Fat Ham

By **James Ijames**  
Directed by **Tyrone Phillips**



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**Welcome**

**from the artistic director**

Audacity. Like most qualities, it shows up in different ways in different people. And when you meet it, it’s not an intellectual idea. You feel it in your body.

I remember reading James Ijames' Pulitzer Prize-winning Fat Ham a few years back and feeling the play. There was this giddy sense of “did he just do THAT?” and wanting to read more and more of this writer’s work—and really wanting to produce this play. Flash forward, I’m in Chicago and I learn that not only is this brilliant playwright a company member of Definition Theatre, but Definition is open to a partnership with us to bring this big, juicy play to Chicago.

I mean—c’mon.

One of the many gifts of this city and its theater ecology is how deep, wide and slammingly good the options are for artists and audiences. Do yourself a favor and get to know Definition. Get to know their brilliant leadership team—Artistic Director Tyrone Phillips (whose exhilarating direction you’re about to witness) and Executive Director Neel McNeill.

Learn about their commitment to being a small business incubator on the South and West sides. Go see their Amplify New Play Festival and run into the next audacious work of theater.

But for now? Sit forward and get ready for the audacious ride of Fat Ham.

**Susan V. Booth**

Artistic Director

**Meet the Director**

**by Jared Bellot**

Director Tyrone Philips, who serves as the founding Artistic Director at Definition Theatre, discusses his feelings about William Shakespeare, the relationship between comedy and tragedy and his vision for *Fat Ham*.

**Jared**: James Ijames, our playwright, describes *Fat Ham* as “his conversation with Shakespeare, a chance to talk to the guy.” How has your relationship with Shakespeare and his works evolved?

**Tyrone**: When I was younger, I felt like Shakespeare was the furthest thing away from me. Whenever it was time to approach his work, I couldn’t help but wonder: did this man have me in mind when he was writing this play? The more time I spent with Shakespearean texts, though, the more I found myself falling in love with the rhythm of Shakespeare’s language—the poetry, stories, characters and archetypes they represented. In my studies I was able to face my fears about Shakespeare and from that moment on, there was a different type of ownership with the work.

**Jared**: Which is so similar to what James has done with this play: using one of Shakespeare’s most well-known works as a framework to explore these larger ideas.

**Tyrone**: I think Hamlet gives the audience a perfect jumping off point. Ultimately, *Fat Ham* is a story about what it looks like for our community to experience death and loss. Having this play that says it’s okay to have these emotions and feel these feelings I think is incredibly important. These stories also give us a lens through which to look at violence and vengeance. In *Fat Ham*, we get to watch as Juicy makes a choice to follow in the footsteps of the past, or choose a different path.

**Jared**: *Fat Ham* also honors the complexities of death while embracing the humor and joy of it all.

**Tyrone**: I was once told that we laugh and cry on the same vibrations, and that is something I take with me to every play that I’m a part of. I love comedy and drama, and those two things go hand in hand. I think some of our saddest movements are some of our funniest moments—which is often true in my own life.

**Jared**: Right, because sometimes you have no choice but to laugh!

**Tyrone**: Humor is a release of energy, and getting to laugh together as an audience is wonderful. It’s live theater and that performance will be special and different because it’s the only time that specific energy will ever happen. The great thing about the magic of theater is that the audience gets to be flies on the wall—in this case, flies at the barbecue—and see the journey this young man is going through.

**Jared**: You’ve said Juicy’s journey is an exploration of what it means to protect your softness in a world that is not welcoming of that. Why is this an important theme to you?

**Tyrone**: Juicy is recognizing that he feels different for lots of reasons, and his journey is about figuring out how to allow space for that. When we look at systemic impacts on individuals’ lives— like the education system and choices young people must make that impact the rest of their lives—it makes me wonder: How do we protect our softness on this journey? In a world that is cold and hard, how do you keep yourself safe, and preserve what makes you, you?

**Jared**: Why did it make sense for the Chicago premiere of *Fat Ham* to be a co-production between the Goodman and Definition Theatre?

**Tyrone**: Definition has a mission that is focused on ensuring people of color see themselves on and off stage, and we are doing that with this production. Juicy’s story gives us the chance to make sure that people of color see the theater as a place where we can see our families, learn, ask questions and thrive.

**Jared**: James also happens to be an ensemble member of Definition, and *Fat Ham* is the third play of his produced by the company. What about his work excites you?

**Tyrone**: James is always looking at different aspects of life and is very purposeful about who is put at center stage. I’ve always been drawn to the magical realism in his writing because he can transport you from this world in the most poetic, beautiful way one moment and then land you smack dab back in realism the next.

**Jared:** How does that manifest in *Fat Ham*?

**Tyrone**: It’s in the way he leans into the Shakespearean structures of direct address and monologue. There are so many beautiful ways he keys the audience into what is going on, and his language and writing is absolutely incredible. I love how he tells stories with purpose and specificity—and don’t forget the comedy! James is really funny but still toes that line between the things that hurt in life and the things that are comical.

**Jared**: What do you hope the audience will take away from this production?

**Tyrone**: I hope you see yourselves in Juicy. I hope you see that even when he is faced with making difficult decisions, at the end of the day he must be true to himself. I hope you feel freedom, the power to make choices and that you will leave wanting to be true and honest to yourself. I hope Juicy liberates you to say: there are many paths in the world that I can take, but for me, I’m going to choose the path that brings me true joy and happiness.

*Jared Bellot is Goodman Theatre's Walter Director of Education and Engagement and the Dramaturg for* Fat Ham*.*

**Adapting *Hamlet* for the 21st Century**

**By Neena Arndt**

In 1592, dramatist and pamphleteer Robert Greene declared 28-year-old William Shakespeare an “upstart crow.” By this he meant that young Shakespeare lacked formal training and experience and that he stole from other writers. While indeed Shakespeare borrowed themes and storylines with impunity and only went to school until about age 15, many scholars today regard Greene as a greeneyed monster (a term popularized, as many terms were, by the "upstart crow" himself). Myriad excellent writers recycle and adapt old stories, and Shakespeare’s lack of university education makes his achievements all the more noteworthy. Obviously undeterred by Greene’s criticism, a few years later Shakespeare penned *Hamlet*, which was based loosely on *Gesta Danorum*, or “Deeds of the Danes,” a patriotic account of Danish history by the 12th century writer Saxo Grammaticus. This 16-book literary undertaking describes a king who kills his brother in order to gain power, only to be killed by his nephew, Amleth, whose name bears a striking similarity to that of Shakespeare’s title character.

So remarkable were Shakespeare’s poetic and storytelling abilities that more than 400 years after his death his plays remain prevalent and relevant, and new upstart crows adapt his work, replacing his language with contemporary vernacular and updating his settings to the modern world. One such writer is James Ijames, who, like Shakespeare, began his professional career as an actor. Since turning his attention to playwriting, Ijames’ ascent has been swift: works like *White* and *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* have been developed and produced at regional theaters, and *Fat Ham*—his dazzling adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*—won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and went on to an acclaimed Broadway production in 2023.

While Shakespeare’s title calls to mind a pontificating Danish prince or perhaps a diminutive village (both the name Hamlet and the English word “hamlet” derive from the old English “ham,” meaning home, and “let,” meaning “small”), the title *Fat Ham* conjures an image of something different entirely. It refers, in this case, to the backyard barbecue at which the action of the play takes place, while the pontificating young man—queer, Black, American, and just as tortured as Shakespeare’s famous waffler—is named Juicy. Like Hamlet, Juicy has recently lost his father, Pap, to murder. Within a week, his mother has married Pap’s brother Rev, and they are celebrating their nuptials—with plenty of meat—in the backyard. This parallels Hamlet’s observation about his mother and uncle’s wedding: “The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish the marriage tables.” Here, Hamlet implies that food prepared for his father’s funeral, no longer hot but still edible, was hastily served as leftovers at the wedding. While the meat in *Fat Ham* is freshly cooked, Pap has only been dead for a week, and Juicy shows his disapproval of his mother’s choice and grief for his father by wearing all black.

The parallels continue when Pap appears as a ghost and asks Juicy to seek revenge. The play-within-a-play in *Hamlet* becomes a game of charades in *Fat Ham*. Some characters have names that echo their Shakespearean counterparts: Horatio loses his first four letters and becomes Tio, Ophelia becomes Opal and Laertes becomes Larry. But ultimately, Ijames diverges from Shakespeare’s play, freeing his characters from the unrelenting machinations of tragedy and allowing them to learn from the mess of their family’s legacy.

Other writers of our era have also taken liberties with Shakespeare’s material. Perhaps the most famous loose adaptation is the 1994 animated Disney film *The Lion King* and its 1997 stage version and 2019 live-action remake. Although often touted as the first animated Disney feature that told an original story as opposed to depicting a myth or fairy tale, *The Lion King* features a jealous royal who kills his brother in order to ascend to the throne, and a prince left to deal with the consequences—a plot eerily similar to *Hamlet*. Through The Lion King, millions of children encounter a story that takes place in Africa, has its roots in Danish history and was popularized by a 16th century British playwright. But a child need not know anything about Danish kings in order to enjoy *The Lion King*, and audiences of *Fat Ham* can similarly enjoy the play with or without historical context. A compelling story, told beautifully, always stands on its own—and this tale of power struggles, family intrigue and mental anguish flourishes in a variety of settings.

*Neena Arndt is the Literary Manager and Dramaturg for Goodman Theatre.*

**Goodman Theatre**

presents

**FAT HAM**  
By

**James Ijames**

Directed by

**Tyrone Phillips**

Set Design by

**Arnel Sancianco**

Costume Design by

**Jos N. Banks**

Lighting Design by

**Jason Lynch**

Sound Design by

**Willow James**

Dramaturgy by

**Jared Bellot**

Casting by

**Lauren Port, CSA**

Production Stage Manager

**Patrick Fries\***

New York Premiere Co•Production by The Public Theater Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director Patrick Willingham, Executive Director and National Black Theatre Sade Lythcott, Chief Executive Officer Jonathan McCrory, Executive Artistic Director FAT HAM was commissioned by and received its World Premiere as a filmed production at The Wilma Theater, Philadelphia: Blanka Zizka, Yury Urnov, James Ijames, and Morgan Green, Co-Artistic Directors Leigh Goldenberg, Managing Director

**CAST**

Juicy........................................................**Trumane Alston\*** Larry.........................................................**Sheldon Brown\*** Rabby ........................................................**E. Faye Butler\*** Rev/Pap................................................**Ronald L. Conner\*** Tio...............................................................**Victor Musoni\*** Opal...............................................................**Ireon Roach\*** Tedra................................................................**Anji White\***

**UNDERSTUDIES**

Larry/Tio — **Blake Hamilton Currie**

Juicy — **Marquise De'Jahn**

Rev/Pap — **Joseph Primes\***

Opal — **Jazzy Rush**

Tedra/Rabby — **TayLar\***

*Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is made.*

**SETTING:** A house in North Carolina. Could also be Virginia, or Maryland or Tennessee. It is not Mississippi, or Alabama or Florida. That's a different thing all together.

The American south, to me, exists in a kind of liminal space between the past and the present with an aspirational relationship to the future that is contingent to your history living in the south. All that to say ... I'm writing this play from inside the second decade of the 21st century. This world aesthetically sits anywhere in the 4-6 decades proceeding the current moment.

Line Producers — **Malkia Stampley, Adam Belcuore**

Intimacy and Violence — **Gaby Labotka**

Voice and Speech Coach — **Maya Vinice Prentiss**

Assistant Director — **Tor Campbell**

Assistant Lighting Designer — **Maaz Ahmed**

Assistant Sound Designer — **Kyle Anthony Cortés**

Production Assistant — **Jojo Wallenberg**

Illusion Consultant — **Benjamin Barnes**

Illusion Team — **Trent James**

Stage Management Apprentice — **Lawrence Jacquan**

Stage Management Intern — **Grecia Bahena**

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\*Denotes member of Actors‘ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

**Profiles**

**TRUMANE ALSTON\***, he/him (*Juicy*) Chicago: *SuperAfro*, Bob Curry Showcase (The Second City); *The Harold* (iO Theatre); and *Exes*, *The Saturday Show* (Logan Square Improv). Trumane is a recipient of the NBCUniversal Second City Bob Curry Fellowship and an alum of the Penguin Random House Audio Narrator Mentorship Program. He is represented by Stewart Talent Chicago.

**SHELDON D. BROWN\***, he/him (*Larry*) is thrilled to make his Goodman Theater debut. His credits include *1919*, *Choir Boy* (Jeff Award, Best Supporting) (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Othello*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Man in the Ring* (Court Theatre); *Magnolia Ballet*, *This Bitter Earth* (About Face Theatre). Broadway: national tour of *A Soldier’s Play*. Film/TV screenwriting credits include *Cicada* (Spirit Award Nominated, Best First Screenplay) and *The Big Leap* (FOX). He is represented by Stewart Talent & Innovative Artists.

**E. FAYE BUTLER\*** (*Rabby*) career spans over 40 years performing and directing plays and musicals. Select Goodman Theatre credits: *Fannie (The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer)* and *The Nacirema Society*. National and regional tours: *Mamma Mia*, *Ain’t Misbehavin*, *Dinah Was*, *Cope*, *Nunsense*. Select Regional theater credits: Seattle Rep., La Jolla Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public, The Kennedy Center, Steppenwolf, Arena Stage, Court Theatre, Victory Gardens, Peninsula Players, Chicago Shakespeare. Recipient of 11 Jeffs, two Helen Hayes, Excellence in the Arts and two Black Excellence Awards, among others. Inducted into the Women in the Arts Museum and Chicagoan of Year 2020. e-fayebutler.com

**RONALD L. CONNER\***, he/him (*Rev/Pap*) is excited to return to Goodman Theatre for *Fat Ham*. Previous Goodman Theatre credits: *the ripple, the wave that carried me home*, *Sweat*, *Incendiary*, *Father Comes Home from the Wars* and *A View from the Bridge*. Chicago theater credits: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Congo Square Theatre (Ensemble Member), Court Theatre, Timeline Theatre and Urban Theatre Company. Regional theater credits: St. Louis Black Rep, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Olney Theatre, among others.

**BLAKE HAMILTON CURRIE**, he/him (*US Larry/US Tio*) is incredibly excited to be making his Goodman Theatre debut and joining the cast of *Fat Ham*. His Chicago credits include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Court Theatre); and *Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). His regional credits include *A Christmas Carol* (Geva Theatre); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Shakespeare & Company); *Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *As You Like It* (Tennessee Shakespeare Company); and *Buried Deep* (Endstation Theatre).

**MARQUISE DE’JAHN**, he/she/they (*US Juicy*) is very excited for their Goodman Theatre debut! After attending the University of South Dakota and majoring in Acting and Musical Theatre, Marquise moved to Chicago, IL. Mostly recently, they’ve been seen as Granger in *Sofa King Queer* with Nothing Without a Company. They’ve also been seen in *One in Two* at Pride Arts and *Passing Strange* at Theo Ubique.

**VICTOR MUSONI\***, he/him (*Tio*) is an actor, writer and dancer from Chicago. Regional: Goodman Theatre, Arkansas Rep, Olney Theatre Center, Steppenwolf, St. Louis Shakespeare, Flint Rep, Congo Square, Victory Gardens and Definition Theatre Company. TV & Film: *Me, We*; *The Tensile Strength of Air*; *61st Street*; *WHOLE*; *Chicago Med*. Choreography: *Maybe* by Daniel Kryi, Olney Theatre Center, Definition and Flint Rep. Musoni is an ensemble member of Definition Theatre and Congo Square Theatre Company, and represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

**JOSEPH PRIMES\*** (*US Rev/US Pap*) is a Cleveland, OH native who now resides in Chicago. He attended Texas Tech University and Howard University. Primes spent many years as an activist and mentor before starting a career as an educator in the Euclid and East Cleveland school district. As a performance poet, he appeared with Vince Robinson and the jazz poets and the underground Hip Hop group, Chop Shop. Theater credits include works at Cleveland’s Public Theatre, Karamu, Ensemble, Great Lakes and more. Primes produced the film *#50 Fathers* and the web series *Seeing Tomorrow*. He has worked at Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, Definition Theatre and more. Television credits include *Chicago P.D*. He is a member of SAG-AFTRA and AEA.

**IREON ROACH\***, she/her (*Opal*) is a Chicago native actor and writer. She is thrilled to make her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include Victory Gardens Theater, Haven Theatre and Jackalope Theatre. Regional credits include Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, SpeakEasy Stage Company and Arkansas Repertory Theatre. Film and TV credits include *Candyman* (Monkeypaw), *Chicago P.D.* (NBC) and *The 4400* (The CW). Ireon is a company member of Definition Theatre Company and represented by Paonessa Talent.

**JAZZY RUSH**, she/her (*US Opal*) is an actor, mover, writer and director. Chicago: *STEW* (Shattered Globe Theatre). Regional: *As You Like it*, *Twelfth Night* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival); *JAYSON, IVANOV* (The Exodus Ensemble); *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *King Lear* (Shakespeare & Company). BFA Acting DePaul University. Jazzy is represented by Gray Talent Group. You can find her on all social media platforms @JazzyCheri.

**TAYLAR\*** (*US Tedra/US Rabby*) is excited to return to Goodman Theatre, with other credits such as *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Sweat*, *The Little Foxes*, *Ruined*, *The Convert*, *Mary* and *The Cook*. Chicago: *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *King Hedley, II*, *Oedipus Rex*, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Steppenwolf, Eclipse, Eta Creative Arts and Black Ensemble. Regional: *Fences* (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina); *Hamlet 50/50* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival); *American Fast* (Constellation Stage and Screen); *The Great Society*, *The Little Foxes* (Asolo Repertory). Off-Broadway: *Ruined* (Manhattan Theatre). Television: *Saint X*, *The Watchful Eye*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *Empire*, *The Chi*, *NeXt*. Film: *Heist 88*, *Southside with You*, *Teacher*, *Ms. White Light*. TayLar is repped by DDO Artists Agency-Chicago.

**ANJI WHITE\*** (*Tedra*) hails from the South Side of Chicago. Anji gives all praise to God for constantly guiding her throughout her career. White is grateful to make her debut on the Goodman Theatre stage. She last appeared in Court Theatre's production of *East Texas Hot Links*. Other credits include *For Colored Girls* (Jeff Award for Best Ensemble, Court Theatre); *Sunset Baby* (Black Theatre Alliance Award for Best Actress, TimeLine Theatre); world premiere docudrama *The Project(s)* (ATC), and more. Selected TV credits include *Fargo*, *Chicago Med*, *61st Street*, *The Chi* and more. White will appear in Marvel's *Ironheart* premiering in 2025. Represented by Paonessa Talent. Matthew 6:33

JAMES IJAMES (*Playwright*) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning and Tony-nominated playwright, director and educator. His plays have been produced by renowned theaters including Steppenwolf Theatre, The Public Theater and the Wilma Theatre, among others. James has received numerous accolades, including two Barrymore Awards for Outstanding Direction, the 2015 Terrance McNally New Play Award for *WHITE* and the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. He is also a 2023 Tony nominee for *Fat Ham*. A founding member of Orbiter 3, James holds a BA in Drama from Morehouse College and an MFA in Acting from Temple University. He currently teaches at Villanova University.

**TYRONE PHILLIPS** (*Director*) is a first generation Jamaican-American artist, Founding Artistic Director of Chicago’s Definition Theatre and member of the NAACP, SAG-AFTRA and SDC. Recipient of the 2022 Alumni Association Award for Diversity & Inclusion, he is an honors graduate of University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign). Tyrone is currently leading a campaign for the development of Definition’s new theater, community center and entrepreneur incubator. Directing and associate credits include: *Purpose* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Fairview* (Jeff Nomination), and more. Regional: *The Royale* (American Players Theatre); *The Tale of Despereaux* (Old Globe, Berkeley Rep). Off–Broadway: *Trevor, the Musical*. Honors: Arts Midwest’s Peter Capell Award for Midwestern Creativity & Entrepreneurship (2022); Newcity Stage Hall of Fame (2024).

**ARNEL SANCIANCO**, he/him (*Scenic Designer*) is an award-winning set designer with a nationally recognized portfolio and currently teaches Scenic Design at UC Berkeley. His credits include productions at Goodman Theatre, The Old Globe, The Kennedy Center, The Muny, The Huntington, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Woolly Mammoth, Steppenwolf, Writers Theatre, Court Theatre, American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Rep. For an in-depth look at his work visit www.ArnelDesigns.com.

**JOS N. BANKS**, he/they (*Costume Designer*) is a true renaissance man ... actor/singer, costume designer, teaching artist and overall LGBTQ+ trailblazer. Tours: International, *Kinky Boots* (Lola); *Hair* (Hud); *The Color Purple* (Harpo). Regional: Steppenwolf, Yale, MUNY, Drury Lane, Paramount Theatre, The Second City, Orlando Shakes, About Face Theatre, Porchlight and Congo Square. Film: Showtime’s *The Chi* and *Work in Progress*. Curator of his very own master class, titled “#BeFEARLESS w/ Jos N. Banks”. Rep: THE MINE. www.FearlessJos.com. @JosNBanks

**JASON LYNCH**, he/him (*Lighting Designer*) Goodman Theatre: *Inherit the Wind*, *English*, *Lucha Teotl*, *The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at a Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years*, *Layalina*, *the ripple, the wave that carried me home*, *Fannie (The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer)*, *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*, *I Hate It Here*, *Ohio State Murders*, *The Sound Inside* and *Lottery Day*. Additional Chicago credits include work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, Definition Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Shattered Globe Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, TimeLine Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, among others. Lynch is represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE and The Gersh Agency. jasondlynch.com @jasonlynch.design

**WILLOW JAMES**, he/him (*Sound Designer*) is a Chicago-based artist, educator and DJ whose work is focused around Black identity, new works and theater as activism. Goodman Theatre: *The Penelopiad*, *The Nacirema Society*. Chicago: *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* (Northlight Theatre); *The Hot Wing King* (Writers Theatre); *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution* (Court Theatre). Regional: *Nat Turner in Jerusalem* (American Players Theatre); *The Band’s Visit* (TheatreSquared/Writer’s Theatre); *Black Book* (NAATC).

**JARED BELLOT** (*Dramaturgy*) is a theater artist, facilitator and arts educator currently serving as the Walter Director of Education and Engagement at Goodman Theatre. A former classroom teacher, Jared has managed education programs at Chicago cultural institutions for the past decade where his passion lies in curating community spaces that allow for moments of deep reflection, authentic curiosity and intense joy.

**LAUREN PORT** (*Casting*) joined the Goodman as Casting Director in August of 2019 after eleven years casting in NYC, where she worked on many Goodman productions over the years, including *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window*, *Disgraced* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Broadway highlights: *Junk*; *Meteor Shower*; *A Doll’s House Part 2*; *The Front Page*; *It’s Only a Play*; *Disgraced*; *Fish in the Dark*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Grace*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Seminar*; *Stick Fl*y; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Fences*. Television/Film includes: *New Amsterdam* (NBC); *American Odyssey* (NBC) and *Steel Magnolias* (Sony for Lifetime). Lauren is a five-time Artios Award winner, a recipient of the 40th Annual Media Access Awards and a proud member of the Casting Society of America.

**PATRICK FRIES\*** (*Production Stage Manager*) most recently stage managed *English* and *Primary Trust* at Goodman Theatre. Other credits include work with Audible Theatre, Berkeley Rep, The Hypocrites, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Next Theatre, Northwestern University, Powerhouse Theatre, National High School Institute, Porchlight Music Theatre, Teatro Vista and The Second City. Pat is an ensemble member with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble in Chicago.

**DEFINITION THEATRE** has been a vibrant force for over a decade, celebrating stories created with, inspired by and intended for people and communities of color. Through the act of making, Definition expands perspectives, stewards resources and bridges the possibilities found at the intersection of art, innovation and education. Known for bold and impactful productions, we’ve brought to life plays by Oscar-winner Tarell Alvin McCraney, Pulitzer Prize-winners James Ijames and Jackie Sibblies Drury and Tony Award-winner Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. We strive to promote equity, foster empathy and enhance the quality of life for our community members by offering opportunities for creative, entrepreneurial and cultural expression. Our work emphasizes collaboration in theater-making and raises awareness of career paths in the arts. In 2024, Definition leased and equipped a storefront space in Hyde Park, enabling us to engage artists and expand programs as we prepare for our permanent home in Woodlawn on the southside of Chicago. This new theater, community center and business incubator will amplify and preserve BIPOC voices, promote social justice and empower the next generation of artists, entrepreneurs and changemakers to drive positive progress through the transformative power of the arts.

**SUSAN V. BOOTH** (Goodman Theatre Artistic Director) joined Goodman Theatre in the fall of 2022, having previously served as Artistic Director of Atlanta’s Tony Awardwinning Alliance Theatre, premiering new work that went on to national, international and commercial life. She has directed at the Goodman, Hartford Stage, Ford's Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and others. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory Universities. She is past president of the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field and a 2024 Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellow.

**JOHN COLLINS** (*Goodman Theatre Executive Director*) began his career with a summer internship at the Goodman, where he has since served in various senior leadership positions over the past two decades. During his tenure, Collins has overseen numerous production transfers to Broadway, regional and international venues and tours of Goodman productions, including *The Who’s TOMMY;* *Good Night, Oscar*; *War Paint*; *Desire Under the Elms*; and *Chinglish* (Broadway); *The Iceman Cometh* (New York/BAM); *The White Snake* (China); and *Luna Gale* (Los Angeles). He also helped open the Alice Rappaport Center for Education & Engagement—a 10,000 square foot center for expanded programming and activities. Collins is a past Chairman and current board member of the League of Chicago Theaters, and a board member of the Chicago Loop Alliance and the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). He is a graduate of Marquette University and resides in Chicago with his wife Melissa and their children, Shea and Evan.

**NOTE:** Bios are current as of December 23, 2024. Full bios also appear online at **GoodmanTheatre.org/InheritTheWind**.

**about us**

**AMERICA’S “BEST REGIONAL THEATRE”** (Time magazine), the Goodman is a premier not for-profit organization distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and civic engagement. Led by Artistic Director Susan V. Booth and Executive Director John Collins and committed to core values of Quality, Diversity and Community, the Goodman makes inclusion the fabric of the organization through its artistic priorities—including new play development, large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics. Distinctions include two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and nearly 200 Jeff Awards. The Goodman was first to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle,” and its annual A Christmas Carol, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers. The Goodman also serves as a production partner with local, national and international companies.

Our nationally recognized Education and Engagement programs use the tools of our profession to inspire youth, lifelong learners and audiences to find and/or enhance their voices, stories and abilities. The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement (est. 2016) is the home of such programming, most offered free of charge, and has vastly expanded the theater’s ability to serve our city (with 85% of youth participants from underserved communities).

Goodman Theatre was founded by William O. Goodman and family in honor of their son, Kenneth, a figure in Chicago’s early 1900s cultural renaissance. The family’s legacy endures through Albert Ivar Goodman who, with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the funds for the new Goodman center in 2000. Today, Goodman leadership also includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective. Julie Danis is Chairman of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, Lorrayne Weiss is the Women’s Board President and Kelli Garcia is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.

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; learn more at **GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability**.

**accessible & enhanced performances**

**Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour:** February 1 at 12:30pm, Touch Tour at 2:00pm

**American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreted Performance:** January 31 at 7:30pm

**Open-Captioned Performance:** February 2 at 2pm

**Spanish Subtitles Performance:** February 1 at 7:30pm