

HARRIS THEATER ANNOUNCES 2017–2018 EXELON FAMILY SERIES

Three Saturday Matinees the Whole Family Can Enjoy – Subscriptions Start at \$15
Increased Access and Inclusion with ASL Interpreters, Audio Descriptions, and HT's First-Ever Sensory-Friendly Performance

CHICAGO – The **Harris Theater for Music and Dance** is pleased to announce its 2017–2018 *Exelon Family Series* season featuring engagements with **Rennie Harris Puremovement**, **Brian Brooks Dance Company**, and **American Ballet Theatre**. Full performance descriptions below.

WHAT IS THE FAMILY SERIES?

- Hour-long performances on Saturdays at 2PM
- Engaging and accessible programs designed for ages 4-12
- Educational materials and discussion questions for families to take home
- Opportunities to interact with artists from around the world
- No shushing allowed! Audiences are encouraged to laugh, clap, and experience the theater in their own way

Access and Inclusion

The Harris Theater maintains a commitment to accessibility and inclusion for Chicago residents of all ages, communities, and abilities. In 2016, the Theater completed the installation of two new high-speed elevators and expanded wheelchair-accessible seating, enhancing the physical accessibility of the space, and upgraded its assistive listening technology for patrons with low or no hearing. Since its inception, the *Family Series* has offered a welcoming, judgement-free environment for audiences, and the Theater's *Access Tickets Program* has led to a 20% increase in the number of patrons with disabilities who visit the theater.

Building on the success of these efforts, the Harris Theater will offer expanded accessible performances and services during the 2017-18 season. Notably, **each of the three *Family Series* programs will feature accessible services** designed to engage new audiences and ensure that all patrons have a welcoming, rich experience during their time at the Theater.

Family Series performances often feature artist commentary and audience interaction; beginning with Rennie Harris Puremovement on October 21, 2017, **all three 2017-18 Family Series performances will include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation.**

Brian Brooks Dance Company's performance on January 13, 2018 will be the Theater's **first ever Sensory-Friendly Performance**, designed to offer a safe and welcoming experience for patrons on the autism spectrum or who have other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. As with all Family Series performances, house lights will remain at a glow, and the Theater will foster an informal, judgement-free atmosphere where audiences can respond to the performance in their own way. Accommodations and support services will include:

- Moderate sound levels
- Designated quiet play area for audience members who need a break from the performance

- Social stories to prepare patrons for their visit to the theater and what they will see onstage
- Trained staff and volunteer support, a range of seating options, and other services to accommodate patrons' individual needs

The Harris Theater's presentation of *ABTKids* with American Ballet Theatre on February 24, 2018 will include **audio description services for patrons with low or no vision**. An audio description professional will provide a live account, broadcast through the Theater's assistive listening devices, of the dancers, choreography, sets, and costumes in each excerpt.

Additional audio-described performance opportunities for Harris Theater Mainstage performances will be announced at a later date. Additional information about Harris Theater accessibility can be found [HERE](#).

Subscribe [HERE](#) – starting at \$15 for three performances!

By becoming a *Family Series* subscriber, you will also gain access to exclusive benefits to enhance your experience at the Harris including:

- 50%* off additional *Harris Theater Presents* single tickets
- FREE exchanges to other *Harris Theater Presents* performances in the season
- Exclusive reduced parking at Millennium Park Garage – \$16 for 8 hours (regularly priced at \$36)
- Discounts at select restaurants – receive 15% off your bill when you dine at any of our NEW Restaurant Partners, to be announced
- Option to purchase additional individual tickets to *Harris Theater Presents* performances before single tickets go on sale to the general public
- Invitations and early access to special Harris Theater events and receptions – **this season, existing *Family Series* subscribers gain early access to add on a very exclusive VIP experience with American Ballet Theatre; limited spaces available**

* On full price tickets and select performances only. Subject to availability

See a full listing of 2017–2018 Exelon Family Series performances below:

Rennie Harris Puremovement: *Nuttin' But A Word*

Saturday, October 21, 2017 | 2:00PM

ASL Interpretation

Rennie Harris Puremovement encompasses rich and diverse African-American traditions of the past while simultaneously presenting the voices of a new generation. RHPM continues to encourage young dancers by sharing their enthusiasm for hip-hop dance theatre. In a society where hip-hop is often portrayed as a violent, undisciplined counterculture, RHPM deconstructs popular perception of this medium, expanding and challenging the boundaries and definitions of hip-hop to honor its history, explore its ideas, and further its contributions to the surrounding community.



Brian Brooks Dance Company

Saturday, January 13, 2018 | 2:00PM



*Sensory-Friendly Performance
ASL Interpretation*

Brian Brooks and his company of eight dancers will perform a lively program created especially for the Harris Theater's family audiences. A pianist will join the company on stage for excerpts from Brooks' newest production, reimagining classical works by Chopin. Favorites from the company's repertory – beloved among Chicago audiences for testing the limits of the human body and mind – will complete the program.

This performance will be open to the general public. To opt into sensory-friendly services and seating for this performance, email access@harristheaterchicago.org or call the Box Office at 312-334-7777.

American Ballet Theatre: ABTKids
Saturday, February 24, 2018 | 2:00PM
Audio Description
ASL Interpretation

Share the wonder of dance with your entire family as American Ballet Theatre presents ABTKids, a special, one-hour performance designed to introduce young audiences to the magic and beauty of dance. The performance, recommended for children ages 4-12, is narrated by a member of ABT's Artistic Staff and features child-friendly highlights from the Company's vast repertoire.

To opt into audio description services and seating for this performance, email access@harristheaterchicago.org or call the Box Office at 312-334-7777.



●●● All programs, prices, and dates are subject to change ●●●

Sponsors

The *Exelon Family Series* was made possible by the generous support of Exelon, Series Presenting Sponsor.

United Airlines is the official airline of the Harris Theater. The Theater gratefully acknowledges the Irving Harris Foundation for its leadership support of the Presenting Fund. All performances take place on The Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage at the Harris Theater.

About Exelon Family Series

Established in 2008, *Family Series* programs provide unique learning opportunities for families to experience world-class performances together at the Harris, at affordable prices. To further engage families, educational materials and discussion questions are provided at each performance to deepen the experience at the Theater. Special opportunities for behind-the-scenes peeks and interactions between the audience and the artists will also be featured throughout the series including signings and meet & greets after each performance.

The Harris Theater is committed to promoting access to and appreciation for the performing arts for Chicago residents of all ages and communities. The theater partners with 36 health and human service agencies, schools and community organizations to provide over 1,000 underwritten tickets to family performances each season through its *Access Tickets Program*. This program allows children and families facing life-threatening illnesses or other challenging circumstances to experience the uplifting benefits of the performing arts. Since 2009, the *Access Tickets Program* has reached more than 8,000 children and families across 25 diverse Chicago neighborhoods.

About 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 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 unique enrichment activities and their *Access Tickets Program*, in which the Harris Theater partners with health and human services agencies and community organizations.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit 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](#).

