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312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **July 17, 2025**

***THE SWEETEST SEASON: A GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS CREATIVITY* RETURNS TO GOODMAN THEATRE,**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GICHIGAMIIN INDIGENOUS NATIONS MUSEUM, AUGUST 1-2**

**\*\*\*4TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL FEATURES AN INDIGENOUS DRAG SHOW AND THE RETURN OF THE 1491s---PLUS FREE WORKSHOPS, PANELS, POETRY, LIVE MUSIC AND ARTISAN VENDORS\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) Celebrate Chicago’s Indigenous community at the 4th annual *The Sweetest Season: A Gathering of Indigenous Creativity* – a one-of-a-kind festival returning to Goodman Theatre for a fourth year. In partnership with the **Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum**, The Goodman hosts a diverse array of events, workshops and panels that highlight and celebrate Indigenous culture and Indigenous artists, scholars and performers, particularly Two-Spirit community members. Participants include artists **Negwes White** (Ojibwe/Diné (Navajo)) and **Jennifer Stevens** (Oneida/Oglala Lakota), poet and storyteller **Vince Romero** (Pueblo Laguna), writers **Elise Paschen** (Osage Nation), **Aaron Golding** (Seneca Nation, Beaver Clan), and **Jim Terry** (Ho-Chunk), musicians **Brandi Berry Benson** (Chickasaw Nation), **Mark Jourdan** (Oneida/Ho-Chunk), **William Bucholtz** (Algonquin/Metis), and **Michaela Marchi** (Isleta Pueblo) and stand-up comedians **Damon Howard** (Navajo)and **Chelazon Leroux** (Canadian Dene), who is also a drag performer. An Indigenous Drag Show (August 1 at 7:30pm; tickets $18-23) features Indigenous performers igniting the 350-seat flexible Owen Theater with big looks and bold moves. Minnesota-, Montana-, and Oklahoma-based members of comedy group **The 1491s** also perform during the festival (August 2 at 7pm). Artists associated with **The Center for Native Futures** display their work during the festival and participate in a panel discussion (August 2 at 1pm). Tickets for the Indigenous Drag Show are $18-23 and all events in the Alice Center are free (reservations required); call 312.443.3800 or visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Sweetest. Media members interested in covering these events should contact [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) for complimentary press passes.

“This year, we are especially proud to uplift and honor our Two-Spirit relatives,” said **Kim Vigue** (Menominee/Oneida), Executive Director of the **Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum.** “Across many Indigenous nations, gender and sexuality have long been viewed as sacred, fluid and expansive. Throughout the festival, we invite you to listen, witness and celebrate the full spectrum of Indigenous expression, especially the voices of our Two-Spirit artists. From storytelling and drag to poetry, music and humor, *The Sweetest Season* reflects the richness and diversity of contemporary Indigenous life. It reminds us that Indigenous art is not only a form of expression but a source of healing, resistance and joy.”

“This weekend gathering and celebration of Indigenous creativity in our shared community is one that so many of us look forward to as a space of riches and wonder,” said Goodman Theatre Walter Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth.** “It is the Goodman’s honor to partner with the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum, as well as the Center for Native Futures, to showcase the words, music, artistry and hearts of these artists.”

**FULL SCHEDULE OF *THE SWEETEST SEASON* EVENTS**

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

* **6pm:** *The Sweetest Season* Social Hour: An Indigenous-Only Curated Space *(Alice Center Lab 1)*    
  An event hosted by the **Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum** and curated by the Indigenous community for fellowship, food and conversation to kick of this year's festival. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.
* **7:30pm:** Indigenous Drag Show *(Owen Theatre)*    
  Join us for the fiercest drag show this side of the Great Lakes! A dazzling lineup of Indigenous drag performers lights up the Goodman Theatre with big looks, bold moves and nonstop laughs in a night of unapologetic fun and flair. Performers include **Chelazon Leroux** (Canadian Dene), **Landa Lakes** (Chickasaw) and **Buffalo Barbie** (Navajo).  Tickets $18-23.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2 *(all events take place in the Alice Center at Goodman Theatre)*

* **1pm:** Art Gallery and Panel Discussion with the Center for Native Futures *)*  
  Come meet some of the area’s most talented fine artists and see their work up close. Their work will be on display throughout the day and will include a panel discussion, curated by **The Center for Native Futures**, which will delve into their process and inspirations. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.
* **2:30pm:** Pottery Workshop with Jennifer Stevens  
  In this workshop, artist **Jennifer Stevens** will introduce attendees to a historical overview of Oneida Pottery. Attendees will learn about the history of Native Americans and experience, hands-on, how many tribes created their pottery that was used for survival for hundreds of years for cooking and storing food. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.
* **3:45pm:** Sip and Paint for Kids with Negwes White  
  Join us for a fun event for kids of all ages and their families to sip on juice and learn to paint, guided by Chicago-based artist **Negwes White**. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.
* **4:30pm:** Sorrel and Songbirds: Music and Poetry   
  Hosted by poet **Vince Romero**, this special event features readings by acclaimed writers **Elise Paschen**, **Aaron Golding**, and **Jim Terry**, each sharing their unique perspectives. The night also includes musical performances by **Jennifer Stevens**, **Brandi Berry Benson**, **Mark Jourdan**, **William Bucholtz**, and **Michaela Marchi**. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.
* **7pm:** Sassafras and Slugs: Comedy Night  
  Join us for a night of comedy, featuring members of the comedy group, **The 1491s**, as well as stand-up comedians **Chelazon Leroux** and **Damon Howard**. Tickets are FREE; reservations are required.

**ABOUT THE GICHIGAMIIN INDIGENOUS NATIONS MUSEUM**

The **Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum** (formerly Mitchell Museum of the American Indian), located in Evanston, Illinois, is one of a handful of museums across the country that focuses exclusively on the histories, cultures, traditions, and arts of Indigenous people from the United States and Canada. Since its founding in 1977, the museum has become a cherished resource and education center committed to promoting a greater understanding of Indigenous peoples and serving as a space to celebrate their diverse cultures, rich histories, and present-day experiences and contributions. Find more information at [Gichigamiin-Museum.org](https://gichigamiin-museum.org/).

**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](https://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 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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