THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE WELCOMES THODOS DANCE CHICAGO AND THE WORLD PREMIERE OF SONO’S JOURNEY

Presented as part of the Auditorium Theatre’s “Made in Chicago” Dance Series

CHICAGO — The Auditorium Theatre presents Thodos Dance Chicago on Saturday, January 9, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. with the world premiere of Sono’s Journey, choreographed by Founder and Artistic Director Melissa Thodos. This full company work artistically traces Japanese-American Sono Osato’s path from her 1934 audition on the Auditorium Theatre stage that launched her dance career with Ballets Russe de Monte-Carlo at age 14, to her position today, at the age of 96, as one of the most inspirational, barrier-breaking artists in American Dance. Sono Osato and her family will be in attendance for this special performance. Ticket prices are $28-$68 and can be purchased online at AuditoriumTheatre.org, by phone at 312.341.2300, or in-person at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (50 E. Congress Parkway). Discounted subscriptions to the Auditorium Theatre’s “Made in Chicago” Dance Series, which also includes Chicago Rhythm Fest (June 4) and Giordano Dance Chicago (June 11), are on sale now at AuditoriumTheatre.org.

“Sono Osato’s trajectory is one of those ‘Made in Chicago’ stories that make us proud to be Chicagoans,” said Auditorium Theatre Board of Trustees Chairman Charlie Gardner. “The Auditorium Theatre is honored to celebrate her legacy and welcome her back to our landmark stage after more than 80 years.”

Sono’s Journey is an original dance story conceived and choreographed by Melissa Thodos. This one act world premiere includes projection, a moving set, and narration by Chicago actress Ellen Karas.

“The story of Sono Osato is so moving and inspiring,” said Thodos Dance Chicago Founder and Artistic Director Melissa Thodos. “Sono’s Journey is an extraordinary and enduring story encompassing her life experience as a Japanese-American performer in a rapidly changing world. It is a story that I felt must be told through dance.”

Along with the world premiere of Sono’s Journey, Thodos Dance Chicago will perform Near Light, choreographed by Melissa Thodos, Memoirs, choreographed by Garfield Lemonius, and All You Need Is, choreographed by Thodos Dance Chicago alum Taylor Mitchell.

The 2015 – 2016 Dance Season is made possible by the NIB Foundation.

About Sono Osato

Sono Osato was born on August 29, 1919 in Omaha, Nebraska and later moved to Chicago as a young girl with her Japanese father Shoji Osato and Irish-French Canadian mother Francis Fitzpatrick.
In 1934 at age 14, Chicago's Auditorium Theatre played a significant role as the site of Sono’s extraordinary audition for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which led to her permanent departure from her family. She later went on to dance with American Ballet Theatre, dancing in such ballets as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Pillar of Fire*, and *The Beloved*.

As a musical theater performer, her Broadway credits included *One Touch of Venus* and the role of Ivy Smith in the original Broadway production of *On the Town*. Sono also appeared in Broadway’s *Peer Gynt*, in the film, *The Kissing Bandit*, and appeared in episodes of the TV series, *The Adventures of Ellery Queen*.

She later founded the Sono Osato Scholarship Program for Graduate Studies with the nonprofit organization, Career Transition for Dancers, which offers scholarships toward graduate degrees in fields other than dance.

Osato is 96 years old, resides in New York and was married for over sixty years to real estate developer Victor Elmaleh until his death in 2014.

**Special Events**

**Master Class with Thodos Dance Chicago**

**Saturday, January 9, 2016 | 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. | The Auditorium Theatre’s Katten-Landau Studio (425 S Wabash, 4th floor, Chicago, IL)**

Cost: $5 with a High School or Roosevelt University ID, $10 with a non-RU College ID, $20 for non-students.

Intermediate to advanced level dancers are encouraged to sign up for this 90-minute master class, which will allow dancers to learn and experience current Thodos Dance Chicago repertory. Dancers will be taught an excerpt of *Memoirs* choreographed by Garfield Lemonius, which has been a part of TDC repertory for two years and will be performed by TDC on the Auditorium Theatre stage that evening. **Prior dance training is required for this master class.**

Dancers must register in advance here or by calling 312.341.2300.

**History in Motion: Dance in Chicago – Past and Present**

*Discussion panel presented by the Chicago Dance History Project*

**Wednesday, January 6, 2016 | 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts (915 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL)

Admission is free but space is limited. Register here to guarantee your spot.

In conjunction with the world premiere of *Sono’s Journey*, Chicago Dance History Project will present a panel discussion on the state of Japanese-American relations in Chicago during World War II and the inspiration for Melissa Thodos’ *Sono’s Journey*.

Panelists include:

**Melissa Thodos** - Founder and Artistic Director, Thodos Dance Chicago
**Sharon Lear** – President, Thodos Dance Chicago Board of Directors
**Jessica Miller Tomlinson** - Sr. Company Member, Thodos Dance Chicago
**Robert W. Karr, Jr.** – President, Project 120
About Thodos Dance Chicago

Thodos Dance Chicago (TDC) is an ensemble of twelve versatile dance artists with a captivating style that uses a variety of dance forms. The company’s unique mission of inspiring expression through dance education, dance creation and dance performance has established TDC as an innovative presence in American contemporary dance.

In addition to performing works by Melissa Thodos and resident artists, TDC performs works created by other renowned choreographers: Bob Fosse, Ann Reinking, Sybil Shearer, Lar Lubovitch, Shapiro & Smith, Jon Lehrer, Garfield Lemonius, Zachary Whittenburg, Lucas Crandall, Brian Enos, Amy Ernst, Ron De Jesús, Gustafo Ramirez Sansano, Ahmad Simmons and KT Nelson.

Thodos Dance Chicago continues to expand its artistic and institutional boundaries under the guidance of Founder and Artistic Director Melissa Thodos, Executive Director Gail Ford, Board President Sharon Lear, and a dedicated Board of Directors and the support of thousands of contemporary dance enthusiasts both in Chicago and nationwide.

Thodos Dance Company is supported by the Sono and Victor Elmaleh Foundation, The Garden of the Phoenix Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council – a state agency, Target, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, The Arts Work Fund, The Morrison-Shearer Foundation, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, The Service Club of Chicago, Project 120, the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events and many individual and corporate sponsors. For more information, visit ThodosDanceChicago.org.

Performance and Ticket Information

Saturday, January 9, 2016 | 7:30 p.m. | Auditorium Theatre

Tickets start at $28 and are available at AuditoriumTheatre.org, by calling 312.341.2300, or in-person at the Auditorium Theatre’s Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy). Discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more are also available.


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. 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.

# # #