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THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE PRESENTS THE 11TH ANNUAL
TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH

Annual Weekend Celebration Honoring the Life and Legacy of Civil Rights Icon,
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 16 and 17, 2016

CHICAGO — The Auditorium Theatre presents its annual King Holiday celebration performances of Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah on Saturday, January 16 and 17, 2016. The exuberant reinvention of George Frideric Handel’s Messiah comes in the form of a vibrant mix of Jazz, Gospel, Blues, Swing, Classical and Scat, featuring soloists Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke and Karen Marie Richardson. Ticket prices start at $29 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).

“Too Hot to Handel has become a King Holiday tradition for many Chicago families, and centers on Dr. King’s global vision of a ‘beloved community’ that embraces the philosophy of change through non-violence,” said Auditorium Theatre Board of Trustees Chairman Charlie Gardner. “In a time where violence continues to plague our great city, we are proud to present a celebration that promotes a positive and unified community through music.”

The conductor for Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah’s 50-piece symphony orchestra and jazz ensemble is Suzanne Mallare Acton, who serves as Artistic and Music Director of Detroit’s Rackham Symphony Choir and Choral Master for the Michigan Opera Theatre. The 100-member Too Hot to Handel choir is directed by Old St. Patrick’s Director of Concert Choirs Bill Fraher. The show also prominently features renowned pianist Alvin Waddles, whose “culminating solo stands as a high point of the evening” (Chicago Tribune).

Originally conceived in 1992 by Music Director Marin Alsop and arranged by Bob Christianson and Gary Anderson, Too Hot to Handel first premiered at the Little Rock Baptist Church in Detroit, earning a reputation for its lively vocals and communal revelry. In January of 2006, the Rackham Symphony Choir combined forces with the Too Hot Choir for the show’s Auditorium Theatre premiere in January of 2006. In recent years, the show has been enhanced through a large high-definition screen that captures both the performers and audience members during the concert.

Community Engagement

In conjunction with the Too Hot to Handel performances, the Auditorium Theatre’s Department of Creative Engagement utilizes innovative educational programs to engage Chicago Public Schools and other Chicago community students and other Chicago community organizations in the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the power of music and community.

Student Matinee Performance

The Student Matinee will be held on Friday, January 15 at 11 a.m. and features a one-hour excerpt from Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah, and is open to any student in grades...
kindergarten through 12th. Tickets are $10 and are available at 312.341.2357 or sales@auditoriumtheatre.org.

Choral Festival

The Auditorium Theatre presents its 2nd Annual Too Hot to Handel Choral Festival on Wednesday, January 13. The festival is an all-encompassing residency that incorporates choral music and celebrates Dr. King’s vision of unification and communal prosperity. Each choir will prepare and perform two choral pieces of their choice as well as the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Too Hot to Handel, and will then receive feedback and suggested performance improvements from Too Hot conductor, Suzanne Mallare Acton.

Two or three soloists from each choir have the opportunity to perform a selection of their choice from the jazz, classical or Broadway repertoire and work with Too Hot soloists, Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke on vocal technique and performance practice.

Within the festival day, choirs will be treated to a private tour of the National Historic Landmark Auditorium Theatre. They will also have the opportunity to learn more about Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts music conservatory, one of the earliest conservatories founded in the United States, and gain insights to preparing for and maintaining a vibrant career in the arts.

For more information on the Choral Festival, contact Christina Bourne, Director of Creative Engagement, at cbourne@auditoriumtheatre.org or 312.341.2353.

Poetry Contest

For the 9th consecutive year, the Auditorium Theatre hosts a poetry contest with Chicago Public School students in grades 3rd through 12th, surrounding the topic of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s philosophy of beloved community. Students are asked to write 3 to 12 line poems addressing the questions, What is community? and What does “beloved community” mean to you? The poetry contest grand prize and runner-up will receive 4 complimentary tickets to a performance and then recite their poem on the Auditorium Theatre’s legendary stage.

Entries must be sent via mail to Auditorium Theatre, Attn: THTH Poetry contest, 50 E. Congress Pkwy, Chicago, IL 60605, postmarked by Friday, December 18, 2015.

Poetry Residency

The Auditorium Theatre offers CPS classes in grades 3rd through 12th free poetry residencies that run from December through February. By exploring the ways Dr. King and others use words to create an emotional impact on their listeners, students discover how they can use their individual voices to create “sounds of non-violence” and affect positive change. Over the course of nine one-hour sessions, students work to create and perform poems based on their knowledge of Dr. King and their experiences within their own communities.

For more information on CPS Poetry Residencies, contact Christina Bourne, Director of Creative Engagement, at cbourne@auditoriumtheatre.org or 312.341.2353.

Music and Visual Arts Workshop (One-day)

The Auditorium Theatre offers CPS classes in grades 3rd through 8th a free one-hour music and visual arts workshop that explores Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s advocacy of cooperative non-violence as a means of social change through the music of Too Hot to Handel. Like the musicians
in the performance, students will be empowered to positively change the sound of their communities by creating a piece of visual art symbolizing their commitment to positive self-expression.

For more information on the CPS music and visual arts workshop, contact Christina Bourne, Director of Creative Engagement, at cbourne@auditoriumtheatre.org or 312.341.2353.

Music Residency (One-week)

The Auditorium Theatre offers CPS classes in grades 3rd through 8th a free one-week music residency focusing on the music of Too Hot to Handel. Students will examine Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.‘s vision of the “beloved community” while gaining a basic understanding of musical composition.

For more information on CPS Music Residency, contact Christina Bourne, Director of Creative Engagement, at cbourne@auditoriumtheatre.org or 312.341.2353.

Too Hot to Handel - The Music and Message of the Jazz-Gospel Messiah

Lecture Demonstration

Thursday, January 7, 2016 | 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. | Buchanan Chapel (126 E. Chestnut St.)

In conjunction with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Northwestern University and the Center for Life and Learning at Fourth Presbyterian Church, Too Hot to Handel soloists Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke will take an in-depth look at the message of Too Hot to Handel by analyzing and singing the lyrics and exploring why it is a fitting tribute for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday celebration.

To register for free, please click here.

The Beloved Community: Restoring a Dream Deferred

Panel Discussion

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 | 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. | Roosevelt University (430 S. Michigan)

A panel of academic, social, and religious leaders will engage in a candid discussion about the issues afflicting our communities and how Dr. King’s vision of the “beloved community” can still be achieved.

Panelists Include:

Baraka de Soleil - Creative Practitioner and Community Engagement Consultant
Dr. Reggie Williams - Assistant Professor of Ethics, McCormick Theological Seminary

Additional panelists will be announced at a later date.

To register for free, please click here.

Too Hot to Handel Sponsors

The Presenting Sponsor of Too Hot to Handel is Exelon. The Educational Outreach Partner is Allstate. Video enhancements are made possible through the generosity of William and Shelley Farley. Additional support is provided by Friends of Too Hot to Handel. The Auditorium
Theatre’s Student Matinee series is sponsored by The Private Bank and The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation. Additional media support is provided by Chicago Jazz Magazine.

**Performance and Ticket Information**

Friday, January 15, 2016 | 11 a.m. | Auditorium Theatre (1-hour Student Matinee Performance*)
Saturday, January 16, 2016 | 7:30 p.m. | Auditorium Theatre
Sunday, January 17, 2016 | 3 p.m. | Auditorium Theatre

Tickets start at $29 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 subscriptions and tickets for groups of 10 or more are also available.

*Student Matinee tickets are $10 each, and are available at 312.341.2357 or sales@auditoriumtheatre.org.

The 2015 – 2016 Auditorium Theatre Season also includes Thodos Dance Chicago, January 9; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, March 8 – 13, 2016; Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal – Leonce and Lena, April 1 – 3, 2016; Chicago Rhythm Fest, June 4; and Giordano Dance Chicago, June 11, 2016. For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click here.

**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.

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