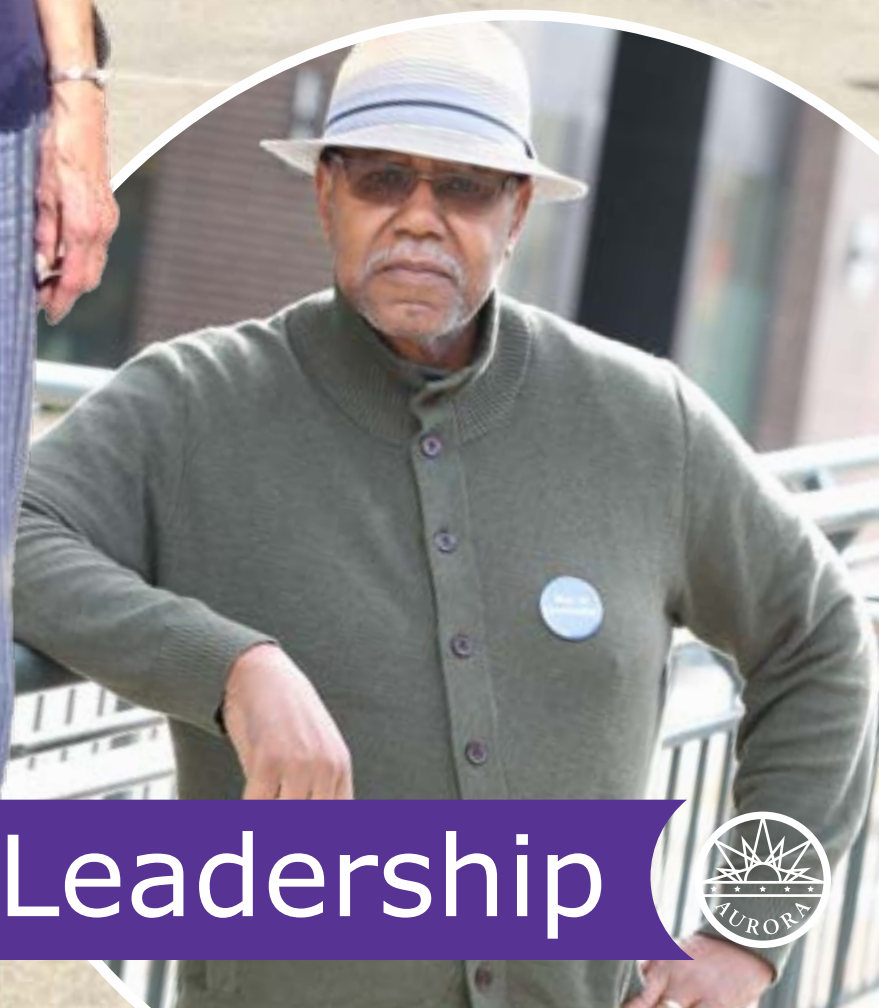


# AURORACREATES

Arts & History Worth Discovering  
February-March 2020



Legacy and Leadership



# AURORACREATES FROM THE EDITORS

Cover photos: Ruth Fountain in 2014 when Trolley No. 610 arrived to the Aurora History Museum; donnie I. betts (intentional lowercase), photo by Brother Jeff.

On this issue, we honor the legacy of two Aurora residents, the late Ruth Fountain, whose contributions to many aspects of the city will endure, and the multitalented donnie I. betts, who—as a director, producer, filmmaker and actor—has been sharing stories of marginalized communities for over 40 years.

May their example of putting their talents to the service of others serve as inspiration for all of us in 2020.



**Ruth Fountain (1928 – 2019) was an accomplished community leader, politician and supporter of the arts and culture who touched many lives in the city. Her biography read, “Everyone in Aurora knows Ruth.” And since she moved to Aurora with husband and two sons in 1961, she never stopped being involved in the community.**

Her accolades in the community and political arenas are many (see below), and her contributions to the arts, culture and history of Aurora will always be remembered as she left an indelible mark.

After a prolific career in politics and government, in retirement Fountain stayed involved and deepened her passion for historic preservation. In the mid-2000s, the Aurora Museum Foundation—under the leadership of Fountain and her late husband, Bob Eide—spearheaded the all-volunteer restoration of the 1913 Trolley Trailer No. 610 (Landmark #24), which was donated to the Aurora History Museum in 2006. The success of such a major restoration project that involved over 4,500 volunteer hours for more than two years is credited in part to Fountain’s leadership skills to bring the community together. In recognition of her work and dedication to the restoration of the historic trolley, the Aurora City Council passed a resolution in 2012 to name the new gallery addition of the Aurora History Museum

as the Ruth Fountain Gallery.

Fountain was elected to the Aurora City Council in 1971, and during her tenure, she was the first female president of the Colorado Municipal League. She was an inaugural inductee in 2013 of the Aurora Colorado Women’s Hall of Fame, also received the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year Award, the Outstanding Citizen Award from the Aurora Board of Realtors, and a Distinguished Service Award from the Denver Regional Council of Governments, among others.

The list of organizations that benefited from her talents is long. Those connected to the arts, culture and history include: founding member and president for 10 years of the Aurora Historical Society; original member and chair of the Arapahoe County Cultural Council – Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD); board of directors of the Aurora Symphony Orchestra; board of directors of the Aurora Museum Foundation, where she was also its president; city of Aurora Historic Preservation commissioner; and member of the Aurora History Museum Advisory Committee.

A person with such passion for preserving Aurora’s history has become part of Aurora’s history. And the Ruth Fountain Wing at the Aurora History Museum will be there to remind us of her lasting legacy.





*Photo by Dave Stevens*

# LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

donnie i. betts honored with CBCA's Leadership Award  
**Congratulations to donnie i. betts (intentional lowercase)—accomplished actor, producer, director and master storyteller—on being honored by the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA). He will receive the prestigious John Madden Jr. Leadership Award March 10, which recognizes a lifetime of extraordinary leadership and a legacy of support for the arts.**

"I am truly honored to receive this award named after John Madden Jr. who left such a legacy," betts said. "This award gives me a larger platform to continue being a voice for people intentionally silenced. I hope it also helps gain support from others to join at opening doors so people can have a seat at the table."

Among his many community contributions throughout his fruitful career, betts served on the Aurora Housing Authority Commission when he first moved to Aurora and currently serves on the city of Aurora Cultural Affairs Commission. Aurora has been his home for the last 19 years.



*Experience*  
**"EYE DREAM"**



**Artist Ariella Asher has created an art piece as a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and loaned it to the city's Art in Public Places program. The mural—printed and placed on hard board—was created with small images to create one larger image, "Eye Dream." It's over 7 feet in length, was reproduced twice and is available to view at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 9898 E. Colfax Ave., through the end of February. Another temporary public art exhibition is the Aurora Public Schools traveling art exhibit, featured at the Aurora Municipal Center Mezzanine Gallery during February and March.**

# FEBRUARY



## 06

**Opening Night: "1 Night 6 Plays" \$**  
5280 Artist Co-op  
ACAD Studios

**ACAD First Thursday Mixer**  
6 – 8 p.m.  
Check website for location  
AuroraCulture.org

## 07

**Opening Night: "The Scottsboro Boys" \$**  
7:30 p.m.  
Vintage Theatre

## 18

**History Trivia at Bent Barley Brewing Co.**  
6:30 p.m.  
6200 S. Main St., Suite 110

## 19

**Lecture: Aurora's Recent History \$**  
Noon – 1 p.m.  
Aurora History Museum

## 21

**Opening Night: "SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE and other songs" \$**  
7:30 p.m.  
Aurora Fox Arts Center

## 28 & 29

**Cabaret Series: Sarah Rex – Who the Hell Does She Think She Is? \$**  
7:30 p.m.  
Aurora Fox Arts Center



## 28

**Opening Night: "Marvin's Room" \$**  
7:30 p.m. | Vintage Theatre

## 07

**Day of Jubilee**

Live music, local artists and local beer.  
5 – 9 p.m. | The People's Building



## 16

**Space Odyssey, Young People Concert**  
Aurora Symphony Orchestra  
11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.  
The Hangar at Stanley Marketplace



# MARCH

## 03

**Opening Day: "Aurora Colorado Women's Hall of Fame"**  
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Aurora History Museum

### **Morning at the Museum**

For ages 3-6 with adult caregiver. Registration required.  
10:30 a.m.  
Aurora History Museum

## 05

### **ACAD First Thursday Mixer**

6 – 8 p.m.  
Check website for location  
AuroraCulture.org

## 06

### **Day of Jubilee**

Live music, local artists and local beer.  
5 – 9 p.m.

## 12

### **Facts on Tap: Tour and Trivia Night for Hometown Pride** \$

6:30 p.m.  
Aurora History Museum

## 18

### **Lecture: The 2020 Census** \$

Noon – 1 p.m.  
Aurora History Museum

## 13

### **Opening Night: "For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday"** \$

7:30 p.m.  
Aurora Fox Arts Center

## 23

### **High School Memories**

For memory care patients and their caregivers. Reservation required.  
1:30 p.m.  
Aurora History Museum



## 21-22

### **An Ode to Joy!** \$

Aurora Symphony Orchestra  
Saturday, 7:30 p.m. | Sunday, 3 p.m.  
The Hangar at Stanley Marketplace

# ONGOING PROGRAMS

## EXHIBITS

**Aurora Public Schools Art Educators at DAVA**  
DAVA  
Through Feb. 18

**Aurora Public Schools Traveling Art Show**  
Aurora Municipal Center, Mezzanine Gallery  
Feb. 3 – March 30

**"Hometown Pride: Student Athletic and Extracurricular History in Aurora"**  
Aurora History Museum  
Through April 5

**"Aurora's Historic Growth"**  
Aurora History Museum  
Through May 31

**"Aurora Colorado Women's Hall of Fame"**  
Aurora History Museum  
Beginning March 3

## THEATRE

### **"1 Night 6 Plays"** \$

Feb. 6 – March 8  
5280 Artist Co-op  
ACAD Studios

### **"The Scottsboro Boys"** \$

Vintage Theatre  
Through March 15

### **"SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE and Other Songs"** \$

Aurora Fox Arts Center  
Through March 15

### **"Marvin's Room"** \$

Vintage Theatre  
Feb. 28 – April 5

### **"For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday"** \$

Aurora Fox Arts Center  
March 13 – April 5

### **"Freaky Friday" the Musical** \$

Aurora Fox Arts Center  
April 17 – May 10

## CLASSES

### **Folklorico Dance Class from Academia de Ballet Folklorico Nezahualcoyotl** \$

Tuesday & Wednesday, 6 – 9 p.m.  
Feb. 4 – March 31  
ACAD Galleries & Studios

*Keep up with the dynamic programming at*  
***ThePeoplesBuilding.com or @PeoplesBuilding***



**While it is not unusual for cities around the U.S. to have public art programs related to city-run construction projects, Aurora is among a much smaller group of innovative cities that also have public art requirements for private developers. Construction projects located in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Districts and in Metropolitan Districts are required to develop a public art plan defining their vision, intent and art locations, and to install public art on-site. With the construction boom, we are starting to see some exciting results from these initiatives.**

**Spur at Iliff Station Apartments by Grand Peaks  
"Double Dip" by Elsa Sroka**

This huge tile mural was created from a smaller painting by Denver/Aurora metro area artist Elsa Sroka. While the painting style and subject matter could be considered "traditional," the whimsical surprise comes in the composition, which is quite unique. Entitled "Double Dip," after it was installed, this playful artwork attracted the attention of the construction workers, who named the cows "Moolan" and "Meatloaf." The fanciful mural is visible from eastbound cars, pedestrians and cyclists on Iliff Avenue just east of I-225 and the Iliff Station, as well as from the train and traffic on I-225. John Grant with Public Art Services worked with the developer in managing their public art process and had this to say: "A high point in these projects comes when the developer turns the corner from skeptical to enthusiastic." He added, "In this case we had an enthusiastic partner from the beginning and a wonderful artist for them to partner with."

**The Conservatory Metropolitan District  
"Prairie Life" by Madeline Wiener**

These figurative reading benches, or "bench people," as artist Madeline Wiener refers to them, were carved from stone and have become a favorite gathering place for children. Wiener describes this installation as an "interactive, functional and inviting community meeting place." They are located across the street from Frontier Elementary School on South Conservatory Boulevard.

To stay up to date with the city's Art in Public Places Program, visit [AuroraGov.org/PublicArt](http://AuroraGov.org/PublicArt).

## Aurora's Public Art in Private Development Initiatives





# Exhibition Chronicles Aurora's Historic Growth

**Aurora has grown by leaps and bounds over the decades. Once a small suburb, Aurora has blossomed into the state's third-largest city and sits in three different counties: Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas. As of July 1, 2019, the population was estimated at 381,000.**

As the city expands geographically and demographically, it is hard not to recognize the historic growth taking place. The "Aurora's Historic Growth" exhibition at the Aurora History Museum, 15051 E. Alameda Parkway, explores how the city has changed from its foundation to the present day, digs deeper into the booms and busts that have defined Aurora's past, and evaluates how growth is redefining the once small town.

The history related within this display highlights some of Aurora's defining moments. Patrons can learn about topics such as the people who inhabited this land before Europeans arrived at the Front Range, Aurora's roots as the town of Fletcher, the military booms in the early 20th century, water rights and infrastructure, the suburban build-up, East Colfax Avenue and much more.

This exhibition is about the people, buildings, industries

and environment that provide the fabric of our growing community. As Aurora has grown, its landscape and culture have changed along the way. Museumgoers can see those changes from a variety of perspectives in this display.

"Aurora's Historic Growth" also features a photography project that demonstrates how the look and feel of our city has changed. The museum staff replicated historic images of key landmarks. This juxtaposition is fascinating to see how the environment and structures have transformed throughout the years. The side-by-side comparison of some of the most recognizable places around Aurora provides visitors a chance to remember how the city once looked. This photo project highlights sites such as: Stanley Aviation/ Marketplace, The Aurora Mall/ Town Center at Aurora, the round barn at DeLaney Farms, the historic KOA building and many other sites.

The museum encourages the public to come and experience for themselves "Aurora's Historic Growth" through May. 31. The exhibition is relevant to those who were raised in Aurora, as well as recent transplants. Of course, the Aurora History Museum is always free. Learn more at [AuroraMuseum.org](http://AuroraMuseum.org)

## ARTS AND CULTURE IN AURORA



### CITY PROGRAMS

**Art in Public Places**  
Multiple locations  
303.739.6747 | [AuroraGov.org/PublicArt](http://AuroraGov.org/PublicArt)

**Aurora Dance Arts**  
Multiple locations  
303.326.8308 | [AuroraGov.org/Dance](http://AuroraGov.org/Dance)

**Aurora Fox Arts Center**  
9900 E. Colfax Ave.  
303.739.1970 | [AuroraFox.org](http://AuroraFox.org)

**Aurora History Museum**  
15051 E. Alameda Parkway  
303.739.6660  
[AuroraMuseum.org](http://AuroraMuseum.org)

**Aurora Municipal Center**  
15151 E. Alameda Parkway  
303.739.7000 | [AuroraGov.org](http://AuroraGov.org)

**Aurora Public Library-Central**  
14949 E. Alameda Parkway  
303.739.6600 | [AuroraLibrary.org](http://AuroraLibrary.org)

**Aurora Rhythms - Concerts on the Lawn**  
Aurora Municipal Center | Great Lawn  
15151 E Alameda Parkway  
303.739.6520 | [AuroraGov.org/Concerts](http://AuroraGov.org/Concerts)

**Bicentennial Art Center - Pottery**  
13655 E. Alameda Ave.  
303.344.1776 | [AuroraGov.org/Pottery](http://AuroraGov.org/Pottery)

**Centennial House (Historic Site)**  
1671 Galena St.  
303.739.6661 | [AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites](http://AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites)

**City of Aurora Cultural Services Division**  
Theatre, music and visual arts classes at multiple locations  
303.326.8650  
[AuroraGov.org/Arts](http://AuroraGov.org/Arts)

**DeLaney Farm Historic District**  
170 S. Chambers Road  
303.739.6661  
[AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites](http://AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites)

**Fletcher Plaza**  
9898 E. Colfax Ave.

**Mission Viejo Library**  
15324 E. Hampden Circle

**Tallyn's Reach Library**  
23911 E. Arapahoe Road

**The People's Building**  
9995 E. Colfax Ave.  
720.819.6680  
[ThePeoplesBuilding.com](http://ThePeoplesBuilding.com)

### OTHER ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS AND VENUES

**5280 Artist CoOp**  
1400 Dallas St.  
303.432.9162 | [5280ArtistCoOp.com](http://5280ArtistCoOp.com)

**Academia de Ballet Folklórico Nezahualcoyotl**  
(Mexican Folklore Dance Classes)  
ACAD, 1400 Dallas St.

**Aurora Artists' Guild**  
[AuroraArtistsGuild.com](http://AuroraArtistsGuild.com)

**Aurora Cultural Arts District (ACAD)**  
1400 Dallas St.  
303.913.7508 | [AuroraCulture.org](http://AuroraCulture.org)

**Aurora Singers**  
303.343.3377 | [AuroraSingers.org](http://AuroraSingers.org)

**Aurora Symphony Orchestra**  
303.873.6622 | [AuroraSymphony.org](http://AuroraSymphony.org)

**Community College of Aurora Arts and Communication Dept.**  
303.340.7335 | [CCAurora.edu](http://CCAurora.edu)

**Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA)**  
1405 Florence St.  
303.367.5886 | [DavArts.org](http://DavArts.org)

**Grand Design Inc.**  
303.955.2724 | [GrandByDesign.org](http://GrandByDesign.org)

**Inside the Orchestra**  
9995 E. Colfax Ave. | 303.355.7855  
[info@insidetheorchestra.org](mailto:info@insidetheorchestra.org)

**Kim Robards Dance Inc.**  
303.825.4847  
[KimRobardsDance.org](http://KimRobardsDance.org)

**Mushin Martial Arts**  
ACAD, 1400 Dallas St.

**Nueva Escuela de Música**  
9995 E. Colfax Ave. | 720.500.3306  
[NuevaEscuelaDeMusica.org](http://NuevaEscuelaDeMusica.org)

**Red Delicious Press**  
9901 E. 16th Ave | 303.366.2922  
[RedDeliciousPress.com](http://RedDeliciousPress.com)

**Roshni, Voice of the Voiceless**  
Multiple locations | 720.427.0404 R  
[oshniLight.org](http://oshniLight.org)

**Vintage Theatre Productions Inc.**  
1468 Dayton St. | 303.856.7830  
[VintageTheatre.com](http://VintageTheatre.com)

**Visions Performing Arts**  
720.620.2316  
[VisionsPerformingArtsCompany.org](http://VisionsPerformingArtsCompany.org)



# BROADWAY ON COLFAX

*Broadway playwright Marc Acito premieres show at the Aurora Fox*

In 1937, a physics professor at Princeton University received a call. Internationally renowned classical singer Marian Anderson was giving a concert at Princeton's McCarter Theatre. But because she was African-American, Anderson was denied a hotel room. Instead she was invited to stay with the professor in his home. That professor was Albert Einstein.

"SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE and other songs" is a freshly re-conceived play-with-music, based on the real-life relationship between these two titanic figures. It is a celebration of the union of hearts, minds and souls in a quest to unlock this vast universe's biggest secrets. And this spring, this breathtaking story will receive its world premiere at the Aurora Fox Arts Center, starring none other than the inimitable Mary Louise Lee.

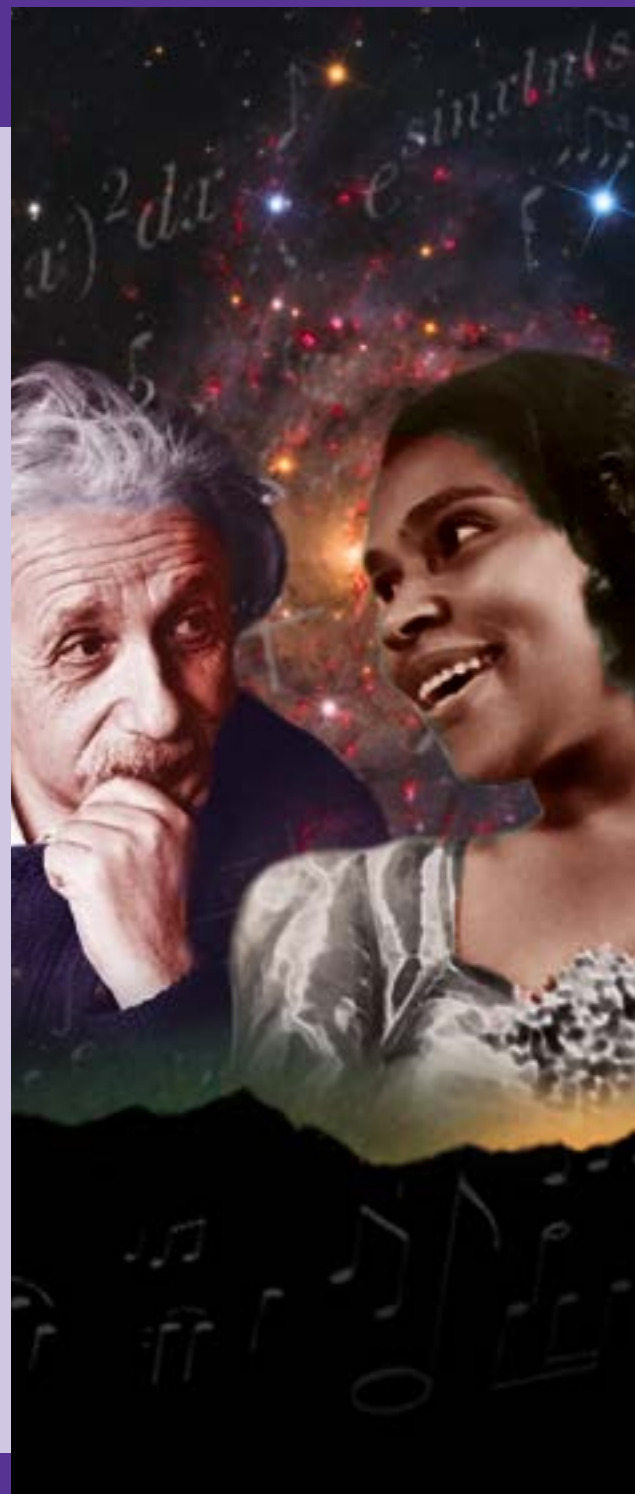
"I had the pleasure of directing an earlier version of this piece at the Hub Theatre in Washington, D.C.," said Aurora Fox Executive Producer Helen R. Murray. "When [playwright] Marc Acito mentioned to me that he was interested in re-working the piece and developing it as a play-with-music, I was immediately intrigued. Add to that the fact that Mary Louise was interested in the role of Marian, and I was sold!"

A play-with-music is different from a standard musical in that the songs do not, necessarily, propel the plot along as they do in a musical. Murray says that instead of a tool for exposition, the music in this latest incarnation of "Secrets of the Universe" almost becomes a character of its own, within the story.

Acito has had great success with his other biographical dramas. Most notably, his Broadway musical "Allegiance" was inspired by, and starred, George Takei in a story about Takei's personal experiences during the Japanese-American Internment of World War II.

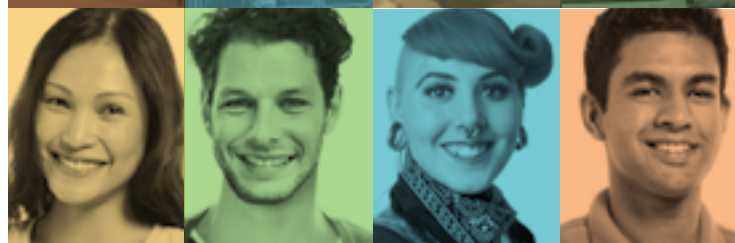
"Marc's passion for the people and subjects he explores is palpable," says Murray. "He's already been to Aurora to work with me and our incredible music director, Andrew Fischer. I know he's really excited about this production, as is everyone at the Aurora Fox."

"SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE and other songs" opens at the Aurora Fox Feb. 21 and plays through March 15. Lee will also be headlining the Aurora Fox's annual Gala on Saturday, May 2. You can get tickets to "SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE," the annual Gala, and all the other Aurora Fox regional premieres by visiting [AuroraFox.org](http://AuroraFox.org) or calling the Box Office at 303.739.1970.



# AURORA

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303.739.7400