

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **MAXIM'S PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF ONE-WOMAN MUSICAL ABOUT SARAH BERNHARDT**

**World's first superstar tells all in *Bernhardt on Broadway*,  
September 23, October 7, October 21, October 28**



Maxim's: The Nancy Goldberg International Center and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs will present the world premiere of *Bernhardt on Broadway*, a one-woman musical about Sarah Bernhardt, who was arguably the most famous actress who ever lived. Set in the 1890s at the height of her career, the show is the story of the world's first superstar, the daughter of a Jewish courtesan who overcame countless obstacles, formed her own theater company, and traveled the globe performing (in French only) to sold out crowds.

The show will be presented at 7:30 pm on four Thursday nights over five weeks: September 23, October 7, October 21, and October 28. Tickets cost \$30. Reservations are required and can be made at 312.742.TIXS (8497) or online at [www.maximschicago.org](http://www.maximschicago.org). Maxim's is located at 24 E. Goethe Street.

Bernhardt will be portrayed by Carol Dunitz, who wrote the script, music and lyrics for *Bernhardt on Broadway*. Dunitz read over eighty books about Bernhardt and her times in English and French, as well as countless articles and reviews before starting work on the project. "All my research enabled me to develop a very clear picture of Sarah Bernhardt and the demons that drove her to persist against all odds," Dunitz said. In the show, Bernhardt addresses the audience in a relaxed and forthright manner,

talking and singing about her present life and reminiscing about her past, both personal and professional. Twelve songs seamlessly contribute to the story as it unfolds. Dunitz is accompanied by Phil Pennington who also produced the arrangements for the *Bernhardt on Broadway* CD.

For more information about *Bernhardt on Broadway*, visit [www.bernhardtonbroadway.com](http://www.bernhardtonbroadway.com).

### **About Sarah Bernhardt**

Sarah Bernhardt was born Rosine Bernard on Oct. 23, 1844, in The Netherlands, and later moved to Paris with some of her sisters. Her mother, recognizing that the Paris smart set was Catholic, had her baptized. Nonetheless, she faced anti-Semitism throughout her life. Although Bernhardt was not observant, she did acknowledge, "I am a daughter of the great Jewish race."

At the age of 13 she entered the drama school of the Paris Conservatoire.

By the early 1870s, "The Divine Sarah" was considered the greatest actress and one of the most magnetic personalities of her time, beloved for her golden voice and for the scope and emotional power of her acting.

In 1880, Bernhardt formed a theatre company of her own that traveled to far off destinations such as Canada, Brazil, Australia, and Russia. She made nine extended tours of America; a savvy self-promoter, she called most of the tours "farewell tours" as a way to encourage people to buy tickets.

Bernhardt said "I adore Chicago. It is the pulse of America."

She performed over 150 parts during the course of her career. She starred in *Queen Elizabeth*, the first full length silent film. Receipts from this film's distribution in the United States enabled Adolph Zukor to co-found what is today known as the Paramount Pictures Corporation.

The world's first superstar, Bernhardt initiated celebrity product endorsements and hobnobbed with royalty on a regular basis.

Bernhardt died on March 26, 1923.

### **About Carol Dunitz**

From the afternoon Carol Dunitz accompanied her mother to a matinee of "Gypsy" starring Ethel Merman, she has been captivated by the musical theatre. Dunitz started composing music as a youngster. She has written several books including the critically acclaimed, "Louder Than Thunder," numerous speeches and scripts, and extensive marketing materials over the years. She speaks professionally in costume, sings original songs, and uses different accents as needed.

To learn more about Carol Dunitz, visit [www.DrCarolDunitz.com](http://www.DrCarolDunitz.com).

### **About Maxim's**

Maxim's: The Nancy Goldberg International Center is a meeting and reception facility operated by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. It was originally built as a restaurant, and duplicated the art nouveau scroll work, plush red banquettes and rich mahogany tones of the famous Maxim's restaurant in Paris. The department presents three unique entertainment series in Maxim's intimate and elegant dining room. For more information, visit, [www.maximschicago.org](http://www.maximschicago.org).

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**Note to press:** Electronic images are available and Carol Dunitz is available for interviews. The press is invited to review *Bernhardt on Broadway*. Please contact Meg Givhan at 312.744.6569 or [mgivhan@cityofchicago.org](mailto:mgivhan@cityofchicago.org).