



DETROIT OPERA HOUSE

For Immediate Release

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**"Too Hot To Handel" Returns to the Detroit Opera House for 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Performance**  
*Holiday Tradition Features Jazz-Gospel Version of Handel's "Messiah"*  
Dec. 16 at the Detroit Opera House

DETROIT, Dec. 6, 2017 - Rackham Choir and the Detroit Opera House are proud to return to the Detroit Opera House stage Saturday, Dec. 16 for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual performance of "Too Hot To Handel". Hailed as the holiday celebration that is "too hot to miss," this jazz-gospel version of Handel's classic "Messiah" has become a tradition for the Motor City, combining decidedly Detroit-inspired styles such as jazz and gospel while weaving in blues, swing, classical and scat. The Opera House pulses with music and the true spirit of the holidays as more than 120 musicians fill the stage and share a soul-stirring experience with the audience!

"After 16 years, 'Too Hot To Handel' remains a beautiful Detroit tradition that continues to uplift and inspire," said Rackham Choir Artistic Director Suzanne Mallare Acton. "We invite longtime fans and newcomers alike to join us for an evening that is sure to put everyone in the holiday spirit."

"Too Hot" is conducted by Acton and features Rackham Choir; tenor Rodrick Dixon, soprano Alfreda Burke; and alto Karen Marie Richardson. They are joined by a full roster of Detroit jazz musicians including, the Too Hot Trio - Marion Hayden, Alvin Waddles and Dave Taylor, the "Too Hot To Handel Orchestra" - Chris Collins, Al Ayoub, Fred Hughes and James Simonson, as well as Walter White, James Simonson, Vincent Chandler and Russ Miller. They are also joined by members of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra.

Acton and select performers will be giving a special pre-show talk at the Detroit Opera House beginning at 6:30 p.m., one hour before the performance.

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In addition to the main performance, Rackham and the Opera House are offering discounted tickets to students and seniors to watch the dress rehearsal at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 15.

Ticket prices for the main performance range from \$33-\$73 and may be purchased online at [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org), by calling (313) 237-7464 or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit). Dress rehearsal tickets are available to local student and senior groups. Tickets purchased in advance for the dress rehearsal start at \$10 for students K-12, \$20 for college students, and \$25 for adults in groups of 10 or more. Dress rehearsal tickets at the door are \$35. For more information visit <http://www.michiganopera.org/events/too-hot-to-handel/>.

This production is made possible by St. John Providence, The Kresge Foundation, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, the DTE Energy Foundation and the Detroit Public Schools Foundation.

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### **About Rackham Choir**

Since 1949, Rackham Choir has provided both classical and contemporary choral masterpieces of the highest artistic quality to audiences throughout Southeast Michigan. Under the visionary leadership of critically-acclaimed conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton, the choir has expanded its rich tradition of musical performance. Acton also serves as Chorus Master for Michigan Opera Theatre and Director of the MOT Children's Chorus. Information about Rackham Choir, including the complete season schedule, is available at [www.rackhamchoir.org](http://www.rackhamchoir.org).