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CHICAGO HUMAN RHYTHM PROJECT ANNOUNCES 25TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON New Chicago Rhythm Fest and Ongoing Programs Among Highlights

The [Chicago Human Rhythm Project](#) (CHRP), which builds community through American tap and contemporary percussive arts in world-class, innovative performance, education and outreach programs, celebrates 25 years with a season combining successful annual programs and the debut of a new, multi-venue Chicago Rhythm Fest.

“We’ve grown from a two-day festival and single performance in 1990 into the first year-round presenter of American tap in the U.S. and the largest institution in the world dedicated to its preservation and evolution. We remain a mission-driven organization devoted to using American tap and the rhythmic arts to educate, inspire and foster social reconciliation—and 25 years later, the work has just begun,” said CHRP Founder and Director Lane Alexander. “But we haven’t done it alone: anything we have accomplished has happened in partnership with passionate artists, volunteers, students, enthusiasts, donors, teachers and administrators.”

Season highlights

CHRP’s 2014–15 season encompasses a range of events, from intimate showcases to the debut of a multi-venue spring event, the Chicago Rhythm Fest:

- August 2, 2014 – The 25th season officially began with the **last concert of the 24th annual Rhythm World summer festival** at the MCA Chicago.
- October 7, 2014 – **JUBALEE! Gala** at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion honors Patti Eylar and Charlie Gardner with the JUBA! Award for Lifetime Contributions to Culture and Community and The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation with the JUBA! Award for Extraordinary Commitment to Community and Culture.
- November 27, 2014 – CHRP marches with hundreds of young tap dancers in the annual **McDonald’s Thanksgiving Day Parade** on State Street.
- December 10, 2014 – **Holiday Rhythms** performance takes place at the Jazz Showcase.
- February 12–15, 2015 – **Winter Tap Jamboree** of master classes, Tap Scholar auditions and more takes place at the American Rhythm Center (ARC) at the Fine Arts Building.
- March and April 2015 – The debut of the **Chicago Rhythm Fest** begins with a series of mini-performances, lecture demonstrations, panel discussions and free classes in several Chicago neighborhoods featuring a variety of Chicago artists and companies.
- May 6, 2015 – The **culminating performance of the Chicago Rhythm Fest** offers a showcase of Chicago artists as well as the return of Argentina’s Che Malambo at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.
- July 6–August 2, 2015 – The **25th annual Rhythm World summer festival** of tap and percussive dance takes place at the ARC, MCA Chicago, Jazz Showcase, Jones College Prep and the Jay Pritzker Pavilion; the fifth year of a five-year international focus (Canada, Japan, Brazil, Europe) will spotlight Chicago and U.S. artists.

In addition, CHRP’s ongoing programs continue, including its acclaimed lecture demonstration *We All Got Rhythm* at Chicago-area K–12 schools, in collaboration with Urban Gateways; in- and after-school outreach programs at Paul Revere, Willa Cather and Dewey elementary schools; daily classes at the American Rhythm

Center in Chicago's historic Fine Arts Building; an after-school program through After School Matters, taking place at the ARC; and a new after-school children's conservatory with two tracks of study: "Space Makers" (spatial forms rooted in ballet) and "Time Travelers" (rooted in ancient percussive dance traditions and contemporized in American culture).

"Our work has truly just begun," Alexander said. "During the next 25 years, we will focus on qualitative evolution as much as quantitative growth, with an increased appreciation for what can be accomplished in a single moment of inspiration as well as through perseverance over time. We will seek to affect more people's lives through dynamic performances and personal experiences that reaffirm and challenge, through intimate and shared learning moments that enlighten and confound and through lifelong participation and engagement in the rhythmic arts that fosters well-being, individual creativity, personal growth and new community."

Funding

CHRP's 25th Anniversary Season is supported by the Arts Midwest Touring Fund, a program of Arts Midwest that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and General Mills Foundation. CHRP is supported by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Target, The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, The Arlen and Elaine Cohen Rubin Charitable Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, The Jeanette & Jerome Cohen Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, National Endowment for the Arts, Illinois Arts Council Agency, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Northern Trust, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, L&L Hardwood Flooring, Peoples Gas, The Service Club of Chicago and generous individual donors.

For more information about Chicago Human Rhythm Project's 25th anniversary season, visit chicagotap.org.

CHRP's origins

Co-founded in 1990 by Lane Alexander and Kelly Michaels, Chicago Human Rhythm Project began as a summer festival at the Gus Giordano Dance Center with a single performance at Northwestern University. Fifty-two students attended classes and more than 200 tap and rhythmic dance enthusiasts attended a single concert benefiting Open Hand Chicago, a meals on wheels program for people impacted by HIV/AIDS.

CHRP's growth

- 1994 – CHRP commissions four new works for Chicago tap ensembles from American masters Dianne "Lady Di" Walker, Robert Reed, Marc Mendonca and Lynn Dally.
- 1995 – To honor the memory of co-founder Kelly Michaels, CHRP establishes the Tap Scholar Program to award \$10,000 in tuition waivers to deserving Chicago teens and is invited to join Arts Bridge, an incubator for small arts organizations.
- 1998 – CHRP produces the PBS documentary *JUBA! Masters of Tap and Percussive Dance* in collaboration with PBS affiliate WTTW and ITVS.
- 2001 – In collaboration with Northwestern University, MCA Chicago, Columbia College Chicago, Gallery 37 and the South Shore Cultural Center, CHRP initiates new performance, education and community outreach programs and becomes the first year-round presenter dedicated to American tap and contemporary percussive arts.
- 2001 – The company receives an Emmy nomination, as well as national airings, for the WTTW/ITVS co-production of *JUBA! Masters of Tap and Percussive Dance*.
- 2004 – With support from an Illinois Arts Council Choreography Fellowship and a Chicago Dancemakers Forum Award, Lane Alexander creates *Prisms*, a work that becomes the nexus for establishing CHRP's performance and education ensemble BAM!
- 2005 – CHRP inaugurates Global Rhythms, the first concert series dedicated to American tap and percussive arts repertory companies, with the presentation of Israel's Sheketak. Lane Alexander opens The Tap Studio to serve teens, adults, professionals and teachers.

- 2007 – Attendance at concert, education and outreach programs reaches 40,000 while earned and contributed income exceeds \$1 million for the first time. CHRP earns a National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpieces Grant administered by the Illinois Arts Council.
- 2010 – CHRP collaborates with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Boitsov Ballet and Roosevelt University to facilitate a major expansion of summer education and performances, including concerts at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion.
- 2012 – In collaboration with Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Kalapriya Center for Indian Performing Arts, Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute and others, CHRP opens the American Rhythm Center in the historic Fine Arts Building in the heart of Chicago’s Cultural Mile. CHRP leads the American tap dance community to the first-ever mainstage concert at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.
- 2013 – CHRP shares a Princess Grace Award with tap superstar Michelle Dorrance.
- 2014 – CHRP’s Tap Scholar Program identifies 15 international summer scholars, with awards surpassing \$300,000 since 1995. CHRP board, staff and constituents prepare to celebrate the 25th Anniversary Season!

Chicago Human Rhythm Project

Founded in 1990, [Chicago Human Rhythm Project](http://chicagotap.org) (CHRP) builds community by presenting American tap dance and contemporary percussive arts in world-class and innovative performance, education and community outreach programs. CHRP has produced multiple community-based collaborations involving shared revenue programs, concerts and touring opportunities, including:

- annual National Tap Dance Day concerts, featuring an array of tap and percussive dance artists
- a shared revenue program designed to assist Chicago’s budding tap community to build capacity through audience development, created in 2001
- Thanks 4 Giving, another innovative shared revenue program launched in 2005 as part of its annual Global Rhythms concerts, through which CHRP has partnered with more than 100 Chicago-based nonprofits to raise funds for a wide variety of service agencies
- participation in the 5th Anniversary Beijing International Dance Festival, assembling 70 artists to represent the United States
- establishment of the American Rhythm Center (ARC), providing a shared, affordable and sustainable education, rehearsal and administrative facility for several leading Chicago arts organizations in the historic Fine Arts Building
- curating the first ever, full-length performance of concert tap dance on a main stage of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on December 7, 2012

CHRP’s vision is to establish the first global center for American tap and percussive arts, which will create a complete ecosystem of education, performance, creation and community in a state-of-the-art facility uniting generations of diverse artists and the general public. For information visit chicagotap.org.

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