FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 19, 2015

THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2015 – 16 SEASON

An Exhilarating Season Includes World-Class International Dance Featuring
The 50th Anniversary Tour of Twyla Tharp, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal,
Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

The Auditorium Theatre’s “Made in Chicago” Dance Series Returns with
River North Dance Chicago, Thodos Dance Chicago and Giordano Dance Chicago

The Auditorium Celebrates Music with The Billy Strayhorn Festival,
Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, “Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah” and
“On Stage With…Branden James”

CHICAGO, IL — As the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University continues to celebrate its momentous 125th Anniversary Season, the National Historic Landmark, led by Executive Director Brett Batterson, announces another thrilling season filled with world-class international, as well as local talent. Highlights of the Auditorium’s 2015 – 16 season feature an Auditorium co-commissioned new work from the incomparable Twyla Tharp; a centennial celebration for jazz legend Billy Strayhorn; and stunning dance companies from Chicago and around the world. Subscription packages are on sale now, by calling (312) 341-2357 and are available online starting in early April at AuditoriumTheatre.org.

“Building off of the momentum from our incredibly robust 125th Anniversary Season, we are thrilled to continue offering the best talent from around the world to our audiences,” said Auditorium Theatre Executive Director Brett Batterson. “The upcoming season will bring something for everyone as we begin the next 125 year legacy of the Auditorium Theatre, while celebrating some of the most influential artists in all genres of entertainment.”

Continuing its mission to present the best international and homegrown talent to enrich Chicago audiences, the Auditorium’s 2015 – 16 Season welcomes new work as well as Auditorium favorites. The diverse season opens September 24, 2015 when the Auditorium invites patrons to sit on the landmark stage for an intimate concert with classical crossover singer Branden James, a finalist on “America’s Got Talent”. On September 26, the Auditorium welcomes back Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández. Bringing the rich culture of Mexico to the Auditorium stage, Ballet Folklórico introduces audiences to the magic of traditional Mexican folk music and dance. The dancing resumes as the Auditorium continues its “Made in Chicago” Dance Series for its second year with the Fall Engagement of River North Dance Chicago as they present a heart-pounding, extraordinary one-night-only performance on October 3.

“By establishing the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series during our celebratory 125th Season, we were able present some of Chicago’s most talented artists on our landmark stage for the first time,” said Batterson. “We are thrilled to bring back this successful series and continue to support our local artists, giving them each another chance to showcase their unique programming.”
In a momentous co-commission with Ravinia Festival, as well as four other dance presenters in four other cities, the Auditorium is thrilled to present two new works by world-renowned choreographer Twyla Tharp November 5 – 8. Celebrating 50 years of creating dance for both modern and ballet companies, television, Broadway and Hollywood, the program will honor Tharp’s five decades of dance-making.

On November 13, the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic (CJP) brings the sounds of Cuba to the stage after a life-changing cultural exchange trip to Havana this past year. Conducted by CJP Artistic Director Orbert Davis, “Scenes from Life: Cuba!” will feature the critically acclaimed CJP orchestra with Cuban musicians brought to Chicago for this unprecedented one-night-only concert and United States premiere.

The incredible sounds of jazz don’t stop there, as the Auditorium marks the 100th birthday of music great Billy Strayhorn with a three-month long city-wide festival culminating with “Lush Life” on November 21 at the Auditorium Theatre. The evening will feature incredible performances by Darius de Haas and Joan Curto, the “Too Hot to Handel” orchestra with Alan Broadbent on piano, a 75-voice choir, the Joel Hall Dancers and more.

2016 welcomes another “Made in Chicago” Dance Series performance when Thodos Dance Chicago returns to the stage January 9 after their critically-acclaimed, captivating debut Auditorium performance this past season. Celebrating the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, the historic stage heats up January 16 and 17 with the 11th annual production of “Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah,” the joyful, exuberant and all-American version of Handel’s beloved oratorio.

Spring at the Auditorium welcomes the return of “America’s cultural ambassador to the world,” Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, March 8 – 13. Under the direction of Robert Battle, Alvin Ailey celebrates the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of American modern dance, bringing audiences to their feet each and every performance. Audiences will have another chance to see the sensual athleticism of River North Dance Chicago when they return for their Spring Engagement March 26.

After 33 years, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal makes a triumphant return to the Auditorium Theatre April 1 – 3, presenting their critically-acclaimed production of “Leonce and Lena,” one of German choreographer Christian Spuck’s greatest successes, inspired by the eponymous political satire by Georg Büchner. Closing the eclectic season and capping off the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series, Giordano Dance Chicago returns to the Auditorium June 11, 2016 with their second Auditorium engagement, after this past January’s triumphant full-length debut.
THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE'S 2015 – 16 SEASON
All titles, artists and dates are subject to change

“ON STAGE WITH…” BRANDEN JAMES
September 24, 2015

This unique concert experience offers Auditorium audiences the opportunity to sit on the National Historic Landmark stage while enjoying the music of classic crossover artist Branden James in this unique setting. The “America’s Got Talent” finalist will perform alongside Australian cellist and musical director James Clark bringing a diverse repertory of music to this up-close-and-personal cabaret performance.

*Branden James concert is made possible in part through the generosity of Dr. Paul M. Lisnek.*

BALLET FOLKLÓRICO DE MÉXICO DE AMALIA HERNÁNDEZ
September 26 and 27, 2015

From the heart of Mexico City, Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández has presented dances that are reflective of the culture in Mexico for the past five decades. Founded in 1952 by Amalia Hernández, the ballet has historically celebrated traditional dance and musical pieces from various regions and folk music genres native to Mexico. A Chicago favorite, many of the ensemble's works depict the traditions of indigenous Meso-American culture and delight audiences with their authentic, spirited movement.

RIVER NORTH DANCE CHICAGO
October 3, 2015
March 26, 2016

Celebrated for creating vital connections between dancers and the audience as well as presenting gutsy and entertaining works, River North Dance Chicago makes the Auditorium Theatre its official Chicago home during the 2015 – 16 Season with both a Fall and Spring Engagement. As part of the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series, RNDC will present both new work as well as company favorites that show off the dancers’ signature athletic prowess and bold, theatrical flair.

TWYLA THARP 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR
November 5 – 8, 2015
*One hour Student Matinee at 11 a.m. November 6

In a momentous co-commission with Ravinia Festival, the Auditorium Theatre is thrilled to present two new works by world-renowned choreographer Twyla Tharp. Celebrating 50 years of creating dance for both modern and ballet companies, television, Broadway and Hollywood, the program will be seen throughout North America during a 10-week anniversary tour to 15 cities, honoring Tharp’s five decades of dance-making. Composer John Zorn provides the show’s vibrant introductory fanfare, followed by the first new work, “Preludes and Fugues” set to J.S. Bach’s “Well-Tempered Clavier.” The second piece, “Yowzie,” is set to music by Henry Butler and Steve Bernstein. Each dance is comprised of 12 dancers—many whom have worked with Tharp over the years. The Joyce Theater in New York City and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. initiated the commissioning of these new works. In addition to the Auditorium Theatre and Ravinia Festival, other members of the consortium include TITAS
Presents in association with AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills.

**CHICAGO JAZZ PHILHARMONIC presents “SCENES FROM LIFE: CUBA!”**

November 13, 2015

In December 2014, members of the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic including Artistic Director Orbert Davis, spent a historic week in Havana, Cuba rehearsing with the Universidad de las Artes student orchestra to deliver the world premiere of “Escenidas de la Vida: Patrimonio” (“Scenes from Life: Heritage”) as part of the Havana International Jazz Festival. Coinciding with President Obama’s announcement outlining sweeping changes in U.S. Policy towards the island nation, CJP’s trip was featured on 60 Minutes as well other international press outlets.

Continuing this significant and timely international exchange, select students and featured guests from Havana will travel to Chicago to deliver the U.S. premiere of “Scenes From Life: Cuba!” In addition, CJP will also perform some of their signature pieces during what will be their eighth performance at the Auditorium Theatre.

**THE BILLY STRAYHORN FESTIVAL - “LUSH LIFE”**

November 21, 2015

A three month celebration marking the centennial birthday of musician Billy Strayhorn—beginning with the Chicago Jazz Festival on September 4, 2015 and continuing at various jazz clubs throughout Chicago in September and October—will culminate at the Auditorium Theatre on November 21 with “Lush Life.” Under the musical direction of Bruce Mayhall Rastrelli, this fully staged salute to Strayhorn features Broadway star Darius de Haas and local favorite Joan Curto with Alan Broadbent on piano, the “Too Hot to Handel” orchestra, the Joel Hall Dancers, a 75-voice choir and more to be announced.

Various educational forums will also be held in conjunction with the festival focusing on Strayhorn’s life, his often-overlooked contributions to the jazz canon and his struggles as a gay artist in mid-twentieth century America. Partners of these educational forums include The Center on Halsted, Chicago Urban League and Roosevelt University.

_The Billy Strayhorn Festival is made possible in part through the generosity of The Chicago Community Trust._

**THODOS DANCE CHICAGO**

January 9, 2016

After making their Auditorium Theatre debut during the inaugural “Made in Chicago” Dance Series last season, See Chicago Dance raved that Thodos Dance Chicago’s “eclectic program at the Auditorium Theatre proved that its ensemble of well-trained dancers can do anything that is thrown at them.” Thodos kicks off 2016 at the Auditorium with an exhilarating program that is sure to excite and amaze audiences once again.
“TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH”
January 16 and 17, 2016
*One hour Student Matinee January 15 at 11 a.m.

Returning for its 11th consecutive year, the Auditorium celebrates the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with “Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah,” a joyful, exuberant, all-American version of George Frideric Handel’s beloved oratorio. With nearly 200 performers on stage, this soulful interpretation features a cast of acclaimed soloists: tenor Rodrick Dixon, soprano Alfreda Burke and alto Karen Marie Richardson, plus pianist Alvin Waddles, bassist Marion Hayden, the 150 voices of the city-wide “Too Hot” Choir (under the direction of Old St. Pat’s Music Director Bill Fraher), and a 50-piece symphony orchestra and jazz ensemble conducted by Suzanne Mallare Acton.

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER
March 8 – 13, 2016
*One hour Student Matinee March 10 and 11 at 11 a.m.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, led by Artistic Director Robert Battle, blends ballet, modern dance, jazz, and African dance techniques. Hailed as America’s “cultural ambassador to the world” and “possibly the most successful modern dance company on the planet” by The New York Times, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performs new repertoire plus audience favorites.

LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL “LEONCE AND LENA”
April 1 – 3, 2016

After 33 years, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal makes a triumphant return to the Auditorium Theatre presenting their critically-acclaimed production of “Leonce and Lena,” one of German choreographer Christian Spuck’s greatest successes, inspired by the eponymous political satire by Georg Büchner. A Prince suffering from boredom and a Princess tired of the absurdity of the world around her, both flee their respective kingdoms to escape the lives that have already been laid out for them, including an arranged marriage to one another. Both under disguise, the two meet one another—not knowing who the other is—and instantly fall in love but are they able to go back to the lives that they so desperately wanted to escape? Among other pieces, Spuck uses the ethereal—and at times grotesque—compositions by the Waltz King, Johann Strauss, to galvanize this tragicomic tale and underscore its parodic aspects.

GIORDANO DANCE CHICAGO
June 11, 2016

Closing out the Auditorium Theatre’s Season, Giordano Dance Chicago returns to the landmark stage after their triumphant full-stage debut in the winter of 2015. The final “Made in Chicago” Dance Series performance will showcase Giordano’s power, athleticism and elegance, and demonstrate intimately why the Chicago Sun-Times raved, “the company, which invariably dances as if there is no tomorrow, looked more stunning than ever.”

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**2015 – 16 Season Sponsors**

The International Dance Season and the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series are made possible by the NIB Foundation.

**Ticket and Subscription Information**

Subscription packages are on sale now by calling (312) 341-2357, and are available online starting in early April at AuditoriumTheatre.org. Individual tickets will go on sale starting in the summer of 2015.

For more information, visit AuditoriumTheatre.org.

**About the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University**

The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, located at 50 E. Congress Pkwy, is an Illinois, not-for-profit organization committed to presenting the finest in international, cultural, community and educational programming to Chicago, and to the continued restoration and preservation of the National Historic Landmark Auditorium Theatre. In September of 2014, the Auditorium Theatre was awarded the inaugural Fifth Star Award by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. On December 9, 2014, the Auditorium Theatre celebrated its 125th Birthday with a proclamation from the City of Chicago declaring it “Auditorium Theatre Day.”

The Auditorium Theatre is generously supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council, the Sage Foundation, and the Palmer House Hilton. For more information about programming, volunteer and donor opportunities or theatre tours, call (312) 341-2310 or visit AuditoriumTheatre.org.

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