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FEBRUARY 2021 VIRTUAL THEATRE HIGHLIGHTS CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Chicago, IL, February 2, 2021 – Chicago theatres are presenting a wide range of online productions and events to celebrate Black History Month. Theatre venues in Chicago and across the world remain closed due to the pandemic yet the creative spirit remains bright.

The following is a selection of work in Chicago available in the month of February honoring Black history and lives. Additional details about each of the Black History Month offerings will be available at ChicagoPlays.com and HotTix.org.

About Face Theatre

<https://aboutfacetheatre.com/kickback/>

KICKBACK

Stream Anytime

KICKBACK is an online festival of original plays and performances that highlights the intersection of queerness and Blackness in all its beauty and glory. About Face Theatre has commissioned a cohort of Black LGBTQ+ artists to create new works in conversation with Rebuild Foundation's extensive collection of African-American art and cultural artifacts.

Chicago Children's Theatre

<https://chicagochildrenstheatre.org/event/diamonds-dream/>

Diamond's Dream

Stream Anytime

Diamond's Dream is the first new work to emerge from the Springboard Project, a new initiative launched in 2020 by Chicago Children's Theatre to foster new works made especially for today's young people. This virtual puppet production takes place on a CTA Red Line train traveling south through pandemic-era Chicago.

City Lit Theater

<https://www.citylit.org/>

Voice of Good Hope

Stream Anytime

The original production of *Voice of Good Hope* took place in January and February of 2020. City Lit presents this online reading featuring the original cast and the play in its entirety. The play focuses on the life of Barbara Jordan, first Black Congresswoman from the deep south. As a devoted defender of the constitution, Barbara Jordan's words and legacy are even more relevant than a year ago.

Congo Square Theatre

<https://www.congosquaretheatre.org>

Festival on the Square

February 4-6, 2021

Congo Square Theatre Company's *Festival on the Square* is a three-day virtual celebration of the arts, inspired by the original Congo Square located in New Orleans, Louisiana, culminating in their *2021 Vision Benefit* at 7:00PM on February 6, 2021, an evening of art, performance, and celebration honoring Les Coney and Ron OJ Parson. Register for one or all of the dates to join in on the fun.

Hit 'Em On The Blackside

Stream Anytime

Congo Square Theatre Company, one of the nation's premier African American theatres, presents the first full show of its *Hit 'Em on the Blackside* sketch comedy series, available for free online viewing through March 2021, when the next set of sketches launch.

Court Theatre

<https://www.courttheatre.org/season-tickets/2020-2021-season/theatre-for-one-here-we-are/>

Theatre for One: Here We Are

Theatre For One: Here We Are is a free, live digital theatrical experience that brings together one actor and one audience member for eight new microplays written and directed by Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color. Following its critically acclaimed run in New York, Court Theatre brings these stories to life with Chicago actors to offer audiences a deeply personal theatrical experience that breaks the boundaries of digital theatre. *Theatre for One: Here We Are* is inspired by the pandemic; the 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment; and the Black Lives Matter, We See You WAT, and other movements fighting racism.

Definition Theatre

<https://www.definitiontheatre.org/amplify>

Amplify, A New Play Commission Showcase

February 24-25, 2021

Definition Theatre presents *Amplify*, A New Play Commission, showcasing scenes from eight semi-finalist plays over two nights. Both virtual performances are pay-what-you-can. *Amplify* was developed to empower and uplift underrepresented theatre creatives. Filmed in accordance with COVID-19 safety guidelines, the evenings will feature eight scenes, one from each play, and a short interview with each semi-finalist playwright.

Goodman Theatre

<https://www.goodmantheatre.org/untiltheflood>

Until The Flood

Stream Anytime

On August 9, 2014 Darren Wilson, a white police officer shot and killed Michael Brown, an African American teenager, in Ferguson, Missouri. The shooting ignited weeks of social unrest, propelled the activist movement known as Black Lives Matter and prompted a controversial investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice. Traveling to the region a few months after the shooting, Dael Orlandersmith conducted interviews with dozens of people who were grievously shaken by the shooting and its turbulent aftermath. From these intimate conversations, she has created eight unforgettable characters who embody a community struggling to come to terms with the personal damage caused by these complex events. Experienced in performance, these voices offer haunting reminders of America's continuing struggle with racism and justice.

Lookingglass Theatre Company

<https://lookingglasstheatre.org/event/sunset-1919/>

Sunset 1919

Stream Anytime

Lookingglass Theatre commemorated the start of the 1919 Chicago race riots, by creating a world premiere short film to honor the fallen. *Sunset 1919* is meant to peacefully honor the lives of Black humans impacted by the deadly racial attacks that swept the nation that summer, the roots of which stretch back across centuries, and the fruits of which we continue to pluck – a moment in an unbroken line.

Lyric Opera

<https://www.lyricopera.org/shows/upcoming/2020-21/lawrence-brownlee-and-friends/>

Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The Next Chapter

Stream Anytime

Lyric's Ryan Opera Center presented a free virtual concert celebrating the depth and breadth of Black artistry, hosted by world-renowned tenor Lawrence Brownlee, who also serves as artistic advisor for the event.

North Central College Performing Arts

<https://finearts.northcentralcollege.edu/events>

The Langston Hughes Project - Ask Your Mama (12 Moods for Jazz)

Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 7:00pm

The Langston Hughes Project is a multimedia concert performance of Langston Hughes' kaleidoscopic jazz poem suite titled, *Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods for Jazz*. This is Hughes' homage in verse and music to the struggle for artistic and social freedom at home and abroad at the beginning of the 1960s.

Mojo & The Bayou Gypsies

Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:00pm

From the Looziana Bayous, where the alligators got soul and the good times roll, comes Mojo & The Bayou Gypsies, a charismatic 6-piece troupe of near-mad musical provocateurs, performing a thrilling crescendo of Cajun accordion, fiddle, rubboards, electrifying drums and more.

Naturally 7

Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7:00pm

Naturally 7 is more than a tightly orchestrated collection of great singers. They transform their voices into actual human instruments, effortlessly producing music of any genre. Their vocal choreography is so perfectly interwoven that they compelled the musical maestro himself, Quincy Jones, to declare them "The best a cappella group in the world!"

Playmaker's Laboratory

<https://www.playmakerslab.org/shows>

That's Weird, Grandma: House Par-Tay: Black History Month Shows

Monday, February 6 and 22 at 8:00pm

Now in its nineteenth year, *That's Weird, Grandma* features adaptations of stories written during PML's creative writing residencies in Chicago elementary schools. PML's ensemble of professional actors, comedians and musicians bring the young authors' stories to life as raucous sketches, songs and movement pieces, performing first for students in their schools and then for the public. These stories - from hilarious dialogues between unlikely characters to poignant pleas for social change - resonate with adults while celebrating the imaginations of young people.

The Second City

<https://www.tixr.com/promoters/theplan>

Black and White News: The Plan

February 4, 18 & March 4 at 7:00PM

Introducing your new favorite live-streaming debate show, *Black and White News: The Plan*. For anyone who is willing to take a side on the biggest mainstream and underground issues of the day and walk

through the valley of the shadows of the white world, this show delves into Black stuff...and white stuff...and basically, a ton of uncomfortable-but-unavoidable stuff. If you're tired of reading comments section meltdowns and wish you could watch people respectfully hash out their differences out loud, don't miss out on this unafraid, unapologetic, and laugh-so-you-don't-cry experience that lives at the intersection of Blackness, current events, and comedy.

Wirtz Center for Performing Arts at Northwestern University

Visions and Voices, a Black Playwrights' Reading Series

<https://wirtz.northwestern.edu>

Wine in the Wilderness

February 5-7, 2021

With race riots outside his apartment in 1964 Harlem, artist and sophisticate Bill Jameson paints his view of Black womanhood. While searching for his final model, a woman he describes as "as close to the bottom as you can get," he thinks he has found a match in Tommy. But Tommy soon tests his toxic assumptions. Rarely staged since its debut in 1969, Alice Childress' masterwork examines the intersection of race, gender and class in Civil-Rights-Era America.

The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World AKA the Negro Book of the Dead

February 12-14, 2021

A woman tries to feed her husband a fried drumstick. Dragons roam a flat earth. The last Black man in the whole entire world dies again. And again. Careening through memory and language, Parks explores and explodes archetypes of Black America with piercing insight and raucous comedy. A riotous theatrical event, *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* hums with the heartbeat of improvisational jazz.

For a comprehensive list of Chicago productions, visit the League of Chicago Theatres websites, ChicagoPlays.com and HotTix.org.

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. Each year Chicago theatres send new work to resident theatres across the country, to Broadway, and around the world.

The 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.

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