FIVE YOUNG NEWCOMERS MAKE THEIR GOODMAN DEBUT IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL:
WILLIAM A. BURKE, NATHANIEL BUESCHER, PHILLIP CUSIC, SKYE SPARKS AND AVA MORSE

***REHEARSAL PHOTOS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE 37TH ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF CHICAGO’S FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION (NOVEMBER 15 – DECEMBER 28)***

(Chicago, IL) Goodman Theatre is decking its halls as A Christmas Carol begins rehearsals for the 37th annual production that “manages to grow brighter and more affecting with every season” (Chicago Sun-Times). Artistic Associate Henry Wishcamper directs the holiday classic for the second time, complete with five young performers cast from hundreds of Chicagoland children who auditioned. Making their Goodman debut are: Nathaniel Buescher (age 7, Chicago) as Tiny Tim; William A. Burke (age 15, Chicago) as Young Scrooge/Turkey Boy; Phillip Cusic (age 11, Chicago) as Peter Cratchit/Ignorance; Ava Morse (age 8, Naperville) as Emily Cratchit/Pratt/Want/Child in Doorway; and Skye Sparks (age 11, Naperville) as Belinda Cratchit. As previously announced, Larry Yando returns for his seventh year as the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge fresh off his critically-acclaimed turn in the title role of King Lear at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, along with 14 newcomers and 11 returning actors. A Christmas Carol runs November 15 – December 28 in the Goodman’s Albert Theatre. Tickets ($25 - $93; subject to change) are available online at GoodmanTheatre.org/Joy, by phone at 312.443.3800 or at the box office (170 North Dearborn). Fifth Third Bank is the Major Corporate Sponsor, PepsiCo is the Official Beverage Sponsor, Aon Corporation and KPMG LLP are the Corporate Sponsor Partners, and Chicago Tribune is the Media Partner for A Christmas Carol. Rehearsal photos are now available for download in our Press Room.

“I am really excited to be Tiny Tim; I have wanted this role my entire life,” said seven-year-old Buescher. “Rehearsals are a lot of fun and I love riding on the sled. The pants are hard to put on. Why do you think they made them so difficult to put on in the olden days? I am really looking forward to all of the fun and seeing my family in the audience. I also can’t wait for opening night and seeing everyone so happy.”

“There’s no better way to get into the holiday spirit” (Chicago Sun-Times) than experiencing the magic of Goodman Theatre’s A Christmas Carol, the iconic tale of greedy British businessman Ebenezer Scrooge—whose sizable bank account is only matched by his hatred of the holidays. One Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by four ghosts who take him on a spectacular adventure through his past, present and future, helping him rediscover the joys of life, love and friendship. For 37 years, Charles Dickens’ holiday classic has delighted Chicago audiences; the production has hosted ten directors, 32 Tiny Tims and eight Scrooges, who’ve snidely delivered nearly 23,000 “Bah Humbugs!” “The granddaddy of Chicago holiday entertainment” (Time Out Chicago), A Christmas Carol at Goodman Theatre is “the crown jewel of the holiday season” (Daily Herald).

“I’m thrilled to again direct A Christmas Carol, which has been an important annual tradition for nearly half of the Goodman’s years,” said Wishcamper. “Together with new faces and returning favorites, we are once again working to create a show that’s moving, hilarious and captures all the best moments of the holiday experience—complete with some new surprises.”

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Rehearsals Underway for Goodman's 37th Annual Production of A Christmas Carol
Casting is Complete with Five New Young Performers

Complete Company of A Christmas Carol
by Charles Dickens, adapted by Tom Creamer, directed by Henry Wishcamper
Artist bios and headshots are now available in the Press Room; unless otherwise noted, performers live in Chicago.

*Denotes an actor new to the production

Theo Allyn..........................................................Miss Ortle/Mrs. Creakle
Justin Amolsch.....................................................French Horn
Patrick Andrews..................................................Ghost of Christmas Past/Topper/Young Man
Kareem Bandealy..................................................Scrooge as a Young Man/Narrator
Nathaniel Buescher..............................................Tiny Tim
William A. Burke................................................Scrooge as a Boy/Turkey Boy/Old Joe’s Assistant
Andrew Coil......................................................Violin
Paige Collins......................................................Martha Cratchit/Fan/Young Woman
Phillip Cusic......................................................Peter Cratchit/Ignorance
Lisa Gaye Dixon................................................Ghost of Christmas Present
Joe Foust.............................................................Jacob Marley/Old Joe/Hat Seller
Allen Gilmore......................................................Alternate Scrooge
Gregory Hirte.....................................................Violin and Fiddle/Mr. Spinet
Kimi Schultz.......................................................Mrs. Fezziwig/Charwoman/Tree Seller/Philomena
J. Salome Martinez..............................................Dick Wilkins/Poulterer/Pie Seller/Ghost of Christmas Future
Ava Morse (Naperville).........................................Emily Cratchit/Want/Pratt/Child in Doorway
Larry Neumann Jr...............................................Schoolmaster/Percy/Undertaker/Chestnut Seller
Ron Rains..........................................................Bob Cratchit
Malcolm Ruhl (Evanston).....................................Musical Director/Accordion
Kim Schultz.......................................................Mrs. Fezziwig/Charwoman/Tree Seller/Philomena
Skye Sparks (Naperville).....................................Belinda Cratchit
Brett Tuomi........................................................Mr. Fezziwig/Mr. Crumb
Kristina Valada-Viars.........................................Abby/Belle
Penelope Walker...............................................Mrs. Cratchit
Larry Yando.......................................................Ebenezer Scrooge
Anish Jethmalani (Forest Park)..........................Fred

Tickets to A Christmas Carol ($25 – $93; subject to change) are currently on sale at GoodmanTheatre.org/Joy. Tickets and subscriptions, including the Goodman WILD CARD, can also be purchased at the box office (170 North Dearborn), by phone at 312.443.3800 or at GoodmanTheatre.org/Subscribe. Mezztix are half-price mezzanine tickets available at 12 noon at the box office, and at 10am online (promo code MEZTTIX) day of performance; Mezztix are not available by telephone. 10Tix are $10 rear mezzanine tickets for students available at 12 noon at the box office, and at 10am online on the day of performance for Albert Theatre productions and in advance for all Owen Theatre productions; 10Tix are not available by telephone; a valid student I.D. must be presented when picking up the tickets; limit four per student with I.D. All tickets are subject to availability and handling fees apply. Discounted Group Tickets for 15 persons or more are available at 312.443.3820. Goodman Theatre offers three ways to give the gift of theater this holiday season: the WILD CARD—four flexible tickets to any production to mix and match for $199, Goodman Gift Certificates available in any amount and exclusive A Christmas Carol merchandise all available online at GoodmanTheatre.org/Gifts. Artists, dates and ticket prices are subject to change.
About Goodman Theatre

The Goodman’s 2014/2015 Season features nine productions on its two stages—six in the 856-seat Albert Theatre and three in the 400-seat flexible Owen Theatre, plus the annual New Stages Festival that includes additional developmental productions, and partner productions with The Second City and Albany Park Theater Project. The season continues with the annual New Stages Festival (October 29 - November 16, in the Owen), including an “Industry Weekend” on November 14 – 16; The Second City’s Twist Your Dickens, Or Scrooge You by Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort (December 5 – 28, in the Owen); Rapture, Blister, Burn by Gina Gionfriddo, directed by Kimberly Senior, a Chicago premiere (January 17 – February 22, 2015 in the Albert); Two Trains Running by August Wilson, directed by Chuck Smith, in conjunction with a citywide celebration of August Wilson (March 7 – April 12, 2015 in the Albert); The Upstairs Concierge by Kristoffer Diaz, directed by KJ Sanchez, a world premiere co-commission with Teatro Vista (March 28 – April 26, 2015 in the Owen); The Little Foxes by Lillian Hellman, directed by Henry Wishcamper (May 2 – June 7, 2015 in the Albert); stop. reset. written and directed by Regina Taylor, a Chicago premiere (May 23 – June 21, 2015 in the Owen); Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike by Christopher Durang, directed by Steve Scott, a Chicago premiere (June 20 – July 26, 2015 in the Albert), and a production still to be announced with the Albany Park Theater Project.

Now celebrating its 90th year as Chicago’s flagship theater, Goodman Theatre is an artistic and community institution dedicated to the art of theater and to civic engagement in the issues of the contemporary world. The Goodman has transformed over the past 35 years into a world class theater and premier Chicago cultural institution distinguished by the quality and scope of its programming and its culturally and aesthetically diverse creative leadership; artistic priorities include new plays, reimagined classics, culturally specific works, musical theater and international collaborations. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer, achievements include the Goodman’s state-of-the-art two-theater complex in the heart of the downtown Theatre District. Over the past three decades, the Goodman has generated more than 150 world or American premieres, and nearly 30 new-work commissions. Joan Clifford is Chairman 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. American Airlines is the Exclusive Airline of Goodman Theatre.

“A mainstay of Chicago and beyond” (Chicago Sun-Times), the Goodman is internationally acclaimed for its “fresh work of magnitude and ambition (and) bold, risky theatrical choices” (Chicago Tribune). From new plays to “first-class revivals” (The New York Times), the Goodman has earned numerous awards for its productions: two Pulitzer Prizes; 22 Tony Awards, including Outstanding Regional Theatre (1992); and nearly 160 Joseph Jefferson Awards.

The 90th Anniversary “Season to Celebrate” programming is rooted in the same spirit that launched the Goodman in 1925—an array of dramatic fare, from classics to noteworthy contemporary works, innovative and often controversial, embracing genres from farces to searing social dramas—honoring the theater’s past and envisioning its future. The nine-play season begins with an All-New Fall of works fostered and developed in the Goodman’s new play development programs followed by an “August Wilson Celebration” in spring 2015, the 10th anniversary of the playwright’s death and the 70th anniversary of his birth. This city-wide Celebration honors the longstanding collaboration between Wilson and the Goodman, the first theater in the world to produce all 10 works in his “20th Century Cycle.”

Visit the special anniversary website, GoodmanTheatre.org/90, to see famous faces who’ve worked at the theater, browse photos of classic productions and read interviews with noted artists.