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CHITA RIVERA WOWS SOLD-OUT CROWD IN *CHITA: A LEGENDARY CELEBRATION*

**PRODUCED BY AND BENEFITING
BROADWAY CARES/EQUITY FIGHTS AIDS,
GALA CONCERT RAISES \$413,660**

New York – A sizzling evening of song and dance honoring and starring theatrical icon **Chita Rivera** raised a remarkable \$413,660 for **Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS**.

A sold-out crowd filled Broadway's August Wilson Theatre with rapturous applause and six standing ovations throughout the evening Monday, October 7, 2013, as they joyfully cheered Rivera, a Broadway legend who turned 80 earlier this year. The one-night-only event, called ***Chita: A Legendary Celebration***, included special performances by Tony Award winners **Tommy Tune** and **Ben Vereen** and a surprise video tribute from legendary composer **John Kander**.

Commanding the stage for nearly two unstoppable hours and backed by a 15-piece onstage orchestra, Rivera recreated some of her most loved performances from 10 of her Broadway musicals including *West Side Story*, *Chicago*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Rink* and *Sweet Charity*.

"I had no idea celebrating my 100th birthday would be so much fun," Rivera joked after a spirited opening number of "A Lot of Livin' To Do" from *Bye, Bye Birdie*. Later, an emotional Rivera express her gratitude to the audience saying, "I've lost so many of my friends to AIDS, thank you for coming, for caring, for sharing, for giving, because Broadway Cares really needs you and we must never forget that."

Chita: A Legendary Celebration (#chita80) was directed by **Graciela Daniele** and written by **Terrence McNally** with music direction by **Michael Croiter**. The evening was produced by and benefitted Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

"Chita has been a true and loyal friend to Broadway Cares since our beginnings more than 25 years ago," said BC/EFA Executive Director **Tom Viola**. "The energy and enthusiasm she shared onstage tonight were just another example of her impassioned dedication to making a difference in the lives of so many others who need our help the most."

From the opening notes of the overture when trumpets heralded the iconic melody of Kander and Ebb's "All That Jazz," to Rivera's final encore, the affectionate "Circle of Friends" from her album *And Now I Swing*, the evening showcased a talent that has been delighting audiences for decades.

Nine-time Tony winner **Tommy Tune** serenaded Rivera with "Rosie" from *Bye Bye Birdie* before joining her for a soft-shoe, ending with a sweet embrace between the longtime friends. Later, Rivera was joined onstage by consummate showman **Ben Vereen**, a Tony winner himself for the original *Pippin*. Perched on stools shoulder-to-shoulder, they performed a slyly humorous rendition of the charmingly crass song "Class" from *Chicago*.

This concert was not the first time Rivera had performed on the August Wilson Stage. In 1955, she created the role of "Fifi" in the short-lived musical *Seventh Heaven*, when the theater was called the ANTA Playhouse. Rivera revisited the gruff prostitute role she relished portraying with the help of two "Angels" from Broadway's current Tony-winning musical *Kinky Boots*, **Kyle Taylor Parker** and **Nathan Peck**. The trio hilariously recreated the "Camille, Collette, Fifi" number from the show.

The second half of the performance was dedicated to the iconic writing team of **John Kander** and **Fred Ebb**, Rivera's long-time friends and frequent collaborators. Following the heartfelt video tribute from Kander, where he called his relationship with Rivera "the definition of friendship," she returned to the stage accompanied by several of her dancers from *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *The Dancer's Life*: **Richard Amaro**, **Brad Bradley**, **Lloyd Culbreath**, **Raymond Del Barrio**, **Robert Montano** and **Alex Sanchez**.

Rivera and her cavalcade performed a medley of songs from several of Kander and Ebb's Broadway hits: "Where You Are," "Gimme Love" and the title song from *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, a delicate rendition of "I Don't Remember You" from *The Happy Time*, the brassy anthem "Chief Cook and Bottle Washer" from *The Rink* and "Love and Love Alone" from *The Visit*.

Rivera paid tribute to the late **Gwen Verdon**, her friend and co-star in *Chicago*, while performing "Nowadays" signature choreography by **Bob Fosse** and finishing with "All That Jazz," the song perhaps most associated with her illustrious career.

Chita: A Legendary Celebration was sponsored by *The New York Times* and United Airlines.

Rivera has won two Tony Awards as Best Leading Actress in a Musical and received seven additional Tony nominations. She recently starred in the first Broadway revival of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and starred in the Broadway and touring productions of *The Dancer's Life*, a new musical celebrating her spectacular career, written by Terence McNally and directed by Graciela Daniele. She created her starring role in the new Kander/Ebb/McNally musical *The Visit* at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and the Signature Theatre in Arlington, VA, and starred in the revival of *Nine*. Her electric performance as Anita in the Broadway premiere of *West Side Story* (1957) brought her stardom, which she repeated in London. Her career is highlighted by starring roles in *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Rink* (Tony Award), *Chicago*, *Jerry's Girls*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Tony Award) and the original Broadway companies of *Guys and Dolls*, *Can-Can*, *Seventh Heaven* and *Mr. Wonderful*. On tour: *Born Yesterday*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Call Me Madam*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Sweet Charity*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Zorba*, *Can-Can* with The Rockettes. Chita was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2009 and was the first Hispanic ever chosen to receive the Kennedy Center Honor in 2002. Her current CD is titled *And Now I Swing* (Yellow Sound Label) and will tour with *Chita: A Legendary Celebration*.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS is one of the nation's leading industry-based, nonprofit AIDS fundraising and grant-making organizations. By drawing upon the talents, resources and generosity of the American theatre community, since 1988 BC/EFA has raised more than \$225 million for essential

services for people with AIDS and other critical illnesses across the United States.

Broadway Cares awards annual grants to more than 450 AIDS and family service organizations nationwide and is the major supporter of the social service programs at The Actors Fund, including the HIV/AIDS Initiative, the Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative and the Al Hirschfeld Free Health Clinic.

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