REBECCA GILMAN'S LATEST PLAY—SOUPS, STEWS, AND CASSEROLES: 1976—MAKES ITS CHICAGO PREMIERE AT GOODMAN THEATRE MAY 21 – JUNE 19, DIRECTED BY ROBERT FALLS, HER LONGTIME COLLABORATOR

***REHEARSAL PHOTOS NOW AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD HERE IN THE PRESS ROOM***

(Chicago, IL) Life was sweet in a small Wisconsin town...then corporate America came to the table. Goodman Theatre concludes its 2015/2016 Owen Theatre series with Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976, by Artistic Associate Rebecca Gilman—a timely and thought-provoking look at workers’ rights and the effects of big business on small town lives. Directed by Artistic Director Robert Falls, Gilman’s 1970s-era work centers on the working class Durst family, and the opportunities and moral dilemmas a buy-out of the Farmstead cheese factory raises. The previously announced cast features Cliff Chamberlain as longtime factory employee Kim Durst; Cora Vander Broek as his wife Kat; Lindsay Stock as their daughter, Kelly and Ty Olwin (Kyle), Angela Reed (Elaine) and Ann Whitney (JoAnne). Please note: the role of “JoAnne” will be portrayed by Meg Thalken on June 3 at 8pm; June 4 at 2pm and 8pm; and June 5 at 2pm and 7:30pm. Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976 appears May 21 – June 19 in the Owen Theatre (opening night is Tuesday, May 31). Tickets ($10 - $40; subject to change) are on sale now at GoodmanTheatre.org/Soups, by phone at 312.443.3800 or at the box office (170 North Dearborn). Mayer Brown LLP is the Corporate Sponsor Partner.

“The past four decades have seen massive changes in American commerce, with the legions of middle class workers who once formed our economic backbone downsized and globalized nearly out of existence. In our current election year, we might find Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976 offers a vital perspective into our vastly transformed landscape of 2016,” said Artistic Director Robert Falls. “As always, I am bowled over by the brevity and craftsmanship of Rebecca’s work; without resorting to flashy overstatement or outsized theatrics, she finds the human truths at the center of social conflict.”

A social awakening is underway for the town of Reynolds, Wisconsin, in the year of the American bicentennial, when the town’s main employer, Farmstead Cheese Factory, is bought out by a Chicago-based food conglomerate. The purchase leaves the Durst family and their friends and neighbors in a cycle of fear and uncertainty for their livelihoods. Although fictitious, the town of Reynolds resembles Green County, which lies in southwest Wisconsin. As in Green County and the world of the play, cheese is not only a delectable food, it represents the foundation of cultural traditions, socializing and finding connections to the residents’ European ancestry.

Gilman found inspiration for her latest work in an unlikely place.

“I was at a garage sale for the volunteer fire department in this little town in Wisconsin, and I found a cookbook called Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976. As I was reading the recipes the women of the town had submitted, I started to think about how communities really come together to help each other out in small towns in ways that remind me of how unions can have a really strong connection to community as well,” said Gilman.

Set Designer Kevin Depinet’s interpretation of a classic 1970s kitchen is the heart and sole set for Falls’ production. The creative team also includes Jenny Mannis (costumes), Richard Woodbury (sound), Jesse Klug (lights) and Kim Osgood is the production stage manager.

The Chicago premiere of Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976 marks the eighth collaboration (five of which were Goodman commissions) between Goodman Theatre and Gilman—“one of Chicago’s hottest playwrights” (Chicago Tribune). Falls’ and Gilman’s last collaboration, Luna Gale, most recently earned the 2016 LA Drama Critics Circle, as well as the 2015 Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award and the 2014 Jeff Award for New Work. Falls first encountered Gilman when he read her 1998 play The Glory of Living (a 2001 Pulitzer Prize finalist that was first produced at Circle Theatre). Soon after, he commissioned Gilman to write a new play for the Goodman; she responded with Spinning Into Butter (premiered in the Goodman Studio in 1999, directed by Les Waters, subsequently produced at Lincoln Center Theater in 2000 and made into a feature film starring Sarah Jessica Parker). The show’s run was extended three times and led to Gilman’s next Goodman commission, Boy Gets Girl (premiered at the Goodman in 2000, directed by the late Michael Maggio), which transferred to New York’s Manhattan Theatre Club and was named by Time magazine as one of the “best
Performs of Rebecca Gilman’s Soups, Stews and Casseroles: 1976, directed by Artistic Director Robert Falls, begin May 21

theater productions of the decade.” Falls later directed both Blue Surge (2001) and Dollhouse (2005)—a modern interpretation of Ibsen’s A Doll’s House. The Crowd You’re In With, directed by Wendy C. Goldberg, made its Chicago debut in 2009 at the Goodman, followed by A True History of the Johnstown Flood, a Goodman commission that had its world premiere at the Goodman in 2010 under Falls’ direction.

Rebecca Gilman’s plays include Luna Gale, A True History of the Johnstown Flood, Dollhouse, Boy Gets Girl, Spinning Into Butter, Blue Surge (all of which were commissioned and originally produced by the Goodman), The Glory of Living, The Sweetest Swing in Baseball, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter and The Crowd You’re in With. Gilman is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Critics Association New Play Award, The Harper Lee Award, The Scott McPherson Award, The Prince Prize for Commissioning New Work, The Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, The Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, The George Devine Award, The Theatre Masters Visionary Award, The Great Plains Playwright Award, The Roe Green Award, and an Illinois Arts Council playwriting fellowship. Boy Gets Girl received an Olivier nomination for Best New Play, and she was named a finalist for the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for The Glory of Living. She is a member of the Council of the Dramatists Guild of America and a board member of the ACLU of Illinois. She received her MFA in playwriting from the University of Iowa. Gilman is a professor of playwriting and screenwriting at Northwestern University as part of its MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage program. She is the recipient of a Global Connections Grant by Theatre Communications Group and an American Scandinavian Foundation Creative Writing Grant for the development of a new play in conjunction with Göteborgs Dramatiska Teater in Gothenburg, Sweden: Rödvinsvänster (Red-Wine Leftists): 1977.

Robert Falls, a recent inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame, most recently co-adapted/directed the world premiere of his critically acclaimed production of 2666, based on Roberto Bolaño’s internationally celebrated novel. Last season, he reprised his critically acclaimed production of The Iceman Cometh at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, directed Rebecca Gilman’s Luna Gale at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Los Angeles and directed a new production of Mozart’s Don Giovanni for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Other recent productions include Measure for Measure and the world premiere 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 (his last play), 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 production 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,” Mr. Falls has also 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) and the Illinois Arts Council Governor’s Award
**Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976**

**By Rebecca Gilman**

**Directed by Robert Falls**

**In the Owen**

**May/June 2016**

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Visit GoodmanTheatre.org/312.443.3800

**Events & Accessibility at Goodman Theatre**

- **May 26, Soups, Stews, and Conversation** – 6pm; pre-show mix-n-mingle with artists from the show, followed by 7:30pm performance; Enter promo code SOUPS when purchasing at GoodmanTheatre.org/conversation
- **June 5, Artist Encounter** – 5pm; an in-depth conversation with Playwright Rebecca Gilman & Director Robert Falls, moderator TBD
- **June 8, American Sign Language Interpreted Performance** – 7:30pm; Enter the promo code SIGN when purchasing
- **June 12, Touch Tour Presentation** – 12:30pm; a presentation detailing the set, costume and character elements;
- **Audio Described Performance** – 2pm; the action/text is audibly enhanced for patrons via headset, enter promo code AUDIO when purchasing
- **June 19, Open Captioned Performance** – 2pm; an LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance; Enter the promo code OPEN when purchasing

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

**Tickets & Discounts**

- Tickets ($10-$40) – GoodmanTheatre.org/Soups; 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 advance 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

**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
Performances for Rebecca Gilman’s *Soups, Stews and Casseroles: 1976*, directed by Artistic Director Robert Falls, begin May 21.

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 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)](http://Twitter (@GoodmanTheatre)), [Facebook](http://Facebook) and [Instagram](http://Instagram).

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