



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 20, 2018
Press release #1733

For more information, contact:
Marita Meinerts Albinson, 612.225.6142
maritaa@guthrietheater.org

**GUTHRIE THEATER TO HOST *TONIGHT, TONIGHT!*
A FUNDRAISING GALA AT THE GUTHRIE THEATER
ON THE OPENING NIGHT OF AMERICA'S ICONIC MUSICAL, *WEST SIDE STORY***

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018

Each gala ticket includes reserved seating to a live performance by Broadway legend and original *West Side Story* star CHITA RIVERA in a unique, solo concert event on Monday, June 11

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—On Friday, June 22, 2018 the Guthrie Theater will host *Tonight, Tonight!*, a formal fundraising gala on Opening Night of the theater's summer musical, *West Side Story*, helmed by Artistic Director Joseph Haj. The *Tonight, Tonight!* Gala evening begins at the Guthrie Theater on Friday, June 22 at 4:30 p.m. with a VIP reception, followed by a seated gourmet dinner, the Opening Night performance on the Guthrie's signature Wurtele Thrust Stage and the dazzling *I Feel Pretty* After-party. Tickets to *Tonight, Tonight!* start at \$500 and may be purchased by calling 612.225.6160. To learn more, visit www.guthrietheater.org/gala.

Your Gala table or ticket purchase will make it possible for the Guthrie to share its work with the widest possible audience, and to reach substantially more diverse and low-income students. For example, proceeds from *Tonight, Tonight!* directly support the Guthrie Education Network—a new model for arts education that embeds dedicated Guthrie teaching artists in residence at Twin Cities area Title I public high schools over the course of three years. The Guthrie Theater provides free tickets and transportation to Guthrie student matinees, ties arts experiences more closely to classroom goals, and increases the capacity of educators to sustain theater-based activities as a permanent part of the schools' culture and curriculum.

Purchasing a ticket to the Gala also offers complimentary access to "Chita: A Legendary Celebration," a unique, solo concert event on Monday, June 11 starring the incomparable Broadway legend Chita Rivera. Rivera created the role of Anita in the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*. During this special evening, the two-time Tony Award winner will recreate signature moments from her legendary career including numbers from *West Side Story*; *Sweet Charity*; *Chicago*; *Kiss of the Spider Woman*; *Bye, Bye, Birdie*, *The Rink* and *The Visit*. In addition to a special tribute to her dear friends John Kander and Fred Ebb, the timeless music of Leonard Bernstein, Charles Strouse, Jerry Herman and Stephen Sondheim will also be featured, accompanied by her long-time trio.

***TONIGHT, TONIGHT!* FORMAL FUNDRAISING GALA ON JUNE 22**

Mambo Package - \$2,500 Single Ticket / \$25,000 Table for 10 Guests

The top tier gala tickets include prime seating for the Chita Rivera solo concert event on the McGuire Proscenium Stage on Monday, June 11; a meet and greet opportunity with Chita Rivera; a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception; premium seating at the three-course Gala Dinner; prime seating for the Opening Night performance of *West Side Story* on the Wurtele Thrust Stage; and the dazzling *I Feel Pretty* After-party.

Rumba Package - \$1,500 Single Ticket / \$15,000 Table for 10 Guests

Second tier gala tickets include prominent seating for the Chita Rivera solo concert event on the McGuire Proscenium Stage on Monday, June 11; prominent seating at the three-course Gala Dinner; prominent seating for the Opening Night performance of *West Side Story* on the Wurtele Thrust Stage; and the dazzling *I Feel Pretty* After-party.

Cha Cha Package - \$500 Single Ticket

The third tier gala tickets include seating for the Chita Rivera solo concert event on the McGuire Proscenium Stage on Monday, June 11; seating at the three-course Gala Dinner; seating for the Opening Night performance of *West Side Story* on the Wurtele Thrust Stage; and the dazzling *I Feel Pretty* After-party.

The Guthrie Theater is a 501(c)(3) organization, and the annual gala is its largest fundraising event of the year with a goal to raise \$1 million. More than 400 esteemed arts patrons are expected to attend the dinner and more than 1,000 will enjoy the Opening Night performance of *West Side Story*. Honorary chairs of *Tonight, Tonight!* are Penny and Bill George, and the event is co-chaired by Guthrie board members Susan Allen and Wayne Zink.

The Guthrie welcomes Best Buy and U.S. Bank as exclusive co-lead sponsors, with Delta as VIP sponsor and Land O'Lakes as Gold Sponsor. Silver sponsors include 3M, Faegre Baker Daniels, Target and Travelers, along with Briggs and Morgan, Dorsey & Whitney and the Minnesota Vikings. Hotel accommodations provided by the Kimpton Grand Hotel.

About *West Side Story*

based on a conception by Jerome Robbins

book by Arthur Laurents / music by Leonard Bernstein / lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

It's 1957 and two rival gangs, the Jets and the Sharks, are prowling the streets of Manhattan's West Side. When Tony falls for Maria, the sister of a rival gang member, a rumble is planned. Like Romeo and Juliet they're caught in an ages-long feud with no escape, even as they pledge their love for each other. Through the genius of Bernstein and Sondheim, incomparable hits like "Maria," "Tonight," "Cool" and "I Feel Pretty" are merged with one of the greatest love stories ever told in this larger-than-life musical. The Broadway production of *West Side Story* opened in 1957, directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins, and closed in 1959 after 732 performances. Robbins won the Tony for Best Choreographer.

After directing the 2017-2018 season opener of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Guthrie Artistic Director Joseph Haj bookends the thrust season by helming *West Side Story*. This vibrant musical plays June 16 – August 26, 2018.

About Chita Rivera

An accomplished and versatile actress/singer/dancer, Chita Rivera has won two Tony Awards as Best Leading Actress in a Musical and received eight additional Tony nominations for an exceptional 10 Tony nominations. She recently starred in *The Visit*, the final John Kander/Fred Ebb/Terrence McNally musical directed by John Doyle and choreographed by Graciela Daniele on Broadway (2015), following the acclaimed production at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer of 2014. She starred in the Broadway revival of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the Broadway and touring productions of *The Dancer's Life*, a dazzling new musical celebrating her spectacular career, written by Terrence McNally and directed by Graciela Daniele and the revival of the Broadway musical *Nine* with Antonio Banderas.

She trained as a ballerina (from age 11) before receiving a scholarship to the School of American Ballet from legendary George Balanchine. Chita's first appearance (age 17) was as a principal dancer in *Call Me Madam*. Her electric performance as Anita in the original Broadway premiere of *West Side Story* brought her stardom, which she repeated in London. Her career is highlighted by starring roles in *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Rink* (Tony Award), *Chicago*, *Jerry's Girls*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Tony Award), and the

original Broadway casts of *Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*, *Seventh Heaven* and *Mr. Wonderful*. On tour: *Born Yesterday*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Call Me Madam*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Sweet Charity*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Zorba*, *Can-Can* with The Rockettes. Chita was awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2009. She received the coveted Kennedy Center Honor in 2002 and became the first Hispanic woman ever chosen to receive this award. In November 2016, she headlined at Carnegie Hall and in 2015, Great Performances aired their special *Chita Rivera: A Lot of Livin' To Do*, a retrospective of her extraordinary life and career nationally on PBS. Chita's current solo CD is entitled *And Now I Swing*. Her most treasured production is her daughter, singer/dancer/choreographer Lisa Mordente.

[Photo of Chita Rivera \(credit: photo by Laura Marie Duncan\)](#)

THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org

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Hotel accommodations provided by the Kimpton Grand Hotel

