

CMU Sparkles On Tony Awards Night

Pittsburgh shined at the Tony Awards as **Carnegie Mellon University** (CMU) alums were among this year's honorees, [reports Alexis Papalia for the Pittsburgh Tribune Review](#).

Carnegie Mellon University

This should probably come as no surprise as *The Hollywood Reporter* has again named CMU as having one of the world's best drama programs.

Will Brill (CMU Class of 2009) won Best Featured Actor in a Play for "Stereophonic" while producer Jamie deRoy (1967) won twice: Best Revival of a Musical for "Merrily We Roll Along" and Best Play for "Stereophonic." In addition, Pittsburgh native and

CMU grad Billy Porter (1991) received the Isabelle Stevenson Award for his philanthropic work.

Professional dancer Isabelle Lubow Stevenson (1913-2003) was among the best-known people in the Broadway world and was president of the **American Theater Wing** (producer of the Tonys) for over three decades. The award named in her honor was first presented in 2009 to actress Phyllis Newman (1933-2019) for establishing the Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative (part of the **Entertainment Community Fund**). Other recipients include Bernadette Peters, Brian Stokes Mitchell and Judith Light.

CMU ranks fourth among the 25 best drama schools, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. The list was created with input from industry professionals. The local university tops prestigious institutions like the **Royal Academy of Dramatic Art** and **Columbia University**. [In her article for the paper, Caitlin Huston writes](#) that "in the school's strong undergraduate program, both acting and music theater students take the same core curriculum before moving into more specialized training, including classes on the business side of the profession, with the goal of preparing students for work in film, television, theater and more."

The full list of this year's Tony Award winners is available [here](#).

GPAC Goes Remote

As part of its developing strategic plan, the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) has announced that it is going remote.

GPAC's announcement claims that "a physical location is no longer an immediate necessity." For several years, GPAC has been functioning out of space in the Penn Building at 810 Penn Avenue in the Pittsburgh Cultural District. The building was completed in 1910 and is notable for its terracotta façade and marble lobby.



Instead, staff members will apparently work from home and hold meetings online. They will also be provided with monthly stipends "to encourage them to be out in the community."

The announcement concedes that the expense of an office is as much a consideration as is the desire "to become more agile" because the change "will help our organization strengthen its financial position."

In other GPAC news, the organization is prepping for its biennial survey. [Learn more here](#).



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Paramount & KDKA Remain In Play

KDKA-TV's parent company, **Paramount Global**, remains a focus of attention in the media and entertainment worlds.

The ownership structure is complex. Paramount Global is a publicly traded company that is controlled [via 79.95% of voting stock – ed.]



by the privately held **National Amusements** which is itself owned by the family of founder Michael Redstone (1902-1987). National was built into a giant by Michael's son, Sumner Redstone (1923-2020). Sumner's daughter Shari is now the key power. Recently she ended talks with the privately held **Skydance Media** which would have meant an equally complex sale deal. [Reuters' Dawn Chmielewski](#) reports that employees "were shocked by the news" that those talks were called off.

Leadership is trying to assure those employees, [reports Lucas Manfredi for The Wrap](#). "We know what a difficult and disruptive period it has been," he quotes co-CEO Brian Robbins telling staff on June 12. "While we cannot say that the noise will disappear, we are here today to lay out a go-forward plan that can set us up for success no matter what path the company chooses to go down."

Paramount Global isn't alone in facing challenges. "Global cash flow," [reports Media Post's Wayne Friedman](#), "among [the] six large legacy media companies declined to \$17.2 billion in 2023 from \$37.3 billion in 2018." Manfredi adds that management

is committed to a strategic plan that "includes streaming partnerships, divesting assets and \$500 million in cost cuts." One of those assets being divested might include the historic Paramount lot, [writes Jill Goldsmith and Anthony D'Alessandro for Deadline](#). Such a sale "could bring in \$2 billion."

In addition, subscription rates for Paramount+ are going up, [writes Caitlin Huston for the Hollywood Reporter](#): "The Paramount+ essential plan will increase by \$2 per month to \$7.99 for all new subscribers and the Paramount+ with Showtime plan will increase by \$1 to \$12.99 . . . the limited commercial plan will also increase by \$1 to \$7.99 for current subscribers. The new pricing starts August 20 for all new Paramount+ customers. For existing Paramount+ with Showtime subscribers, the price hikes kick in with their next billing date on or after September 20" The decision follows announced hikes at competitors such as Max and Peacock.

But don't expect streaming to become a cash cow any time soon. "Premium streaming has a long way to go to make up [legacy media] declines," warns

Friedman. "In 2023, direct-to-consumer (D2C) losses were at \$8.3 billion." A big hurdle is the expense to consumers, something the rate hikes are unlikely to help. "Most studies suggest that consumers will pay for about four streaming services at a time," [cites the Hollywood Reporter's Alex Weprin](#). **Netflix** appears to have a lock on being one of the four, leaving "increasingly little room" for others. This may provide opportunities for smaller and cheaper niche streamers.

Observers generally think that any sale of Paramount Global will mean breaking up the company --- including CBS and KDKA-TV. However, at least one potential buyer would keep the conglomerate intact. That buyer is former distiller and occasional actor/producer [John Paul DeJoria](#). He is the co-founder of tequila maker Patrón (which was sold to **Bacardi Limited** in 2018). "I think Shari [Redstone] wants us to take it", [Manfredi quotes DeJoria in a separate article](#). "I think she does,"

Meanwhile, viewers and insiders were stunned when the web sites for Paramount web sites were suddenly stripped of content. People are being directed to Paramount+ to watch those videos.



Station Wins Murrows

Pittsburgh station WPXI-TV won a 2024 Edward R. Murrow Award. It was among seven stations owned by Cox Media Group (which, itself, is primarily owned by **Apollo Global Management**) honored.



The award program began in 1971 and is named after pioneering broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965). Murrow first came to prominence covering World War II (1939-1945) for CBS Radio and later for acclaimed television reporting such as “See it Now” (1952-1957). The awards are presented annually by the **Radio Television Digital News Association**

(which was founded in 1946 as the National Association of Radio News Editors.

WPXI (channel 11) won in the categories of Breaking News ([Garfield SWAT Shootout](#)), Feature Reporting ([The Ring](#)) and Sports Reporting ([Coaches & Heroes](#))

KDKA-TV (channel 2), part of **Paramount Global**, won in the Continuing Coverage category for its reporting on the [East Palestine Train Derailment](#) and the award for [Overall Excellence](#). WTAE-TV (channel 4), part of **Hearst Communications**, won for [Best Newscast](#).

You can access the full list of winners [here](#).

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Equity Halts Agreements

On June 17, the union **Actors' Equity Association** (AEA) halted all new contracts under the existing Development Agreement.

The Development Agreement was created by AEA in 2019 to create a pay framework for members during the development period of new works by the **Broadway League**. It usually leads to a production contract.



"Equity and the Broadway League began negotiations on a new contract for the Development Agree-

ment at the end of January," reports The Wrap's Jacob Bryant, "and the current agreement expired on February 11." AEA represents more than 50,000 actor and stage managers, including Pittsburgh performers who also participate in Broadway productions.

"We never wanted it to come to this," explained AEA's Stephen Bogardus in an official statement, "but the wage package put across the table by The Broadway League was just plain unacceptable. Read the [full statement here](#).

IATSE Okays Pact

A tentative agreement has been reached between the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE) and **Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers** (AMPTP)/



The announcement was made by the

union in late June. Known as the Area Standards Agreement (ASA), the contract covers 20,000 film and TV workers around the country (including Pittsburgh).

IATSE has posted a one-sheet flyer providing highlights [here](#).

Backyard Makeover

The outdoor space known as The Backyard is getting "a summertime makeover," the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** (PCT) has announced.

Starting July 26, the public can enjoy a new mural, pickleball courts, playful lighting and "funky" furniture. The refreshed space was created in partnership with the nonprofit **Better Block Foundation** urban design organization.



"We are thrilled to welcome downtown residents and Cultural District visitors for another fun-filled summer season in the Giant Eagle Foundation Backyard," said the PCT's James Hill in a press release. "We thank the **RK Mellon Foundation** for their generous support of the Better Block Foundation's creativity and commitment on this project."



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PSO Adds Ross Fellows

Two more musicians have been named by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) to its Paul J. Ross Fellowship Program.

The Paul J. Ross Fellowship is a two-year program designed to enable musicians identifying as Black or African American to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of an orchestral career.

The program is named in honor of the late violinist Paul J. Ross, who, in 1965, was the first African American musician to receive a full-time contract from the PSO.

Bassoonist Carlos Clark and horn Landon Young are the newest



Ross Fellows, joining continuing Fellows bassist Drew Collins and trumpeter Joshua Carr.

“Carlos Clark and Landon Young are talented emerging musicians who will make outstanding contributions to the PSO over the next two seasons,” said CEO Melia Tourangeau in a press release. “I am equally proud of their appointments and of PSO’s commitment to honoring the legacy of the late PSO violinist Paul J. Ross, whose commitment to nurturing, mentoring, and supporting young musicians lives on through this Fellowship.”

In other news: violinist Justine Campagna has been named associate concertmaster and violinist Dylan Naroff, has been named assistant concertmaster

Frick Wins Tour Award

A tour program at the **Frick Pittsburgh** has been recognized by the **American Association for State & Local History** with an Award for Excellence.



Founded in 1940, the American Association for State & Local History (AASLH) is a non-profit association focusing on state and local history. It has about 3,200 institutional members and 1,300 individual members.

“All of us at the Frick are humbled and excited to receive this

prestigious award,” said executive director Elizabeth E. Barker in a press release.

The tour entitled “Gilded, Not Golden.” emphasizes the stories of real people involved with Clayton, the 19th century mansion of industrialist Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) which serves as Frick’s core. The tour encourages visitor participation.

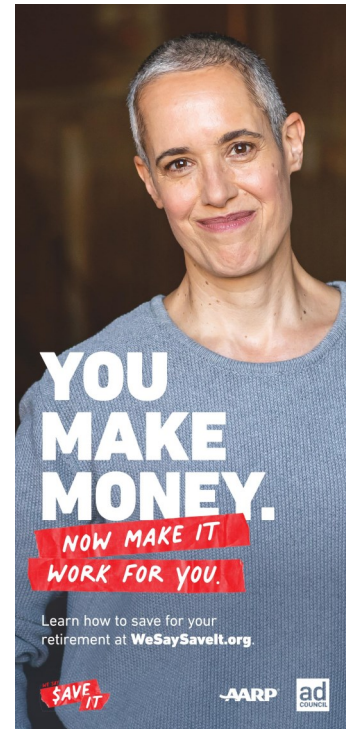


Plays Head To Fest

A pair of locally originated plays are heading to a prestigious theater festival, reports the On-StagePittsburgh blog.

The **North Carolina Black Repertory Company** was founded in 1979 by Larry L. Hamlin (1948-2007) as that state’s first black theater organization. The company’s signature program is the National Black Theatre Festival. Begun in 1989, the biennial festival showcases the best in African American theater.

Being staged at this year’s festival are “The Bluegrass Mile” from **Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company** and “Blues Is the Roots: The Willie Dixon Story” from **New Horizon Theater**. Learn more by reading the blog post.



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Ballet Signs New Dancers

Several new faces are coming to the **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre** (BTR), the company has announced.

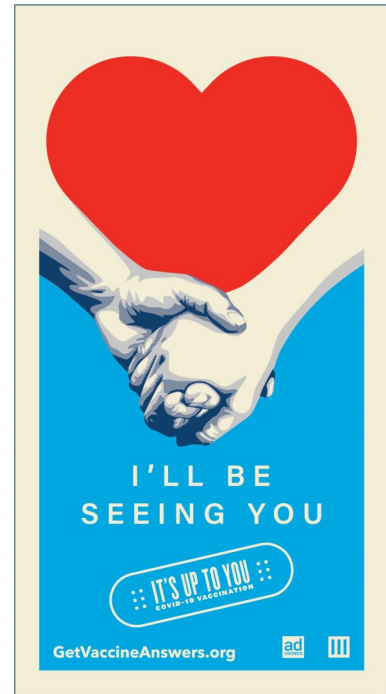
Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Starting this month, April Berry is PBT's new Director of Education and Community Engagement. Berry has some thirty years' experience as a dancer, choreographer, educator and administrator. She has most recently been with **Kansas City Ballet**. A brief Q&A with Berry has been posted to the company's web site [here](#).

PBT has also announced the signing of six new artists to its roster. Four of them have a connection to **Houston Ballet**. Two are designated as apprentices. They are:

- ◆ Magnoly Batista
- ◆ Rylan Doty
- ◆ Andre Gallon
- ◆ Madison Russo
- ◆ Anya Chiu
- ◆ Amelia McGravey

Learn more about them [here](#).



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Images



Row House Cinema starts the month of July by screening some of director Tim Burton's most popular films.

Scare-Free October

Halloween will be less frightening this year [reports Sean Collier of Pittsburgh Magazine](#). This is because the popular **ScareHouse** won't be opening its doors this fall.

The attraction had most recently been operating out of the struggling Pittsburgh Mills shopping mall. "Crunching the numbers and looking at what we were doing . . . It was just going to get really, really bad," co-owner Scott Simmons told Collier. "We didn't see the situation improving at Pittsburgh Mills."

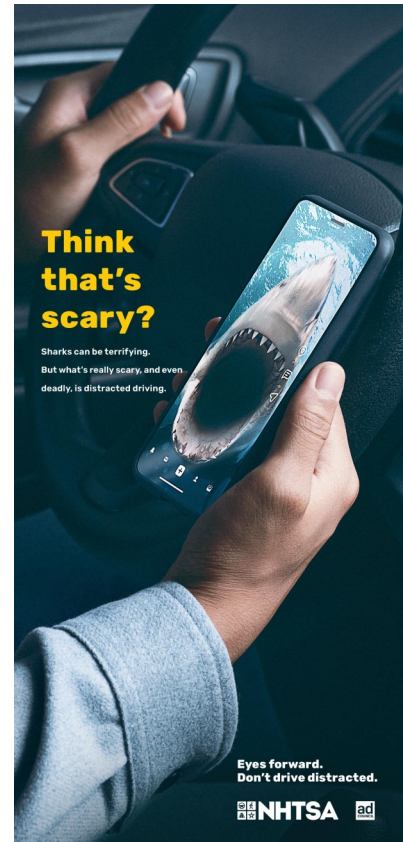
There remains some hope for ScareHouse's future, although this may depend on one or more outside investors.

NEA Grant

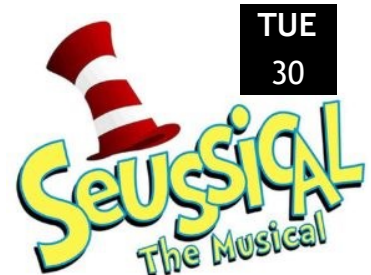
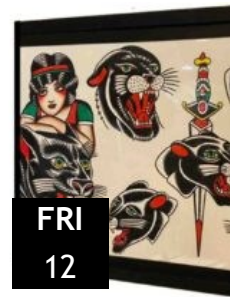
A \$15,000 **National Endowment for the Arts** grant has been approved for **Prime Stage Theatre**, announced the OnStagePittsburgh blog.

The grant will be used to create a stage adaptation of author Laurie Halse Anderson's award winning 1999 young adult novel *Speak*. Written in a nonlinear format, *Speak* is the story of a high school girl who uses her diary to process the sexual abuse she endured. The novel was adapted to the screen in 2004 with a film starring Kristen Stewart and Michael Angarano. Like the book, "Speak: was well received by critics.

Prime Stage plans to debut its play in February 2025 at the New Hazlett Theater.



Channel Pittsburgh



Opportunities

Aspiring young African American, Asian American, Latino and women directors are able to apply to the **Directors Guild of America's** annual Student Film Awards. The deadline is October 7. [Details and application are available here.](#)

WTAE-TV is looking for someone to write, shoot, edit and design promos for the station. [Click here.](#)

A collection of organizations including the **University of Pittsburgh** have issued a call for artists across fields including fiction, photography, video, poetry, dance and others. [Click here.](#)

Someone with a marketing background is being sought by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** who is “capable of orchestrating unforgettable and distinctive audience experiences.” [Click here.](#)

Another organization seeking a marketing pro is the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**. This is a full-time position focused on direct marketing. [Click here.](#)

Applications are being accepted through July 24 for **Handmade Arcade's** annual holiday show. [Click here.](#)

July 31 is the deadline for submitting work to Fiberarts International 2025. [Click here.](#)

The local **iHeart Media** radio stations are looking for a part-time promotions assistant. [Click here.](#)

KDKA-TV is seeking an experienced videographer. [Click here.](#)





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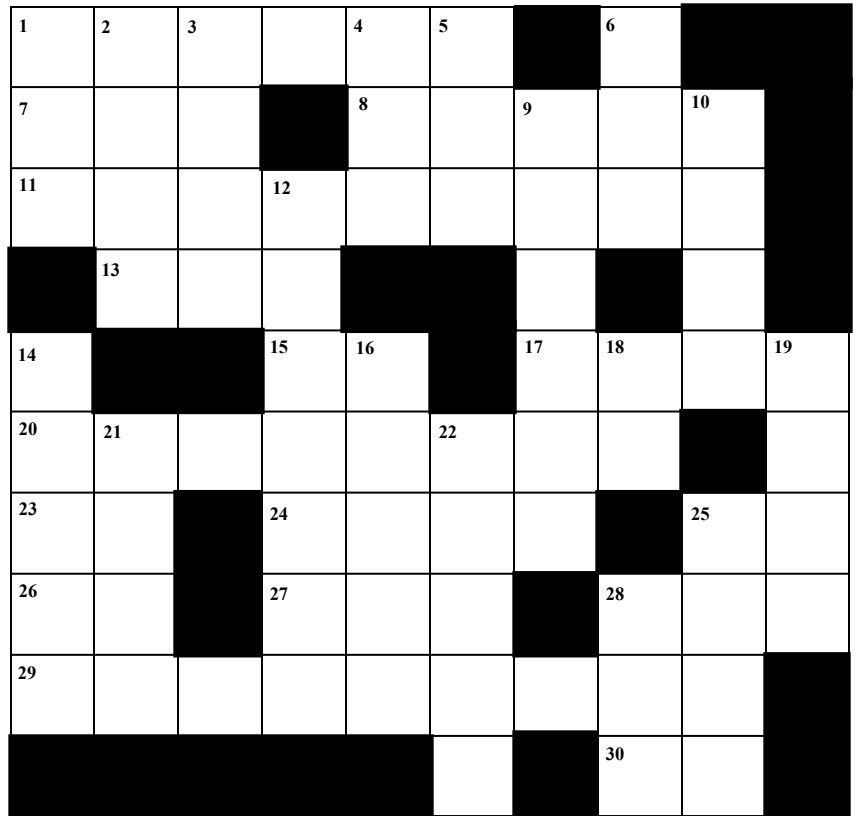


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Across

1. Legendary singer performing at Heinz Hall on July 28 (with 9-Down)
7. In debt
8. Middle East militant group
11. San Francisco club where 1-Across first made a name for himself
13. Cardinals' city, initially
15. Windows, for example
17. "Ghost & Mrs. Muir" star Lange
20. The record label that signed 1-Across
23. B&O in Monopoly
24. Female deer
25. WWII soldier, commonly
26. One of the Cook Islands
27. Squeeze out, like a living
28. Possessive "we"
29. Used twice, 1-Across' signature song
30. Fashion designer and filmmaker, initially



Down

1. Biblical sufferer
2. Night fowl
3. 1999 cable cop show "L.A. ____"
4. Japanese broadcaster, commonly
5. Slang approval (var.)
6. Puppy's foot
9. See 1-Across
10. Hop and jump partner?
12. Unclear, like vision or thought
14. Nut's construction partner?
16. Mirrors partner?
18. Green Lantern's comic book world
19. Kuwaiti VIP
21. Black and white treat
22. Ales
25. Mexico or Oman
28. Not in the "closet" (like 1-Across)

Last Month's Solution

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