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**AUDITORIUM THEATRE'S NEW "BRAVE FACE PROJECT" SHINES LIGHT ON
WOMEN'S ROLES IN SOCIETY**

Collaborative Project Seeks to Share Real Women's Stories Culminating in New Work to
Close the 125th Anniversary Season

CHICAGO — As part of its milestone Anniversary Season, the [Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University](http://AuditoriumTheatreofRooseveltUniversity.com) presents the "**Brave Face Project**," a bold new endeavor aimed to shine light on women's roles in society. This innovative project seeks to examine the roots of societal expectations that have been set upon women and that are at times both unattainable and unrealistic. The project hopes to bring out the resilience needed to break free from the shame and stigma of those harsh expectations and allow women to move past the traditional stereotypes still plaguing them today. The project, led by Auditorium Theatre Director of Creative Engagement **Christina Bourné**, Chicago artist and arts education specialist **Annie Rezac** and Playwright **Scott Woldman**, will call for everyday women in the community to submit their own stories. Select stories will be scripted into a piece that will be workshopped and presented June 22 – 28, 2015 in the Auditorium's Katten/Landau Studio (425 S. Wabash, 4th Floor).

For more information or to submit personal stories, visit AuditoriumTheatre.org.

"As we celebrate the incredible history of the Auditorium, it is empowering to see the vital influence that women have had in making the theatre what it is today," said Auditorium Theatre Director of Creative Engagement **Christina Bourné**. "Without women such as Beatrice Spachner, who fought to restore the Auditorium to its original splendor, we may not have as many national historic landmarks, strong civic committees and long-standing institutions as we do today. With the "Brave Face Project" we look to reflect on these pioneering women while looking at ways to empower women in today's society."

As the Auditorium's Anniversary Season looks back on an incredible 125 year history, it also aims to look forward. As women's roles in society are continuously questioned and challenged, the "Brave Face Project" also aims to look forward, creating a dialogue on the topic of why many women feel an insecurity or fear of not measuring up to the social expectations of what it means "to be a woman" and what can be done to break through those barriers and change those perceptions. By asking women to share their own experiences regarding "shame," whether they be about physical appearance, insufficiency, mental health, sexuality, violence, addiction and more, the project hopes to reveal communal truths while instilling new hope for the future.

"I am thrilled to be directing a project that will allow voices within the community that may have been silent for many years to finally be heard, said Director of the "Brave Face Project" **Annie Rezac**. "Along with my co-creator **Scott Woldman**, we are both inspired and intrigued to explore a woman-centric issue through the lens of both a woman and a man's perspective. All genders contribute to this problem and we need to hear from all sides in order to understand how we can face and overcome these issues."

About the Artistic Team

Christina Bourné is a native of the greater Chicagoland area and a graduate of Roosevelt University. In addition to her current role as Auditorium Theatre Director of Creative Engagement, Bourné has worked with the Auditorium in various capacities including teaching artist, musical director and Director for the Auditorium's award-winning summer camp "Hands Together, Heart to Art." She has also been a teaching artist and assistant stage manager for "Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah" and was featured as a performer in the touring musical, "A Midnight Cry: the Underground Railroad to Freedom" as Lida Anderson. Bourné and her family performed to a sold out crowd in the Auditorium Theatre's 2012 Katten/Landau Studio Summer Cabaret Series. Bourné performs regularly throughout the metropolitan area with organizations such as the South Suburban Chorale, the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Community Chorus, and as a guest artist for the Greater Chicago Opera Guild.

Annie Rezac is a Chicago artist and arts education specialist. Currently, Annie works with arts organizations and Institutions all over the Chicagoland area including the Auditorium Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Shakespeare, Art Institute of Chicago, Adventure Stage Chicago, Emerald City Theatre, Chicago Opera Theater and Chicago Children's Theatre to develop and connect arts education programs to CPS students.

Annie has directed, devised and collaborated on numerous projects across the country with a wide-range of organizations, including; Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, Rare Terra Theatre, Second City Training Center and Missoula Children's Theatre. She received her MFA in Acting from Western Illinois University and studied extensively with Lincoln Center Institute's approach to Aesthetic Education.

In addition to theatre, Annie serves on the Strategic Initiatives Advisory Panel for Ingenuity Incorporated (a non-profit arts education leader in Chicago) and the Community Board of Emerald City Theatre. She is an active advocate and programmer for the arts in Chicago and provides professional development for arts educators seeking to increase their impact in Chicago schools.

Scott Woldman is a Resident Playwright at Chicago Dramatists and Redtwist Theatre. In Chicago, Scott's work has been produced by Redtwist Theatre, The Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, The Artistic Home, Under The Gun Theatre, Stangeloop Theatre, Stage Left Theatre, The Playground Theatre, Ouribos Theatre and The Second City.

Scott is also the author of the critically acclaimed play, "Beaten," a drama which explores the impact of domestic violence upon three generations of women in the same family. He is a veteran comedian, improviser, story-teller and performance poet. He is a former member of the "Free Associates" improv ensemble and half of the story-telling duo, "Bikerman and The Jewish Avenger." With his unique brand of comedic poetry, he has represented Chicago at the National Poetry Slam and has performed at poetry venues, readings and slams across the nation, including the Chicago Poetry Centre's "No Love for Love Anti-Valentine Show" hosted by Ira Glass.

Woldman recently directed the improv ensemble "Almost Atlanta" and helped create their show "Act Too," a full-length improvised play that ran at The Annoyance Theatre, Chicago Dramatists and Steppenwolf Garage.

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 the **Pasquinelli Family Foundation** is the Gala Dinner Celebration Sponsor. Student Matinee Series Sponsors for the 2014 – 15 Season include **The Private Bank** and **The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation**.

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. 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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