

APRIL 2025



FROM THE WINGS

MISSING FIXTURES REPLACED WITH NEW ART DECO LIGHTING AROUND WEST HERR PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Some new style-appropriate light fixtures have gone up around the West Herr Performing Arts Center and Auditorium Theatre, and it's all thanks to a grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation. In an effort to preserve the Art Deco-style look throughout the building, funds from the award are helping to replace over 60 lights that have gone missing or that broke over time.



Unfortunately, only a small number of original light fixtures remain throughout the building, having been replaced with low-quality and insufficient commercial fluorescents. Now, through studying old photographs from when the building served as the Masonic Temple of Rochester and by sourcing collections originated in other decommissioned 1920s buildings, Art Deco style light fixtures once again adorn the ceilings of the Performing Arts Center lobbies and staircases. Not only does this align with RBTL's goal to restore the original aesthetic of the building and make it viable for generations to come, but it also ensures the venue is safer and more visually appealing to visitors.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JEEZY

May 3

SOME LIKE IT HOT

May 13-18

WBEE'S GUITARS & STARS

May 21

BACK TO THE FUTURE

June 17-22

THE GREAT GATSBY BALLET

September 23



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

RBTL.ORG



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REAR ENTRANCE & HALLWAY ON TRACK TO BE COMPLETED THIS SUMMER

We're revealing new renderings and construction photos of the corridor leading from the renovated accessible rear entrance/exit of the building to the Performing Arts Center lobby.

Progress is ramping up as work continues daily (seen in the photos below), and the new renderings better reflect how the hallway, which will be many patrons' first impressions of the building, will look once completed. We're excited to show patrons the final result, which is on schedule to be unveiled this summer!

Corridor Leading to Rear Exit

Corridor Leading to Lobby

Current Construction Progress



New Renderings



(Renderings Courtesy of LaBella Associates & Pike Construction Services)

Learn more about **PROJECT RESTOURATION** at WestHerrPac.org, or to make a tax-deductible donation toward the incredible transformation. To follow along with the progress, be sure to follow the West Herr Performing Arts Center on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

A LOOK AT THE PROCESS: INSIGHTS FROM THE CREATIVE TEAM BEHIND *SOME LIKE IT HOT*

"Some Like it Hot" will make its Rochester debut May 13-18 as part of the 2024-2025 M&T Bank Broadway Season at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre. It's based on the 1959 MGM film of the same name, which starred Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. Set in the Prohibition era, this fast-paced comedy follows two musicians who take up new identities and go on the run after witnessing a mob hit. Their cross-country journey brings them face to face with a dazzling singer with dreams of stardom, who captures one of their hearts, while the other catches the eye of a wealthy suitor set on finding true love. Still under disguise, they must find a way to untangle their messes and survive the gangsters who are hot on their tail.



Edward Juvier (Osgood), Tavis Kordell (Daphne) and the First National Touring Company of *Some Like it Hot*. Photo by Matthew Murphy.

With its irresistible combination of heart and laughs, song and dance, *"Some Like it Hot"* won more theater awards than any show in its season, including the Grammy Award® for Best Musical Theatre Album and four Tony Awards® for Best Choreography, Best Costumes, Best Orchestrations and Best Actor in a Musical (J. Harrison Ghee for their role as Jerry/Daphne).

"Some Like it Hot" has a book by Tony-winner Matthew López (*"The Inheritance"*) and Amber Ruffin, a score crafted by the team behind *"Hairspray,"* Marc Shaiman (music and lyrics) and Scott Wittman (lyrics), and Tony-winning choreography from director Casey Nicholaw (*"The Book of Mormon,"* *"Mean Girls,"* *"Aladdin"*). But what all goes into developing a full-scale Broadway production? The *"Some Like it Hot"* creatives gave some of their insights ahead of the Rochester engagement.

"From our earliest conversations, we knew we wanted to write a show about people in the process of becoming newer, better, truer versions of themselves," said López. "Our characters were underdogs and misfits. Flawed but (mostly) well-intentioned, they are each thirsty for more opportunities, more respect, more money, more love. Joe and Jerry (eventually Daphne) dream of success as dancers; Sugar dreams of Hollywood stardom; Sue dreams of respect and achievement as a top-flight band leader. For Jerry, Sugar and Sue especially, these dreams are tempered by the headwinds of racial injustice in 1930's America. Joe's ambitions are tempered by his own personal foibles as the abandoned child of a family of grifters. They all find themselves on a train bound for California, each with a dream of what awaits them, each ending up getting far more than they bargained for, and each better off for having taken the journey."

When developing the score, Shaiman and Wittman said, "As songwriters, our challenge was to celebrate the musical styles of Jazz Age icons, but also, through our lyrics, to deal truthfully with the dilemmas and discoveries our characters are wrestling with, issues still prevalent today. We were especially inspired by the collaborations between songwriters like Harold Arlen and performers like Ethel Waters and Lena Horne, which proved that white and Black artists could and should work side by side. Music has always broken-down barriers and that kind of kinship forms the foundation of our score. And thanks to our brilliant director and choreographer, Casey Nicholaw, the show does move to its own special beat."



Devon Hadsell (Minnie). Photo by Matthew Murphy.

Nicholaw added, "In the process of working with a great quartet of writers—Matthew, Amber, Marc and Scott—we discovered that we could go deeper into the characters and their feelings because now they could sing and dance! I wanted the choreography to serve the story. In that regard, I was lucky that it was a story about a band. So, in staging numbers such as *"A Darker Shade of Blue,"* *"Ride Out the Storm,"* *"Take It Up A Step,"* and

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"He Lied When He Said Hello," I could blend the world of our characters with the performances of Sweet Sue's Society Syncopators. One other thing stands out as a huge joy: the creation of "Tip Tap Trouble," the climactic dance in Act 2. Assisted by our brilliant music department and our remarkable designers, I was able to take all the puzzle pieces of the story and instead of having a long dialogue scene, convey it all through choreography."

Finally, Costume Designer Gregg Barnes said "Some Like it Hot" is the kind of project he loves to design. "The costume demands include so many walks of life: Chicago gangsters, speakeasy patrons, jazz bands, an eccentric millionaire and even a quick trip south of the border—these are folks with a dream, running away from (or towards) a new destiny. In Chicago I was able to pay homage to the amazing textile patterns of the 1930s: off-center geometrics, wacky florals and anything argyle to complement [Scenic Designer] Scott Pask's industrial Deco surround. What I find fascinating about the era was the seismic shift from the bright hues of the 1920s toward subtler shades of pastel greens, corals, muted golds, soft blues and lavenders. I was inspired by these pale colors in the scene where Sweet Sue and her band arrive in California. I wanted to conjure the feeling of the San Diego beaches and interior of the swanky Hotel. I love that the creative vision of artists working almost 100 years ago still inspires us today."



Tavis Kordell (Jerry) and Matt Loehr (Joe). Photo by Matthew Murphy.



Leandra Ellis-Gaston (Sugar) and Matt Loehr (Joe). Photo by Matthew Murphy.

On a local note, Geva Theatre Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson worked as a dramaturg on the Broadway production of "Some Like it Hot." Her role was to provide the director, writers and actors with the context and history to ensure the accuracy of the show.

Don't miss "Some Like it Hot," which the New York Times called "A super-sized all-out song-and-dance spectacular!" Tickets are available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or the Auditorium Box Office.

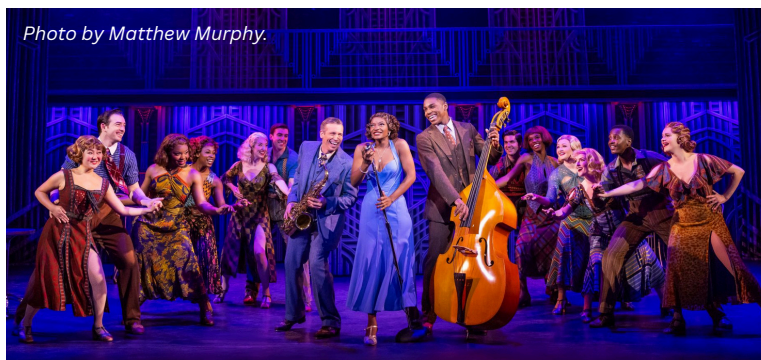
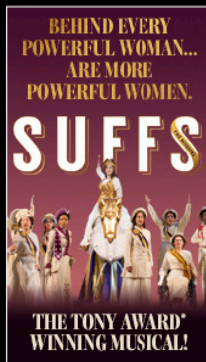
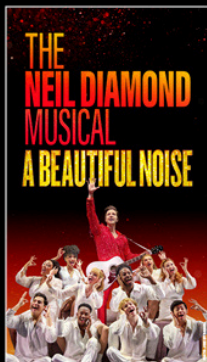
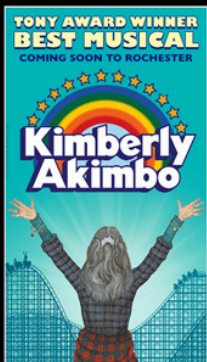
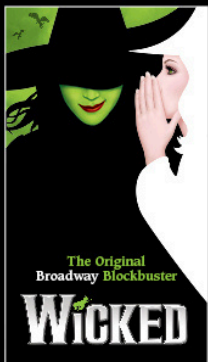


Photo by Matthew Murphy.

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THE 2025-2026 M&T BANK BROADWAY SEASON AT WEST HERR AUDITORIUM THEATRE



THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-2025 STARS OF TOMORROW EVALUATORS!

As the annual Stars of Tomorrow Recognition Ceremony approaches, RBTL would like to thank all our evaluators who took part in the 2024-2025 season. From the Fall to the Spring, they gave their time and expertise visiting the nearly 50 area schools that were part of the program to watch their high school musical productions. Stars of Tomorrow would not be possible without the dedication of the following members of the evaluating team:

Donnell Adler
Necole Almond
Dylinn Andrew
Dave Babcock
Emily Brown
Maureen Callan
Cori Colombo
Rebekah Connors
Tina Crandall
Ben Davis
Marissa DeFranco
Marissa DelVecchio
Victor DiNitto
Stephanie Drew
Lynn Duffy
Kevin Farnsworth
Tami Farnsworth
Tom Freeland
Dustin Gardner
Mandi Lynn Griffith



Carrie Green
Kendra Hayes
Jane Huffer
Danielle Joseph
Tyler Krause
Courtney Larkin
Elizabeth Nyanzi
Allison Olaode
Sara Platek
Katie Pohlman
Ben Rand
Kim Rudd
Lisa Silverstein
Peter Smith
Brian Smith
Amanda Strauss
Dawn Stever
Samantha Thompson
Dominic Vassallo
Marli Worden

Our Stars of Tomorrow evaluators are comprised of performing arts educators and professionals in the Rochester community, who have shown a commitment to the arts and to helping students hone their craft. These trained evaluators attended the productions and then provided students and directors with feedback in a variety of categories. That included Overall Production, Acting Ensemble, Dance Ensemble, Singing Ensemble, Production Crew, Student Orchestra, Production of the Year and Leading Performers. Each production was evaluated independently against itself, which allows each school to produce the best performance possible for their unique environment without worrying about competing with other schools. The goal of Stars of Tomorrow is to recognize the incredible work being done in area high school theatre programs.

The 2025 Stars of Tomorrow Recognition Gala will be held on Friday, May 9. Be sure to check out RBTL on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) after the event for highlights of the night.

For more information about Stars of Tomorrow, visit [RBTL.org/stars-of-tomorrow](https://rbtl.org/stars-of-tomorrow). For more information about all RBTL arts education programs, visit [RBTL.org/education](https://rbtl.org/education).

MOST-PERFORMED MUSICALS IN THE 2024-2025 STARS OF TOMORROW SEASON

Mamma Mia!

Avon | Bishop Kearney | Brighton | Medina | Newark | Our Lady of Mercy | Palmyra-Macedon

Hadestown

Aquinas Institute | Eastridge | Honeoye Falls-Lima | Penn Yan | Pittsford Mendon | Webster Schroeder