

## Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces a Bold 2025/26 Season of 12 productions

Featuring an expansion of Shakespeare, Two World Premieres, Three North American Premieres, and Three International Presentations from England, Ethiopia, and New Zealand

Shining a spotlight on leading local, national, and international artists



Chicago—April 9, 2025—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) Artistic Director Edward Hall and Executive Director Kimberly Motes announce today the **2025/26 Season**. As the nation’s largest year-round theater dedicated to the works of Shakespeare, CST is committed to creating vivid, entertaining theatrical experiences that invigorate and engage people of all ages and identities by illuminating the complexity, ambiguity, and wonder of our world. This season, CST will produce two world premieres, three North American premieres, six Shakespeare and Shakespeare-adjacent productions, and present work from England, Ethiopia, and New Zealand for a total of 12 productions across all three stages. CST is deepening its commitment to its namesake playwright: out of a total of 358 performances this season, more than 50% are written or inspired by Shakespeare, including the return of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The 2025/26 Season begins this summer with high-flying entertainment for audiences of all ages with *Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams*; the world premiere of *Billie Jean*, a new play

from Lauren Gunderson about sports icon and equality champion Billie Jean King; and free performances of *Shakes in the City: A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in green spaces and neighborhood events throughout Chicago. The Fall kicks off with a major new production of the musical revue *Ain’t Misbehavin’: The Fats Waller Musical Show* as Richard Maltby, Jr. and André De Shields reinvent this Tony Award-winning celebration of the music and spirit of Fats Waller. CST will produce the world premiere of Q Brothers Collective’s satirical new “add-rap-tation” of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, *Rome Sweet Rome*. Just in time for Halloween, CST launches the North American premiere of *Paranormal Activity: A New Story Live on Stage*, a thrilling new play from Chicago’s Levi Holloway inspired by the world of Paramount Pictures’ global horror phenomenon. For the holidays, Shakespeare’s wittiest rom-com *Much Ado About Nothing* sparks joy in a new staging from acclaimed director Selina Cadell. Artistic Director Edward Hall directs *Short Shakespeare! Hamlet* for nearly 20,000 students in addition to public performances. The **Royal Shakespeare Company** returns as part of CST and RSC’s ongoing artistic partnership with *Hamnet*, launching a US tour. CST produces Shakespeare’s glorious comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, staged by leading Shakespeare director Phillip Breen. Direct from New Zealand, audiences are invited to *Mrs. Krishnan’s Party*, an immersive experience from Indian Ink Theatre. CST closes the season with the North American premiere of a new play: *Brokeback Mountain*, the heartbreaking love story based on the novella that inspired the Academy Award-winning film.

“Here at CST, we draw so much inspiration from the stories of Shakespeare and our Chicago community,” said **Edward Hall, Artistic Director**. “In thinking about our 2025/26 Season, I was reminded of the quote from *Cymbeline*, ‘boldness be my friend.’ It says so much about looking outward, reaching for something ambitious, trying to create and build and serve something bigger than yourself. This upcoming season is bold—and promises to entertain, invigorate, and engage you with unforgettable stories that remind us of our shared humanity.”

“Chicago Shakespeare Theater has a rare geographic vantage point which inspires a wide perspective,” shared **Kimberly Motes, Executive Director**. “We look out at the expanse of Chicago and its 77 neighborhoods—and it challenges us to create work that reflects this vibrant city. And to the other side, we see the horizon line of the gorgeous Lake Michigan, encouraging us to look beyond—bringing the world to Chicago and sending Chicago out into the world. Our 2025/26 Season reflects this exactly with the work we are producing and the breadth of voices we share on our stages.”

## **The 2025/26 Season**

The world-famous Circus Abyssinia comes to Chicago Shakespeare Theater this summer for a limited engagement. ***Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams* (July 10–August 3, 2025 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater)** astounds with heart-stopping acrobatics, stunning feats of juggling, high-flying hilarity, and death-defying tricks—all set to the irresistible beats of Ethiopian music. Inspired by the story of its creators, brothers **Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam** and **Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis**, the tale follows Little Bibi and Little Bichu who dream of joining the circus. Throughout their journey, they are joined by a host of circus dreamers whose acts of acrobatic daring call up a world of rushing adventure that awakens the possibility of the first Ethiopian circus made by and for Ethiopian artists. This soaring spectacle is the perfect, unforgettable outing for audiences young and old alike. *The Times* (UK) gave it four stars, calling it “sensational entertainment.” *TheaterMania* declares, “Some of the most talented jugglers, tumblers, and contortionists you’re likely to ever see...a journey worth taking.”

Creators **Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam** and **Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis** shared, “We’re beyond excited to partner with Chicago Shakespeare Theater to share the joy, energy, and magic of *Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams* with new audiences. This show is a celebration of Ethiopian culture, storytelling, and breathtaking circus artistry—an unforgettable journey filled with heart-pounding acrobatics and boundless dreams.”

Beginning in July, Chicago Shakespeare Theater produces the world premiere of ***Billie Jean* (July 18–August 10, 2025 | The Yard)**, an electrifying new play about **Billie Jean King**: a visionary, a pioneer, a woman who changed the world. Following her path to becoming a sports icon, from her record-breaking victories to her relentless fight for equal pay and equal rights, *Billie Jean* explores the cost of public battles and private struggles—bringing us closer than ever before to a woman whose battle for identity and equality inspired and continues to inspire generations. This new play is written by **Lauren Gunderson**, one of the most-produced playwrights in America and two-time winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award (*I and You*, *The Book of Will*). **Marc Bruni**—director of Broadway’s *The Great Gatsby* and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*—stages this empowering new look at a living legend who shattered glass ceilings on and off the court.

Playwright **Lauren Gunderson** said, “CST is the perfect place to launch this new play about Billie Jean King, her activism, and her ongoing impact on the world. Her story is a hero’s journey, and the house of Shakespeare’s heroes is a fitting home for this theatrical debut about excellence, equality, and heart. We want this play to be an exploration of contrast: instantly recognizable and also deeply surprising; athletic and also theatrical; heartfelt and heroic. I am honored and thrilled to have *Billie Jean* be a part of CST’s season.”

Shakespeare’s dreamiest romantic comedy is brought to vibrant new life with free performances and activities in green spaces, neighborhood festivals, and events across the city with ***Shakes in the City: A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (July 19–August 17, 2025 | sites across Chicago)**. Now in the second year of the annual free initiative, join Puck and his feisty fairy band for Shakespeare at his most whimsical and fun—packed into just 45 minutes! A quartet of love-sick young people are joined by a motley crew of theatricals, a fairy King and Queen in an epic showdown, and a talking donkey to boot. Delight in the exhilaration and hilarity of young love as the chaos of magic and enchantment turns the world upside down. Adapted and originally staged by CST Artistic Director **Edward Hall**, who brings his signature clarity in storytelling and a playful staging to the comedy, this Midsummer treat now comes directly to Chicagoans across the city after a successful run played for students this winter. Dates, locations, and special programming to be announced soon.

**Edward Hall** stated, “Taking this vivacious, energetic and life affirming comedy onto the streets and into the neighborhoods of Chicago is a dream for Shakespeare’s *Dream*. I am so looking forward to renewing our relationship with the many different communities of Chicago, a city that explodes with summer energy and life whenever the sun shines and people gather.”

**Richard Maltby, Jr.**—Tony, Olivier, and Outer Critics Circle Award winner and the production’s original creator and director—teams up with **André De Shields**—Emmy, Grammy, and Tony Award winner and member of the original 1978 Broadway cast—to reimagine, reframe, and direct a new production of the Tony Award-winning musical, ***Ain’t Misbehavin’: The Fats Waller Musical Show* (September 3-28, 2025 | The Yard)**. Set in the golden age of the Harlem Renaissance in the ‘20s and ‘30s, this infectiously joyful Fats Waller tribute celebrates the enduring spirit of Black artistry as a multi-talented cast of five performs more than 30 hit songs from Waller and other artists—including “The Joint is Jumpin’,” “Honeysuckle Rose,” and the title track “Ain’t Misbehavin’.” CST produces this fresh, new production that goes straight to the heart of Waller’s music, brought to life by the extraordinary artists who began it all. *The New York Times* declared that the revue, “moves with the zing and sparkle of a Waller recording—filled with bright melodies and wonderfully lighthearted rhythms, counterpointed by the comments and asides.”

Co-director **Richard Maltby, Jr.** said, “The creation of *Ain’t Misbehavin’*, often referred to as the greatest musical revue of all time, was marked by so many accidents, coincidences, and magical surprises that, even while it was happening it felt to us creating it that

the show was somehow blessed. What was intended to be pure entertainment turned out—because it was based on Fats Waller's life, art, and gargantuan personality—to suddenly have acquired a deeper significance that transcended a mere revue, and conjured up the story, the humanity, and the entire zeitgeist of the Harlem Renaissance. Now, nearly 50 years later, André De Shields and I are grateful to the Chicago Shakespeare Theater for the opportunity to release the magic to happen again as we bring a brilliant new cast into the creative process and reimagine the show for audiences today.”

Co-director **André De Shields** added, “We artists/activists, who embrace the discipline of theater as a way to life, understand that the journey is taken in search of the eternal. Our souls are nourished and our senses informed by the unique communities we either encounter or create as we seek. When, in June of 1978, *Ain't Misbehavin'* opened on Broadway—winning the Tony Award for Best Musical—it was confirmation of the journey I had begun nearly a decade earlier in Chicago during the summer of 1969. I return to Chicago to celebrate. Lesson: theater as a way of life is finite; theater as a way to life is in-finite.”

CST is excited to partner with **Q Brothers Collective (GQ, JQ, JAX & POS)** to debut their satirical new “add-rap-tation” of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, ***Rome Sweet Rome* (September 23–October 19, 2025 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater)**, created and directed by Q Brothers Collective (GQ, JQ, JAX & POS). The Collective returns once again to Chicago Shakespeare Theater after more than a decade of successful collaborations, including *Othello: The Remix*, *Funk It Up About Nothin'*, and *Q Brothers' Christmas Carol*. Hailed by MTV as “nothing short of brilliant,” their work blends hip hop and theater—adapting classic stories with a wholly original style of performance that has amassed a cult following of fans in Chicago and beyond. Igniting *Julius Caesar* with the pulse of '90s hip hop and New Jack Swing, *Rome Sweet Rome* infuses Shakespeare's political intrigue with bold satire and electrifying beats. Razor-sharp wit collides with revolutionary rhythm, proving that power struggles never go out of style.

**Q Brothers Collective (GQ, JQ, JAX & POS)** shared, “We're excited to be back home at Chicago Shakes. *Rome Sweet Rome* is just us doing what we love—celebrating and satirizing Shakespeare, and the world at large.”

In October, Chicago Shakespeare Theater launches the North American premiere of ***Paranormal Activity: A New Story Live on Stage* (October 15–November 2, 2025 | The Yard)**. An original story set in the world of **Paramount Pictures'** terrifying film franchise, James and Lou move from Chicago to London to escape their past—and the rest is to be revealed. The haunting thriller is written by celebrated Chicago-based playwright **Levi Holloway**, a Red Orchid Theatre ensemble member whose Tony-nominated *Grey House* premiered on Broadway in 2023. The production is directed by **Felix Barrett**, pioneering founder and artistic director of the acclaimed Punchdrunk—whose immersive *Sleep No More* played more than 5,000 performances in a record-breaking 14-year run. *Paranormal Activity's* UK premiere was hailed “a delicious mix of fear and excitement” (*North West End*)—urging “make sure you have someone's hand to hold” (*Yorkshire Times*). CST's North American premiere production is perfectly timed for the lead-up to Halloween, and audiences can turn up their fear factor with a special late night showing on October 31. *Paranormal Activity* is produced in a co-production with Center Theatre Group, American Conservatory Theater, and Shakespeare Theatre Company.

Playwright **Levi Holloway** shared, “Writing *Paranormal Activity* for the stage, collaborating with Felix Barrett in London—working to create an actual nightmare—has been a dream. We strived to create something impossible, mixing the familiar with the uncanny, heart with horror. Chicago audiences have a nose for honesty on stage and little patience for anything else. They'll find it here, right alongside all the mischief we've made to trouble their sleep.”

Just in time for the festive holiday season, CST stages Shakespeare's original rom-com, ***Much Ado About Nothing* (November 16–December 21, 2025 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater)**. CST welcomes back acclaimed director **Selina Cadell**, who most recently staged the record-breaking solo theatrical performance of *Hamlet* from Eddie Izzard, which played to sold-out houses at CST in 2024 as well as in NYC and London. One of the most sought-after directors in the UK, Cadell's extensive directing credits include *Charles Dickens' Great Expectations* (New York and London), *Love for Love* (RSC), and *The Life I Lead* (West End). In this wittiest of comedies, we meet Beatrice and Benedick: two ferociously independent individuals who have steadfastly avoided sharing their lives with anyone but themselves. Set against the backdrop of romantic Italy, they both finally fall for each other despite their best efforts to remain single. It's a warm-hearted ode to the power of love and the joy of partnership.

Director **Selina Cadell** stated, “In a turbulent world, where charm turns on a dime to hot headed decisions and disproven assumptions, *Much Ado About Nothing* is a play for our times, reflecting the tangles of a powerful patriarchy and the wrongful accusations made when power and reputation take precedent over listening and truth. Shakespeare balances this tragic lens with comedy and compassion, as Beatrice and Benedick guide themselves and us through the obstacles that can thwart enduring love.”

CST will welcome nearly 20,000 middle and high school students from across the region to 35 student matinee performances of ***Short Shakespeare! Hamlet* (January 27–February 28, 2026 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater)**. Directed by Artistic Director **Edward Hall**, this production marks CST's first-ever abridged staging of William Shakespeare's most famous play. Reeling from grief, the young Prince of Denmark navigates the loss of his father, his mother's betrayal, and relationships torn apart—offering a chance

for today's young people to see themselves and their experiences reflected through a 400-year-old story. CST's education programming extends the performance's impact into the classroom with dedicated teacher workshops and curriculum resources designed to support the development of students' crucial skills, including social-emotional competencies, critical literacy, and meaningful collaboration. In addition to the five-week run of school matinees, this 75-minute production will offer 6 additional public performances on Saturdays.

**Edward Hall** noted, "*Hamlet* was written at a time of such great uncertainty and turbulence, making this an electric moment to delve back into his story of family, politics, and identity. After my experience directing *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I relish the opportunity of sharing *Hamlet* with a young audience that has so much to teach me about the world in which I live."

The world-renowned **Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)** returns to CST as part of our ongoing artistic partnership to launch the US tour of their acclaimed ***Hamnet* (February 10–March 8, 2026 | The Yard)**. When the plague steals 11-year-old Hamnet from his loving parents, Agnes and William Shakespeare, they must each confront their loss alone. And yet, out of the greatest suffering, something of extraordinary wonder is born. Experience the US premiere of the Royal Shakespeare Company's "elegant and beguiling" (*London's Evening Standard*) stage adaptation of **Maggie O'Farrell's** best-selling novel, adapted by award-winning playwright **Lolita Chakrabarti** (whose *Hymn* opens at CST in May 2025), and directed by **Erica Whyman**. Pulling back a curtain on the story of the greatest writer in the English language and the woman who was the constant presence and purpose of his life, *Hamnet* is a love letter to passion, birth, grief, and the magic of nature. The RSC's production originally opened in the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2023 and transferred to the Garrick Theatre in London's West End.

RSC co-Artistic Directors **Daniel Evans** and **Tamara Harvey** shared, "We are delighted to be returning to Chicago Shakespeare Theater where we were welcomed so warmly when we brought Shakespeare's *Pericles* to audiences on Navy Pier last year, marking the RSC's first visit to the city in 30 years. It's wonderful to be coming back in 2026 with Lolita Chakrabarti's beautiful adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet*, which offers a compelling new perspective on Shakespeare through the eyes of Agnes Hathaway and their children. We can't wait to share this intimate and moving story with US audiences."

Playwright **Lolita Chakrabarti** added, "I am so excited to bring *Hamnet* to CST. As a theater steeped in Shakespeare and new work, this play offers both in one show. *Hamnet* brings to life the Shakespeare family—William, his sister and their parents, Agnes, his wife, and their three children. You will see why William went to London and discovered the theater, how his family lived without him and how the profound loss of a child gave us one of the most important plays in the western world. *Hamnet* is a heartwarming and heartbreaking exploration of family, loss, and the stories we tell ourselves in order to survive."

In the spring, audiences will delight in Shakespeare's glorious comedy ***The Merry Wives of Windsor* (April 2–May 3, 2026 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater)**. The production is directed by foremost Shakespeare authority **Phillip Breen**, who has quite literally written the book on *Merry Wives*. His seminar for the Shakespeare Institute—*Walking in A Windsor Wonderland: Some Ramshackle Reflections on Directing Shakespeare's Greatest Comedy*—examines his creative sensibilities around a story that he considers exemplary of Shakespeare's comedic genius. An Associate Artist at the RSC, Breen's eclectic range of work expands beyond theater to encompass opera, musicals, and cabaret, as well as being a regular collaborator with Vivienne Westwood for London Fashion Week. In the middle-class and very English hamlet of Windsor, joyous revelry abounds as the ladies of the town—the ebullient Mistress Page and Mistress Quickly—band together to have the last laugh over the lewd, but loveable, Falstaff.

Director **Phillip Breen** shared, "I am thrilled to be making my debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, one of the great Shakespeare Theaters of the world, under exciting new artistic directorship. Edward Hall is a director whose work I have greatly admired for a very long time, I am hugely looking forward to collaborating with him and the whole CST team. *Merry Wives* is by far Shakespeare's funniest play, mainly because it is his most subversive, as well as being his most (egregiously and erroneously) underrated. It smuggles heresy into its chocolate box English setting like a late Elizabethan copy of *Samizdat*. You know... all the things you shouldn't talk about in public. Sex. Class. Money. Politics. Can there have been a better time to examine the repressed sadism of the monied bourgeoisie?"

Bringing the world to Chicago, CST presents **Indian Ink Theatre's** joyfully immersive ***Mrs. Krishnan's Party* (April 7–26, 2026 | Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio)** from New Zealand. Step into the back room of Mrs. Krishnan's corner shop where garlands decorate the ceiling, music flows, and Mrs. Krishnan is throwing a party like no other. Food simmers on the stove, laughter abounds, and strangers become friends in this celebration of life created by **Jacob Rajan** and **Justin Lewis**, who also directs. The actors juggle cooking, music, and guests in an unfolding drama where no two nights are the same. The *New Zealand Herald* raved, "the show's generous spirit offers a timely reminder that live theater is a gift which engenders connection, sharing, and celebration of community" and *Waikato Times* called it "so original, so creatively fresh, and so much fun no one wanted to go home." This production marks the Chicago debut of New Zealand's acclaimed Indian Ink Theatre Company, which for more than two decades has mined the collision of East and West to create spirited, artful storytelling under the creative partnership of Rajan and Lewis.



The show's co-creators **Jacob Rajan** and **Justin Lewis** said, "We're thrilled to bring *Mrs. Krishnan's Party* to Chicago Shakespeare Theater. This show breaks the fourth wall, the fifth wall, and probably a few rules—all in the name of joy, connection, and an almighty good time. It's not every day theater serves food for the belly and the soul. I mean, where else can you experience heart-in-your-mouth storytelling and dancing on tables in the same night?"

CST closes the season with the North American premiere production of *Brokeback Mountain* (May 28-June 28, 2026 | The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater), **Ashley Robinson's** new adaptation of **Annie Proulx's** captivating novella that inspired the Academy Award-winning film. The story is set in Wyoming 1963, a wild landscape of extreme rural poverty and insular conservative communities. When Ennis and Jack take jobs on the isolated Brokeback Mountain, all their certainties of life change forever as they flounder in unexpected emotional waters of increasing depth. Directed by **Jonathan Butterell**, this intense tale of an irresistible and hidden love spans 20 years and is interwoven with soulful, original Country Western songs by **Dan Gillespie Sells** (*Everybody's Talking About Jamie*), performed live onstage. The play's 2023 debut on London's West End was a runaway hit, called "electrifying" by the *Sunday Express*, and "compelling" by *The Guardian*.

Playwright **Ashley Robinson** said, "I'm thrilled that Chicago Shakespeare will host the US Premiere of *Brokeback Mountain*. Chicago is the perfect city in which to premiere this working-class story of star-crossed lovers. I'm looking forward to bringing the play home, at a time when this beloved story feels more resonant and needed than ever."

Author of the novella **Annie Proulx** shared, "*Brokeback Mountain* has been recreated in several different forms, each with its own distinctive moods and impact. Ashley's script is fresh and deeply moving, opening sight lines not visible in the original nor successive treatments. The story has always projected a sense of the difficult fated solitudes that echo in Wyoming's tawny landscapes. The joinery of script, actors, director, theatre, audiences becomes a complex watershed of dozens of mountain streams finally merging into a river of sensibility."

#### **ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER**

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) is a leading international theater company and the nation's largest year-round theater dedicated to the works of Shakespeare. Under the visionary leadership of Artistic Director Edward Hall and Executive Director Kimberly Motes, the Regional Tony Award recipient is committed to creating vivid, entertaining theatrical experiences that invigorate and engage people of all ages and identities by illuminating the complexity, ambiguity, and wonder of our world. Each year, nearly a quarter of a million people experience CST's artistry through more than 12 productions and 356 performances and events each year.

CST exemplifies theatrical excellence. Shakespeare is at the heart of the artistic work, illuminating the 400-year-old playwright as a modern writer for our modern world. CST also produces compelling, contemporary stories from fresh artistic voices of today. CST brings the world to Chicago and sends Chicago out into the world as Chicago's foremost presenter of international theater, and consistent producer of North American and world premieres. Productions originating from Chicago Shakespeare have gone on to Broadway, national and international tours, garnering three Tony Awards, three Olivier Awards, and two Grammy nominations.

The Theater fosters a lifelong relationship with the arts by providing transformational experiences for multigenerational audiences. Serving more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST annually welcomes more than 20,000 high school and middle schoolers to attend 50+ daytime matinee performances and participate in after-school programs like Chicago Shakespeare SLAM. Professional development opportunities for teachers include the year-long Bard Core intensive for Chicago Public Schools educators. CST's initiatives support the development of young people's crucial skills, including social-emotional competencies, critical literacy, and meaningful collaboration. Learners of all ages deepen their engagement through PreAmble talks and post-show discussions. The \$30 under 30 discounted ticket program for young adults and students reduces barriers to participation for thousands of first-time attendees.

CST activates its campus with three best-in-class venues: The Yard, a robust 700-seat space with flexible configurations and expansive proscenium; the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, an intimate 500-seat thrust theater where the audience surrounds the stage on three sides; and the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio, a 200-seat black box theater. Situated along the picturesque shore of Lake Michigan, CST is the cultural anchor of the iconic Navy Pier, one of the top Midwest tourism destinations attracting 9 million visitors annually.

Fueled by the vitality of the city of Chicago, CST contributes significantly to the vibrancy and economic impact of the arts and culture ecosystem. CST's reach extends beyond the theater's walls with free programs like Shakes in the City, which brings performances and workshops to parks, festivals, and shared community spaces across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods.

For nearly four decades, CST has distinguished itself with a spirit of innovation, dynamism, and ambitious vision. Shared humanity and unforgettable stories—now THIS is Chicago Shakespeare. [chicagoshakes.com](https://chicagoshakes.com)

# Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2025/26 Season

(as of press time)

## **CIRCUS ABYSSINIA: ETHIOPIAN DREAMS**

Co-Created & produced by Mehari "Bibi" Tesfamariam

Co-Created & directed by Binyam "Bichu" Shimellis

Written by Cal McCrystal

Choreography by Kate Smyth

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**July 10–August 3, 2025**

World Premiere

## **BILLIE JEAN**

By Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Marc Bruni

**The Yard**

**July 18–August 10, 2025**

## **SHAKES IN THE CITY: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**

By William Shakespeare

Adapted and originally staged by Edward Hall

**Free performances across Chicago**

**July 19–August 17, 2025**

## **AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'**

**The Fats Waller Musical Show**

Created and originally directed by Richard Maltby, Jr.

Conceived by Richard Maltby, Jr. and Murray Horwitz

Directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. and André De Shields

**The Yard**

**September 3–28, 2025**

World Premiere

## **ROME SWEET ROME**

Created and Directed by Q Brothers Collective (GQ, JQ, JAX & POS)

Based on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**September 23–October 19, 2025**

North American Premiere

## **PARANORMAL ACTIVITY**

### **A NEW STORY LIVE ON STAGE**

Written by Levi Holloway

Directed by Felix Barrett

In co-production with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Center Theatre Group,

American Conservatory Theater, and Shakespeare Theatre Company

Based on the *Paranormal Activity* films, first written and directed by Oren Peli

and brought to the screen by Blumhouse and Solana Films

Produced by arrangement with Paramount Pictures and Simon Friend

Entertainment

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**The Yard**

**October 15–November 2, 2025**

## **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Selina Cadell

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**November 16–December 21, 2025**

## **SHORT SHAKESPEARE! HAMLET**

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Edward Hall

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**January 27–February 28, 2026**

The Royal Shakespeare Company and Neal Street Productions present

Maggie O'Farrell's

## **HAMNET**

Adapted by Lolita Chakrabarti

Directed by Erica Whyman

**The Yard**

**February 10–March 8, 2026**

## **THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Phillip Breen

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**April 2–May 3, 2026**

From New Zealand: Indian Ink Theatre's

## **MRS. KRISHNAN'S PARTY**

By Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis

Directed by Justin Lewis

**Carl and Marilynn Thoma Upstairs Studio**

**April 7–April 26, 2026**

North American Premiere

## **BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN**

By Ashley Robinson

Songs by Dan Gillespie Sells

Based on Annie Proulx's short story

Directed by Jonathan Butterell

Originally produced @sohoplac by Nica Burns, Adam Blanshay Productions,

Lambert Jackson Productions, and Katy Lipson for Aria Entertainment

**The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**

**May 28–June 28, 2026**