

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces cast and creative team
 For the North American Premiere production of

Brokeback Mountain

Ashley Robinson's new adaptation of the captivating novella by Annie Proulx
 that inspired the Academy Award-winning film

Directed by Jonathan Butterell, May 28–June 28 in the Courtyard Theater



Chicago—May 1, 2026—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) announces the cast and creative team for *Brokeback Mountain*, the North American premiere production of **Ashley Robinson's** adaptation of the captivating novella by **Annie Proulx** that inspired the Academy Award-winning film. The production is directed by **Jonathan Butterell** and plays **May 28–June 28** in the **Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**. *Brokeback Mountain* stars **Harrison Ball** as Ennis Del Mar and **Jack Cameron Kay** as Jack Twist, leading an ensemble cast that also features **Thomas Cox**, **Cordelia Dewdney**, **Kat Eggleston**, and **Alina Jenine Taber**.

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. This intense tale of an irresistible and hidden love spans twenty years and is interwoven with soulful, original Country Western songs by **Dan Gillespie Sells**, performed live onstage.

"It's a huge pleasure to launch this beautiful love story in the Midwest, so close to its spiritual home," said Artistic Director **Edward Hall**. "Audiences will enjoy a truly immersive experience watching this in the intimacy of the Courtyard Theater, where every glance, every breath and every absence deepens what is unsaid and felt beneath the surface."

Harrison Ball (Ennis Del Mar, CST debut) is an actor, choreographer, writer, and producer with a dynamic career spanning ballet, film, and theatre. A former principal dancer with New York City Ballet, he spent 13 years performing a vast repertoire that included works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Justin Peck, and many others. In 2022, Ball starred alongside Debbie Harry in *Catharsis*, a short film that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival

Jack Cameron Kay (Jack Twist, CST debut) is an actor, songwriter, and Juilliard-trained opera singer. His breakout role came as Joshua "Jones" in Netflix's *Boots* (2025), a coming-of-age dramedy set in 1990s Marine boot camp. He also appeared in the short film *Bird in Hand* and the upcoming *Club Kid*, premiering at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival.

The cast also features **Thomas Cox** as Joe Aguirre/Bill/Jack's Father (CST debut; founding ensemble member of Lookingglass Theatre Company, many additional credits including at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and more), **Cordelia Dewdney** as Alma (*Ashland Avenue* at Goodman Theatre, *Steel Magnolias* at Drury Lane), **Kat Eggleston** as the Balladeer/Jack's Mother (CST debut; musical artist with multiple recordings, including her award-winning solo album *Speak*; credits at Briar Street Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Victory Gardens), and **Alina Jenine Taber** as Lureen (Arwen in *The Lord of the Rings: A Musical Tale* at CST, *A Streetcar Named Desire* at Paramount Theatre, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* at Marriott Theatre). Understudies include **Laura Nelson**, **Matt Rosin**, and **Andrew Shipman**.

Ashley Robinson is a Brooklyn based writer/actor who grew up in rural Lockhart, South Carolina. In addition to *Brokeback Mountain*, he has also conceived and penned the books for musicals *Fall of '94*, *5 & Dime*, and *Lockhart*. As an actor, Robinson has performed in *Floyd Collins* (Wiltons Music Hall, London), *A Clockwork Orange* (New World Stages), *Casa Valentina* (Original London Cast), *Truman Capote's A Christmas Memory* (New York Premiere/ 2015 Outer Critics Award Nom), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Menier Chocolate Factory and West End),

The Last Goodbye (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Wicked* (Original Chicago Company). He also originated the role of Jett Rink in the World Premiere of the musical *Giant* (Helen Hayes Award nomination, Best Actor).

Jonathan Butterell is a director and choreographer who has worked in London, New York, and around the world. He directed the movie *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, released globally on Amazon Prime in 2021. Prior to that he spent time developing and directing the award-winning stage musical *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. Further directing credits include: *Alone Together*, Michael Ball's one man show (Donmar Warehouse and Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Floyd Collins* (Wilton's Music Hall); *Peter Pan* (Royal Festival Hall); *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Royal Festival Hall); *Second Chance* (Signature Theatre and Public Theater); *Whida Peru: Resurrection Tangle* (Inner Voice for Premier Stages); and *Tres Niñas* (Zipper Theatre). Butterell created the musical staging for the Tony Award-winning shows *The Light in the Piazza* (Lincoln Center Theater) and *Assassins* (Broadway), as well as the revival of *Fiddler on the Roof* (Broadway) and the musical staging for the original workshop of Sondheim's musical *Wise Guys* at New York Theatre Workshop, directed by Sam Mendes. Butterell also choreographed the Tony award-winning *Nine* on Broadway, and further productions in London, Buenos Aires and Tokyo.

The creative team for *Brokeback Mountain* also includes **Dan Gillespie Sells** (Composer), **Jacob Yates** (Music Director), **Tom Pye** (Scenic and Costume Designer), **David Finn** (Lighting Designer), **Christopher Shutt** (Sound Designer), **Stephanie Farina** (Sound Recreation and Additional Content), **Zev Steinrock** (Fight and Intimacy Coordinator), **Sammi Grant** (Dialect Coach), **Christopher Chase Carter** (Associate Director), **Emily Hayman** (Associate Sound Designer), **Brenden Marble** (Assistant Lighting Designer), **Ethan Smith** (Assistant Intimacy Choreographer), **Christine D. Freeburg** (Production Stage Manager), **Danny Fender** (Assistant Stage Manager), and **Bruno Diaz Miranda** (Production Assistant).

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."

The novella's author **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."

Opening is set for **7:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 4.**

Special events include:

- **PRIDE Night** at *Brokeback Mountain* will take place **Tuesday, June 2 at 7:00 p.m.** with a pre-show party beginning at 5:30 p.m. Gather around the "CAMPfire" for a joyful celebration to kick-off Pride Month with Western music, dancing, community, and a splash of camp. Each ticket to the show includes one free drink, light bites, and special pre-show activities in the lobby.
- On **Wednesday, June 10** after the 1:00 p.m. performance, CST will host a post-show discussion on LGBTQIA+ experiences of health and history as part of the national [Seven Days in June](#) campaign to ensure "Health is Primary." Marking the 45th anniversary of the first known case of what became HIV/AIDS, the panel will be moderated by journalist and community leader **Tracy Baim**, co-founder of Windy City Times and executive director of Press Forward Chicago.
- All Wednesday and Saturday evening performances will be perfectly timed to enjoy Navy Pier summer fireworks after the performance (beginning at 9pm on Wednesdays, 10pm on Saturdays).

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, June 21 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.
- **Open captioned performance – Wednesday, June 24 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, June 26 at 7:00 p.m.**
All dialogue and lyrics are translated into American Sign Language by two certified interpreters

Brokeback Mountain is presented by special arrangement with Nica Burns and Adam Blanshay. Originally produced by Nica Burns, Adam Blanshay Productions, Lambert Jackson and Katy Lipson for Aria Entertainment, @sohoplac in 2023.

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

Brokeback Mountain

A Play by **Ashley Robinson**

Songs by **Dan Gillespie Sells**

Based on **Annie Proulx's** short story

Directed by **Jonathan Butterell**

May 28–June 28, 2026

in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater

PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. (*no performance on June 16*)
- Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee June 3*)
- Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. (*plus 1:00 p.m. performance on June 18*)
- Fridays at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee April 4*)
- Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Creative Team

Ashley Robinson – Playwright

Jonathan Butterell – Director

Dan Gillespie Sells – Composer

Jacob Yates – Music Director

Tom Pye – Scenic and Costume Designer

David Finn – Lighting Designer

Christopher Shutt – Sound Designer

Stephanie Farina – Sound Recreation and Additional Content

Zev Steinrock – Fight and Intimacy Coordinator

Sammi Grant – Dialect Coach

Christopher Chase Carter – Associate Director

Emily Hayman – Associate Sound Designer

Brenden Marble – Assistant Lighting Designer

Ethan Smith – Assistant Intimacy Choreographer

Christine D. Freeburg – Production Stage Manager

Danny Fender – Assistant Stage Manager

Bruno Diaz Miranda – Production Assistant

Cast

Harrison Ball – Ennis Del Mar

Thomas Cox – Joe Aguirre/Bill/Jack's Father

Cordelia Dewdney – Alma

Kat Eggleston – Balladeer/Jack's Mother

Jack Cameron Kay – Jack Twist

Alina Jenine Taber – Lureen

Laura Nelson – Understudy

Matt Rosin – Understudy

Andrew Shipman – Understudy

Band

Jacob Yates – Music Director / Piano / Conductor

Paul Mertens – Harmonicas

Tom McGettrick – Pedal Steel Guitar

Mary Halm – Bass

Ryan Blihovde – Copyist

Heather Boehm – Musicians Contractor

ABOUT 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. 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. www.chicagoshakes.com

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