

CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE'
AUDITORIUM THEATRE EST. 1889
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THE THEATRE FOR THE PEOPLE
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**AUDITORIUM
THEATRE**
of ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

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AuditoriumTheatre.org

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AUDITORIUM THEATRE YEAR IN REVIEW



It's been a big year for the Auditorium Theatre. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the theatre's grand re-opening with dancers from companies including **American Ballet Theatre**, **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, and **New York City Ballet**, among many others; hosted, along with Roosevelt University, the incomparable **Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg** for an enlightening conversation; reveled in great vocal performances by **Kathleen Battle**, **Bernadette Peters**, **Joan Curto**, **E. Faye Butler**, and the stars of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*; and highlighted the best in local Chicago dance with our "Made in Chicago" Dance Series, featuring **Ensemble Español**, **Giordano Dance Chicago**, and **Thodos Dance Chicago**.

This year, in addition to our presenting series, we also had the pleasure of hosting **Chance the Rapper** for the #BBBash following the annual Bud Biliken Parade; former Secretary of State and presidential candidate **Hillary Clinton** on her tour for her new book *What Happened?*; a **Concert for America** that featured Broadway legend **Chita Rivera**, cast members from Chicago's *Hamilton*, and Chicago blues icon **Lynne Jordan**; rock stars **Nick Cave** and **Father John Misty**; humor writer and essayist **David Sedaris**; the slam poetry competition **Louder Than a Bomb**; and much more. As always, we were thrilled to welcome back resident company **The Joffrey Ballet**.

The founders of the Auditorium wanted the theatre to serve as a place for Chicagoans from all across the city to come together under one roof. We are pleased to serve this vision today by hosting such an incredible variety of events, from dance to slam poetry to rock shows, reflecting the diversity of Chicago itself and showcasing why the Auditorium Theatre truly is **The Theatre for the People**.

Take a look back at the events that we presented in 2017!

TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH **JANUARY 14 and 15**

The Auditorium Theatre hosted the 12th annual presentation of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*, celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with this twist on Handel's classic oratorio. Audience members were inspired to stand up, dance, and sing along with soloists **Rodrick Dixon**, **Alfreda Burke**, and **Karen Marie Richardson** and the 100-person choir, led by **Bill Fraher** of Old St. Patrick's Church. Legendary pianist **Alvin Waddles** showed off his skills with a rousing medley that featured a tribute to Prince and a snippet of "Go, Cubs, Go" to celebrate the newly-crowned World Champions. By the time the famous "Hallelujah!" chorus came around, it was impossible not to feel inspired. Over 1,700 Chicagoland-area students were able to experience the joy of *Too Hot* with a special Student Matinee performance on January 13.

"At a time of increasing polarization, tension and mistrust in American society, endeavors like Too Hot To Handel become essential to heal our wounds and reaffirm the shared values of our common humanity." – Picture This Post

For the first time, the Auditorium Theatre partnered with the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church to live-stream the Sunday matinee performance of *Too Hot* to four correctional facilities: Lake County Adult Corrections Facility in Waukegan, IL; Danville Correctional Center in Danville, IL; Lawrence Correctional Center in Sumner, IL; and the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, LA.

"One by one, more and more prisoners gathered around a flat-screen TV, drawn there by sounds they never had heard inside these walls: The thunder of a massive chorus, orchestra and jazz band transforming Handel's 'Messiah.'" – Chicago Tribune

JACKIE CHAN'S LONG YUN KUNG FU TROUPE FROM BEIJING **FEBRUARY 4**

Jackie Chan's Long Yun Kung Fu Troupe from Beijing rang in the Chinese New Year with an electrifying display of heart-stopping artistry and athleticism, combining traditional Chinese dance and kung fu in one exhilarating night. The multidisciplinary members of the Long Yun troupe were each hand-picked by **Jackie Chan** himself.

"Audience members were taken on what can only be described as an epic journey ... If Long Yun Kung Fu Troupe from Beijing can share a small piece of China (past and present) with international audiences in a fun and accessible way, while affording young people the chance to make a living as artists, that seems like a win-win." – Chicago Tribune

THODOS DANCE CHICAGO – FULL CIRCLE | MARCH 11

In its final company performance, Thodos Dance Chicago brought everything "full circle." The evening featured the Chicago premiere of iconic choreographer **Bella Lewitzky's** *Nos Duraturi*; company member **Briana Robinson's** *Uncovering*; **Brian Enos' Acid Reign**; and company founder and artistic director **Melissa Thodos' Changing Strangers**. The performance ended with the world premiere of Thodos' *There*, the last piece in her signature *The Wheel Trilogy*, which also featured *Reaching There* (1986) and *Getting There* (2011).

"Thodos' Changing Strangers is a solid representation of the choreographer's ability to build beautiful dance phrases, and Enos' Acid Reign shows off the dancers' ability to shift moment to moment between jazz and contemporary dance." – Chicago Tribune

'Full Circle was meant to act as the culmination of the last twenty-five years, and the evolution of The Wheel Trilogy brought that all together in a thrilling conclusion to the night.'
– Picture This Post

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER | MARCH 22-26

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater continued its decades-long tradition of performing at the Auditorium Theatre with six riveting performances featuring Chicago premieres of **Mauro Bigonzetti's** *Deep*, set to music by the duo **Ibeyi**; company member **Hope Boykin's** *r-Evolution, Dream.*, inspired by the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and featuring narration from *Hamilton's* Leslie Odom, Jr.; and **Kyle Abraham's** *Untitled America*, which details the impact of incarceration on families and individuals. The company also performed **Alvin Ailey's** *Masekela Langage*, **Billy Wilson's** *The Winter in Lisbon*, **John Inger's** *Walking Mad*, **Christopher Wheeldon's** *After the Rain Pas de Deux*, and artistic director **Robert Battle's** *Ella* and *In/Side*. Each performance ended with Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations*. The company also presented two one-hour Student Matinee performances, featuring Ailey's *Night Creature* and excerpts from *Revelations*, to over 4,400 students.

"Talk about electrifying. The arrival of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for its annual Spring season at the Auditorium Theatre is invariably a reason to celebrate. But the company's opening night program on Wednesday felt more electrifying than ever." – Chicago Sun-Times

"The company's annual appearance is a Chicago dance tradition, if we ever had one, and a testament to the importance of this predominantly African-American contemporary dance company." – Chicago Tribune

THE BOSTON POPS ESPLANADE ORCHESTRA WITH BERNADETTE PETERS | MARCH 31

Led by conductor **Keith Lockhart**, the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra returned to the Auditorium Theatre for a program that featured George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* as well as a world premiere of a reconstructed version of his *An American in Paris*. The orchestra was joined in the second half of the program by legendary vocalist **Bernadette Peters**, performing a mix of American classics and Broadway hits like "Fever" and "Let Me Entertain You."

"The first act of the evening had the Boston Pops masterfully playing some of George Gershwin's renowned compositions, which was a lovely lead-up to Ms. Peters's second half ... With every beat onstage and every note she sang, Ms. Peters proved her greatness and cemented her mark as a Broadway master." – PerformInk

EIFMAN BALLET OF ST. PETERSBURG – RED GISELLE | MAY 19-21

Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg returned to the Auditorium Theatre with *Red Giselle*, a dramatic, mesmerizing work by company founder and artistic director **Boris Eifman**. *Red Giselle* interprets the tragic story of Olga Spessivtseva, a famous Russian ballerina who was consumed by the role of Giselle in the classic story ballet.

"Red Giselle is a psychological thriller of epic proportions, ambitious in scale and boasting masterful execution of incredibly difficult choreography." – Chicago Tribune

"Not only did Eifman create a brilliant story to tell on the stage, but he also chose a magnificent team of artists to produce his work. Each dancer was so obviously emotionally connected to his or her performance." – Chicago Stage Standard

GIORDANO DANCE CHICAGO | JUNE 10

Giordano Dance Chicago brought its high-energy performance style to the stage to close out the Auditorium's 2016-17 Season. The evening featured the world premiere of company dancer **Joshua Blake Carter's** *Before My Eyes*, concluding Carter's time as a dancer in the company before he moved into an administrative role; **Liz Imperio's** electric *Lost in This World*; **Autumn Eckman's** *commonthread*; **Roni Koresh's** *EXit4*; **Jon Lehrer's** *A Ritual Dynamic*; and *Grusin Suite* by River North Dance Chicago's **Frank Chaves**.

"Giordano Dance Chicago brought an electric evening of dynamic dance to its audience." – Chicago Stage Standard

"Beautiful choreography and aesthetically striking made this performance a strong finish for the company's 54th season." – Picture This Post

THE VIETNAM WAR – AN EVENING WITH KEN BURNS AND LYNN NOVICK | SEPTEMBER 7

Acclaimed documentarian **Ken Burns** and his filmmaking partner **Lynn Novick** previewed their new ten-part series *The Vietnam War*, which premiered in September. Presented in partnership with WTTW, the evening featured a discussion between the two filmmakers, moderated by Chicago Tonight correspondent Paris Schutz.

"The Vietnam War promises to be thought-provoking even as it will stir the viewer to anger, joy, sadness, hope and closure. Snippets from each of the episodes gave the audience a peek at goals of the project, the enormity of its focus." – Picture This Post

A CONVERSATION WITH JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG SEPTEMBER 11

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg spoke in conversation with **Judge Ann Claire Williams** as part of Roosevelt University's American Dream Reconsidered Conference. At this sold-out event, the two discussed Justice Ginsburg's extraordinary life and career, including her work with the American Civil Liberties Union and the early hardships she faced as a woman in the legal profession.

"The event took on a festive atmosphere with standing ovations and loud cheers. One young girl dressed as Wonder Woman. Two women wore T-shirts featuring all three female Supreme Court justices with the caption 'Squad Goals.'" – The Associated Press

"The Supreme Court's most cultishly beloved Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the Notorious RBG herself, was in vintage form on Monday night, when she spoke in front of a packed, noticeably amped crowd at Roosevelt University's Auditorium Theatre." – Chicagoist

SHEN WEI DANCE ARTS | SEPTEMBER 23-24

New York-based contemporary dance company Shen Wei Dance Arts made its Chicago debut with two works by company founder and artistic director **Shen Wei**. *Rite of Spring*, set to the traditional Stravinsky piece of the same name, provided a fresh perspective on the classic score. *Folding*, Shen's signature work, was meditative and somber, with dancers gliding their way across the floor to music by John Tavener and Tibetan Buddhist chants.

"Filled with visceral and visual delights." – Chicago Tribune

"Shen Wei Dance Arts made its debut Chicago performance this weekend, and gave dance fans a lot to murmur and exclaim over." – Chicago Stage Standard

KATHLEEN BATTLE – UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY | SEPTEMBER 30

Legendary soprano **Kathleen Battle** made her Auditorium Theatre debut with *Underground Railroad: A Spiritual Journey*, a powerful program of spirituals inspired by the Underground Railroad, including "Fix Me, Jesus," and "Wade in the Water." Joined by an all-star chorus made up of Chicago's best choral talent, Battle transfixed audiences with her signature high notes and engaging stage presence.

"The concert was quite the amazing journey to witness." – Splash Magazines

"The evening was one for the books." – The Chicago Moms

ENSEMBLE ESPAÑOL SPANISH DANCE THEATER | OCTOBER 6

Ensemble Español brought its fiery, passionate blend of contemporary, classical, and folkloric dance to the Auditorium Theatre for an exhilarating performance. The evening featured the company's newest work, *Defalla, Fuera de la Caja*, choreographed by **Angel Rojas** and inspired by the classic ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat*, first performed at the Auditorium in the 1930s by the Ballet Russes de Monte-Carlo. Other works performed included company founder **Dame Libby Komaiko's** masterpiece *Bolero* and her piece *Ecós de España*, plus Rojas and **Carlos Rodriguez's** contemporary ballet *Iroko*. Over 2,300 students learned about Spanish dance at a Student Matinee with the educational performance *Tales of Spain*.

"The seething drama at the heart of flamenco, Spain's signature dance emblem, carried the day in Ensemble Español's triumphant program at the Auditorium Theatre on Friday night in a fitting season opener for the Auditorium's 'Made In Chicago' series." – See Chicago Dance

A GOLDEN CELEBRATION OF DANCE: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE'S RE-OPENING | NOVEMBER 12

The Auditorium Theatre celebrated the 50th anniversary of the theatre's grand re-opening with a spectacular night of dance, featuring performers from **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet West, Berlin State Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, MOMIX, New York City Ballet, Parsons Dance, San Francisco Ballet, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, Vienna State Ballet, and The Washington Ballet**. The evening commemorated the theatre's grand re-opening following a 26-year closure in 1967, when New York City Ballet performed George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Edward Villella** and **Suzanne Farrell**, who starred in the production in 1967, served as honorary co-chairs for A Golden Celebration of Dance. Villella opened the evening by recalling that special night in 1967, noting that out of all the venues at which he performed, the Auditorium stood out for its magnificence.

"Fifty years later, Chicago is a flourishing mecca for the performing arts, supported by a dance-loving mayor and places like the Auditorium Theatre, a shining example of arts venues presenting cherished classics alongside innovative programming and community engagement activities." – Chicago Tribune

"[Every] piece was an absolute wonder to see." – PerformInk

ELLA & LENA: THE LADIES AND THEIR MUSIC | NOVEMBER 17

Popular Chicago vocalist **Joan Curto**, joined by **E. Faye Butler, Beckie Menzie, Tammy McCann, Paul Marinaro, Tom Michael, and Sophie Grimm**, commemorated the centennials of two icons, **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Lena Horne**. The program featured songs that each woman truly made her own, from "The Lady is a Tramp" to "It Don't Mean a Thing." **Rich Daniels and the City Lights Orchestra** provided live music for the evening.

"No wonder the Auditorium Theatre was packed on Friday night ... In the end, this was the rare musical retrospective that honored its subjects without being overwhelmed by them." – Chicago Tribune

MORE 2017 AUDITORIUM THEATRE EVENTS:

The Joffrey Ballet – Game Changers | February 15-26

Varsity Vocals | March 3-4

Aida Cuevas and Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan | March 17

Louder Than a Bomb | March 18

Concert for America | March 20

Roosevelt University's VIVID | March 30

#RESIST: Naomi Klein and Michelle Alexander in Conversation | May 9

Jean-Michel Jarre | May 22
The Joffrey Ballet – Global Visionaries | April 26-May 7
International Mr. Leather | May 27
Sigur Ros | June 3
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds | June 16
Air | June 20
Ballet Folklorico de la Universidad de Colima | June 24
Chance the Rapper | August 12
Dance for Life | August 19
Jonathan Lee | September 19
Father John Misty | September 20
The Joffrey Ballet – *Giselle* | October 18-29
Hillary Clinton Live | October 30
David Sedaris | November 1
The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses | November 18
Mayday | November 21
The Joffrey Ballet – *The Nutcracker* | December 1-30



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](#).

Bernadette Peters and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, photo by Winslow Townson. | Kathleen Battle. | Chance the Rapper. | Brooklyn Mack and Koto Ishihara, photo by Kristie Kahns. | Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, photo by Paul Kolnik. | Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, photo courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States. | Hillary Clinton. | Concert for America, photo courtesy of Concert for America.



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