

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Tim Rater

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History Project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-06

Tim Rater, President and CEO of the Aurora Civic Center Authority, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: January 12, 2022

Location: Phone interview at the recording studio at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed.

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:03 / 1.05 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 1, 2022.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Tim Rater, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-06

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Tim Rater was born in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1974. He grew up on a farm and attended Clarke High School in Osceola, Iowa, graduating in 1993. During high school, Rater participated in football, wrestling, track, golf, and theater. He was also active in student government, even serving as the senior class president. His other interests were in the math team, Spanish Club, drama club, and Future Farmers of America (FFA). Upon graduation, Rater attended Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, on a scholarship. He graduated with degrees in business management and theatre in 1997. Rater initially found work in the restaurant industry before moving to the performing arts. He first worked at Apple Tree Theatre in Highland Park, Chicago, before moving to the Metropolis Theatre in Arlington Heights, and then later to the Grand Theatre in Wheaton, Illinois. In 2010, Tim became the president and CEO of the Aurora Civic Center Authority which, at the time of the interview, operates the Paramount Theatre, the Copley Theatre, RiverEdge Park, and the Paramount School of the Arts.

Over the course of the interview, Rater describes the challenges presented by COVID-19 to the theater community in Aurora, Illinois. The initial lockdown in March of 2020 caused the shutdown of the Aurora Civic Center Authority's theaters. Rater describes that originally the theaters were going to open in April of 2020, though as the pandemic continued, they remain closed until 2021, when shows could be performed outdoors at the RiverEdge park theater. Rater details the reopening of the Paramount Theatre with the musical *Kinky Boots* in August of 2021. Throughout, Rater outlines the various challenges the theater community experiences, including the loss of funding from shows and patrons, the impact of the closures on civic center employees, contracted show members, COVID-19 safety practices in 2021.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Aurora Civic Center Authority; Aurora, Illinois; Paramount Theatre; Copley Theatre; RiverEdge Park; Paramount School of the Arts; Performing Arts; COVID-19; COVID-19 pandemic; pandemic's effect on theater

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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