

The
PEOPLE'S
THEATRE

THE
PARAMOUNT
90th
ANNIVERSARY

PARAMOUNT



THE PEOPLE’S THEATRE

The *Paramount* at 90

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PETER
DAVIS

Board Member,
Seattle Theatre Group

PRELUDE: THE MIRACLE OF THE PARAMOUNT

The mere fact that The Paramount Theatre exists and is as wonderful as it is, is a miracle for the city and the region. So many historic theaters have been torn down for whatever reason. But we're unbelievably lucky that Ida Cole saved The Paramount and made it what it is today—the people's theatre.

And the programming at The Paramount is so diverse it's just stunning. Everything from Broadway to dance to rock and roll to all of the educational programs. Between The Neptune, The Moore and The Paramount, we present an amazing variety of shows where everyone is welcome. No matter who you are, where you came from, how old you are, we are here for you. And I don't know any other organization in the region that has that same mission.

The Paramount has come a long distance from the day Ida purchased it, when it was a run-down mess, ready to be torn down. It had nothing except a few bare light bulbs and every once in a while a bad rock and roll show.

But today you could see the marquee lit up outside and the fabulous interior and you know The Paramount is as strong as it has ever been—financially strong, artistically strong, and managed and run by strong people. We've recreated the glory of the theater when it first opened 90 years ago. When you walk inside, you experience a world that

is bigger than us. That's what this building expresses.

Seattle's rapid current growth couldn't have come at a better time for Seattle Theatre Group. Maintaining a historic theater is really expensive. And we have three that we need to keep alive and healthy. Sustaining the financial strength to do what we do is always a challenge. The infusion of people and commercial activity to the region gives us a great opportunity to build our audience and extend our partnerships with business leaders.

Our financial strength allows us to take creative risks with our programming and to provide so many opportunities to kids and under-served populations. And of course, we have absolutely the best arts management team in the region. They do a fabulous job as stewards of both the historic theater and the diverse performances we present.

All of that expertise and community support gives me a lot of confidence in our future. While it's exciting to talk about today, and a great show like "Hamilton" coming to the theater, we're thinking 10, 20, 40 years ahead.

We see those years filled with electrifying entertainment along with educational programs that plant the seeds of future performances in the wonderful brains of our region's young people. That's what arts mean to a community. They bring magic into our lives that only grows and enriches all of us. I can't imagine a more exciting time for The Paramount and for the arts in Seattle.

"I can't imagine a more exciting time for The Paramount"

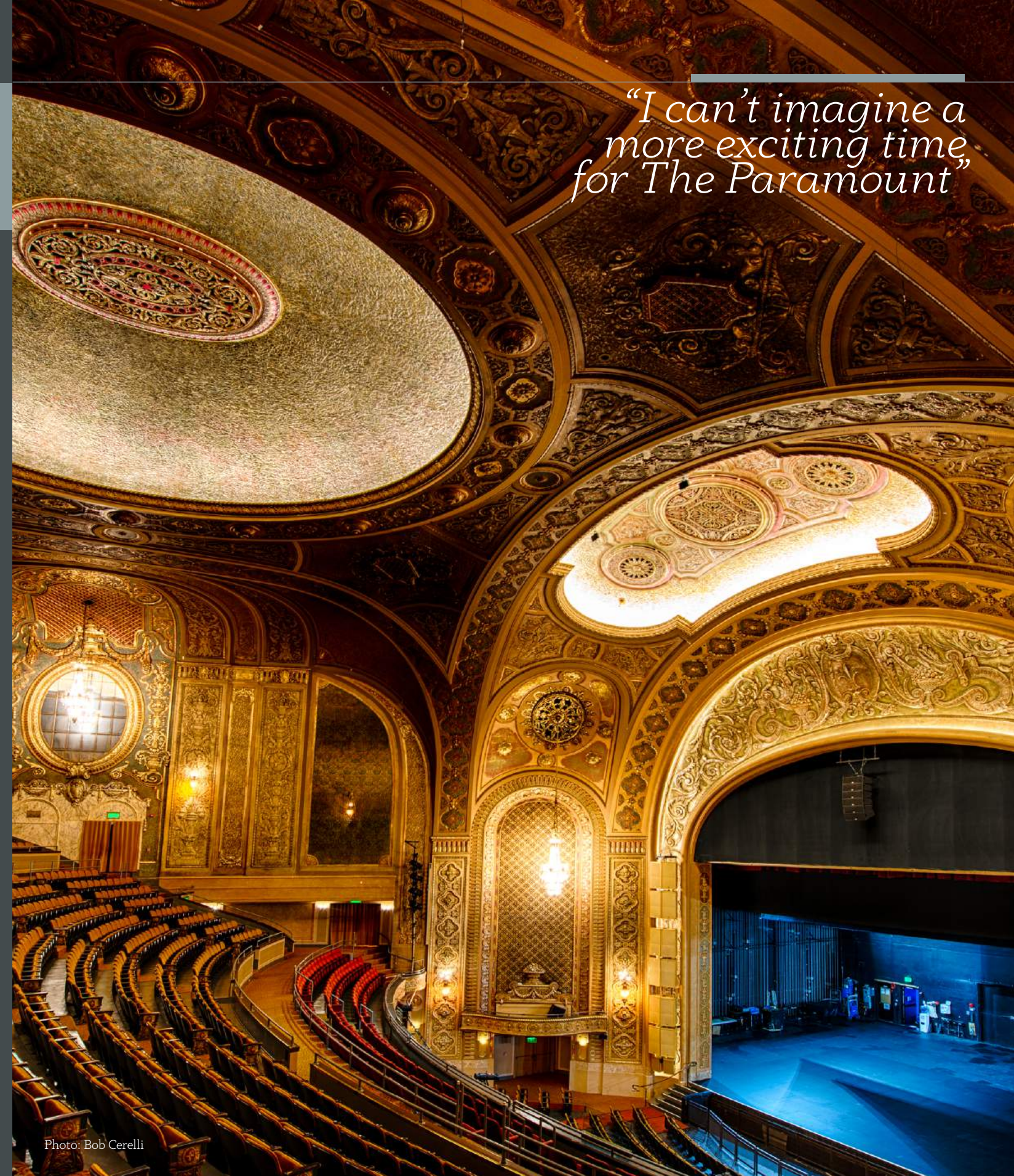
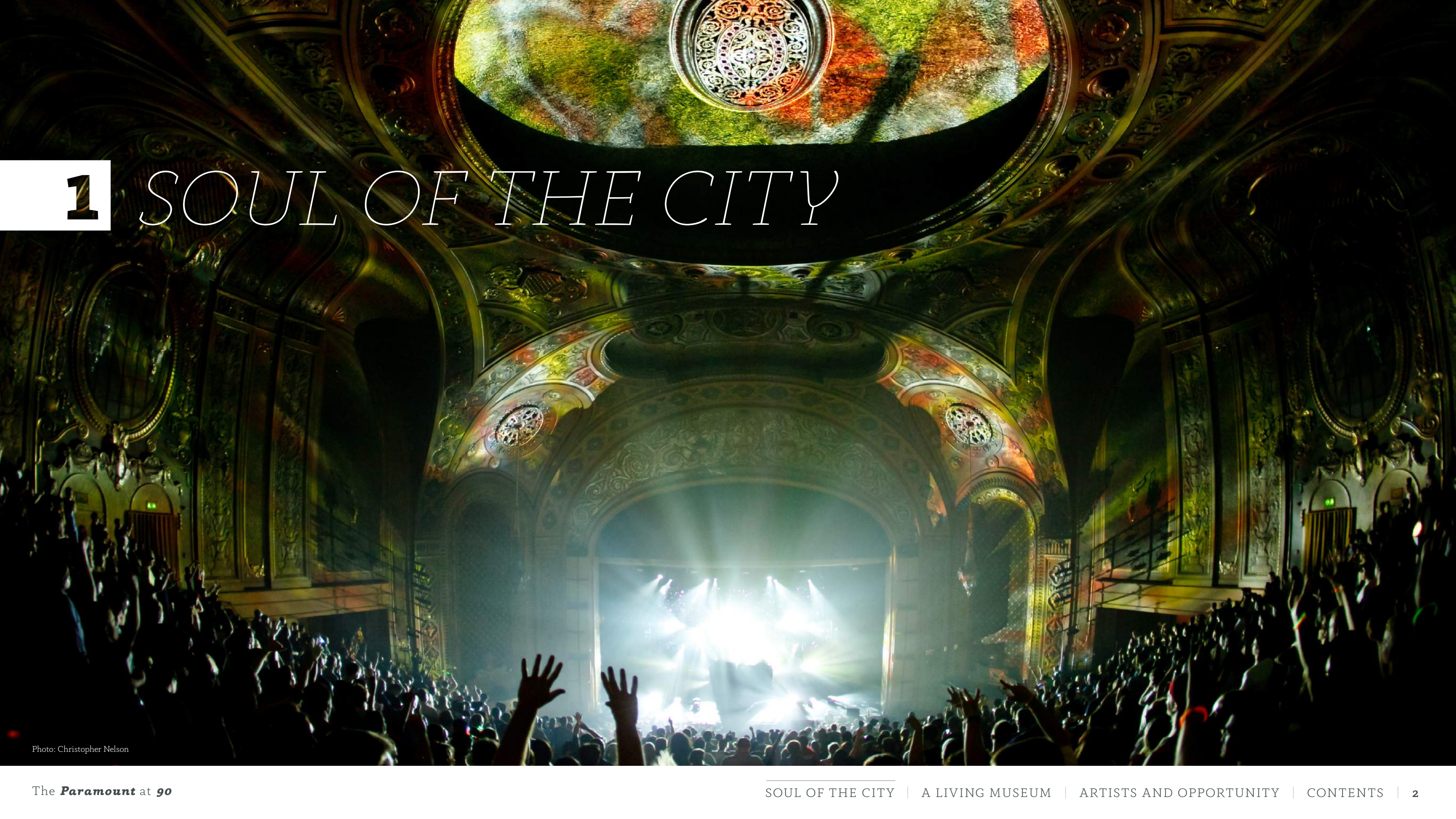


Photo: Bob Cerelli



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SOUL OF THE CITY

Photo: Christopher Nelson

“Its magnificence helps frame the performances on stage and elevates them into something unforgettable”



THE PARAMOUNT AT 90 HAS NEVER LOOKED BETTER

On my very first visit to The Paramount Theatre, I could see it was a special place. I took my stepson to a Violent Femmes concert in the late 1980s, which turned out to be one crazy show.

I remember the building as a shabby place, but quite beautiful, with really wonderful bones. Over the next several years, I enjoyed many shows at The Paramount.

My friend Chip Wilson mentioned that the theater was in financial trouble and at risk of being sold. Seattle had recently lost several other classic theaters to the wrecking ball, and I began to look into efforts by community groups to keep the remaining theaters standing, and whether I might be able to help.

As it turned out, the building needed a lot of work. When I purchased it, only 20 percent of its electrical circuits worked. The exit signs would fill up with water when it rained. Many of the seats were broken. But, fortunately, it still had most of its wonderful pieces and parts. That included its dazzling chandeliers, though they did need a serious scrubbing. The restoration was a major undertaking, but I couldn't imagine watching it get torn down. Nobody's going to build a theater like that again.

Today The Paramount is one of the things that

separate Seattle from other towns. So many modern-day stores and restaurants are chains, and lots of cities look like lots of other cities, with similar glass and steel residential towers and office buildings. What makes a city unique is its history, the story of where it came from. Cities that can integrate that history into their future can offer something other cities lack. That's what Seattle gets from preserving neighborhood theaters and other buildings created back when the city was a gritty old port town. Keeping that history alive gives a city character, and it's irreplaceable.

Yet the building itself is only part of the story. What happens inside it is another treasure. Ninety years on, The Paramount still succeeds in its mission to make ordinary people feel like royalty for an hour or two. And while most people don't go to The Paramount to look at the architecture, its magnificence helps frame the performances on stage and elevates them into something unforgettable. And most of all, the audience shares that experience as a community.

Seattle's extraordinary growth in recent years further underscores the significance of The Paramount. It offers a chance for the tens of thousands of new residents to connect with the city's heritage and mingle with existing Seattleites. The tech workers and other young people arriving today

will be the stewards of the city's culture in coming years, and engaging them now is the best way to ensure that support for the arts will continue.

Young people are among the most enthusiastic patrons of live performances, particularly popular music and rock concerts. The arrival of so many new faces should boost ticket sales across all of the city's artistic venues. Of course, there's no guarantee that today's offerings will remain fashionable, and Seattle's arts and theaters will have to adapt to stay relevant going forward.

The good news is that musical theater gets better and better all the time, and demand for tickets has never been as strong as it is now. I'm confident that The Paramount, The Moore, and The Neptune will remain vibrant venues for years to come, under the strong stewardship of Seattle Theatre Group. Live theater and music play an important role in rounding out Seattle's portfolio of cultural offerings, including the symphony, ballet, opera and art museums.

STG has done a marvelous job with The Paramount, strengthening and deepening its programming and growing more and more beloved by the community. And there's nothing that's quite as satisfying as watching something that you've launched, not only carry on, but go way beyond your own vision for it. Here's to another 90 years.



IDA COLE
*Founding Director,
Seattle Theatre Group*



Photo: Bob Cerelli

“The building itself is only **part of the story.**”



RICARDO
FRAZER

President,
Seattle Theatre Group
Board of Directors

ARTS CONNECT US TO OUR HISTORY – AND OUR FUTURE

The arts are the lifeblood of a city, and nowhere is that more true than Seattle.

It's true that we have a booming economy, with lots of jobs and shiny new buildings, and magical new technologies at our fingertips. All of those are special in their own way. But it's the arts that protect and nourish the city's soul, that give us a foundation and a way to connect to each other. And it doesn't matter what color you are, what nationality you are, or what gender you are. The arts connect us all.

Seattle's rapid growth reminds me of a child that's growing up. It takes time for a child to mature and to recognize what's important over the long haul – not just what's right in front of us today. Each year we welcome thousands of people from everywhere, including young people, tech workers and others who may not yet understand our history and culture. We face a challenge to preserve that culture, and to refresh it in ways that help our new neighbors embrace it.

We're all fortunate to have The Paramount and our other historical theaters to remind us of Seattle's artistic roots. In my case, that connection runs deeper. When I was a freshman at Evergreen State College, I worked as an intern and lived in the theater building, where I got my first real gig working on the clean-up crew. Eventually I worked my way up into the offices of West Coast

Theater Corp, where I became marketing director, booking shows at The Paramount back in the 1980s, including the likes of Sir Mix-a-Lot.

Back then, I would ride up and down in the freight elevator to the guts of the theater, where I'd hear musicians like Sid Clark practicing their music. You could just feel the spirits of the people that had been in that basement since The Paramount opened in 1928. I met theater artists, sound techs, and musicians of all types that dated back to those early days, some of them quite old. And they taught me a lot of things. Even as a young man I could feel the history there. The theater just had a pulse of its own.

Today, The Paramount, The Moore and The Neptune offer us a bridge to that history, a connection from the past to the present. We need to make sure they also serve as a connection to the future – tying our arts experiences together in a continuous flow of creativity, of culture, of social justice.

To do that, in a city with major growth and demographic changes, requires us to expose more people to the arts. We start by creating more diverse art, which engages the new residents who are changing our culture. Seattle Theatre Group, for example, has brought in performers from places like Scotland, the Baltics and South Africa.

“...It's the arts that protect and nourish the city's soul.”



Photo: Jesse Young

We acknowledge our city's diversity by letting new people know that we value their culture, too.

And finally, we need to recognize that technology is not an enemy of the arts. In fact, it's an incredible tool to increase access to performers and to distribute their work. Technology means more people can explore music, dance, drawings, poetry, and theater. To reach a diverse and growing community, we need to reach beyond our theaters' four walls.

Some artists might fear technology, or want to protect themselves from it. Maybe people won't come to the theater if they can see a performance on a digital platform. But innovation actually helps us reach more people. We're in a similar place as the music business back in the 1990s. A lot of music industry people feared downloads – which eventually replaced CDs. People tried to shut down digital music. But you can't stop innovation -- it's its own animal. And eventually, the industry evolved to protect artists and expand access to their work.

I am optimistic that live arts will continue to thrive in Seattle, bolstered by irreplaceable theaters like The Paramount and the incredible performances they help inspire. Reaching out to our new neighbors and our younger citizens with more relevant shows and modern technology will engage more people who will appreciate Seattle's rich cultural history and support the innovative new performances that we'll see in the years to come.



Photo: Jesse Young



TRACY RECTOR
City of Seattle Arts Commissioner

When I was a kid, The Paramount Theatre was a little rough around the edges yet still obviously a palace.

After it was restored, I remember going there to see “The Nutcracker” with my family and just feeling, “Wow! This place is so magical.” You could really see the detail in the brilliant setting and feel that sensation of a time past.

Today, STG is conscientious about making The Paramount an inclusive space, a place where people from different backgrounds are represented and welcomed with a diverse array of shows, gatherings, educational experiences and opportunities.

And my personal interaction with Seattle Theatre Group has blown me away. In my role as a curator of the Re:definition Gallery in The Paramount’s lobby, I asked to see their race and social justice initiative statement and plan, as well as public recognition that they’re on Indigenous land. They enthusiastically said, “Of course! We’ve actually been working on a plan—here it is.” And today, the theater has a very visible wall sign that states that we are on Indigenous land, traditional Coast Salish territory. This has also led other organizations in town to post similar signs.

The STG staff is listening to community. They invite others to share their experiences and insight. They

are maintaining and recognizing their privilege of having this amazing building in downtown Seattle. They are creating and maintaining cultural space for the people of Seattle who might feel pushed out

“STG is conscientious about making The Paramount an inclusive space”

or unwelcome or disenfranchised. They’re saying to Indigenous people: “Be proud of who you are and know that your contributions to this public space are highly valued.”



Photo: Jesse Young

“a diverse array of shows, gatherings, educational experiences and opportunities”



Photo: Jesse Young

CITY OF SEATTLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, for ninety years, Seattle’s Paramount Theatre has been a cultural fixture and architectural landmark in this great City; and

WHEREAS, Bertha Knight Landes, Seattle’s first female mayor, opened the theater—then called The Seattle Theatre—on March 1, 1928; and

WHEREAS, from the pre-“talkies” era to today, The Paramount Theatre has a long history of showcasing cultural achievements onstage, exemplified by the current production of “Hamilton”; and

WHEREAS, artists and speakers who have graced the stage of The Paramount include Prince, Nirvana, Maya Angelou and President Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, the operations of The Paramount Theatre and The Seattle Theatre Group continue to inspire artists of this generation and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle promotes, supports and celebrates the growth of inclusive and democratic spaces for artistic expression, and congratulates The Paramount Theatre on its 90th birthday;

NOW, THEREFORE I, JENNY A. DURKAN, MAYOR OF SEATTLE,
DO HEREBY PROCLAIM MARCH 1, 2018 TO BE

Paramount Theatre Day.



Photo: Jason Tang



JENNY DURKAN
Mayor, City of Seattle



Photo: Timothy Aguero

JIM
KELLY

Executive Director,
4Culture

SEATTLE'S PAST FEEDS ITS FUTURE

The famous preservationist Jane Jacobs—who saved New York’s lower Manhattan from having a highway built right through it—once said: *new ideas need old buildings*.

We need connections to the past, to the history of our communities and neighborhoods, in order to launch the ideas that move us into the future.

As Seattle strives to become a great city, it’s important to respect the accomplishments of the people who came before us. In the arts, that means saving the remaining great venues that were built before television, radio, and the internet dominated popular entertainment options. In the early decades of the 20th century, theaters were built for the public to escape from daily life, to be transported to a magical environment in which the world came to them and made “going to the theater” unique and special. The march of progress has sacrificed a few of these theatrical jewels. But fortunately, not all of them. Not The Paramount. Our city is richer for having this architectural masterpiece in our midst. A great city blends the new with the old in ways that honor both.

When I first encountered The Paramount Theatre in the 1990s, you could see its beauty hiding under a coat of matte white paint. It was the fading movie star showing her age. The restoration was transformative. Every detail, every piece of glass hanging from a chandelier was seemingly brand-new. The intricate nature of the plaster work, the accoutrements and the moldings showed

craftsmanship that doesn’t exist today. I moved to Seattle from New York and I’d been to a lot of Broadway houses, but The Paramount Theatre was the most beautiful theater I’d ever seen.

We all know Seattle Theatre Group as a presenter of live performances, but they get too little credit for being one of the premier preservation organizations in our region. That’s a role few arts organizations embrace. It’s expensive to maintain a historic theater. But STG meticulously maintains three historic buildings. The Moore Theatre, built in 1907, preceded the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition by two years. The Paramount Theatre and The Neptune Theatre were built in the Roaring 20s, before the Crash of 1929. Together, they provide a window into life in the early 20th century.

The battle between development and preservation is not new. “Out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new” is a particularly American philosophy, as befits a relatively young nation. The frantic current construction boom creates constant tension between the past and future. The best way to save the old is to own the old. Seattle is extremely fortunate to have Seattle Theatre Group keeping alive a vital piece of the city’s history – old buildings where new ideas can grow and thrive.



Photo: Bob Cerelli

“I’d been to a lot of Broadway houses, but The Paramount Theatre was the most beautiful theater I’d ever seen”

“Today, the theater is as beloved as it has ever been.”

THE PARAMOUNT IS A PIECE OF SEATTLE HISTORY

In its early years, the city of Seattle grew rapidly and sometimes chaotically. At the beginning of the 20th century, a number of important structures began to define the city and give it a more permanent feel, including the Smith Tower, King Street Station, and many of our original schools and libraries.

The Paramount Theatre was one of those buildings that made Seattle feel like it had grown up. We had witnessed some important history by 1928, when the theater then called The Seattle Theatre was completed. And at the time, Seattle had a lively vaudeville and movie scene. But the new theater brought it all together in a beautiful, imposing building, establishing a big-time, bright-lights, big-city kind of feel.

When you look at historic photographs at the Museum of History & Industry, at the crowds that would flock to the theater, you get the sense that this was the pulsing heart of the entertainment world of Seattle. And it has really played that role continuously.

The fact that The Paramount was saved and restored is a big deal in a city that has sadly lost so many of its great historic buildings. Seattle has always looked toward the future. We typically don't spend much time looking over our shoulder or waxing nostalgic about what used to be. We're very much focused on what's coming next.

So, when a structure like The Paramount not only survives for 90 years, but continues to thrive, it becomes an anchor to the city's character. It reminds us that we all share something in common as a city that celebrates great artists and appreciates great architecture.

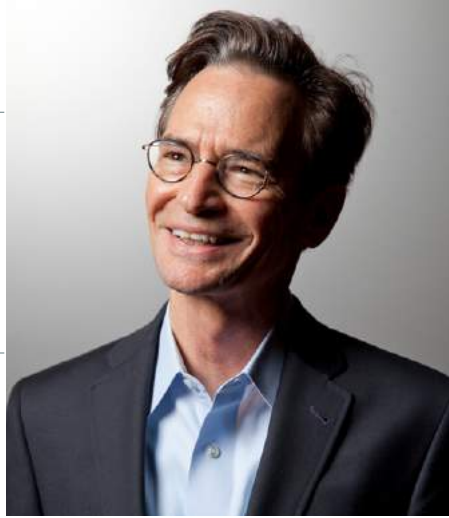
And when we look out today at Seattle's vibrant, thriving central city, it might be easy to overlook

the role The Paramount played in revitalizing downtown. It was part of the first wave of historic buildings to be saved, establishing downtown as not just a commercial center, but also a place to live and enjoy after work.

When you see that neon, and the marquee all lit up, and the lights on at The Paramount, you know that something pretty wonderful is happening inside. And you feel proud to be in this city. We are lucky to have this breathtaking cathedral to art as a complement to our newer houses for the symphony, ballet, and opera.

It would be very hard to create another building like The Paramount today. The level of imagination, of craftsmanship, of thoughtfulness that went into that building were exceptional. Today, the theater is as beloved as it has ever been. It's as lovingly cared for as it has ever been. And most importantly, it's safe from the threat of neglect or the forces of redevelopment. I think it's fair to say that most Seattleites would find it inconceivable to imagine our city without The Paramount.

When Seattle looks back after another 90 years, it will celebrate the painstaking restoration of The Paramount and the ongoing preservation by the Seattle Theatre Group. Saving not only the structure, but also its original purpose as an entertainment venue, is remarkable. It turned a page in our civic history in Seattle, reminding us how important these living landmarks are, and inspiring us to keep them forever. And we're a better city because of that.



LEONARD GARFIELD

*Executive Director,
Museum of History and Industry*



Cinerama at The Paramount, 1956 (Museum of History and Industry)



PATRICK
AND KEVIN
RICHARDSON
Paramount Club members

A THEATER YOU CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH

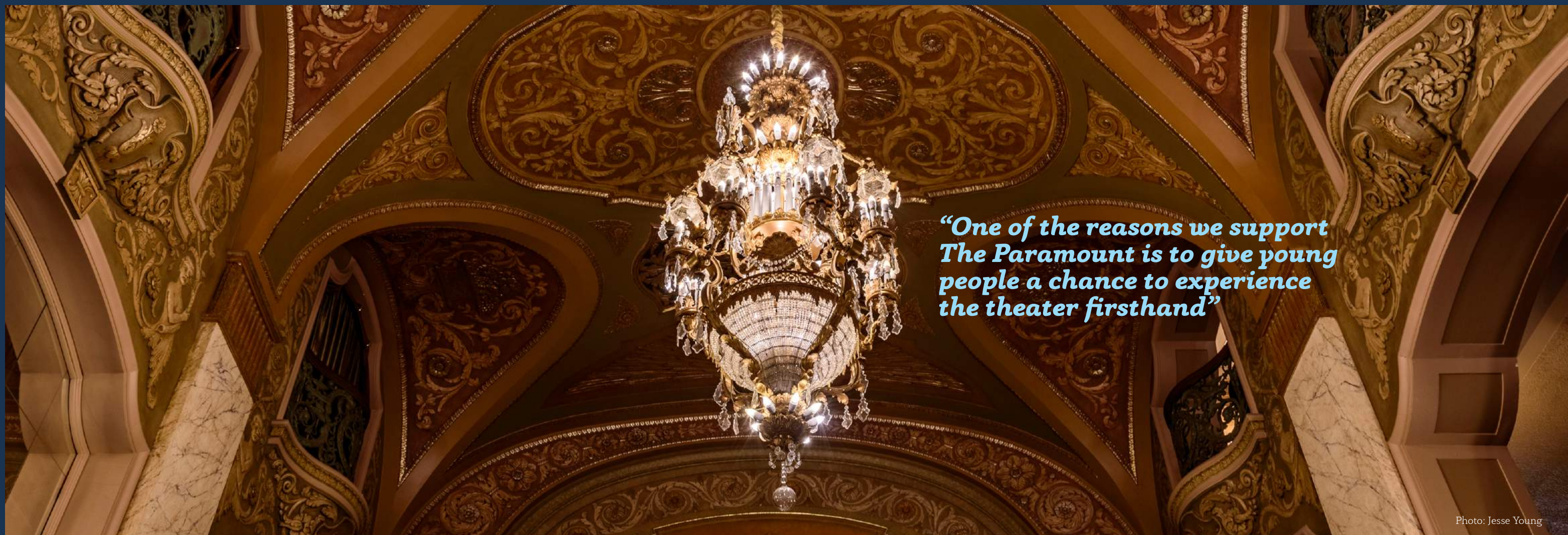


Photo: Jesse Young

***“One of the reasons we support
The Paramount is to give young
people a chance to experience
the theater firsthand”***

Before we moved to Seattle in 2003, we lived in the Bay Area. We’d go see a show every once in a while, but we weren’t avid theater-goers at all. Once we visited The Paramount, we were blown away.

We loved the ambience, the people, the staff there,

and the really high quality shows they bring in.

So, we started going to more and more shows and just fell in love with it. It’s a gem. Even though it’s a big theater, it still feels like one of those little intimate theaters that you can see on Broadway in New York.

For a lot of the people nowadays, a night of entertainment means they go to the movies to see

these massive, 3D-screen, mind-blowing special effects. But when you just go for a simple story and see things on stage, that has a chance to touch a lot of people in a different way. It leaves a deeper impression than, “Oh my God, did you see that starship explode? That was so cool!”

One of the reasons we support The Paramount is to give young people a chance to experience the

theater firsthand. Our school systems, our colleges and universities fund sports, but they don’t put a lot of emphasis on the arts, so many people miss out on live performances, which can enrich people’s lives. It may not fix potholes in the street, so its value may be harder to see at first. But a stage performance can actually touch you very deeply. Seattle Theatre Group plays an important role in making our community a better, more well-rounded place.



“There’s an excitement
that goes with walking,
into a spectacular space”

GREAT ARTS HELP ENERGIZE SEATTLE

The Paramount is one of the grand theaters of the world, and I’m so happy to have it in my home town.

There’s an excitement that goes with walking into a spectacular space like The Paramount. And I’ve seen some great shows there—“A Chorus Line,” David Bowie, “Miss Saigon.”

I always think of the Pike Place Market being the heart and soul of our city, and that The Paramount is in that same vein, along with Seattle Center and the waterfront. You really need to have these essential organs to make a great town, and we have to do everything you can to protect those organs.

But ultimately, it’s the people who make a city great. It’s the people who make sure that hungry people get fed, that their neighbors get healthcare, that everyone has access to what the city offers. And that’s what Seattle Theatre Group brings to the arts culture in town. They do more than bring in great shows like “Hamilton” or “The Book of Mormon.” I really love the Silent Movie Mondays series, or when they bring Dance Theatre of Harlem to town, and their programs for kids.

The arts are incredibly important to a city. In Seattle, it’s places like the Frye, the Seattle Art Museum, The Paramount, and the 5th Avenue that energize my spirit. All of those are part of the fabric, the texture of our city, and I can’t imagine living here without them.



TOM DOUGLAS

*Executive Chef,
Restaurateur*



JOSH
LABELLE

Executive Director,
Seattle Theatre Group

It would be tempting, and maybe even fitting, to think of The Paramount Theatre as a museum.

It is, after all, a gorgeous, historic building from 1928, and there's something special about historic places. What makes this "museum" different is that the priceless treasures inside it come to life. Seeing a show at The Paramount is like viewing fabulous paintings by Rembrandt or Picasso and then getting to watch the artists working away on their next masterpieces as a bonus.

Seattle is fortunate that The Paramount has survived for 90 years. But our goal is bigger than merely preserving this fabulous treasure. We must continually adapt it so that it meets the needs of new generations of people, many of whom have come from distant places with varying interests. The ways that art is viewed and produced are also changing along with the constant advances in technology.

Fortunately, The Paramount has demonstrated its ability to adapt over several decades. It was originally built as a movie house and vaudeville

theater, an opulent, but affordable urban oasis for people of all walks of life.

Seattle Theatre Group embraces and honors that vision of "the people's theatre," and we strive to deliver a variety of high quality performing arts that appeal to all audiences. The Paramount has hosted a range of shows that very few venues today can match – from the Grateful Dead and Nirvana, to Broadway shows like "Wicked" and "Hamilton," to the Bolshoi Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

For the people's theatre to produce great art and help sustain Seattle's vibrant cultural life, Seattle needs to cultivate great artists, right here in our community. Our young artists need time to mature and grow. We are committed to helping them develop their talents and then connect and share them with their neighbors. STG's network of theaters and community programs offer them a place to learn and opportunities to find an audience.

Fortunately, we live in a region where many government and business leaders recognize the

"An urban oasis for people of all walks of life"

value of arts and culture and we have enjoyed extraordinary public support. As our community welcomes tens of thousands of new residents coming to work at Seattle's newer industries and companies, we're confident that they will also support the arts. Many of those newcomers value live performances, and a vibrant arts community can help local employers recruit new workers.

Preserving and modernizing the people's theatre was Ida Cole's amazing gift to the city. Since it re-opened with a presentation of "Miss Saigon" in 1995, The Paramount has helped enhance and expand Seattle's cultural offerings at a crucial time. The arts may have never been more vulnerable and more valuable than they are today. We're lucky to have The Paramount—a versatile and spectacular theater, run by talented, passionate people, and supported by citizens who show their appreciation by filling its seats for an incredible variety of live shows.

"The arts may have never been more vulnerable and, more valuable than they are today."



Photo: Jason Tang

2

A LIVING MUSEUM





RANDY
ENGSTROM

Director,
Office of Arts and Culture
City of Seattle

When I think about the moments that make us feel proud of our city, that show Seattle at its best and its most memorable, I also think about where those moments take place.

For the arts community, and often for the city at large, nothing beats The Paramount Theatre for hosting an extraordinary event. Its size, its grandeur, and its connection to so many historic Seattle performances, all make The Paramount a natural home for civic and cultural events that we'll always remember.

One of those moments came in 2012 when the marriage equality ballot measure passed in Washington State. There was a big reception held, naturally, at The Paramount. As I left the theater that night, I took a picture of the marquee outside, which read: "Love Wins." I was so proud of the city that I lived in, and our ability to stand for our values. The celebration demonstrated that when Seattle wants to

THE PARAMOUNT CONNECTS US ALL

come together for something special, The Paramount is where we go.

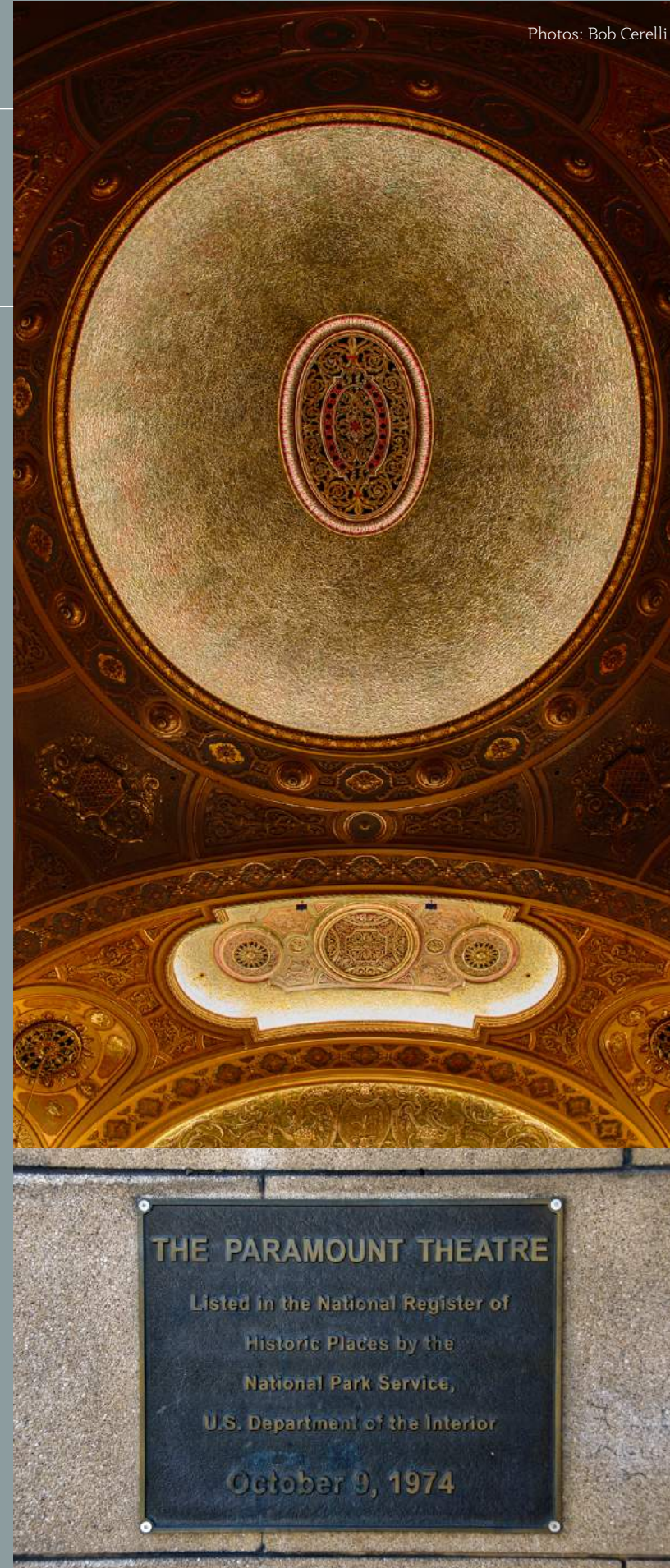
It takes a special kind of city just to keep a place like The Paramount alive. Similar theaters once graced cities across the country, but most of them fell to the wrecking ball years ago. The perseverance of The Paramount in the 21st Century speaks to Seattle's legacy of embracing culture and creativity.

Some people say that's driven by a need to find things to do indoors for nine months out of the year. But I think it's more than that. People have always come to Seattle to imagine what hasn't happened before—chasing Alaskan gold, defining commercial air travel, brewing up fancy new coffee drinks, and pioneering online retail. And the people involved in those endeavors also valued theater, dance, film and music.

Seattle's consistent support for the arts has helped produce some incredible local artists. Jimi Hendrix, the grunge era, Sir Mix-a-lot and Macklemore.

Today the city is transforming, with unprecedented growth and new residents coming from all over the world. The changing demographics challenge us to tell more stories and different kinds of stories for different audiences and communities that appreciate culture and art and music. And the rising cost of living challenges us to expand access to the arts, especially among people of modest means. But it's essential that we do so. A vibrant arts community is an enormous asset, and an important piece of what makes the city so attractive to both visitors and new arrivals.

Photos: Bob Cerelli



We're fortunate to have several great music and theater venues in town to showcase world-class performances. But The Paramount's size, its opulence, and its history are unique. Without it, Seattle wouldn't be able to bring huge Broadway shows like "The Book of Mormon," "The Lion King" and "Hamilton" to town.

"It takes a special kind of city just to keep a place like The Paramount alive"

When I think about the next 10 years in Seattle, I hope that we can create even more opportunities, happening in more places, to see and experience art. I hope that we're able to retain and grow a thriving creative community, in the face of all the growth and challenges that come with that. And I hope that The Paramount continues to be a place where we go to celebrate not only great live shows, but also the really important civic moments where we express our values as a community.

"nothing beats The Paramount Theatre for hosting an extraordinary event"

“one of my favorite places in,” Seattle



MELINDA
GATES

*Co-chair,
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

The Paramount Theatre is one of my favorite places in Seattle. Our family has seen more great productions at The Paramount than I can count, but the gorgeous building alone is worth the trip. It's a Seattle landmark with a special place in my heart and a permanent spot on my list of recommendations to visitors.



STEVE
MOORE, PhD.

*Executive Director,
M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust*

Seattle Theatre Group applied to the Murdock Trust in 2013 to fund a somewhat unique project: a historic facilities program director. A key priority for the Murdock Trust is to invest in the infrastructure of nonprofit organizations to ensure their long-term success. Normally we see requests for positions like executive director, development director or program manager. However, the Trust has invested considerable funds in historic preservation, and this application piqued our interest.

The Trustees have been impressed with STG's leadership, both the staff and the board, as well as the excellent work accomplished thus far by the historic facilities program director, Brian Layton, who was hired as a result of the Trust grant. STG utilizes a strong financial model, drawing 93 percent of revenue from earned income. These details, coupled with the fact that the venues themselves are as much an attraction as the performances inside, helped make this a strong proposal for STG and the community.

“For a presenting arts organization to also be in the business of historic preservation is incredible.”

Preserving three historic theaters is a never-ending task. For a presenting arts organization to also be in the business of historic preservation is incredible. What they're continuing to do for these three structures is so important to Seattle and the region. Every time I visit Seattle, the landscape changes. While innovation and renovation can be positive aspects of a thriving city, it is also critical that we maintain the historic heritage of our communities. STG is caring for these cherished buildings and making the vital spaces for arts today. They've been there for generations. You cannot replace them.

In the current frenzy of development in Seattle, it's wonderful to see that these buildings bring joy to audiences, artists, school children and the community at large. It is a critical part of the “ecosystem” of a healthy and verdant city.



Photo: Jesse Young

“Seattle’s passion for the arts has not dwindled”

Photo: Bob Cerelli

Theater and the arts are things that touch you inside and cause your mind to go to different places.

Arts and other extracurricular activities can alleviate day-to-day stress in the lives of young people and adults alike, which frees up our capacity to focus academically and in other areas of our lives. And when you can give yourself that freedom, then who knows what your mind can create?



Photo: Christopher Nelson

ARTS CREATE POSSIBILITIES FOR US ALL

Our partnership with Seattle Theatre Group aims to broaden the spectrum of young people from various economic and cultural backgrounds that are exposed to the theater and live arts performances. The fact that The Paramount has been around for 90 years demonstrates that Seattle’s passion for the arts has not died or dwindled. Through the changing mix of people, perspectives, and diversification of our communities, our arts culture has persisted and thrived.

Our task today is to preserve and expand local access to the arts, building partnerships with leaders in government, business, and philanthropy that intentionally create new opportunities, for young people in particular, to experience and participate in the arts.

Schools are obviously an important area of focus, and we need to make sure that every school, not just some, has outlets for students to enjoy the arts in some way. That’s a challenge, given the budget difficulties and space crunch at many of our public schools. But when we decide that something is vital and important to our kids for their survival, then we must be willing to make sure that they have it.

We need to decide that we will not sacrifice the arts for any reason. Then, our creativity will determine what that looks like in each school. We can start by recognizing that space crunch is a choice. Schools have gymnasiums and other facilities where we can create arts opportunities. We can also take kids out of schools to visit The Paramount or other venues, exhibits or performances.

As a child growing up in rural Mississippi, I didn’t have exposure to the arts. I was a young adult in college before I ever went to a movie theater, let alone a live performance. But we did have theater in school, and I played roles from six years old through high school. It made a huge difference in how I saw the world, and myself, and how I thought about the challenges that existed in the world I lived in.

When you can give that to every child, you create opportunity for them to think differently about their world and their own space. About who they are themselves. It enables a child to see themselves and

“Through the changing mix of people, perspectives, and diversification of our communities, our arts culture has persisted and thrived”

their world differently. It can sometimes also cause a teacher, coach or mentor, to see something in a child that the child didn’t see in themselves.

As The Paramount turns 90 years old, I’m optimistic that it will remain just as relevant for the next 90 years. The ongoing partnerships with the community support a living organization, with many different audiences and groups feeling a sense of ownership. That ensures The Paramount will be cared for by future generations, no matter how our city or the rest of the world changes.



WILLIAM
BELL, PhD.

CEO, Casey Family Programs



TED
ACKERLEY
*Ginger & Barry Ackerley
Foundation*

THE ARTS ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS – BUSINESS SHOULD BE GOOD TO THE ARTS

Support from businesses for local arts organizations is an essential part of building and sustaining a thriving city.

Fortunately, Seattle’s commercial leaders have a long tradition of sponsoring our cultural attractions. And that’s more than just a vehicle for giving something back to our community. It’s also a great way to engage our employees and to strengthen the fabric of the place they call home.

Amid our city’s rapid recent growth, corporate connections to the arts have grown as well. Established institutions like the symphony, the ballet, and the opera have long enjoyed ample support. And today, as the local arts landscape expands to include more smaller, not-for-profit institutions, the corporate sector has recognized that and has actively stepped up its support.

In fact, more and more businesses are getting involved directly with individual arts providers, helping their employees learn more about those organizations and allowing them to determine which they should fund. Workforces want to feel more

empowered, and workplace giving programs can help them get there.

This trend should be expanding as Seattle’s companies welcome so many newcomers to town. Our new neighbors may not be fully aware of the institutions in our community that need their support – or the vast array of live performances that happen in our town. Their employers can introduce them to the best parts of their town and connect them in meaningful ways to programs that could use their support.

Many arts programs have recognized that their new customers are bringing cultural changes and different interests to town, and they are responding with changes in their programmatic focus. There’s a greater effort to try to present different kinds of content that historically might not have had sold as well as it could today.

One of the most adaptable and resourceful institutions is Seattle Theatre Group, with an impressive mix of savvy people ranging from performers and artistic professionals to representatives of the business community. STG has a knack for recognizing and promoting a diversity of content, both on the for-profit side and for the not-for-profit side.

Their versatility of ideas helps them deliver a schedule of performances that appeal to a broad cross-section of our community, not just a small subset. As a result, we get to see a great mix of

Broadway-level, first-tier talent plus a lot of talent from the local market, including countless kids who perform as musicians or dancers. That confluence of big league and emerging artists provides a potent mix of first class entertainment and community service.

Whatever type of performance you love, you can probably find it in Seattle. And that makes for a better city. We don’t have to rely on broadcasts or online replays of the shows we seek. And there’s no substitute for the passion, the energy, and the spine-tingling moments that you get when you witness something in person. It touches the soul on a level that you’re just not going to feel through a 55-inch HD experience.

On the 90th anniversary of The Paramount Theatre, I’d like to think that we’ve developed a collective appreciation for great venues, and that this appreciation will endure. But we’ll always need to be vigilant, starting with our civic leaders, particularly on the political side. The city is developing at a very fast rate and getting very modern in its orientation. We need to be more thoughtful about maintaining a balance between developing for development’s sake and building a city that will make people proud 90 years from now.

We absolutely, positively have to preserve—and even build more—institutions like The Paramount. Since its inception, The Paramount has played a critical role in Seattle’s arts culture, and its value is only increasing over time.



Photo: Jesse Young

*“we’ve developed
a collective
appreciation
for great venues”*

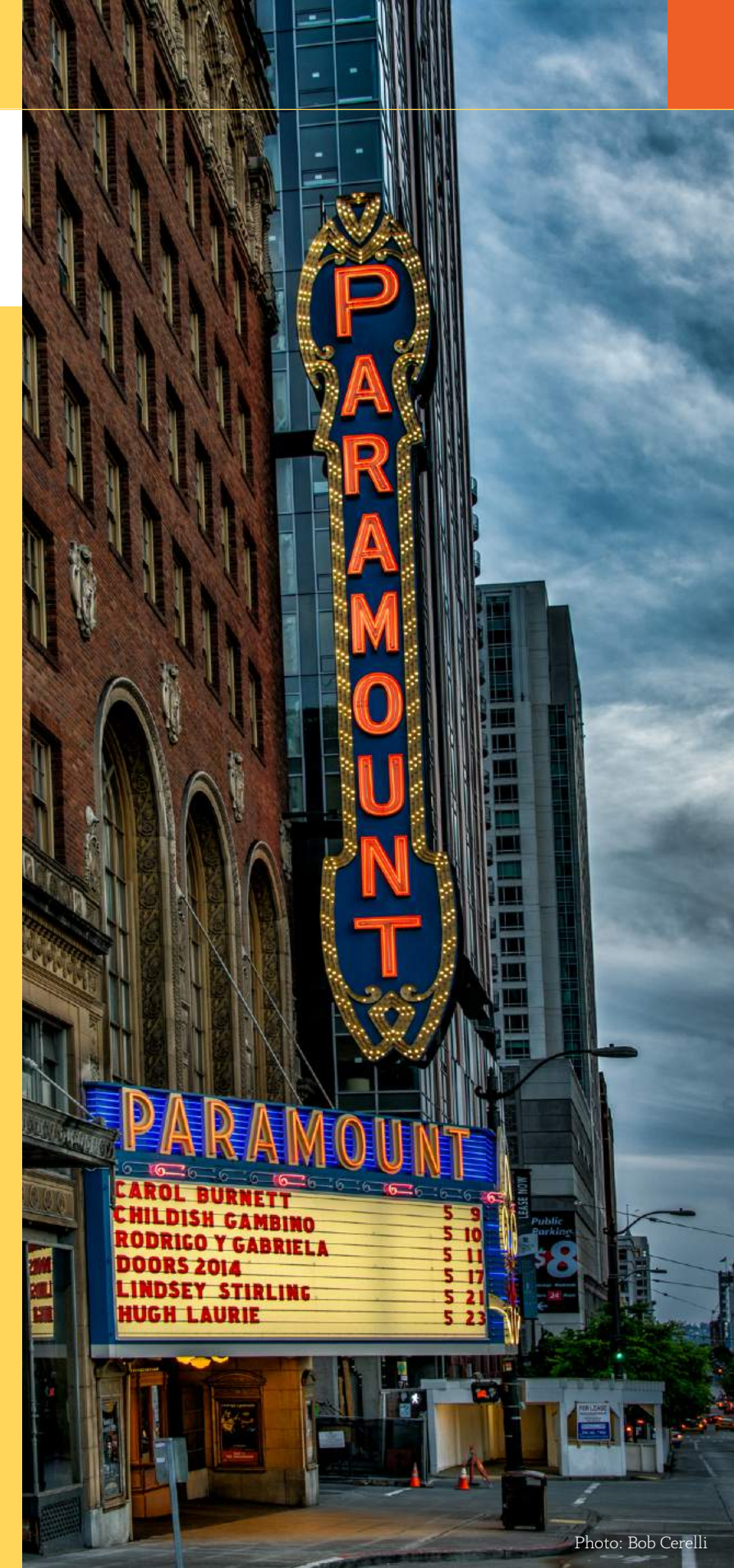


Photo: Bob Cerelli



Photo: Bob Cerelli

Theaters are, by their very nature, magical places.

Something transformative occurs when people – of disparate ages and backgrounds - come together to witness a live performance. Suddenly, out of thin air, comes a shared experience, a common bond—and the differences between us become vastly less important than this newfound commonality.

This is why theaters are so valuable to their communities—they create the kind of experiences that strengthen the bonds between people. A theater as grand, technologically sophisticated, and gorgeous as The Paramount has the power to transform a city, as the people of Seattle are very aware.

Working alongside Seattle Theatre Group to bring Broadway to Seattle, I’ve been able to witness firsthand this kind of magic at play. It’s evident in the way a young person’s face lights up as he or she experiences a live show for the first time. Or, when that same kid—participating in one of STG’s



THE PARAMOUNT IS A NATIONAL TREASURE

mentoring programs—starts peppering a company manager with questions, realizing for the first time that opportunities to work in this great sphere exist off stage too.

The Paramount is a living monument, a shrine for a city that embraces and cherishes culture. The very presence of this historical theater, for which great effort and expense has gone into its preservation, restoration, and continued maintenance, shows Seattle’s commitment to the arts.

In return, the arts provide a huge financial boost to a community. Touring Broadway shows in Seattle generate tens of millions of dollars in economic benefits, from restaurants and hotels to parking lots and babysitters. We’re proud to see how Broadway can support workers not just in the arts, but also in the many businesses that support them.

The Paramount Theatre’s importance is not just a local story, mind you. The “Hamilton” decision to launch their second national touring company in Seattle in February 2018 is proof positive that the

national culture scene is standing up and taking note of this treasure of the Pacific Northwest. Beyond its attractive capacity and cutting-edge technical capabilities, which make it such an ideal venue for touring Broadway productions, The Paramount has something else—something indefinable, but just as vital. It’s an unmistakable quality that makes the hair on your arms stand up the moment you enter.

“The Paramount is a living monument, a shrine for a city”

At the center of this great city, in the upper left-hand corner of America, sits this enchanted place, where day-in and day-out people come together and share experiences, break down barriers, and listen. And, day-in and day-out, a stronger, more cohesive community is being built. We couldn’t dream of a greater home for the wonderful collaboration we continue to enjoy between Broadway Across America and Seattle Theatre Group.



LAUREN REID
*Chief Operating Officer,
The John Gore Organization*

“an enchanted place, where day-in and day-out people come together and share experiences, break down barriers, and listen”



Photo: Jesse Young



BILL
BAIN

Architect and
Consulting Partner, NBBJ

THE EVOLUTION OF A MAGICAL PLACE

MAGIC - The Paramount Theatre has always had the ability to magically take me from my every day life to another special world.

Those early Charlie Chan movies taught me and my pre-teen Capitol Hill buddies many things. For instance, that inscrutable Chinese detective, taught us to be hyper observant and always on the right side of the law.

When I went east to college, I lost that intimate connection with The Paramount and focused on architecture. However, when Ida Cole, who saved the theater from destruction, asked me to head up the refresh of the theater and bring it up to date, I was thrilled.

The theater still had the bones of that magical place, but we, with Ida's guidance, kept the magic, and made the theater an even better place. With her help, we did many things to update the theater.

They included an enlarged stage and loading dock, new dressing rooms and special Italian seating that could be converted to a flat floor at different levels to accommodate different organizations and functions.

The separate office element in front of the main House on Pine Street was an excellent feature. It was a perfect place for incubator arts oriented firms to locate. Also, in the future, The Paramount will be right between the two major spaces of Seattle's new Convention Center.

**“an architectural gem like
The Paramount Theatre”**

Classic architecture adds beauty and character to a city. The presence of older buildings such as The Paramount interspersed with newer ones, give a city its charm and sense of its own history. We're fortunate that, even as Seattle adds so many new buildings, we've retained an architectural gem like The Paramount Theatre.

*“Classic architecture
adds beauty and
character to a city”*



Photo: Bob Cerelli

“A beacon of the arts scene in Seattle since 1928”

Grand Lobby, 1928 (Museum of History and Industry)



A WINDOW INTO WHO WE ARE

It is a true pleasure to extend my best wishes and congratulations to The Paramount Theatre as it celebrates 90 years of artistry, innovation and service. The Paramount has been a beacon of the arts scene in Seattle since 1928, a constant landmark in a rapidly changing city.

The Paramount has been home to some of our most iconic performers from Nirvana to Pink Floyd, and to dazzling performances in dance, theater, jazz and comedy. Millions of people have come through the doors of The Paramount, awed by the performances, the architecture, the history and the unique place The Paramount occupies in our city. The Paramount Theatre has been at the center of Seattle’s artistic boom—one that has helped transform Seattle from a simple logging town into the thriving, diverse and unique city it is today.

The value of the arts to our society is simply immeasurable. The arts provide us with joy and entertainment, but also as windows to our past, present, and future. The arts enrich our understanding of our community, country and world—touching hearts and minds deeply and opening new avenues for understanding who we are and what we value as well as our challenges and our struggles.

I am proud of all of our arts institutions in the 7th Congressional District. We are truly blessed with tremendous riches. As a writer myself who has served on the board of arts organization in the area, and as the mother of a musician who benefited personally from the education and arts programs at The Paramount, I am deeply grateful to all those who have made The Paramount what it is. From the Hungarian-born movie magnate Adolph Zukor, who invested the princely sum of \$3 million to construct The Paramount, to the remarkable Ida Cole, who brought The Paramount back to life, to the current staff and board of Seattle Theatre Group who keep it vibrant and alive—we are blessed to have this jewel in Seattle.

The Paramount’s dedication to the arts and artistic expression has immeasurably strengthened our society and our city. I am proud to represent this area in the United States Congress and I join you in commemorating this special anniversary. May The Paramount Theatre remain a beacon of inspiration and hope for future generations for the next 90 years!



PRAMILA JAYAPAL
*U.S. Representative,
7th District*

“90 years of artistry,
innovation and service”



DOW
CONSTANTINE
King County Executive

THE PARAMOUNT IS A GIFT FOR GENERATIONS

Throughout its history, Seattle has been home to many great theaters and music clubs. While many of them have been very important in their moment, there are a few venues that stand out, that tie together experiences across decades and generations.

Among those treasures, The Paramount Theatre stands out as our crown jewel. Every time you walk in there, you can feel the spirit of the performers and the local residents who came together at The Paramount over the last 90 years.

The theater first opened for business the same week that my father was born, and he has fond memories of watching shows there as far back as the 1950s. As I sat next to my father enjoying “Hamilton” at The Paramount, the value of this historic building could not have been more apparent.

The Paramount adds so much to an entertainment experience. It’s more than just being in that grand setting. The theater also holds a lot of emotional meaning for me as a Seattleite. It’s part of our history.

When I grew up, The Paramount was one of those mystical places where the big kids went to see shows. When I got old enough for Mom and Dad to let me go, I got to see some memorable performances, starting with local guitar hero Randy Hansen’s tribute to local guitar god Jimi Hendrix in the late 1970s.

When I got to college, I saw an awful lot of shows with my girlfriend, who’s now my wife. Every single

time I walk into The Paramount Theatre today, I’m grateful to Ida Cole and everybody who stepped up to renew that building for this city and this region.

The Paramount is a vestige of a forgotten era, when the theater itself was a piece of art and part of the experience. People my age grew up with the idea that theaters should look like that, have that kind of ornate design, even a certain smell to it.

But we’re not building any new venues like The Paramount, so by preserving it, we’ve made it possible for today’s generations to enjoy it, and to keep it alive for those to come. It’s a remarkable gift to this community, like a keepsake handed down from our great grandparents.

Now it belongs to us as a community. It enriches us and reminds us of the past. But it can also help us navigate the rapid change and growth in the region. As we manage so much dislocation and disruption, those things that tie us to our history, to the people who built this city, provide an anchor and a foundation. It shows newcomers as well as longtime residents a sense of our identity, a sense of Seattle’s uniqueness.

“A SENSE OF SEATTLE’S UNIQUENESS”

For me, and my father, it’s comforting to see this priceless community asset not only surviving, but thriving, and well positioned to continue dazzling future generations for the next 90 years. Or more.

“The theater also holds a lot of emotional meaning for me”



Photo: Bob Cerelli



3

ARTISTS AND OPPORTUNITY

Photo: Mark Sanders



MARI
HORITA
*President & CEO,
ArtsFund*

ARTS ARE MORE THAN ENTERTAINMENT

Great cities are defined in large part by their cultural offerings, and Seattle has an impressive assortment. The arts entertain and inspire us, and they build stronger communities by bringing people together and providing experiences that we all can share. We all benefit from the arts.

We're fortunate to have an organization like Seattle Theatre Group, which does so much to enhance and promote live performances by artists across various genres—ranging from neighborhood kids just learning to dance to Broadway actors and world-class musicians. Iconic venues like The Paramount Theatre make it possible to bring in shows that dazzle us, and to inspire emerging artists to raise their skills to a new level.

I remember the first show I saw at The Paramount – “Miss Saigon” at the grand reopening. I was struck by The Paramount’s unique beauty and its stunning architecture, and how the theater also felt very comfortable and friendly. It’s like it transports you back in time, and you feel part of a community that is not tied to any era.

Bringing communities together is especially important in a place like Seattle, where so many new people are coming to live. One of the best ways to make them feel at home is to build shared experiences. This element of the arts is often overlooked, almost taken for granted. But the

cultural opportunities here are a large part of what makes Seattle different from other cities.

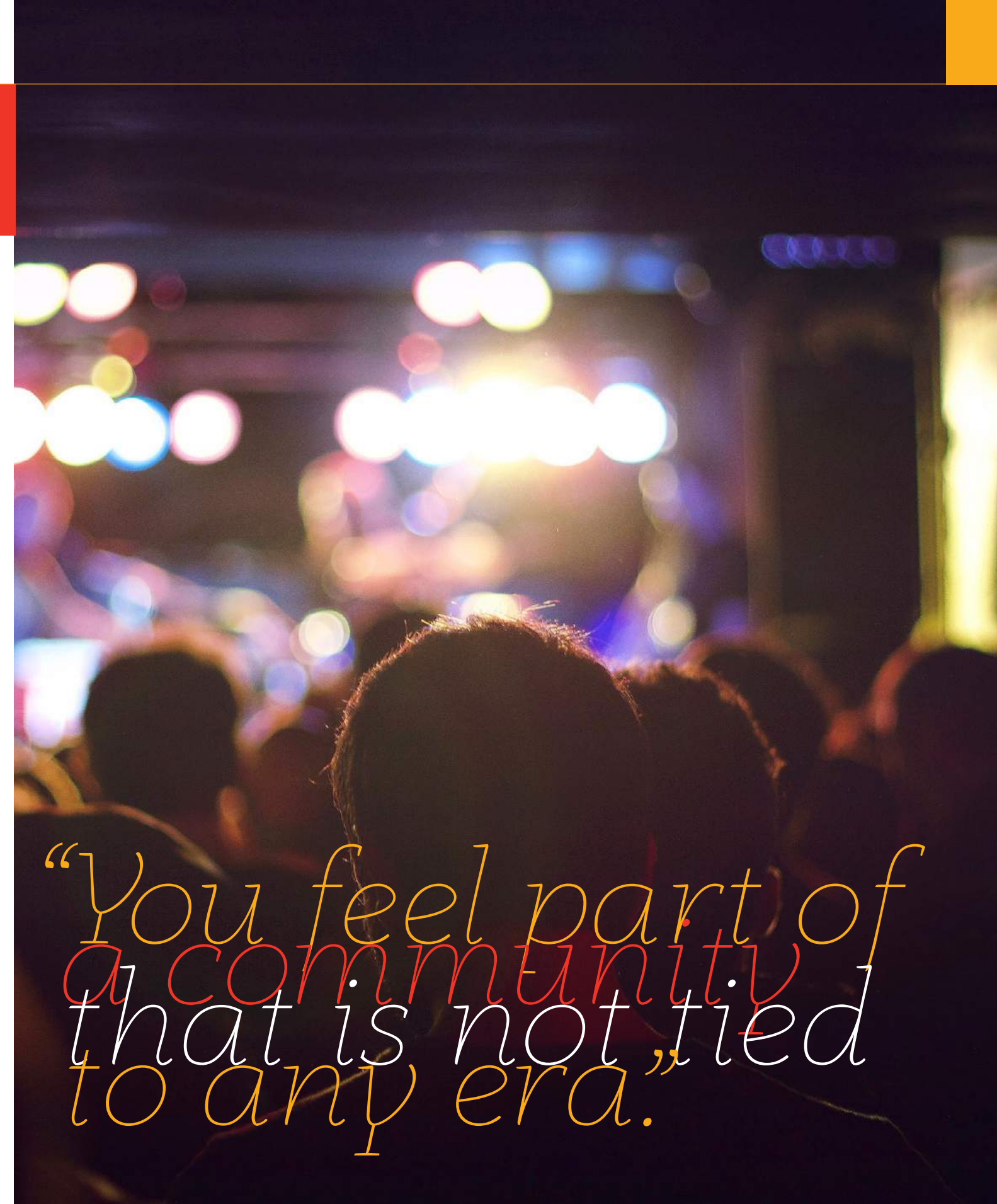
The reality is that arts strengthen cities, both through economic and social impact. National research documents the positive impact of arts on education, especially for kids from challenging backgrounds. Arts exposure can even make people healthier, which is why more than half of U.S. hospitals incorporate arts in their healing programs. Arts programs help make for more equitable, inclusive, healthy, vibrant communities, while adding jobs and reducing crime.

Considering all the value they provide, we need to stop thinking of the arts as something peripheral and recognize arts and culture as an essential thread woven through the fabric of the city. And we need to invest in the arts as an investment in our city’s future.

While our city’s growth brings plenty of challenges, it also brings reason for optimism. Through cultural offerings like those at STG, we have an opportunity to connect with new residents, and to encourage and foster new participation in arts programs.

Live theater, music and dance provide a special experience that can’t be replicated. The ability to sit in a gorgeous room like The Paramount, experiencing a performance alongside thousands of your neighbors, is a blessing many other cities would love to have. This special anniversary is an opportune moment for Seattle to appreciate and celebrate this priceless community resource.

“...STOP THINKING OF THE ARTS AS SOMETHING PERIPHERAL...”



“You feel part of a community that is not tied to any era.”



“A place
that helps
young people
think bigger”

Photo: Christopher Nelson

THE PARAMOUNT SHOWS US WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Northwest Tap Connection is a social justice-oriented studio located in South Seattle. We provide space for artists of color where they can create pieces that are relevant to our history, our present, and our future.

My relationship with Seattle Theatre Group began in 2003, when a handful of our young dancers got a chance to work with DANCE This—and that was life changing for them. Within black communities, classical arts like dance don't always feel accessible. Seeing the students' reaction, and the reaction of the other young dancers watching them at The Paramount, opened up my eyes on the bigger picture. This was an opportunity for children to see people that lived here – not in New York or Los Angeles dancing on a magnificent stage.

Many people would say The Paramount is a theater, but it's more than that. It becomes alive with STG and the people that work with them. It becomes a growing ground, a place that helps young people think bigger and to prepare for greatness as they travel through their artistry.

Within the walls of The Paramount begins a life of success. It's the ability to think: “If I can be on the stage of The Paramount, then I can tour Europe, or dance on stage at the Kennedy Center, or at the opening ceremonies for the Emmys.” It changes the whole dynamics of how young people view their future.



MELBA
AYCO

*Artistic Director,
Northwest Tap Connection*



“When the kids see this iconic place with its beautiful touches, they can’t help but say “Wow!””

ARTS HELP INSPIRE AND HEAL

Many of the kids we meet at the Melodic Caring Project have spent months or even years confined in a hospital room.

Their world is those four walls, a sterile environment with significant restrictions. Some of the kids are so sick that even their families are prevented from visiting. If ever a group of people needed access to the arts, it’s this one.

Our organization helps those kids experience live performances, including programming from Seattle Theatre Group, over a video link. In doing so, we transport them to places that couldn’t be more different from their hospital room. Magical places like The Paramount Theatre, where they can escape their reality through the arts and enjoy the love and encouragement of some of the world’s most passionate artists.

We are very fortunate to have an incredible venue like The Paramount to work with. When the kids see this iconic place with its beautiful touches, they can’t help but say “Wow!” We bring five cameras into the theater, so the kids get to experience the show from multiple angles and see the theater up close. We show them the crenulated ceilings, the stage, and all the amazing plasterwork and history. They get a full personal, guided tour along with open affection from the artists and the audience at The Paramount Theatre.

We’ve received some amazing comments from kids and their families. Many of the children have been stuck in bed for weeks, but when they see the

dancing on their screen, they get excited. Some get up and start dancing along with their nurses. It’s a powerful thing for them to know they are not alone, that someone is pulling for them.

As a Seattle native, I’m proud that we have The Paramount in our city. I get inspiration from The Paramount, where so much passionate art has taken place over the years. As an artist, it can make your skin tingle. It’s like the physical manifestation of the invisible hook that catches you and drives you to perform. It’s the perfect venue for us to do our work with kids. It feels like holy ground. Like you need to take your shoes off before you come inside.

And we couldn’t have found a better partner than Seattle Theatre Group. Everyone that I’ve met in the organization believes in community engagement, in bringing the arts to people and kids that are v and don’t have access. For STG, it’s more than just an intent. It’s something they do on a daily basis. The people at STG bring a passion for presenting arts and culture to their neighbors in the most impactful ways possible. STG motivates and energizes us, and they are an asset that our city should cherish.



LEVI WARE
*President,
Melodic Caring Project*

“It’s like the physical manifestation of the invisible hook that catches you and drives you to perform.”



AARON
LOUX

Professional dancer

BRINGING OPPORTUNITY TO SEATTLE'S DANCERS

The arts scene in Seattle is much smaller than in a place like New York, which has many different training programs or apprenticeships where you can jump in and get your career started. In Seattle, you have to make more of your own opportunities.

I've been dancing for the Mark Morris Dance Group for seven and a half years. Previously, I danced with the Metropolitan Opera, and I trained at the Julliard School. But I got my start at Kaleidoscope

Dance Company, a youth modern dance company in Seattle, and I was in the very first DANCE This performance, at The Moore Theatre.

A few years later, I got to do the same thing but at The Paramount Theatre, and it's hard to describe how exciting that was as a young performer. All the people that I was dancing with were giants of dance, to me. DANCE This gives young dancers the chance to perform on that amazing stage along

with high quality, diverse programming.

Seattle's arts scene is much more intimate than in a huge city. And nothing can beat Seattle's physical setting and beauty. That definitely provides a unique kind of inspiration. It's no accident that so many of the great choreographers of our time grew up in the Pacific Northwest: Merce Cunningham, Trisha Brown, Mark Morris. I feel very lucky to get to dance for one of them.

“so many
of the great
choreographers
of our time grew
up in the Pacific
Northwest”



Photo: Bob Cerelli

“we need to find other ways to inspire people of all ages to discover and appreciate the arts”



THE NEED FOR ARTS EDUCATION

When I grew up and went to school in Seattle, access to the arts was woven into our education much more consistently than in those same schools today.

I went to a regular old public school, but we took field trips all the time to Seattle Repertory Theater, the opera house, the museum, and The Paramount. We would take a bus to what was then called Chinatown, or the International District today.

Of course, we also had singing once or twice a week, played the auto harp and learned music, and had recess, where we could run around and play games and not just study for a test. My school was very mixed economically and racially, but no one called it “multicultural,” because that word hadn’t been invented yet. It was just what Seattle was like. We were enculturated, and we didn’t even know it.

I was one of the few kids that lost my mind over seeing an opera when I was in fifth grade. And even if you hated the field trip, you were thrilled to get out of the school. You might even feel good just because you got to see something that you wouldn’t have otherwise.

Today, there’s far less arts related education in school. So, we need to find other ways to inspire people – of all ages – to discover and appreciate the arts.

The funding gap is a major problem. Even some of our better funded arts receive a drop in the bucket compared to sports. Arts aren’t competitive, and people would prefer to bet on horses or football games than on a beautiful future. To compete for people’s attention and passion, our product has to be good.

We are also competing against a growing number of entertainment options. The obvious example is the cell phone, a magic window into everything that a kid, along with older people, could want to see. Related to that is the reduction in attention spans and a kind of “unsocialization” that comes from overusing devices. You can’t just watch the last five minutes of “Tristan und Isolde,” you have to stay for the full four or five hours.

The tech boom in Seattle has changed the philanthropic landscape in ways that we’re still sorting out. In the past, people who accumulated vast fortunes could be counted on to support the arts

more than today’s billionaires. Many of them may not fully appreciate the arts.

Our challenge is to demonstrate the value of arts to tech leaders and other potential patrons who generally want to support their community. We’re competing with worthy alternatives—clean water and air, encouraging girls to write code. But one smallish check from some of these big new corporations could solve an awful lot of problems for artists and cultural institutions. True, you could name a hospital wing after yourself, but you can also buy instruments for the school that you went to, where arts education has been eliminated.

For the arts to thrive and grow in our modern, tech-centric world, we need to maintain and expand access, both for kids who want to learn a craft and to audiences who want to experience a show. But we also need art, music, dance and theater to be fun, to be enjoyable, if we expect people to participate and benefactors to support them. In Seattle, the one organization that both introduces young people to the arts and delivers fantastic performances is Seattle Theatre Group.



MARK MORRIS
*Artistic Director
and Choreographer,
Mark Morris Dance Group*

“one organization that delivers fantastic performances is Seattle Theatre Group”



Photo: Tino Tran



PAMELA
YASUTAKE
Professional dancer

STG SHOWED ME WHAT WAS POSSIBLE

Seattle is definitely on its way to becoming an established force comparable to other arts meccas, though it doesn't always receive that recognition. It has birthed many successful artists and many more have been drawn to Seattle.

Perhaps because it's so much smaller than New York or L.A., Seattle is a very nurturing environment for artists. From the serenity of the natural landscape to the encouragement from fellow artists and art patrons, it is a great confidence building scene.

Seattle Theatre Group and The Paramount Theatre help draw young artists to town by providing access to the highest level of performances. STG is at the center of the local arts community and offers people many different ways to be involved or connected.

In my case, STG helped me build a network of relationships through programs like DANCE This, along with many opportunities to perform and travel. Along the way, I came to understand what I wanted to do and what my goals were, as well as just how much possibility there was out there in the world. Seeing tap dance at that level on a stage of that caliber really blew my mind. This was real tap dance, not "Broadway tap dance." It was tap dancing like it was meant to be done in the tradition that it was created in. I remember being inspired by "Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk" for a very long time.



“STG is at the center of
the local arts community”

Photo: Christopher Nelson

“The medium of music gives us hope, strengthens our community, and drives change.”

STEWARDS OF SEATTLE’S ARTS ECOSYSTEM

Seattle’s thriving music scene is different from those in other cities.

I see it as more of an ecosystem than a competitive industry—a cluster of individuals, artists, and organizations that collaborate and support each other as much as they strive to attract the best talent and sell tickets.

So many of the leaders of this ecosystem are committed to its stewardship. Recording labels and venues that sometimes compete against each other also frequently work together. At the end of the day, everyone from booking agents to publishing attorneys to club owners feel a kind of civic responsibility.

Seattle Theatre Group sits in the middle of this ecosystem and helps it succeed by connecting artists of all types with broad audiences. STG’s role is bigger than the creation and the presentation of great live performances. This function also champions the arts and advocates for theater, music, and dance to play a larger role in our lives. KEXP serves that same local ecosystem, and we are a much stronger arts organization as a direct result of our collaboration with STG.

With its national profile and connections to Broadway, STG has become a platform that the rest of us often stand on. When STG brings touring artists to town, we often get to spend time with them on air, or even leverage some of their performances. As a result, STG enables us to provide many of the experiences we offer our

listeners and viewers. Our relationship with STG allows us to do a better job connecting artists to music lovers.

STG also plays an important role as an incubator of local talent, utilizing The Paramount and its other theaters to grant aspiring artists access to the same stages as more established performers. STG takes chances on a variety of artists, giving Seattle a musical perspective that

“Our connections to Seattle Theatre Group make KEXP much better at our job.”

is wider, deeper, and more diverse than in many comparably sized cities.

With Seattle’s incredible current growth, it would be easy to take a more commercial approach, focusing on filling our theaters by bringing only tried and true artists to the stage. Widening the spotlight to include a range of performers is another of STG’s many gifts to the city and the mark of a valuable civic benefactor.

I find it inspiring to work with an industry leader like STG and it keeps me optimistic about the future of arts and music in Seattle. As our local ecosystem flourishes, it’s important to remember the greater role we can play. Even if we do our job curating compelling music and theater, the arts still need to make a difference.

In KEXP’s case, we believe the medium of music brings joy to listeners’ lives and connects them to other music fans. It gives us hope, strengthens our community, and drives change. We have a unique opportunity but also a responsibility. There’s a lot more to this than just putting needles on records. As a fellow steward of Seattle’s arts community, KEXP works hard every day to measure up to that responsibility. Having STG as a partner makes that job a whole lot easier.

Our connections to Seattle Theatre Group make KEXP much better at our job. STG’s leadership helps us and others raise our individual games and meet our varied missions. And the future of the arts in Seattle is far more promising as a result.



TOM MARA
*Executive Director,
KEXP Radio*



ONE-OF-A-KIND ARTS EXPERIENCES

STG draws young artists to Seattle because it provides one-of-a-kind performing experiences, exposure to new culture, and chances to meet prominent artists. These are things that one can only get in a big urban center like Seattle.

And while Seattle is big enough to offer high profile experiences and exposure, it's still small enough to nurture and encourage young artists who are still finding their voice. As a result, I never felt like the arts was a business, but rather an outlet for my creative side. It was that sense of freedom that allowed me to pursue art with maximum creativity and honesty.



AARON
ALEXANDER
*Professional dancer
and choreographer*

“STG draws young
artists to Seattle”



VIRGINIA
JOHNSON

Artistic Director,
Dance Theatre of Harlem

STG AND THE PARAMOUNT BRING OUT OUR BEST

Dance Theatre of Harlem performs in communities around the world and in many different kinds of venues. Because of this, we tailor our presentation based on the city, the audience and the theater where we perform. The very best experiences for us come when we visit a place like The Paramount Theatre and work with a partner like Seattle Theatre Group.

When you come to see Dance Theatre of Harlem, what you are actually seeing is a statement about possibility. Our organization works hard to change people's perceptions about the art form of classical ballet—not on only who belongs in it, but who would be interested in it, excited by it. We do this in performance, but because we also want to connect people to ballet, a central part of our mission is arts education and exposure. At home and on tour, we offer lecture/demonstrations in schools and other community locations as well as master classes, athletic workshops and “dancing in the street”

activities to expand the way people look at ballet.

In STG, we have found an artistic soul mate. STG's approach aligns beautifully with ours, and when we perform at The Paramount or The Moore Theatre, the bonus is that we also get an opportunity to talk to a community in a deeper way than just promoting a show and selling tickets. Through a series of smaller touches, we get to engage with people who might never have thought of coming to see ballet. Working with STG, we can provide live entertainment experiences to every segment of a community.

STG is a real partner to DTH. We are so fortunate that STG supports development of new work through commissions. Very few presenting organizations in the country provide that kind of support. The beauty of it is that we get to tap into Seattle-based artists which broadens our reach and creates opportunities for local artists. I wish more presenters were committed to that possibility. STG is a rarity in the presenting world. It would make a huge difference in communities everywhere to have a local organization focused on high quality art and about bringing together people from across the community.

The stimulation of new influences really enriches the work we do. It's important to inspire artists to keep creating new things. For classical ballet, it's a chance to revitalize an art form that, frankly, has gotten a little stuck. Ballet's beauty has become a place to escape to. At DTH we believe that ballet is more than just that. The pretty fairy tales are fine, they certainly serve a purpose, but today it isn't enough. We need to be asking: how can this art form be a vital part of a good life? How can we be an answer to modern life's myriad questions?

Of course, The Paramount itself almost demands something special. It's rare for a city to have such a resource, with its great history, its long relationship with a range of artistic expression as well as a deep connection with the public. When our dancers walk up to the stage at The Paramount, they can feel that history, that sense that all kinds of magic has been made within those four walls.

I wish more cities had centerpiece theaters like The Paramount. Modern facilities are shiny and efficient, but the places with the history and the beautiful old bones can lend a magical touch to a live performance. Places like The Paramount, Playhouse Square in Cleveland, Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo and others scattered across the country bring a warm welcome and an audience experience that can't be duplicated by newer theaters.

“The history and the beautiful old bones can lend a magical touch to a live performance”

I'm thrilled that we've managed to preserve some of these wonderful old theaters and I'm optimistic that people today will value them as much as the artists do. The trick is to keep bringing new people in to experience live performances for the first time. Once they've been bitten by the bug, they'll want more. Our challenge as art makers and arts producers is to make sure that we're creating art that's worthy of those theaters, work that is relevant and captivating for today's audiences.

Photo: Christopher Nelson



VIVIAN PHILLIPS
City of Seattle Arts Commissioner

CODA: PRESERVING A PIECE OF SEATTLE’S HISTORY

The Paramount Theatre is in my DNA. Like the things that make you who you are, this is a place that has been essential to my development.

I grew up in Seattle, and The Paramount was that special movie house I visited often as a youngster. I saw my first Ian Fleming James Bond film “Goldfinger” at The Paramount. All of my Paramount memories are special, so when the opportunity to work on restoration of the theater presented itself, it meant everything to me.

When Ida Cole had just purchased The Paramount Theatre, she and her partner, Chip Wilson, recruited me to work on the restoration project. I’d gained their notice from having worked on an upgrade of the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, which was and is a community asset in the neighborhood where I live. That project focused mostly on structural improvements and seismic upgrades,

plus a few cosmetic updates, and introduced me to historic preservation. As a member of The Paramount restoration team, I would assist in bringing just over three million dollars of public support to the restoration effort.

When Ida’s restoration project launched, The Paramount was just over 60 years old and needed a lot of work. But the bones were strong. It had been built with the integrity and the intention that goes into something meant to last for many generations. By the time the restoration began, it had already survived two major earthquakes.

But the magic of the theatre is much deeper, much more subtle than its physical strength. Monitoring most elements of the project brought me into intimate proximity of the intricate interior design.

I’ll always remember seeing the grand chandeliers up close. The contractors had already pulled out the worn and weathered carpet and construction crews



Photo: Bob Cerelli

“The intricate details and long-lost artistry that grace this 90 year-old building are part of what separates The Paramount from other performance venues”

were ready to start blowing out the back wall. The lighting restoration contractor was in the building and lowering the chandeliers from the ceiling to begin the removal process. I stood right next to one of them and could experience the absolute beauty and craftsmanship of these precious lights. At the same time, I experienced a great deal of anxiety watching how the chandeliers were dismantled, packed, and then trucked off to the north-end shop location where the work would take place. I thought: *Oh my! What if they can’t get them back in place when they’re done?* Gladly, my fears were without merit and I was delighted to see them return.

The intricate details and long-lost artistry that grace this 90-year-old building are part of what separates

The Paramount from other performance venues and what gives the theatre special value for Seattle. In that way, it has its own personality and character, which helps embellish and animate what happens inside it.

It also makes possible a very different kind of audience experience than that of a newer venue. And we are fortunate to have several lovely modern performance halls in town. But the waves of newer buildings driven by the extraordinary growth of the city somehow make our existing landmarks all the more precious. Without these landmarks Seattle may appear as a brand new city. Places like The Paramount allow us to illustrate and embrace our history.



THE
PARAMOUNT

90th
ANNIVERSARY