Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)

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A Note About Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)

When I first encountered the work of Suzan-Lori Parks in the 1990s with her play Venus, I was struck both by her poetic, jazz-inspired language, and by her ability to exhume history and create relevance and resonance for contemporary audiences. With Venus, she explored the objectification, both past and present, of black women’s bodies by depicting the story of Sarah Baartman, a 19th century South African woman who was put on display so people could gape at her bodily proportions. I had rarely encountered a play that so deftly links past and present, showing us how bygone eras still effervesce within us.

In the decades since, I watched in admiration as Suzan-Lori’s singular voice swept across the American theater; in 2002, she became the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play Topdog/Underdog.

When I read Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3), I knew immediately that the plays—three separate works, which Suzan-Lori intended to be performed together—would enthrall and intrigue our audiences. This epic trilogy offers an expansive view of the effects of slavery on America’s consciousness and conscience, and riffs loosely on Homer’s Odyssey. Like so many of Suzan-Lori’s other works, it collapses and expands time, bringing us face to face with our ancestors—and ourselves.
Since it premiered at New York’s Public Theater in 2014 to rave reviews, several companies have undertaken this masterpiece, and I am thrilled to produce the Chicago premiere as part of the Goodman’s 2017/2018 Season. I am also excited to welcome director Niegel Smith, artistic director of New York’s Flea Theater, who makes his Goodman debut with these remarkable plays. Niegel brings both deep intellect and well-cultivated aesthetic to his work, and I cannot imagine a director better suited to interpret Suzan-Lori’s epic story.

I invite you to join me in exploring these three staggeringly beautiful, complex plays, and to contemplate their resonance in your own life.

Robert Falls
Artistic Director
Staging an Epic: An Interview with Director Niegel Smith

By Michael Mellini

With a cast of 15 actors, live music and a three-part story that straddles challenging aspects of both America’s history and its current state, *Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* presents both challenges and opportunity for unique artistic interpretations for director Niegel Smith, artistic director of New York’s famed Flea Theater.

Michael Mellini: You have some history with playwright Suzan-Lori Parks. What do you find so exciting and singular about her work?

Niegel Smith: Suzan-Lori is one of the fiercest dramatists of the American stage. She is interested in works that could only be created in the theater, so they are filled with dramatic action, really intense characters and excellent metaphors. Her work has been about excavating a history of blackness in America—particularly, how that blackness gets performed and subsumed by historical facts and figures. I was lucky enough to work with Suzan-Lori when I was a fellow at The Public Theater, during which time this play had two workshops and its world-premiere production—so I got to watch as she uncovered the language of the play’s world. She’s attempting to write something on an epic scale that she hasn’t done before.
MM: Can you speak a bit about the unique structure of the play?

NS: It’s a nine-part play, and these are the first three parts Suzan-Lori has written so far. It’s unfair to speak on her behalf, but I think what she’s signaling in the title is, “Get ready,” because this is as big as Star Wars—and possibly more important, you know? I consider each part its own play with a distinct tonal quality. Watching these plays should feel like a full meal. Part 1 has a lot of suspense, Part 2 settles into one spot for a bit of storytelling and Part 3 is a bit of bait and switch: you’ve been watching these characters for a while, and see what they do, and you think, “How dare you!” Part 1 is about very much questioning the worth of a man. We’re on a plantation in far west Texas, where an enslaved man has to decide if he’s going to accept his master’s promise to grant him his freedom after the war if he’s willing to fight for the Confederacy. Together, the plays explore the value of a man, particularly the value of a black man. You know your body has economic value in that you can be sold, but do you have intrinsic value as a human being? What does it mean to be a black man inside this American experiment? This play tackles those questions in a very rigorous way.

MM: Though the play takes place during the Civil War, audiences will likely identify current relevancy in the topics discussed and in the production’s visual representations.
NS: Since the play was first produced at The Public in 2014, the Black Lives Matter movement began, and we as a nation have been in conversation about what to do with monuments of the Confederacy. Costume designer Linda Cho and I spoke about how we have very much inherited the institution of slavery. In the opening image in Part 1, the silhouettes and the fabrics on stage are going to be historical, but the slave's clothes will be prison orange. When we arrive in Part 3, we have a chorus of runaway slaves, and again, the silhouettes and fabrics are historical, but their clothes will be dyed in elements of the American flag. The hope of the staging is that these runaways show some impulse towards the possibility of what the flag stands for. What is the promise of that flag?

Then, the set is a kind of a monument to the Confederate worldview. It’s a big granite space with the stars of the Confederate flag etched in. I want there to be something aesthetically that every audience member at once wrestles with but engages them. There will be a lot in the play that makes people uncomfortable, but I think the story is going to resonate with audiences. It will be useful, engaging and provocative. Again I think what Suzan-Lori is getting at in her work is that these issues are ingrained in us, and are not easily separated into the now and then.

MM: Music is also a major aspect of the production.

NS: In a way, this show is part-concert, part theater. Suzan-Lori is a musician; she writes blues music and when you invite her to talk at your school or company, she
doesn’t talk about her work—she brings her guitar and sings. The script simply calls one character “musician.” It could be anybody. We've cast Melody Angel, a local Chicago blues musician. We auditioned a wide gamut of musicians because this is a great music town. She was just electric and captured me. There was something raw and honest in her sound. Looking at the play and knowing Suzan-Lori, I’m like, “Oh, this is her interlocutor, commenting on and deepening the action.” So that will be Melody in our production. She will literally call for scenery, point out the direction of our focus.

**MM: Despite the modern aesthetics, did you do conduct a lot of historical research?**

**NS:** This production will give you a wide swath of Africa and exploring the Africans who were enslaved. There will be 12 different enslaved people on stage from different parts of Africa so we’re working with a dialect coach to reflect the different tonalities that may have survived after a generation or two of enslavement. I’m hopeful this production will communicate the complexity and beauty of African traditions. We didn’t all come from the same cultures in Africa.

This play says all this stuff—the images, texture, language, music—is the recent past but still lives with us. I think about the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee following the end of apartheid and what happened in Germany after World War II. Those opportunities allowed those communities to reflect on what it meant to have your
dominant culture be oppressive to whole populations of people. Our country has never gone through that process, the closest thing was the Civil Rights Movement. It’s important for us to engage with art that makes us think and reflect on that.

END OF INTERVIEW
Goodman Theatre Presents
FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS
(PARTS 1, 2 & 3)

By SUZAN-LORI PARKS
Directed by NIEGEL SMITH
Set Design by COURTNEY O’NEILL
Costume Design by LINDA CHO
Lighting Design by KEITH PARHAM
Original Music and Sound Design by JUSTIN ELLINGTON
Casting by ADAM BELCUORE,
CSA ERICA SARTINI-COMBS
Dramaturgy by NEENA ARNDT
Production Stage Manager DONALD E. CLAXON*

CAST

Musician..................................................Melody Angel

PART 1: A MEASURE OF A MAN

The Chorus of Less Than Desirable Slaves:
Leader.....................................................Jacqueline Williams
Second......................................................Sydney Charles
Third......................................................Ronald L. Conner
Fourth......................................................Michael Aaron Pogue

The Oldest Old Man.........................Ernest Perry, Jr.
Hero......................................................Kamal Angelo Bolden
Penny............................Aimé Donna Kelly
Homer..................................................Jaime Lincoln Smith
PART 2: A BATTLE IN THE WILDERNESS
Colonel..................................................William Dick
Smith..................................................Demetrios Troy
Hero...................................................Kamal Angelo Bolden*

Angelo Bolden

PART 3: THE UNION OF MY CONFEDERATE PARTS
The Runaway Slaves.......................Bernard Gilbert, Nicole Michelle Haskins, Tyrone Phillips
Homer.............................................Jaime Lincoln Smith
Penny........................................Aimé Donna Kelly
Odyssey Dog............................BrittneyLove Smith
Ulysses.................................Kamal Angelo Bolden

Assistant Director: Sydney Chatman
Assistant Lighting Designer: Brian Elston
Dialect Coach: Michelle Lopez-Rios
Casting Consultant: Lauren Port, CSA
Musician Consultant: Mike Przygoda
Fight Choreographer: Matt Hawkins
Assistant to the Director: David Monteagudo

MELODY ANGEL (Musician) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. She is a singer-songwriter and a self-taught guitarist from the South Side of Chicago who plays a mix of blues/rock. She performed at the Chicago Blues Festival in 2016 and will again this summer. In 2017, she opened for Buddy Guy at Buddy Guy’s Legends and performed in Australia at the Byron Bay Blues Festival. Recently, she was the subject of the documentary *Black*
Girl Rock. She performs regularly at the Rosa’s Lounge blues club in Chicago. Her music is available online and at her shows. MelodyAngelMusic.com

KAMAL ANGELO BOLDEN* (Hero/Ulysses) Chicago credits include Man in the Ring, Jitney, The Misanthrope and Home (Court Theatre); Detroit ‘67 (Northlight Theatre); The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, We Are Proud to Present... (Victory Gardens Theater); Short Shakespeare: Romeo & Juliet (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Hit The Wall (The Inconvenience); The Island (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); The Opponent (A Red Orchid Theatre and off-Broadway at 59e59 Theatre) and Jackie and Me and Bud Not Buddy (Chicago Children’s Theatre). Regional credits include Coriolanus (Nashville Shakespeare) and Immediate Family (Mark Taper Forum). Film and television credits include Ravers, Elvis & Nixon, The Night Before, Consumed, Chicago Fire, Insecure, Rosewood, Major Crimes, Law & Order: SVU, Betrayal, Low Winter Sun, Public Housing Unit, Lights Out, Crisis and Boss.

SYDNEY CHARLES (Second) returns to the Goodman, where she was previously seen in the New Stages production of Lottery Day and reading of Florissant & Canfield, as well as the reading of Every 28 Hours: Cycle One. Select theater credits include The Wiz at Kokandy Productions (Time Out Chicago Award for Best Actress), Prowess at Jackalope Theatre Company, Dessa Rose at Bailiwick Chicago (Jeff Award nomination for Best Actress) and Smokey Joe’s Cafe at the Royal George Theater. She
is also an artistic associate with Firebrand Theatre and represented by Stewart Talent Agency.

RONALD L. CONNER* (Third) returns to the Goodman, where he previously appeared in A View From the Bridge. Chicago credits include Paradise Blue (TimeLine Theatre Company); Jitney, Small Oak Tree Runs Red and King Hedley II (Congo Square Theatre Company, where he is an ensemble member); Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night and Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits (Chicago Shakespeare Theater) and Seven Guitars, The Piano Lesson and First Breeze of Summer (Court Theatre). Regional credits include Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, The Whipping Man, The Mountaintop and Macbeth (St. Louis Black Repertory Company); Gem of the Ocean (Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati); Fences (New Harmony Theatre) and Two Trains Running (Geva Theatre Center). Television credits include The Chi, Empire, Chicago P.D., Sirens and The Secret Santa. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

WILLIAM DICK* (Colonel) returns to Goodman Theatre, where previous credits include Blind Date; Moonlight and Magnolias; The Goat, or Who is Sylvia; House and Garden; Griller; Spinning Into Butter; and Hey, Stay a While. Other Chicago credits include The Book of Will and The Odd Couple (Northlight Theatre); The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cyrano de Bergerac, Henry VIII, Timon of Athens, The Madness of King George III, Macbeth, Cymbeline, Troilus and Cressida, The Two Noble Kinsmen, A Flea in Her Ear and The Merchant of Venice
(Chicago Shakespeare Theater); We All Went Down to Amsterdam (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); The Hammer Trinity (The House Theatre of Chicago) and The Pitmen Painters (TimeLine Theatre Company). Regional credits include Ah, Wilderness; Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner; The Little Foxes; All The Way and The Great Society (Asolo Repertory Theatre), as well as work with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Studio Arena and Los Angeles Theatre Center. Film credits include Oz the Great and Powerful, The Merry Gentlemen, Fred Claus, Stranger than Fiction, The Break Up and The Company. Television credits include Empire, Chicago Fire, Crisis, Mob Doctor and Leverage.

**BERNARD GILBERT** (*Runaway*) makes his Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include Skeleton Crew at Northlight Theatre, Our Lady of 121st Street with Eclipse Theatre, Man in the Ring at Court Theatre and a tour of Letters Home with Griffin Theatre. He has performed in productions of The Royale at City Theatre in Pittsburgh and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. He has also appeared as Eddie Greene on Chicago P.D. He is an MFA graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University and Morehouse College. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

**NICOLE MICHELLE HASKINS** (*Runaway*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include Marie Christine (Boho Theatre), Our Town (Redtwist Theatre), The Wiz (Kokandy Productions, Black Theatre Alliance Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress in a
Musical, Jeff Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical and *Time Out Chicago* Award nomination for Best Featured Performance in a Musical), *Parade* (Writers Theatre), *Rent* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre, Jeff Award Nomination for Best Ensemble), *MUTT* (Stage Left Theatre with Red Tape Theatre) and *For Her as a Piano* (Pegasus Theatre). She was the 2014 School at Steppenwolf Acting Fellow and is an associate artist with Black Lives, Black Words theater collective and a MOSAIC Youth Theatre of Detroit alumnus. She is a Detroit native and represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent. NicoleMichelleHaskins.com

**AIMÉ DONNA KELLY** *(Penny)* makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Off-Broadway credits include *Exit Strategy* (Primary Stages) and *Macbeth* and *Othello* (Epic Theatre Ensemble). Regional credits include *Disgraced* (Philadelphia Theatre Company), *The White Snake* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Macbeth* (Arden Theatre Company), *Moon Man Walk* (Oribiter 3), *The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane* (Barrymore Award nomination for Best Actress) and *We are Proud to Present...* (InterAct Theatre Company), *This is the week that is* (1812 Productions), *Unsex me Here* (Theatre 4 the People), *We are Bandits* (Applied Mechanics), *The Exonerated* (Delaware Theatre Company) and *The North Plan* (Theatre Exile). Film and television credits include *Iron Fist* and *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. She received her BFA from the University of the Arts.
ERNEST PERRY, JR.* (The Oldest Old Man) returns to Goodman Theatre, where his credits include Two Trains Running, Death and the King’s Horseman, An Enemy of the People, Play Mas, The Road, Edmond, A Raisin in the Sun, Galileo, A Christmas Carol, Black Star Line, Puddin ‘n’ Pete (Jeff Award nomination), The Ties That Bind, Let Me Live, ‘Tis Pity She's a Whore, Miss Evers' Boys, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Oo-Blå- Dee, Drowning Crow, Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, Cry, The Beloved Country, The Iceman Cometh, The Merchant of Venice, Heartbreak House, Magnolia and Gas For Less. Other Chicago credits include Rest, The Gospel of Lovingkindness, Ceremonies in Dark Old Men, Daddy’s Seashore Blues, Pecong and Split Second (Victry Gardens Theater); All’s Well That Ends Well, Playboy of the West Indies, Mary Stuart and Pantomime (Court Theatre); Henry V, Measure for Measure, As You Like It and Cymbeline (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Meetings and Rhino’s Policeman (Northlight Theatre); The Petrified Forest, The Merchant of Venice and King Lear (Body Politic Theatre); Suspenders! (Chicago Theatre Company, Jeff Award nomination); Driving Miss Daisy (Briar Street Theatre) and 5 Rooms of Furniture (Organic Theater Company, Black Theatre Alliance Award for Best Actor). Regional credits include Death and the King’s Horsemen (Kennedy Center); The Tempest (American Shakespeare Center); Jitney, Driving Miss Daisy and Gem of the Ocean (Indiana Repertory Theatre); Fences (Arden Theatre Company, Barrymore Award nomination); King Hedley II (Alliance Theatre); Of Mice and Men (Virginia Stage Company); The Tempest and Fences (Actors Theatre of
Louisville); *Gem of the Ocean* and *Trouble in Mind* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); *Birdie Blue* (City Theatre); *Emancipation of the Valet de Chambre* (Cleveland Play House); *Dutchman* (Hartford Stage); *Oo-Bla-Dee* (La Jolla Playhouse) and *Elmina’s Kitchen* and *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (Center Stage). International credits include *The Iceman Cometh* at the Abbey Theatre (Dublin); *My Children, My Africa* at Vienna’s English Theatre and *The Merchant of Venice* at Royal Shakespeare Company (London), Thalia Theatre (Germany) and MC93 Bobigny (Paris). Television credits include *ER, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, Lady Blue, The Howard Beach Story, Early Edition, Unnatural Causes, The Watcher, The Untouchables* and *Boss*. Film credits include *Quebec, Barbershop 2, Roll Bounce, Liar Liar, Rage in Harlem, The Color of Money, Running Scared* and *The Fifteen Minute Hamlet*.

**TYRONE PHILLIPS** (*Runaway*) makes his Goodman Theatre debut. He is the founding artistic director of Chicago’s Definition Theatre Company. Acting credits include *A Doll’s House, Genesis* and *The Brothers’ Size* (Definition Theatre), *King Charles III* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *George Orwell’s 1984* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Stick Fly* (Windy City Playhouse) and *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning* (Steppenwolf Garage Rep). He was recently selected as one of *Newcity’s* Players—the 50 leaders of Chicago’s theater, dance, opera and comedy culture of 2018. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he received his BFA with honors. He also studied
abroad at Shakespeare’s Globe and was an emerging professional resident at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, where he worked on *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Mountaintop* and *Clybourne Park*. Film and television credits include *Boss*, *Chicago Justice*, *Divergent*, *Gimmick*, DiGiorno’s “Don’t Settle” commercial and McDonald’s “Mario-Kart Happy Meal” commercial. He is represented by Grossman and Jack Talent.

**MICHAEL AARON POGUE** *(Fourth)* Chicago credits include *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, *Electra*, *Tartuffe*, *The Misanthrope*, *Angels in America* and *Spunk* (Court Theatre); *Becky Shaw* and *Stick Fly*; (Windy City Playhouse); *Dutchman* (American Blues Theatre); *Carter’s Way* and *Venus* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Night and Day* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista) and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Hamlet* (Oak Park Festival). Television credits include *Chicago Fire* and *Crisis*.

**BRITTNEYLOVE SMITH** *(Odyssey Dog)* makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include *Breath Boom* and *Ruined* (Black Theatre Alliance Award nomination) at Eclipse Theatre, *You On The Moors Now* with The Hypocrites, *Men On Boats* and *We’re Gonna Be Ok* at American Theatre Company and *Charm* with Northlight Theatre at the Steppenwolf Garage. She recently appeared in the new Nash Edgerton film *Gringo*. She can be heard on the WBEZ podcast *Pleasure Town*, on which she is a series regular. She also voices Mona in the children’s audio book series *Curiosity Chronicles*. 
JAIME LINCOLN SMITH* (Homer) makes his Goodman Theatre debut. Broadway credits include Holler If Ya Hear Me. Off-Broadway credits include Pipeline (Lincoln Center Theater), Ruined (Manhattan Theatre Club), Pass Over (Cherry Lane Theatre), Seed (Classical Theatre of Harlem), The Last Saint on Sugar Hill (National Black Theatre), Birthright (Billie Holiday Theatre), Paradox of the Urban Cliché (The Wild Project), Lights Rise on Grace (The Fringe Festival) and Felony Friday (The Fringe Festival). Regional credits include Marley (Baltimore Centerstage), Carnaval (Luna Stage), Marcus or the Secret of Sweet (City Theatre) and Gleam (Baltimore Centerstage). Film and television credits include 11:55, Respect The Jux, The Abandoned, NCIS: New Orleans, The Deuce, Blue Bloods, Elementary, The 2-2 and Law & Order.

DEMETRIOS TROY* (Smith) Goodman Theatre credits include 2666, The Happiest Song Plays Last, A Christmas Carol, The Seagull and The Good Negro. Chicago Credits include The Wheel at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; Charles III, Henry V, Julius Caesar, Timon of Athens, Richard III and Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Never the Sinner at Victory Gardens Theater; Treasure Island at Lookingglass Theatre Company/Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Inana, Blood and Gifts and Danny Casolaro Died for You at TimeLine Theatre Company, where he is an artistic associate; Awake and Sing at Northlight Theatre; Threesome at The Other Theatre Company; Beyond the
Score: Haydn, Beyond the Score: Beethoven, Beyond the Score: Schoenberg, The Soldier’s Tale and Welcome Yule at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Working at the Broadway Playhouse. Regional credits include The Boys Next Door at Syracuse Stage; Julius Caesar at Utah Shakespeare Festival; Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night and The Heart of Robin Hood at Door Shakespeare; King Lear and The Merry Wives of Windsor at Riverside Shakespeare; King Lear and Tartuffe at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Television and film credits include Empire, Chicago Fire, Mob Doctor, The Year that Changed Us, The King, Two Thieves and Jobless. He holds a BA from DePaul University/Barat College and an MFA from the University of South Carolina. He is a member of the UV Theatre Project Collective.

JACQUELINE WILLIAMS* (Leader) returns to the Goodman, where she has performed for over 30 years and credits include stop. reset., Pullman Porter Blues, Camino Real, The Trinity River Plays, The Story, The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove, Crowns, Blues for an Alabama Sky, Oo-Bla-Dee, The Amen Corner, Gertrude Stein: Each One as She May, Richard II and The Skin of Our Teeth. Chicago credits include The Christians, Head of Passes, The Hot L Baltimore and The Brother/Sister Plays (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Man in the Ring, Harvey, Gem of the Ocean, Fences, The First Breeze of Summer, Electra and Caroline, or Change (Court Theatre); Gee’s Bend, Po Boy Tango, The Miser and Skeleton Crew (Northlight Theatre); Yellowman and
Fabulation (Next Theatre Company) and The House That Will Not Stand, A Wonder in My Soul, The Gospel of Lovingkindness and The Colored Museum (Victory Gardens Theater). She appeared on Broadway in The Young Man from Atlanta and off-Broadway in From the Mississippi Delta, Mill Fire and The Talented Tenth. She has appeared in the national tours of Crowns and Born in the R.S.A. Recently, Williams reprised her role of Mae in Tarell McCraney’s Head of Passes at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles opposite Phylicia Rashad. Other regional credits include work with La Jolla Playhouse, Huntington Theatre Company, A Contemporary Theatre (Seattle), Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Portland Stage Company, Arena Stage, Asolo Repertory Theatre and others. Williams’ film and television credits include the recurring Officer Becerra on Chicago Fire, Chicago Med and Chicago P.D., Empire, Turks (series regular), The Chicago Code, Prison Break, ER, The Break-Up, The Lake House, Hardball, Whiteboyz, The Merry Gentleman and Heartlock. Williams is a former Lunt-Fontanne Fellow (representing the Goodman) and has been recognized with awards and nominations from the Jeff Committee, 3Arts, Helen Hayes, Black Theater Alliance, American Arts Council, Drama Desk, Sarah Siddons, Excellence in the Arts, After Dark Awards and others. She holds a BFA from the Goodman School of Drama/Theatre School.

SUZAN-LORI PARKS (Playwright) Named one of Time magazine’s “100 Innovators for the Next New Wave,” in 2002, Parks was the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her Broadway hit
Topdog/Underdog. A MacArthur “Genius” Award and Gish Prize recipient, she has also been awarded grants by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her play Father Comes Home From The Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3) made its world premiere at The Public Theater in New York, followed by a run at American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, MA, and Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles. The play was named a finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and was awarded the 2015 Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History, as well as the 2014 Horton Foote Prize. Parks’ work on The Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess was honored with the 2012 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical. Her numerous plays include The Book of Grace, In the Blood (2000 Pulitzer Prize finalist), Venus (1996 Obie Award), 365 Days/365 Plays and The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World, among others. Parks’ novel Getting Mother’s Body was published by Random House. Her first feature-length screenplay was Girl 6, written for Spike Lee. She’s also written screenplays for Brad Pitt, Denzel Washington and Jodie Foster, as well as adapting Zora Neale Hurston’s classic novel Their Eyes Were Watching God, which premiered on ABC’s Oprah Winfrey Presents. Parks is currently writing an adaptation of the film The Harder They Come for a live stage musical. She is the master writer chair at The Public Theater, A Residency One playwright at Signature Theatre and serves as a professor in dramatic writing at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.
NIEGEL SMITH (Director) is a Bessie Award-winning theater director and performance artist. He is the artistic director of New York’s The Flea; board member of A.R.T./New York and ringleader of Willing Participant, an artistic activist organization. His theater work has been produced by The Alley, HERE Arts Center, Hip Hop Theatre Festival, Magic Theatre, Mixed Blood, New York Fringe Festival, New York Live Arts, Phoenix Theatre Ensemble, Playwrights Horizons, Pomegranate Arts, The Public Theater, St. Ann’s Warehouse, Summer Play Festival and Under the Radar, and his participatory walks and performances have been produced by Abrons Arts Center, American Realness, Dartmouth College, Elastic City, The Invisible Dog, Jack, The New Museum, Prelude Festival, PS 122, the Van Alen Institute and Visual AIDS. He often collaborates with playwright/performer Taylor Mac and with artist Todd Shalom. Smith was co-director of the critically acclaimed A 24 Decade History of Popular Music, winner of the Kennedy Prize in Drama, the Edwin Booth Award and a Pulitzer Prize finalist. NiegelSmith.com

COURTNEY O’NEILL (Set Design) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include Plantation!, Moby Dick and The Little Prince (Lookingglass Theatre Company); The Burn, The Burials, The Compass, Life and Limb and Of Mice and Men (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Five Guys Named Moe, Harvey and Waiting for Godot (Court Theatre); Julius Caesar (Writers Theatre); You Can’t Take It With You (Northlight Theatre); Wit, Oedipus, Our Town, The Bald Soprano and Mud (The
Hypocrites, Jeff Award for Mud). Broadway credits include Fish in the Dark (associate designer), This is Our Youth (associate designer) and Of Mice and Men (assistant designer). Regional credits include work with Arena Stage, Alliance Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Kansas City Repertory, Marin Theatre Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Round House Theatre, South Coast Repertory and Virginia Stage Company. O’Neill is the recipient of the 2017 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award. She holds an MFA from Northwestern University, a BFA from DePaul University and currently teaches at both institutions. CourtneyOneill.com

LINDA CHO (Costume Design) returns to Goodman Theatre, where previous credits include Magnolia. Chicago credits include Two Noble Kinsmen (Jeff Award nomination) and Mary Stuart at Chicago Shakespeare Theater and The Merchant of Venice (national tour at Bank of America Theatre). Broadway credits include Anastasia (Tony Award nomination), A Gentlemen’s Guide to Love and Murder (Tony Award, Henry Hewes Design Award, Outer Critics Circle Award nomination) and The Velocity of Autumn. Off-Broadway credits include Grand Hotel (New York City Center Encores!), The Other Side (Manhattan Theatre Club) and Durango (The Public Theater). Regional credits include Top Girls (Huntington Theatre), Sovereignty (Arena Stage), Wild Goose Dreams (La Jolla Playhouse), 1000 Splendid Suns (American Conservatory Theatre) and October Sky (The Old Globe). Opera credits include the upcoming Samson et Dalila (Metropolitan Opera); Ghosts of Versailles, Die Vogel and
Der Zwerg/Der Zerbrochene Krug (LA Opera) and Mikado and The Magic Flute (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis). She is the recipient of the Theatre Development Fund’s Irene Sharaff Young Master Award, the Ruth Morely Design Award from the League of Professional Theatre Women and is on the Advisory Committee of the American Theatre Wing. She received her MFA from the Yale School of Drama. LindaCho.com

KEITH PARHAM (Lighting Design) returns to Goodman Theatre, where past credits include A Christmas Carol; The Wolves; Uncle Vanya; stop. reset; Ask Aunt Susan; Venus in Fur; By the Way, Meet Vera Stark; Teddy Ferrara; Sweet Bird of Youth, Red, Mary and The Seagull. Chicago credits include The Edge of Our Bodies, Gentle and The Anyway Cabaret (TUTA, where he is a company member) and The Flick, The Herd, The Birthday Party, Time Stands Still, The Sunset Limited and Red Light Winter (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). Broadway credits include Thérèse Raquin (Roundabout Theatre Company). Off-Broadway credits include Our Lady of 121st Street (Signature Theatre); Between Riverside and Crazy (Atlantic Theater Company/Second Stage Theatre); Hit the Wall, Tribes, Mistakes Were Made and Red Light Winter (Barrow Street Theatre); Through the Yellow Hour (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater); Karen O’s Stop the Virgens (St. Ann’s Warehouse); Ivanov and Three Sisters (Classic Stage Company); A Minister’s Wife (Lincoln Center Theater); Adding Machine (Minetta Lane Theatre); Crime and Punishment and The Sunset Limited (59E59 Theaters). Internationally, his credits include Stop the
Virgens (Sydney Opera House) and Homebody/Kabul (National Theatre in Belgrade, Serbia). Other design credits include productions at Court Theatre, Arena Stage, the Alley Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum and Trinity Repertory Company, among others. He has received Obie, Lucille Lortel and After Dark Awards.

JUSTIN ELLINGTON (Original Music and Sound Design) is a composer, arranger, music director, producer, educator, sound designer and pianist. As composer and sound designer, he has worked with companies including Lincoln Center Theater, Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Theater for a New Audience, New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theater and Center Theatre Group, and has collaborated on new works with acclaimed playwrights including John Guare, Neil LaBute, Will Power, Marcus Gardley, Dominique Morriseau, Dael Orlandersmith, Jon Robin Baitz and Adrianne Kennedy. He arranged, co-orchestrated and composed the music for the Dallas Theater Center production of Stagger Lee, which earned the Dallas Theater Award for Best New Musical. He earned a Grammy Award for his work with Usher on Raymond vs. Raymond and an ASACP award for his work with Nicki Minaj on Pink Friday. In 2014, Ellington was commissioned to compose music for the Center for Civil Human Rights. The project, titled MOVE ACT FREE, led by George C. Wolfe, was awarded a Cinema in Industry (CINDY) Award for production design. He is a member of the American Society of Composer and Publishers, United
NEENA ARNDT (Dramaturg) In nine seasons as Goodman Theatre’s dramaturg, Arndt has dramaturged more than 30 productions, including Robert Falls’ productions of *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976; Measure for Measure; The Iceman Cometh and The Seagull;* David Cromer’s production of *Sweet Bird of Youth* and the world premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s *Luna Gale.* She has also worked with the American Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the New Harmony Project and Actors Shakespeare Project, among others. Arndt has taught at Boston University and DePaul University. She holds an MFA in dramaturgy from the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University and a BA in linguistics from Pomona College.

DONALD E. CLAXON* (Production Stage Manager) returns to Goodman Theatre, where credits include *Yasmina’s Necklace, King of the Yees, Carlyle and stop. reset.* Chicago credits include work with Teatro Vista, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, Windy City Playhouse, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Silk Road Rising, Grant Park Music Festival, Court Theatre, Paramount Theater, The Second City and About Face Theatre. Regionally, he has worked with Mobile Opera, Peninsula Players, Yale Opera, Florentine Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Barrington Stage Company and
Yale Repertory Theatre. He is a graduate of Wabash College and the Yale School of Drama.

**ROBERT FALLS** (*Goodman Theatre Artistic Director*)

Most recently, Falls remounted his Lyric Opera of Chicago production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* for the Dallas Opera. Earlier this season, he directed the world premiere of Rogelio Martinez’s *Blind Date* and directed a new production of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* in the Albert Theatre. This summer, he will direct the return engagement of Jim McGrath’s *Pamplona* in the Goodman’s Owen Theatre. In the 2015/2016 Season, Falls directed the Chicago premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976*, and partnered with Goodman Playwright-in-Residence Seth Bockley to direct their world premiere adaptation of Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* (Jeff Award for Best Adaptation). Recent productions also include *The Iceman Cometh* for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Rebecca Gilman’s *Luna Gale* for the Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, *Measure for Measure* and the world and off-Broadway premieres of Beth Henley’s *The Jacksonian*. Among his other credits are *The Seagull*, *King Lear*, *Desire Under the Elms*, John Logan’s *Red*, Jon Robin Baitz’s *Three Hotels*, Eric Bogosian’s *Talk Radio* and Conor McPherson’s *Shining City*; the world premieres of Richard Nelson’s *Frank’s Home*, Arthur Miller’s *Finishing the Picture*, Eric Bogosian’s *Griller*, Steve Tesich’s *The Speed of Darkness* and *On the Open Road*, John Logan’s *Riverview: A Melodrama with Music* and Rebecca Gilman’s *A True History of the Johnstown Flood, Blue Surge* and *Dollhouse*; the American premiere of Alan
Ayckbourn’s *House and Garden*; and the Broadway premiere of Elton John and Tim Rice’s *Aida*. Falls’ honors for directing include, among others, a Tony Award (*Death of a Salesman*), a Drama Desk Award (*Long Day’s Journey into Night*), an Obie Award (*subUrbia*), a Helen Hayes Award (*King Lear*) and multiple Jeff Awards (including a 2012 Jeff Award for *The Iceman Cometh*). For “outstanding contributions to theater,” Falls has been recognized with such prestigious honors as the Savva Morozov Diamond Award (Moscow Art Theatre), the O’Neill Medallion (Eugene O’Neill Society), the Distinguished Service to the Arts Award (Lawyers for the Creative Arts), the Illinois Arts Council Governor’s Award and induction into the Theater Hall of Fame.

**ROCHE EDWARD SCHULFER** (*Goodman Theatre Executive Director*) started working in the Goodman Theatre box office and ultimately became executive director in 1980. Since that time he has overseen more than 350 productions including close to 150 premieres. He initiated the Goodman’s annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, which celebrated 40 years as Chicago’s leading holiday arts tradition in 2017. In partnership with Artistic Director Robert Falls, Schulfer led the establishment of quality, diversity and community engagement as the core values of Goodman Theatre. During their tenure, the Goodman has received numerous awards for excellence, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater, recognition by *Time* magazine as the “Best Regional Theatre” in the U.S., the Pulitzer Prize for Lynn Nottage’s *Ruined* and many Jeff Awards for outstanding
achievement in Chicago area theater. Schulfer has negotiated the presentation of numerous Goodman Theatre productions to many national and international venues. He coordinated the 12-year process to relocate the Goodman to the Theatre District in 2000. To mark his 40th anniversary with the Goodman, his name was added to the theater’s “Walk of Stars.” Schulfer was a founder and twice chair of the League of Chicago Theatres, the trade association of more than 200 Chicago area theaters and producers. He has been privileged to serve in leadership roles with Arts Alliance Illinois (the statewide advocacy coalition); Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for more than 450 not-for-profit theaters); the Performing Arts Alliance (the national advocacy consortium of more than 18,000 organizations and individuals); the League of Resident Theatres (the management association of 65 leading US theater companies); Lifeline Theatre in Rogers Park and the Arts & Business Council. Schulfer is honored to have been recognized with the League of Chicago Theater’s Lifetime Achievement Award; Theatre Communication Group’s Visionary Leadership Award; Actors’ Equity Association for promoting diversity and equal opportunity in Chicago theater; the American Arts Alliance and Arts Alliance Illinois for arts advocacy; the Arts & Business Council for distinguished contributions to Chicago’s artistic vitality; Chicago magazine and the Chicago Tribune as a “Chicagoan of the Year”; the City of Chicago; Columbia College Chicago for entrepreneurial leadership; the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee for his partnership with Robert Falls; Lawyers for the Creative Arts; Lifeline
Theatre’s Raymond R. Snyder Award for Commitment to the Arts; Season of Concern for support of direct care for those living with HIV/AIDS; and Vision 2020 for promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace. Schulfer received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from North Central College. He taught at DePaul University for 15 years and has lectured annually on strategic planning at Southern Methodist University, as well as being a guest speaker at many academic institutions. In the past year, he has presented a talk on the economics of the performing arts for several local and national theater companies as well as Theater Communications Group. Schulfer is a lifelong Chicago area resident and received a degree in economics from the University of Notre Dame where he managed the cultural arts commission. He will be teaching a theater management seminar at Notre Dame in the fall of 2018.

END OF PROGRAM