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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION IN FOUNDATION SUPPORT AND NEW
PROGRAMMING FOR THE 2019 YEAR OF CHICAGO THEATRE**

First-of-its-kind in U.S., citywide initiative will shine a spotlight on Chicago's vibrant theatre scene

Mayor Rahm Emanuel along with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and the League of Chicago Theatres today announced \$1 million in foundation support for the 2019 Year of Chicago Theatre. Grants received from BMO Harris Bank, Bayless Family Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, Illinois Arts Council Agency, The Joyce Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation Endowment at Millennium Park Foundation, Millennium Park Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts and Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. The funding will support inclusion and equity initiatives, additional grants to theatres, performances and special events for the public, and a marketing campaign that leverages a new brand for Chicago theatre. This citywide, year-long focus on theatre is the first of its kind in the U.S.

"The generous and enthusiastic support from Chicago's civic, philanthropic, arts and business leaders is a ringing endorsement of our theatre community," said Mayor Emanuel. "From world-renowned, Tony Award-winning stages to intimate storefront productions across the city, theater is essential to the cultural fabric of Chicago."

Promotional and programming support for the Year of Chicago Theatre is provided by Art on theMART, Chicago Loop Alliance, Choose Chicago, HMS Media, Illinois Restaurant Association, LUMA8, The Magnificent Mile Association, Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority and **others**—plus many City departments and sister agencies including the Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Transit Authority and Department of Aviation.

"To truly fall in love with Chicago, you must go to our theatres. This is where the city bares its fearless soul," said DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly. "Through Broadway musicals or storefront plays and improv, the energy of the city comes alive in our theatres. And with a diverse collection of more than 250 dynamic theatres throughout our neighborhoods, there's always a seat waiting for you."

With foundation support, DCASE and the League of Chicago Theatres will now provide more than \$750,000 in financial grants to theatres – with an emphasis on sector building, increasing diversity and access, and expanding the geographic scope of Chicago theatre, especially on the city's South

and West sides. Application guidelines for microgrants will be available in late February. Applications for CityArts Program grants are open and due February 28.

"Chicago's rich tradition of theatre is known world-wide. The City's support of the theatre industry is a testament to its importance to the culture, economy and uniqueness of Chicago," comments Deb Clapp, Executive Director of the League of Chicago Theatres. "During the Year of Chicago Theatres, we hope that every Chicagoan and visitor will see a show. In fact, we are in the midst of Chicago Theatre Week, which is the official kick-off to the Year of Chicago Theatre. With value-priced ticket to more than 100 productions, it is a great way to visit a favorite theatre—or to explore a new one."

Millennium Park will activate Year of Chicago Theatre programming with family events, movies and pop-up performances. DCASE has partnered with 13 local theatre companies to co-present its Millennium Park Summer Film Series (Tuesdays, June – August): About Face Theatre, Aguijón Theater, Chicago Children's Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, eta Creative Arts, Free Street Theater, Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Teatro Vista and Victory Gardens Theater. The full schedule including movie titles will be announced this spring. Also in Millennium Park this summer, DCASE will select up to 12 theatre companies for one-week residencies – during which theatres will produce free, site-specific performances for the public near Cloud Gate. Applications open in February.

Programming will also be supported at the Chicago Cultural Center and the nearby Expo 72 space with free performances, special events and exhibitions – including an installation by artist Paola Aguirre (February 11 – June 23), "Chicago! The Play, The Movies, The Musical...The Murders" and "goat island archive—we have discovered the performance by making it" (through June 23).

Choose Chicago is developing its largest-ever digital marketing campaign for theatre as well as hosting theatre-themed individual and group media tours throughout the year; and media promotional events in New York City, London, Toronto, Montreal, Paris, Munich, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Beijing, Shanghai and Tokyo. DCASE and the League of Chicago Theatre have launched a local marketing campaign that includes digital billboards, street pole banners, advertising on CTA trains and busses, advertising at O'Hare and McCormick Place, promotion via neighborhood theatres and a redesigned ChicagoPlays.com website.

Foundation support is announced during Chicago Theatre Week, now in its seventh year. Presented by the League of Chicago Theatres in partnership with Choose Chicago, Chicago Theatre Week provides visitors and residents with the opportunity to choose from more than 100 productions and sample the extraordinary range of theatrical offerings in Chicago. Tickets for Chicago Theatre Week (#CTW19) are all priced at \$30, \$15, or less, available at ChicagoTheatreWeek.com.

2019 Year of Chicago Theatre

The City of Chicago and the League of Chicago Theatres have designated 2019 as the 'Year of Chicago Theatre.' This citywide, year-long focus on theatre is the first of its kind in the U.S. The initiative includes performances and special events throughout the city – including theatre-themed events in all 77 community areas, as part of the Chicago Park District's 'Night Out in the Parks' series. The City of Chicago and its partners will also launch a marketing campaign; provide additional financial grants to theatre projects; encourage dialog around inclusion and equity; and

call on civic, philanthropic, arts and business leaders to support the theatre community. To truly fall in love with Chicago, you must go to our theatres. This is where the city bares its fearless soul. From Broadway musicals to storefront plays and improv, there's a seat waiting for you at one of our 200+ theatres. Book your next show today at ChicagoPlays.com.

League of Chicago Theatres

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.

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

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