

# rbtl FROM THE WINGS

## PHASE TWO OF PROJECT RESTOURATION BEGINS AT WEST HERR PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

RBTL has begun the next phase of PROJECT RESTOURATION, as the organization continues its efforts to transform the historic West Herr Performing Arts Center into an arts, entertainment and cultural hub. Like the first stage, Phase Two will focus on enhancing the customer experience, while simultaneously boosting the economy and further investing in the future of the arts locally.

“Over the past 100 years, the West Herr Performing Arts Center has played host to thousands of incredible live events, some featuring mega stars like Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis and Tallulah Bankhead, while others included blockbuster tours like *The Phantom of the Opera*, Disney’s *The Lion King*, *Hamilton* and *Wicked*,” said RBTL COO, Linda Glosser. “These are all big names and big titles, but the most important of all to come through our doors are those whose names you will not find in the program book. They are our guests and audience members, and they are who we have in mind while doing these restorations.”

Phase Two includes the expansion and transformation of the Rothschild Lounge back to its initial footprint, once again featuring a grand late 1920’s fireplace and improving its amenities. This requires removing the wall that was put up in the early 1960’s and bringing the room back to its original size and grandeur. The original plasterwork, woodwork, light fixtures and windows will be retained where able. Time period appropriate replacements will be selected if those details have been removed or deteriorated over time. By expanding the lounge, this allows for additional capacity and seating, multiple entrances/exits and use for a variety of events. Currently, the Rothschild Lounge is only open during the engagements of touring Broadway productions. With this restoration, it will allow for a more versatile and frequent use of the space beyond Broadway performances.



(continued on page two)

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

RBTL’S ANNUAL GOLF  
TOURNAMENT  
August 3

2026-2027 M&T BANK  
BROADWAY SEASON  
October-June

SWAN LAKE  
October 21

NUTCRACKER! MAGICAL  
CHRISTMAS BALLET  
December 10



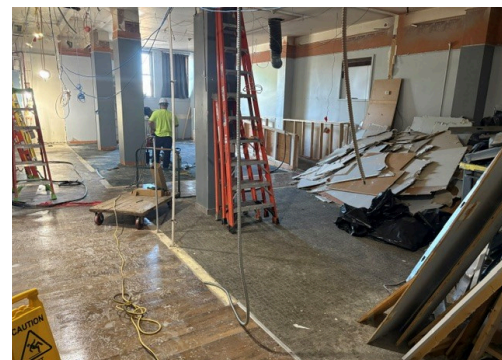
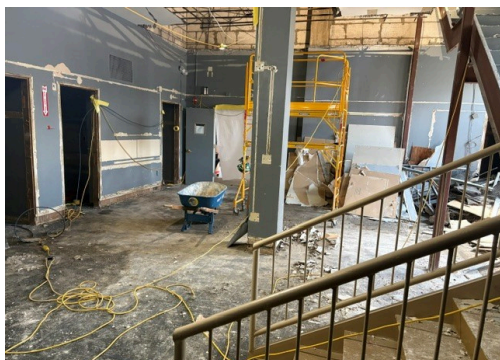
WEST HERR  
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
875 EAST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NY 14605  
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@RBTLAUD

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Additionally, work will include the redesign and reconfiguration of the Auditorium Theatre's backstage artist and crew spaces throughout two floors. This effort will update the conditions and facilities to meet the modern standards and requirements of touring productions. This will be the first significant enhancement to these cast, crew and local union spaces, improving the touring artist experience in Rochester.



*Backstage dressing room areas at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre undergo reconfiguration and restoration.*

Work on the Rothschild Lounge and the first floor of the dressing rooms are scheduled to be completed by the start of RBTL's 2026-2027 M&T Bank Broadway Season in October. The refurbishment of the second-floor dressing areas will be completed in 2027.

To date, more than \$20 million has been committed to **PROJECT RESTOURATION**. \$6.2 million of which will be used for Phase Two. These funds from both private and public sources have gone towards sourcing materials and contributing to the local labor force. In excess of 65,000 total hours have been dedicated by the teams at Pike Construction Services and LaBella Associates overseeing the construction and design so far. The funding has not only helped enhance the future of the arts in the Rochester area by developing this Performing Arts Center, but it has proven beneficial to the economy, through job creation.

"Very often, we talk about this restoration in the context of entertainment events that will come to the new and improved West Herr Performing Arts Center, but there is much more to the story; the economic impact for the community," said RBTL CEO and Board Chair, Arnie Rothschild. "What we've already seen are restaurants flourishing on performance days, high use of hotels and rental vehicles when touring companies are in town, and a tremendous amount of food consumed in Auditorium Theatre concession spaces. That alone has increased business for our food and beverage suppliers, deliverers and servers. Additionally, construction jobs have been created on top of the hundreds of union laborers who help bring each event into our venue. The West Herr Performing Arts Center is an economic driver that is critical to our growth and prosperity as a community."

**PROJECT RESTOURATION** began in 2023, with Phase One focusing on enhanced accessibility, adaptability and amenities. It included refurbishing two elevators and creating a crossover point for access to the second-floor Theatre lobby, which now features a new lounge/concession space and additional restroom facilities. On the ground floor, historic brass doors have been restored, along with a new lounge/entertainment space and west entrance with drop-off area. Outside, the steps and railings leading to the East Main Street entrances of the West Herr Performing Arts Center and Auditorium Theatre and the retaining walls have been replaced, along with the widening of sidewalks.

Future work will focus on the stunning and historic Cathedral Hall, a former lodge room from the building's time as a Masonic Temple, to accommodate a variety of performance and entertainment opportunities. This will further RBTL's goal of creating a renowned entertainment hub for the region and establishing Rochester as a true arts and cultural destination. A timeline for this project has not yet been established.

"Live theatre, concerts and events are a place where we can come together as a community to share an experience with others," added Glosser. "Strangers gathering in one place to do that speaks to our need to be with other people. If by restoring the West Herr Performing Arts Center we are contributing to satisfying that human need, then we consider our efforts rewarding and successful. We look forward to these next stages and beyond to expand that effort for the benefit of our very deserving guests."

Overall, the total transformation cost is estimated to be \$65 million. Community involvement is critical for progress and realizing the vision of a beautifully restored cultural landmark. Upon completion, the complex will shine as the anchor of the Neighborhood of the Arts for future generations. Those interested in helping to support this innovative effort, can make a tax-deductible donation at [WestHerrPAC.org](http://WestHerrPAC.org) or by reaching out to RBTL CEO Arnie Rothschild at 585-277-3332 or [ahr@rbtl.org](mailto:ahr@rbtl.org).

# TWO LOCAL STUDENTS CONCLUDE WEEK IN NEW YORK CITY COMPETING AT THE JIMMY AWARDS®

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®), also known as the Jimmy Awards®, took place on Monday, June 22 at New York City's Minskoff Theatre (home to Disney's *The Lion King*). Among the 116 performers from around the country were Pittsford Mendon High School senior, Addie Schultz, and Batavia High School junior, Gus Crawford. They were chosen to represent Rochester, NY at this year's Jimmy Awards during RBTL's Stars of Tomorrow NYC Bound competition back in May.



Addie and Gus arrived in New York City on June 12. What followed was 10 days of coaching sessions, training and rehearsals led by some of Broadway's most accomplished professionals, plus some additional fun activities. That included enjoying a dinner at the iconic restaurant, Carmine's, followed by seeing a performance of *MJ the Musical*. Some cast members even joined the Jimmy Award nominees for dinner! After the show, they had the opportunity to participate in a talkback with members of the company, who gave them insight on what it's like to be a part of a Broadway show.

They also visited the Museum of Broadway and took open-top buses into the heart of Times Square, where they saw their headshots on a New York City billboard. The buses also took them by the Chrysler Building, the Empire State Building and the Flatiron Building, crossed the Manhattan Bridge, and gave them a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty.

Between rehearsals, they sat in on panels with Broadway professionals, including past Jimmy Award winners and nominees, and had a special visit from Tony Award®-winner Aaron Tveit (*Chess, Moulin Rouge!*).

The whirlwind week culminated with a talent showcase at the Jimmy Awards. This year's host was Emmy®-nominated comedian, actor and writer, Bowen Yang. Addie and Gus performed in the Opening and Closing numbers, as well as the Feature Group, which was dedicated to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Chicago*.

Additionally, each year at the Jimmy Awards, two teachers are honored with the "Inspiring Teacher Award." They are nominated by some of the previous year's Jimmy Awards participants. This year, RBTL is proud to say that Kristy Kosko from Greece Arcadia High School was one of the teachers who received the award. She was nominated by Rochester's 2025 Jimmy Awards nominees, Tessa Meyers and Ian Royse, both of whom are now Greece Arcadia alumni. You can check out Kristy's interview with Broadway World prior to the ceremony, [here](#).

Addie and Gus sat down for two interviews before their trip. You can see them on WROC News 8's "Behind the Curtain with Gio Battaglia," [here](#) or listen to what they told WXXI's Mikhaela Singleton, [here](#).

Plus, scroll to page four to see more photos from their time at the Jimmys!

For more information about the Jimmy Awards, visit [jimmyawards.com](http://jimmyawards.com).

To learn more about RBTL's arts education programs, which help provide opportunities like this experience to local students, visit [rbtl.org/education](http://rbtl.org/education).



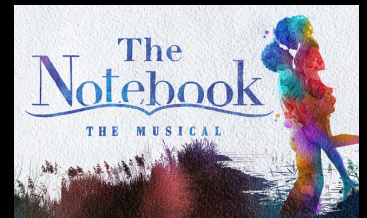
Ian Royse, Kristy Kosko, and Tessa Meyers.

# GUS & ADDIE'S WEEK AT THE JIMMYS - THROUGH PHOTOS

(Photos Courtesy: Angela of York)



## 2026-2027 M&T BANK BROADWAY SEASON SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



# SPOTLIGHT ON: *THE OUTSIDERS*

## Engagement Dates:

June 15-20, 2027

## Book:

Adam Rapp (*Red Light Winter*)

## Music & Lyrics:

Jamestown Revival (Jonathan Clay & Zach Chance)

## Book, Music & Lyrics, Music Supervision, Orchestration & Arrangements:

Justin Levine (*Moulin Rouge!*)

## Direction:

Danya Taymor (*Pass Over*)

## Choreography:

Rick & Jeff Kuperman (*Alice by Heart*)

## Age Recommendation:

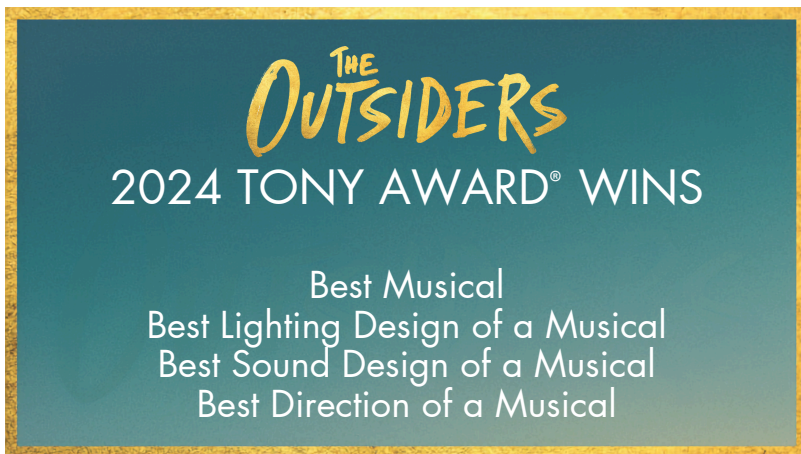
10+

## Running Time:

2 hours & 30 minutes, including intermission



**Synopsis:** In Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1967, Ponyboy Curtis, his best friend Johnny Cade and their Greaser family of ‘outsiders’ battle with their affluent rivals, the Socs. ***THE OUTSIDERS*** navigates the complexities of self-discovery as the Greasers dream about who they want to become in a world that may never accept them. Adapted from S.E. Hinton’s seminal novel and Francis Ford Coppola’s iconic film, with a dynamic original score, this is a story of friendship, family, belonging... and the realization that there is still “lots of good in the world.”



## What the Critics are Saying:

“Astonishing. Gritty. Stunning. ***THE OUTSIDERS*** has been made with so much love and sincerity. It is fair to call it golden.”

– *The New York Times*

“***THE OUTSIDERS*** has a heart of gold and the power to inspire an entire generation.”

– *Entertainment Weekly*

“An exhilarating world of movement with high-octane choreography.”

– *New York Magazine*



# SPOTLIGHT ON: *DISNEY'S THE LION KING*

**Engagement Dates:**  
April 28-May 16, 2027

**Music:**  
Elton John

**Lyrics:**  
Tim Rice

**Book:**  
Roger Allers & Irene Mecchi (*The Lion King* feature film)

**Conceiver & Director, Costume Design, Mask & Puppet  
Co-Design, Additional Lyrics:**  
Julie Taymor (*Frida, Across the Universe*)

**Choreography:**  
Garth Fagan (founder of Rochester-based studio  
Garth Fagan Dance)

**Age Recommendation:**  
6+

**Running Time:**  
2 hours & 30 minutes, including intermission



**The Details:** Giraffes strut. Birds swoop. Gazelles leap. The entire Serengeti comes to life as never before. And as the music soars, Pride Rock slowly emerges from the mist. This is Disney's ***THE LION KING***, making its triumphant return to the Auditorium Theatre! More than 130 million people around the world have experienced the awe-inspiring visual artistry, the unforgettable music, and the uniquely theatrical storytelling of this Broadway spectacular – one of the most breathtaking and beloved productions ever to grace the stage. There is simply nothing else like ***THE LION KING***.



## What the Critics are Saying:

"***THE LION KING*** is an experience, an all-encompassing bath of beautiful imagery and gorgeous voices that can leave anyone of any age dazzled."

– *Vancouver Sun*

"...a visual tapestry you'll be talking about for years."

– *The Oklahoman*

"A quintessentially live, communal theatergoing experience no animated cartoon or 3-D movie could ever replicate."

– *Denver Post*



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## CONNECTING *SUFFS* WITH LOCAL HISTORY

It's no secret that Rochester is a city rich in history around civil rights movements, as two significant activists made Rochester their home – Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony. And while in town for the engagement of *Suffs* at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre, the company had the chance to see and learn about some of that history, by visiting the [National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House](#) on Madison Street.

Two actresses, Trisha Jeffery, who plays Mary Church Terrell, and Victoria Pekel, who plays her daughter Phyllis Terrell, had advance access to the house, where Mary Church Terrell herself visited. They even were given access to Susan B. Anthony's guest book, where Terrell signed and dated her visit back in 1904.

WROC News 8's Gio Battaglia joined them on their tour to chat about the show and how it felt to bring *Suffs*, a show with a powerful message, to a city that has such a pivotal connection to the women's suffrage movement. You can watch their entire walkthrough on "[Behind the Curtain with Gio Battaglia](#)."



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## FULL-CIRCLE MOMENT FOR GENESEO GIRL SCOUT TROOP



Members of Geneseo Girl Scout Troop #51001 had a full-circle moment when they attended a performance of *Suffs* earlier this month. The troop dedicated their middle and high school years to providing local womanpower to organizations like the American Red Cross, Geneseo Groveland Emergency Food Pantry and the Genesee Valley Conservancy. They also took a trip to Mount Hope Cemetery when they were in sixth grade to visit the gravesite of Susan B. Anthony. That all brings them to now, as they concluded their 13-year Girl Scout journey together with a mother-daughter outing at *Suffs*, to celebrate with one last big event before they all graduated high school.

You can hear more from some of the troop members and troop leaders [here](#).

## RBTL'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, August 3rd

[Register Here](#)

# MASONS RETURN TO AUDITORIUM COMPLEX TO HOLD DEGREE CEREMONY

When the cornerstone for the Auditorium Complex was laid in 1928, it was done so to establish the Masonic Temple of Rochester. The building was dedicated in 1930 and remained with the Masons, a fraternal organization, until 1989. What is now known as the West Herr Performing Arts Center consists of several large former Masonic ceremonial meeting rooms, including Cathedral Hall. And this past April, for the first time in years, the Masons returned to Cathedral Hall to once again hold a Third Degree Ceremony.

“I’m really excited that you let us play in here one last time before you restore the Hall,” said Brother James MacDuff, District Deputy Grand Master of the Monroe Masonic District. “It’s very special because all of us have known brothers that have come before us that have unlimited stories of what used to happen here.”

To become a Mason, one goes through three degrees aimed at sharing the history of Freemasonry and how the organization works. The Third Degree is the highest, and the ceremony for reaching this is a celebration and culmination of hours of work and study. In April, 15 candidates from 10 Masonic lodges in the surrounding area became Third Degree Masons in Cathedral Hall, a space that was historically used for ceremonies such as this.



“The Third Degree is the capstone and most important part of becoming a Mason,” said Brother Michael Pettinato, Assistant Grand Lecturer of the Monroe Masonic District. “This event is special to us, as rather than each individual Masonic lodge putting together the Degree for their own members, all lodges in the surrounding area are coming together. For many, this is the first time setting foot in this space since it was sold.”

Brother Gary Burke, Secretary of the Valley of Rochester Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, remembers coming to the complex as a young man in the Order of DeMolay, which was a Masonic youth group that would meet in Cathedral Hall. He says the art deco style architecture in the building relates to the First, Second and Third Degrees of Freemasonry, therefore holding this ceremony here offers a unique opportunity in the present day.

“Nowadays, we’re in modern buildings – there’s no grandeur of an edifice like this anymore where they can experience their first time joining Masonry,” said Burke. “Because of the architecture here, and what the building was as a Masonic Temple back in the day, the men who recently joined Masonry, can appreciate the physical structure of the building as much as those who came before them.”

RBTL was honored to have the Masons return to the Auditorium for this special event. Preserving and acknowledging the history of the complex as a Masonic Temple is of utmost importance as PROJECT RESTOURATION continues. To learn more about the history of the West Herr Performing Arts Center, visit [westherrpac.org/about](http://westherrpac.org/about).

## SUMMER BOX OFFICE HOURS

**Monday - Thursday**  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
**Friday - Sunday**  
CLOSED

Visit [RBTL.org](http://RBTL.org) or [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com) any time for event and ticket information.  
*Extended hours resume September 8.*