

BART'S BLOG – APRIL 2025

🕒 2 weeks ago 👤 Bart Lovins 🔗 <http://bartlovins.com>

Part 2: Designing the World of *Ragtime*



Ragtime original cast photo 1998

Ragtime original cast photo 1998

Welcome to the second installment in a four-part series exploring the journey of bringing the musical *Ragtime* to the stage as the PAC's 2025-2026 season opener.

The world of *Ragtime* is vast, spanning multiple locations throughout the state of New York and the social classes that make it up at the turn of the last century. Yet, our design for this show embraces a unified approach and a dynamic space that allows the story to unfold seamlessly.

- While embracing a **unit set design**, our environment will be anything but static. The set will be in constant motion, transforming with rolling staircases, revolving platforms, set pieces flying in and out, and striking visual shifts of focus to reflect the revolution and momentum of an era in constant change. Weekly consultations with the PAC technical director, **Aaron Taylor**, have been crucial as we search for set pieces and props that can be repurposed from stock or rented locally. Knowing that locally produced shows, such as *Urinetown*, *Newsies*, and *Chicago*, have some scenery and props that align with *Ragtime*'s aesthetic, we are actively sourcing elements from local theatre groups that can be adapted to suit our vision. Such choices ensure both authenticity and efficiency.
- **Lighting** will be essential in directing the audience's focus while enhancing mood, movement, and storytelling. Designed by **Paige Johnson**, these shifts in color and intensity will distinguish social classes and reinforce key themes, while moving lights and projections will help define geographic locations and heighten the emotional impact of key scenes.
- **Costuming** presents the most exciting challenge as we seek a costume designer who can capture the early 20th-century aesthetic and handle the logistical demands of a cast, like the set, also in constant motion. Our actors must make rapid costume changes with only moments between scenes, requiring historically accurate, functional, and sturdy designs. Furthermore,

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reflect the cultural influences of each group, from the fluid expressiveness of the immigrants to the syncopated rhythms of ragtime and the mechanical precision of America's industrialization.

- All of these elements — set, costumes, lights, movement — exist in service to the sweeping, unforgettable **musical score** under the direction of **Kimberly Strange**. With one show-stopping number after another, *Ragtime* boasts some of the most glorious music ever written for the stage. Our combination of stunning visuals and breathtaking performances will create an experience PAC audiences won't soon forget.

As we refine our designs and continue our search for the perfect elements, artistic team members, and cast to bring *Ragtime* to life, I will continue to share our journey with you. Stay tuned for more behind-the-scenes insights with our continuing part series devoted to our September production, *Ragtime*.

Learn More about *Ragtime* Auditions at ThePAC.net/2025-pac-proam-auditions

Video Links

The links below provide a video version of this month's blog and a link to HCECTV's **The Monthly Marquee**, an interview program hosted by Bart focused on performing arts activities in our region.

BART'S BLOG

THE MONTHLY MARQUEE

Audience Survey Winners

Congratulations to Shawn Dillon, Ava Durbin, Jennifer Johnson, and Christopher Miller, each the lucky winner of a \$20 PAC gift certificate for completing an audience survey in March, and thank you for helping us learn how to serve our audiences better!

Audience Survey

Share your thoughts on your recent PAC visit and get entered into the next drawing.

AUDIENCE SURVEY

The APRIL PAC Spotlight shines on Central Hardin High School's Gracie Taylor

What do you want to do when you grow up?

I want to write and direct movies.

What have you seen at the PAC?

The PAC ProAm's Mary Poppins, John Hardin's Mamma Mia, North Hardin's Into the Woods, and Central Hardin's Carrie the Musical.

What have you participated in at the PAC?

With my school's drama club I did the Bully Plays and am currently involved in the Page to Stage Writing and Directing workshops.

What have been your most rewarding PAC experiences?

Performing with the CHHS Drama Club.

What did you learn from your PAC experiences?

I have learned more about writing, directing, and all the behind the scenes of how a production gets put together.

How have you benefited from the PAC?

I have gotten to grow in my creativity, figured out my style of theater, and stories. At the PAC, I have made lifelong friends that I know will stay with me for a while

Why is the PAC important to you?

I get to explore and try out all the things I want to do when I'm older. I can see what I like and not like, my limits and goals, as well as

Why should the PAC be important to others?

The PAC is a place where you can show off and grow in what you love. Music performers like musicians and singers get to perform concerts. Writers get to watch their work come to life. Actors can try out new characters and figure out who you are as an actor. Everyone else can come and watch and take a break from the monotony of life.

[Click HERE to learn more about all the PAC Spotlight Ambassadors we've recognized over the years.](#)

