

School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play

By **Jocelyn Bioh**
Directed by **Lili-Anne Brown**



Contents

Page 1 – A Note from Artistic Director Robert Falls

Page 3 – Back to School

Page 6 – Skin Deep

Page 9 – School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play

Page 13 – Artist Profiles

Page 24 – About Goodman Theatre

welcome

Welcome back to the Goodman!

On March 7, 2020, *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* had its first preview performance at the Goodman.

Playwright Jocelyn Bioh’s incisive comedy had been brought to life by director Lili-Anne Brown, and a skilled cast and creative team. The play delivers big-hearted humor based on the familiar trope of the “mean girl”: in this case, a Ghanaian high school senior in 1986. But this girl, queen bee of her small boarding school, doesn’t realize that larger societal forces—racism, colorism and bigotry—can upend her ambitions as quickly as she squelches those of her classmates. Jocelyn skillfully weaves a story that stylistically nods to the 2004 hit film *Mean Girls*, but defies its aesthetic origins to pack a thematic punch.

The play enjoyed five successful preview performances before the Goodman closed its doors. We didn’t know then that it would be 506 days before *School Girls* would take the stage again, but we always knew that this play—in which comedy is infused with serious, relevant themes—would be the first we would produce upon our return. I warmly welcome back Jocelyn, a Ghanaian-American playwright who won a Lucille Lortel Award, a John Gassner Award and a Drama Desk nomination when *School Girls* premiered Off-Broadway at MCC Theater in 2017, and Lili-Anne, an accomplished Chicago

director who previously directed *Lottery Day* and, most recently, *I Hate It Here* at the Goodman.

School Girls now plays to a different audience: one that has endured loss and grief, altered their patterns of work and play, and lived through, and perhaps participated in, the nation's biggest racial reckoning in more than half a century. When I watch *School Girls* now, I see its themes of colorism and bigotry in sharper focus; I also more deeply appreciate the play's humor and our ability to laugh together in a shared space. I hope that, no matter what tribulations you have withstood in the past year and a half, you find hope in this wise, ebullient play.

Robert Falls,

Artistic Director of Goodman Theatre

Back to School

Edited by Jaclyn Jermyn

In March of 2020, *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* was halted just days before its opening. Now Director Lili-Anne Brown shares how it feels returning to the theater and how refreshed perspective is bringing a new depth to this deeply funny work.

How does it feel to be directing for in-person audiences again?

It feels good, but it has also been difficult. As the director and the caretaker of others, I've had to take on not just my feelings of how it feels to return, but a whole group of people that I brought into this. Everyone is holding a lot, everything that they've been through for the past year and a half, everything that they're going through now. These are young women who are in their early career prime time and they are making the best of it and finding their way and having these massive journeys. I want that to be protected and cherished and be able to help them get back into this because we were really living the dream right before this show shuttered last spring.

Right before, we were like this is the dream, we did it. Look at this! When have you seen an all Black lady room? None of us ever had. Not just the actors, but the director, the assistant director, the playwright, the dramaturg, the dance consultant, the dialect coach...Black women! So that room was a dream come true and the culmination of twenty years of work, of my life. To

have that come to a grinding halt was really devastating and those feelings don't just go away. A lot of people will say it's just like getting back on a horse! It's not! It's scary.

It's not going to be the same obviously, but I want the company to feel triumphant. My job now is to support—what do you need, what can I do? How do we focus on the love?

What thrills you about this story?

School Girls is about a group of girls at an exclusive Ghanaian boarding school in the late '80s and what happens when a new girl enters into their clique. What thrills me about this story is the immense amount of Black girl joy. It's my favorite kind of play, which is a one-two punch. I love to laugh, but then here's this very pointed thing we're going to wrap in these gold-foil laughs. I think that's what we go to the theater for.

It's set in a time and place that you just wouldn't think of, but it's actually inspired by playwright Jocelyn Bioh's mom, as well as from real-life events that happened in the greater pageant world. When we think of pageants, we tend to think of America and I love that this play does not take place here, because you really get to see something from the other side of the world in a place that is normally portrayed as a place of great want. When in fact, this is the world I remember from visiting Ghana and I'm so happy to be putting that on stage. When I first read this play, I just died laughing. I just could not believe how funny it was and where it went and how it ended. It leaves you really caring about these characters.

Is there anything you've learned in the past year and a half that you're looking to incorporate into this production?

The experience of the past year and a half is absolutely going into this production. I think there's going to be a depth that may not have been there before. It was already good and I think we have the opportunity to be better. In many ways, it's like getting a do-over even though for the actors it feels like 'what if I lost what I had before?' They have held on to this dream. It was really an act of faith and I think holding on to that faith as an actor is a lot harder.

When we did a zoom reading, there was so much there. All of the humor—we were all laughing and saying 'oh I forgot how funny this was.' Long, loud laughter with a lot of people. When was the last time you did that? Having that feeling again was a spark. It was electric.

There's just a little more perspective. It's one of the most valuable things you can have if you're a creator and you can't get perspective unless you're a distance away from something. So we've gotten some distance from our production and can now look at it and approach it again. That's invaluable and we wouldn't have had that otherwise.

You go through a really dark tunnel of a year and have this play on the other side. Thank goodness.

Jaclyn Jermyn is the Publicity Coordinator at Goodman Theatre.

Skin Deep

A Brief History of Race and the Beauty Pageant

By Neena Arndt

In *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*, the teenage characters pine to win the Miss Global Universe Pageant, 1986. In the midst of their youth and enthusiasm, these Ghanaian young women aren't yet aware that they are entering into a system rigged against them. The beauty pageant, as we know it, was born out of the idea that being beautiful required white skin.

The first Miss America contest—billed as a “bathing beauty” competition—was held on the beaches of Atlantic City in September 1921. Though 19th century festivals, including May Day and Mardi Gras celebrations, had often featured the crowning of a “queen,” the standalone beauty pageant emerged as American women gained more access to the public sphere, including the right to vote, and the Victorian constraints around decorum and sexuality began to relax – but whether the pageant embraced that newfound independence or aimed to preserve Victorian ideals of femininity is up for debate. What is certain is that the pageant’s organizers aimed to celebrate and idealize only white women. All eight of the bathing beauties who graced the beach in 1921 were white; 16-year-old Margaret Gorman won the competition and was praised for her sweetness, short stature and flowing tresses. Two years later, in 1923, African-American women made their first appearance in the event—but not as competitors. Instead, they played enslaved people in a musical number. For nearly half a century, the pageant’s bylaws

restricted participation to “members of the white race” and until the 1940s, entrants were required to catalogue their genealogy. As the century progressed and beauty pageants gained popularity worldwide, women of color found success in pageants outside of America—though international pageants still favored women with light skin. It was not until after the Civil Rights Movement that a Black woman competed in the Miss America Pageant and not until 1983 that a Black woman won. That woman, Vanessa Williams (who would eventually be stripped of her title after *Penthouse* published nude photos of her without her permission) later spoke of the many reactions to her victory. “There were a lot of people,” she noted in 2010, “that did not want me to be representative of the United States and Miss America.” In 1989, six years after Williams’ win, Black journalist Monte R. Young wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* about his complex interpretations of watching a mixed-race woman represent Black Americans. “It had to do with her cat-green eyes, and the golden brown shoulder-length hair flowing in waves over her light mocha skin,” he writes. “It had to do with the way she looked. With the white man’s stereotype of Black beauty.” He goes on to note that when Williams nailed the talent portion of the competition, it was with her rendition of “Happy Days Are Here Again,” in which she “sounded more like Barbara Streisand than Aretha Franklin.” Even when a Black woman won, Young implies, she did so because of her proximity to whiteness.

Although many Black women have been crowned beauty queens since the 1980s—in 2019 the winners of Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Teen USA and Miss Universe were all Black—the

question remains whether pageants celebrate Black beauty and culture, or merely reward women who fit into their narrowly prescribed notions of attractiveness and talent.

The young characters in *School Girls*, coming of age in Ghana in the 1980s, long to grow into their power and beauty. But who has the power to define beauty?

Neena Arndt is the Resident Dramaturg at Goodman Theatre.

Goodman Theatre

Robert Falls, Artistic Director
Roche Schulfer, Executive Director

Presents

SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY

By
Jocelyn Bioh

Directed by
Lili-Anne Brown

Set Design by
Yu Shibagaki

Costume Design by
Samantha C. Jones

Lighting Design by
Jason Lynch

Sound Design by
Justin Ellington

Casting by
Lauren Port, CSA

Dramaturgy by
Fatima Sowe

Production Stage Manager
Alden Vasquez*

Stage Manager
Caitlin Body*

World Premiere at the MCC Theater, October 16, 2017 (Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey & William Cantler, Artistic Directors; Blake West, Executive Director)

Originally developed as part of The New Black Fest at The Lark, 2016

Additional development as part of the MCC Theater PlayLabs series, 2016

“The Greatest Love Of All” By Linda Creed and Michael Masser

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School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play Cast

Gifty.....Adia Alli*
Ericka Boafo.....Kyrie Courter*
Nana.....Ashley Crowe*
Paulina Sarpong.....Ciera Dawn*
Mercy.....Tiffany Renee Johnson*
Ama.....Adhana Reid
Headmistress Francis.....Tania Richard*
Eloise Amponsah.....Lanise Antoine Shelley*
Casting Associate.....Rachael Jimenez, CSA
Assistant Director.....Am’Ber Montgomery
Voice and Dialect Coach.....Phyllis Griffin
Dance Consultant.....Cheretta Hill
Dance Captain.....Tiffany Renee Johnson*

SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is made at the beginning of the play.

Rory Furey-King–*Ericka Boafo*; Maya Vinice Prentiss–*Mercy/Gifty/Nana*; Eben K. Logan*–*Paulina Sarpong/Ama*; Shariba Rivers–*Headmistress Francis/Eloise Amponsah*

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Goodman productions are made possible in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Goodman Theatre is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization of nonprofit theaters; the League of Resident Theatres; the Illinois Arts Alliance and the American Arts Alliance; the League of Chicago Theatres; and the Illinois Theatre Association.

Goodman Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States; the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union; the United Scenic Artists of America, Local 829, AFL-CIO and the Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local No. 10-208, American Federation of Musicians. House crew and scene shop employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local No. 2.

*Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

profiles

ADIA ALLI *(*Gifty*) returns to the Goodman where previous credits include *The Wolves* (Assistant Director). Chicago credits include: *The Niceties* (Writers Theatre); *United Flight 232* (The House Theatre of Chicago); *Cardboard Piano* (TimeLine Theatre); *The Escape* (Art Institute of Chicago); *No Child...* (Definition Theatre); *Curves and Edges* (Interrobang Theatre Project); *The Doppelgänger* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Insurrection: Holding History* (Stage Left Theatre); *Sweet* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre); *First* (For Youth Inquiry).
TV/Film: *Seeds!* A Nigerian-born, Michigan-raised artist, Adia holds a BA in theatre, a specialization in African American and African studies and a minor in economics from Michigan State University. She is represented by Gray Talent Group.

KYRIE COURTER* (*Ericka Boafo*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. She is a performer, producer and content creator based in New York. Chicago credits include *Next to Normal* (Writers Theatre, Jeff Award nomination for Performer in a Supporting Role); *Marie Christine* (BoHo Theatre, Jeff Award nomination for Performer in a Principal Role); *Legally Blonde* (Paramount Theatre); *Seussical* and *The Color Purple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Company* (Venus Cabaret Theater); *BLKS* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Thaddeus and Slocum* (Lookingglass Theatre); *Dreamgirls*, *Applause* and *Babes in Arms* (Porchlight Music Theatre). @kyriecourter | YouTube: Kyrie's Karaoke

ASHLEY CROWE* (*Nana*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include *Sugar in Our Wounds* (First Floor Theater); *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow Theatre Company, Jeff nominated); *The Veil* (Idle Muse Theatre Company); *Speed of Light* (Otherworld Theatre Company); *fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life* (Loyola University Chicago). Television credits include *Chicago PD*.

CIERA DAWN* (*Paulina Sarpong*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include *We Are Proud To Present...* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *The Mutilated* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *Next To Normal* (BoHo Theatre); *A Man Of No Importance* (Pride Films and Plays); *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *The Little Mermaid* (Paramount Theatre); *Madagascar* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre) and *Other Than Honorable* (American Blues Theatre). Film and TV credits include *Chicago Fire* (NBC) and *Pitch Perfect* (Universal Pictures). She attended Emerson College for Theatre Performance and The School at Steppenwolf. She is managed by Stephanie Nese at Velocity Entertainment Partners and her theatrical agent is Nora Manz at Shirley Hamilton Talent. @thisiscieradawn

TIFFANY RENEE JOHNSON* (*Mercy*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include: *A Doll's House*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Writers Theatre); *Flyin' West* (American Blues Theater); *Red Velvet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Saint Joan* (Poetic Forum Collective); *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *VANYA (or, "That's Life!")* (Rasaka Theatre Company); *Hairspray* (Drury Lane Theatre); *The Nativity* (Congo Square Theatre). Regional: *Race* (Next Act Theatre). Television: *Shameless*, *Soundtrack*, *Chicago*

Med, Chicago P.D., Chicago Fire, APB and Embeds. A Chicago native and Howard University alumna, Tiffany is represented by Gray Talent Group. TiffanyReneeJohnson.com | @TiffanyReneeJ_

ADHANA REID (*Ama*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Other Chicago credits include *The MLK Project* (Writers Theatre); *Sheepdog* (Shattered Globe Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* and *The Color Purple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Mercury Theater); *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Emerald City Theatre); *Eclipsed* (Pegasus Theatre); *Big River* (Theatre at the Center); and *Spring Awakening* (Marriott Theatre). @uhh_dah_nuh | adhanareid.com

TANIA RICHARD* (*Headmistress Francis*) returns to the Goodman, where previous credits include *A Christmas Carol* and *By the Music of the Spheres*. Chicago: *This* (Windy City Playhouse); *Everyman, Nomathemba* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Court Theatre); *Old Wine in New Bottles, Slaughterhouse 5, Cattle 0, Brother, Can You Spare Some Change?* and *Studs Terkel Is Not Working* (The Second City); *Truth Be Told* (Fleetwood-Jourdain); *Voyeurs de Venus* (Chicago Dramatists); *The People's Temple* (American Theater Company). Broadway: *The Song of Jacob Zulu*. Regional: *Blues for an Alabama Sky, Valley Song* (Portland Center Stage); *Nomathemba* (The Kennedy Center). Film/TV: *Work in Progress, NeXt, Chicago Fire, Chicago PD, Chicago Justice, Empire, The Chi* and *Proven Innocent*.

LANISE ANTOINE SHELLEY* (*Eloise Amponsah*) returns to the Goodman, where previous credits include *An Enemy of the People* and *Stop.Reset*. Chicago acting credits include work with Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Victory Gardens Theater and Backroom Shakespeare. Regional credits include *Glass Menagerie*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *King Lear*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Sueño, ...Young Lady From Rwanda* and *The Crucible* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre) and work with American Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theater, Book-It Repertory Theater, Seattle Repertory Theater, Outside the Wire, Shakespeare Santa Cruz and Kansas City Rep. International credits include *Macbeth*, *All My Sons* and *Aeneid* (Stratford Festival) and *Nutcracker Turbo* (Moscow Art Theatre). TV and Film credits include *Empire*, *Fresh Hell*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *The Inner Room*, *Discovery World* and *Macbeth HD*. She is the Drama League Classical Directing Fellow 2021, Victory Gardens Theater Director's Inclusion Fellow 2019, Stratford Shakespeare Festival's 2016 Chicago Fellow and she received her MFA from ART/MXAT at Harvard University. She is the Artistic Director of The House Theatre of Chicago.

JOCELYN BIOH (*Playwright*) is a Ghanaian-American writer and performer from New York City. Bioh's plays include *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (2016 Kilroys List, MCC Theater, Center Theatre Group); *The Ladykiller's Love Story*, *Happiness and Joe*, *Nollywood Dreams* (2015 Kilroys List, Cherry Lane Mentor Project) and *African Americans* (2011 Southern Rep Ruby Prize finalist, 2012 O'Neill Center semi-finalist, Howard University). Bioh's acting credits include work on Broadway as well as productions with Soho Rep, The Public

Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Classical Theater of Harlem, Wilma Theater and Signature Theater. Television writing credits include *She's Gotta Have It* and *Russian Doll*.

LILI-ANNE BROWN* (*Director*) is a native Chicagoan who works as a director, actor and educator. She has performed in, directed and produced many award-winning shows, both local and regional. Goodman credits include *I Hate It Here* and the world premiere of Ike Holter's *Lottery Day*. She is the former Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago, where she focused programming on Chicago-premiere musicals and new play development with resident playwrights. She is a member of SDC, AEA, SAG-AFTRA and is represented by William Morris Endeavor. lilbrowchicago.com

YU SHIBAGAKI (*Scenic Designer*) is a Chicago- and NYC-based set designer, born and raised in Japan. Chicago credits include work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Lookingglass Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Sideshow Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Writers Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Remy Bumppo Theatre and more. Regional credits include work with Merrimack Repertory Theater, City Theatre Company, Heritage Theater Festival, American Players Theatre and First Stage Theatre. Yushibagaki.com

SAMANTHA C. JONES (*Costume Designer*) returns to Goodman Theatre where previous credits include *Lottery Day*. Chicago credits include work with Court Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Writers Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago Children's Theatre, American Blues

Theater, TimeLine Theatre Company, Porchlight Music Theatre, Jackalope Theatre and others. Regional credits include work with Kansas City Rep, The Alley, Seattle Children's Theatre, First Stage Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Peninsula Players Theatre and others. Upcoming productions include *King James* (Steppenwolf Theatre) and *Black Odyssey* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival).

SamanthaCJones.com

JASON LYNCH (*Lighting Designer*) returns to the Goodman, where recent credits include *I Hate It Here*, *Ohio State Murders*, *The Sound Inside*, *Lottery Day*, *How To Catch Creation* and *An Enemy of the People*. Additional Chicago credits include work with Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Steppenwolf Theatre. Regional credits include work with Alley Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He was the recipient of the 2019 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, which recognizes emerging theatrical designers within the Chicago area. Jason is a proud member of The Association of Lighting Designers and is represented by The Gersh Agency. jasondlynch.com

JUSTIN ELLINGTON (*Sound Designer*) returns to Goodman Theatre where he previously served as composer and sound designer for *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* and *Until The Flood*. Justin also provided original music for *How to Catch Creation*. Additional Chicago credits: *Familiar* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). Broadway credits: *Other Desert Cities*. Off-Broadway credits: *Heroes of the Fourth*

Turning (Playwrights Horizons); *The House That Will Not Stand*; *Fetch Clay Make Man* (New York Theatre Workshop); *The Rolling Stone*, *Pipeline*, *Pass Over*, *Other Desert Cities* (Lincoln Center); *He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box*, *The Winter's Tale* (Theater for a New Audience).

FATIMA SOWE (*Dramaturg*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Past dramaturgy work includes *Caroline, or Change* (Firebrand Theatre in partnership with TimeLine Theatre); *Paradise Blue* (TimeLine Theatre) and *Scottsboro Boys* (Porchlight Music Theatre). Additional credits include Choreographer & Movement Director for *Once* (Hangar Theatre); Movement Choreographer for *Cardboard Piano* (TimeLine Theatre); Assistant Director for *Rutherford and Son* (TimeLine Theatre); Assistant Director for *True West* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* (Steppenwolf Theatre).

ALDEN VASQUEZ* (*Production Stage Manager*) has been a Stage Manager for the Goodman for over 30 years, including 30 productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include 14 productions at Steppenwolf Theatre, including the Broadway productions of *The Song of Jacob Zulu* (also in Perth, Australia) and *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*. Regional theater credits include productions at American Theater Company, American Stage Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, Ford's Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Northlight Theatre, Peninsula Players Theatre, A Red Orchid Theater, Remains Theatre, Royal George Theatre, Teatro Vista, Trinity Repertory Company and the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company. He teaches stage

management at DePaul University, is a 37-year member of Actors' Equity Association and the recipient of the Del Hughes Lifetime Achievement Award from the Stage Manager's Association. He is a U.S. Air Force veteran.

CAITLIN BODY* (*Stage Manager*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Previous stage manager credits include *MLK Project* (Writers Theatre); *La Havana Madrid* (Teatro Vista); *What We're Up Against* (Compass Theatre); *The Comedy of Errors and Andares* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Forgotten Future, Gender Breakdown, Connected, Encounter, Blue Island and Peacebook* (Collaboraction Theatre); *For Her as a Piano* (Pegasus Theatre); *Wild Duck* (Halcyon Theatre); *Julia De Burgos: Child of Water* (Urban Theater Company); and *Pen the Musical* (Chicago Musical Theatre Festival). She is a founding member of Stage Managers of Color–Chicago.

ROBERT FALLS (*Goodman Theatre Artistic Director*) recent Goodman credits include *The Sound Inside, The Winter's Tale, We're Only Alive for A Short Amount of Time, Pamplona, An Enemy of the People, 2666* and *The Iceman Cometh*. Falls' Broadway productions include *Death of a Salesman, Long Day's Journey into Night, Talk Radio, Shining City* and *The Young Man from Atlanta*. His Broadway production of Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* continues to be produced around the world. Previous Goodman productions include, most notably, *The Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Measure for Measure, King Lear, Desire Under the Elms, Finishing the Picture, The Misanthrope, Pal Joey, Galileo, House and Garden, Blue Surge, Dollhouse*

and *Luna Gale*. Falls' honors for directing include 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. For "outstanding contributions to theater," he 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) and the Illinois Arts Council Governor's Award. Falls was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2015.

ROCHE EDWARD SCHULFER (*Goodman Theatre Executive Director*) started working in the Goodman Theatre box office and became executive director in 1980. Since that time he has overseen more than 350 productions including more than 150 premieres. He initiated the Goodman's annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, which celebrated 42 years as Chicago's leading holiday arts tradition in 2019. In partnership with Artistic Director Robert Falls, Mr. Schulfer led the establishment of quality, diversity and community engagement as the core values of Goodman Theatre. During their tenure, the Goodman has received numerous awards for excellence, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater, recognition by Time magazine as the "Best Regional Theatre" in the U.S., the Pulitzer Prize for Lynn Nottage's *Ruined* and many Jeff Awards for outstanding achievement in Chicago area theater. Schulfer has negotiated the presentation of numerous Goodman Theatre productions to national and international venues. He coordinated the 12-year process to relocate the

Goodman to the Theatre District in 2000. To mark his 40th anniversary with the Goodman, his name was added to the theater's "Walk of Stars." Schulfer was a founder and twice chair of the League of Chicago Theatres, the trade association of more than 200 Chicago area theaters and producers. He has been privileged to serve in leadership roles with Arts Alliance Illinois (the statewide advocacy coalition); Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for more than 500 not-for-profit theaters); the Performing Arts Alliance (the national advocacy consortium of more than 18,000 organizations and individuals); the League of Resident Theatres (the management association of over 70 leading U.S. theater companies); Lifeline Theatre; the Arts & Business Council and Theater Wit. Mr. Schulfer is honored to have been recognized with the League of Chicago Theater's Lifetime Achievement Award; Theatre Communication Group's Visionary Leadership Award; Actors' Equity Association for promoting diversity and equal opportunity in Chicago theater; the American Arts Alliance and Arts Alliance Illinois for arts advocacy; the Arts & Business Council for distinguished contributions to Chicago's artistic vitality; Chicago magazine and the Chicago Tribune as a "Chicagoan of the Year"; the City of Chicago; the Chicago Loop Alliance's "Illumination Award," honoring his commitment to Chicago's theater district; Columbia College Chicago for entrepreneurial leadership; the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee for his partnership with Robert Falls; Lawyers for the Creative Arts; Lifeline Theatre's Raymond R. Snyder Award for Commitment to the Arts; Season of Concern for support of

direct care for those living with HIV/AIDS and Vision 2020 for promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace. He taught at the theater school at DePaul University, lectured annually on strategic planning in the arts at Southern Methodist University and frequently consults with local and national theater companies. Schulfer received a degree in economics from the University of Notre Dame where he served as cultural art commissioner and currently conducts an annual seminar on theater management. He received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from North Central College in 2009. His celebrated presentation on the economics of the performing arts and business models in the theater industry, **WHY NOT FOR PROFIT THEATER**, has been seen by numerous theater companies and at national conferences over the past two years. Mr. Schulfer was born in Chicago and is a lifelong resident of the area.

about us

AMERICA’S “BEST REGIONAL THEATRE” (*Time* magazine), Goodman Theatre is a premier not-for-profit organization distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and civic engagement. Led by Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer, the theater’s artistic priorities include new play development (more than 150 world or American premieres in the past three decades), large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics (celebrated revivals include Falls’ productions of *Death of a Salesman* and *The Iceman Cometh*). Goodman Theatre artists and productions have earned two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards, over 160 Jeff Awards and many more accolades. In addition, the Goodman is the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle;” and its annual holiday tradition *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers. The Goodman also frequently serves as a production partner with local off-Loop theaters and national and international companies by providing financial support or physical space for a variety of artistic endeavors.

Committed to three core values of Quality, Diversity and Community, the Goodman proactively makes inclusion the fabric of the institution and develops education and community engagement programs that support arts *as* education. This practice uses the process of artistic creation to inspire youth,

lifelong learners and audiences to find and/or enhance their voices, stories and abilities. The Goodman's Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement is the home of such programming, most offered free of charge, and has vastly expanded the theater's ability to touch the lives of Chicagoland citizens (with 85% of youth participants coming from underserved communities) since its 2016 opening.

Goodman Theatre was founded 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. The Goodman family's legacy lives on through the continued work and dedication of Kenneth's family, including Albert Ivar Goodman, who with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the necessary funds for the creation of the new Goodman center in 2000.

Today, Goodman Theatre leadership also includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective: Rebecca Gilman, Dael Orlandersmith, Henry Godinez, Steve Scott, Kimberly Senior, Chuck Smith, Regina Taylor, Henry Wishcamper and Mary Zimmerman. Jeff Hesse is Chairman of Goodman Theatre's Board of Trustees, Fran Del Boca is Women's Board President and Megan McCarthy Hayes is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.