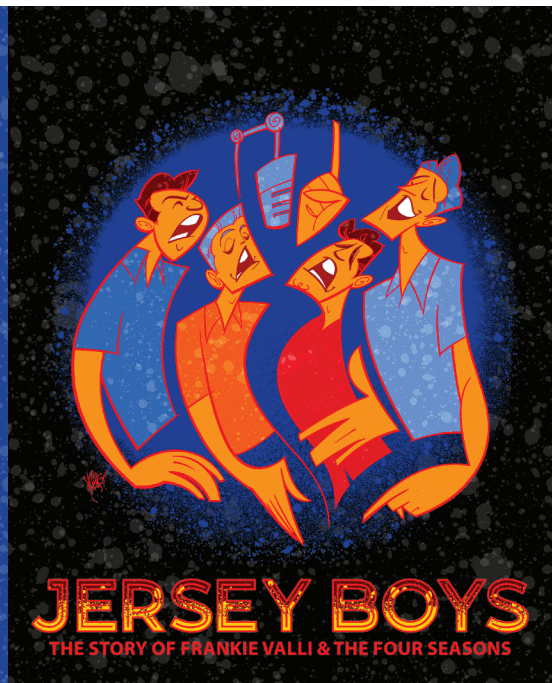
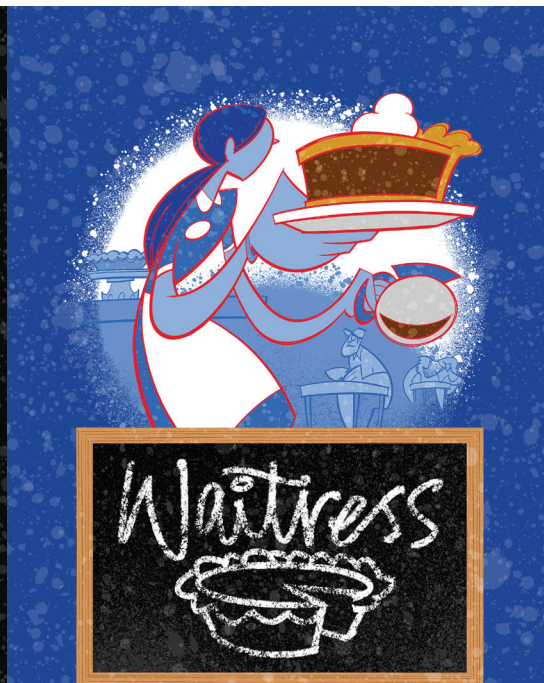




2024 SEASON

PERFORMANCE GUIDE





WELCOME TO THE 2024 SEASON

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I liken creating a professional musical theatre production to cooking a multi-course, gourmet meal: Both require thoughtful menu planning, the careful sourcing of ingredients, skilled hands for its proper preparation and execution, and a mad scramble at the end of the cooking process to deliver each of the dishes at the right temperature, looking and tasting delicious! And just like cooking, we don't produce shows for the sake of producing them: We create them to feed people, to nourish souls. Welcome to our table!

Theatre is always best served with an understanding and appreciation of its ingredients. That's what inspired our Education and Community Engagement team to create this multifaceted guide. Each of the shows in our 2024 Broadway At Music Circus lineup are represented with insights into their production histories, story content, historical context and what inspired them. It is our hope that this guide both enhances your enjoyment of the show and later serves as a reminder of your time with us.

If you are like me, no meal is too large; I can always find room for another serving! I feel the same about musical theatre – the more, the better – whether it's seeing the same show for the twentieth time or experiencing something completely new. I hope your attendance at a show (or shows!) this summer has whet your appetite for more. We'll keep cooking them up and you, our welcome guest, are always invited.

Bon appetit! Enjoy the show!

SCOTT KLIER

PRESIDENT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BROADWAY AT MUSIC CIRCUS THROUGH THE YEARS

- **1949** Actor St. John Terrell sets up a summer stock theatre under a giant round tent in Lambertville, New Jersey. Drawing inspiration from the layout of Greek amphitheaters and the summer fun of the circus, Terrell's idea is a success and more than 40 others pop up across the country in the next decade.
- **1951** With the support of arts patron and newspaper owner Eleanor McClatchy, producers Russell Lewis and Howard Young establish the Sacramento Music Circus by setting up a tent in the parking lot of the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre. It is the first professional theatre-in-the-round located to the west of the Mississippi River and the fourth in the country.
- **1953** Lewis and Young found the Sacramento Light Opera Association to continue producing shows in the area. Sacramento Music Circus continues to be a successful summer tradition, gaining a notable reputation in the theatre community.
- **1989** The Broadway Series is introduced as a winter companion to the summer shows, bringing national tours of Broadway musicals and plays to Sacramento every year.
- **2003** The Wells Fargo Pavilion (now called the UC Davis Health Pavilion) opens on the site of the original Sacramento Music Circus tent, providing a state-of-the-art, permanent, fully air-conditioned facility for all future shows.
- **2018** The company name changes to Broadway Sacramento, with the respective touring and summer seasons being named Broadway On Tour and **Broadway At Music Circus**.
- **2020** The 2020 and 2021 seasons were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **2024** **The 72nd Broadway At Music Circus season opens June 11 at the UC Davis Health Pavilion!**

BEFORE THE SHOW BEGINS, A FEW QUICK REMINDERS:

- Make sure you find your seat before the show starts! Actors will be entering through the aisles, so staying seated when the lights go down helps keep everyone safe. If you need to leave for any reason, the ushers in the hallway will let you know when it's okay to enter again.
- Please keep your cell phones silenced and put them away during the show. You are welcome to use them before or after, but the bright screens and noises are distracting for everyone else at the theatre. Using your phone to take pictures or video during the performance is also not allowed.
- If you're enjoying the show, make sure to laugh, cheer and applaud! The actors love hearing that you're having a good time. Please save side conversations until after the show, though. That can be distracting for the actors and the people around you.

SUNSET BLVD

JULY 23-28

MUSIC BY
ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

BOOK AND LYRICS BY
DON BLACK
& CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON

- THE STORY -

Hidden away in her vast mansion on Sunset Boulevard, forgotten film star Norma Desmond longs to return to the screen. When struggling screenwriter Joe Gillis shows up at her house by accident, she sees a chance to get back into Hollywood and she invites him to move into her mansion and collaborate with her on a script she has written for her comeback. Joe is startled by Norma's eccentric behavior, but he is eager for work and intrigued by the glamor, so he accepts her offer.

As Joe and Norma grow closer, he starts to realize that her script is a mess and the studios want nothing to do with her. Meanwhile, Joe also starts working with Betty Schaefer, a script reader for a Hollywood agent, on a film of his own and their partnership develops into a romance. As Norma continues to descend deeper into her delusion, Joe tries to escape her desperate grasp, but she threatens to bring him down with her if he jeopardizes her last chance at stardom.

- THE CHARACTERS -

NORMA DESMOND: A glamorous silent movie star desperately trying to regain her fading fame.

JOE GILLIS: A handsome young writer who has grown disillusioned with Hollywood.

MAX VON MAYERLING: Norma's faithful butler, who had a past life as a director.

BETTY SCHAEFER: A charming, aspiring young scriptwriter.

CECIL B. DEMILLE: A legendary Hollywood filmmaker.

ARTIE GREEN : A young assistant director who is friends with Joe and engaged to Betty.

SHELDRAKE : A stuffy older movie studio executive.

MANFRED: A skilled tailor for movie stars.

MAKING THE MUSICAL

FROM HOLLYWOOD TO CENTER STAGE

Norma Desmond first enchanted audiences in 1950, as portrayed by film star Gloria Swanson in Billy Wilder's hit film "Sunset Boulevard." Wilder's darkly comedic film noir depicted a once-glamorous silent film actress who had been abandoned by the Hollywood film industry and filmgoers were both awed and devastated by Swanson's powerful performance. Some film industry leaders responded more defensively, viewing the film as a cynical betrayal of their work, but Norma's tragic story has endured as a lasting representation of skillful filmmaking and the dark side of Hollywood.

In a move that eerily mirrored Norma Desmond's attempts to revive her career, Gloria Swanson spent the years following "Sunset Boulevard's" success working with writer Richard Stapley and musician Dickson Hughes on a musical adaptation of the film titled "Boulevard!" This effort, which would have concluded on a happier note, fell apart in 1956 when Paramount Pictures refused to grant them the rights to the story. Composer Stephen Sondheim considered adapting the film for the stage several years later, but he abandoned the project after Wilder told him the story would be better as an opera. Then, in the 1970s, composer Andrew Lloyd Weber set his sights on "Sunset."



Dickson Hughes, Gloria Swanson, Richard Stapley - Automat Pictures, 1955

Lloyd Weber's adaptation took some time to come to fruition, but by 1991 he was collaborating with writers Amy Powers and Don Black on an early version of **SUNSET BOULEVARD** that he previewed at his annual Sydmon-ton Festival. The following year, Powers had been replaced by writer Christopher Hampton and a revised version of Lloyd Weber's "Sunset" musical was presented at Sydmon-ton with Broadway star Patti LuPone and a lush, melodramatic score. Following that presentation's positive reception, Lloyd Weber promised LuPone the role of Norma Desmond and began work on a fully-staged West End production.

Patti LuPone's contract guaranteed that she would open **SUNSET BOULEVARD** on the West End in 1993 and on Broadway the following year, so it came as a surprise when news broke that actress Glenn Close would open a Los Angeles production before the show went to Broadway. LuPone maintained her composure and worked hard to deliver a showstopping performance night after night in London, but Lloyd Weber had already had a change of heart. Glenn Close was announced to be opening a revised version of **SUNSET BOULEVARD** on Broadway in the fall of 1994, while a heartbroken LuPone had to finish out her run in the original London production.



Patti LuPone as Norma Desmond - Alastair Muir and Shutterstock, 1993
Glenn Close as Norma Desmond - Craig Schwartz, 1994

All of the pre-production drama only served to stir up audience interest and **SUNSET BOULEVARD** opened at the Minskoff Theatre in New York to positive reviews and stellar ticket sales. Despite this, the show's massive set and starry cast meant it was expensive to keep open and breaking LuPone's contract had resulted in a costly legal battle. In an ironic twist, this musical about a woman mistreated by the entertainment industry had done the same to its original star and the original Broadway production failed to recoup its budget due to these expenses.

Despite the initial drama, **SUNSET BOULEVARD's** dramatic tale of a woman trying to reclaim her identity has continued to resonate with audiences over the past 30 years. There have been many tours and revivals around the world, including a 2016 production with Glenn Close and a recent stripped-down restaging on the West End that received critical praise. This production marks **SUNSET BOULEVARD's** Broadway At Music Circus premiere, providing yet another unique presentation of Norma Desmond's story that is sure to delight longtime fans and newcomers.

SILENT STARLETS

GET TO KNOW SOME OF THE REAL-LIFE SILENT FILM ACTRESSES WHO MAY HAVE INSPIRED THE CREATION OF NORMA DESMOND!



CLARA BOW (1905 – 1965)

Was one of the most popular actresses of the silent film era, starring in over 50 films during her 11-year career. She escaped her difficult childhood in Brooklyn when she won a beauty contest at age 16 and she quickly came to embody the lively “flapper girl” stereotype of the Roaring ‘20s. Her smash hit “It” in 1927 led to her being known as “the ‘It’ girl” of Hollywood and she gained a reputation as a guaranteed box office draw in the later 1920s. Although her early talking pictures were still hits, Bow disliked the change and retired in 1933 after several years of professional and personal struggles.



MABEL NORMAND (1893 – 1930)

Was an early silent film actress, director and writer who starred in at least 160 shorts and 23 feature films. She was well-known for her slapstick comedies and frequently worked with Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle and Charlie Chaplin. Her later works were overshadowed by her connections to several scandals, including the murder of director William Desmond Taylor and a shooting committed by her chauffeur.



MAE MURRAY (1885 – 1965)

Was an actress, dancer and producer who began her career on the Broadway stage and rose to prominence in silent films. She was most famous for her over-the-top expressive performances but received praise for her dramatic turn in the 1925 film “The Merry Widow.” Murray’s career struggled after the transition to talking pictures and thanks to a greedy husband, she lived her later years in poverty.



MARY PICKFORD (1892 – 1979)

Was a Canadian-born actress, screenwriter and producer who started her career as a child performer onstage in Toronto before transitioning to film in 1909. By 1914, she had become an international star with significant influence, which she used to negotiate creative control over her films. Pickford co-founded two film studios and even after her acting career declined in the 1930s she continued to produce films for several decades. She received the second-ever Academy Award for Best Actress for her first “talkie” performance in “Coquette” (1929).



NORMA TALMADGE (1894 – 1957)

Was the eldest of three sisters, all of whom had successful film careers in the early 1900s. She broke onto the scene in short films from Vitagraph Studios and quickly transitioned to features, garnering praise for her melodramatic performances. With her first husband, Joseph M. Schenck, she founded an independent production studio and became one of the most recognizable stars of the 1920s. Talmadge retired from acting in 1930 but retained most of her wealth, living out her later years in privacy.

WORD SEARCH

LOCATE THE GIVEN WORDS IN THE GRID, RUNNING HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY, OR DIAGONALLY

.....



~~FILM~~

BETTY

BOULEVARD

CLOSE

DEMILLE

JOE

MOVIE

NORMA

SALOME

SCRIPT

STAR

SUNSET

TALKIE

THINK ABOUT IT

- **SUNSET BOULEVARD** tells a story about the entertainment industry at a specific point in time. How do you think things have changed since 1950 and what has stayed the same? Do you think these changes have been good or bad?
- Norma Desmond is an immensely complex character who has been hurt and also hurts others. How does her characterization help the audience to feel empathy for her even when she is demanding or manipulative? Do you think she is more of a sympathetic character or a villain?
- Much of **SUNSET BOULEVARD** takes place inside Norma's grandiose Hollywood mansion. How does this setting reflect the lives of the people who live there?
- Watch some clips from the original film version of "Sunset Boulevard." How do they compare to similar scenes from the musical? Why do you think the creative team chose to change certain things and to keep others the same?



UC DAVIS HEALTH PAVILION

SPECIAL THANKS TO



This guide was developed by Mason Diab, Caleb Larrosa-Colombo and Jackie Vanderbeck.
Special thanks to Griff Field, Matt Hessburg, Scott Klier, Dejan Zivkovic and YOU, audience members, for joining us at **Broadway At Music Circus** this summer!