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312.443.5151 or Press@GoodmanTheatre.org  **September 15, 2025**

IMAGES: [Press Scenes Now Available Here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/17lo9daoa363fvdj75ony/APljJbS45WFYlsmJAhOwBUE?rlkey=kk49a723z3xoa3vpprqh43zr1&st=lk9cgxeu&dl=0)

***ASHLAND AVENUE* BY LEE KIRK*,* DIRECTED BY SUSAN V. BOOTH, OPENS TONIGHT TO A SOLD-OUT HOUSE**

**\*\***[**VIDEO + PHOTOS ARE NOW AVAILABLE**](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/17lo9daoa363fvdj75ony/APljJbS45WFYlsmJAhOwBUE?rlkey=kk49a723z3xoa3vpprqh43zr1&st=lk9cgxeu&dl=0) **OF THE WORLD PREMIERE STARRING JENNA FISCHER AND FRANCIS GUINAN, WITH WILL ALLAN, CORDELIA DEWDNEY AND CHIKÉ JOHNSON\*\***

**\*\*\*THE GOODMAN’S CENTENNIAL 25/26 SEASON OPENER HAS BEEN EXTENDED THROUGH OCTOBER 12\*\*\***

(CHICAGO, IL) The first production of The Goodman’s Centennial 2025/2026 Season opens tonight to a capacity crowd in the 856-seat Albert Theatre. Already extended through October 12 due to high demand for tickets, **Lee Kirk**’s *Ashland Avenue*—directed by Walter Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth** and starring *The Office’s* **Jenna Fischer** alongside Chicago’s own **Francis Guinan** (*The Cherry Orchard*), with **Will Allan** (*The Cherry Orchard*), **Cordelia Dewdney** (Drury Lane’s *Steel Magnolias*) and **Chiké Johnson** (*Toni Stone*)—explores what happens when we step out of our parents’ footsteps to follow our heart. Video and photos of the company on a set detailed with Chicago nostalgia by Set Designer **Kevin Depinet** are available now. *Ashland Avenue* continues its extended run through October 12. Tickets ($39-$153, subject to change) are available at the Box Office (170 N. Dearborn), by phone at 312.443.3800 and online at [GoodmanTheatre.org/Ashland](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/show/ashland-avenue/).

Pete’s TV and Video has served Chicagoland for 40+ years, its plucky owner famous for his legendary commercials and customer care. But it’s a new era, and Pete’s (**Francis Guinan**) last store location is struggling while Sam (**Jenna Fischer**)—his daughter and family business heir apparent—has different dreams.

“I started writing *Ashland Avenue* after a visit to Chicago in 2023. It was on this trip when I realized, sadly, that many of my old college haunts were no longer in existence,” said playwright **Lee Kirk**. “Although I hadn’t thought of them in years, I was instantly nostalgic for places like The Three penny Cinema, Taco Burrito Place #2 and the legendary Lounge Ax. But my longing gave me an idea—and by the time I’d returned to Los Angeles three days later, the seeds of *Ashland Avenue* had been planted.”

A graduate of The Theater School at DePaul University, where he studied Acting, Kirk’s feature films as writer/director include *Ordinary World*, starring Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day), Selma Blair, Judy Greer and Fred Armisen. *The Giant Mechanical Man*, starring Jenna Fischer, Chris Messina, Topher Grace with Bob Odenkirk. And the upcoming film *New Years Rev: A Green Day Movie*. Playwright: *Sad Happy Sucker,* originally produced in 2007 in Los Angeles, produced 2019 Trap Door Theater, Chicago. Music Video/Director: Old 97’s *Good With God*. Television/Director: NBC comedy, *The Office*.

“Last December, following a reading of *Ashland Avenue* for a few hundred intrepid souls who attend 10am Saturday play readings, there was a line of people waiting to talk—to Lee, to me, to anyone associated with the play. And while they said some nice things about the play, that isn’t what they wanted to talk about. They wanted to tell us about kids who’d moved away. About family businesses that now were no more. About aspirations they had, but weren’t ready to share—and yet, here they were, sharing them,” said **Susan V. Booth**. “When a play opens up its audience like that, we all get a little more human in that space. And we certainly can use more of that right now.”

The Goodman is grateful for the support of JPMorgan Chase & Co. (Lead Corporate Sponsor), Edgerton Foundation (New Play Award), Abbott Fund and Winston & Strawn LLP (Corporate Sponsor Partners).

**THE COMPANY OF *ASHLAND AVENUE***

**By Lee Kirk**

**Directed by Susan V. Booth**

**Will Allan…**Young Man

**Cordelia Dewdney…**Jess

**Jenna Fischer…**Sam

**Francis Guinan…**Pete

**Chiké Johnson…**Mike

Understudies for this production include **Daniel Ajak** (Mike), **Adam Benjamin** (Young Man), **Maura Kidwell** (Sam), **Hannah Ruwe** (Jess) and **Neil Friedman** (Pete).

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Vocal and Dialect Coach…**Stan Brown**

Fight Choreographer…**Chuck Coyl**

Set Designer…**Kevin Depinet**

Costume Designer…**Jessica Pabst**

Lighting Designer…**Jason Lynch**

Sound Designer and Composer…**Lindsay Jones**

Line Producer…**Malkia Stampley**

Second Line Producer…**Lena Romano**

Assistant Director…**Michael Cotey**

Assistant Lighting Designer...**Emma Berry**

Assistant Sound Designer…**Aaron Woodstein**

Script & Production Assistant...**Lauren Westfahl**

Jingle Vocalist...**Becca Kaufman**

Casting is by **Lauren Port**, CSA. **Clara Zucker** is the Dramaturg. **Nikki Blue** is the Production Stage Manager. **Jennifer Gregory** is the Stage Manager.

**ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES**

*Visit* [*GoodmanTheatre.org/Access*](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/tickets/accessibility/) *for more information about The Goodman’s accessibility efforts.*

ASL-Interpreted: September 26 at 7:30pm – An ASL interpreter signs the action/text as played.

Audio-Described: September 27 at 2pm; Touch Tour; 12:30pm – Action audibly enhanced via headset.

Spanish-Subtitled: September 27 at 7:30pm – Spanish-translated dialogue via LED sign.

Open-Captioned: September 28 at 2pm – LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.

**ABOUT THE GOODMAN**

Since 1925, The Goodman has been more than a stage. A theatrical home for artists and a gathering space for community, it’s where stories come to life—bold in artistry and rich in history, deeply rooted in the city it serves.

Led by Walter Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth** and Executive Director **John Collins**, The Goodman sparks conversation, connection and change through new plays, reimagined classics and large-scale musicals. With distinctions including nearly 200 world or American premieres, two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and nearly 200 Joseph Jefferson Awards, The Goodman is proud to be the first theater to produce all 10 plays of August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle.” In addition, the theater frequently serves as a production partner—with national and international companies to Chicago’s Off-Loop theaters—to help amplify theatrical voices.

But The Goodman believes a more empathetic, more connected Chicago is created one story at a time, and counts as its greatest legacy the community it’s built. Generation-spanning productions and programs offer theater for a lifetime; from *Theater for the Very Young* (plays designed for ages 0-5) to the long-running annual *A Christmas Carol*, which has introduced new generations to theater over five decades, The Goodman is committed to being an asset for all of Chicago. Education and Engagement programs led by Clifford Director of Education and Engagement **Jared Bellot** and housed in the Alice Rapoport Center use the tools of theater to spark imagination, reflection and belonging. Each year, these programs reach thousands of people (85% from underserved communities) as well as educators, artists and lifelong learners across the city.

The Goodman stands on the unceded homelands of the Council of the Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations—and acknowledges the many other Nations for whom this land now called Chicago has long been home, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo, and Mascouten. The Goodman is proud to partner with the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum ([Gichigamiin-Museum.org](https://gichigamiin-museum.org/)) and the Center for Native Futures ([CenterForNativeFutures.org](https://www.centerfornativefutures.org/))—organizations devoted to honoring Indigenous stories, preserving cultural memory, and deepening public understanding.

The Goodman was founded by William O. Goodman and his family to honor the memory of Kenneth Sawyer Goodman—a visionary playwright whose bold ideas helped shape Chicago’s early cultural renaissance. That spirit of creativity and generosity endures today. In 2000, through the commitment of Mr. Goodman’s descendants—Albert Ivar Goodman and his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton—The Goodman opened the doors to its current home in the heart of the Loop.

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