

## Tickets an even better deal during Chicago Theatre Week

By MARY HOULIHAN For Sun-Times Media February 9, 2014 7:49PM

Tom Jones (Sam Ashdown) has a fruitful encounter with Mrs. Waters (Melanie Keller) in “Tom Jones,” a Northlight Theatre production on offer during Chicago Theatre Week. | MICHAEL BROSILOW

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An argument certainly can be made that there’s something for everyone when it comes to local theater. Evidence proving this point can be found in the roster of plays offered during the upcoming Chicago Theatre Week, an event that encourages Chicagoans and tourists to check out live theater.



Presented by the League of Chicago Theatres in partnership with Choose Chicago, the city’s official visitors’ site, the week (Feb. 11-16) celebrates a rich tradition of theatergoing that has only grown stronger with each passing season.

Last year’s inaugural event, was a great success and “beyond our expectations,” says League executive director Deb Clapp.

“Anecdotally, what we heard from our theaters is that a lot of people attended plays at theaters they hadn’t been to before,” Clapp says. “Even a well-known theater like Steppenwolf reported a high rate of first-time attendees.”

Nearly 100 productions are being offered by theaters around the city and suburbs. Ticket prices are either \$15 or \$30 depending on the theater. New this year, some Chicago hotels are offering packages that include a hotel room and a pair of tickets to one of 10 productions.

The list of theaters taking part is a wide range, from the larger houses (Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare) to the many storefronts and commercial houses (Broadway in Chicago’s “The Phantom of the Opera,” Blue Man Group, “Million Dollar Quartet”) as well as comedy venues (Up Comedy Club, the Second City, ComedySportz).

“There’s so much out there, and most people only know about the tiniest fraction, if any, of it,” says Robert Kauzlaric, marketing director at Lifeline Theatre, where theatergoers can catch an adaptation of Charles Dickens’ “A Tale of Two Cities.” “This is an opportunity for people to step outside of their comfort zone and try something new.”

Chicago Theatre Week also marks the return of the Storefront Playwright Project, which offers passersby a look into the theater process as playwrights work in a window space at Expo 72 (10 a.m.-6 p.m. at 72 E. Randolph). A large screen facing the street displays what the playwright is writing — possibly the next great Chicago play.

The playwrights taking part are Alice Austen, Brooke Allen, Randall Colburn, Bilal Dardai, Philip Dawkins, Reginald Edmund, Ike Holter, Susan Lieberman, Jessy Lauren Smith, Brett Neveu and Regina Taylor.

Here is a sampling of the varied productions being offered during Chicago Theatre Week. Some performances may be sold out, but keep checking, as more tickets may be added. For a complete day-by-day list of all plays, visit [chicagotheatreweek.com](http://chicagotheatreweek.com).

† “Tom Jones” — At Northlight Theatre, William Brown directs a wickedly sassy staging of John Jory’s adaptation of Henry Fielding’s novel. 9501 Skokie, Skokie. (847) 673-6300; [northlight.org](http://northlight.org).

† “Chicago’s Golden Soul” — Black Ensemble Theater’s musical journey celebrates the artists who propelled Chicago to national fame as a center for recording in the ’60s and ’70s. 4450 N. Clark. (773) 769-4451; [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

† “A Day in the Death of Joe Egg” — Stage Left Theatre’s staging of British playwright Peter Nichols’ play chronicles the toll that caring for a severely disabled daughter has on her parents. Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont. (773) 975-8150; [theaterwit.org](http://theaterwit.org).

† “Mr. Chickee’s Funny Money” — Chicago Children’s Theatre’s all-new rhythm and blues musical follows the misadventures of a 10-year-old who plots to save his town from ruin. Music and lyrics are co-written by Motown legend Lamont Dozier and his son Paris. Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn. (872) 222-9555; [chicagochildrenstheatre.org](http://chicagochildrenstheatre.org).

† “The Playboy of the Western World” — Irish playwright J.M. Synge’s classic tale about a handsome young stranger and his effect on the inhabitants of a small village. Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark. (773) 338-2177; [raventheatre.com](http://raventheatre.com).

† “Do-Gooder” — The world premiere of Laura Jacqmin’s drama about a man caught in the middle of a power struggle that raises the question what it means to do good. 16th Street Theater, 6420 W. 16th, Berwyn. (708) 795-6704; [16thstreettheater.org](http://16thstreettheater.org)

† “Into the Woods” — The Hypocrites stage Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s Tony Award-winning musical inspired by fairy tales. Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport. (773) 325-1700; [mercurytheaterchicago.com](http://mercurytheaterchicago.com).

† “Rasheeda Speaking” — Joel Drake Johnson’s world premiere drama about a white physician who attempts to out his black receptionist by enlisting a white female co-worker as a spy. Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge. (773) 334-7728; [rivendelltheatre.org](http://rivendelltheatre.org).

† “Mr. Shaw Goes to Hollywood” — MadKap Productions stages Mark Saltzman’s comedy based on the true story of when George Bernard Shaw and his wife Charlotte meet with Hollywood celebrities and moguls. Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln. (773) 404-7336; [greenhousetheater.org](http://greenhousetheater.org).

† “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind” — Running for 25 years, this Neo-Futurists classic conjures 30 plays in 60 minutes. 5153 N. Ashland. (773) 878-4557; [neofuturists.org](http://neofuturists.org).

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