On January 13 and 14, 2018, the Auditorium Theatre presents the 13th annual performance of Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah. Traditionally held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend, Too Hot celebrates Dr. King's message of "beloved community." The show features acclaimed soloists Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke, and Karen Marie Richardson; legendary Detroit pianist Alvin Waddles; a choir of over 100 members led by Bill Fraher, director of concert choirs at Old St. Patrick's Church; a chamber orchestra conducted by Suzanne Mallare Acton, the assistant music director at Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit, MI; and a world-class jazz band featuring electric bass, electric guitar, string bass, and more. Too Hot, which was originally conceived by conductor Marin Alsop and arranged by Bob Christianson and Gary Anderson, puts a twist on George Frideric Handel's classic oratorio, infusing the music with jazz, gospel, rock, and blues.
"I saw *Too Hot* last season for the first time, and it was one of the most joyous, uplifting performances I have ever experienced," says **Tania Castroverde Moskalenko**, Auditorium Theatre CEO. "When everyone starts clapping and singing along to the 'Hallelujah!' chorus, it is truly a heart-warming moment."

For the second consecutive year, the Auditorium Theatre is streaming the Sunday production of *Too Hot* to multiple correctional facilities around Illinois, in addition to facilities in Wisconsin and Louisiana. Working with Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, the program is expanding to three new facilities this year: the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center in Chicago, IL; Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center in Union Grove, WI (an all-women facility); and the Illinois Youth Center in Warrenville, IL. Danville Correctional Center in Danville, IL; Lawrence Correctional Center in Sumner, IL; the Lake County Adult Corrections Facility in Waukegan, IL; and the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, LA, are participating in the streaming program for the second time (please note that participating facilities are subject to change).

"As The Theatre for the People, one of our main tenets is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience the healing power of the performing arts," says Castroverde Moskalenko. "We are so excited to make this show available to the men, women, and youth in these facilities and give them the chance to engage with the powerful messages of *Too Hot* and Dr. King's concept of 'beloved community.'"

**Creative Engagement Activities – Media invited to cover these inspiring events**

In addition to the weekend performances of *Too Hot*, the Auditorium Theatre offers an hour-long **Student Matinee** performance on Friday, January 12, 2018 at 11AM for students in grades K-12.

Students from across the Chicagoland area are invited to participate in a citywide **poetry contest**, submitting poems in response to the prompt, "These are the sounds of my community." Winners' poems are published in the *Too Hot* performance programs, and each winner receives four tickets to a *Too Hot* performance. The deadline to submit poems is December 15, 2017.

The theatre also offers a one-day music workshop, which gives students the opportunity to explore the music of *Too Hot* and reflect on their own abilities to contribute their voices and talents to their own communities; a five-class music residency that connects the music of *Too Hot* to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s vision of "beloved community"; and an eight-class poetry residency that gives students the opportunity to create and perform their own poems based on Dr. King’s message, the music and lyrics of *Too Hot*, and their own personal experiences.

On January 10, 2018, the theatre hosts a *Too Hot* Master Class, which offers select Chicagoland choirs the chance to work with *Too Hot* stars Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke, along with conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton. **Applications** are due December 1, 2017.

**EXELON – Presenting Sponsor | ALLSTATE – Educational Outreach Sponsor | CIBC – Student Matinee Sponsor | THE ROBERT THOMAS BOBINS FOUNDATION – Student Matinee Sponsor | WILLIAM AND SHELLEY FARLEY – Video Enhancement Sponsors | DUSABLE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY – Community Partner**

Additional support provided by **FRIENDS OF TOO HOT**

**Performance Information**

*Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*

Friday, January 12 | 11AM – **One hour student matinee performance**
Saturday, January 13 | 7:30PM
Sunday, January 14 | 3PM

Tickets start at $29 and are available online at AuditoriumTheatre.org, by phone at 312.341.2300, or in person at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (50 E Congress Parkway). Student Matinee tickets (for K-12 groups of 10+) are $10 and are available now at 312.341.2357. *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* may be added to the Auditorium Theatre’s **Select Your Own subscription**, discounted at 20-25%. Discounts available for **groups of 10+**.
Auditorium Theatre’s 2017-18 Season Upcoming Performances

November 17: Ella & Lena: The Ladies and Their Music
November 18: The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses
November 21: Mayday
December 1-30: The Joffrey Ballet – The Nutcracker
January 13-14: Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah
January 27: Pedro Fernández
February 7-18: The Joffrey Ballet – Modern Masters
March 3-4: Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo – La Belle
March 7-11: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
March 14: VIVID 2018: CCPA Annual Showcase
March 23-24: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago

About The Auditorium Theatre

The Auditorium Theatre, located at 50 E Congress Pkwy in Chicago, is an Illinois, not-for-profit organization committed to presenting the finest in international, cultural, community, and educational programming to all of Chicago and beyond as The Theatre for the People. The organization also is committed to the continued restoration and preservation of the National Historic Landmark.

The Auditorium Theatre 2017-18 Season is made possible in part with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Palmer House Hilton. Michigan Avenue is the official magazine sponsor. For more information about programming, volunteer, and donor opportunities or theatre tours, call 312.341.2310 or visit AuditoriumTheatre.org. For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click here.