FRANCIS GUINAN, SEAN PARRIS AND BRETT SCHNEIDER WILL STAR IN THE MAGIC PLAY
BY ANDREW HINDERAKER, OCTOBER 21 – NOVEMBER 20 IN THE OWEN THEATRE

***HALENA KAYS DIRECTS WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION—PART MAGIC SHOW, PART PLAY—
AT GOODMAN THEATRE***

(Chicago, IL) This fall, Goodman Theatre combines world-class magic with a human story of loss and love in the world premiere of The Magic Play, by Andrew Hinderaker and directed by Halena Kays, starting October 21. Though a good magician must always be in control of his show, his offstage life may be as fragile as a house of cards. When a rising young magician must take the stage just hours after his partner has left him, his performance begins to unravel. Critically acclaimed magician, illusion designer and actor Brett Schneider stars as the Magician alongside Francis Guinan (Father) and Sean Parris (Diver). The Magic Play, recommended for ages 13 and up, appears October 21 – November 20 in the Owen Theatre. Opening night is Tuesday, November 1. Tickets ($10 - $40; subject to change) go on sale August 19 at GoodmanTheatre.org/Magic, by phone at 312.443.3800 or at the box office (170 North Dearborn).

“I am both an actor and a magician—so naturally, the project immediately appealed to me,” said Schneider, who collaborated with Hinderaker on The Magic Play for four years, including the show’s debut in the Goodman’s 2014 New Stages Festival, also directed by Kays. “I am ecstatic and humbled that we get to premiere it at the Goodman, a champion and supporter of this piece from day one. The Magic Play has challenged me as an artist, and opened me up to ideas I never thought possible in the theater. Usually, when I create new material as a magician, I draw from skills and knowledge I already have about the craft. Andrew flipped that process on its head. Instead of writing toward my strengths, he purposefully explored uncharted territory, writing new magic pieces that didn’t yet have solutions or pushing me to take risks on stage. The Magic Play is about taking real risks—taking a leap of faith to try to capture the truly miraculous.”

The Magic Play was originally commissioned by Roundabout Theatre Company and produced in a developmental production at Goodman Theatre’s 2014 New Stages Festival. The Davee Foundation is the Major Supporter of the Expansion of New Stages. The Time Warner Foundation is the Lead Supporter of New Play Development. The Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation and The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation are Major Supporters of New Work Development. The Glasser and Rosenthal Family and the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust are Supporters of New Work Development. Julie and Roger Baskes, Joan and Robert Clifford and Albert and Maria Goodman/The Edith-Marie Appleton Foundation are 2016-17 Season Sponsors.

The creative team includes Lizzie Bracken (Set Designer), Alison Siple (Costume Designer), Maggie Fullilove-Nugent (Lighting Designer), Christopher Kriz (Sound Designer) and John Boesche (Projection Designer). Kim Osgood is the Production Stage Manager.

About the Artists

Andrew Hinderaker (Playwright) returns to Goodman Theatre, where he was a member of the 2013/2014 Playwrights Unit. During this time he developed The Magic Play, a co-commission between the Goodman and New York’s Roundabout Theatre Company that appeared at the Goodman’s 2014 New Stages Festival. Mr. Hinderaker is an ensemble member of The Gift Theatre and an emeritus resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists. His plays
include *I Am Going to Change the World; Dirty; Kingsville* and *Suicide, Incorporated*, which premiered at The Gift and was subsequently produced off-Broadway at Roundabout. His play *Colossal*, which features a dance company, drumline and full-contact football hits, received a National New Play Network (NNPN) rolling world premiere from 2014 through 2016. The inaugural production at the Olney Theatre Center received four Helen Hayes Awards, including the Charles MacArthur Award for Best Original Play or Musical. Most recently, Mr. Hinderaker worked as a staff writer for John Logan’s *Showtime* series, *Penny Dreadful*. He holds an MFA in playwriting from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Halena Kays** (Director) returns to Goodman Theatre, where she previously directed *The Magic Play* at the 2014 New Stages Festival. Ms. Kays is the former artistic director of The Hypocrites theater company and co-founder and former artistic director of Barrel of Monkeys. Chicago credits include *Endgame, Ivywild* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* at The Hypocrites; *Lord of the Flies* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *Burning Bluebeard, Pop/Waits, 44 Plays for 44 Presidents, Daredevils, Daredevils Hamlet* and *Fake Lake* at The Neo-Futurists (where she is an artistic associate); *Roustabout* at Concordia College and *Buried in Bughouse Square* at The University of Chicago. She has received Jeff Award nominations for Best Supporting Actress and Best Direction. Ms. Kays also received the 3Arts Award and was named one of the top 50 “players” in Chicago theater by *Newcity*. She is a founding member of the artistic collaborative *The Ruffians*, a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and Northwestern University, a former member of the Big Apple Circus Clown Care unit and professor of directing at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Brett Schneider** (Magician) returns to the Goodman, where he appeared in the New Stages production of *The Magic Play* and reading of *Teddy Ferrara*. His other Chicago credits include *The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle* (Steep Theatre), *The Great God Pan* (Next Theatre), *Homecoming 1972* (Chicago Dramatists), *The Glass Menagerie* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Peter and the Wolf* (Lookingglass Theatre Company), *The Sea* (Theatre Mir), *Too Much Memory* (Sinnerman Ensemble), *The Hiding Place* (Provision Theatre), *REWIND* (The Side Project Theatre) and *Rose and the Rime* (The House Theatre of Chicago). New York credits include a workshop production of *The Magic Play* (Roundabout Theatre Company). Los Angeles credits include *Orange Lemon Egg Canary* (The Complex Theatre). Television credits include *Chicago Fire, Chicago P.D.*, *Sirens* and *Vinyl*. Mr. Schneider's illusion design work has been twice nominated for Jeff Awards for Artistic Specialization and has appeared at Roundabout Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago Children's Theatre, The Strange Tree Group and Strawdog Theatre Company, among others. Mr. Schneider is a graduate of Northwestern University and The School at Steppenwolf, and he is a member of the Magic Castle in Los Angeles.

**Francis Guinan** (Father) returns to the Goodman, where he previously appeared in *Pullman Porter Blues*, *The Seagull* and two seasons of The Second City’s *Twist Your Dickens*. Chicago credits include *East of Eden*, *The Herd, Grand Concourse, The Night Alive, The Birthday Party, Time Stands Still, The Book Thief, American Buffalo, Balm in Gilead* and *Say Goodnight, Gracie* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Goldfish* (Route 66 Theatre); *White Guy on the Bus, Stella and Lou, Season’s Greetings and Inherit the Wind* (Northlight Theatre); *A Guide for the Perplexed* (Victory Gardens Theater, Jeff Award) and *Rantoul and Die* (American Blues Theatre). Broadway credits include *August: Osage County, The Grapes of Wrath* and *As Is*. Film credits include *The Last Airbender, Typing, Low Tide* and *Constantine*. Television credits include *Boss; The Exorcist* (pilot); *Eerie, Indiana; Chicago Med; Frasier* and several Star Trek franchise episodes.

**Sean Parris** (Diver) returns to the Goodman, where he previously appeared in *The Solid Sand Below* at the New Stages Festival. Chicago credits include *The Drunken City* (The Garage at Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *The Whipping Man* (Northlight Theatre), *Seascape* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company), *Pornography* (Steep Theatre Company), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *A Girl With Sun in Her Eyes* (Pine Box Theater Company) and *Letter’s Home* (Griffin Theatre).

**About Goodman Theatre**

Called America’s “Best Regional Theatre” by *Time* magazine, Goodman Theatre has won international recognition for
Goodman Theatre Announces Cast for *The Magic Play* by Andrew Hinderaker

Halena Kays Directs the World Premiere **October 21 – November 20** in the Owen Theatre

its artists, productions and programs, and is a major cultural, educational and economic pillar in Chicago. Founded in 1925 by William O. Goodman and his family in honor of their son Kenneth (an important figure in Chicago’s cultural renaissance in the early 1900s), Goodman Theatre has garnered hundreds of awards for artistic achievement and community engagement, including: two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards (including “Outstanding Regional Theatre” in 1992), nearly 160 Joseph Jefferson Awards and more. Under the leadership of Artistic Director **Robert Falls** and Executive Director **Roche Schulfer**, the Goodman’s artistic priorities include new plays (more than 150 world or American premieres in the past 30 years), reimagined classics (including Falls’ nationally and internationally celebrated productions of *Death of a Salesman*, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, *King Lear* and *The Iceman Cometh*, many in collaboration with actor Brian Dennehy), culturally specific work, musical theater (26 major productions in 20 years, including 10 world premieres) and international collaborations. Diversity and inclusion have been primary cornerstones of the Goodman’s mission for 30 years; over the past decade, 68% of the Goodman’s 35 world premieres were authored by women and/or playwrights of color, and the Goodman was the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle.” Each year, the Goodman’s education and engagement programs serve thousands of students, teachers and life-long learners. In addition, for nearly four decades *A Christmas Carol* has led to the creation of a new generation of theatergoers in Chicago.

Goodman Theatre’s leadership includes the Artistic Collective: **Brian Dennehy**, **Rebecca Gilman**, **Henry Godinez**, **Dael Orlandersmith**, **Steve Scott**, **Chuck Smith**, **Regina Taylor**, **Henry Wishcamper** and **Mary Zimmerman**. **Joan Clifford** is Chair of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees. **Swati Mehta** is Women’s Board President and **Gordon C.C. Liao** is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals. Visit the Goodman virtually at [GoodmanTheatre.org](http://GoodmanTheatre.org)—including [OnStage+](http://OnStage+) for insider information—and on Twitter (@GoodmanTheatre), [Facebook](http://Facebook) and [Instagram](http://Instagram).