**GOODMAN THEATRE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS (DCASE)**

**PRODUCE *100 FREE ACTS OF THEATER* AT ARTS AND CULTURE DESTINATIONS THROUGHOUT CHICAGO**

**\*\*\*YEAR-LONG CITYWIDE ACTIVATION BEGINS THIS SUMMER, KICKS OFF THE GOODMAN’S CENTENNIAL SEASON\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) From circus-inspired wonder for children aged 0-5 in parks from Ashburn/Wrightwood to Norwood Park, to a Bronzeville classical music deep dive, to a South Shore BIPOC Play Festival, to a South Asian Electronic Dance Music “house party”—and much more—Goodman Theatre teams up with Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) to generate an unprecedented celebration of the artistic fabric of Chicago, offered entirely FREE of charge. A year-long citywide event, ***100 Free Acts of Theater*** is designed to activate each of Chicago’s 50 wards with arts programming as part of The Goodman’s upcoming celebratory Centennial 2025/2026 Season. Today, The Goodman and DCASE announce a sampling of the programs and community partners of *100 Free Acts of Theater, se*t to begin late summer, offered free with participation open to Chicagoans of all ages and backgrounds. A full list of programs, partner organizations and corresponding wards will be announced in the months ahead. Visit [GoodmanTheatre.org/FreeActs](https://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/100FreeActs) for details. Allstate Insurance Company is additionally a Corporate Sponsor Partner for *100 Free Acts of Theater*.

“You don’t hit the centennial milestone without deeply robust community support. So as a way to say thank you, we’re thrilled to be partnering with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in a year-long adventure—bringing free performance, arts education and opportunities to create to our city’s citizens,” said Walter Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth**. “We do this in partnership with neighborhood-based organizations, and with the greatest of all supports, the wildly gifted artists and teachers of Chicago.”

“DCASE is excited to collaborate with Goodman Theatre on this extraordinary initiative that celebrates the diversity, creativity and vibrant artistic spirit of Chicago. Our city’s cultural landscape is enriched by all of the arts, but theater’s impact is undeniable,” said DCASE **Commissioner Clinée Hedspeth.** “Making the artform accessible to Chicago’s communities is important to us and The Goodman, especially as we commemorate the legacy of one of Chicago’s legendary theaters. Through a wide variety of community partnerships, *100 Free Acts of Theater* aims to inspire, engage and transform.”

Led by **Jared Bellot**, The Goodman’s Clifford Director of Education and Engagement,together withArtistic Coordinator and Project Manager **Emi Suarez** and 100 Free Acts Coordinating Producer **Ericka Ratcliff,** the initiative *100 Free Acts of Theater* connects the Goodman with creative partners and organizations throughout the city. Each Act, developed in close collaboration and in tune with that partner organization’s mission, and programmed to take place at destinations within the partner’s community, touches one or more of Chicago’s 50 wards. Together, DCASE and The Goodman help provide resources to make each Act possible—including but not limited to artistic personnel, tech support, assistance with marketing/publicity and more.

Produced in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), *100 Free Acts of Theater* is part of The Goodman’s 100th anniversary season of 11 theater productions—six world premieres (including two musicals) and one revival, the major new downtown cultural attraction David Byrne’s *Theater of the Mind* and three annual offerings—a line-up that honors the past and sets a bold stage for the theater’s second century. An unprecedented year-long offering, *100 Free Acts of Theater*activates every area of the city with arts programming offered free of charge, as a way to give back to the community that helps distinguish Chicago as a foremost international destination for theater.

***100 FREE ACTS OF THEATER* – FIRST-QUARTER PARTNERSHIPS OPEN TO ALL**

***Additional programs and partners will be announced in the months ahead;*** [***GoodmanTheatre.org/FreeActs***](https://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/100FreeActs)

**Wards 1, 11, 13, 15. 17, 18, 24, 25, 38 and 41**

***BOOK UP!***

**Presented as part of the Chicago Park District’s Night Out in the Parks Series, supported by the Mayor’s Office and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)**

**Co-Directed by Tor Campbell and Raquel Torre**

**July 23 – August 10 citywide in 12 Chicago parks**

**Two one-hour performances (9:30am and 11:30am) at each park**

**FREE and open to all**

A traveling librarian (**Jean Claudio**) rolls into town with their magical book cart, ready to spark big imaginations everywhere and beyond! With a little wiggle, a little giggle and a whole lot of wonder, stories leap off the pages through juggling, tumbling, clowning and aerial acrobatics—with **Kylie Anderson**, **Madie Doppelt** and **Robbie Matthew**, all ProTraining alumni of Chicago’s famed Actors Gymnasium! Every book holds a new adventure; where will we go next? This wonderous outdoor circus spectacle invites little ones—and their grown-ups!—to move, play and discover the magic of reading. Running 60 minutes with no intermission, *Book Up!* Is specially made for children ages 0-5 years and their adult friends and family. All performances are FREE and followed by a hands-on workshop for audiences. Tickets are not required, but registration is encouraged in the event of inclement weather. [GoodmanTheatre.org/BookUp](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/Lizard). The Goodman is grateful to Kirkland & Ellis, Arts and Community Sponsor for Theater for the Very Young programming. *BOOK UP!* is presented as part of the Chicago Park District’s Night Out in the Parks series, supported by the Mayor’s Office and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. [www.nightoutintheparks.com](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nightoutintheparks.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7CDeniseSchneider%40GoodmanTheatre.org%7Cec86f46d359a4ac1907408dc80c0bb49%7C8305ef74c2704cdb9f2107217cc0965a%7C0%7C0%7C638526812484520261%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SL%2FN4sRrKw%2F20IyoW33P2pFi4JRLR28SiDxzLZ7jXD0%3D&reserved=0).

**Ward 42**

***SWEETEST SEASON***

***The 4th Annual Gathering of Indigenous Creativity***

**In partnership with Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum**

**Goodman Theatre (170 N. Dearborn)**

**August 1 and 2**

**FREE and open to all; with some paid ticketed offerings**

Since time immemorial, Chicago has been a meeting place for Native peoples. With words of wisdom, stories and histories old and new, we expand traditions of art with a festival of music, dance, spoken word, panel discussions, crafting workshops and much more, featuring local Indigenous artists, scholars and activists. Together in partnership with the **Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum**, Goodman Theatre proudly hosts a one-of-a-kind festival of local Indigenous artists and scholars in the fourth annual *Sweetest Season: A Gathering of Indigenous Creativity*. Experience two days of performances and workshops celebrating Two Spirit artists and community members—including a highly anticipated drag show in the Owen Theatre, featuring multiple drag artists uplifting the artistry, joy and resilience of Indigenous performers across Chicagoland and beyond. The next day, the Alice Center hosts a vibrant, community-centered lineup of workshops, panels, poetry, live music, comedy, artisan vendors and more. Come learn, laugh, connect and celebrate—all are welcome! [GoodmanTheatre.org/Sweetest](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/Sweetest)

**Ward 8**

**5th ANNUAL BIPOC PLAY FESTIVAL**

**Perceptions Theatre (1825 E. 79th Street)**

**August 15-24 | Fridays 7-10pm; Saturdays -2-5pm**

**FREE and open to all**

Perceptions Theatre presents the 5th Annual BIPOC Play Festival, a celebration of one-act plays by Black, Indigenous and other playwrights of color. The festival showcases several one-act plays each day, performed by Perceptions Theatre cast members. Committed to making the arts more accessible, the festival highlights the voices of writers and actors of color—many from South Shore and the South Side—while creating opportunities for their work to be seen and celebrated. **Perceptions Theatre**’s mission is to strengthen the accessibility of theater to the African American/Black communities of South Shore and to be an economic and artistic resource for BIPOC artists. Perceptions changes the way people perceive the world around them one show at a time by highlighting Black playwright’s stories, especially those from the South side of Chicago. [PerceptionsTheatre.org](https://www.perceptionstheatre.org/)

**Ward 48**

**16TH ANNUAL LIVING NEWSPAPER FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT**

**Jackalope Theatre (5917 N. Broadway)**

**August 21 | 7:30 – 10pm**

**FREE and open to all**

Jackalope Theatre kicks off its Living Newspaper Festival with a free opening night, featuring one-act plays inspired by current news headlines. Rooted in the legacy of the 1930s Federal Theatre Project, the festival brings timely stories to the stage with bold, fresh voices. **Jackalope Theatre Company** expands the definition of American identity by producing works that celebrate diverse perspectives. A premier home for exciting and intimate Off-Loop Theatre based in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood, Jackalope is committed to cultivating new voices that contribute to an expanding American culture and mythology. Each season, they produce full-length plays, offer new play development programming, and classes in partnership with the Chicago Parks District. [JackalopeTheatre.org](http://www.JackalopeTheatre.org)

**Ward 32**

**MANDALA MAKERS FESTIVAL**

***A South Asian EDM House Party***

**Mandala South Asian Performing Arts (2936 N. Southport)**

**September 5 | 6-11pm**

**FREE and open to all; with some paid ticketed offerings**

Mandala South Asian Performing Arts kicks off the Mandala Makers Festival with a high-energy South Asian EDM House Party at the Athenaeum Theatre’s Paradiso space. Featuring multiple DJs, this opening night celebration brings together dance, music, and community in a vibrant tribute to South Asian culture. This event launches the free-to-all festival and conclude the first day with a massive celebration of South Asian music and culture. **Mandala Arts** is a MacArthur Award-winning organization founded by Executive Artistic Director Pranita Nayar. From classical to contemporary, Mandala offers evocative dance, theatre, and musical arts of South Asia. Mandala connects our audiences and students with the vibrancy of the performing arts traditions of South Asia. We offer powerful engagement with specialized artists and educators who represent diverse ethno-geographic, linguistic, cultural and gender identities. [MandalaArts.org](http://www.MandalaArts.org)

**Ward 4**

**SAY GAY PLAYS**

**About Face Theatre, Silk Road Cultural Center and Northeastern Illinois University (700 E. Oakwood)**

**September 20 | 3-6pm**

**FREE and open to all**

*Say Gay Plays* features staged readings of LGBTQ+-themed short plays created in response to the wave of discriminatory legislation targeting LGBTQ+ communities across the U.S. Originally conceived by Voyage Theater Company with Tectonic Theater Project, Quick Silver Theater Company, and Provincetown Theater, *Say Gay Plays* uplifts queer stories of courage, triumph, and joy. **About Face Theatre** advances LGBTQ+ equity through community building, education, and performance. Since 1995, the company has created brave spaces for new work to flourish through union-affiliated productions, touring shows, education programs, and interactive workshops. We envision an affirming and equitable world in which all LGBTQ+ individuals are thriving and free from prejudice and discrimination. **Silk Road Cultural Center** is a Chicago-based interdisciplinary arts organization rooted in the modern communities of the historic Silk Roads, including our diaspora communities. We embrace the arts as a catalyst for connecting people, places, histories, and futures.

**Ward 3**

***THE FORUM AND URBAN JUNCTURE FOUNDATION***

***The Music of Bronzeville’s Florence Price***

**The Bronzeville Incubator (5055 S. Prairie)**

**October 18 | 1-3pm**

**FREE and open to all**

During Open House Chicago 2025, Goodman Theatre and the Urban Juncture Foundation team host a free event at the historic Forum complex celebrating Bronzeville’s rich classical music history. Highlighting Florence Price—the first Black woman to have her composition performed by a major symphony and a 1920s Forum neighbor—the event will feature live performances and a discussion with community and music sector leaders, hosted by UJF’s Bernard Loyd. **Urban Juncture Foundation** collaborates with **Urban Juncture Inc.** and other partners in ‘Build Bronzeville’—an initiative that harnesses culture and innovation to reclaim spaces, rebuild commerce and revitalize the community. The initiative’s five programs include *Boxville*, a vibrant shipping container market offering accessible storefronts for local entrepreneurs and unique experiences for residents; *Bronzeville Cookin’*, a culinary hub that celebrates Black food traditions; *The Forum* honors and uplifts Black cultural heritage; *Bronzeville Incubator*, which empowers emerging local enterprises; and *Engage Bronzeville*, which fosters neighborhood pride through beautification and storytelling.

***FREE EVENTS OPEN ONLY TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS***

**Ward 20**

**MOVE ME SOUL**

***Movement Workshop for Youth Artists***

**July 9 | 9am – 1pm**

**555 E 51st Street**

Move Me Soul will host a Musical Theater Movement Workshop for youth artists, inspired by the choreography and design of *The Color Purple* at Goodman Theatre. Led by the show's choreographer, Breon Arzell, the workshop will explore storytelling through movement and introduce students to the music and choreography of the production. Created for Move Me Soul participants pursuing careers in the performing arts, the workshop offers an inside look at professional theater and a deeper artistic experience. *This workshop is for Move Me Soul participants only*; to learn more about Move Me Soul and how to get involved in their programming, visit [MoveMeSoul.com](http://www.MoveMeSoul.com).

**Ward 14**

**PEQUEÑOS SOÑADORES: SUMMER YOUTH ARTIST SERIES**

***Artist-led Workshop for Youth***

**July 25 | 11am – 1:30pm**

Gage Park Latinx Council (GPLXC) presents a guest artist-led workshop for youth in GPLXC’s free summer camp. Participants create powerful visual and written expressions of their identities through guided activities, a professional photoshoot and artistic design. Their work will be showcased during the camp’s final performances and displayed at GPLXC’s Centro Cultural as a living archive of youth creativity and community impact. *This workshop is for registered camp participants only.* To learn more or sign up, visit GPLXC’s website and don’t miss the public exhibit at Centro Cultural (2711 W. 51st Street) later this summer! **Gage Park Latinx Council** is a Queer, DACA, Latinx-led grassroots organization that runs two Cultural Centers in Gage Park, a neighborhood located on the Southwest side of Chicago. GPLXC organizes programs, spaces and initiatives holistically, through art, popular education, and direct actions grounded in social justice, mutual aid, and abolition.

**PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

*Confirmed partner organizations for 100 Free Acts of Theater include the following. Additional partners will be announced throughout the year.*

* + Chicago Parks Department (Multiple wards, city-wide)
  + Chicago Public Libraries (Multiple wards, city-wide)
  + Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum (Multiple wards)
  + Lookingglass Theatre (Ward 2)
  + The Forum/Urban Juncture Foundation (Ward 3)
  + About Face Theatre and Silk Road Cultural Center (Ward 4)
  + Rebuild Foundation (Ward 5)
  + Definition Theatre (Ward 5)
  + Perceptions Theatre (Ward 8)
  + Historic Pullman Foundation (Ward 9)
  + Southeast Chicago Archive and Storytelling Project (Ward 10)
  + ProjectVISION (Ward 11)
  + Gage Park Latinx Council (Ward 14)
  + Beverly Theatre Guild (Ward 19)
  + Move Me Soul (Ward 20)
  + Open Center for the Arts (Ward 24)
  + Honey Pot Performance (Ward 24)
  + UrbanTheater Company (Ward 26)
  + Kehrein Center for the Arts (Ward 29)
  + Mandala South Asian Performing Arts at the Athenaeum Theatre (Ward 32)
  + Jane Addams Hull House (Ward 34)
  + Elastic Arts (Ward 35)
  + Driehaus Foundation (Ward 42)
  + Jackalope Theatre (Ward 48)
  + Rivendell Theatre/Folded Map Project (Ward 48)
  + Mandala South Asian Performing Arts (Ward 50)

**ABOUT CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS (DCASE)**

The **City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)** supports artists and cultural organizations, invests in the creative economy, and expands access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods. As a collaborative cultural presenter, arts funder, and advocate for creative workers, our programs and events serve Chicagoans and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, downtown and in diverse communities across our city—to strengthen and celebrate Chicago. DCASE produces some of the city’s most iconic festivals, markets, events, and exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center, Millennium Park, and in communities across the city—serving a local and global audience of 25 million people. The Department offers cultural grants and resources, manages public art, supports TV and film production and other creative industries, and permits special events throughout Chicago. For details, visit Chicago.gov/DCASE and stay connected via our newsletters and social media.

**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 Walter 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 unceded 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. The Goodman is proud to have a relationship with Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum. Located in Evanston, the Museum honors the survival and perseverance of Indigenous communities and promotes a greater understanding of Indigenous peoples: gichigamiin-museum.org.

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 of 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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