

AUDITORIUM THEATRE

CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE® EST. 1889

50 E Ida B Wells Dr
Chicago, IL 60605
AuditoriumTheatre.org

Lily Oberman
Auditorium Theatre
312.341.2331 (office) | 973.699.5312 (cell)
loberman01@auditoriumtheatre.org

Release date: November 7, 2019

***TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH* CELEBRATES 15 YEARS IN CHICAGO AT THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE**

Featuring Musicians and Singers from All Across Chicago and Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Vision of "Beloved Community"

[Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah on January 18 + 19, 2020](#)
[Student Matinee Performance on January 17, 2020](#)



(CHICAGO, IL) The Auditorium Theatre's signature production *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* celebrates 15 years in Chicago, and is one of the first performances to kick off the [Year of Chicago Music](#), on January 18 and 19, 2020, in addition to a special Student Matinee performance on January 17. The jazz-gospel twist on **George Frideric Handel's** classic *Messiah* oratorio premiered at the Auditorium in 2006, and has been inspiring and uplifting audiences ever since.

Too Hot features the powerful soloists **Alfreda Burke** (soprano), **Karen Marie Richardson** (alto), and **Rodrick Dixon** (tenor); legendary Detroit pianist **Alvin Waddles**; a 100-person choir led by **Bill Fraher**, director of concert choirs at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago; and a chamber orchestra and jazz band led by Michigan Opera Theatre assistant music director **Suzanne Mallare Acton**.

Traditionally hosted on **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend**, *Too Hot* commemorates King's vision of a "**beloved community**," a world in which peace, justice, and love prevail. King frequently referred to Biblical passages that are repeated throughout the *Messiah* and *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*; his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, for example, uses the passage, "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low," which is also heard in the *Too Hot* song "Every Valley." King also remarked on jazz music's unique ability to bring people together – in his opening address to the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival, he stated, "Everybody has the blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs love and to be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy ... in music, especially in this broad category called jazz, there is a stepping stone towards all of these."

"I was here for the first-ever production of *Too Hot* at the Auditorium, and even then, I knew that this performance would keep people coming back to the theatre year after year," says **Rich Regan**, Auditorium Theatre CEO. "*Too Hot* has built a dedicated audience in Chicago, and it is inspiring to see people from all across the city come together to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision and witness the unifying impact that the performing arts can have. We are honored to present this show to Chicago for the 15th year."

Too Hot was conceived by the composer **Marin Alsop**, who wanted to create a version of the *Messiah* that would have people on their feet and clapping along, as she told NPR in 2006. "I could clearly imagine the 'Hallelujah!' chorus becoming a gospel number," she said. "I could hear the recitatives as improvised recital or call-and-response pieces." Alsop worked with orchestrators **Bob Christianson** and **Gary Anderson** to infuse the oratorio with jazz, blues, rock, and gospel. *Too Hot* premiered in 1993 at Lincoln Center in New York City.

TOO HOT TO HANDEL CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT RESIDENCIES AND EVENTS

Student Matinee

In addition to the performances on January 18 and 19, the Auditorium presents a one-hour [Student Matinee](#) performance on Friday, January 17 at 11AM for thousands of students in grades K-12.

Master Class

Ahead of the performances, *Too Hot* soloists Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke, along with conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton, lead a Master Class for the student choir at the [Mahalia Jackson Elementary School](#) in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood. The choir will perform on-stage with the musicians at the Student Matinee during the "Hallelujah!" chorus.

In-School Residencies

The theatre's Creative Engagement department oversees in-school [Poetry and Music Residencies](#) that tie into the messages of *Too Hot*, prompting students to consider what a "beloved community" might look and sound like. Students also engage with King's "I Have a Dream" speech and music from *Too Hot* to observe the ways that music, lyrics, and texts can have an emotional impact, connecting passages from King's speeches to lyrics from *Too Hot*.

Poetry Contest

Students from across the city are encouraged to enter the annual [Poetry Contest](#), responding to the prompt "How has my community shaped me?" Winners will have their poems published in the *Too Hot* program book, receive four tickets to a performance of *Too Hot*, and will perform their poetry onstage ahead of the performances. The deadline to submit poems is **December 2, 2019 at 5PM**.

Correctional Facilities and Youth Center Engagement

Since 2017, the Auditorium has worked with correctional facilities across the state and with the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, LA, to share the messages of *Too Hot* with residents at these facilities. In 2020, the theatre is partnering with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice to bring five one-hour Poetry Residencies to the Illinois Youth Center in Chicago, joined by residents of the Illinois Youth Center in Warrenville, IL. Residency participants will also have the opportunity to attend the Student Matinee performance on January 17. The performances will also be live-streamed to residents at the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

ADMIT ONE

Through the ADMIT ONE program, community groups that face barriers to experiencing the performing arts have the opportunity to experience *Too Hot* at the Auditorium Theatre for free. In addition to receiving tickets to the performance, transportation costs to and from the theatre are covered. Groups also have the option to add on a pre- or post-show workshop, hosted by Creative Engagement staff, to help them engage with the performance. More information about the ADMIT ONE program can be found [here](#).

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

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

Friday, January 17 | 11AM – *One hour Student Matinee*

Saturday, January 18 | 7:30PM

Sunday, January 19 | 3PM

Tickets start at \$29 and are available online [here](#), by phone at 312.341.2300, or in person at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (50 E Ida B Wells Dr). *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* may be added to the Auditorium Theatre's ["Create Your Own" Series](#) subscription, which offers a 15-25% discount. Discounted tickets for [groups](#) of 10 or more people are also available.

Student Matinee tickets (for K-12 groups of 10 or more people) are \$10 and are available by phone at 312.341.2357. Inquiries regarding Student Matinee tickets may also be submitted online [here](#).

The Auditorium Theatre also offers \$15 [student rush](#) tickets to full-time college students and \$5 tickets to young people ages 13-19 with Urban Gateways' [Teen Arts Pass](#) program. The Auditorium Theatre's [ADMIT ONE](#) program offers complimentary tickets to Chicago-area community groups.



Press photos and video are available [here](#).

Upcoming Events at the Auditorium Theatre

November 7-9: [93XRT Presents The String Cheese Incident](#)

November 10: [Magic Reality Group Presents Sleeping Beauty Dreams](#)

November 16: [Chicago Celebrates Sondheim!](#)

November 21: [An Evening with David Sedaris](#)

November 30-December 29: [The Joffrey Ballet – The Nutcracker](#)

December 9: [Auditorium Theatre's Birthday Celebration Open House](#)

January 18+19: [Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah](#)

January 26: [National Geographic Live – On the Trail of Big Cats](#)

February 12-23: [The Joffrey Ballet – The Times Are Racing](#)

February 29: [Trinity Irish Dance Company](#)

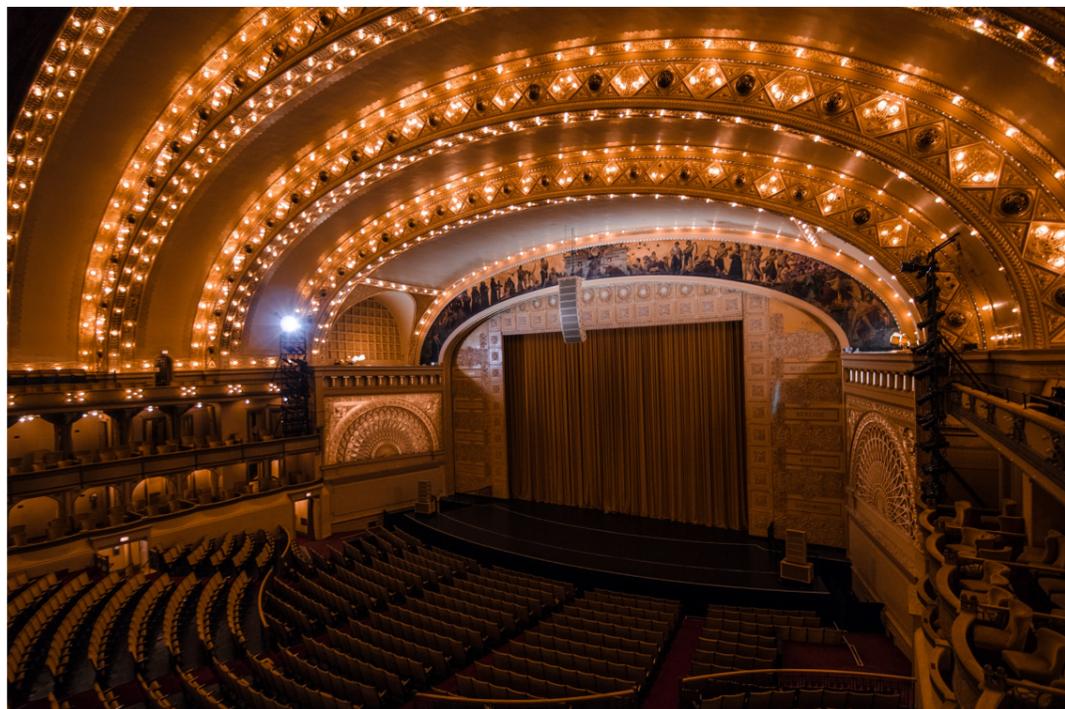
About the Auditorium Theatre

The Auditorium Theatre, located at 50 E Ida B Wells Dr at Roosevelt University 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**, and was recognized by the League of Historic American Theatres as the **Outstanding Historic Theatre** for 2019 for its programming, restoration, and community engagement.

The Auditorium Theatre 2019-20 Season is made possible in part with support from the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, the **Illinois Arts Council**, and the **Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel**. **Chicago Magazine** is the official magazine sponsor. For more information about programming, volunteer, and donor opportunities or theatre tours, please call 312.341.2310 or visit AuditoriumTheatre.org. For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click [here](#).



WINNER OF THE
2019 OUTSTANDING HISTORIC THEATRE AWARD
Presented by the League of Historic American Theatres



Auditorium Theatre, photo by Carlos Rosas. | Opening night sketch, courtesy of the Auditorium Theatre. | Auditorium Theatre, photo by Karl Solano.



You are receiving this message as a member of the Auditorium Theatre's press list. If you do not wish to receive similar messages in the future, please email our [associate director of communications](#).

50 E Ida B Wells Dr, Chicago, IL 60605, United States

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward](#) | [View in browser](#)

130
AUDITORIUM THEATRE 1889–2019