

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS
PIPING HOT PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAY

FAT HAM

By James Ijames

Directed by Margo Hall

March 20 – April 19, 2025 (opening night: March 26)

Northern California Premiere
SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (29 January 2025) — **San Francisco Playhouse** presents the Northern California Premiere of 2022 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fat Ham*. Playwright **James Ijames** turns William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* on its head in this piping hot play that transports the drama to a modern-day barbecue in the American South. Queer Black college kid Juicy longs to break his crazy family’s cycle of trauma and violence when his father’s ghost demands Juicy avenge his murder. With family feuds and a dance party on the menu, this delectably irreverent, poignant play explores legacy and identity, love and loss, as well as pain and joy. Bay Area theatre titan **Margo Hall**, who directed the Playhouse’s [*hieroglyph*], *Barbecue*, *Red Velvet*, *The Story*, and most recently *Nollywood Dreams*, returns to direct. *Fat Ham* will perform **March 20 – April 19, 2025** (opening night: March 26) at San Francisco Playhouse 450, Post Street. For tickets (\$35-\$135) and more information, the public may visit sfplayhouse.org or call the box office at **415-677-9596**.

Making its World Premiere in a filmed production presented by Wilma Theater, *Fat Ham* received the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Drama ahead of its in-person premiere Off-Broadway at The Public Theater. The production transferred to Broadway in 2023, where it was nominated for five Tony Awards including Best Play. *The New York Times* hailed the show as “hilarious yet profound. It is the rare takeoff that actually takes off — and then flies in its own smart direction.” *The Wrap* called it “the most fun you’ll have at any play this Broadway season” and *Deadline* lauded it as “a delicious and irresistible piece of work. Sweet, saucy, and very funny, *Fat Ham* has enough good-time disco sparkle to win over all but the grumpiest of spirits.”

San Francisco Playhouse has assembled a cast of talented actors for this play. **Devin A. Cunningham** (he/him) makes his Playhouse debut as Juicy. Cunningham has previously performed with American Conservatory Theater, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Oakland Theater Project, and Shotgun Players. He currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director at African-American Shakespeare Company.

Jenn Stephens makes her Playhouse debut as Tedra, Juicy’s mother. Stephens has worked with Dave Chappelle on “Chappelle’s Show,” as well as directors Andrei Serban and Mary Zimmerman while performing in *Measure for Measure* at The Public Theater.

Ron Chapman (he/him) plays Juicy’s father Rev and his father’s ghost Pap. Chapman is a resident artist at San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, and has also performed with African-American Shakespeare Company, Novato Theatre Company, and Quantum Dragon Theatre.

Courtney Gabrielle Williams (she/her) debuts as Opal, one of Juicy’s friends. She has performed with New York’s Clubbed Thumb, The Flea, The Kitchen, and Rivendell Theater. Her film and T.V. credits include Starz’s “Blindspotting,” Fox’s “Empire,” Netflix’s “Soundtrack,” and NBC’s “Chicago Med.”

Samuel Ademola (he/him) debuts as Larry, an awkward boy attracted to Juicy. Ademola has been seen onstage at Marin Shakespeare Company, Left Edge Theatre, The Magic Theatre, and Chautauqua Playhouse. His film and TV credits include USA’s 2021 film “Nash Bridges.”

Phaedra Tillery-Boughton (she/her) makes her Playhouse debut as Rabby, Larry and Opal’s mother. Her stage credits include shows with Center Repertory Company, Presidio Theatre, Hillbarn Theatre, Ray of Light Theatre, Woodminster Summer Musicals, New Conservatory Theatre Center, and Palo Alto Players. As an Associate Producer and Casting Manager at SFBATCO and the 2022-2023 Theatre Bay Area Arts Leadership Resident, she passionately supports Black theater and strives to create inclusive spaces for Black creatives. Tillery-Boughton co-hosts the podcast *Creatively Shaded*, which amplifies Black theater experiences in the Bay Area. Recently, she was honored with the 2024-2025 Black Futures Award for her commitment to innovation and inclusion in the arts.

Seen in *Waitress* and *Nollywood Dreams*, **Jordan Covington** (he/him) returns as Tio, Juicy’s cousin and oldest friend. He has appeared in productions at San Francisco Opera, American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Playhouse, PlayGround, Theatre Rhinoceros, 3Girls Theatre, and The Lower Bottom Playaz.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Fat Ham features choreography by **Rotimi Agbabiaka**, scenic design by **Nina Ball**; lighting design by **Stephanie Johnson**; costume design by **Lee Garber-Patel**; sound design by **Ray Archie**, properties design by **Amy Benjamin**, intimacy direction by **Jeunee Simon**, and fight direction by **Dave Maier**.

CREATIVE TEAM:

James Ijames (Playwright) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning and Tony Award-nominated playwright, director, and educator. Ijames’ *Fat Ham* won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Steinberg Playwright Award, and received a Tony Award nomination for Best Play. Ijames won the Kesselring Prize for *Kill Move Paradise* and the Terrence McNally New Play Award for *WHITE*. His plays also include *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington*; *Welcome Table*; *Passion of Osiris*; *Hymn*; *Tank Stranger*; *Moon Man Walk*; *Phoebe in Birdland*; *Good Bones*; *Reverie*; *The Threshing Floor*; *TJ Loves Sally 4ever*; *Abandon*; *Where We’ve Been*; and *What is Left, Burns*. Ijames’ plays have been produced by The Public Theater, Shotgun Players, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Geffen Playhouse, National Black Theatre, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, and many others.

Margo Hall (Director) is the artistic director of Lorraine Hansberry Theatre and an award-winning actor/director/playwright. She returns to San Francisco Playhouse, where she directed *[hieroglyph]*, *Barbecue*, *Red Velvet*, *The Story*, and most recently *Nollywood Dreams*.

Other directing credits include *Garuda's Wing* for The Magic Theatre, *In the Evening by the Moonlight*, *Thurgood*, and *Soulful Christmas* for Lorraine Hansberry Theatre; *Friend of My Youth* and *Sonny's Blues* for Word for Word; and *Brownsville Song*, *B-Side for Tray* for Shotgun Players, where she also co-directed *Bulrusher* with Ellen Sebastian Chang.

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE:

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by *The New York Times* as “a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around” and deemed “ever adventurous” by *The Mercury News*. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, San Francisco Playhouse is the city’s premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. The Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design, including the *SF Weekly* Best Theatre Award and the *Bay Guardian*’s Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award, as well as three consecutive San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for Best Entire Production in the Bay Area. *KQED/NPR* recently described the company as “one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic Director Bill English’s commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage.” The Playhouse is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **San Francisco Playhouse** the Northern California Premiere of 2022 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fat Ham*. Playwright **James Ijames** turns William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* on its head in this piping hot play that transports the drama to a modern-day barbecue in the American South. Queer Black college kid Juicy longs to break his crazy family’s cycle of trauma and violence when his father’s ghost demands Juicy avenge his murder. With family feuds and a dance party on the menu, this delectably irreverent, poignant play explores legacy and identity, love and loss, as well as pain and joy. Making its World Premiere in a filmed production presented by Wilma Theater, *Fat Ham* received the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Drama ahead of its in-person premiere Off-Broadway at The Public Theater. The production transferred to Broadway in 2023, where it was nominated for five Tony Awards including Best Play. *The New York Times* hailed the show as “hilarious yet profound. It is the rare takeoff that actually takes off — and then flies in its own smart direction.” *The Wrap* called it “the most fun you’ll have at any play this Broadway season” and *Deadline* lauded it as “a delicious and irresistible piece of work. Sweet, saucy, and very funny, *Fat Ham* has enough good-time disco sparkle to win over all but the grumpiest of spirits.” Bay Area theatre titan **Margo Hall**, who directed the Playhouse’s

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WHEN: Previews: Thursday, March 20 – Tuesday, March 25, 2025
Opening: Wednesday, March 26, 2025
Closes: Saturday, April 19, 2025

SHOWS: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7pm
Wednesdays: 2pm & 7pm
Fridays: 3pm & 8pm
Saturdays: 3pm & 8pm
Sundays: 2pm

WHERE: San Francisco Playhouse (450 Post Street, San Francisco)

TICKETS: Single tickets (\$35-\$135) for *Fat Ham* and 2024-25 Season subscriptions are currently available. For tickets and more information, the public may visit <https://www.sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2024-2025-season/fat-ham/> or call the box office at 415-677-9596.

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co. lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available: <http://cbpr.co/press/fatham>