GOODMAN THEATRE OPENS ITS ALICE RAPOPORT CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT, ANNOUNCES NEW CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS WITH PLAYWRIGHT/POET/PERFORMER DAEL ORLANDERSMITH AND MICHAEL ROHD OF THE CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE AND CIVIC PRACTICE

***AUDIENCES ARE INVITED TO EXPERIENCE “THE ALICE” WITH FREE EVENTS THIS WEEK, INCLUDING A SCREENING OF A RAISIN IN THE SUN (5/19) AND AN OPEN HOUSE OF CREATIVE FUN (5/21)***

(Chicago, IL) Welcome to “the Alice.” Today, Goodman Theatre opens its Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement—a new addition that exponentially expands the theater’s ability to use its practice of art as education in service of positive social change in Chicago. The Goodman becomes the first theater in Chicago to establish a facility expressly dedicated to education and engagement initiatives—efforts which evolved when Robert Falls became Artistic Director in 1986, and currently serve more than 8,000 youth and lifelong learners. Falls and Board of Trustees Chair Joan Clifford, Executive Director Roche Schuler and Walter Director of Education and Engagement Willa J. Taylor announced two ground-breaking artistic collaborations at the Alice: Pulitzer Prize finalist and Obie Award-winning playwright/performer/poet Dael Orlandersmith (Lady in Denmark in 2017; Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men in 2012 and Stoop Stories in 2009) becomes a Goodman Artistic Associate/Alice Artist in Residence, and Michael Rohd and the Center for Performance and Civic Practice (CPCP) begins a three-year residency at the Alice.

“This is an incredibly proud, game-changing moment for all of us at the Goodman Theatre,” said Artistic Director Robert Falls. “Our work in education and engagement has always begun with the art itself—as practiced on our stages and as created by hundreds of distinguished artists each season. With the Alice, we are thrilled to deepen our relationship with Dael and Michael—two artists whose belief in the transformative power of the theater and the processes used to create it will help us reach many more members of our Chicago community, and to communities nationwide.”

The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement is named for Alice B. Rapoport, a Goodman Trustee and chair of the theater’s Education and Community Engagement Committee, who championed the theater’s outreach efforts for more than 15 years, until her death in 2014. Rapoort’s husband, Chicago civic leader Michael A. Sachs of the investment advisory and consulting firm TLSG, Inc., named the new Center in her honor. The Alice realizes the theater’s 30-year commitment to using its art as education—using the process of artistic creation to empower and inspire youth and lifelong learners. Working with Wheeler Kearns Architects, 10,000 square feet were transformed into classrooms, a learning lab and more. Patrons access the Alice though the Goodman’s mezzanine lobby.

“When the current Goodman facility opened in 2000, we knew that expansion would be necessary for our youth, adult, audience and artist programs. The groundwork for the Alice was laid at that time, thanks to the strong partnership with noted Chicago developer Albert Friedman, making this expansion of the Goodman Theatre possible,” said Executive Director Roche Schuler. “An extraordinary group of donors and supporters stepped forward to make today a reality—and I am pleased to announce that we’ve exceeded our $15 million goal, 80% of which supports expanded programming.”

Entirely funded by private contributions, the Alice features spaces named by the theater’s longtime education and engagement champions, in addition to Sachs’ gift, contributions include Trustee Roger and Julie Baskes (naming the “Baskes Rotunda”); Trustee Joan and Robert Clifford (naming the “Clifford Family Lobby”); and Trustee Kimbra and Mark Walter (naming the “Walter Family Foundation Lab,” the Director of Education and Engagement’s position and endowing PlayBuild Youth Intensive); and The Pritzker Foundation, who as the Lead Impact Investor and Digital Assets Partner, provides technological capacity in the Alice.
Starting May 19, the Goodman invites Chicago audiences to sample the newly dedicated space for classes, lectures and discussions with free activities—including family playmaking, a stage combat workshop, meet-the-artist events with Mike Nussbaum (Smokefall) and Mary Beth Fisher (Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike) and more. May 19 is “Lorraine Hansberry Day” featuring events connected to the critically acclaimed current mainstage production, Hansberry’s The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window, directed by Anne Kauffman (on stage through June 5). On Friday, May 20, a youth spoken word event and open mic takes place pre-show, and Saturday, May 21’s open house begins at 9am with activities for all age. Visit GoodmanTheatre.org for a full schedule and reservation information. The opening weekend culminates in the black tie gala fundraiser, “Daring. Dazzling. Dynamic. A Night with Broadway’s Norm Lewis” (ABC’s Scandal, and the first African American to star in the title role of The Phantom of the Opera on Broadway), with Lewis performing a repertory of song and dance. The event takes place on Saturday, May 21 at 6:30pm at The Fairmont Chicago; tickets start at $1,000, and all proceeds benefit education and engagement initiatives. Contact GoodmanGala@GoodmanTheatre.org for tickets and more information.

About the Artists in Residence and Creative Leadership of the Alice

Dael Orlandersmith, “a poet possessed of an exciting new voice” who “has long demonstrated a theatrical intelligence, ferocious stage presence and gift for staccato language” (New York Times), is known for creating unflinching portrayals of marginalized characters desperate to create their own identities, despite overwhelming obstacles. A Pulitzer Prize finalist and Drama Desk Award nominee (Yellowwoman), Orlandersmith’s most recent play, Lady in Denmark, appeared in the Goodman’s 2015 New Stages festival; previous works at the Goodman include Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men (2012/2013) and Stoop Stories (2009/2010). Her other plays The Gimmick, The Blue Album, Beauty’s Daughter (Obie Award), Bones and Horsedreams, have appeared at major theaters across the country, including the New York Theatre Workshop, Mark Taper Forum, New Dramatists, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre and Wilma Theater. She is currently working on a play about the events in Ferguson, Missouri, for the Repertory Theatre of St Louis. She has toured extensively with the Nuyorican Poets Café (Real Live Poetry) throughout the United States, Europe and Australia. Orlandersmith attended Sundance Institute Theatre Lab for four summers and is the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Grant, the Helen Merrill Award for Emerging Artists in Residence and Creative Leadership of the Alice

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The nationally acclaimed Center for Performance and Civic Practice (CPCP) will begin a three-year residency at the Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement at Goodman Theatre this summer. The CPCP, led by Michael Rohd, is a national resource supporting artists and communities working together to build civic health, equity and capacity. Through this residency, the Goodman aims to expand its own capacity for community-based engagement towards positive social change, and establish a template for other U.S. arts institutions to emulate. Civic Practice is an approach in which artists use their core skills—such as design, collaboration and expression—to help communities address needs they have identified for themselves. Together, the Goodman and CPCP seek to participate in and promote authentic, lasting solutions to Chicago’s most challenging issues.”

"I have been working with Willa and her team at Goodman for several years now. They are a passionate, dedicated group of artists/organizers working in community contexts around Chicago and committed to issues of equity, access and social justice," said Michael Rohd. "We at CPCP are tremendously excited at the opportunity to deepen our collaboration and explore new ways to partner with and positively impact Chicago neighborhoods and residents."

Artist, educator and activist Willa J. Taylor, Walter Director of Education and Engagement, has led the Goodman’s programs since 2007. Taylor and her team of associates—Bobby Bledrzycki (Curriculum and Instruction Associate), Elizabeth Rice (School Programs Coordinator), Brandi Lee (Education and Community Engagement Associate) and Adrian Azevedo (Education and Engagement Assistant)—will collaborate with the Goodman’s artistic and executive leadership to oversee programmatic efforts in the Alice.

Taylor began her career in arts education at Arena Stage where, under founding director Zelda Fichandler, she established the Allen Lee Hughes Fellows Program—one of the first theater-run apprenticeships designed to increase participation by people of color in professional theater. She then went to Lincoln Center Theater where she created The Urban Ensemble, a multidisciplinary project that served at-risk youth. This collaboration between Lincoln Center
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About Wheeler Kearns Architects and Chris-AnnMarie Spencer, Alice Architect

Wheeler Kearns Architects (WKA) is devoted to a critical pursuit and practice of architecture, believing in the search for spaces which define a full, rich, and dignified life. Kept purposefully small, WKA endeavors to focus attention on every detail throughout a project, no matter how small. Relying on the participatory atmosphere of a studio, WKA’s process involves clients, engineers, consultants, and contractors in the development of structures which respond to desire, function and budget. After devoting efforts to finding the “emotional center” of a project early on, WKA collaborates to develop solutions that reinforce it. Simple, direct solutions are held in high esteem. WKA’s work ranges in scale and type—from the design of a door lever to a theater arts center for a college; from an elementary school to an indoor ice rink; from a children's museum to a painter's studio. Their work includes residences of various scales, programs, budgets for all walks of life. WKA remains committed to the optimistic pursuit of architecture in the design of buildings, interiors, landscapes, furniture, and urban design to ensure the realization of unified projects, regardless of their magnitude.

Chris-AnnMarie Spencer, Jamaican by birth, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies from the Caribbean School of Architecture at the University of Technology in 1998. Shortly after receiving her degree, her family relocated to Massachusetts and in 2001 she moved to Chicago to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago. During her studies there, Spencer spent a semester in Rome studying historical design and its application to contemporary design. During graduate school, she interned at Xavier Vendrell Studio and Worn Jerabek Architects working on single family residences and landscape projects. Before graduating in 2004 with a Master of Architecture, she was awarded several design and academic merit scholarships, a teaching assistantship position, and was nominated for the SOM and Schiff Foundation fellowships. In 2004, she was awarded the Martin Roche Fellowship for Independent Study which allowed her to travel to and continue her studies of urban and housing strategies for South African cities. Spencer has served as Project Architect for renovations of residences in Glencoe and Chicago. She recently completed an award winning project for Inspiration Kitchens and the Chicago region’s only high school for students with Learning Differences. In 2008, Spencer and her husband Grant Gibson, an architect at Garafolo Architects won third place in the White House Redux Competition. In 2012, she was recognized as a local innovator by the Chicago Urban League during their Economic Empowerment Summit. Most recently, she received the 2015 AIA Chicago Dubin Family Young Architect Award. Currently she is Project Architect for a new Noble Charter High School and the Chicago Urban League.

About the Education (including Curriculum Development) and Engagement Programs at Goodman Theatre

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUMMER MUSICAL THEATER INTENSIVE – A new eight-week program that provides pre-professional training for young artists wishing to pursue a musical theater career. Led by a staff of some of Chicago’s leading artists, the program culminates in a showcase of original and classic show tunes.

STUDENT SUBSCRIPTION SERIES – Established in 1986 as one of the first comprehensive arts education theater programs in the country, this unique process-oriented series currently serves 2,700 students and 70 teachers, primarily from Chicago public high schools. Teachers attend professional development workshops to learn how to
use the tools of theater to differentiate instruction, build curriculum that connects the plays on stage with students’ classroom studies and activate student engagement.

CLASSROOM AS COMMUNITY – This professional peer-learning teacher development series teaches artistic practices and habits of mind to enhance teachers’ pedagogy, such as listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly and communicating with clarity and precision.

DRAMATIC INTEGRATION – This interactive, hands-on course explores how educators can use artistic praxis (the what, how and why of what artists do) in the classroom.

PLAYBUILD | YOUTH INTENSIVE – A comprehensive seven-week summer workshop that empowers young people through the act of creating theater. This program currently serves a demographically diverse group of Chicagoland youth between 14 and 18 years old.

CINDY BANDLE YOUNG CRITICS PROGRAM (CBYC) – Named for the Goodman’s late press director, CBYC is designed to increase awareness of arts journalism in collaboration with the Association of Women Journalists. Mentored by professional journalists, 25 to 30 Chicagoland young women learn the art of theater criticism and improve their writing skills by reviewing each Goodman production and interviewing theater artists.

INTERNSHIPS – The Goodman helps train the next generation of arts professionals through internships in all areas of the theater, offered in one of three annual terms.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

STAGE CHEMISTRY - Goodman Theatre’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) standards-based curriculum developed in partnership with Chicago’s GCE Lab School. Stage Chemistry introduces teachers and students to the math, science and technology of theatrical production.

TEACHING AUGUST WILSON - A multi-week blended learning course for teachers to develop the skills and techniques necessary to incorporate the plays of August Wilson into their high school curricula.

INTRO TO THE THEATER – Developed in partnership with Chicago Virtual Charter Academy, “Intro to the Theater” is a blended learning course designed to introduce students to the art, craft and business of theatrical production.

ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

PLAY ‘N 90 - This interactive program encourages children ages eight to 12 and their families to build a show together in just 90 minutes.

GOODMAN YOUTH ARTS COUNCIL - A leadership development program for alumni of Goodman programs to stay involved with the theater by serving as ambassadors in their communities and schools. Council members promote young audience development events and volunteer at Goodman events, such as opening nights and benefits.

POETRY PERFORMANCE TEAM – Young alumni of Goodman programs develop and perform original solo poetry pieces.

GENARRATIONS - This personal narrative performance workshop for adults ages 55+ uses themes connected to Goodman productions to develop personal performance pieces, which participants then present to an audience.

INTERGENS - In this intergenerational summer program, participants in GeNarrations collaborate with youth in the PlayBuild program to create performance works.

CONTEXT: DISCOURSE AND DISCUSSION – A series of community conversations exploring how the themes of Goodman productions intersect with the issues making headlines today.
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About Goodman Theatre

Called America’s “Best Regional Theatre” by Time magazine, Goodman Theatre has won international recognition for 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) and represented today by descendant Albert Ivar Goodman and Suzette “Suki” Dewey, 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’s 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 numerous education and community engagement programs—including the innovative Student Subscription Series, now in its 30th year—serve thousands of students, teachers, life-long learners and special constituencies. In addition, for nearly four decades the annual holiday tradition of A Christmas Carol has led to the creation of a new generation of theatergoers in Chicago.

Goodman Theatre’s leadership includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective: Brian Dennehy, Rebecca Gilman, Henry Godinez, 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, and on Twitter (@GoodmanTheatre), Facebook and Instagram.