we're taking a look at the history of the iconic musical, ahead of the production's return to the stage.

October 1974 – "The Wiz" begins performances in Baltimore, Maryland for a pre-Broadway run.

January 1975 – After previews in December, "The Wiz" officially opens at the Majestic Theatre on Broadway.

April 1975 – "The Wiz" takes home seven Tony® Awards, including Best Musical, Best Direction of a Musical (Geoffrey Holder), Best Original Score (Charlie Smalls), Best Costume Design (Geoffrey Holder) and Best Choreography (George Faison). The production also earned Dee Dee Bridgewater (Glinda) and Ted Ross (The Lion) their first Tony wins for Best Featured Actress and Best Featured Actor in a Musical, respectively. Holder was the first Black man to be nominated, and subsequently win, for Best Direction of a Musical and Costume Design. Faison made history by becoming the first African American to win a Tony for Best Choreography.

May 1977 – The production moves from the Majestic to the Broadway Theatre.

October 1978 – A film adaptation starring Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Ted Ross, Mabel King, Richard Pryor and Lena Horne premieres.

January 1979 – After 15 previews, 1,672 performances and four years, "The Wiz" closes on Broadway.

September 2023 – "The Wiz" kicks off a pre-Broadway tour at the Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland.

April 2024 – "The Wiz" opens on Broadway at the Marquis Theatre – almost 50 years since it first took the stage.

February 2025 – "The Wiz" returns 'home' to stages across America in an all-new Broadway tour.

The production runs approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes, including an intermission. It uses haze, smoke and flashing lights. Tickets for "The Wiz" at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre are available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or the Auditorium Box Office.

(Production photos by Jeremy Daniel)



CHECK OUT THE LOCAL TALENT: SPRING PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE FOR AREA SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN RBTL'S STARS OF TOMORROW

We're quickly approaching the busiest time of the year for high school musical theatre. This season, 49 area schools are participating in RBTL's Stars of Tomorrow program, which is now in its 27th year. The program recognizes the high school musical in true Tony Award® fashion. A team of trained and qualified evaluators attends the productions and provides students and directors with written feedback and scores in a variety of categories. Recognition is then given to schools with the highest scores in each of the evaluated categories at the Stars of Tomorrow Recognition Ceremony (to be held at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre on Friday, May 9).

Five participating schools performed their musicals in the fall. They were Campbell-Savona ("Between the Lines"), The Harley School ("Young Frankenstein"), Our Lady of Mercy ("Mamma Mia!"), Marcus Whitman ("Clue") and York ("Once Upon a Mattress"). But there are still many more talented local performers to see! Take a look at the spring schedule below (visit each school's website for exact performance days and times):

Weekend of January 31 & February 6 Greece Athena – "Footloose"

Weekend of February 6 Brighton – "Mamma Mia!" Webster Schroeder – "Hadestown: Teen Edition"

Weekend of February 20 Greece Odyssey – "The Little Mermaid"

Weekend of February 27 Batavia – "Newsies" Mount Morris – "The Wizard of Oz" Newark – "Mamma Mia!"

Weekend of March 6 Gananda – "Once Upon a Mattress" Le Roy – "The Wizard of Oz" Lima Christian – "Anastasia" Lyons – "Grease" Marion – "Mary Poppins" Mynderse Academy – "The Secret Garden" Palmyra-Macedon – "Mamma Mia!" Perry – "The Wizard of Oz" Victor – "Spamalot"

Weekend of March 6 & March 13 Canandaigua – "Bye Bye Birdie" Greece Arcadia – "Into the Woods"

Weekend of March 13 Bloomfield – "Legally Blonde" Dansville – "Shrek" McQuaid Jesuit – "Chicago: Teen Edition" Medina – "Mamma Mia!" Midlakes – "The Little Mermaid" Penn Yan – "Hadestown: Teen Edition" Williamson – "Anastasia"

Weekend of March 20 Avon – "Mamma Mia!"

Eastridge – "Hadestown: Teen Edition" Greece Olympia – "Matilda" Lyndonville – "Newsies" Notre Dame – "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" Penfield – "Mean Girls" Pittsford Sutherland – "Anything Goes"

Weekend of March 27

Albion – "Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)" Aquinas Institute – "Hadestown: Teen Edition" Bishop Kearney – "Mamma Mia!" Caledonia-Mumford – "The Drowsy Chaperone" Churchville-Chili – "The Addams Family" Honeoye Falls-Lima – "Hadestown: Teen Edition" Rush-Henrietta – "Once Upon a Mattress" Wayne – "Les Misérables" Wheatland-Chili – "Little Women"

Weekend of April 3

Hilton – "The Addams Family" Pittsford Mendon – "Hadestown: Teen Edition" Warsaw – "The Hunchback of Notre Dame"

For more information about Stars of Tomorrow and all RBTL arts education programs, visit RBTL.org/education.



APPLICATIONS FOR FIFTH YEAR OF FAIRGAME GRANTS OPEN IN FEBRUARY

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE CAPITAL REGION, CATSKILLS REGION AND
SOUTHERN TIER SET TO BENEFIT FROM CASINO FUNDING OPPORTUNITY



RBTL is among prominent cultural institutions in New York State that make up the Upstate Theater Coalition for a Fairgame. It was established through a partnership between the State and the casinos in three gaming regions: the Capital Region, Catskills and Southern Tier.

Each coalition member is committed to enhancing its community by showcasing world-class live events, promoting education, and ensuring accessibility for all. Driven by this dedication, the coalition launched the Fairgame Arts Grants program to support arts and

cultural organizations in its regions. Now, for a fifth year, the Upstate Theater Coalition is once again offering this funding for non-profit arts and cultural organizations. Eligible non-profits in 27 counties, which include Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates counties, can apply for grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to support creative programs that enrich their communities.

Since 2019, the program has awarded nearly 100 grants, distributing over \$300,000 to empower creative initiatives and enrich local communities.

"These organizations operate at the community level and have a direct impact on arts patrons in the Empire State," said RBTL COO and Upstate Theater Coalition President, John Parkhurst. "That we can support such incredible programs and help the arts come alive for our communities is an honor for all the performing arts centers and theatres in the Upstate Theater Coalition for a Fairgame and the Upstate casinos who support us."

Grant applications open on Monday, February 3, and must be submitted by Thursday, March 20. Guidelines and application forms are available at afairgame.net. For additional inquiries, email info@afairgame.net.



THE HIT BROADWAY MUSICAL

FUNNY GIRL

APRIL 8-13

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Available at Ticketmaster.com or
the Auditorium Box Office

Performance Schedule:

Tuesday, April 8 at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 13 at 1:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.