

AUGUST 2026

THE BALTIMORE BULLETIN



VICTORIA PLAYERS CHILDREN'S THEATER WRAPS SEASON NINE

Season 9 began last December with ***The Lion, The Witch, & The Wardrobe***, which delighted audiences during the holiday season. ***Disney's Frozen Jr.*** played to packed houses at the Victoria Opera House in early June. Congratulations to the cast, crew, and adults leading this production. It was outstanding!

VPCT's older thespians presented ***Chicago the Musical: Teen Edition*** in July. The musical extravaganza was a delight from start to finish. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who purchased tickets or helped with the production of these shows. It takes a surprisingly large team to stage live productions of this caliber.

We also appreciate our season's show sponsors. Sponsors included the **Buckeye Automotive Family, Sitterley Law LLC, Gabby's Greetings, and Baum Law Office**. The VPCT also extends its sincere thanks to the Fairfield County Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee for an audio equipment grant from the George and Dolly L. Zimpfer Memorial Fund, along with the Foundation's Ann Chess Fund and the Edward Sands Memorial Fund for Baltimore.

Stay tuned for announcements about VPCT's season 10! The season will debut with a holiday show. Auditions will be coming this fall, but further details are top secret for now. Follow VPCT on Facebook (Victoria Players Children's Theater), Instagram (vpctheater) or visit **VPCTheater.com**.



Pictures by Photos by Amy Lynn

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THE VICTORIA PLAYERS CHILDREN'S THEATER IS A PROGRAM OF THE BDRC. SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TIRELESS VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE OUR SPECTACULAR VPCT PRODUCTIONS POSSIBLE!

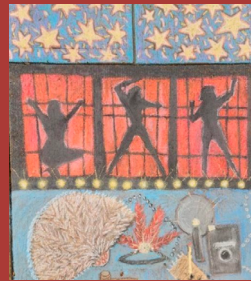
The VPCT Committee includes:

Ryan Westoven, Chair
Jill Henwood, Artistic Director
Danielle Bartos

Max DeBaltzo
Trish Hendershot
Megan Hysell

Brooke Schrader
Melissa Sponseller
Codi Williamson

VPCT actor, Kamryn Wilson, created an ephemeral promotional piece for Chicago Teen Edition during the Lancaster Festival's Chalk the Block in July. She also recreated the Chicago Teen Edition cast photo in water color for their cast gift to director, Jill Henwood. **Amazing work, Kamryn!**



In August, VPCT Artistic Director, Jill Henwood, accepted a generous donation from Barry Buehler and Aaron Uhl with the Buckeye Automotive Family in Lancaster as part of their Buckeye Cares. During the month of July, a percentage of auto sales and money made from a round up program was donated to our organization. **Thank you for your continued support! As the commercials say, "Thank you, Buckeye!"**



BALTIMORE FESTIVAL PARADE'S DRAMATIC GRAND MARSHALS



The Baltimore Festival's parade was led this year by Emily Fisher, Music Teacher and Coral Director at Liberty Union Thurston High School, and Jill Henwood, Artistic Director for the Victoria Players Children's Theater. Both have devoted extraordinary time and talent to mentor young performers in our community. Congratulations Emily & Jill! The VPCT also performed at the Festival, offering a collection of songs from past VPCT shows. The Festival also kindly shared space with

the BDRC in the welcome tent again this year. It was great to chat with everyone who stopped by our display or screamed in fear at our Opera House haunted parade entry.



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THE NOSTALGICS RETURN - AUG. 30!

Don't miss the return of Lancaster's premier big band, The Nostalgics! They will be playing a show on Sunday August 30 at the Opera House. Now under the direction of Baltimore's own Tom Young, this ensemble of talented musicians will have your toe (or more) tapping.

The dance floor will be open! Admission is free, with donations happily accepted to support the ongoing renovation of the Victoria. ***Showtime is 2 pm.***



KROGER REWARDS SUPPORT THE BDRC

Do you shop at Kroger? Designate BDRC!



It's super easy to support us and the Opera House by signing up for Kroger Community Rewards. Just go to Krogercommunityrewards.com, sign in with your Kroger Plus card, click enroll, and designate the BDRC (#KU440) as the organization you wish to support. Then Kroger sends us a quarterly check as a reward for your purchases. Thanks to everyone who has listed us so far!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! THE GROOVE CITY BIG BAND RETURNS TO THE VICTORIA!

The Groove City Big Band will offer another dynamite performance at the ***Victoria Opera House on Saturday, Oct. 24***. The free show starts at 7 PM, so plan to make an evening of it in downtown Baltimore!



IN LOVING MEMORY OF KRISTIN MORRIS KIRKPATRICK

In July, the community and the VPCT family felt deep sorrow, as theater alum Kristin Morris Kirkpatrick and her husband Connor perished in a tragic accident. Our deepest condolences to her family and all who knew her. Kristin loved music of all kinds and was active in numerous theater groups, bringing joy and energy to each performance. To honor and remember her, the VPCT has established the Kristin Morris Kirkpatrick Spotlight Scholarship. Details on applying for and distribution of scholarship funds will be available in the coming months.

Donations to the scholarship fund in her memory can be sent to: VPCT Scholarship, PO Box 74, Baltimore, OH 43105
Or online donations can be made at: <https://vpct.ludus.com/donate> . Thanks so much to all who have already contributed.



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SILENT VOICES | HANDS IN MOTION - SEPT. 19!

Unspoken Events Co. is bringing a new experience to Baltimore in September. This extraordinary evening will celebrate deaf culture, accessibility, storytelling, and community. The program will include several dynamic presenters with meaningful messages to share. This event is for everyone, not just members of the deaf community. The event is also an important step in our ongoing efforts to make the Victoria Opera House more accessible for all. This is a ticketed event, with reserved seating. Don't wait – purchase your seat now at: [Buy Tickets - Hands in Motion, Silent Voices - Victoria Opera House.](#)



♥ UNSPOKEN EVENTS COMPANY, LLC PRESENTS ♥

HANDS IN MOTION, *Silent Voices*

CELEBRATING DEAF CULTURE.
BUILDING AN ACCESSIBLE FUTURE.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

 **VICTORIA OPERA HOUSE**
101 S Main St
Baltimore, OH 43105

	DOORS OPEN	5:00 PM
	PROGRAM	6:00 PM – 8:30 PM
	NETWORKING, BOOK SIGNING & MEET & GREET	8:30 PM – 9:00 PM

FEATURED PRESENTERS



Aarron Loggins

DEAF KING INTERNATIONAL
Actor • Author • International Performer
Super Bowl LIII ASL Performer

Sharing his inspiring journey of perseverance, advocacy, leadership, and believing in yourself.



Brandy Mimms

PROFESSIONAL DEAF DANCER
Founder & Artistic Director
LWYEDT & Deaf Pulse
Performing Arts

Experience the beauty of Deaf performing arts through movement, expression, and visual storytelling.



Brent Borden

38+ YEARS TEACHING
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Hearing will be emerged into a world of silence to discover how Audism impacts the Deaf community and learn how inclusion begins with awareness.

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VOLUNTEER

The BDRC is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation. The group has a board of directors from the community, and elects officers annually. Without the countless hours and dedicated efforts of these people, the BDRC and Victoria Opera House would cease to function.

The Board meets at the Victoria Opera House on the third Thursday, 7 PM, Jan. – Nov. of each year. Visitors are always welcome, and we have volunteer opportunities year-round.

If your group is interested in learning more, board members are available to speak at your next meeting or event, or discuss potential collaboration. **You can reach us at baltimoredowntownrestoration@gmail.com.**

Board and Officers for 2026

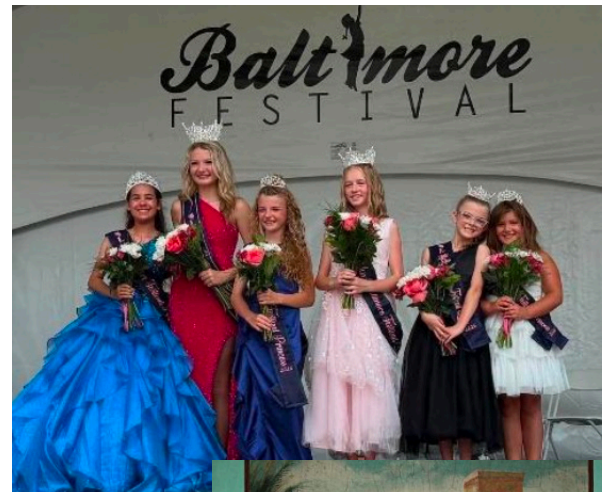
- Steve Cothrel, Director
- Brandy McCreery, Assistant Director
- Andrew Todd, Secretary
- Michele Morrone, Treasurer
- Beth Volpe, Board Member
- Angi Miller, Board Member
- Ryan Westhoven, Board Member & VPCT Chair
- Joe Machado, Board Member
- Jill Henwood, Board Member & VPCT Artistic Director
- Melissa Pickens, Board Member

CONGRATULATIONS BALTIMORE FESTIVAL ROYALTY

As part of the annual Baltimore Festival, the Baltimore Festival Queens Pageant is held each summer. This year, the pageant again returned to the Opera House, hosting an amazing group of young women who wanted to represent the community and festival for the coming year. At the same time, it's an opportunity to say farewell to the Queens and Princesses who have done such a marvelous job over the past 12 months. Their '20s vintage look really fit the Victoria's vibe! Thanks and best wishes to Willow Bensonhaver, Rory Gaskill, Sarah Young, Becka Wolfe, Brianna Fink, and Erica Lysinger for all you've done and learned over the last year.

And congratulations to this year's winners:

- Miss Baltimore Festival Queen Avary Ehni
- Miss Baltimore Festival Princess Autumn Peterson
- Junior Miss Baltimore Festival Queen Sophia Spradlin
- Junior Miss Baltimore Festival Princess Zoey Gaskill
- Little Miss Baltimore Festival Queen Rory Gaskill
- Little Miss Baltimore Festival Princess Juniper Brady



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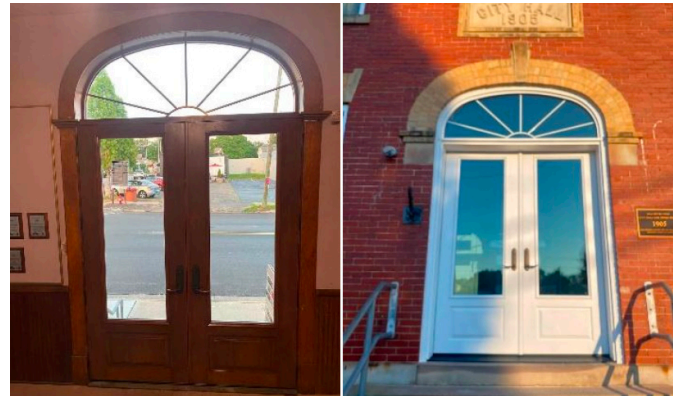


VICTORIA OPERA HOUSE CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

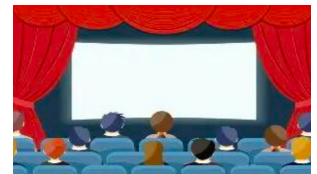
The Opera House was buzzing with construction noise during May, as new custom cabinetry was installed. For years, the audio booth area in the theater was cobbled together with assorted structures. The collection of random furniture was recently replaced with a proper audio booth area to enhance VPCT shows and other events. In addition, the makeshift concession stand was replaced with coordinating concession stand cabinets. We are so pleased with these improvements! Thanks to Ben Smith and WASP Finishing and Cabinets for the excellent carpentry work (on a sloped floor no less). We are also grateful to the Fairfield County Foundation's Ann Chess Fund, and to the Edward N. Sands Fund for Baltimore. Grants from these two amazing charitable funds made this work possible.



Our appreciation also extends to the Village of Baltimore for their continued investment in the historic Opera House/Town Hall building. New front doors were installed in early August, and they are wonderful and far more weather tight than the old doors. Thank you to Mayor Rick Ellas, the Village Council, and Village Administrator Matt Nihiser for your support! The Rosati Windows crew did a great job, and the new ellipse window is gorgeous too.



Finally, we are eagerly awaiting the new permanent movie screen's installation. It's scheduled for late August, and will usher in a new era for the VPCT, for those having meetings or making presentations at the Victoria, and for potential movie nights at the Opera House.



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What is the Victoria Opera House??

In early August, we gave a tour of the Victoria to a group from the Groveport Senior Center. It was fun, but with every event, we hear the same thing... *"I've been past this building a hundred times, and never knew what was in here."*

We are now trying to do something about that. Baltimore Mayor Rick Ellas has offered to lead a fundraising initiative to install a new sign on the exterior of the building. Rick has boundless enthusiasm for the Village, and knows a golden opportunity when he sees one.



The building was christened the Town Hall when it was built in 1905, and it housed many things over the decades: a public theater, The Knights of Pythias, doctors offices, tinsmiths, a gas station, a blacksmith, an optician, the firehouse and hoosegow, the Masonic Lodge, and more, both documented and undocumented.

Today, the Village offices are in the walkout lower level, accessible only from the west entry (or back of the building). Above the offices is the Victoria Opera House, comprised of a theater level, mezzanine/balcony level, and what we now call the Ballroom level (formerly the meeting space for the Knights and Masons). The Opera House is being restored by the nonprofit BDRC, and we've been working on it for a decade.

The building was originally lit with natural gas, and was electrified in the teens or 1920s. Back in the 1920s, the movie theater portion of the building was known as The Victoria, and that's the sign we want to bring back.

If you or someone you know would like to discuss a contribution towards this project, we'd love to hear from you. This is an ambitious undertaking, but it will help identify the Opera House as both a historic symbol of Baltimore, and a catalyst for economic growth and activity in the downtown area and beyond. Please contact Mayor Ellas or the BDRC for more information, and thank you to those who have already contributed.



Special thanks to Melissa Pickens for the rendering of the future sign.

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THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THE BDRC

As a volunteer run 501 (c)(3) non-profit, the BDRC depends on revenue from donations, memberships, sponsorships, and events to operate. This is what makes all our programming and the ongoing restoration of the Victoria Opera House possible!

Memberships are available at different levels. In addition, anyone who contributes \$500 or more per year has an annual recognition plaque hung in the Victoria Opera House.

Finally, annual sponsorships for the following programs and more are available.

- Victoria Players Children's Theater (multiple shows throughout season)
- Victoria Opera House Restoration
- Flag Fund (flags on Main & Market St.)
- Holiday Decorations

KEEP UP WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The BDRC and its many programs are on Facebook at:

- Baltimore Downtown Restoration
- Victoria Opera House
- Victoria Players Children's Theater – VPCT
- Instagram: vpctheater

And of course, our website is up to speed with current events and programs. Questions? Email us at:

- baltimoredowntownrestoration@gmail.com
- vpctheater@gmail.com

PO Box 74, Baltimore, OH 43105

Email: baltimoredowntownrestoration@gmail.com



The Baltimore Bulletin is a periodic publication of the Baltimore Downtown Restoration Committee, a volunteer run 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization.