

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 2014

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**THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF
“TOO HOT TO HANDEL: THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH,” JANUARY 17 AND 18,
PART OF THE “MADE IN CHICAGO” MUSIC SERIES**

More Than 200 Musicians and Vocalists With Soloists Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke and Karen Marie Richardson Pay Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

CHICAGO — The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University presents the 10th anniversary performance of “[Too Hot To Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah](#),” honoring the life of Civil Rights activist and cultural icon Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., January 17 and 18, 2015. The exuberant jazz reinvention of George Frideric Handel’s “Messiah”—a vibrant mix of Jazz, Gospel, Blues, Swing, Classical and Scat—features star soloists **Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke** and **Karen Marie Richardson**. Tickets (\$25 - \$70) are on sale now and available online at AuditoriumTheatre.org, by calling (800) 982-2787 or at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy).

“As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of our production of ‘Too Hot to Handel’ in Chicago, we are excited to think of the thousands of people who have been entertained by the show,” said Auditorium Theatre Executive Director **Brett Batterson**. “Likewise, we continue to be enlightened by the show’s spirit and message of peace. It has become a city-wide celebration of the legacy of a great American—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Auditorium looks forward to hosting this production for many years to come.”

Now in the midst of its historic 125th Anniversary Season, the Auditorium Theatre presents “Too Hot to Handel” as part of the “Made in Chicago” Performance Series featuring some of Chicago’s best homegrown music and dance talent.

Suzanne Mallare Acton, Artistic and Music Director of Detroit’s Rackham Symphony Choir, conducts the 50-piece “Too Hot” symphony orchestra and jazz ensemble, while Chicago’s Old St. Pat’s Music Director **Bill Fraher** leads the extraordinary 100-person “Too Hot” choir. Described as “your grandmother’s choral classic sliced, diced, spiced, swirled, swung, amplified, and totally reinvented” (“Chicago Reader”), this annual, family-friendly tradition—conceived by **Marin Alsop** and arranged by **Bob Christianson** and **Gary Anderson**—brings thrilling entertainment to the Auditorium’s landmark stage for all to enjoy.

“Too Hot” first premiered at the Little Rock Baptist Church in Detroit, earning a reputation for its lively vocals and communal revelry. In January 2006, the Rackham Symphony Choir combined forces with the “Too Hot” Chicago Choir for the show’s Chicago debut at the Auditorium. Recently, the show has been enhanced through a large high-definition screen that captures

both the performers and audience members during the concert. *Video enhancements made possible through the generosity of William and Shelley Farley.*

"TOO HOT" Community Engagement

A one-hour Student Matinee performance is offered on Friday, January 16, open to any student groups elementary through high school for \$10 each. Tickets are available by calling (312) 341-2357 or by contacting sales@auditoriumtheatre.org.

In tandem with the "Too Hot to Handel" performances, the Auditorium Theatre's **Department of Creative Engagement** utilizes innovative programming to engage Chicago students in the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the power of music and community. For the 8th consecutive year, the Auditorium invites Chicago Public School students, grades 3-12, **to write an original poem** celebrating Dr. King's vision of the "beloved community." The grand prize-winner will receive 4 free tickets to the "Too Hot to Handel" opening night performance and will recite their poem on stage before the show.

Poems must be sent via mail to Attn: THTH Poetry Contest, 50 E. Congress Pkwy, Chicago, IL 60605, postmarked by Friday, December 19, 2014.

The Auditorium Theatre's Department of Creative Engagement also presents the first annual **"Too Hot to Handel: Choral Festival"** on January 14, 2015, an all-encompassing residency that incorporates choral music and celebrates Dr. King's vision of unification and communal prosperity. The fest welcomes four Chicago area choirs to participate in choral workshops and master classes with "Too Hot to Handel" artists, including conductor **Suzanne Mallare Acton** and soloists **Rodrick Dixon** and **Alfreda Burke**. Participating choirs, to be announced December 17, will also have the opportunity to take a private tour of the Auditorium Theatre, as well as a tour of Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts Music Conservatory—one of the earliest conservatories founded in the United States.

Also available to CPS Grades 3–8: a **One-Week Residency** beginning January 12, in which students will create an original musical composition under the guidance of a "Too Hot" Teaching Artist; and a **One-Day Residency** that asks students to create a piece of visual art symbolizing their commitment to positive self-expression.

Contact Director of Creative Engagement Christina Bourné at (312) 341-2353 or cbourne@auditoriumtheatre.org for more information on these residencies.

"Too Hot to Handel" Sponsors

Exelon is the Presenting Sponsor of "Too Hot to Handel", **JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.** is the "Too Hot to Handel" Educational Outreach Partner. "Too Hot" video enhancements are made possible through the generosity of **William and Shelley Farley**. Additional support is provided by **Friends of "Too Hot to Handel."** The Auditorium Theatre's student matinee series is sponsored by **The Private Bank** and **The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation**. Additional media support provided by **"Chicago Jazz Magazine"** and **"N'Digo."**

Performance Schedule and Ticket Information

Friday, January 16 | 11am (one hour Student Matinee Performance*)
Saturday, January 17 | 7:30pm
Sunday, January 18 | 3pm

Tickets (\$25 - \$70) are available online at AuditoriumTheatre.org, by calling (800) 982-ARTS (2787) or in-person at Auditorium Theatre's Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy). Discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more are available at (312) 341-2357 or sales@auditoriumtheatre.org.

*Student Matinee tickets are \$10 each, available at (312) 341-2357 or sales@auditoriumtheatre.org.

Auditorium Theatre's 2014 – 15 Season:

The Auditorium Theatre 2014 – 15 season also includes "[Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah](#)" (January 17 – 18); [Tango Buenos Aires](#) (January 25); [Giordano Dance Chicago](#) (January 31); [Grupo Corpo](#) (February 28 – March 1); [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) (March 6 – 15); [River North Dance Chicago](#) (March 28); [Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg](#) (May 8 – 10); "[His Way - A Sinatra Centennial Celebration](#)" (May 30); and The Royal Ballet's "[Don Quixote](#)" (June 18 – 21). For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click [here](#).

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. 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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