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CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK 2020

FEBRUARY 13-23

**Celebrate Valentine's Day, honor Black History Month, and more
during Chicago Theatre Week 2020
February 13-23, 2020**

Discount tickets to more than 120 productions now on sale

Chicago – Audiences can celebrate Valentine's Day, honor Black History Month, and more during **Chicago Theatre Week (#CTW20)**. With over 120 participating productions, there is something for everyone during Chicago Theatre Week, running February 13-23, 2020. Value-priced tickets, priced at \$30, \$15, or less, are now available at ChicagoTheatreWeek.com.

Now entering its eighth year, Chicago Theatre Week is a highly anticipated event that allows visitors and locals to sample the extraordinary range of theatrical offerings throughout Chicago. As a program of the League of Chicago Theatres, in partnership with Choose Chicago, more than 120 theatre productions are participating in neighborhoods throughout the city and suburbs.

From joy to heartache and every feeling in between, Chicago theatre tells stories that evoke big emotions. Stories that take risks, inspire awe, ask tough questions – and dare audiences to do the same. From musicals to plays to comedy, theatre is for everyone in Chicago. Chicago Theatre Week is a celebration of the stories we share.

A selection of romantic musicals, plays and comedy productions for Valentine's Day includes:

Jane Austen's beloved novel *Emma* is now a deliciously charming musical at **Chicago Shakespeare Theater!** Privileged, pampered, and preoccupied with romance, Emma Woodhouse indulges in her pastime of misguided matchmaking, but remains quite clueless when it comes to her own feelings—and a

gentleman named Mr. Knightley. This blissfully entertaining production promises to light a spark in your heart that will warm up even the coldest Chicago winter.

Drury Lane Theatre presents the regional premiere of the beautifully captivating Gershwin musical **An American in Paris**. Based on the Academy Award winner for Best Picture, *An American in Paris* brings breathtaking moments of dance and song to the stage. The storied streets of the City of Light become the dancefloor to a ravishing and passionate voyage into art, friendship, and love, set to the music of George and Ira Gershwin.

Men Are From Mars – Women Are From Venus LIVE!, the Off-Broadway hit comedy based on *The New York Times* #1 best-selling book of the last decade by John Gray, comes to the **Broadway Playhouse** by popular demand. Moving swiftly through a series of vignettes, the show covers everything from dating and marriage to the bedroom. This hysterical show will have couples elbowing each other all evening as they see themselves on stage. Sexy and fast-paced, this show is definitely for adults, but will leave audiences laughing and giggling like little kids.

Happy Valen-TINAS Day at **The iO Theater**. Celebrate the month of love with Las Tinas, Chicago's only improvised telenovela. These Latinx comedians create never-before-seen soap opera. Enter the telenovela world by being part of the drama, laugh at spicy comedy, and be showered with love (and tequila shots).

The iO Theater also presents **Improvised Jane Austen**. The long-running, all-female comedy team will conjure a tale on the spot in the style of the beloved 19th-century British novelist, Jane Austen.

Dances from the Heart at the **Athenaeum Theatre** showcases the most romantic works from **Dance Chicago** performers featuring an amazing array of dance styles such as aerial, tap, urban fusion, jazz, contemporary, Irish, Mexican folkloric, hip-hop and more.

A selection of anti-Valentine's Day productions includes:

Tracy Lett's cult classic **BUG**— a luridly funny tale of love, paranoia and government conspiracy— makes its **Steppenwolf Theatre** debut with ensemble members Carrie Coon and Namir Smallwood. In a seedy Oklahoma motel room, a lonely waitress begins an unexpected love affair with a young drifter. And then they see the first bugs.

Steven Dietz's world premiere psychological thriller **How A Boy Falls** plays at **Northlight Theatre**. A newly hired au pair named Chelle is thrust into the midst of a mystery when the sudden disappearance of a young boy casts suspicion on her and the boy's wealthy parents. The parents are seeking answers— and possibly revenge—while Chelle is hatching a dangerous scheme of her own.

How to Defend Yourself, a new play by Liliana Padilla at **Victory Gardens Theater**, circles around seven college students who gather for a DIY self-defense workshop after a sorority sister is raped. They learn how to “not be a victim”, how to use their bodies as weapons, how to fend off attackers. The form of self-defense becomes a channel for their rage, trauma, confusion, anxiety and desire—lots of desire.

Raven Theatre presents a vibrant and progressive new adaptation of **A Doll's House**. Life with her husband, Torvald, is comfortable, if uninteresting. But when an old acquaintance reappears, threatening to bring Nora's secrets to light, everything changes. As her marriage, her relationships, and her world crumble, she begins to speak her mind and question what she really wants for herself.

Relevant shows to honor Black History Month include:

Lifeline Theatre Artistic Director Ilesa Duncan and David Barr III revisit Charles Johnson's epic tale, **Middle Passage**. A newly freed Illinois slave eking out a living in 1830 New Orleans stows away aboard

an outbound rigger, to evade debtors enforcing marriage. But his clever escape backfires as the clipper turns out to be a slave ship bound for Africa. He must choose between a fanatical captain, a mutinous crew, and the Africans seeking escape. Building on a tradition of African American storytelling, this tale challenges perceptions of American identity using a Black aesthetic.

TimeLine Theatre presents James Ijames' ***Kill Move Paradise***, a powerful and provocative reflection on recent events, illustrating the possibilities of collective transformation and radical acts of joy. Inspired by the ever-growing list of slain unarmed black men and women, *Kill Move Paradise* is a portrait of those lost—not as statistics, but as heroes who deserve to be seen for the splendid beings they are.

Voice of Good Hope at **City Lit Theater** is a dramatic portrait of Barbara Jordan, the first African American congresswoman to be elected from the Deep South.

MPAACT presents the world premiere of ***Spoken Word*** at **Greenhouse Theater Center**. Written by Shepsu Aakhu and directed by Lauren "LL" Lundy, *Spoken Word* takes place in a small community dominated by hearsay, fear, outrage, and over-reaching authority figures. On the isolated campus of a Midwest university - sex, race, and gender collide in an epic culture war.

Writers Theatre presents ***Stick Fly***, written by Lydia R. Diamond and directed by WT Resident Director Ron OJ Parson. Sibling rivalries and parental expectations come to a head as family secrets emerge during a weekend away that becomes more "interrogation" than "relaxation" in this witty and moving rollercoaster of a family comedy-drama.

Dominican University Performing Arts Center presents ***We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***, a joyful celebration of music from across the African American that electrified generations of Civil Rights activists and defenders, interwoven with spoken word from Dr. King's recorded speeches.

Broadway In Chicago presents ***SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*** at the James M. Nederlander Theatre. She was a girl from Boston with a voice from heaven, who shot through the stars from gospel choir to dance floor diva. But what the world didn't know was how Donna Summer risked it all to break through barriers, becoming the icon of an era and the inspiration for every music diva who followed. With a score featuring more than 20 of Summer's classic hits including "Love to Love You Baby," "Bad Girls" and "Hot Stuff," this electric experience is a moving tribute to the voice of a generation.

Re-imagined for 2020 and infused with a contemporary comedic spin, ***The Second City's Black History Month Show*** sets the stage for an uproarious night of laughter delivered by a new generation of rising comedians in a celebratory showcase of the incredible history and work artists of color have brought to The Second City's stages.

The **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** presents ***The Piano Soul of Nat King Cole*** featuring Jeff Lindberg's Chicago Jazz Orchestra with special guests Kenny Barron, Benny Green & Russell Malone. Before Nat King Cole emerged as one of America's most popular singers, he was making waves as an influential jazz pianist and expert arranger in his adopted hometown of Chicago. Marking the 2019 centennial of Cole's birth, this unique concert will celebrate his instrumental roots in a program created specifically for the Symphony Center Presents Jazz series.

Additional productions for musical lovers include:

Drury Lane Theatre presents the regional premiere of the beautifully captivating Gershwin musical ***An American in Paris***. Based on the Academy Award winner for Best Picture, *An American in Paris* brings breathtaking moments of dance and song to the stage. The storied streets of the City of Light become the dancefloor to a ravishing and passionate voyage into art, friendship, and love, set to the music of George and Ira Gershwin.

Firebrand Theatre presents *Always...Patsy Cline* at **The Den Theatre**. This moving musical, complete with laughs, down home country charm, and sisterhood, includes many of Patsy's unforgettable hits such as "Crazy," "I Fall to Pieces," "Sweet Dreams" and "Walking After Midnight"... 27 songs in all! The show's title was inspired by Patsy's letters to Louise, which were consistently signed "Love ALWAYS... Patsy Cline."

In **The House Theatre of Chicago's** *Verboten* at the **Chopin Theatre**, a Chicago band made up of outsider teens with seriously complex home lives gears up for a show at The Cubby Bear that is sure to change their lives forever, can they keep their parents from destroying the fabric of their self-made punk rock family?

Brown Paper Box Co. presents *If/Then* at the **Athenaeum Theatre**, a new musical with unforgettable songs and a deeply moving story by the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning creators of *Next to Normal*, *If/Then* paints a moving portrait of the lives we lead, as well as the lives we might have led.

Underscore Theatre presents its 6th annual **Chicago Musical Theatre Festival (CMTF)**, created to showcase and support the growing field of musical theatre creators from Chicago and beyond. After receiving more than 35 submissions, Underscore chose eight new musicals for this year's Festival to be presented in full productions.

A selection of other notable works include:

For its winter engagement, **The Joffrey Ballet** presents *The Times Are Racing*, a mixed repertory program featuring choreography from four of the most influential artists working today, including the Chicago premiere of Justin Peck's 2017 ballet for which the program gets its name, two pieces by Israeli choreographer and former Batsheva Dance Company member Itzik Galili, a Christopher Wheeldon classic, and a new work from Chicago's Stephanie Martinez, 2015 winner of the Joffrey's Winning Works choreographic competition.

Puccini's timeless *Madama Butterfly* returns to the **Lyric Opera of Chicago**. Experience love, betrayal, & sacrifice with this love story that reaches across cultures, oceans, and time. A wonderful first opera experience, *Madama Butterfly* epitomizes the best of this multifaceted art form, beautifully incorporating romantic tragedy with sublime musical storytelling.

16th Street Theater in Berwyn presents *Alabaster*, a darkly comic southern drama about love, art and the power of women. After a tornado barrels through North Alabama leaving nothing but death and destruction, only June and her wisecracking pet goat Weezy live to tell the tale. When Alice, a prominent photographer, arrives to take pictures of June's scars, all are tipped to the breaking point in this beautiful story of life after death.

A complete list of participating productions is at ChicagoTheatreWeek.com. Chicago Theatre Week is presented by the **League of Chicago Theatres** in partnership with **Choose Chicago**. The official hashtag for Chicago Theatre Week 2020 is #CTW20.

Last year, in February 2019, 139 participating productions offered value-priced tickets to 593 individual performances during Chicago Theatre Week. The initiative continues to see increased sales year over year, with 12,700 Theatre Week tickets sold in 2019. Chicago Theatre Week brings in new audiences to area theatres with an average of 63% of attendees visiting their chosen theatre for the first time. Theatre Week also proved to be a draw for visitors from outside Chicago with 17% of patrons coming from beyond 50 miles of the city, spanning 36 states and several countries.

About Chicago theatre

Chicago theatre is the leader in the U.S. with more than 250 theatres throughout Chicagoland, comprising a rich and varied community ranging from storefront, non-union theatres to the most renowned resident

theatres in the country, including 5 which have been honored with Regional Tony Awards, and the largest touring Broadway organization in the nation. Chicago's theatres serve 5 million audience members annually and have a combined budget of more than \$250 million. Chicago produces and/or presents more world premieres annually than any other city in the nation. Last year alone Chicago theatre companies produced more than 100 world premiere productions and adaptations. Each year Chicago theatres send new work to resident theatres across the country, to Broadway, and around the world.

League of Chicago Theatres' Mission Statement

Theatre is essential to the life of a great city and to its citizens. The League of Chicago Theatres is an alliance of theatres which leverages its collective strength to support, promote, and advocate for Chicago's theatre industry. Through our work, we ensure that theatre continues to thrive in our city.

For a comprehensive list of Chicago productions, visit the League of Chicago Theatres website, ChicagoPlays.com. Half-price tickets to the current week's performances as well as future performances are available at HotTix.org and at the two Hot Tix half-price ticket locations: across from the Chicago Cultural Center at Expo72 (72 E. Randolph) and Block Thirty Seven (108 N. State).

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