

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces the cast of
its NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE Production

Sunny Afternoon

The Kinks' iconic rise to rock 'n' roll fame
told through their hit songs performed live onstage

With an original story, music, and lyrics by The Kinks' legendary Ray Davies
and written by Joe Penhall, directed by CST Artistic Director Edward Hall

March 21-April 27, 2025 in The Yard



Chicago—February 11, 2025—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) announces today the cast and creative team of its highly anticipated North American Premiere musical event [Sunny Afternoon](#). Based on the music of The Kinks and featuring a soundtrack of their own chart-topping songs, this Chicago Shakespeare production comes to the stage directed by Artistic Director **Edward Hall**, **March 21-April 27, 2025 in The Yard**.

From working-class London lads to rock 'n' roll icons, The Kinks exploded onto the '60s music scene with a raw, energetic new sound that rocked a nation and changed the industry forever. The story of the band's atmospheric rise to fame is told through their own prolific catalog of hit songs, including "You Really Got Me," "Lola," and "All Day and All of the Night"—all performed live onstage by the actors in a concert experience of the irresistible

music that inspired generations. With an original story, music, and lyrics by The Kinks' legendary **Ray Davies** and a script by **Joe Penhall**, this musical makes its North American Premiere after the UK debut production, also directed by Hall, took the West End by storm—winning four Olivier Awards, including Best Musical.

Sunny Afternoon features an ensemble cast that includes **Emma Grace Bailey**, **Joy Campbell**, **John Carlin**, **Sean Fortunato**, **Marya Grandy**, **Jared D.M. Grant**, **Oliver Hoare**, **Danny Horn**, **Will Leonard**, **Michael Lepore**, **Ana Margaret Marcu**, **Ben Mayne**, **Kieran McCabe**, **Joseph Papke**, and **Kayla Shipman**.

"Anyone who knows The Kinks knows we're a series of catastrophes turning into glorious triumph," says **Ray Davies**. "This is not an interpretation...it's coming from my perspective and very personal to me. Most of the stories come from the family in the front room where everyone played an instrument, and everyone collaborated. Yet what's come through is that it's a kind of timeless story. Yes, there's a setting, but hopefully the songs transcend time. It's about characters and situations and people trying to get through their lives."

"It's a joy to be bringing this show to America for the first time, and to celebrate the incredible music of The Kinks," says **Edward Hall**. "Chicago is a city rich in musical history so there is no better place to begin this rock 'n' roll journey, which takes us from a small family home in North London to the stage of Madison Square Garden."

Playing brothers and founding members of The Kinks are **Danny Horn** as Ray Davies and **Oliver Hoare** as Dave Davies, both reprising their roles from the Olivier Award-winning West End run. Danny Horn has been seen in *The Bah Humbug Club* at Lichfield Garrick, *We'll Dance On The Ash Of The Apocalypse* at The Park Theatre, and *Reclaim The Night* at Arcola Theatre, along with television credits Riot Women, Doctors, and Doctor Who (BBC), and more. He has released two albums as a musician, *Quitting Smoking* and *Sirens & Sea Monsters*, and published his first collection of poems, *Lucy and the Others*, in 2023. Oliver Hoare's credits include *Anthony & Cleopatra* at Chichester Festival Theatre and *The Beggar's Opera* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, as well as film and television credits. As a singer-songwriter, he performs with his band Oliver Hoare and the Late Great, and he is the co-founder of Neon Candle Theatre.

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Portraying the other original members of The Kinks are **Michael Lepore** as bassist Peter Quaife and **Kieran McCabe** as drummer Mick Avory. Michael Lepore was a member of the Original Broadway Cast of *Sing Street*, with additional credits including *Spring Awakening* at Irondale Center, *Rent* at Theatre Aspen, and *Origin Story* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Kieran McCabe was nominated for a Jeff Award for his performance in the title role of *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story* at the Marriott Theatre. He returns to Chicago Shakespeare after appearing in *As You Like It*, and his other credits include *Rock of Ages* at Paramount Theatre, *Verboten* at the House Theatre of Chicago, *Next to Normal* at Writers Theatre, and *Million Dollar Quartet* at the Marriott Theatre.

The ensemble cast also features **Emma Grace Bailey** as Peggy (*Music Man* and *Beehive: The '60s Musical* at the Marriott Theatre); **Joy Campbell** as Joyce (*Baked! The Musical* at Theo); **John Carlin** as Fred Davies and Allen Klein (*Run Bambi Run* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, *Turn Me Loose* at Westside Theatre); **Sean Fortunato** as Larry Page (*Henry V*, *Richard III*, and many more at CST, *Damn Yankees* at Marriott Theatre, *Young Frankenstein* at Mercury Theater), **Marya Grandy** as Annie Davies and Marsha (*Emma*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Follies* at CST, *Into the Woods* US tour, *The Devil Wears Prada*, Broadway in Chicago); **Jared D.M. Grant** as Gregory Piven (*The Full Monty*, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and more at Paramount Theatre, *Tootsie* North American tour); **Will Leonard** as Grenville Collins (*Guys and Dolls* and *Fiddler on the Roof* at Drury Lane Theatre); **Ana Margaret Marcu** as Rasa (*Once* at Syracuse Stage, *Jersey Boys* at Theater Aspen); **Ben Mayne** as Robert Wace (*Girl From The North Country* on Broadway, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* at Marriott Theatre, *The Full Monty* at Paramount); **Joseph Papke** as Eddie Kassner (Children's Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater); **Kayla Shipman** as Rosie (*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* at Goodman Theatre, *Jersey Boys*, *Young Frankenstein*, and *Rock of Ages* at Mercury Theatre). Understudies include **Grant Alexander Brown**, **Joey Chelius**, **Matthew Benenson Cruz**, **Laura Nelson**, and **Ashton Norris**.

CST Artistic Director **Edward Hall** directs *Sunny Afternoon* after helming its original production at the UK's Hampstead Theatre and the West End. An acclaimed international director, Hall joined CST in October 2023, and has since directed *Richard III*, *Henry V*, and *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Prior to his tenure as Artistic Director, he directed *Rose Rage* at CST and in New York in 2003. He was the founding artistic director of the multi-award-winning Propeller Shakespeare, touring globally for over 20 years. He led the UK's Hampstead Theatre for nearly a decade, transforming it into one of the nation's most successful theaters for new work development with more than 100 world premieres. He has served as an Associate Director at the National Theatre and Old Vic, and his extensive film and television credits include *The Heist Before Christmas*, *Blithe Spirit* starring Dame Judi Dench, multiple HBO and BBC series, and the *Downton Abbey* season four finale. He is a member of the Arts Club of Chicago and the Economic Club of Chicago.

The creative team also includes Music Supervisor **Elliott Ware**, Choreographer **Adam Cooper**, Set and Costume Designer **Miriam Buether**, Lighting Designer **Rick Fisher**, Sound Designer **Matt McKenzie**, Music Director **Mason Moss**, Associate Director **Christopher Chase Carter**, Fight and Intimacy Choreographer **Max Fabian**, Dialect and Vocal Coach **Marie Ramirez Downing**, Assistant Choreographer Emily **Goodenough**, Associate Scenic Designer **Milo Blue**, Associate Sound Designer **Ken Hampton**, Directing Apprentice **Jo Hoagland**, Production Stage Manager **Christine D. Freeburg**, Assistant Stage Manager **Danny Fender**, Production Assistant **Anna Vu**, and Instrument Tech **Nat Treloar**.

The press opening for *Sunny Afternoon* is scheduled for **Friday, March 28 at 7:00 p.m.**

More information at www.chicagoshakes.com/sunnyafternoon or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](https://www.instagram.com/chicagoshakes).

Sunny Afternoon

by Joe Penhall

Original story, music, and lyrics by Ray Davies

Directed by Edward Hall

March 21–April 27, 2025

The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare

By special arrangement with WestBeth Entertainment and Seattle Theatre Group

PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (no matinee on March 26)
- Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Fridays at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (no matinee on March 22)
- Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Chicago Shakespeare strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all patrons. Accessible seating, assistive listening devices, large-print and Braille programs, and sensory tools are available at every performance. Enhanced performances include:

- **Audio-described performance with optional touch tour – Sunday, April 13 at 2:00 p.m.**
A program that provides spoken narration of a play's key visual elements for patrons who are blind or have low vision. Touch Tours provide patrons the opportunity to experience, firsthand, a production's design elements.
- **Open captioned performance – Wednesday, April 16 at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**
A text display of the words and sounds heard during a play, synced live with the action onstage.
- **ASL interpreted performance – Friday, April 18 at 7:00 p.m.**
All dialogue and lyrics are translated into American Sign Language by two certified interpreters.

Creative Team

Ray Davies - Music, Lyrics, and Original Story
Joe Penhall - Book
Edward Hall - Director
Elliott Ware - Music Supervisor
Adam Cooper - Choreographer
Miriam Buether - Set and Costume Designer
Rick Fisher - Lighting Designer
Matt McKenzie - Sound Designer
Mason Moss - Music Director
Bob Mason - Chicago Casting
Casting By Them - New York Casting
Christopher Chase Carter - Associate Director
Max Fabian - Fight and Intimacy Choreographer
Marie Ramirez Downing - Dialect and Vocal Coach
Emily Goodenough - Assistant Choreographer
Milo Blue - Associate Scenic Designer
Ken Hampton - Associate Sound Designer
Jo Hoagland - Directing Apprentice
Christine D. Freeburg - Production Stage Manager
Danny Fender - Assistant Stage Manager
Anna Vu - Production Assistant
Nat Treloar - Instrument Tech

Cast

Emma Grace Bailey - Peggy / Ensemble
Joy Campbell - Joyce / Ensemble
John Carlin - Fred Davies / Allen Klein / Ensemble
Sean Fortunato - Larry Page / Ensemble
Marya Grandy - Annie Davies / Marsha / Ensemble
Jared D.M. Grant - Gregory Piven / Ensemble
Oliver Hoare - Dave Davies
Danny Horn - Ray Davies
Will Leonard - Grenville Collins / Ensemble
Michael Lepore - Peter Quaife / Ensemble
Ana Margaret Marcu - Rasa / Sister / Ensemble
Ben Mayne - Robert Wace / Ensemble
Kieran McCabe - Mick Avory / Ensemble
Joseph Papke - Kassner / Ensemble
Kayla Shipman - Rosie / Ensemble
Grant Alexander Brown - Understudy
Joey Chelius - Understudy
Matthew Benenson Cruz - Understudy
Laura Nelson - Understudy
Ashton Norris - Understudy

Band

Elliott Ware - Keyboard / Conductor (through Mar 28)
Mason Moss - Keyboard / Conductor (beginning Mar 29)
Daniel Peters - Guitar
Heather Boehm - Musicians Contractor

ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

A Regional Tony Award recipient, Chicago Shakespeare Theater produces a bold and innovative year-round season that includes Shakespeare, original plays, musicals, family programming, and international theatrical events. CST is committed to serving as a cultural center across its three stages—the 700+ seat Yard, 500 seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, and the 200 seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Theater Upstairs as well as in classrooms, neighborhoods, and venues around the world. CST has a deep commitment to education and lifelong learning with robust programming for students, teachers, and lifelong learners, and engagement with communities across the city. Onstage, in classrooms and neighborhoods across the city, and in venues around the world, Chicago Shakespeare is a multifaceted theatre—inviting audiences, artists, and community members to share powerful stories that illuminate the complexities, ambiguities, and wonders of our world.

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