GOODMAN THEATRE REVIVES THE MATCHMAKER, THORNTON WILDER’S RARELY SEEN 20TH CENTURY FARCE, THROUGH A 21ST CENTURY LENS, MARCH 5 – APRIL 10 IN THE ALBERT THEATRE

**KRISTINE NIELSEN AND ALLEN GILMORE LEAD A DIVERSE CAST WHO PLAY INSTRUMENTS LIVE ON STAGE IN WILDER’S EXAMINATION OF CLASS THROUGH OUTRAGEOUS COMEDY**

***PHOTOS OF THE ARTISTS IN REHEARSAL ARE NOW AVAILABLE HERE IN THE PRESS ROOM***

(Chicago, IL) Thornton Wilder’s The Matchmaker returns to the city of its birth in a new production at Goodman Theatre directed by Artistic Associate Henry Wishcamper. The uproarious romp, which served as the inspiration for the musical Hello, Dolly!, follows the prickly, wealthy widower, Horace Vandergelder, who recruits the services of matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi to help him find a new wife. Little does Horace know that the vivacious Dolly has already found the perfect mate for Horace: herself! As Horace and Dolly set out from Yonkers to Manhattan to commence the search, a madcap mix of mistaken identity, outrageous misbehavior and spontaneous romance ensues. The Matchmaker appears in the Goodman’s 856-seat Albert Theatre, March 5 – April 10, 2016; opening night is March 14. Tickets ($25-$82; subject to change, as well as $10 student tickets) are on sale now at GoodmanTheatre.org, by phone at 312.443.3800 or at the Box Office (170 N. Dearborn). Rehearsal photos and bio information for the company are now available at GoodmanTheatre.org/PressRoom. Ernst & Young LLP and Interactive Health are the Corporate Sponsor Partners.

“Wilder’s plays defy categorization by genre or type; unlike many of his realism-steeped contemporaries, he not only acknowledges the artificial environs of the stage but celebrates them, using them to reveal the absurdities of human action itself,” explains Goodman Theatre Artistic Director Robert Falls. “Nowhere is this approach more evident than in his 1955 comic masterpiece The Matchmaker. Perhaps eclipsed in popularity by its musical iteration Hello, Dolly! and Wilder’s Our Town, The Matchmaker remains one of his best works, a fizzy, exuberant celebration of human foibles, romantic entanglements and the possibilities of connection in an often disconnected world.”

Director Henry Wishcamper, whose history of reexamining the classics includes Animal Crackers, The Little Foxes and A Christmas Carol, among others, consulted with Tappan Wilder, literary executor and nephew of Thornton Wilder for this production.

“We are pleased to put The Matchmaker in the hands this gifted director and his distinguished cast on a great stage in Chicago—the city my uncle adored and where the idea for his play germinated,” said Tappan Wilder. “Henry’s concept makes The Matchmaker a more universal play—or, in 21st century parlance, a more inclusive play—one that acknowledges our diverse society and captures the spirit of Thornton Wilder’s dramatic vision, his view that art should be comprehensive, broadening and vast, should unite rather than divide.”

Actor Anita Hollander, who lost her leg in 1977 to cancer and whose career includes a one-woman show, Still Standing, joins the cast to portray multiple characters. "People with disabilities comprise nearly 20% of our population and cross all other forms of diversity. I am pleased that the Goodman Theatre includes performers with disabilities on their stages, particularly in The Matchmaker, wherein my three characters vary in age, personality, occupation, skill set and type of disability," said Hollander.

Tony Award nominee Kristine Nielsen and Chicago favorite Allen Gilmore lead the diverse company of acclaimed talents and rising stars, seven of whom also play instruments including accordion, cajon, keyboard, mandolin, sitar, trumpet and even a musical saw live on stage during the show: Theo Allyn (Ermengarde), Behzad Dabu (Barnaby Tucker), Lawrence E. DiStasi (Rudolph/Cabman), Marilyn Dodds Frank (Flora Van Huysen), Sydney Germaine (Minnie Fay), Marc Grapey (Malachi Stack), Anita Hollander (Cook/Gertrude/Ensemble), Ronobir Lahiri (Ambrose Kemper), Elizabeth Ledo (Mrs. Malloy), Postell Pringle (Cornelius Hackl) and Ron E. Rains (Joe Scanlon/August).
In creating the scenic and costume elements, Wishcamper encouraged his creative team to root the production in 1890s New York but also explore Wilder’s affinity for anti-realism. Set Designer Neil Patel’s set uses scenic touches—sparse furniture, curtains, birdcages—to suggest the style and atmosphere of a room, while leaving other artistic elements, like the city skyline, fully visible on stage. “Wilder was working against the naturalistic style of his time,” explained Patel. “Similarly today, we spend a lot of time looking at sets that are supposed to be ‘real’ or whatever that could possibly mean. It is wonderful to have the liberty that this play inspires to use the full imaginative power of the stage.”

Costume Designer Jenny Mannis’ designs span several class strata of 1890s New York, from the rough and tumble to the romantic and elegant. “I love the opportunity to explore the grittiness and exuberance of this time in our history; much like today, it was a period of enormous change in American society,” says Mannis. “We have enjoyed delving into that history and looking at images that represent American diversity in a way that isn’t always shown in textbooks.” The design team also includes David Lander (lights) and Richard Woodbury (sound). Kathleen Petroziello and Alden Patel are the Production Stage Managers.

About Thornton Wilder (1897-1975)

Born in Madison, Wisconsin and educated at Yale and Princeton, Thornton Wilder was an accomplished novelist and playwright whose works explore the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience. The Bridge of San Luis Rey, one of his seven novels, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1928, and his penultimate novel, The Eighth Day, received the National Book Award (1968). Two of his four major plays garnered Pulitzer Prizes: Our Town (1938) and The Skin of Our Teeth (1943). Wilder’s play The Matchmaker ran on Broadway for 486 performances (1955-1957), his Broadway record, and was later adapted into the record-breaking musical Hello, Dolly! Wilder also enjoyed enormous success with many other forms of the written and spoken word, among them translation, acting, opera librettos, lecturing, teaching and film (his screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's 1943 psycho-thriller Shadow of a Doubt remains a classic to this day). Letter-writing held a central place in Wilder's life, and since his death, three volumes of his letters have been published. Wilder's many honors include the Gold Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Book Committee's Medal for Literature. On April 17, 1997, the centenary of his birth, the US Postal Service unveiled the Thornton Wilder 32-cent stamp in Hamden, Connecticut, his official address where he died on December 7, 1975. However, Penelope Niven's biography, Thornton Wilder: A Life, asserts that it was in Chicago in the early 1930s where Wilder truly found himself and his popularity while teaching at University of Chicago. Niven claims “there was probably no city he loved more than he loved Chicago.” Wilder continues to be read and performed around the world. Our Town is performed at least once each day somewhere in this country, with his other major dramas and shorter plays not far behind. In 2008, Our Town and The Bridge of San Luis Rey were selected as a joint choice for the National Endowment for the Arts "Big Read" Program. In recent years, Wilder's works have also inspired a growing number of adaptations, among them an opera based on Our Town (music by Ned Rorem, libretto by J.D. McClatchy) and a dramatized version of his novel Theophilus North (Matt Burnett). Reflecting the renewed interest in Wilder, the Thornton Wilder Society sponsored the first international conference on Wilder in fall 2008.

About Henry Wishcamper

Wishcamper’s Goodman Theatre directing credits include The Little Foxes (Jeff Award nomination), the world premiere of Ask Aunt Susan, his own adaptation of Animal Crackers (Jeff Award nomination), A Christmas Carol (2013, 2014 and 2015 productions), Other Desert Cities and Talking Pictures. Other Chicago directing credits include The Dance of Death (Jeff nomination) at Writers Theatre and The Night Alive at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. His New York directing credits include Spirit Control at Manhattan Theatre Club; Graceland at LCT3; Port Authority at Atlantic Theater Company; Elvis People at New World Stages; The Polish Play at Katharsis Theater Company and Pullman Car Hiawatha at Keen Company (Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play). Regional theater and other directing credits include Animal Crackers at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the American premiere of Conor McPherson’s The Birds at the Guthrie Theater; Engaging Shaw and The Mystery of Irma Vep at The Old Globe and The Seafarer and Speech & Debate at TheatreWorks. He served as the assistant director for the Broadway productions of August: Osage County and Shining City. His adaptation of Animal Crackers has been produced by the Denver Center Theatre Company, Baltimore Center Stage, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Lyric Stage Company. Wishcamper was the Artistic Director of Katharsis Theater Company in New York and the Maine Summer Dramatic Institute (MSDI) in Portland, Maine. At MSDI, he founded Shakespeare in Deering Oaks Park, a free Shakespeare festival in Portland's primary public park featuring students from MSDI's education program. Wishcamper is a Drama League directing fellow and a graduate of Yale University.
Goodman Theatre Announces Casting and Creative Team for *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder
Henry Wishcamper Directs the Rarely-Produced Romantic Farce, starring Kristine Nielsen and Allen Gilmore

TICKETS AND DISCOUNTS

Tickets ($25-82) – GoodmanTheatre.org/Matchmaker; 312.443.3800; Fax: 312.443.3825; TTY/TDD: 312.443.3829

MezzTix – Half-price day-of-performance mezzanine tickets available at 10am online (promo code MEZZTIX)

$10Tix – Student $10 day-of-performance tickets; limit four, with valid student ID (promo code 10TIX)

Group Sales – Discounted tickets for parties of 10+ – 312.443.3820

Gift Certificates – Available in any amount (GoodmanTheatre.org/GiftCertificates)

Box Office Hours – 12noon - 5pm; on performance days, the office remains open until 30 minutes past curtain

EVENTS AND ACCESSIBILITY AT GOODMAN THEATRE

March 9, College Night – 6pm; Pre-show reception and artistic presentation using promo code COLLEGE. Student ID needed.

March 13, Artist Encounter – 5pm; Jeremy McCarter moderates a conversation with Henry Wishcamper and Tappan Wilder.

March 23, Sign Interpreted Performance – 7:30pm; professional ASL interpreter signs the action/text as played.

April 2, Touch Tour Presentation – 12:30pm; a presentation detailing the set, costume and character elements.

April 2, Audio Described Performance – 2pm; the action/text is audibly enhanced for patrons via headset.

April 9, Open Captioned Performance – 2pm; an LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.

Visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Access for more information about Goodman Theatre’s accessibility efforts.

THE MATCHMAKER by THORNTON WILDER
DIRECTED BY HENRY WISHCAMPER

In the Albert
MARCH/APRIL 2016

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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), 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*
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*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](http://GoodmanTheatre.org), and on [Twitter (@GoodmanTheatre)](https://twitter.com/GoodmanTheatre), [Facebook](https://facebook.com) and [Instagram](https://instagram.com).