

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces cast for
Rome Sweet Rome

A new satirical “add-rap-tation” of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* by Q Brothers Collective
September 23–October 19 in the Courtyard Theater



Chicago—August 20, 2025—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) announces the cast and creative team for [Rome Sweet Rome](#), a wild and satirical new “add-rap-tation” of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* from **Q Brothers Collective** (GQ, JQ, JAX and POS). The production was developed in collaboration with Chicago Shakespeare’s Artistic Director **Edward Hall** and Literary Manager **Ericka Ratcliff**, as part of CST’s new work development program. *Rome Sweet Rome* runs **September 23–October 19 in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**, featuring performances by JQ, JAX, POS, Janyce Caraballo, Danielle Davis, Victor Musoni, Cage Sebastian Pierre, Maya Vinice Prentiss, Jonathan Shaboo, and Bri Sudia.

Rome wasn’t built in a day, but it only takes a moment for the balance of power—and the breadbasket—to crumble. The charismatic tyrant Caesar rules over his realm with an iron fist and a string of increasingly ludicrous executive orders. When delicious carbs are officially kiboshed, Brutus, Cassius, and the Senator crew decide the madness must end. Set to the electrifying beats of ’90s hip hop and New Jack Swing, razor-sharp wit collides with revolutionary rhythm, proving that political power struggles never go out of style. This is Shakespeare that bumps, breathes, and breaks boundaries... Can we get a “Hail Caesar”?

Internationally acclaimed theater artists, **Q Brothers Collective** (GQ, JQ, JAX and POS) generates original work fusing hip hop and theater, adapting classic stories to a wholly original, entertaining, and fast-paced style of comedic performance that has been energizing audiences for over two decades. The world premiere of *Rome Sweet Rome* marks the long-awaited return of the Collective to Chicago Shakespeare Theater after hugely successful collaborations including *Othello: The Remix*, *Funk It Up About Nothin’*, and *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*.

Q Brothers Collective 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.”

“It’s a real joy to be collaborating with Q Brothers Collective, who bring such a unique and joyful perspective to Shakespeare,” shared Chicago Shakespeare’s artistic director **Edward Hall**. “*Julius Caesar* has been a story of our times for centuries and now it gets the Q treatment, which guarantees to put a smile on your face and a spring in your step. Hail Caesar...”

The production features an ensemble cast, including **JQ** as DJ/Cicero/Meta World War Three (original score for FX’s *The Bear*; *Othello: The Remix*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, and *Funk It Up About Nothin’* at Chicago Shakespeare); **JAX** as Tre Bone/Billy/DJ (*Othello: The Remix*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, and *Funk It Up About Nothin’* at Chicago Shakespeare); **POS** as Caesar/Octavius (*A Free Man of Color* on Broadway, *Othello: The Remix*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, and *Funk It Up About Nothin’* at Chicago Shakespeare); **Janyce Caraballo** as Lucy/Anne Marellus (*The Hero Within* at Chicago Shakespeare, *Little Women* at Northlight Theatre); **Danielle Davis** as Casca/TV Reporter (*Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and more at Chicago

Shakespeare); **Victor Musoni** as Brutus/Chuck D (*Fat Ham* at the Goodman Theatre, *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* at Steppenwolf Theatre); **Cage Sebastian Pierre** as Tony (*Romeo and Juliet*, Short Shakespeare! *Macbeth*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and more at Chicago Shakespeare); **Maya Vinice Prentiss** as Flavius Flav/C-Pimp (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and more at Chicago Shakespeare); **Jonathan Shaboo** as Cash/Soothy Sue (*The Band's Visit* at Writers Theatre, *Layalina* at Goodman Theatre); and **Bri Sudia** as Purney (*Emma*, *Red Velvet*, and more at Chicago Shakespeare, *A Beautiful Noise* on Broadway). Understudies include **Madeline Baird**, **Theo Gyra**, and **Elexis Selmon**.

The creative team for *Rome Sweet Rome* includes **Tanji Harper** (Choreographer), **Collette Pollard** (Scenic Designer), **Jos N. Banks** (Costume Designer), **Jesse Klug** (Lighting Designer), **Stephen Ptacek** (Sound Designer), **Bob Mason** (Casting), **Joe Disbrow** (Associate Sound Designer), **Rita Vreeland** (Production Stage Manager), and **Danny Fender** (Assistant Stage Manager).

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

Rome Sweet Rome

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

Based on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

September 23 – October 19, 2025

The Jentes Family Courtyard Theater

PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. (*no matinee September 24*)
- Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.
- Fridays at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. (*no matinee September 27*)
- Sundays at 2:30 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 – Sunday, October 5 at 2:30 p.m.**
A program that provides spoken narration of a play's key visual elements for patrons who are blind or have low vision.
- **Open captioned performance – Wednesday, October 8 at 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.**
A text display of the words and sounds heard during a play, synced live with the action onstage.
- **ASL interpreted performance – Friday, October 10 at 7:30 p.m.**
All dialogue and lyrics are translated into American Sign Language by two certified interpreters

Creative Team

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

Tanji Harper – Choreographer

Collette Pollard – Scenic Designer

Jos N. Banks – Costume Designer

Jesse Klug – Lighting Designer

Stephen Ptacek – Sound Designer

Bob Mason – Casting

Joe Disbrow – Associate Sound Designer

Rita Vreeland – Production Stage Manager

Danny Fender – Assistant Stage Manager

Cast

JQ – DJ/Cicero/Meta World War Three

JAX – Tre Bone/Billy/DJ

POS – Caesar/Octavius

Janyce Caraballo – Lucy/Anne Marellus

Danielle Davis – Casca/TV Reporter

Victor Musoni – Brutus/Chuck D

Cage Sebastian Pierre – Tony

Maya Vinice Prentiss – Flavius Flav/C-Pimp

Jonathan Shaboo – Cash/Soothy Sue

Bri Sudia – Purney

Madeline Baird *Understudy*

Theo Gyra *Understudy*

Elexis Selmon *Understudy*

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CST)

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. With Shakespeare at the heart of the artistic work, CST also produces compelling, contemporary stories from fresh 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. Serving more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST annually welcomes more than 20,000 students to performances and programs like Chicago Shakespeare SLAM, alongside professional development opportunities for teachers. CST activates its campus with three venues: 700-seat The Yard; the 500-seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater; and the 200-seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio. Free programs like Shakes in the City bring performances to parks and community spaces across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Shared humanity and unforgettable stories—now THIS is Chicago Shakespeare.

chicagoshakes.com