

Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah on January 14 and 15

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**AUDITORIUM
THEATRE**
of ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE[®]
AUDITORIUM THEATRE EST. 1889

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**Auditorium Theatre Celebrates 12th Annual MLK
Weekend Performances of Too Hot to Handel:
The Jazz-Gospel Messiah January 14 and 15 – Honoring
the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**Sunday Performance Will Be Live-Streamed to Louisiana State
Penitentiary (Angola), Sheridan Correctional Center, and Lake County
Adult Corrections Facility**

[TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH ON JANUARY 14 AND 15](#)





The 12th annual performances of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* take place at the Auditorium Theatre on January 14 and 15, the weekend before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Renowned soloists **Rodrick Dixon**, **Alfreda Burke**, and **Karen Marie Richardson** join legendary pianist **Alvin Waddles** in the celebratory production, which **features a choir of over 100 choir members and musicians**. *Too Hot to Handel* is based on George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, and pairs Handel's traditional classical score with jazz, gospel, and blues.

"I am so looking forward to seeing *Too Hot to Handel* for the first time in the Auditorium Theatre – the theatre for the people," says **Tania Castroverde Moskalenko**, Auditorium Theatre CEO. "The healing power of the performing arts is strong, and there has never been a better time to embrace the inspirational messages of *Too Hot to Handel* than the weekend before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day."

For the first time, the Auditorium Theatre is partnering with the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church's Friends of Prison Fellowship to live-stream the January 15 performance of *Too Hot to Handel* to the Louisiana State Penitentiary, a maximum-security prison located in Angola, LA, as well as the Lake County Adult Corrections Facility in Waukegan, IL and the Sheridan Correctional Center in Sheridan, IL. Inmates at the facilities will be provided with a scripture guide put together by the church, as well as background information on Handel's *Messiah*, Martin Luther King, Jr., and *Too Hot to Handel*. Footage from the facilities will be streamed back to the Auditorium Theatre audience during the live performance on Sunday.

Members of the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church have been attending performances of *Too Hot to Handel* for 8 years. They also have maintained a close relationship with the Louisiana State Penitentiary since 2005. Three years ago, church member John Zeilstra had the idea to bring the powerful and uplifting *Too Hot to Handel* experience to prisons, spreading the message of unity, joy, and hope. In addition to Angola, Friends of Prison Fellowship also worked to get the show streamed at the two Illinois facilities.

"The memories and history of Dr. King will bring joy and peace to the hearts of the men in prison," says **John Zeilstra** of Friends of Prison Fellowship. "The concert is given when we celebrate Dr. King's life and his message of peace and comfort is something we all search for. On January 15, these men will hear one of the most spectacular concerts ever."

In addition to the January 14 and 15 performances, there also will be a one-hour Student Matinee performance on Friday, January 13, for K-12 students. The Auditorium Theatre Creative

Engagement Department offers several other opportunities for students to get inspired by Too Hot to Handel, including a poetry residency, a workshop in which students explore King's advocacy of cooperative nonviolence, and the Too Hot Choral Festival, when high school choirs are invited to interact and work with Too Hot artists. Additionally, 3rd-12th graders may submit poems to the annual Poetry Contest, focusing on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the "beloved community." Winners receive tickets to Too Hot to Handel as well as transportation to the theatre, and will recite their poems on stage.

Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke will be performing two songs, including Too Hot to Handel's "Comfort Ye," at the inaugural outdoor [Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony](#) at Navy Pier on Wednesday, November 30 at 6PM.

Exelon is the Presenting Sponsor of Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah. **Allstate** is the Educational Outreach Sponsor. **Friends of Too Hot to Handel** provide additional support. The 2016-17 Student Matinee Sponsors are **The PrivateBank** and the **Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation**.

Chicago Jazz Magazine is the Official Media Sponsor of the American Music Series.

Performance and Ticket Information

[Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah](#)

Saturday, January 14 | 7:30PM

Sunday, January 15 | 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). Discounts available for groups of 10+.

Friday, January 13 | 11AM (Student Matinee)

One-hour student matinee tickets for Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah are \$10 and are available at 312.341.2357 or sales@auditoriumtheatre.org. Please find more information on the Auditorium's Student Matinee program at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](#).

Community Engagement

Auditorium Theatre Teaching Artists bring the performing arts directly to classrooms and lead students in exploring the creative process in connection to Too Hot to Handel. Specific content varies with each program.

Residency and workshop programs are filled on a first-come-first-serve basis. For more information, please contact Kristen Hansel, Director of Creative Engagement, at 312.341.2359 or at khansel@auditoriumtheatre.org.

- **Too Hot to Handel Residency** – Bringing together the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the music of Too Hot To Handel, students will examine Dr. King's vision of the "beloved community" while gaining a basic understanding of musical composition. Under the guidance of a Too Hot Teaching Artist, students will create a final musical composition reflecting on and musically articulating their own vision of what Dr. King's beloved community means to them.
- **Too Hot to Handel Poetry Residency** – 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 eight one-hour sessions, students work to create and then perform poems based on their knowledge of Dr. King and their experiences within their own communities. Students perform poems in a spoken word performance at the end of the residencies.
- **Too Hot to Handel Workshop** – Teaching Artists offer one-time classes, leading students in a 1 to 2 hour exploration of art-making and performance technique. Specific content varies with each workshop. Through the music of Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz Gospel Messiah, students will explore Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s advocacy of cooperative nonviolence as a means of change. 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.

- **Too Hot Choral Festival** – Chicago area high school choirs are invited to participate in the full day of music. Throughout the festival events, participants will have the opportunity to interact and work with Too Hot Artists as well as other prominent Chicago musicians.
- **Too Hot to Handel Poetry Contest** – Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of "beloved community," 3rd-12th grade students across the city are invited to enter a poem, three to 12 lines in length, focusing on what the concept of "beloved community" means to them. Poems will be judged on creativity/originality, language, and relevance to theme. Two finalists will have the opportunity to recite their poems on stage, and will win tickets and transportation to a performance of Too Hot to Handel. All entries must be received by Friday, December 18, 2016.



Auditorium Theatre's 2016-17 Season Upcoming Events

January 14-15: [Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah](#)

February 4: [Jackie Chan's Long Yun Kung Fu Troupe from Beijing](#)

March 11: [Thodos Dance Chicago](#)

March 22-26: [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#)

March 31: [The Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra - By George! The Pops Plays Gershwin](#)

May 19-21: [Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg - Red Giselle](#)

June 10: [Giordano 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 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.

The Auditorium Theatre 2016-17 Season is made possible in part with support from the **MacArthur Foundation**, the **Illinois Arts Council** 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. For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click [here](#).

Too Hot to Handel photos by Paul Natkin.

Auditorium Theatre photo by Jude Howell.



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