



For Immediate Release

**PARAMOUNT THEATRE NAMES CHICAGO DIRECTOR
AMBER MAK NEW WORKS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR,
SIGNALS EXPANSION INTO NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT**



Amber Mak
New Works Development Director
Paramount Theatre

CHICAGO, February 23, 2016 - The Paramount Theatre, the suburban Chicago musical theater powerhouse, announced today the appointment of **Amber Mak** in the new position of New Works Development Director.

The position is full time, begins immediately and foretells an exciting new era of artistic and economic expansion for the Paramount.

Mak is the respected, Chicago-based director and choreographer who most recently directed and choreographed Paramount Theatre's production of *Hairspray - The Musical*, which just closed its highly critically-acclaimed run this past weekend. Mak also was assistant director and associate choreographer of Paramount's 2014 smash hit *Mary Poppins*.

She is also founding artistic director of Chicago's FWD Theatre Project, which recently collaborated with Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, co-creators of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*, on their concert reading and English premiere of *La Révolution Française*.

"With today's announcement, Paramount is adding an extremely talented Chicago theater artist and experienced, well-connected producer to our staff," said Tim Rater, President and CEO, Paramount Theatre. "Paramount has radically altered Chicago's musical theater landscape in just the last five years with one amazing, Broadway-caliber musical after another. The time is now to take the next step in our growth plan, expand into new play development and stake Paramount's claim in advancing the art form of contemporary musical theater."

"Today's announcement brings with it an expansion Tim and I had hoped for from the beginning of our partnership creating Paramount's Broadway Series. Amber Mak's passion for new work matches our own and she brings with her discerning taste and resourcefulness we would never know without her," agreed Jim Corti, Paramount's Artistic Director. "A dream come true for Amber, and us, is to be collaborating with writers of new scores and scripts benefitting from melding together what we have learned and achieved over the last five years. A risky and brave sort, this collaboration personally expands all of us as well, as we embark in a new direction yet logical next step for our company: cultivating and nourishing new work for the theatre, made in Aurora."

Since 2010, under Rater's and Corti's guidance, Paramount has re-focused on self-producing a Broadway subscription series featuring fully realized productions of classic and contemporary musicals. As a result, Paramount has grown its subscriber base from 500 to more than 30,000 loyal patrons in just five years, employed hundreds of Equity and non-Equity theater artists, won the most Jeff Awards of any Chicago musical theater last season and helped spur the revitalization of Aurora's downtown business district.

In her new position, Mak will help grow the theater's mission by overseeing the discovery, creation, development and production of new musicals for the Paramount Theatre Broadway Series. A key goal is to introduce Paramount audiences to the company's first world premiere musical within the next three to five years.

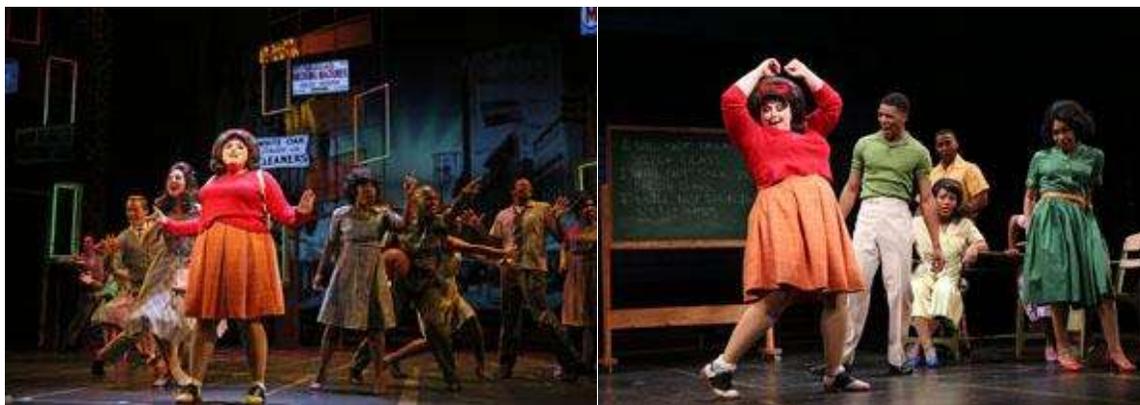
Mak will be working with new writers and artists, organizing readings and workshops of new shows and networking with potential producers, artistic teams and licensing companies to create new paths for shows to live on beyond their Paramount debuts. Paramount will also foster the growth of local talent and Chicago-area writers by creating educational and mentoring opportunities such as workshops and retreats.

"I believe the Paramount's artistic vision, dedication to creating high quality productions, Broadway caliber facilities and passion for excellence makes it an ideal place to develop the next great musical," said Mak. "Paramount is already a proven place to re-imagine and revive our greatest musicals. Now we're looking to the future, being a part of the conversation and contributing to the growth and development of the art form. There is nothing more exciting and rewarding than being a part of creating something from where nothing existed before."

Paramount Theatre's new play submission policy will be a mix of open submissions throughout the year for any Chicago area writing teams, by invitation, agent submission and by commissioning pieces for development specifically for the Paramount Theatre. For more details about Paramount's new play development initiative and submission policies, visit ParamountAurora.com/NewWorks.

In addition to staging Paramount's *Hairspray-The Musical*, Amber Mak's other credits include serving as Assistant/SDC Observership Fellow for Susan Stroman for *Big Fish* in Chicago and on Broadway. She was Jeff-Nominated for her choreography of *Singin' in the Rain* at Drury Lane Oakbrook. Regional credits include director/choreographer of *Mary Poppins* and *Swing*, and choreographer for *Legally Blonde* and *Sound of Music*, all at the Little Theatre on the Square, and choreographer of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* at Rocky Mountain Rep and *The Music Man* at The Clarence Brown Theatre. Her creative team credits as associate director/choreographer include *The Sound of Music*, *Ragtime*, *Mary Poppins*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Xanadu*, *Shout* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. As a performer, she has been on stage in more than 40 shows nationally, including as Bombalurina in *Cats* at Paramount, as well as *Cabaret*, *West Side Story*, *Crazy For You* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. She is originally from suburban Kansas City, a current resident of Chicago, a Northwestern University graduate and has served on the National High School Institute faculty for the past 15 years.

In addition, Mak was founding artistic director of Chicago's FWD Theatre Project. Founded in 2014, this new company has advanced Chicago as a premiere destination for new musical theatre by presenting public staged readings of the genre's best new works to Chicago's producing entities for future full production consideration. While Mak is stepping down as artistic director to accept her new position at Paramount, she remains a close collaborator and member of FWD Theatre Project's board of directors.



The [announcement press folder](#) includes images from Paramount's 2016 production of *Hairspray-The Musical*, directed by Amber Mak. Credit: Liz Lauren

About The Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre (ParamountAurora.com) is the center for performing arts, entertainment and arts education in Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois. Named "One of Chicago's Top 10 Attended Theatres" by the League of Chicago Theatres, the 1,888-seat Paramount, located in downtown Aurora at 23 E. Galena Blvd., is nationally renowned for the quality and caliber of its presentations, superb acoustics and historic beauty.

Each season, Paramount offers a "Buy Two Shows, Get Two Shows Free" subscription offer, with four-play packages starting at less than \$90. The rewards are ample - four amazing, Broadway-quality, classic American musicals at one of the most majestic theaters in the Midwest, all for the price of one show downtown.

Up next is Paramount's 2015-16 Broadway season finale, Jerome Robbins's *West Side*

Story, directed by Jim Corti, March 16-April 24, 2016. Paramount will announce its 2016-17 Broadway musical series in March. To purchase subscriptions or single tickets, visit ParamountAurora.com, call **(630) 896-6666** or visit the Paramount Theatre box office, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in the heart of downtown Aurora.

The Paramount Theatre continues to expand its artistic and institutional boundaries under the guidance of Tim Rater, President and CEO, Aurora Civic Center Authority; Jim Corti, Artistic Director, Paramount Theatre; a dedicated Board of Trustees and a devoted staff of live theater and music professionals.

For tickets and information, go to ParamountAurora.com or call **(630) 896-6666**.

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