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THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE OF ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 125TH ANNIVERSARY DURING 2014 – 2015 SEASON

First Lady, Mrs. Michelle Obama, to Serve as Honorary Chair, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Amy Rule to Serve as Honorary Co-Chairs for the Anniversary Season

Celebratory Season Includes a World-Class International Dance Series Featuring the Auditorium Theatre Debut of Britain’s world-renowned The Royal Ballet and the Triumphant Return of Dance Theatre of Harlem; Three “Made in Chicago” Series; and Special Community Engagement Programming Throughout the Year

CHICAGO, IL — The National Historic Landmark Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, led by Executive Director Brett Batterson and Board Chairman Melvin L. Katten, celebrates the milestone 125th Anniversary and announces programming for 2014 – 15 Season.

Built in 1889 by the pioneering genius of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, along with their young draftsman Frank Lloyd Wright, the Auditorium Theatre, often referred to as “the eighth wonder of the world,” would catapult Chicago onto the world’s stage driving both culture and tourism to the Windy City.

In honor of the momentous anniversary, the Auditorium Theatre is thrilled to announce First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Michelle Obama, as the Honorary Chair for this historic season-long celebration; Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Amy Rule will serve as Honorary Co-chairs. Co-chairs for the 125th Anniversary Season include Norm and Virginia Bobins, Steve and Nancy Crown, Jorge and Catrina Ramirez, Mike and Beth Reese, Jim and Sandy Reynolds, Jack and Carole Sandner, Ed and Dia Weil and Wilco’s Jeff Tweedy with wife Sue Miller.

"On behalf of all Chicagoans, we are thrilled to celebrate the Auditorium Theatre’s 125th birthday," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “This national historic landmark is representative of our rich history in the arts as well as the unique Chicago architecture styles that have influenced American building structures for generations. The Auditorium Theatre continues to make Chicago a leader in the arts and culture today, and I wish the theatre nothing but good fortunes in the coming years.”

At the time of its opening in 1889, the Auditorium Building was the epitome of modern design, the largest structure in the United States and the tallest in Chicago. It housed not only the glorious Auditorium Theatre, but also a luxurious 400-room hotel and 136 offices. The theatre itself was a marvel of cutting-edge technology, featuring the prominent display of an astounding 3,500 bare carbon filament light bulbs (only publicly seen for the first time in 1879), unrivalled acoustics, air conditioning (which called for the delivery of 15 tons of ice daily), 26 hydraulic lifts that could easily raise and lower sections of the stage, and an expansive 95-foot loft above the stage for flown scenic elements. During the grand opening night of the theatre, attendee President Benjamin Harrison was evidently so impressed that he was rumored to have whispered to Vice President Levi P. Morton, “New York surrenders, eh?”
The Auditorium Theatre played a key role in Chicago’s honor to host the 1893 Columbian Exposition, which, in turn, helped to make Chicago the city it is today. Local civic leaders in Chicago were vying with those in St. Louis, New York City and Washington DC to host a fair that could reestablish Chicago as a solid destination for travel and commerce. The international sensation brought about by the opening of the Auditorium was seen by Congress as an indication that the people of Chicago possessed the vision, forethought, work ethic, and financing to successfully produce a world-renowned fair. These factors also led to the Auditorium Theatre becoming one of the finest venues in the world to present first-class entertainment and was the first home to some of the greatest performance institutions including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Grand Opera Company.

“The Auditorium’s 125th Anniversary Season showcases the incredible diversity and scope that has graced this historic landmark stage for 125 years,” said Auditorium Theatre Executive Director Brett Batterson. “When the doors of the Auditorium Theatre opened in 1889, the world was not expecting the grandeur that came along with Adler and Sullivan’s pioneering design and insightful forward-thinking. What the people of Chicago as well as the rest of the world received, was a historic space where anything could happen. From National Conventions to stunning theatrical performances, breathtaking ballet to the most heart-pounding rock concerts, this building has seen a little bit of everything and true history lives within the intricate walls that are sure to house another 125 years of extraordinary talent and mesmerizing performances.”

The Anniversary Season pays homage to the extraordinary caliber of dance over the past 125 years with the return of The Royal Ballet to Chicago after a 37-year absence from Chicago. Led by Director Kevin O'Hare, the company will present Carlos Acosta’s production of “Don Quixote.”

“I am delighted to bring The Royal Ballet back to Chicago as part of our US Tour in 2015,” said O'Hare. “The Company has a long history of performing in North America and we’ve always been made to feel very welcome by our American audiences. The Royal Ballet hasn't visited Chicago since 1978 so the program we plan to bring is designed to showcase the depth of the company’s repertory and the talent of our dancers led by our world-class roster of principals. We are honored to be part of such a special season at the Auditorium Theatre.”

In November 2014, Dance Theatre of Harlem makes a triumphant return to the Auditorium Theatre after 16 years, bringing innovative and bold new forms of artistic expression with a mixed repertoire performance.

"The Auditorium Theatre was one of my favorite places to perform when I was a dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem," said Artistic Director Virginia Johnson. "Now, as Artistic Director, it is a thrill and honor to bring the new Dance Theatre of Harlem to Chicago and the Auditorium, particularly as part of its 125th Anniversary celebration."

Highlighting the Anniversary celebration is a special Gala performance on December 9, 2014, exactly 125 years from when the Auditorium Theatre’s doors opened in 1889. The evening will feature Broadway legend Patti LuPone, as well as host Chicago’s premiere cultural institutions including members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, singers from the Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as The Apollo Chorus (who participated in the opening night of the theatre 125 years ago). These world-renowned organizations celebrate the rich history and emulate the opening night that originally put Chicago on the world’s stage. The evening’s program will include a tribute to the diverse entertainment that has been and continues to be presented at the theatre.
including Broadway, Pop, Rock, Dance and a special salute to the Military, which made its home at the Auditorium during wartime. The Gala performance will be followed by a celebrity dinner at the Palmer House.

2014 – 15 Season Programming

Highlighting both International and Chicago talent, the Anniversary season features the International Dance Series with seven announced world-class dance companies including The Royal Ballet and Dance Theatre of Harlem; the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series, presenting Chicago’s premiere dance companies; the “Made in Chicago” Music Series; and a free “Made in Chicago” Film Series dedicated to Chicago films. The theatre will also present Special Community Outreach programming including the Preservation Snapshots Lecture Series, an in-depth architectural lecture series in collaboration with Landmarks Illinois; and many more collaborations with Chicago’s premiere cultural institutions throughout the season.

International Dance Series

In addition to The Royal Ballet Theatre (June 18 – 21, 2015) and Dance Theatre of Harlem (November 21 – 23, 2014) the Auditorium Theatre’s 2014 – 15 Season includes the return of American Ballet Theatre October 3 – 5, 2014. Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie brings an eclectic mixed repertoire to the Auditorium stage including “Bach Partida” and “Sinatra Suite” by Twyla Tharp, “Some Assembly Required” by Clark Tippet, and “Fancy Free” by Jerome Robbins. Winter receives a heat-wave when Tango Buenos Aires makes a one-night-only stop in the Windy City on January 25, 2015. Georgina Vargas and Oscar Mandagaran, recognized as one of the best tango couples on the international level, bring their sensual passion to the Auditorium stage with “Song of Eva Perón,” a Tango dance and music performance inspired by the most important feminine character in Argentinian history. Making their Chicago debut, Grupo Corpo, led by Artistic Director Paulo Pederneiras and Choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras, will bring two innovative, enthralling pieces to the Auditorium February 28 and March 1, 2015. Melding traditional Brazilian dance with western contemporary movement, Grupo Corpo presents “Sem Mim” as well as “Onqotô.”

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, a perennial Chicago favorite, returns to the Auditorium March 6 – 15, 2015. “America’s Cultural Ambassador to the World,” celebrates the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of American modern dance while bringing audiences to their feet at every performance. After unveiling their innovative portrayal of “Rodin” during the Auditorium’s 2012 – 13 Season, Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg returns May 8 – 10, 2015 to debut the American premiere of “Tender is the Night” based on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s famous novel. Led by visionary choreographer Boris Eifman, the company continues to push the limits of contemporary ballet and is hailed by the “The Financial Times” as “the dance equivalent of a guilty pleasure.”

“Made in Chicago” Dance Series

Paying tribute to the abundant amount of talent within the Chicago dance community, the Auditorium Theatre announces the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series. Performing a special ode to the Windy City, Thodos Dance Chicago performs an innovative rendition of “Devil in the White City” in addition to a mixed repertoire program on November 29, 2014. Returning to the Auditorium stage after their “jolting” performance during the Auditorium’s MUSIC + MOVEMENT Festival, Giordano Dance Chicago brings a program of mixed repertoire including their critically acclaimed “Moving Sidewalks,” a piece about Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood on January 31, 2015. After stunning audiences with the world premiere of “Havana Blue” in 2013 and a mixed repertory program at the Auditorium in April 2014, River North Dance Chicago returns to showcase their
The Auditorium Theatre Announces 125th Anniversary Season – Updated: May 22, 2014
Page 4 of 5

athletic, sensual and dynamic repertoire on March 28, 2015. Concluding the “Made in Chicago” Dance Series and in celebration of National Tap Dance Day (NTDD), Chicago Human Rhythm Project (CHRP) creates “Chicago Rhythm Fest” featuring its resident ensemble BAM!, with Trinity Irish Dance Company, Mexican Dance Ensemble, Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago and Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater. This one-night-only performance on May 6, 2015 is part of a citywide celebration that will re-imagine CHRP’s inaugural Tap Dance Day concert performed 25 years ago.

“Made in Chicago” Music Series

Paying tribute to Chicago’s vibrant music scene, the “Made in Chicago” Music Series highlights the wide range of musical talent that can be found within all genres throughout the city. Susan Werner, an Auditorium Theatre favorite, will return for an intimate “On Stage With” performance allowing audiences to experience a performance while sitting on the actual landmark stage, November 8, 2014. Celebrating their own 10th Anniversary, Chicago Jazz Philharmonic (CJP) returns to the Auditorium Theatre November 14, 2014 with “CJP @ Ten,” a montage of favorite moments from past performances as well as new work representing the future of CJP. Also celebrating a special anniversary, “Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah”, returns to Chicago for its 10th year, once again paying tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The joyful, exuberant and all-American version of Handel’s beloved oratorio takes the stage with Chicago’s own Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke and Karen Marie Richardson on January 17 – 18, 2015. “His Way – Sinatra’s Centennial Celebration” will close the “Made in Chicago” Music Series on May 30, 2015. In honor of Frank Sinatra’s 100th birthday, to whom the production is dedicated, Ron Hawking revives one of Chicago’s longest running shows on the Auditorium Theatre’s historic stage along with the musical styling of the “His Way” Orchestra.

“Made in Chicago” Film Series

Paying homage to the movies that feature the great city of Chicago and its rich history, the Auditorium presents the free “Made in Chicago” Film Series. Chicagoans will enjoy selected movies in the beautiful environment of the landmark theatre and will also have the unique opportunity to participate in the selection process of films for certain screenings by voting on their favorite Chicago movies. Voting details and a full list of film choices will be available at a later date.

Auditorium Theatre’s 125th Anniversary Creative Engagement Programming

The Auditorium Theatre’s Department of Creative Engagement will launch a collection of free or low cost family and community programming for the city to enjoy throughout the 125th Anniversary Season celebration. Kicking off the educational programming, the Auditorium Theatre and Landmarks Illinois are currently presenting a free year-long series of lectures celebrating the architectural landscape of 1889 in Roosevelt University’s Murray-Green Library (430 S Michigan). Other highlights include a free Family Fun Day when the theatre open its doors for a day filled with arts activities and performances for the entire family. Celebrating Honorary Chair of the 125th Anniversary Season First Lady Michelle Obama’s fitness agenda “Let’s Move!,” the Auditorium presents Dance Fit Day urging and inspiring Chicagoans to get moving with dance focused fitness classes featuring Chicago based dance companies. Event dates to be announced.

For more information on the Auditorium Theatre’s 125th Anniversary Season, please visit AuditoriumTheatre.org/125.
Roosevelt University

Roosevelt University, which acquired the Auditorium Building in 1947, will celebrate three anniversaries in 2014 – 15: the 125th Anniversary of the building and theatre, the 70th Anniversary of the University and the 60th Anniversary of the University’s merger with the Chicago Musical College, now known as the Chicago College of Performing Arts (CCPA).

The University will celebrate with a lecture series commemorating Roosevelt’s restoration of the building and its founding faculty and students. Throughout its 2014-15 Season, CCPA will explore ways to reflect upon the Auditorium's history in programming by its theatre and music conservatories. In addition, CCPA’s annual musical highlight, “Vivid,” in April 2015, will feature music that has played an important part in the history of the Auditorium Theatre. “The Auditorium is clearly one of Chicago's treasures and we are pleased to join with them in celebrating this milestone,” said CCPA Dean Henry Fogel.

125th Anniversary Season Sponsors

The Auditorium Theatre would like to thank their 125th Anniversary Season Sponsors: Lead Corporate Sponsor Nicor Gas, Lead Foundation Sponsor Robert R. McCormick Foundation and David D. Hiller, International Dance Series Sponsor NIB Foundation, and “Made in Chicago” Dance Series sponsor The Boeing Company. Media sponsors include Chicago Magazine and WXRT, and 125th Gala Sponsors include Pasquinelli Family Foundation. Student Matinee Series Sponsors for the 2014-15 Season include The Private Bank and The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation.

Fundraising and Restoration Initiatives

Now in its 125th year, the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University celebrates its historic landmark status as a true symbol of the City of Chicago. With vast improvements already made, the Theatre continues to build upon the incredible framework that Adler and Sullivan designed 125 years ago. In order to maintain both the structure of the theatre as well as the commitment to the community both educationally and theatrically, a strong fundraising campaign has been set forth to celebrate the 125th Anniversary with a goal of $2 million, which will be split between programming and capital improvements. To date, over $1.5 million has already been raised!

Subscription Information

2014 - 15 Season Packages:

Subscribers save 30% off of single tickets. Subscription packages are on sale now by calling (312) 341-2357 or online at AuditoriumTheatre.org.

“Made in Chicago” Dance Series - Save 30% when you purchase tickets to Thodos Dance Chicago (November 29, 2014), Giordano Dance Chicago (January 31, 2015), River North Dance Chicago (March 28, 2015) and “Chicago Rhythm Fest” (May 6, 2015).

“Made in Chicago” Music Series - Save 30% when you purchase tickets to Chicago Jazz Philharmonic’s “CJP@10” (November 14, 2014), “Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah” (January 17 – 18, 2015) and “His Way” (May 30, 2015). “On Stage With...Susan Werner” (November 8, 2014) subscribers will receive $10 off per ticket.

Select Your Own Series - Save 15% when you create your own series by choosing at least four shows or 20% when you choose at least five shows in the 2014 -15 Season.

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. 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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