

AUDITORIUM THEATRE

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The Auditorium Theatre Proudly Presents

Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah

For the first time during the holiday season in two performances only:

Saturday, December 3 at 7:30pm, and Sunday, December 4 at 3pm

(October 24, 2022) The **Auditorium Theatre** (Chicago's landmark stage at 50 E. Ida B. Wells Drive) joyously welcomes back ***Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*** for its 18th presentation. This year, for the first time, the popular jazz-gospel-rock-funk version of G.F. Handel's traditional *Messiah* oratorio welcomes the start of the holiday season, Saturday, December 3 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 PM.

Created in 1992 as a collaboration between conductor Marin Alsop with orchestrators and arrangers Bob Christianson and Gary Anderson, *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* had its Chicago premiere at the Auditorium Theatre in 2006. The production has returned every year since, formerly during the weekend before Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This year, *Too Hot to Handel* lands right in the middle of the traditional *Messiah* season in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Using the original musical material from *Messiah*, Alsop, Christianson, and Anderson reinvented the basic melodic and harmonic outlines of Handel's original by using scat, backbeats, jazz and gospel vocals, instrumental improvisation, and the walking bass line played by the bass soloist. *Messiah's* recitatives are expanded to shout-and-response improvisations over a gospel organ and piano accompaniment while the original metrical material of the work is expanded via a drum set. The result is that *Too Hot*, with its jazz and gospel elements, acts as a modern-day musical tribute to the original work by introducing a new generation to Handel's masterpiece.

A powerhouse Chicago chorus, along with members of Detroit's Rackham Symphony Choir, is joined by a chamber orchestra, an exuberant jazz combo, and three gifted soloists: **Alfreda Burke, Rodrick Dixon, and Karen-Marie Richardson.**

"The Auditorium is proud to serve as the Chicago home for this exuberant audience favorite and now, in December, *Too Hot to Handel* becomes a new way to welcome the holiday season," said Auditorium Theatre CEO **Rich Regan**. "We invite families and friends of all ages to come enjoy this festive, uplifting program that keeps our spirits driving forward."

Performance schedule and tickets

Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah performs at the Auditorium Theatre Saturday, December 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 4 at 3 p.m. Tickets start at \$28 and are now available at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](https://auditoriumtheatre.org), by calling 312.341.2300, or at the Box Office at 50 E Ida B Wells Drive in Chicago, IL. [Click here for phone and in-person hours.](#)

Discounted tickets for [groups](#) of 10 or more people are available. The Auditorium Theatre offers \$20 [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 also offers a [Student Savings Club](#) for both college and high school students. The Auditorium Theatre's [ADMIT ONE](#) program offers complimentary tickets to Chicago-area community groups.

The Auditorium Theatre is fully committed to the health and safety of our patrons and our staff. We continue to monitor health guidance and appropriately adjust our policies. For current health safety information, please visit [AuditoriumTheatre.org/visit/safety](https://auditoriumtheatre.org/visit/safety).

Special thanks

The Auditorium Theatre is grateful for the support of the Presenting Sponsors of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*, Darrell Windle and Dave Samber, with additional support provided by Friends of *Too Hot to Handel*, and Media Sponsor, ChicagoJazz.com. The Auditorium Theatre 2022-23 Season is made possible in part with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. The Auditorium's official hotel partner is the Palmer House Hilton.

The **Auditorium Theatre**, located at 50 E. Ida B. Wells Drive 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 this National Historic Landmark that originally opened in 1889.

This Auditorium Theatre's 2022-23 performance season features a dynamic mix of acclaimed global dance companies (**Kyiv City Ballet, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Step Afrika!, American Ballet Theatre**, and the much anticipated annual engagement by the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**) while closer to home, beloved Chicago dance companies also take the stage (**Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, South Chicago Dance Theatre**, and an evening with **Trinity Irish**

Dance Company, M.A.D.D. Rhythms, and special guest, New York-based **Dorrance Dance**. In addition, the critically acclaimed **National Geographic Live** speaker series, offering first-hand accounts and expert voices on cultural and environmental issues, returns with three offerings and a new lower ticket price. And rounding out the holiday season is **Celtic Woman: A Christmas Symphony**.

For more information on the Auditorium Theatre and a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please visit AuditoriumTheatre.org.

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Photo credits (from left):

Too Hot to Handel soloist Rodrick Dixon with choir (photo by Kristie Kahns)

Too Hot to Handel soloist Alfreda Burke (photo by Kristie Kahns)

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