

A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark blue lace dress, is singing into a microphone on stage. She has her right hand raised. In the background, an orchestra is seated with various instruments, including saxophones and brass. The stage is lit with warm, golden light.

THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE PRESENTS

TOO HOT TO HANDEL

THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH

DEC 3 + 4

2022-23 SEASON

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889



A GIFT TO REMEMBER



AuditoriumTheatre.org
312.341.2300



AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889
50 East Ida B. Wells Drive | Chicago, IL 60605

Welcome Letter

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2022-23 Season at the Auditorium Theatre!

We are overjoyed for you to join us in person to experience the best of all performing arts, an Auditorium Theatre legacy that began in 1889 and continues into this season and beyond!

Mayor Lori Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) have designated 2022 as the "Year of Chicago Dance." Here at the Auditorium, we are proud to celebrate that and play our part as one of the city's largest presenters of dance artists from across the city, country, and around the world.

Forced to flee their war-torn home in Ukraine, we are proud to support their most distinguished dance ambassadors for peace, Kyiv City Ballet. Their strength and courage are inspiring and their continuance to perform on the global stage speaks volumes about the immense power of dance.

Within our local community, we are thrilled to present for the first time on the Auditorium Stage, South Chicago Dance Theatre. This exceptional company embodies the vibrancy and resiliency of Chicago itself through its intimately transformative style.

We have a full slate of performances and events in our 2022-23 Season. Our Global Dance series welcomes, in addition to Kyiv City Ballet, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Step Afrika!, Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo, American Ballet Theatre, and the annual return of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Chicago Dance is vibrant and visceral! In addition to South Chicago Dance, we are excited to feature local favorites Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater and

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, as well as a special one-night-only triple threat performance by Dorrance Dance, Trinity Irish Dance Company, and M.A.D.D Rhythms! If you are more of an adventurer, discover and learn with National Geographic Explorers who will take you from under the golden glow of this National Historic Landmark to around the world with stories, photographs, and stunning videos.

Our beloved annual presentation of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* will kick off December followed by Celtic Woman and plenty of holiday performances for you and your family to enjoy. Join us to celebrate the festive season with evenings filled with music, laughter, and wonder.

The best way to experience all that the Auditorium has to offer this season is by joining us as a subscriber, which gets you the best savings and the best seats in the house. Visit AuditoriumTheatre.org to learn more about the variety of programming we have planned for the year ahead.

Let's come together for a season of enriching live experiences! When we walk into Chicago's National Historic Landmark Auditorium Theatre, we add momentum to the energy of past generations to creatively face the world. We sincerely thank you for your commitment and for joining us on this journey.

ENJOY THE SHOW!



Rich Regan

Rich Regan
Chief Executive Officer



Thomas R. Baryl

Thomas R. Baryl
Chair, Auditorium Theatre Board of Directors

Auditorium Theatre

Venue Policies & Amenities

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

BABY CHANGING TABLES are located in both the men's and women's restrooms, located in the Lower Level and on Level 3 of the Theatre.

CHILDREN: All guests must have a ticket for entry, and in all instances, babies in arms are not permitted. It is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian to research and judge the content of a performance as appropriate for their child's age and level of maturity. There is no official rating system for live performance.

COAT CHECK is located between Aisle 2 and Aisle 3 in the Main Floor Lobby. Please note that our Coat Check only accepts credit card transactions. The Coat Check also features complimentary seat cushions/booster seats, disposable ear plugs, and assisted listening devices.

ELECTRONICS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND VIDEO: Please turn off ALL electronic devices that may ring, beep, vibrate, or otherwise produce a sound that may disrupt performances. The use of video, photography, or any other recording devices is strictly prohibited during performances.

EMERGENCY EXIT: Please take a moment to locate the nearest emergency exit closet to your seating area. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please remain calm, and follow the instructions from the Auditorium Theatre team members.

FILMING NOTICE: Please be aware there may be video recording and/or photography of audience members taking place throughout the day. By entering the theatre, you consent to your voice, name, image, and/or likeness being used, without compensation, by the Auditorium Theatre, in any medium of publicity or advertising, and you release the Auditorium Theatre, its members, agents, employees, and board from any liability.

FIREARMS: In compliance with the Illinois Firearms Concealed Carry Act, the Auditorium Theatre prohibits the carrying of weapons of any kind in the theatre and on theatre property.

FIRST AID SERVICES: In the event you require medical assistance, please see an Auditorium Theatre team member.

FOOD & BEVERAGE: Concessions are open on the Main Floor Lobby for all performances. Additional concession locations will be open throughout the Theatre lobbies for certain performances. Outside food and beverages are

not allowed inside the building. Please note that our Coat Check, Merchandise, and Concession locations only accept credit card transactions.

HEALTH SAFETY: Our priority is the safety and comfort of all our guests in our theatre. To find out more information and for the most up to date protocols for our venue and your specific event, please check the Safety Page on the Auditorium Theatre website at auditoriumtheatre.org

LATE SEATING: The Auditorium Theatre has a strict policy of no late seating. Guests arriving after a performance has begun, or leaving the seating area for any reason, will be seated in a designated section and may take their ticketed seats at intermission, if applicable. For further information regarding late seating policies for your specific event, please see any Auditorium Theatre team member.

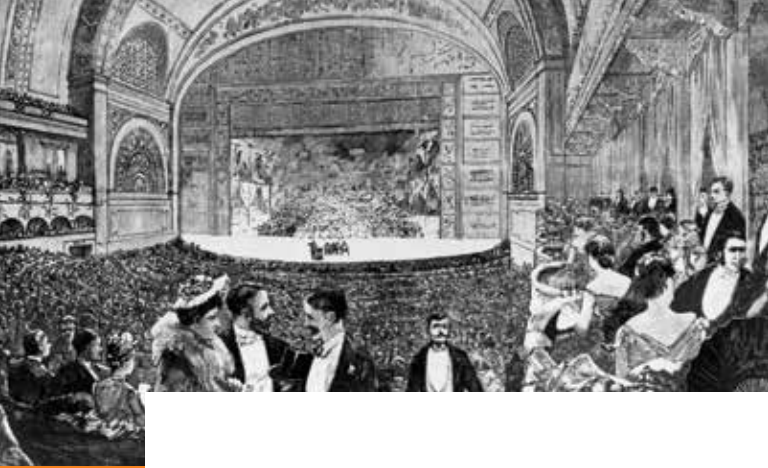
LOST AND FOUND: Found articles should be left with any Auditorium Theatre team member. To determine whether a personal article has been turned in to the Lost and Found, please call 312.341.2300. Any items lost or presumed stolen are not the responsibility of the Auditorium Theatre. Lost and Found items will be held on-site for 30 days only.

PROHIBITED ITEMS: Cameras (photo or video), professional camera equipment (tripods, monopods, etc.) and/or audio recording equipment of any kind are NOT permitted in the theatre during an event. In addition: firearms, weapons of any kind, large bags, backpacks, outside food and drinks, helium balloons, bullhorns or noisemakers, gifts, costumes, masks covering face, confetti or glitter, UAVs/drones, hover boards, luggage, signs of any type, and other items deemed unsafe by management are prohibited.

RESTROOMS/ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS are located on the Main Floor, Lower Level, and Level 3 of the Theatre. There are 2 accessible gender-neutral restrooms located in the Southwest corner of the Main Lobby and 2 additional accessible gender-neutral restrooms located on Level 3 of the Theatre.

SECURITY: Upon arrival, all guests will be required to follow all security protocols and screenings, which may include walk through metal detectors and/or handheld wands in order to gain access into the venue.

SMOKING of any kind, including e-cigarettes and vaporizers, is strictly prohibited inside the theatre and within 25 feet of any entrances.



133 YEARS OF HISTORY AND COUNTING!

Designed by **Louis Sullivan** and **Dankmar Adler** at the behest of Chicago businessman Ferdinand Peck, the theatre was immediately hailed as one of the most beautiful venues in the world, with its gilded elegance, graceful design and perfect acoustics. Architectural giant Frank Lloyd Wright, who for one of his first jobs served as a draftsman on the project, would later note the Auditorium is: "The greatest room for music and opera in the world—bar none."

During its early decades, the Auditorium stage was the venue of choice for leading entertainers of the era, including **John Philip Sousa** and **Sarah Bernhardt**, as well as political figures including **Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt**, and **Booker T. Washington**. It also played host to not only operas and orchestras, but indoor baseball games, as well as a bowling alley while acting as a **Servicemen's Center** during WWII.

Since the late 1960s, the Auditorium earned a reputation as Chicago's home for music superstars, world premier dance companies, and even Broadway musicals!

We are a theatre that endures. To this day, the staff and Board of the Auditorium Theatre continue to preserve and restore this treasured building. Typically, more than 250 performances and events attract **over a quarter of a million people every year** to Chicago's landmark theatre, making it a true staple in Chicago and the rest of the world.

2021-22 SEASON IMPACT

ON OUR STAGE

- **24** Cultures + countries represented
- **179** In-person performances + events
- **1,446** Paid artists + theatre professionals
- **106,016** Audience members + counting!

IN OUR COMMUNITY

- **5** Signature education + outreach programs
- **41** Neighborhoods reached
- **954** People strengthened their communities through the performing arts

1889
Auditorium Theatre
officially opened

1893
US Congress
decision to host
World's Fair in
Chicago

1945
Post WW II closes
our doors

1960s
Beatrice Spachner:
renovate and
restore!

1967
Re-opening night
performance

1975
Declared a National
Historic Landmark

2020
Covid-19 pandemic
closes Auditorium's
doors

2021
Reopened after
600 days with a
record-breaking
season!

And beyond!
Home for the
best variety of
entertainment and
your memories!

Auditorium Theatre Staff and Board Members

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

Auditorium Theatre Sponsors

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

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Too Hot to Handel
Ishanee DeVas, Interim Producer
Lionell Moore, Booking and
Events Manager

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Helen Zorn, Ticket Services Associate

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Jeff Gandy, Creative Engagement and
Education Manager
Justin Cross,
Creative Engagement Intern

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Manager
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Production Coordinator
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The Auditorium Theatre is proud to acknowledge the following institutional partners for their generous support. Corporate, foundation, and government relationships are integral to the success of the Auditorium’s work on stage and in the community. This list is reflective of support from October 1, 2021 through November 6, 2022.



Our In-Kind Partners



TOO HOT TO HANDEL

THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH

WHAT'S YOUR HALLELUJAH MOMENT?

When The Too Hot Choir
nails it entrance on AHH WE
LIKE SHEEP

Bill Fraher, Choir Director

Alvin's improv, the following standing
ovation, right into the "Hallelujah Chorus"
with the audience dancing in the aisles!

Judie Green, Auditorium Staff — Chief Development Officer

Adventures with my Friends & family

Alex Cadice, Auditorium Staff — Marketing

My first performance came after my sister passed.
I wanted her to hear the performance; DA I
felt she d.d. 2007

Arthur Jones, Choir — Bass

Receiving a 2021 DCASE Grant
to produce a mural with youths
in paint, ceramic and mosaic!

Anne Farley Gaines, Choir — Alto

Having the opportunity to work with & get
to know our amazing Too Hot Ambassadors
on a deeper level :)

Helen Zorn, Auditorium Staff — Call Center

When the lights dim and the Orchestra swells to
life at the start of a live show that I've been
anticipating for a long time

Ryan Neil, Auditorium Staff — Call Center

Retirement!

Robin Speaks, Choir — Soprano

Knowing The Love of my
Chosen Family! ❤️
Charlie, Tim, Ez, Tony, Will, Mary, Jess, Sterlin, Eric, Hark, And so many more!

Sara Murphy, Choir — Alto



AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE® EST. 1889

PRESENTS

TOO HOT TO HANDEL

THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH

Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 7:30PM
Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 3PM

Original concept by Marin Alsop.
Arranged by Bob Christianson and Gary Anderson.



Sponsor Thank You

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Darrell Windle
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Performance Sponsor



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A HILTON HOTEL
Official Hotel
Partner



THANK YOU TO OUR FRIENDS OF TOO HOT TO HANDEL

Kathy and George Bliss
Linda and Eric Boasmond
Geneva and Robert Calloway
Tammy and Rob Campbell
Gwendolyn Cohen
Joan Colmar and Mitchell Sabshon
Marie and David Dickson
Patti Eylar and Charlie Gardner
Shelley and William Farley
Judie and Richard Green

Hermene Hartman, Chair Emeritus
Renee and Mel Katten
Dr. Paul M. Lisnek
Helen Hall Melchoir
Margaret and Dave Radelet
Michelle Rathel
Dave Samber and Darrell Windle
Janice Van Dyke and John Zeilstra
Nike B. Whitcomb and the late
Jim McKechnie

THANK YOU TO OUR AMBASSADORS

Too Hot Ambassadors are a group of enthusiastic volunteers who contribute to the show's success by bringing people to our historic theatre through personal promotion, group sales, and grassroots efforts. We thank you!

Vanessa Beavers
Rhonda Bell
Norm Cratty

Aida R. Gibson
Robin Speaks
Linnetta Taylor

Marcella Thomas
Althea Ward-Curtis

Program

Rodrick Dixon
Tenor

Alfreda Burke
Soprano

Karen Marie Richardson
Alto

Conductor: Suzanne Mallare Acton

Director: Joan Curto

Too Hot Choir Director: Bill Fraher

Concept: Marin Alsop

Co-Arrangers and Orchestrators:
Bob Christianson & Gary Anderson

Producer: Marisa C. Santiago

Interim Producer: Ishanee DeVas

Production Manager: Kim Grose

Production Coordinator: Maggie Walters

Sound Design: Daniel Turek

Lighting Designer: Matt Miller

Video Director: John Petrosky

Stage Manager: Ellen Peck

Musical Contractor: Sylvia de la Cerna

TOO HOT TO HANDEL
THE JAZZ-GOSPEL MESSIAH

PART I

Sinfony
Comfort Ye
Every Valley
And the Glory of the Lord
Thus Said the Lord
But Who May Abide
And He Shall Purify
Behold, A Virgin Shall Conceive
O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion
For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth
The People That Walked in Darkness
For Unto Us a Child is Born
There Were Shepherds Abiding in the Field
And Suddenly There was the Angel
Glory to God

INTERMISSION

PART II

Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion
Then Shall the Eyes of the Blind Be Opened
He Shall Feed His Flock
His Yoke is Easy
Behold, the Lamb of God
Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs
(with David Vaughn, bass baritone)
All We Like Sheep
Behold, I Tell You a Mystery
The Trumpet Shall Sound
The Lord Gave the Word
Why Do the Nations So Furiously Rage
Hallelujah!



Rodrick Dixon
Soloist

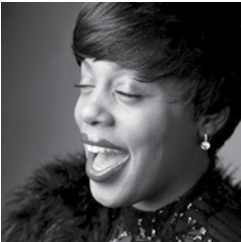
Rodrick Dixon possesses a tenor voice of extraordinary range and versatility that has earned him the respect and attention of leading conductors, orchestras and opera companies throughout the world. His 2022 season includes appearances with the Enescu Festival in the title role of Zemlinsky’s *Der Zwerg*, Philadelphia Orchestra for Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, Florida Orchestra for Mozart’s *Requiem*, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra’s UK premiere for Dett’s *The Ordering of Moses*; Beethoven’s 9th Symphony with the Richmond, Greensboro, Peoria, Asheville and Alexandria Symphonies. He will return to perform *Too Hot to Handel* for the Auditorium Theatre, Denver Symphony and debut the work with the Peoria Symphony. The 2023 season includes debuts with the Royal Opera House in *Das Rheingold*, The Royal Concertgebouw in *The Death of Klinghoffer*, the New York Philharmonic in *Done Made My Vow*, the Nashville Symphony world premiere of *The Jonah People*; Beethoven’s 9th Symphony with the South Dakota Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati May Festival; Aspen Music Festival in *Das Lied Von Der Erde* and University of Maryland and Belmont University’s world premiere of *Requiem For Colour*. Mr. Dixon’s TV credits include :PBS Great Performances *Now Hear This* with wife soprano Alfreda Burke and producer Fred Nelson III; Prague PBS Special *Hallelujah Broadway* with Alfreda Burke, Linda Eder and Anthony Kearns from the *Three Irish Tenors*; *Martha & Snoop’s Potluck Dinner Party* VH1; *Freedom Awards* National Civil Rights Museum; *An Evening with Vernon Jordan/History Makers* WETA, PBS; *The US Air Force 60th Anniversary Musical Celebration*; *Cook, Dixon & Young Vol. 1* PBS Great Performances; Washington Opera Gala at Constitution Hall; The Mark Twain Awards Honoring Whoopi Goldberg at the Kennedy Center; *Three Mo’ Tenors* PBS Great Performances and *My Favorite Broadway: The Love Songs* at City Center. His discography includes: *Der Zwerg* DVD ArtHaus Musik (James Conlon conducting, LA Opera), *The Ordering of Moses* CD Bridge Records (James Conlon conducting, Live at Carnegie Hall), *Recorded Music of the African Diaspora* CD Albany Records, *Can You Hear God Crying* DVD Naxos (Dirk Brosse Conducting Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Hannibal Lokumbe composer), *Three Mo’ Tenors* DVD/CD Sony/BMG PBS Great Performances, *Cook, Dixon & Young Vol. 1* DVD/CD Sony/BMG PBS Great Performances, PBS *Hallelujah Broadway* EMI DVD/CD (Starring Rodrick Dixon, Alfreda Burke, Linda Eder and Anthony Kearns), *Home for the Holidays* CD Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, *The Right Frame of Mind* CD Blue Griffin Records, *Follow That Star Christmas* CD EMI Records, *The Prayer* introducing Cape Town South Africa Whitney April, *When Glory Calls Me* composed by Lana Manson, Liam Lawton’s *Sacred Land* CD, *Triptych...A Celebration of the Negro Spiritual* CD and *The Praise + Worship Experience* CD (Marvin L. Winans).



Alfreda Burke
Soloist

Alfreda Burke’s vocal artistry has been described as “*voluptuous, creamy and luxuriant*” (Chicago Tribune). She has appeared in concert throughout North America and in Europe. She made her Carnegie and Orchestra Hall debuts in Strauss’ *Elektra* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra led by Daniel Barenboim. Highlighted international performances include the Royal Philharmonic (UK); Prague Philharmonic; Umbria Music Festival (Italy); Miss World (China, UK, US, Puerto Rico); *Humanity Rising: Notre-Dame Reborn* Virtual Gala; Mandela, Miss World Beauty *With A Purpose & Rise Against Hunger* events and Gala (South Africa); Holders Season Gala (Barbados). Highlighted national performances include the Kennedy Center, Cincinnati Pops Symphony Orchestra; Michigan Opera Theatre/Detroit Symphony; Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; Orpheum Theatre (Memphis); Hannibal Lokumbe’s *Crucifixion Resurrection*; Lancaster Festival; TodiMusicFest; Corrales Cultural Arts Council (New Mexico); CSO at Ravinia Festival; *Sentinel of the Sea Award* Virtual Celebration honoring Gary Sinise; Millennium Park Gala; Grant Park Music Festival; Chicago Opera Theater; Chicagoland Pops Orchestra; NATO Chicago Summit; Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks; Ravinia TV; Auditorium Theatre’s *Too Hot To Handel*, a duo show, *125 Living the History*, virtual live-streamed *At-Home* series and *Holiday Concert*. Ms. Burke filmed Prague PBS Special *Hallelujah Broadway* with Rodrick Dixon; they were featured in PBS Great Performances *Now Hear This: “Florence Price and the American Migration”*; and sang in the historical Mayoral Inauguration of The Honorable Lori E. Lightfoot (Chicago’s Wintrust Arena, 2019). Other recordings include her solo CD, *From the Heart* and Chicago Olympic 2016 Bid Anthem, *I Will Stand*. She was soprano soloist in Dawa movies soundtrack featuring Ramsey Lewis, Maestro James Mack and members of the CSO; appeared in Celine Dion’s *I’m Your Angel* video; made solo appearances on the WTTW/Odyssey broadcast of *30 Good Minutes*; performed the National Anthem for the Chicago Bulls and Chicago Fire. Burke’s *Negro Mother* performance with the Michael Teolis Singers is archived in the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Song cycles for Burke were composed by Dr. Edward Hart and Belford Hernandez. A double Alumna, Ms. Burke serves on the Roosevelt University CCPA Advisory Board (2010-current), Community Engagement Committee Chair (2018-20). She was Guest Lecturer in Voice at Wheaton College (1997-2009). She is honored to be a *HistoryMaker* and permanent part of their collection at the Library of Congress. Visit Ms. Burke at sopranoalfredaburke.com, on YouTube, Facebook; follow her on Twitter @AlfredaBurke17.

The talent, support, and encouragement of Alfreda Burke’s beloved parents ignited her musical passion. Her performances are dedicated to the life, love, legacy and cherished memory of Pastor John H. Burke Jr. and First Lady Mamie R. Burke.



Karen Marie Richardson
Soloist

Karen Marie Richardson is a songwriter, vocal arranger, actress, educator, and musician and a Chicago native who is known nationally for her vocals. She has performed in Too Hot to Handel as the alto soloist at the Auditorium Theatre and Detroit Opera House for over last ten seasons. She is currently starring in the Off-Broadway sensation *Sleep No More* as jazz chanteuse Stella Sinclair, where she has sung duets with P!nk and John Legend. She can also be seen as the Canteen Chanteuse in the movie adaptation of the Michael John Lachiusa musical *Hello Again*. In the past, she has also appeared on television, vocally supporting Grammy Award-nominated artist Andra Day on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, *The Wendy Williams Show*, *Good Morning America*, *CBS This Morning*, and *Live With Kelly*. She was featured in the pilot episode of *Vinyl* on HBO, directed by Martin Scorsese. She is one of the few artists to perform in Duke Ellington’s *Queenie Pie* in the title role (at the Long Beach Opera and Chicago Opera Theater). She portrayed the *Queen of Night* in the *Baz Dazzled* series at Barneys New York under the direction of Baz Luhrmann. She can also be seen on YouTube as a featured vocalist and co-arranger in a few viral videos. She holds a BFA in musical theatre from Millikin University.



Alvin B. Waddles
Piano

Alvin Waddles is a native Detroiter. An alum of the Interlochen Arts Academy and the University of Michigan School of music, he returned home to immerse himself in the rich musical culture of the city. His performance style has been described as eclectic, imaginative, inspiring, instantly recognizable and deeply personal, earning him the moniker “A Detroit Original.”

Waddles has delighted Detroit music lovers with performances at a variety of musical events including the Michigan Jazz Festival, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, the Detroit International Jazz Festival and was named the 2022 Legacy Artist by the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation. He has appeared as a soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra and the Rochester Symphony.

Mr. Waddles’ engagements as a soloist and featured artist have taken him to a variety of destinations including Beijing, Barbados, Vienna, London, Paris, Barcelona, and Ghana, West Africa. He has also traveled extensively as musical director/pianist for Cook, Dixon, and Young. He has been blessed to work with many great artists including Aretha Franklin, Anita Baker, George Shirley, Brazeal Dennard, Tremaine Hawkins, Stephanie Mills, Lillias White, Jack Jones and Minister Thomas Whitfield.



Suzanne Acton
Conductor

Conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton is known for her versatility and energy on the podium with a repertoire that ranges from opera to jazz. As Assistant Music Director/Chorus Master of Detroit Opera, she has more than 160 production credits covering 7 languages. In addition to her chorus work, Ms. Acton has conducted over 35 productions for the company, including *West Side Story*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Carmen*, *Music Man*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata*, *A Little Night Music*, a staged version of *Carmina Burana* with members of the Cirque du Soleil, *The Medium*, *View from the Bridge*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and *Frida*.

Additional conducting credits include *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera, *The Merry Widow* and *Madama Butterfly* for Artpark, *Tosca* for Augusta Opera, *La Traviata*, *L’Elisir D’Amore*, and *Gianni Schicchi* for Verdi Opera Theatre, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Traviata*, *The Magic Flute*, *Carmen* at the Wharton Center, *Cavalleria Rusticana* for Friends of the Opera and *Frida* for El Paso Opera. Ms. Acton has served as guest conductor for Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Lexington Bach Festival, Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra and Dearborn Symphony Orchestra. Recording credits include Chorus Master of Hannibal Lokumbe’s *Dear Mrs. Parks* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on the Naxos label.

For 25 years, Ms. Acton was artistic/music director of Rackham Choir. During her tenure, she programmed and conducted numerous multi-media productions including the Detroit premiere of *Voices of Light*, a work for soloists, orchestra, choir and the historic silent film “*The Passion of Joan of Arc*” and Karl Jenkins’ *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* with the premier of an original film *The Armed Boy* commissioned by Rackham. Under her leadership, Rackham Choir received the prestigious 2008 Governor’s Awards for Arts & Culture for outstanding contributions to arts and culture in Michigan. Ms. Acton has been recognized by Corp! Magazine as one of Michigan’s 95 Most Powerful Women. In 2014, she was one of 12 women selected as WJR’s Women Who Lead.

Ms. Acton has premiered Too Hot to Handel in the Detroit Opera House, The Orpheum Theatre in Memphis, and here in Chicago’s Auditorium Theatre. She is thrilled to return to this magnificent and historic theater, and to lead the Chicago “Too Hot” family in her 17th year as conductor.



Joan Curto
Director

Joan is thrilled to be joining the Too Hot Family this year! Having been an enthusiastic Too Hot to Handel audience member many times, it is an honor to be involved in this production. Chicago based; she is a familiar face to Chicago audiences. Joan has served as a producer, director and performer in many Chicago based concerts. Most recently, Joan produced and directed several highly acclaim concerts in partnership with The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University celebrating the music of legends including *Cole Porter 125* in 2016, and *Ella and Lena, The Ladies and Their Music* in 2017, and *Chicago Celebrates Sondheim* in 2019. She has also directed and produced several Concerts for the Chicago Cabaret Professionals and The Humanities Festival. She directed the re-opening of the famed *Empire Room* in the Palmer House Hotel in 2015. Joan has performed in many other Chicago theaters and clubs including: The Harris Theater, The Empire Room, Victory Gardens, Davenport, The Drury Lane Theater, Park West, The Thorne Auditorium, and the Claudia Cassidy Theater. She has been seen in numerous Chicago Humanities Festivals and the Mabel Mercer Foundation's Cabaret Conventions. Nationally, Joan has performed in some of the top cabaret clubs and concert series including New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Room, The Sharon Lynne Wilson Center in Milwaukee, and The Overture Center in Madison, The Asolo Theatre in Sarasota, The Gardenia in Los Angeles and the Colony Hotel, Palm Beach.

In 2016 Joan was recognized and awarded with the *Gold Coast Award* by Chicago Cabaret Professionals for her contributions to the art of cabaret and awarded the *Chicago After Dark Award* for Outstanding Cabaret Artist. She continues to explore the songs of both the Classic and the New American Songbook and has developed and performed shows across the country featuring the music of Cole Porter, George & Ira Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Jerry Herman, and Stephen Sondheim. Howard Reich from The Chicago Tribune has praised Joan's work describing her as "a seasoned interpreter who makes every note count." You can find her music on CDBaby.com, iTunes and Amazon or through her website: joancurto.com



Bill Fraher
Too Hot Choir Director

Bill Fraher is a native of rural Illinois who has been making music since he was a child and conducting choirs since high school. He has served as pianist, organist, music director, and worship director at churches in St. Louis, Oakland, San Francisco, and the Chicago area. He was Director of Music at Chicago's historic Old St. Patrick's Church from 1991 to 2013. During that time, the music program expanded to include numerous liturgical choirs as well as a number of concert choirs that delighted audiences not only at Old St. Patrick's Church, but at Chicago's Symphony Center; Galway, Ireland's Arts Festival; The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University; and the National Concert Hall of Ireland in Dublin. During his tenure, commissioned works came from Ireland's Shaun Davey, Noel Eccles, and Liam Lawton and from Chicago's Rory Cooney, Gary Fry, Scott Stevenson, and Ben Wedge.

From 2013 to 2020 he continued at Old St. Patrick's Church as Creator, Music Director, and Producer of *Deck the Hal'* and *Siamsa na nGael: A Celebration Of The Celtic Arts*. Some of the programs he created along with Mary Evers, Mary Pat Kelly, and David and Patti Kovacs were *If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews*; *The Most Dangerous Woman In America: Ireland's Mother Jones*; *A Bridge Over The Troubles: The Peace Bridge* telling the story of Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement; *Make Them Hear You* – John Riley, the San Patricios, and Chile's Bernardo O'Higgins; *Journey to Justice: the Story of Two Liberators - Ireland's Daniel O'Connell and America's Frederick Douglass*; and *The USS Mason in Derry, Northern Ireland*.

Bill has been Director of Chicago's Too Hot Choir since its beginning. Singers are welcomed from throughout the Chicago metropolitan area — from Hoffman Estates to Crown Pointe and Gary, IN; from Broadview to Lakeview; from Hyde Park to Lincoln Park to Oak Park; from Aurora to Harvey to Joliet; from the west side of the city to the north and south sides. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful, hardworking group of singers or for more information on any of the programs Fraher is involved in, please contact him at BillFraher52@gmail.com.



Chris Mahieu
Rehearsal Pianist

Chris Mahieu studied classical piano at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music. Since then, his interests have led him to jazz and other styles of piano. He is an active performer in Chicago in both jazz and classical settings and has performed at venues including Chicago Jazz Fest, Jazz Showcase, the Green Mill, and Symphony Center. Outside of music, Mahieu is also a Registered Nurse and the father of two wonderful kids, ages 3 and 4.



Daniel Turek
Sound Designer

Daniel has been the sound designer and audio mixer for the Chicago production of Too Hot to Handel at the Auditorium Theatre every year since the very first show in 2005. He has greatly enjoyed collaborating with the artists to make the show sound better and more exciting with every new performance. Over those years the technology for amplifying music has also changed significantly, and Daniel enthusiastically dug into the creative challenge of using new technology to enhance this timeless music, and he prides himself on adding his individual touches to every unique performance. Daniel began his interest in classical music in 2000 as Technical Director at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall at Northwestern University where he managed a staff of music students for concert recording. He shared his love of recording with the students who in turn taught him appreciation of the classical music art. Today Daniel can be found mixing concerts and events all over the country, or in his home studio in Chicago recording his own music with friends.



Matt Miller
Lighting Designer

Based in Chicago, IL, Matt’s lighting portfolio includes a broad variety of projects in the industry including Dance, Theatre, Music, Corporate Events, Installations, Filmed Projects, and more. His design credits include work for such companies as *Hubbard Street Dance Chicago*, *Yeager Design*, *The Joffrey Ballet*, *Microsoft*, *Ballet Idaho*, *Mercedes*, *Kurt Elling*, *Starbucks*, *Atlanta Ballet*, *Verizon*, *The Chicago Symphony Orchestra*, *Airbnb*, & *Google*, to name a few. Matt has toured extensively throughout the US and internationally to over a dozen countries. During his time with Hubbard Street, he designed over thirty new works and had the honor to act as a cultural ambassador for the US State Department during Hubbard Street’s participation in *Dancemotion USA*. Matt is an alumnus of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, as well as a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. Special thanks to his wife Marisa, who is the perfect woman, and to their new baby Milo. mmiller-lighting.com



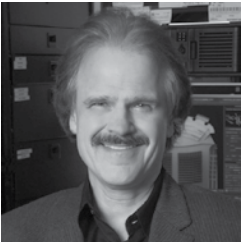
John Petrosky
Video Designer

John Petrosky has worked for decades around Chicago in many aspects of broadcast TV, media and event production, including the past 10 years at (Tribeca) Flashpoint Chicago, a media arts college, teaching and encouraging the next generation of production professionals in film and broadcast as well as sound and graphics. In addition to Too Hot to Handel, John regularly directs live concerts for the Village of New Lenox, where he resides with his wife and four children, featuring a wide variety of artists and groups from Richard Marx to ZZ Top and Huey Lewis to Counting Crows as part of the Village’s “Triple Play” concert series. He has also produced and/or directed a number of livestream events prior to, as well as during, the pandemic including United Way’s “Battle of the (Corporate) Bands”, an online fundraising gala for Beat the Streets Chicago and several pilot talk shows. This is John’s second time directing video on Too Hot to Handel.



Marin Alsop
Concept

One of the foremost conductors of our time, Marin Alsop represents a powerful and inspiring voice. The first woman to serve as the head of a major orchestra in the U.S., South America, Austria and Britain, she is the first and only conductor to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. She holds positions as Chief Conductor of the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, first Music Director of the University of Maryland’s National Orchestral Institute + Festival, Conductor of Honour of Brazil’s São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, and Chief Conductor and Curator of Chicago’s Ravinia Festival, where she conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s summer residencies. Later this year, after an outstanding 14-year tenure as its Music Director, she assumes the title of Music Director Laureate and OrchKids Founder of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She is also the founder of the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, which promotes and nurtures the careers of fellow female conductors.

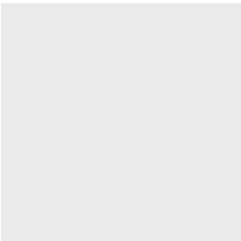


Bob Christianson
Co-arranger & Orchestrator

Bob Christianson is a composer, arranger, keyboard player and conductor. Bob is the composer, arranger, and executive producer of the WTTW-PBS Special A Christmas Carol – The Concert. The project, which was a three-year labor of love that he considers to be one of the highlights of his career, was nominated in 2014 for a Prime Time Emmy for Outstanding Music & Lyrics (lyrics & book adaptation by Alisa Hauser). His new musical, Take Me America (book & lyrics by Bill Nabel), recently had a two-month run at the prestigious Village Theatre in Seattle.

He was the most called-upon composer for the HBO series Sex and the City. He was Emmy-nominated for work on ABC Sports and has scored many series for the Discovery networks. His television credits also include Mysteries of the Museum (Travel Channel), and the iconic NCAA Basketball Theme for CBS. He has also scored Life is Wild (CW), The Equalizer (CBS), Gimme a Break (NBC), and the Winter Olympics (CBS). Bob has written over 25 award-winning sports themes for CBS, ESPN and ABC.

His career began in New York as musical director/conductor for such Broadway shows as Godspell, The Magic Show, and Gilda Radner - Live From New York. As a successful studio synthesist, he has recorded with such producers as the late, great Arif Mardin, and with such artists as Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, Jan Hammer, Judy Collins, Dianna Ross & Rupert Holmes. His orchestra works have been performed by The Baltimore Symphony, The Colorado Symphony, The Concordia Orchestra, The Florida Orchestra, and others.



Gary Anderson
Co-arranger & Orchestrator

Gary Anderson is an acclaimed composer, producer, and artist who has accumulated a wide range of work, from the world-known themes of ABC and CNN to the critically acclaimed underscore for animations by Ralph Bakshi and Matt Groening. He has worked with legends from Frank Sinatra to Chaka Khan to Judy Collins. A summa cum laude graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Anderson began his career with a four-year tenure as a full-time professor at the world-renowned school. He was awarded his alma mater’s Outstanding Achievement Award and was named one of the college’s 50 outstanding graduates, along with fellow alumni Quincy Jones, Arif Mardin, Alf Clausen, and Gary Burton. In network and cable television, his music can be heard on ABC, CNN, CBS, PBS, NBC, and (not to forget Bart Simpson’s favorite) the theme from The Itchy and Scratchy Show.

Marin Alsop, *Concept*
Bob Christianson, *Co-Arranger & Ochestrator*
Gary Anderson, *Co-Arranger & Orchestrator*
Suzanne Mallare Acton, *Conductor*
Joan Curto, *Director*

Choir

Bill Fraher, *Too Hot Choir Director – Chicago and Detroit* **
Chris Mayhew, *Accompanist – Chicago and Detroit Choir* **

SOPRANO

Victoria Bigelow*
Elisabeth Bombell
Maria Brady**
Karen Callam
Sandra Davis
Liz Gassner
Beth Hafter
Beth Anne Hostert
Yvonne Levy
Julie McKeough
Renee Merrill
Dina Schenk
Karen Slawik
Robin Speaks**
Linnetta Taylor

Gima Vergara
Althea Ward Curtis**
Katherine Winson

ALTO

Beth Awerkamp**
Emily Eichenhorn*
Anne Farley Gaines
Lisa Gilmore
Kathryn Kelly
Loryn Kogan
Sarah Lang
Kim Minichiello**
Patricia A. Minnick*
Sara Murphy
Cheryl Murphy**

Judith Popovich
Katie Randall
Jackie Roberson***^
Linda Scott
Robin Simon**
Joan Sporny

TENOR

Norm Cratty
Jeff Fritz*
Patrick Garner
Kevin Glover
Wesley Rizal**
Mike Spurlock
Leslie Star**

BASS

Simone Bonino*
Frederick Butzen
Bruce Dopke**
Dan Gardiner***^
Arthur Jones
Michael Murphy**
Warren Rosen
Peter Sullivan
David Vaughn*
Will Yeats*
* Member of Rackham Symphony Choir, Detroit
** Steering Committee Member
^ Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Jazz Band

Alvin Waddles, Piano
Fred Hughes, Organ

Marion Hayden,
String Bass

James Simonson,
Electric Bass

Alan Ayoub, Electric Guitar
David Taylor, Drums

Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Jenny Cappelli,
Concertmaster
Heather Boehm
Kjersti Nostbakken
Rika Seko
Jeff Yang
Edith Yokley

VIOLIN II

Paul Vanderwerf, Principal
Jennifer Dunne
Lisa Fako
Barbara Farley
Lucinda Ali Landing
Clayton Penrose-Whitmore

VIOLA

Daniel Golden, Principal
Michael Hall
Dorothy Okpebholo
Rachel Taylor

CELLO

Alexa Muhly, Principal
Elizabeth Anderson
Ed Moore
Richard Yeo

BASS

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FRENCH HORN

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William Denton
John Moore

TROMBONE

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Steve Berry
Mark Fry

TIMPANI

Tina Laughlin, Principal

PERCUSSION

Eric Hines, Principal



COMMUNITY MAKES US

From those experiencing it for the first time, to the ones who have held it in their hearts since its debut 18 years ago, *Too Hot to Handel* leaves an enduring impact on the artists and audiences who bring it to the Auditorium stage every year. Just take it from some of our choir members, who have had the opportunity to witness the positive influence this show has had on their community.

Robin Speaks is a Soprano section leader, and she has been a member of the *Too Hot* choir for 16 years. As someone who has maintained such a long-standing involvement in the production, Robin observes the importance of *Too Hot* through the message it brings “about love, about hope, about humanity, about how we treat each other... *Too Hot* is love.” And for others, like fellow Soprano Sandra Davis, the performance is a religious experience. “The message in *Too Hot*, the message from Handel, it’s a sacred, religious message. When I sing the words, I am praying.”

Even though many singers continue to participate year after year, they never forget the impact it has on new audiences. Tenor and *Too Hot* Ambassador Norm Cratty, who has performed in every production of *Too Hot* since its inception,

describes the show as “transformational, especially for people who haven’t seen it before.” And for some, this transformational experience can draw them from the seats in the audience to the stage, becoming an active participant in creating musical magic.

Anne Farley Gaines is an Alto who is joining the choir for the first time this year after seeing the show in 2019. “I had tears. I had goosebumps, and I looked around me, and there were other people around me with tears in their eyes, singing their hearts out,” Anne says of the iconic Hallelujah Chorus. And now, as a member of the choir, she continues to experience “a real sense of comradeship and fellowship and kinship with the people around [her], and they all love it too... and it really is so spiritual and uplifting.”

We are thankful for everyone who makes *Too Hot to Handel* possible, both onstage and off. By being here tonight, you are now an essential part of the ever-growing *Too Hot* community, and we look forward to singing Hallelujah with you tonight and for years to come. **Welcome to the *Too Hot* Family!**

REMEMBERING RUBÉN ALVAREZ

OUR “TOO HOT TO HANDEL” FAMILY LOST A DEAR FRIEND ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2022. For 15 seasons Rubén sat stage right with his percussion instruments, his eyes twinkling, a smile on his face, and his signature cap. His consummate skill, boundless energy, and palpable joy for expressing his craft captivated audiences, as well as his fellow musicians.

Rubén P. Alvarez was a Chicago-based Latin percussionist, drum set artist, and educator. His credits included musical theatre as a percussionist and musical consultant for the Goodman Theatre Production “Crowns”, and the Broadway Chicago run of “The Lion King,” and performances and recordings with blues artists John Mayall and Junior Wells, rock artists Dave Mason and Dennis De Young, and jazz artists including Grammy nominee Ramsey Lewis, Patricia Barber, Dave Valentín, Slide Hampton, Grammy winner Arturo Sandoval, and 2010 Latin and Latin Grammy nominees Sones De Mexico.

“I so much enjoyed working with Rubén. His performances **inspired** those on the stage and in the audience with his **radiant personality, consummate musicianship, and energetic spirit.** His **improv** with Dave Taylor was a highlight. How fortunate we all were to have experienced his artistry.”

— “Too Hot” Maestro Suzanne Acton

As an educator Rubén taught Latin percussion and directed ensembles at Northwestern University, Roosevelt University, Columbia College and Prairie State College. He was a featured presenter at national and international music education conferences, and was teaching artist for the Jazz Institute of Chicago’s Jazz Links residency program.

THTH Soloist and CCPA (Chicago College of Performing Arts) Advisory Board Member Alfreda Burke summed up Rubén’s indelible impact on audiences, colleagues, students, and the art form itself:

“I loved the **kind exchanges** stage right with Rubén Alvarez during the *Too Hot to Handel* performances. He was a **warm, generous, gifted phenomenon.** Everywhere I bumped into him, I felt that warmth. He presented Roosevelt University’s (RU) CCPA jazz ensembles for one of our RU CCPA Advisory Board meetings, as well as RU Vivid student showcases. It was clear that the students **highly regarded** him. He will be sorely missed in both the performance and education industries. Rest In Peace, dear Rubén.”





FRIEND OF *TOO HOT* SPOTLIGHT: GWEN COHEN

For nearly twenty years, *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*, has been a fixture on the Auditorium's stage. Profound, kinetic, diverse, and unique, *Too Hot* is one of our theatre's most celebrated productions...and a rousing tribute to the power of music.

Too Hot to Handel is a celebration of community—and the generosity of the community is essential to its success. In fact, the annual support of a community of exceptional benefactors, the Friends of *Too Hot to Handel*, helps ensure the show's presence on our stage.

The Friends of *Too Hot* are all united by their appreciation of this production. One member, Gwen Cohen, exemplifies the warmth and enthusiasm that make this group so integral to *Too Hot to Handel*, and to the Auditorium's legacy.

Gwen is a wealth advisor at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, a role she says: "helps people preserve the things they treasure." Gwen makes an incalculable difference in the lives of many—but her efforts extend beyond her profession into volunteer work that benefits a variety of causes.

As a board member of Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts, Gwen met Alfreda Burke, the sublime soprano and one of the stars of *Too Hot to Handel*. This relationship was instrumental in familiarizing Gwen with *Too Hot* and its importance to Chicago.

Gwen hails from a musical family, and the power of music was instilled within her at a very young age. "My mother was wonderfully talented," Gwen recalls. "We grew up around music, and learned

to appreciate it from her. She even appeared on a PBS special as part of a folk singing group."

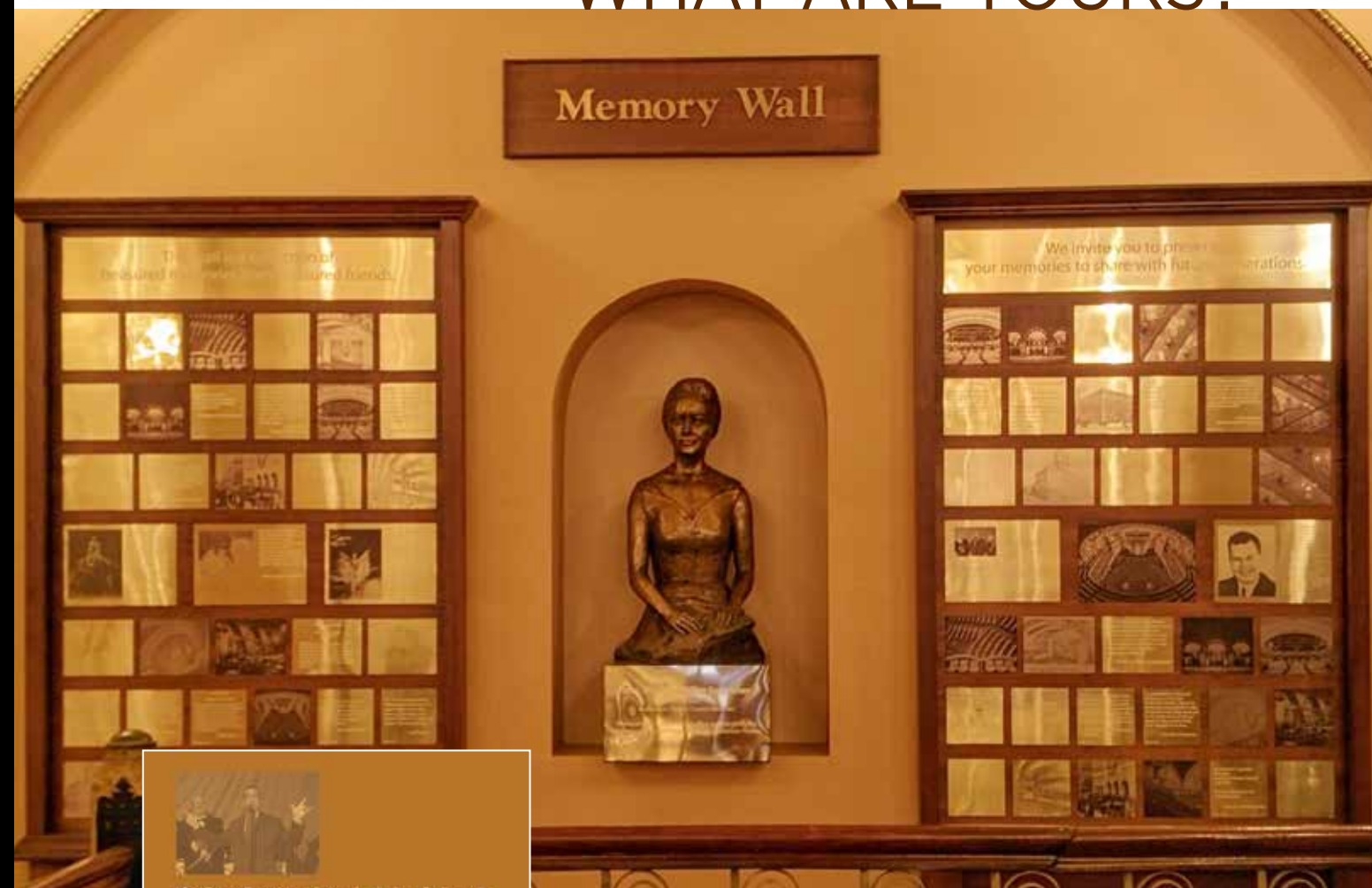
Gwen's mother taught her to sing, and helped Gwen harness her musical abilities to discover her inner voice. Gwen was bullied in her youth, but singing provided her with the confidence she needed to find success in life. And today, Gwen sees the values she discovered through music ingrained in *Too Hot to Handel*. "I enjoy seeing the change that comes over a quiet person," Gwen says. "The music reaches everyone gathered together in this beautiful theatre. The music wafts into you and you want to be part of it, to move the way that the performers do. Before, we all spoke differently, and looked at things differently. During and after the performance, we all speak the same language."

It is this commonality that provides the foundation of *Too Hot to Handel*, a production that illustrates that music speaks to something grander than our everyday concerns. Music unites and empowers, instills values and bridges divisions, and we are honored to have friends like Gwen who recognize and champion these ideals. Her kindness inspires us, and her commitment as a Friend of *Too Hot* ensures that the music's power and its message will resonate beyond our soaring arches and into the communities, the city, and the world that we share.



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
BECOMING A FRIEND OF *TOO HOT*,**
please call 312.341.2397 or email
giving@auditoriumtheatre.org.

WE HAVE OUR MEMORIES... WHAT ARE YOURS?



I fondly recall serving as Emcee for the benefit dinner & performance of Broadway's Christine Ebersol & pianist Billy Stritch. Held on the stage and looking out over the house... WOW! And I will always remember the naming of the lobby coffee and merchandise counters.

With love, Dr. Paul M. Lisnek



While we remember "Les Miz" and "Phantom" and "Miss Saigon" and Tony Bennett without a mike and exceptional dance programming, our dearest memories are of Patti dancing Chicago City Ballet's Gala Opening Night, then in "Cinderella" through the years, and most recently appearing in Joffrey's "La Bayadere."

Patti Elyar and Charlie Gardner

Located across the lobby from the theatre's entrance, the Memory Wall is a collection of treasured memories from our dear friends. Your gift of \$2,500, \$5,000, or \$10,000 will allow your remembrance to grace the lobby so that future patrons will know of your role in shaping our legacy. Photo engraving available on premium spaces.

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES WITH US.

Call 312.341.2397 for further details.

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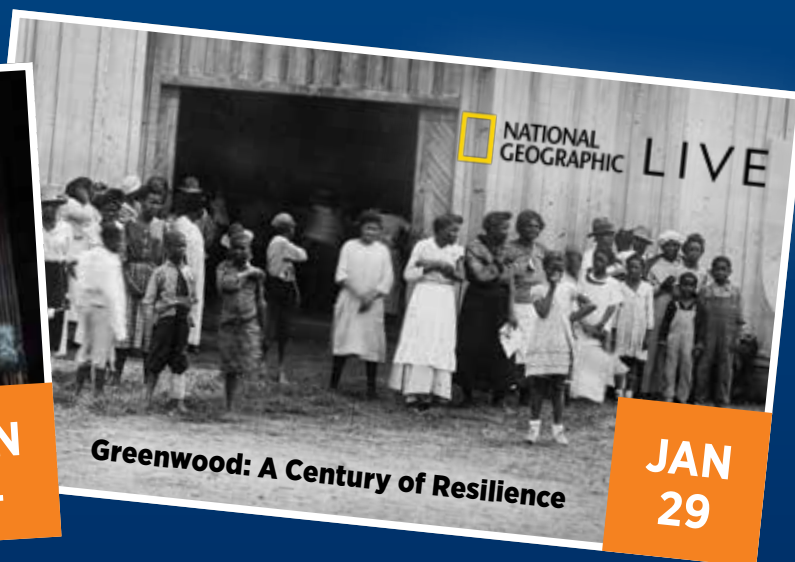
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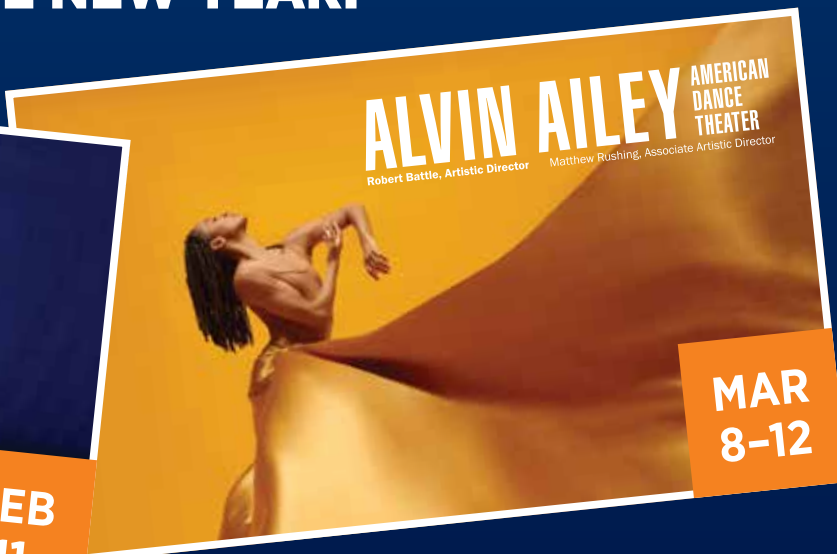
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