For the 14th consecutive year, the Auditorium Theatre proudly presents Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah over Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend. Celebrating Dr. King’s vision of “beloved community” – a world without poverty, bigotry, and violence – Too Hot is a true Chicago show that unites people from all across the city as they sing, dance, and clap along with the performers.
Featuring celebrated soloists Rodrick Dixon (tenor), Alfreda Burke (soprano), and Karen Marie Richardson (alto), Too Hot puts a spin on George Frideric Handel’s classic Messiah by arranging the traditional oratorio into a jazz, gospel, blues, and rock experience. The soloists are joined by legendary Detroit pianist Alvin Waddles, a choir of over 100 members led by Bill Fraher (director of concert choirs at Old St. Patrick’s Church in Chicago), and a chamber orchestra and jazz band conducted by Michigan Opera Theatre assistant music director Suzanne Mallare Acton.

“This is an event that every Chicagoan must experience – and once you see it, you’ll keep coming back every year because the energy when Too Hot is in the house is totally unique,” says C.J. Dillon, Auditorium Theatre Chief Programming Officer. “These performances have become a Chicago tradition, and we are honored to present the amazing artists of Too Hot for the 14th year.”

For the third time, the Auditorium will be streaming the production of Too Hot to correctional facilities in Chicago and to the Louisiana State Penitentiary. More details regarding this community outreach will be announced at a later date.

The Auditorium Theatre also presents an hour-long Student Matinee performance on Friday, January 18 at 11AM for students in grades K-12. Along with the Student Matinee, the theatre's Creative Engagement Department also offers free in-school Too Hot residencies to Chicago Public Schools: a five-class poetry residency, in which students explore the ways that poetry, music, and words can create an emotional impact, and a five-class music residency, connecting the music of Too Hot to King's "beloved community" vision. Additionally, Too Hot soloists Burke and Dixon, along with conductor Acton, host a choir Master Class with the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Choir in early January. The Master Class choir performs alongside the professionals during the Too Hot Student Matinee performance.

Students in grades 3-12 are encouraged to submit poems to the Auditorium’s annual Too Hot Poetry Contest, responding to the prompt “How has my community shaped me?” Winning poems are published in the Too Hot performance programs, with each winner receiving four tickets to a performance of the show and the chance to perform their poetry on the Auditorium’s landmark stage. More information is available here.

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Additional support provided by FRIENDS OF TOO HOT

**Performance Information**

*Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*

Friday, January 18 | 11AM – *One hour Student Matinee performance*
Saturday, January 19 | 7:30PM
Sunday, January 20 | 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 Ida B Wells Dr). 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. Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah may be added to the Auditorium Theatre’s Create Your Own Series subscription, discounted at 15-20 percent. Discounts are also available for groups of 10 or more people.
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. Applications are also currently being accepted for the Auditorium’s ADMIT ONE program, which offers complimentary tickets to Chicago-area community groups.

Press photos are available here.

Upcoming Events at the Auditorium Theatre

November 16: Ate9 Dance Company/Visceral Dance Chicago/Deeply Rooted Dance Theater

December 1-30: The Joffrey Ballet – The Nutcracker

January 19+20: Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah

January 24: National Geographic Live – Pink Boots and a Machete

February 2: Trinity Irish Dance Company

February 13-24: The Joffrey Ballet – Anna Karenina

March 2+3: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago/Malpaso Dance Company

March 6-10: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

March 30: A Whole New World of Alan Menken

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.

The Auditorium Theatre 2018-19 Season is made possible in part with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council, The Chicago Community Trust, and the Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel. Michigan Avenue 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.
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