BACKSTAGE NEWS



Mission

EDUCATE. ENCHANT. ENRICH. ENLIGHTEN.

The mission of the historic nonprofit Paramount Theater is to educate, enchant, enrich, and enlighten through the power of the arts by providing high-quality programming and accessibility for the artistic, educational, and charitable benefit of our entire community while driving economic vitality for Charlottesville, Albemarle, and the Central Virginia region.

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Backstage News is a newsletter published bi-annually by The Paramount Theater. Questions, comments, and address changes should be directed to: Backstage News, c/o Marketing Department at The Paramount, 215 East Main Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902; info@theparamount.net; or 434.979.1922

A Word from CEO & Executive Director Julie A. Montross



Greetings from all of us at The Paramount Theater!

I hope that this issue of *Backstage News* finds you well and enjoying the season's remarkable beauty here in central Virginia!

It's hard to believe we're nearly halfway through 2025. The months are moving quickly — as they always seem to — but they've also been deeply rewarding, filled with moments that remind me just how special this place is.

Every day, I'm humbled by the opportunity to lead this historic organization, to work alongside such a dedicated staff, and to be supported by volunteers who pour their time, heart, and energy into our mission. The Paramount isn't just a building — it's a reflection of the people who care so deeply about what it stands for. That's something I never take for granted.

One of the most meaningful moments this winter was gathering together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of The Paramount's reopening. It was an evening filled with gratitude — screening our film *On With The Show* with so many of the individuals who helped make our revival possible, swapping stories, and honoring the legacy of those who brought the Theater back to life. As someone who's still relatively new to this remarkable chapter in our community's story, I was deeply moved by the chance to say thank you — to shake hands with history and to offer a promise to carry it forward with care.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll find stories that speak to the spirit of The Paramount today: our retired digital projector getting a second life at the Orpheum Theatre in Illinois; our Volunteer of the Year, Martha Thomas, whose generosity and commitment have left an indelible mark; a recap of another successful Arts Education season; and, of course, a look back at our 14th Annual Grand Marquee Gala, A Night at the Races. Our Kentucky Derbythemed event was festive and full of fun — from the bold Derby hats and delicious Harvest Moon cuisine to a spirited silent auction and dancing that lasted well into the night. The Gala was a success by every measure. Many thanks to our outstanding Gala Committee for making it all happen.

As always, thank you for being part of The Paramount's story — whether as a patron, partner, volunteer, or friend. Your support makes this work possible.

Wishing you a wonderful summer ahead. I hope to see you at the Theater very soon.

With warm regards,

Julie A. Montross
CEO & Executive Director

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 An unforgettable Derby Day!

Figures from The Paramount's storied history gathered together last December to honor and celebrate 20 years since accomplishing one of the Theater's most significant milestones — reopening in 2004.



ALWAYS On with the Show

Pringing The Paramount back to life was no easy task. Just ask Elsie Thompson or Sheldon Anderson. Jeff Dreyfuss has a story or two. So do Sandy DeKay and David Munn and Barbara Sieg and Ethel deNeveu.

The Theater did just that, along with interviewing over a dozen other past and present Paramount figures. The result is an emotional 45-minute film, *On With The Show*, that tells the story of how our dilapidated, overlooked movie palace turned into a nonprofit performing arts venue that continues to thrive today.

"Our entire history is rich and encompassing, dating back to our original opening in 1931," said Julie Montross, CEO & Executive Director of The Paramount Theater. "Capturing the rebirth chapter that began in the 1990's was a passion project for all involved, and it was essential that this story be led by the very voices who organized the effort."

"We have deep archives — photos, newspaper articles, media footage, paperwork, amateur video, among other treasures — and the twentieth anniversary of our reopening was the perfect opportunity to weave it all together into a single, absorbing artifact that will never get lost," notes The Paramount's Director of Communications Andy Pillifant, who also wrote the film.





To tell the story in the most compelling way, The Paramount hired Randall R. Taylor, Jr., and his company, Noble Ave. Media, to direct the film and give the project the polish it deserved. "Randall and his team collaborated with me and Andy to turn hundreds of materials and miles of incredible interview footage into a finished piece that documents, honors, and celebrates. It took months to complete and required countless hours of extra commitment from a lengthy list of people. I'm so happy with the result. It has all of the production qualities that we see in the films we regularly screen right here at The Paramount. Everyone involved is beyond pleased," added Montross.

c. 2001-2002 Kristen Gleason, Chad Hershner, and Sandy DeKay

The film served as the centerpiece for a particularly moving night at The Paramount on December 17 — a big 20th anniversary that invited those featured in the film, founding and present Board members, honored guests, and The Paramount staff to look back and appreciate a dedicated community that has delivered the Theater to the present day. "It was such a wonderful evening, full of energy and reverence" recalls Board Chair Sterling Frank. "It was part culmination, retrospective, and anniversary. There are so many reasons to be so proud of The Paramount and it was so fulfilling to see how much this Theater is adored by our community. Everyone left feeling thankful for the past 20 years and energized for the next 100."

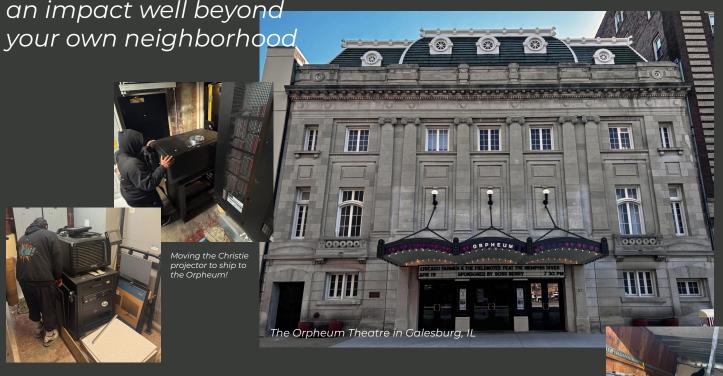
We are far from done with sharing *On With The Show* with a much broader audience," adds Montross. "We want as many eyes on this as possible, and we'll be announcing when and where before too long. For now, I'll have to ask you to stay tuned and borrow a phrase we all know well — it's 'Coming Soon'!





Feelgood News from the COMMUNITY THEATER Community

Being neighborly can make an impact well beyond



lose readers of *Backstage News* will remember a story we ran in our 2023 Fall/Winter issue about The Paramount's brand-new NEC-3541L projector ("Project Projector"), so you may be wondering — what happened to the one it replaced, the Christie CP4220 4K?

We're pleased to report that the Christie has found a new home at the historic Orpheum Theatre in Galesburg, Illinois, and it's arrived with a colorful splash.

The Paramount, through a message board hosted by the League of Historic American Theaters (LHAT), put the Christie up for sale. "It was still in good shape and we knew that there was a solid chance that one of our historic theater peers out there would definitely consider this unit to be an immediate upgrade," said Kyle Schneider, Production Manager at The Paramount. "We got a few bites, including from the Orpheum. They were enthusiastic about it but eventually let us know that they just couldn't raise enough money to meet our asking price."

"They did have enough money to pay for the packing and shipping costs, so we thought about it and decided to donate it to them," said Matthew Simon, Director of Programming and Operations at The Paramount. "We certainly know how it goes [when it comes to running a historic theater] and The Paramount has greatly benefited from the kindness of others when it's come

to materials and resources, so we felt good about doing it this way and sending it off to its next stop. I know it'll be appreciated there, and that makes us all feel good."

"This projector is consistent with what you would see at the AMC theater. To have something that is going to be that quality here in a venue like the Orpheum that has such a rich history in film, that then brings in the opportunity for us to show more current movies in a much better visual quality than we had before. It's just amazing," said Andrew Driscoll, Executive Director of The Orpheum Theatre, in a story first reported on *TriState Public Radio*.

And how did the Orpheum christen their Christie? With an Over The Rainbow Movie Series, featuring *The Wizard of Oz* and *Wicked*, an incredibly clever way to show off just how magical the movie business can be both on and off the big screen.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Congrats to Martha Thomas, our 2024 Volunteer of the Year!

Whether it's scanning tickets, pouring drinks in Founders, or guiding you to your seat, volunteers help make an event at The Paramount a great one. Every year, we single out one volunteer for a special distinction: Volunteer of the Year.

What made you interested in volunteering at The Paramount?

Having relocated to Charlottesville three years ago not knowing a single soul, it was my great good fortune to have attended a concert at The Paramount shortly after arriving. It was, as they say, love at first sight.

What does volunteering mean to you?

The ways my life has been enriched by volunteering here are innumerable- the camaraderie, sense of purpose, and witnessing countless amazing performances to name a few. And, always, having fun. But lately there is another layer of appreciation that I feel for The Paramount. As much as I love the rush of crowds entering for an event, I'm currently more cognizant of what they leave with. Some bit of insight or joy or inspiration wafts back into the community, an exquisite form of resistance to the current forces that choose to quash those very things. Twenty years ago the community of Charlotteseville rallied against daunting odds to turn the marquee lights of The Paramount back on, and I am honored to contribute in any way to keeping them turned on.

Can you share a favorite Paramount memory or two?

Two truly standout memories surprisingly occurred on two consecutive days during the 2023 VA Film Festival. The first involved the screening of American Fiction. It was sold out, so I was watching from the back of the balcony when someone tapped me on the shoulder and said that three seats had just opened up downstairs. As I was running down the stairs to relocate, I saw three gentlemen walking towards the orchestra and so intercepted them to point out the seats, concurrently gushing about the film and how much I was loving it. They stopped and stared at me, all visibly trying to hold back laughter. Then the middle gentleman grabbed my hands, looked me straight in the eyes and said "you have no idea how much that means to me. I'm Cord Jefferson, and this is my movie." It was truly a magical moment, one I will never forget.



66

Martha has become an invaluable swiss army knife of a volunteer since she joined The Paramount family in 2023. She brings so much infectious, positive energy and compassion to any event or task that she volunteers for that it's hard to imagine the Theater without her presence.

Malcolm Dyson, Volunteer Coordinator and Director of Front of House Operations



The second was the following day after the screening of *American Symphony*. As if the film wasn't moving enough, after its conclusion (and tumultuous applause) a grand piano was rolled onto the stage, and out walked Jon Batiste who proceeded to play the most inspired version of "When the Saints Come Marching In" that I'm sure I will ever hear. Within five seconds, 1,100 people were up and dancing. His energy could have powered several large cities!

What do you want potential volunteers to know about our volunteer community?

Welcome! Come with the intent of enhancing the experience of our patrons, as a participant rather than a spectator in the operation of making the magic happen, and you will be embraced by fellow volunteers, staff, and community as well. You get out of it what you put into it was never truer.

What are you looking forward to in your upcoming year as a volunteer?

Keeping it rolling! ■

Interested in becoming a Paramount Volunteer?





EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

CHARLOTTESVILLE OPERA PRESENTS:

PARAMOUNT PRESENTS:

PARAMOUNT PRESENTS:

CARMEN AND THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

STRAIGHT NO CHASER **SUMMER: THE 90S PART 2**

GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS THE BADDEST SHOW ON EARTH







June 20-22

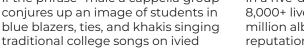
The most frequently performed opera of all time, Carmen's passionate characters, familiar melodies, and dramatic storyline have attracted audiences since its premiere 150 years ago. It is filled with suspense, the enchanting rhythm of Flamenco, and music that exudes an intoxicating passion.

If the phrase "male a cappella group" traditional college songs on ivied

Wednesday, August 6, 7:30PM

campuses... think again. Straight No Chaser (SNC) are neither strait-laced nor straight-faced, but neither are

They have emerged as a phenomenon with a massive fanbase and a long list of accomplishments including 2 RIAA Gold Certified albums, over 1.5 million concert tickets sold, over 1 billion streams on Pandora, and over 2 million albums sold worldwide. Straight No Chaser is the real deal. the captivating sound of nine unadulterated human voices coming together to make extraordinary music that is moving people in a fundamental sense... and with a sense of humor.

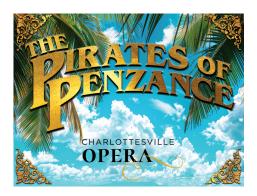


they vaudeville-style kitsch.

Saturday, September 6, 8:00PM

In a five-decade career fueled by 8,000+ live shows, more than 15 million albums sold, and a global reputation as "the band that plays hot enough to melt the polar icecaps" (Rolling Stone) and "one of the 5 best acts left out of The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame" (WNBF Binghamton), where can "one of the most iconic bands in rock history" (Rapid City Journal) possibly go from here?

George and longtime Destroyers Jeff Simon (drums), Bill Blough (bass), Jim Suhler (guitar), and Buddy Leach (saxophone) are now taking all the drum-bashing, basspounding, saxwailing, monster guitar energy of the past five decades and pouring it into The Baddest Show On Earth Tour, with "the boogie-blues Sinatra" (Classic Rock History) as its relentless ringmaster. "If the circus makes everyone feel like a kid again, this tour will make you feel like a teenager," George says with a grin. "I consider us to be a musical highwire act that works without a net, and we'll be bringing all the danger, thrills, and fun that our audiences can handle. Because that's what great rock & roll is all about."



July 11-13

An engaging comedy of misunderstandings, exaggerated loyalties, and tender-hearted pirates, Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance is perfect for the whole family. Young Frederic assumes his servitude to the pirate ship is complete when he meets the lovely Mabel, a daughter of the bumbling Major General Stanley. An untimely revelation threatens his newfound love and a return to the ship.

Event Sponsors: Janna & David Gies

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RYAN ADAMS HEARTBREAKER '25 WORLD TOUR



Tuesday, September 16, 8:00PM

Ryan Adams is a seven-time Grammy-nominated singersongwriter praised as "one of rock's most talented songwriters."

Formerly fronting rock-Americana groups Whiskeytown and Ryan Adams & the Cardinals, Adams has the ability to connect with audiences across a variety of different mediums.

Heartbreaker is the debut studio album by Ryan Adams, released on September 5, 2000. The album was recorded over fourteen days at Woodland Studios in Nashville, Tennessee. It was nominated for the 2001 Shortlist Music Prize. The album is said to be inspired by Adams' break-up with music industry publicist Amy Lombardi.

According to Adams, the album's title originates from a poster of Mariah Carey: "My manager called and said, 'You have 15 seconds to name this record,' My eyes focused on this poster of Mariah wearing a T-shirt that said HEARTBREAKER. I just shouted, 'Heartbreaker!'"

BLACK VIOLIN FULL CIRCLE TOUR 2025



Tuesday, September 30, 7:30PM

Step into Black Violin's Full Circle Tour, where GRAMMY-nominated duo Wil Baptiste and Kev Marcus redefine the possibilities of music by merging classical depth with hip-hop's pulse. This tour captures the essence of returning to where it all began — transformed and reimagined. Each powerful performance invites audiences to reflect on their own journeys, discovering that even as we evolve, we're often drawn back to our roots with renewed purpose.

From high school orchestra classmates to groundbreaking artists, Black Violin's path reflects resilience, creativity, and the courage to challenge expectations. With their Black Violin Foundation reaching over 100,000 students each year, they're building a legacy that transcends the stage, inspiring a new generation to dream boldly. Join them for an unforgettable night that celebrates growth, music, and the beauty of coming full circle.

SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR - PEACE



Thursday, October 9, 7:30PM

With their concert entitled PEACE, the multi-Grammy and Emmy Award-winning SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR returns to North America to perform a joyful program of South African freedom songs, traditional spirituals, and some classics. The inspirational concert will also feature the spirited music of Aretha Franklin, Harry Belafonte, Peter Gabriel, Kate Bush, Leonard Cohen, and more!

Formed in 2002, the Choir was created to celebrate the unique power of African gospel music and quickly established itself as a group that is "undeniably synchronized, appears unshakable, and simultaneously expresses universality and individuality" (San Francisco Classical Voice). Heralded by Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey, SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR excites audiences worldwide, uplifting the soul and spreading joy through its earthy rhythms, rich harmonies, brilliant costumes, and infectious spirit. It's perfect for the entire family!

Event Sponsor:



Event Sponsors:

Janna & David Gies

THE PARAMOUNT THEATER

ARTS EDUCATION



We were thrilled to welcome back school audiences for the 2024-25 season. Thousands of students and teachers from around Central Virginia attended a LIVE performing arts experience and **TOGETHER** made great memories with artists from all over the world.

2024-2025 PROGRAM



Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

GOODNIGHT MOON & THE RUNAWAY BUNNY*

MALEVO: THE ARGENTINIAN MALAMBO SENSATIONS*

CIRQUE KALABANTÉ (AFRIQUE EN CIRQUE)*

Enchantment Theatre Company **MY FATHER'S DRAGON***

Tall Stories Theatre Company of London, England **THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD***

First Woman, from New York, New York

HERO: THE BOY FROM TROY - A NEW MUSICAL

ABOUT YOUNG JOHN LEWIS

Tutti Frutti and York Theatre Royal from Leeds, England UNDERNEATH A MAGICAL MOON

Wishing Star Productions, LLC A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD*

MOMIX: ALICE*

Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences on Tour LOOK BOTH WAYS: A TALE TOLD IN TEN BLOCKS

Charlottesville Opera

SING ME A STORY: YOUR JOURNEY TO THE STAGE

* Public performances were also offered.

Presenting Sponsor of the 2024-25 Arts Education Season



2024-25 Arts Education Season Sponsor





Thank you to our 2024-25 Arts Education Event Sponsors:

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The Joseph and Robert Cornell
Memorial Foundation
Elsie & Mac Thompson
UVA Division for Community
Engagement and Equal Opportunity



45 public schools from

14

school districts participated

From Albemarle County, all 15 elementary and 4 middle schools participated. From Charlottesville, all 6 elementary schools and all 5th, 6th, and 7th graders participated.

10

world class productions

were presented by artists hailing from all over the U.S., Argentina, Canada, Africa, and England.

> Study Guides and Virginia SOLs/Curriculum Connections accompanied all 10!

Since 2004, the Arts Education Program has served more than

241,950Students & Teachers

The feedback we have received this season from both educators and students has been overwhelmingly positive and appreciative. Teachers have spoken to the power of exposing their students to diverse cultures and perspectives through the arts and live theatre, fostering a sense of empathy and inclusiveness.

Others have shared the ways in which these experiences and the artists themselves have inspired their students back in the classroom, at home, and in their communities, from wanting to learn a new language to realizing that the art of dance was a cool lesson in physics and that human beings create amazing things, to experimenting with new storytelling techniques and ways of expressing gratitude to thank a donor who made it all possible, to being a better friend and team player, feeling proud to come back again because they know they "belong", becoming critical, imaginary and forward thinkers, being bolder and more passionate with a classroom presentation or school play, curious and excited about reading literature and digging into history to learn more that they will never forget, and as one teacher shared, "our students are using this performance as an example of people being totally committed to their craft, and how art can be a mirror, window, or sliding glass door for them in an end of unit essay that they will write!"

> - Cathy von Storch Education and Outreach Manager The Paramount Theater



THERE'S A ROLE FOR YOU

AT THE PARAMOUNT



INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR CAST OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS?

Contact Shawn Puller, Director of Development, to learn more about the level of impact you can make at The Paramount Theater!

shawnpuller@theparamount.net 434.218.1590

TICKETS

Taking a seat in the auditorium for any event is easily the best way to support the Theater. Experiencing the world of performance together is the whole reason why we're all here!

MEMBERSHIPS

Starting at just \$75 per year/\$6.25 per month, benefits include early access to ticket purchases, free concessions, and more!

STAR CIRCLE

Beginning at \$1,000 per year/\$84 per month, Star Circle members can join us in the Founder's Lounge before showtime and at intermissions for complimentary drinks and snacks.

EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

Underwriting a film screening or live performance ensures that The Paramount is a home to the best of the stage and screen, plus gets you tickets and your name on the promotional materials that spread the word, among other perks.

PLANNED GIVING

Keep us in mind when you're planning your own legacy. From endowment contributions to earmarking a required minimum distribution, these gifts contribute to future generations of Paramount patrons.

VOLUNTEER

Working an event and tapping into the excitement of show day just might be the best gig in town.

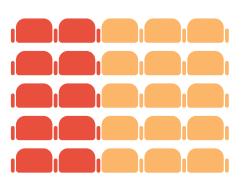
SPREAD THE WORD

Good news travels fast and makes a difference. Sharing your own Paramount experience with your circle of friends and family builds the kind of community we can all be proud of.

DID YOU KNOW?

40%

OF GENERATED REVENUE COMES FROM DONATIONS



60% of generated revenue comes from ticket sales and other earned income



ormed in 2002, the career achievements of
 Soweto Gospel Choir are phenomenal. To list but some:

- They have collaborated with Peter Gabriel, U2, John Legend, Robert Plant, Chance the Rapper and Ben Harper.
- They have performed on stage with Celine Dion, Andre Rieu, Bono, Diana Ross, Zahara, and Pharrell Williams.
- They have performed in programs alongside the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Black Eyed Peas, Shakira, Angelique Kidjo, Jimmy Cliff, Youssou N'Dour, Ziggy Marley, and South African superstar Johnny Clegg, including at his farewell concert.

COMING TO THE PARAMOUNT

OCTOBER 9



The Choir has performed in such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, Royal Festival Hall London and Nelson Mandela Theatre. Further, they have performed at such important events as the 2009 Academy Awards, Nelson Mandela's funeral, memorial service in Westminster Abbey, centenary celebrations; Archbishop Desmond Tutu's funeral (as well as his 75th and 80th birthdays) the FIFA 2009 World Cup opening ceremony in Cape Town and kick-off in Johannesburg; and Winnie Madikileza-Mandela's memorial service.

In addition to Nelson Mandela and their once patron, Desmond Tutu, they have performed before Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, Prince Charles and Camilla, Prince Harry, Princess Charlene of Monaco, and a plethora of TV personalities, celebrities, glitteraties, dignitaries, ambassadors, movie stars and rock stars.

The Choir has also appeared on NBC's Today Show and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.

Their festival appearances include Edinburgh, Adelaide (Festival and Fringe), Perth, Sydney, Hong Kong, London, WOMADelaide and the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Soweto Gospel Choir has been nominated for five Grammys, an Oscar (with Peter Gabriel), six South African Music Awards (SAMAs), as well as an International Reggae and World Music Award The Choir has been awarded three Grammys in their own right and three associated ones, an Emmy Award, three SAMAs, two American Gospel Awards, the inaugural Tower Music African Gospel Award for best gospel group, and a Helpmann Award.



A NIGHT AT THE

THIS YEAR'S GALA WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

Thanks again to everyone, especially our kind and generous sponsors, for celebrating and supporting The Paramount.

WE WELCOMED OVER

200 GUESTS

AND RAISED MORE THAN

\$250,000

FOR THE THEATER!









RACES

















EVENTS

Scan the QR code for the latest events or visit us at THEPARAMOUNT. NET



June

- **11, 28** Paramount Presents: Tour The Paramount Theater!
- **20-22** Charlottesville Opera Presents: *Carmen*
- Paramount Presents:Kathleen Madigan:The Day Drinking Tour
- 28 HER Sports Presents: Sports Awards: Celebrating 5 years
- 29 Paramount On Screen: Monty Python and the Holy Grail [PG] (1975)

July

- 11-13 Charlottesville Opera Presents:The Pirates of Penzance
- **16, 19** Paramount Presents: Tour The Paramount Theater!
- Paramount On Screen: Mary Poppins [G] (1964)
- 22 Charlottesville Band Presents: Summer at The Paramount
- Paramount On Screen: Cooley High [PG] (1975)
- Paramount On Screen: Flash Gordon [G] (1964)
- Paramount On Screen: Out of Africa [PG] (1985)

August

- **2** DMR Adventures Presents: The Little Mermaid. JR!
- Paramount On Screen: Top Gun [PG] (1986)

- 6 Paramount Presents: Straight No Chaser -
 - Summer: The 90s Part 2
- Paramount On Screen:

 Pee-Wee's Big Adventure

 [PG] (1985)
- Paramount On Screen: Ocean's 11 [NR] (1960)
- 12 Charlottesville Band Presents: Summer at The Paramount
- Paramount On Screen: Snatch [R] (2000)
- 16 Outback Presents: Justin Willman
- Paramount On Screen:
 The Empire Strikes Back [PG]
 (1980)
- **20, 23** Paramount Presents: Tour The Paramount Theater!
- Paramount On Screen: Rashomon [NR] (1950)
- Paramount On Screen: La La Land [R] (2016)

September

- 6 Paramount Presents:
 George Thorogood and The
 Destroyers: The Baddest
 Show on Farth
- Paramount Presents:
 Ryan Adams: Heartbreaker
 '25 World Tour
- **26** World Ballet Company Presents: *Cinderella*
 - 30 Paramount Presents:
 Black Violin: Full Circle Tour

































