

**HARRIS THEATER RECOGNIZED AS OFFICIAL “25 FOR 25  
CULTURAL ACCESS PARTNER” of ADA 25 CHICAGO**  
**One of Chicago’s Top 25 Organizations Committed to Increasing  
Accessible Programs and Services**



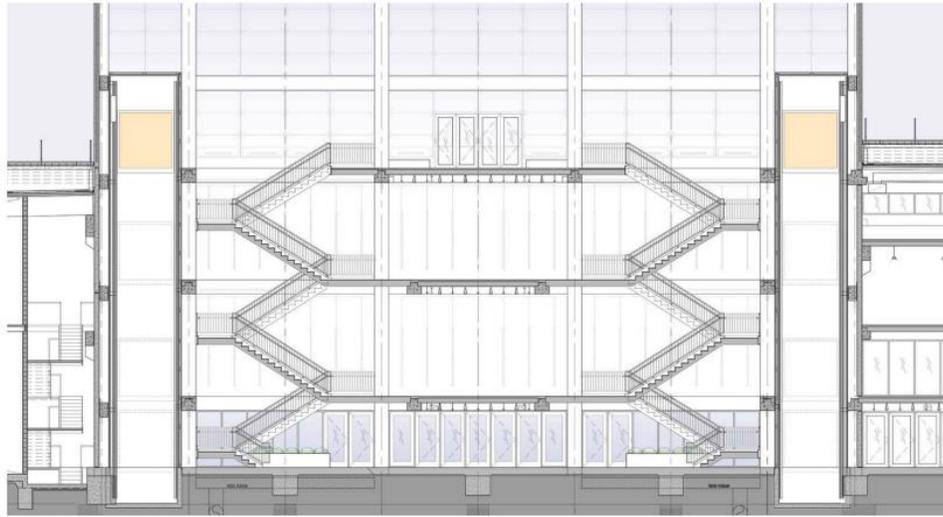
**Installing 2 High-Speed, High-Capacity Elevators**

***1,200 Access Tickets Underwritten for Community Partners This Season***

**CHICAGO** – Harris Theater for Music and Dance, this month, is kicking off their 2015-16 season as an official “25 for 25 Cultural Access Partner” of ADA 25 Chicago. ADA 25 Chicago, The City of Chicago, Arts Alliance Illinois and Illinois Arts Council Agency sought out cultural partner organizations to commit to increased accessible programs and services in 2015, and Harris Theater is honored to be among those recognized with this prestigious title.

As an official ADA 25 Cultural Access Partner, the Harris Theater is undergoing many physical and institutional changes to further its reach for patrons. The Theater is demonstrating its institutional commitment to inclusivity through deepening the impact of its *Access Tickets Program* in conjunction with ADA 25. The *Access Tickets Program* provides underwritten performance tickets and enrichment activities for children and families dealing with disabilities and other life challenges. Since the founding of the program in 2009, the Theater has underwritten over 8,800 tickets for *Access Tickets* partners. In partnership with ADA 25, the Theater will identify 3-5 new health and human service organizations with whom to partner to provide the uplifting benefits of the performing arts.

This year, the Theater is also undergoing major physical improvements. The Harris is in the process of constructing two new, high-capacity elevators in order to more efficiently accommodate patrons entering from Upper Randolph Drive, as well as serve the 20% increase in patrons with accessibility needs who attend performances as a result of the *Access Tickets Program*. The Theater plans to unveil its newly constructed elevators in December 2015.



Rendering of new high capacity, high speed elevators and more efficient stairwell construction; estimated completion by December 2015

In addition to institutional and physical changes, the Harris incorporated programmatic elements and opened its season with two performances from **AXIS Dance Company**, one of the world's most acclaimed ensembles of performers with and without disabilities. Since their founding in 1987, they have won seven Isadora Duncan Dance Awards and, this year, received a Leadership Grant from the prestigious *Doris Duke Charitable Foundation*. During their time between performances, AXIS Dance Company conducted a physically-integrated dance workshop at Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Using creative movement, improvisation and modern dance techniques, AXIS dancers will introduce the exciting art form of physically-integrated dance for people with and without physical disabilities. Participants included youth from RIC's inpatient pediatric floor, as well as members of the Caring for Kids program (an *Access Tickets* partner since 2010). All participants and their families had the opportunity to attend the *Exelon Family Series* performance at the Harris through the *Access Tickets Program*. Throughout the AXIS Dance Company engagements alone, Harris Theater provided more than 300 underwritten tickets through the *Access Tickets Program*.

Heading into this season, Harris Theater hosted disability awareness training for its 35 resident companies, internal staff, and peer organizations. Led by JJ's List, an organization committed to disability-aware marketing, customer service and employment, the training addressed the language, etiquette, and best practices for serving patrons with disabilities. More than 20 individuals participated, representing 12 arts and culture organizations across the city of Chicago.

The Harris Theater looks forward to better serving all of its patrons, guest companies and artists, while continuing to bring world class talent and performances to its stage.

### **Sponsors**

The Northern Trust Company is the Harris Theater's 2015–2016 season sponsor. United Airlines is the Official Airline of the Harris Theater. Hyatt Regency Chicago is the Harris Theater's season hotel partner. The Theater gratefully acknowledges the Irving Harris Foundation for its leadership support of the Presenting Fund. The Harris Theater is partially supported by the Illinois Arts Council Agency. All performances take place on The Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage at the Harris Theater.

### **Harris Theater for Music and Dance**

The Harris Theater's mission is to partner with a wide array of Chicago's performing arts organizations supporting their initiatives for artistic growth and development. Its continuing efforts help build infrastructure and long-term sustainability for many of its resident companies.

Opened on November 8, 2003, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance was the first multi-use performing arts venue to be built in the Chicago downtown area since 1929. Today the Theater continues to host the most diverse offerings of

any venue in Chicago, featuring the city's world-renowned music and dance institutions and the *Harris Theater Presents* series of acclaimed national and international artists and ensembles.

*Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*, is a \$38.8M comprehensive fundraising effort supporting the Theater's multifaceted mission. The campaign ensures the continued growth and artistic development of the Harris Theater over the next 10 years.

The *Imagine* campaign is led by four transformational gifts: from The Irving Harris Foundation, Joan W. Harris; Alexandra and John Nichols; Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation, Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes; Caryn and King Harris, The Harris Family Foundation. Additional leadership gifts supporting programmatic and capital projects have been generously funded by The Crown Family, Jay Franke and David Herro, Jack and Sandra Guthman, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Neisser Family Foundation, The Northern Trust Company, Christine and Glenn Kelly, Laura and Ricardo Rosenkranz, and Marilyn and David J. Vitale.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust are the lead underwriters of fundraising for *Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*.

The Harris maintains a strong emphasis on community engagement through enrichment activities and their *Access Tickets Program*, in which the Harris Theater partners with health and human services agencies and community organizations to provide underwritten performance tickets for individuals facing illness, disability and challenging life circumstances. Since 2009, the Theater has provided over 8,800 tickets to children and families, representing 25 neighborhoods across the city of Chicago.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit [HarrisTheaterChicago.org](http://HarrisTheaterChicago.org). Call the Box Office at 312.334.7777 to request a brochure or additional information.

The Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago's state-of-the-art 1,525-seat performance venue, can also be found on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

