CONTACT: Denise Schneider and Ata Younan **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

 312.443.5151 or Press@GoodmanTheatre.org **May 25, 2023**

IMAGES: [Goodman Press Room](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mom58nrbexrsn29/AACQanZVx2kxZU4J2_w2EQuDa?dl=0)

***THE WHO’S TOMMY*, REIMAGINED BY ITS TONY AWARD-WINNING CREATORS PETE TOWNSHEND AND DES McANUFF,**

**PREMIERES IN CHICAGO THIS SUMMER AT GOODMAN THEATRE – PERFORMANCES START JUNE 13**

**\*\***[**VIDEO**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8pFMyM4gVc)**: TOWNSHEND AND McANUFF RETURN TO THE REVOLUTIONARY ROCK MUSICAL FOR A NEW GENERATION\*\***

**\*\*\***[**PHOTO RELEASE**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mom58nrbexrsn29/AACQanZVx2kxZU4J2_w2EQuDa?dl=0)**: A FIRST-LOOK AT THE CAST OF 29 IN REHEARSAL, WITH ALI LOUIS BOURZGUI AS TOMMY, JOINED BY JOHN AMBROSINO, BOBBY CONTE, ADAM JACOBS, ALISON LUFF, CHRISTINA SAJOUS AND MORE\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) The epic pop-culture musical smash sensation that revolutionized the theater, *The Who’s Tommy*, is reimagined anew at Goodman Theatre this summer. The famed original Tony Award-winning creators—The Who lead guitarist **Pete Townshend** (music, lyrics, book), who composed the 1969 double album “Tommy,” and original director **Des McAnuff** (book), who brought the story to the stage—team up again to tell the tale of Tommy Walker for 2023 audiences. *The Who’s Tommy* appears at Goodman Theatre June 13 – July 23 (Opening Night is Monday, June 26) in the 856-seat Albert Theatre; for tickets ($30 - $180, subject to change) call 312.443.3800, visit [GoodmanTheatre.org/Tommy](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/Tommy) or purchase in-person at the Goodman Box Office at 170 N. Dearborn (12 noon – 5pm). Northern Trust is the Lead Corporate Sponsor, Winston & Strawn LLP is the Major Corporate Sponsor and Shure is the Technical Supporter.

“In many ways, I think the world has caught up to Tommy Walker, which makes it exciting to revisit *The Who’s Tommy* for a new generation who, possibly more than any other, has a broad appetite for all kinds of music and story-telling,” said **Des McAnuff**, who originated the acclaimed production of *The Who’s Tommy* at La Jolla Playhouse, followed by its long-running Broadway engagement (1993-1995). “While the music remains as glorious as ever, our world years later is unimaginably and irrevocably changed. As a result, there’s so much more we all can recognize—and celebrate—in our protagonist’s evolution, as a collective deeper understanding of mental health has sharpened our lens. Tommy Walker’s triumph over devastating childhood trauma, to enlightened leadership, to ultimately recognizing the folly in which he’s surrounded himself is an ‘Amazing Journey’ to discover anew.”

Myth and spectacle combine in this reimagining of The Who’s exhilarating 1969 rock concept album, *Tommy*—including the unforgettable anthems “I’m Free,” “See Me, Feel Me,” “Sensation” and “Pinball Wizard.” After witnessing his father shoot his rival, the young Tommy Walker is lost in the universe, endlessly and obsessively staring into the mirror. An innate knack for pinball catapults him from reticent adolescent to celebrity savior.

“I’m excited about *The Who’s Tommy* in Chicago, which has always been a special place for me,” said **Pete Townshend**, whose numerous awards for *The Who’s Tommy* include a Grammy Award (1993), Tony Award for Best score (1993), Dora Mavor Moore Award (1994) and Olivier Award (1997). “In 1969, when I originally wrote ‘Tommy’ with The Who, nobody had ever written popular music songs about trauma, nobody talked about bullying. Then, working with Des on the staged theater piece, we broke the established rules for a musical show. Now, the current generation is breaking all of those rules again—and what Des is suggesting is that we honor that. I can’t wait to see how this show connects with Chicago today.”

Award-winning choreographer **Lorin Latarro**, whose work has been seen on and off Broadway (*Into The Woods*, *Waitress*), at the Metropolitan Opera and theaters across the nation, brings high octane physicality to the piece.

“Being asked to join the creative team of *The Who’s Tommy* is a dream come true. It’s the OG rock musical. Des and Pete are visionaries,” said Latarro. “I’m focused on creating a contemporary movement vocabulary that feels like it could be from any era. I am interested in pushing story inside the dances, and still building to dance breaks that have high velocity. I’m also a mother and I see the domestic aspects of this family as both brutal and profound. The work of motherhood without the joy of a hug from your child is sobering.”

A cast of 29 and a nine-piece band performs the classic songs from The Who’s exhilarating 1969 rock concept album, *Tommy*, in an exciting new staging. Cast in the title role of Tommy Walker is **Ali Louis Bourzgui** (*Layalina*, *The Band’s Visit* national tour), with **Adam Jacobs** (*Aladdin, Les Misérables* and *The Lion King* on Broadway) as his father, Captain Walker and **Alison Luff** (*Escape to Margaritaville, Waitress* and *Matilda* on Broadway) as his mother, Mrs. Walker. Joining them are **John Ambrosino** (*Les Misérables* on Broadway) as Uncle Ernie; **Bobby Conte** (*Company*, *A Bronx Tale The Musical* on Broadway) as Cousin Kevin; and **Christina Sajous** (*SpongeBob SquarePants* and *Holler If Ya Hear Me* on Broadway) as the Acid Queen.

Also joining the cast are **Jeremiah Alsop**, **Stephen Brower**, **Haley Gustafson**, **Sheldon Henry, Aliah James**, **Gabriel Kearns**, **Tassy Kirbas**  **Lily Kren**, **Nathan Lucrezio**, **Alexandra Matteo**, **Morgan McGhee**, **Mark Mitrano**, **Reagan Pender, Daniel Quadrino,** **Nathe Rowbotham**, **Jenna Nicole Schoen, Zach Sorrow**, **Ayana Strutz** and **Andrew Tufano**. Young Tommy is played as a child and a pre-adolescent by the following actors in rotation: **Ava Rose Doty**, **Presley Rose Jones**, **Annabel Finch** and **Ezekiel Ruiz.**

In addition to Latarro, the creative team includes music supervision and additional arrangements by **Ron Melrose** (*Jersey Boys* on Broadway, London and national tour); set design by **David Korins** (*Hamilton, Beetlejuice, Here Lies Love* on Broadway); costume design by **Sarafina Bush** (*for colored girls..., Pass Over* on Broadway); lighting design by **Amanda Zieve** (Broadway associate on *Escape to Margaritaville* and *Allegiance*); sound design by **Gareth Owen** (*Back to the Future, & Juliet* and *MJ* on Broadway); and projection design by **Peter Nigrini** (*MJ* and *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway). Casting is by **Lauren Port**, CSAand **Rachael Jimenez**, CSA. New York casting by **Tara Rubin Casting**/**Merri Sugarman**, CSA. **Tripp Phillips** is the Production Stage Manager and **Nikki Blue** and **Jason Hindelang** are the Stage Managers.

A nine-piece band performs the Tony Award-winning original score, featuring **Rick Fox** (Keyboard/Conductor), **Valerie Gebert** (Keyboard/Associate Conductor), **Bobby Everson** (Percussion), **Chris Forte** (Guitar), **Jeremiah Frederick** (Horn), **Larry Kohut** (Bass), **Felton Offard** (Guitar), **Rose Snyder** (Keyboard) and **Jim Widlowski** (Drums).

**ABOUT THE CREATORS**

**Pete Townshend** is known principally as the lead guitarist and composer for The Who, as well as for his own solo career. His career with The Who spans over fifty years, during which time Townshend wrote well over a hundred songs for The Who’s eleven studio albums, including the rock operas *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia* and the well-regarded rock radio staple *Who’s Next*. From early classic singles, such as ‘*My Generation*’ and ‘*Substitute*’ to ‘*Tommy*’, ‘*Lifehouse*’ and ‘*Quadrophenia*’, Townshend has always been at the forefront of his profession. Though known mainly as a guitarist, he is an accomplished singer and keyboard player, and has played many other instruments (banjo, accordion, synthesizer, piano, bass guitar and drums) on his solo albums and on certain Who albums. As an author, he has written *Horse’s Neck*, a collection of short stories (Faber & Faber, 1985); *Who I Am*, a memoir (Harper Collins, 2012) and his latest artistic project, *The Age of Anxiety*, is simultaneously a novel and a rock opera about passion and ambition, good drugs and bad drugs, and loves lost and found (the novel was published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2019). His numerous awards for *The Who’s Tommy* include a Grammy Award (1993), Tony Award for Best score (1993), Dora Mavor Moore Award (1994) and Olivier Award (1997). Other awards include Classic Rock Award (2011); Ivor Novello Award (1981); British Phonographic Industry Lifetime Achievement Award (1983); BRIT Award for contribution to British Music (1988); Living Legend Award, International Rock Awards (1991); Q Lifetime Achievement Award (1997); Ivor Novello Lifetime Achievement Award (2001); Kennedy Center Honor, John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts (jointly with Roger Daltrey, 2008); Rock Honor, VH1 (2008); Honorary Doctorate West London University (2010); Les Paul Award, TEC Foundation (2012). The most recent Who album, *WHO*, was released on December 6, 2019.

**Des McAnuff** is a two-time Tony Award-winning director and former artistic director of Canada’s Stratford Festival. He is also director emeritus of La Jolla Playhouse, where he staged over 30 productions of classics, new plays and musicals as artistic director. He’s co-founder of Broadway’s Dodgers. Broadway credits include *Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations; Summer: The Donna Summer Musical;**Doctor Zhivago; Jesus Christ Superstar; Guys and Dolls;* Aaron Sorkin’s *The Farnsworth Invention; Jersey Boys*(Tony and Olivier awards: Best Musical); Billy Crystal’s *700 Sundays* (Tony Award: Best Special Theatrical Event); *Dracula the Musical*; *How to Succeed…*; *The Who’ s Tommy* (Tony and Olivier awards: Best Director); *A Walk in the Woods* and *Big River* (Tony awards: Best Director, Best Musical). Selected New York credits include *Fetch Clay, Make Man* (NYTW); multiple productions at The Public and BAM. Stratford highlights include: *A Word or Two; Caesar and* *Cleopatra* and *The Tempest* (all with Christopher Plummer). Operacredits include*Faust* (The Met, ENO). TV and film credits include *700 Sundays* (HBO); *Cousin Bette* (with Jessica Lange, director); *The Iron Giant* (producer, BAFTA Award) and *Quills*(executive producer). In 2011, he was honored with a doctorate from Ryerson University where he attended theater school. In 2012, he was awarded Canada’s Governor General’ s National Arts Center Award and the Order of Canada.

**THE COMPANY OF *THE WHO’S TOMMY***

***For images, bios and additional information about the artists, visit the*** [***Play Detail Page***](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/show/the-whos-tommy/)***.***

**(*listed* *in alphabetical order*)**

Male Ensemble/Lad 2…Jeremiah Alsop

Uncle Ernie…John Ambrosino

Tommy/Narrator….Ali Louis Bourzgui

Male Ensemble/Minister…Stephen Brower

Cousin Kevin…Bobby Conte

Tommy, Age 4….Ava Rose Doty

Tommy, Age 10…Annabel Finch

Female Ensemble/Sally Simpson…Haley Gustafson

Male Ensemble/Hawker/Specialist…Sheldon Henry

Captain Walker…Adam Jacobs

Female Ensemble…Aliah James

Tommy, Age 4…Presley Rose Jones

Male Ensemble…Gabriel Kearns

Onstage Swing…Tassy Kirbas

Female Ensemble…Lily Kren

Male Ensemble…Nathan Lucrezio\*

Mrs. Walker…Alison Luff

Female Ensemble…Alexandra Matteo

Female Ensemble…Morgan McGhee

Male Ensemble/Lad 1…Mark Mitrano

Onstage Swing…Reagan Pender

Male Ensemble…Daniel Quadrino

Offstage Swing….Nathe Rowbotham

Tommy, Age 10…Ezekiel Ruiz

Acid Queen/Specialist’s Assistant…Christina Sajous

Female Ensemble…Jenna Nicole Schoen

Onstage Swing…Zach Sorrow

Offstage Female Swing…Ayana Strutz

Onstage Swing…Andrew Tufano

\**Denotes Dance Captain*

Choreography…Lorin Latarro

Set Design…David Korins

Costume Design…Sarafina Bush

Lighting Design…Amanda Zieve

Sound Design…Gareth Owen

Projection Design…Peter Nigrini

Flying Effects…ZFX Inc.

Music Supervision and Additional Arrangements…Ron Melrose

Music Director/Conductor/Keyboard 2…Rick Fox

Associate Conductor/Keyboard 3…Valerie Gebert

Keyboard 1…Rose Snyder

French Horn…Jeremiah Frederick

Guitar 1…Chris Forte

Guitar 2…Felton Offard

Bass…Larry Kohut

Percussion…Bobby Everson

Drums…Jim Widlowski

Casting is by Lauren Port, CSA and Rachael Jimenez, CSA. New York casting by Tara Rubin Casting/Merri Sugarman, CSA. Tripp Phillips is the Production Stage Manager; Jason Hindelang and Nikki Blue are Stage Managers.

**ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES**

*Visit Goodman theatre.org/Access for more information about Goodman Theatre’s accessibility efforts.*

-ASL-Interpreted: Friday, July 7 at 8pm – An American Sign Language interpreter signs the action/text as played.

-Touch Tour (12:30pm) and Audio-Described Performance (2pm): Saturday, July 15

-Spanish Subtitles: Saturday, July 15 at 8pm

-Open-Captioned: Sunday, July 16 at 2pm – An LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.

-Sensory-Friendly: Saturday, July 22 at 2pm

**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. 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 the theatrical profession, the Goodman’s Education and Engagement programs aim to develop generations of citizens who understand the 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 free of charge 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; learn more at **GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability**.

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.

Today, Goodman Theatre is led by Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth** and Executive Director/CEO **Roche Schulfer**. Theater leadership also includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective: **Rebecca Gilman**, **Dael Orlandersmith**, **Henry Godinez**, **Steve Scott**, **Kimberly Senior**, **Chuck Smith** and **Mary Zimmerman**. **Jeff Hesse** is Chairman of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, **Fran Del Boca** is President of the Women’s Board and **Craig McCaw** is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.