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312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **October 30, 2024**

IMAGES: [Goodman Theatre Press Room](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nb21n9kca3dx9mji2lstt/h?rlkey=d6towuo7qhdrmzfqy3x0tbgws&st=clclfc9z&dl=0)

**TRUMANE ALSTON, SHELDON BROWN, E. FAYE BUTLER, RONALD L. CONNER, VICTOR MUSONI, IREON ROACH & ANJI WHITE CAST IN *FAT HAM*, A GOODMAN CO-PRODUCTION WITH DEFINITION THEATRE, JANUARY 11 – FEBRUARY 23**

***\*\**TYRONE PHILLIPS DIRECTS THE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF JAMES IJAMES’S PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAY\*\***

**\*\*\*TICKETS ON SALE NOV. 1 WITH EVENTS INCLUDING PRIDE NIGHT (JAN. 14) AND BLACK AFFINITY NIGHT (FEB. 7)\*\*\***

A skull with a crown on a table

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(Chicago, IL) Come to the barbecue! **James** **Ijames**’s Pulitzer Prize-winning, five-time Tony Award-nominated play *Fat Ham*—an “uproarious reimagining of ‘*Hamlet’*” (*The New Yorker*)—makes its Chicago debut with an all-Chicago cast led by **Trumane Alston**. The Chicago- premiere production is directed by **Tyrone Phillips**—Founding Artistic Director of Chicago’s famed **Definition Theatre**, who co-produces *Fat Ham* at the Goodman—and also features **Sheldon Brown**, **E. Faye Butler**, **Ronald L. Conner**, **Victor Musoni**, **Ireon Roach** and **Anji White**. *Fat Ham* appears January 11 – February 23 (opening night is Monday, January 21 at 7pm). Tickets ($25 - $85; subject to change) are on sale November 1 at [GoodmanTheatre.org/Ham](http://goodmantheatre.org/Ham) or by phone at 312.443.3800. Goodman Theatre is grateful for the support of ITW (Corporate Sponsor Partner) and the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust (Lead Sponsor of IDEAA Programming).

“I am thrilled to bring this production to life with some of Chicago’s finest artists on and off the stage,” said Director **Tyrone Phillips**. This cast is extraordinary, and I can’t wait to get to be in the room with each one of them as we explore this beautiful coming of age story. I’m also thrilled to collaborate once again with Definition ensemble members Ireon Roach and Victor Musoni.”

A boisterous Southern cookout sets the scene for a Black, queer discovery of self and resilience in this Pulitzer Prize-winning, five-time Tony nominated coming-of-age story. As Juicy grapples with his identity and his family at a backyard barbecue, his father’s ghost shows up asking for revenge—on Juicy’s uncle, who has married his widowed mom—bringing his quest for joy and liberation to a screeching halt. **James Ijames** has reinvented Shakespeare’s masterpiece, creating what the *New York Times* hails as “a hilarious yet profound tragedy, smothered in comedy,” where the only death is the patriarchy.

Special events for the production include **Pride Night** (January 14), a celebration of the LGBTQ+ community that includes a discounted ticket, specialty drink, light refreshments and music. In addition, **Black Affinity Night** (February 7) celebrates the richness of Black culture and community at a special pre-show reception and conversation, followed by the evening performance.

**James Ijames** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning and Tony Award nominated playwright, director and educator. Ijames’ plays have been produced by Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon, Wilma Theatre, Theatre Exile, Azuka Theatre (Philadelphia, PA), The National Black Theatre, JACK, The Public Theater (NYC), Hudson Valley Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Definition Theatre, Timeline Theater (Chicago IL) Shotgun Players (Berkeley, CA) and have received development with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwright’s Horizon, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre and Victory Garden. Ijames is the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist recipient, and two Barrymore Awards for Outstanding Direction of a Play for The Brothers Size with Simpatico Theatre Company and Gem of the Ocean with Arden Theatre. Ijames is a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the 2015 winner of the Terrance McNally New Play Award for WHITE, the 2015 Kesselring Honorable Mention Prize winner for ….Miz Martha, a 2017 recipient of the Whiting Award, a 2019 Kesselring Prize for Kill Move Paradise, a 2020 and 2022 Steinberg Prize, the 2022 [Pulitzer Prize](https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/james-ijames) in Drama recipient and a 2023 Tony nominee for Best Play for Fat Ham. James was a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia’s first playwright producing collective. He received a BA in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and a MFA in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. James is an Associate Professor of Theatre at [Villanova University](http://villanova.edu/). He resides in South Philadelphia.

**Tyrone Phillips** is a first generation Jamaican-American artist, Founding Artistic Director of Chicago’s Definition Theatre and a proud member of the NAACP, SAG-AFTRA and SDC. Recipient of the 2022 Alumni Association Award for Diversity & Inclusion, he is an honors graduate of the Fine and Applied Arts college at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) and has studied abroad at Shakespeare’s Globe. Tyrone is currently leading a capital campaign for the development of Definition’s new theater, community center and entrepreneur incubator in Woodlawn. Past directing and associate directing credits include: Purpose (Steppenwolf Theatre), Twelfth Night, I,Cinna (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Fairview (Jeff Nomination), Byhalia, Mississippi (Jeff Nomination), Dutchman (Definition Theatre), An Octoroon (Goodman Theatre/Definition Theatre) and The MLK Project (Writers Theatre). Regional: The Royale (American Players Theatre) and The Tale of Despereaux (Old Globe, Berkeley Rep). Off–Broadway: Trevor, the Musical. Awards and Honorable Mention: Arts Midwest’s Peter Capell Award for Midwestern Creativity & Entrepreneurship (2022) and Newcity Stage Hall of Fame (2024).

**Full Company of *Fat Ham*** (in alphabetical order)

By James Ijames

Directed by Tyrone Phillips

**Trumane Alston**…Juicy  
**Sheldon Brown**…Larry  
**E. Faye Butler**…Rabby  
**Ronald L. Conner**…Rev/Pap  
**Victor Musoni**…Tio  
**Ireon Roach**…Opal  
**Anji White**…Tedra  
  
Understudies for this production include **Blake Hamilton Currie**, **Marquise De’Jahn**, **TayLar**, **Joseph Primes** and **Jazzy Rush.**

**Creative Team**

Set Designer…..**Arnel Sancianco**

Costume Designer ……**Jos N. Banks**

Lighting Designer…..**Jason Lynch**

Sound Designer….. **Willow James**  
Illusion Consultant…**Benjamin Barnes**Fight and Intimacy…**Gaby Labotka**

Casting is by **Lauren Port**, CSA. **Jared Bellot** is the Dramaturg. **Patrick Fries** is the Production Stage Manager.

**ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES AT GOODMAN THEATRE**

**ASL-Interpreted Performance: Friday, January 31 at 7:30pm**– Professional ASL interpreter signs the action/text as played.

**Touch Tour\* and Audio-Described Performance: Saturday, February 1, 12:30pm Touch Tour; 2pm performance**– The action/text is audibly enhanced for patrons via headset.

**Spanish-Subtitled Performance: Saturday, February 1 at 7:30pm**– An LED sign presents Spanish-translated dialogue in sync with the performance.

**Open-Captioned Performance: Sunday, February 2 at 2pm**– An LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.  
*Visit Goodman theatre.org/Access for more information about Goodman Theatre’s accessibility efforts.*

**ABOUT GOODMAN THEATRE**

Chicago’s theater since 1925, **Goodman Theatre** is a not-for-profit arts and community organization in the heart of the Loop, distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and community engagement. Led by Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth** and Executive Director **John Collins**, the theater’s artistic priorities include new play development (more than 150 world or American premieres), large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics. Artists and productions have earned two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and more than 160 Jeff Awards, among other accolades.

The Goodman is the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle.” Its longtime annual holiday tradition *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers in Chicago. The Goodman also frequently serves as a production and program partner with national and international companies and Chicago’s Off-Loop theaters.

Using the tools of theatrical practice, the Goodman’s Education and Engagement programs aim to develop generations of citizens who understand and empathize with cultures and stories of diverse voices. The Goodman’s Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement is the home of these programs, which are offered for Chicago youth—85% of whom come from underserved communities—schools and life-long learners.

Goodman Theatre was built on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. We recognize that many other Nations consider the area we now call Chicago as their traditional homeland—including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten—and remains home to many Native peoples today. While we believe that our city’s vast diversity should be reflected on the stages of its largest theater, we acknowledge that our efforts have largely overlooked the voices of our Native peoples. This omission has added to the isolation, erasure and harm that Indigenous communities have faced for hundreds of years. We have begun a more deliberate journey towards celebrating Native American stories and welcoming Indigenous communities.

Goodman Theatre was founded by William O. Goodman and his family in honor of their son Kenneth, an important figure in Chicago’s cultural renaissance in the early 1900s. The Goodman family’s legacy lives on through the continued work and dedication of Kenneth’s family, including Albert Ivar Goodman, who with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the necessary funds for the creation on the new Goodman center in 2000.

**Julie Danis** is Chair of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, **Lorrayne Weiss** is Women’s Board President and **Kelli Garcia** is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.

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