

LIFE / FAMILY &amp; PARENTING / FAMILY

# Chicago celebrates the city's dance community at Chicago Rhythm Fest

May 4, 2015

2:25 PM MST



Celebrate dance at Chicago Rhythm Fest

*Cheryl Mann*

Chicago has a long history of supporting the arts. With many [dance companies](#) in the city, Chicago Rhythm Fest celebrates the city's diverse percussive arts. Throughout the multi-day celebration, events include mini-concerts, performances and panel discussion on Chicago's vast performance companies. Showcasing five of the city's premier [dance](#) groups, the Made In Chicago Dance Series culminates with a performance on Wednesday, May 13 at the Auditorium [Theater](#) of Roosevelt University.

The finale performance on May 13 is led by Chicago Human Rhythm Projects. The finale performance reimagines CHRPs inaugural National Tap Dance Day concert 25 years ago with

an eclectic program featuring Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, Mexican Dance Ensemble, Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago, Trinity Irish Dance Company, as well as Chicago Human Rhythm Project.

"Chicago has a long and venerable history when it comes to the percussive arts," said Auditorium Theatre Executive Director Brett Batterson. "We're excited to host five of the country's best ambassadors of the art form in one night, a chance to present an extraordinary range of talent and diversity. Each of these companies brings a unique cultural perspective to the art form, and the juxtaposition of each over the course of an evening will be fascinating and informative."

Featured in the performance are the following Chicago dance companies.

### **Chicago Rhythm Fest Companies**

The Chicago Rhythm Fest finale highlights critically acclaimed works from each company's respective programming, featuring original choreography and the presentation of authentic cultural traditions from around the world. The Auditorium Theatre program on May 13 includes:

#### **Chicago Human Rhythm Project**

Chicago Human Rhythm Project co-founder and artistic director and NEA American Masterpieces Award winner **Lane Alexander** brings "**Prisms**" to the stage, performed by CHRP's resident ensemble and accompanied by noted jazz pianist Vijay Tellis-Nayak. Inspired by classically structured jazz compositions and modern jazz rhythms, this 2004 original, set to music by renowned pianist-composer Chick Corea, creates a visual and aural quilt of sound. Joined by guests from Chicago's large tap community (Chicago Tap Theatre, M.A.D.D. Rhythms, Jus' LisTeN), CHRP closes the 2015 Chicago Rhythm Fest with the seminal "**Opus 1**," created in 1943 by legendary hooper, comedian and vaudeville trailblazer **Harold J. Cromer**. The perennial crowd-pleaser delights with hints of comedic nuance and light-hearted ingenuity, evoking feel-good sensibility and charm.

#### **Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater**

Ensemble founder **Dame Libby Komaiko** and **Paco Alonso**'s extraordinary "**Zapateados**" features a cast of a dozen men and women in traditional gaucho attire and giant poles to strike the earth, invoking the history of the Latin-American dance for the cowboy. "Zapateados"—translated to mean "tap dance" in Spanish—stems from Andalusian traditions. Ensemble Español currently boasts a repertoire of 125 works, including Spanish ballets, traditional folkloric suites and Flamenco dramas.

#### **Mexican Dance Ensemble**

The Mexican Dance Ensemble, founded in 2001, highlights "**Michoacan**," an authentic folk

dance derived from the southwestern pacific region of Mexico. Dating back to pre-Hispanic times, the region's lively folk dances feature playful parodies and charismatic salutes to family hierarchies, performed during festivals and special events throughout the year. The company also brings "**Guerrero Caliente**," defined by fast, successive beats, as depicted in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. The Mexican Dance Ensemble has performed in renowned venues around the world, and first appeared at the Auditorium Theatre in 2013 as part of the Music + Movement Festival.

### **Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago**

Chicago's premier African dance ensemble, considered the nation's longest operating African dance company, brings two works to the Auditorium's landmark stage. "**Djole**," a traditional mask dance rooted in the provinces of Guinea, West Africa and Sierra Leone, is characterized by celebratory rhythms of the drums and the feet. Muntu also presents "**No More Trouble**" by company member and Chicago native **Stacey Letrice**, an eclectic blend of reggae, dancehall, and afrobeat styles mixed with the traditional elements of African dance.

### **Trinity Irish Dance Company**

The Emmy Award-winning Trinity Irish Dance Company brings a three-piece presentation —"**The Dawn**" | "**Push**" | "**Black Rose**"—to the landmark stage, choreographed by Trinity founder and artistic director **Mark Howard**. The company has garnered international acclaim during its 30-year history, leading to appearances on The Tonight Show, Good Morning America and PBS, among others.

*Program subject to change.*

The finale will be held at The Auditorium Theater of Roosevelt University on Wednesday, May 13 at 7:3 p.m. Tickets are priced \$27-\$67 and are at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](http://AuditoriumTheatre.org), by calling (800) 982-ARTS (2787) or in-person at the Auditorium's Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy). Discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more are available at (312) 341-2357 or [sales@auditoriumtheatre.org](mailto:sales@auditoriumtheatre.org).

## **SUGGESTED LINKS**

- **Bask in the fun, food and frivolity on Chicago's rooftops**
- **Luella's Southern Kitchen, elevating traditional southern favorites**
- **Farm fresh Mother's Day meals with help from Green City Market**
- **Ribalizer, pit master rib perfection from the backyard grill**
- **Warmer weather brings new frozen treats from Unilever**



**Cristine Struble**

Naperville Family Entertainment Examiner

© 2006-2015 AXS Digital Group LLC d/b/a Examiner.com