OnStage

**The Matchmaker**

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 **Lies, Truth and Theatricality: Thornton Wilder’s Vision**By Neena Arndt

Nearly every day of the year, somewhere in America, an actor strides on stage and declares, “This play is called *Our Town*…The name of the town is Grover’s Corners, New Hampshire.” Since these opening lines were first delivered in 1938, *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder’s first major hit, has woven its way into the fabric of American culture. *Our Town* is now a frequent presence in our towns and cities, with productions staged in professional theaters, community centers and high schools. The theatrical conventions employed in the play—an actor functioning as a “stage manager” who narrates the action, as well as a lack of sets, props and costumes—have influenced countless plays and films.

At first glance, this better-known play of Wilder’s bears little resemblance to *The Matchmaker*, his farce that follows several hapless New Yorkers as they search for adventure and dare to fall in love. But both plays adhere to Wilder’s firm belief in anti-realism, and both use theatrical conventions to show audiences a world that reflects, but is not quite identical to, our own. Although Wilder was a stylistic chameleon, he held specific ideas about playwriting that were frequently at odds with those of the accepted “masters” of his era: Eugene O’Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.

Though he had penned skits and plays since childhood and became a world-famous writer in his early 30s, Wilder had no theatrical successes until 1938, when at age 41, he catapulted into theater history with *Our Town*, which won him his second Pulitzer Prize (The first was for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*). In his stage directions, Wilder insists on “no curtain” and “no scenery,” and indicates that actors should pantomime rather than use physical props. The play is narrated by the Stage Manager, a seemingly omniscient presence who provides context for the action of the play. In the first act, the people of Grover’s Corners, a small fictional town, go about a typical day in 1901. In the second act, two teenage characters, George and Emily, fall in love. Finally, in the third act, years have passed and Emily has died during childbirth. Wrenched suddenly from her loved ones, she appears as a ghost and watches her own funeral, wondering if any of the living truly appreciate life while they experience it. *Our Town* treats the quotidian as if it were extraordinary, shining a light on unremarkable lives in an unexceptional small town. The play, with its lack of sets, encourages the audience to see the characters not only as people of a specific time and place, but also, as universal everymen and everywomen. “The theater longs to represent the symbols of things, not the things themselves,” Wilder wrote in a preface to the play. “All the lies it tells—the lie that that young lady is Caesar’s wife; the lie that people can go through life talking in blank verse; the lie that that man just killed that man—all those lies enhance the one truth that is there—the truth that dictated the story, the myth.”

This disregard for realism allowed Wilder to write works in multiple genres and experiment with form, structure and staging. He continued his exploration in 1942 with *The Skin of Our Teeth* (for which he received his third Pulitzer Prize) and in 1955 with *The Matchmaker*, a play he had first drafted in the 1930s with the title *The Merchant of Yonkers*. Set at the turn of the 20th century and based loosely on John Oxenford’s 1835 comedy *A Day Well Spent*, Wilder’s play features slapstick comedy, witty repartee, mistaken identity and drag as it traces the misadventures of Horace Vandergeldger, a wealthy business owner; his matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi; his clerk Cornelius Hackl and apprentice Barnaby Tucker. Unfulfilled by their dull, constricted lives, the characters travel from Yonkers to New York City to find adventure. Rather than creating fully fleshed-out characters, as Eugene O’Neill might have done, Wilder wrote zany, exaggerated characters that represent various extremes: Horace is deeply stingy, for example, and Cornelius has spent so much of his life cooped up in Horace’s shop that, at 33, he has never dated or kissed a woman. Much of the play’s action relies heavily on unrealistic coincidences, and rarely do more than three or four lines pass without a punchline. Frequently, characters step outside the play to directly address the audience, even revealing, in the end, the moral of the story. As in *Our Town*, these theatrical conventions are used not out of lack of skill, but out of clear intention to create a theatrical experience that distances audiences enough from the play that theatergoers can apply their own thoughts, feelings and vision to the work. Just as in *Our Town*, Wilder presents situations that are specific in their time and place, yet general enough to be applied to any era or location.

In comparison to *Our Town*, *The Matchmaker* is produced rarely. But its characters tread the boards regularly in *Hello, Dolly!*, a musical based on the play that, since it premiered in 1964, has enjoyed a vaunted reputation as one of the greatest American musicals. Its royalties allowed Wilder to retire comfortably and live with his sister in Connecticut until his death in 1975. This versatile dramatist, who found wisdom in humor and humor in wisdom, reminded his contemporaries—and audiences today—that theater’s greatest asset is itself: its own theatricality.

For a timeline of Thornton Wilder’s life and much more visit OnStage.GoodmanTheatre.org

 **A Costume Designer’s Perspective**

By Michael Mellini

For *The Matchmaker*, costume designer Jenny Mannis performed significant research on the fashion styles of Yonkers and New York City leading up to the turn of the 20th century, the time period when the play is set. Mannis also found inspiration from the many stage and screen adaptations *The Matchmaker* has taken over the years. “When an iconic film of the work has been made you must decide if you’re going to let that into your mind or pretend like you don’t know it exists,” Mannis said, referencing the play’s musical adaptation *Hello, Dolly!* “I usually embrace it; I’m a big fan of the [Hollywood] golden era of musicals and movies.”

**A Brief History of Courtship and Matchmaking in America**

By Lori Polemenakos

Since Shakespeare’s time, farcical romances featuring classic tropes like mistaken identity, love at first sight and couples breaking through society’s class barriers have long been a favorite staple of theater-goers. And for good reason—for centuries, strategically planned marriages allowed the wealthy and elite to retain their social standing, property and family businesses for generations. Marrying for love was pure fantasy and relegated to works of popular fiction.

Set in Yonkers, New York, just before the turn of the 20th century, Thornton Wilder’s *The Matchmaker* addresses a pivotal time in courtship’s history: “dating” as we currently know it didn’t yet exist, and America’s constantly shifting class mobility made traditional courtship difficult. So why would a successful, widowed bachelor like the play’s protagonist, Horace Vandergelder, seek a matchmaker to find him a new bride? Looking back at the evolution of courting customs in America over the last two centuries sheds light on the factors that would have influenced Vandergelder’s search.

**Courtship in the Victorian Age: Calling Cards, Visits and Chaperones (1837-1901)**
Respectable behavior and strict courtship rituals were the hallmarks of Victorian romance. Men were expected to marry within the same class to preserve their family’s social standing; courting a woman from a family “above” or “below” his own class standing was frowned upon. Gentlemen were to first ascertain a lady’s interest publicly (via a marriage broker or group social gathering), ask her parents for permission to “call” on her at a particular time and then enjoy a series of formal, chaperoned visits lasting no more than 15 minutes. (Should the lady in question be indisposed, personalized “calling cards” were left as a sign of intent.) If the woman’s family was sufficiently impressed, courting would progress until the man formally asked for her hand in marriage. Absolutely no physical contact was allowed until the couple became engaged, and gifts were limited to impersonal gestures like flowers, chocolate or a book. Emotional intimacy was expressed primarily through love letters. In *The Matchmaker*, aspiring young artist Ambrose Kemper states his intention to marry Vandergelder’s niece, Ermengarde, during a formal visit reminiscent of traditional “calling.” Vandergelder dismisses him, saying, “Ermengarde is not for you, nor for anybody else who can’t support her.” And while Ermengarde has already consented to marry Ambrose, without securing Vandergelder’s permission, the couple must explore other deceptive options in order to remain together.

**The Rise of Dating in America (1920-1939)**
As young Americans left small towns in droves for job opportunities in sprawling urban cities, traditional parlor visits under a family’s watchful eye disappeared. Dance halls and theaters encouraged group socializing between men and women, and dating became a way to build popularity and social standing. Certain behavioral norms—for example, men should pay for dates, dating many different people before marriage—became popular. “The idea was to go out with as many people as possible, as visibly as possible, with someone as high a status as possible,” historian Beth L. Bailey wrote in *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*. “You would never dance with the same person you came to the dance with all night.” Dating was expensive, as women expected to be taken out and entertained by an array of suitors competing for their attention. Wilder hints at one of these more modern norms in one of *The Matchmaker*’s memorable scenes, in which milliner Irene Molloy and her shop assistant, Minnie Fay, insist on having a spontaneous dinner out with their new acquaintances Barnaby Tucker and Cornelius Hackl.
 **The Role of Matchmakers and Other Dating Experts**
Victorian-era “calling” was specifically structured towards the goal of marriage, but dating triggered a cultural shift in socializing between the sexes that didn’t necessarily lead American couples down the aisle. Dating’s social dominance provided plenty of new opportunities for marriage brokers and matchmakers. The Gilded Era (1870–1900) saw the fastest rate of economic growth in America’s history, providing singles with access to disposable income. Rapid industrialization across the US meant opportunity for more leisure time, too, producing a nationalized culture and popular media in the form of magazines, radio programs and scholarly journals. And because dating no longer followed the same rigid rules of Victorian courtship, everyone from members of the clergy to social scientists, educators and newspaper columnists stepped in to offer dating advice and matchmaking services. In *The Matchmaker*, Vandergelder enlists marriage broker Dolly Gallagher Levi’s help in securing Irene Molloy’s hand in marriage, but Dolly is determined to pair him up with a woman she believes will be a much more equitable match: herself! Luckily for the audience, there’s plenty of mischief, humor and misdirection as Dolly works to make her plan a reality.

Lori Polemenakos is an award-winning journalist and a former senior editor at Match.com, where she reviewed over 1.5 million dating profiles and provided dating and relationships content for major portal sites like Yahoo, AOL and MSN. She also served as editorial content manager for *Happen*, Match’s online dating magazine.

**A Different Kind of Matchmaking: Pairing Actors with Their Roles**

By Neena Arndt

“If Juliet is represented as a girl ‘very like Juliet’…moving about in a ‘real’ house with marble staircases, rugs, lamps and furniture, the impression is irresistibly conveyed that these events happened to this one girl, in one place, at one moment in time. When the play is staged as Shakespeare intended it, the bareness of the stage releases the events from the particular and the experience of which Juliet partakes is that of all girls in love, in every time, place and language.” —Thornton Wilder, in his essay “Some Thoughts on Playwriting”

In keeping with the Elizabethan convention that women did not appear on stage, a teenage boy portrayed Juliet in William Shakespeare’s original production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Though born out of sexism, this convention allowed Juliet’s experience to become universal, not only to all girls, as Wilder stated, but also, perhaps, to all people regardless of their gender or age. Similarly, since its first mounting nearly 40 years ago, the Goodman’s annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has featured actors of diverse backgrounds, implying that Charles Dickens’ Victorian tale of redemption belongs not only to British people or Caucasians, but to all audiences. In addition, the Goodman’s production of *The Matchmaker* features actors who are not white, an actor who does not identify as cisgender\* and a differently-abled actor—all casting choices which universalize the story. Other plays, in which gender, race or age are essential to the story, might call for casting choices in which the actors resemble their characters: most directors of August Wilson’s plays, for example, would not choose to tell his specifically African American stories with a non-African American cast. Casting choices, like any other theatrical decision, provide meaning. And meaning, of course, is the primary business of theater.

When Wilder wrote about Juliet in 1941, he likely did not imagine a future in which people of color might play characters previously assumed to be white, that a woman might play a male character, or that a differently abled actor might appear in a play in which the writer had not expressed that any characters were differently abled. He might never have imagined that the very notion of gender would someday become more fluid, viewed as a spectrum rather than a binary. His own plays, including *The Matchmaker*, were produced with white, cisgender\*, able-bodied actors who most often were “very like” their characters in terms of age, gender, race and physical characteristics. In fact, Wilder, who was born in 1897 and died in 1975, lived in a rare age in theater history: an age during which convention dictated that actors should “be like” their characters.

In the ancient Greek theater, men played all roles, and their appearance and age mattered little because their faces were obscured by large masks. In Chinese opera, a theater form that includes dialogue, acrobatics and singing, actors traditionally specialize in a single type of role, mastering its musical, physical and dramatic requirements. Examples of such roles include the *laosheng* (old scholar) and the *xiaosheng* (young scholar); actors do not begin their careers playing young scholars and then progress to older ones, but rather play the same type of role throughout their lives. And in Shakespeare’s day, of course, female roles were played by teenage boys; differences in diet and environment likely meant that their voices remained high and their bodies less muscle-bound until their late teenage years. But their voices and slim physiques likely did not fool audiences; viewers could tell the actors were male and simply accepted the convention. Wilder himself wrote of an instance in which he saw Eleonora Duse play the role of Hedda Gabler, a 29-year-old character: “She was a woman of 60 and made no effort to conceal it...And the performance was very fine.”

In the late 19th century, European playwrights such as Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov revolutionized theater by suggesting that the art form ought to resemble real life as closely as possible. Their plays featured everyday characters in quotidian situations, and used conversational language rather than poetry. Casting followed suit, with producers and directors aiming to find actors who physically resembled the characters as written on the page. Wilder respected these dramatic titans, writing “Ibsen and Chekhov
carried realism as far as it could go, and it took all their genius to do it.” But he also noted that, with the rise of cinema, “now the camera is carrying it on…” suggesting that the theater ought to return to its usual business of being stylized and non-literal.

This anti-realism sentiment comes to bear in *The Matchmaker* with casting choices beyond Wilder’s imaginings. And yet, these choices help make *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 Wilder’s playwriting ideology, and his view that art should be comprehensive, broadening and vast.

**From Merchant to Matchmaker: The Many Lives of Thornton Wilder’s Classic Farce**

*By Steve Scott*

“Some mornings fancies run down my forearm like ants, and other days I just copy down the status quo. Writing’s a damnable profession. But rain or shine, I write.” —Thornton Wilder, on writing *The Merchant of Yonkers*

Although *The Matchmaker* is now regarded as a classic of its genre, its success came only after nearly two decades of frustration and disappointment on the part of its creator. By 1935 (three years before the success of *Our Town*), Wilder had begun work on an English-language adaptation of an 1842 farce entitled *Einen Jux er sich Machen* (roughly translated as “He Just Wants to Have Fun”) by Johann Nestroy, the great Austrian comic writer whose work had fascinated Wilder as a young student. Itself an adaptation of British playwright John Oxenford’s 1835 one-act farce *A Day Well Spent*, Nestroy’s play followed the misadventures of two young shop clerks who, unbeknownst to their miserly boss, go off to Vienna in search of adventure. (The play would also serve as the basis for Tom Stoppard’s *On the Razzle* in 1981.) Wilder worked sporadically for several years on his first farce, secretly hoping that the adaptation might someday be staged by the great Max Reinhardt, the towering German director who had become something of an idol to the young writer. Calling his adaptation *The Merchant of Yonkers*, Wilder also borrowed elements from Moliere’s *The Miser* as he crafted his comedy, switching the primary focus from the two clerks to the character of the shop owner himself. Wilder also created a new character for *The Merchant of Yonkers*: a wily widow-turned-matchmaker named Dolly Gallagher Levi, who would eventually become recognized as one of the author’s most vibrant creations.

Somewhat boldly, Wilder sent a copy of *The Merchant of Yonkers* to Reinhardt through a mutual friend. Reinhardt, who had moved to Hollywood during the Nazi takeover of Germany, was immediately taken with the script, and began plans to premiere the play at his “California Festival” in 1938. Although that production fell through, Reinhardt was determined to premiere the play in New York that December, and rehearsals began in the fall. Although initial preparations went well (Wilder enthusiastically wrote that Reinhardt’s comic sensibilities were “dazzling”), Wilder’s airy comedy became burdened by Reinhardt’s heavy, detail-laden set designs and by the histrionic performance of famed tragic actress Jane Cowl as Dolly. Reviews of the play’s December 28 premiere were largely negative, and the show closed after only 39 performances.

Among the actresses initially considered for the role of Dolly was Ruth Gordon, who turned the offer down due to her distrust of Reinhardt’s comic abilities. Gordon’s fascination with the character of the meddling matchmaker endured, however, and in the fall of 1951 she contacted Wilder with an idea to revive the play for London audiences. Although Wilder feared that the play “bore the stigma of failure” (although it had lived on in a number of student and professional productions), Gordon and her husband Garson Kanin soon convinced him to revise and update the play, and to retitle it. Now called *The Matchmaker*, this new version premiered at the 1954 Edinburgh Festival, where its strong reception—and Gordon’s incandescent portrayal of Dolly—led to a premiere in London that November. From there the play moved to New York, under the auspices of the Theatre Guild and producer David Merrick. Opening on December 5, 1955, it played for 486 performances—the longest run enjoyed by any of Wilder’s plays. A film version followed in 1958, starring Shirley Booth, Anthony Perkins and Shirley MacLaine.

But more spectacular success awaited Ms. Levi. A musicalized version of Wilder’s tale, under the direction of Gower Champion, began a pre-Broadway tour in 1963, bearing the somewhat daunting title *Dolly, A Damned Exasperating Woman*. Under a new name, *Hello, Dolly!*, the show opened in January 1964, and instantly became one of the all-time smashes of the American musical theater. Wilder had no official role in this incarnation, and in fact was in Europe when *Hello, Dolly!* debuted. But when he finally did see it, in May of 1965, he was so delighted that, according to his sister Isabel, “One would have thought he wrote it all himself, not just the play on which the book, lyrics and music were based.” *Hello, Dolly!* eventually ran for over 2,800 performances on Broadway, and has since become a staple of the American musical theater repertoire. Its success finally brought Wilder the financial security that eluded him throughout his career—and firmly enshrined his Dolly as one of the great stage creations of the 20th century.

**Say ‘Hello’ to Dolly: Tony Award Nominee Kristine Nielsen Brings Her Signature Spark to The Matchmaker**

By Michael Mellini

More than four decades have passed since actor Kristine Nielsen first plotted and schemed on her high school stage in the role of *The Matchmaker*’s namesake character Dolly Gallagher Levi. Now, having built a professional career filled with accolades (including Tony and Drama League Award nominations and an Obie Award), Nielsen will once again don Dolly’s signature feathered headdress when she headlines this spring’s Goodman Theatre revival of Thornton Wilder’s classic comedy.

“I hope I remember the lines and nothing else of my high school performance,” Nielsen said shortly before beginning rehearsals for the production. “I’ll obviously be completely different. Wilder wrote so many wonderful things about life and how our wants, needs and desires collide in such different ways during its various stages. Now that I’m actually age appropriate for the role, I know this is going to be such a rich experience.”

After attending Northwestern University (*The Matchmaker* will mark her first time on a Chicago stage since college) and graduate school at Yale University, Nielsen became a distinct comic force in the New York theater scene, where she has notably starred in the plays of her Yale pal, playwright Christopher Durang. His offbeat works have found Nielsen frantically delivering a one-woman reenactment of a Court TV trial (*Betty Summer’s Vacation*); reincarnated as a crying baby, an exuberant dog and angst-ridden teenager (*Miss Witherspoon*) and showcasing a dead-on Maggie Smith impression (*Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike*, for which she earned her Tony nomination). Nielsen’s performances often convey a “hectic energy and a thermometer-cracking warmth that enlivens melancholy characters and embraces outlandish ones,” as one of her many glowing *New York Times* reviews characterized her work.

Her knack for abrasive yet well-meaning characters will surely come in handy when she portrays Dolly, a widowed, over-the-hill matchmaker looking not only to satisfy the young lovers of turn-of-the-century New York, but also her own romantic interests. “She’s a woman who wants the world to be happy and optimistic,” Nielsen said of the character, which has attracted the likes of Ruth Gordon, Shirley Booth, Carol Channing, Pearl Bailey, Barbra Streisand and many other iconic actors in various stage and screen incarnations. “Of course she does it in her own way. It’s her way or the highway and she can be a little tone deaf to what other people say sometimes.”

Growing up in Washington, DC, where her mother worked for Hamilton Jordan, Chief of Staff to President Carter, Nielsen found many of her earliest romantic endeavors as the result of her mother’s own matchmaking. “It was a totally different time,” she recalled. “I used to pick her up from the White House in a little Volkswagen and they’d wave me in. I’d just wander the halls until I found my mother. Now, you can’t get near the White House! But my mother was convinced that I would marry a senator or a congressman and was always trying to set me up with aides she thought would have a big future in politics. It was always a disaster.” Eventually, she found love in closer professional proximity, marrying actor Brett Langdon, whom she met while working on a production of Theresa Rebeck and Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros’ *Omnium Gatherum* in Louisville. “We got together very quickly and it was sort of magic,” she said of their courtship. “When you realize something special is about to happen, it’s very exciting but then very scary and then wonderful again.”

Despite having found her own love, Nielsen isn’t quite sure she has the matchmaking skills of her onstage counterpart. “I’m not very good at it,” she admitted. “I don’t let the mysteries of romance unfold. I try to shove people at each other, although that is a quality that Dolly certainly has as well. I’m pretty naked in my desire to get people together and that’s sometimes off-putting.”

If Nielsen doesn’t bring people together romantically off stage, she certainly hopes to bond theatergoers through her work. “Dolly is tired of negativity, which seems so right during our current time,” she said. “This is the first time in many years that I’ve felt the country was sort of dark; people are anxious and scared of many things happening right now. Dolly’s message is, ‘What you send out, you’ll get back. So why not send out lots of love and try to take care of each other?’ I hope that notion will resonate with and entertain audiences. Keeping love at our cores is essential.”

**Looking for Love: The Cast of The Matchmaker on the Highs and Lows of Romance**

By Michael Mellini

From dating horror stories to their own attempts at matchmaking, cast members from *The Matchmaker* weigh in on their memorable romantic experiences below!

 **Kristine Nielsen (Dolly Gallagher Levi)**

*What were your best and worst dates?*

My husband and I always go back to a restaurant in Louisville when we visit my in-laws because of the magic moment when we met. The worst date was probably a tea dance my mother insisted I attend in Annapolis where young girls were arranged to meet the midshipmen. The girls were lined up behind a curtain and whoever came out from behind it was then their date for the day. I had nothing in common with the man with whom I was paired. The pairings were really all just based on height. It was an excruciating day.

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

“Never go to bed angry.” You have to talk it out; honesty is always the best policy. If you sleep on something, you hide something. It’s always best to get it all out there.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), whom would you choose?*

I’ve always been obsessed with Marlon Brando. When I was a young girl I had an assignment in home economics class for which we had to put together our “dream house.” I cut up a bunch of pictures from my mother’s *Architectural Digest* and wrote that I wanted to live with Marlon Brando and all his illegitimate children. The teacher was worried and called my mother saying, “She’s crazy! She wants to make a home with this lewd, horrible man!” My mother had to explain that I didn’t even know what an illegitimate child was and just loved a movie star!

 **Theo Allyn (Ermengarde)**

*Would you be a good matchmaker?*

I would be a dreadful matchmaker. I would take it way too personally and be heartsick if a couple I set up fell apart. I would blame myself for getting it wrong and causing them pain. I don’t want that responsibility!

*What were your best or worst dates?*

The worst date I ever had was with a guy I met through an online dating service. He took me to a baseball game for which he had standing room only tickets. So we stood at the baseball game for hours, not really talking, and taking turns fighting the crowd to buy beer. I was profoundly broke at the time, so while I wanted to be independent and autonomous, I couldn’t believe I was buying so much overpriced stadium beer. Then I never heard from him again.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), whom would you choose?*

Paul Newman. Or Idris Elba. Or both, I guess, if this is a wish list.

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

It’s cliché, but honestly, the advice I give myself is that I have to like who I am; I have to want to be with myself. If I’m going to have any kind of meaningful relationship, I have to have a healthy one with myself. Also I have to love the person I’m with for who they are, not who I hope they’ll turn out to be.

 **Sydney Germaine (Minnie Fay)**

*Would you be a good matchmaker?*

My expertise is in the area of helping existing couples maintain healthy relationships rather than creating new couples. I enjoy playing the role of the mediator between partners or with the person who really needs to vent about something in their relationship. I personally wouldn’t be interested in being set up by someone else, so I don’t have interest in setting up others. If you want someone, I say go after that person on your own terms with politeness and consent.

*What were your best or worst dates?*

I’m thankful that I actually have a history of really good dates. My ideal date would be something involving really good food. I was voted employee of the month at the restaurant where I work and received free dinner and drinks for the prize, so my significant other and I had a feast that night and then slept in the next day. It was the best. Seeing a play is part of a great date, too.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), whom would you choose?*

I would really like to have a large dinner party date with a collective of other [transgendered] actors, directors and producers—some names include Rhys Ernst, Laverne Cox, Alexandra Billings, Tom Phelan and Mya Taylor. A lot of us aren’t [consistently working] in the theater and film industries, or it’s just plain hard to find others, and I’d love to be able to meet and eat with others like myself and hear more about how they are successfully doing what I’m trying to do in my own career.

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

The best relationship advice I’ve ever been given, and what I’ve in turn said to others, is, “Trust your gut.” I wasn’t good at listening to this for a bit. You usually know if a relationship is right for you or not; you usually know when it’s time to go, but a lot can get in the way of making the best decisions for yourself. Trusting your gut, to me, means regularly checking in with yourself to see if your needs are being met—emotionally, sexually, socially and professionally. It’s important to ensure you’re in a situation where you’re not being taken advantage of or sacrificing yourself. Sometimes the metaphorical heart and brain get in the way of things, but the gut knows what’s up. Trust me.

**Elizabeth Ledo (Irene Molloy)**

*Would you be a good matchmaker?*

I am not sure if I would be very good at being a matchmaker. My weakness lies in my tendency to give people the benefit of the doubt, so I could possibly get myself in a bit of trouble by overlooking some important faults in someone and linking them up with someone else who is not interested in navigating said overlooked faults. I have, however, created situations that brought two people together who ended up becoming a couple without that having been the actual intention.

*How would you describe your ideal date night?*

It would be very simple: a good meal, some good laughs and a desire for the night to continue.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), who would you choose?*

I have wanted to go on a date with Bernadette Peters since I was 16 years old. That hasn’t changed and the reasons for wanting to do so are endless!

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

The best relationship advice I have ever received, and the advice I give as well, is to remember to communicate. I see so many relationships fracture simply because the two people are not being open with one another.

**Postell Pringle (Cornelius Hackl)**

*Would you be a good matchmaker?*

I’d be a terrible matchmaker. I clearly learned nothing from years of watching *The Love Connection* every evening with my dad. That being said, I’ve had my hand in connecting people a lot. I make an impeccable wingman at a bar for male and female friends alike. My friends have gone on to make all sorts of connections based on my efforts, though I’m not sure if “love” was the resulting connection.

*Have you ever been set up by anybody and, if so, how was the experience?*

I was set up a few times. Every occasion resulted in a great night…for me! I can’t say the same for my dates.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), whom would you choose?*

Sade Adu [the singer known as Sade].

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

The best dating advice I’ve ever been given is “Ro-mance without fi-nance is a nui-sance.” The relationship advice I’d give to someone else is “Happy wife equals happy life.”

 **Allen Gilmore (Horace Vandergelder)**

*Would you be a good matchmaker?*

I have done some matchmaking without knowing I had done it! But no, I don’t think I would make a good matchmaker. I’m interested in people individually—not so much as pairs.

*What were your best or worst dates?*

Best or worst dates are all about the company, I believe. The best date I remember involved great conversations while walking all around lower Manhattan on a beautiful spring afternoon.

*If you could go on a date with anyone (living or dead), whom would you choose?*

Going out with Elizabeth Taylor would have been a great date. She seemed so funny, warm and intelligent, but very down to earth.

*What’s the best romantic advice you’ve received or that you tell others?*

If I had great relationship advice, I probably wouldn’t be single now!

**Why The Matchmaker?**

Few would argue that Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town* is one of the most loved plays of the 20th century. Since its debut in 1938 it has received countless productions, professional and amateur, in every corner of the United States and beyond. The play’s lack of pretension in both writing and staging, its celebration of the commonplace joys and tragedies of life, its understated wellspring of emotions and its seeming universality—all have made *Our Town* one of the most cherished works in our culture, and its author the voice of wisdom and clarity in an uncertain world. Today, 40 years after his death, Wilder and the rest of his startlingly peripatetic career and achievements have been largely obscured by the overwhelming success of this one play—and Wilder the theatrical iconoclast has been homogenized into Wilder the benevolent chronicler of a wistful past.

This, of course, belies the sophisticated artistry and tremendous variety of one of our great literary geniuses. Equally accomplished in fiction and drama (he’s one of the few authors to have been awarded Pulitzer Prizes in both categories), Wilder was a tireless experimenter in both subject matter and form, an intensely private man whose works explored, in his own words, “the perpetual alternation/of hope and dejection/of Plans and Defeat/of Aspiration and Rebuff.” His 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. Nowhere is this approach more evident than in his 1955 comic masterpiece *The Matchmaker*. Wilder’s foray into the world of farce includes not only healthy portions of comic chaos, but an unexpectedly nuanced view of characters struggling to escape the proscribed lives that the world has imposed upon them, ready to risk what they have to experience the presumably heady pleasures of what they don’t. Disaster can indeed loom just around the corner—but so too can liberation, joy and love. Perhaps inevitably eclipsed in popularity by it musical iteration *Hello, Dolly!*, *The Matchmaker* is seldom produced today, but remains one of Wilder’s best works. It’s a fizzy, exuberant celebration of human foibles, romantic entanglements and the possibilities of connection in an often disconnected world.

Long an admirer of Wilder and his work, director Henry Wishcamper has worked closely with the author’s nephew and literary executor Tappan Wilder to create a new adaptation of this comic gem, and has assembled a talented and diverse cast to bring it to the Goodman stage. The result is a production that honors every element of this supremely unique farce—and a fitting tribute to an author whose far-ranging vision and theatricality left an indelible impression on the American theater.

Robert Falls
Artistic Director

Goodman Theatre
Robert Falls, Artistic Director
Roche Schulfer, Executive Director

Presents **the matchmaker**

By thornton wilder

Directed by henry wishcamper

Set Design by Neil patel

Costume Design by jenny mannis

Lighting Design by david lander

Original Music and Sound Design by richard woodbury

Casting by ADAM BELCUORE, CSA and Erica sartini-combs

New York Casting by tara rubin casting

Dramaturgy by NEENA ARNDT

Music Direction by Mike Przygoda

Production Stage Managers: kathleen petroziello\* and alden vasquez\*

Stage Manager: nikki blue\*

**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

*Ermengarde* **Theo Allyn** *Barnaby Tucker* **Behzad Dabu***Rudolph/Cabman* **Lawrence E. DiStasi**
*Flora Van Huysen* **Marilyn Dodds Frank***Minnie Fay* **Sydney Germaine***Horace Vandegelder* **Allen Gilmore***Malachi Stack* **Marc Grapey** *Gertrude/Cook/Harmonia Gardens Musician* **Anita Hollander** *Ambrose/Harmonia Gardens Musician* **Ronobir Lahiri** *Irene Molloy* **Elizabeth Ledo** *Dolly Gallagher Levi* **Kristine Nielsen***Cornelius Hackl* **Postell Pringle***Joe Scanlon/August* **Ron E. Rains**

**Time:** 1896
**Act I:** Vandergelders house in Yonkers, New York
**Act II:** Mrs. Molloy’s hat shop, New York
**ACT III:** The Harmonia Gardens Restaurant on the Battery, New York
**Act IV:** Miss Van Huysen’s house, New York

**Additional Staff**

Original music adapted from “Desert Love Song” by Jessica Frogley

Assistant Director: **Kristina Valada-Viars**Choreographer: **Tommy Rapley**

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

Ramon Camín\**—Malachi, Joe, Cabman, August, Rudolph*; Jim DeSelm\**—Ambrose, Musician*; Brandon Greenhouse*—Cornelius Hackl*; Jessica London-Shields*—Ermengarde, Minnie Fay*; Dannye Luwe*—Barnaby Tucker*; Penny Slusher\**—Flora Van Huysen, Gertrude, Cook*; Penelope Walker\**—Dolly Gallagher Levi*

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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 Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local No. 10-208, American Federation of Musicians; and the United Scenic Artists of America, Local 829, AFL-CIO. 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**

**THEO ALLYN\*** *(Ermengarde)* returns to Goodman Theatre, where she previously appeared in *The Upstairs Concierge* and two seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. Ms. Allyn has worked regionally with City Theatre, the Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera and Bricolage. As a teaching artist-in-residence at the University of Pittsburgh, she co-devised and starred in *Her Hamlet*, a movement-driven piece combining Shakespeare’s text with the imagined narrative of Jude, Shakespeare’s daughter. Recent film credits include *Progression*, written and directed by Gab Cody and Sam Turich. Recent television appearances include *Chicago Fire* and Nickelodeon’s *Supah Ninjas*. Ms. Allyn studied at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, the Stella Adler Acting Studio and the Atlantic Theatre Company. She is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

**BEHZAD DABU\*** (*Barnaby*) returns to the Goodman, where he previously appeared in *Disgraced* (also at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre) and *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include *Inana*, *Blood and Gifts* and *The History Boys* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *Samsara* (Jeff Award nomination) and *Disconnect* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Disgraced* (American Theatre Company); *Twelfth Night* (First Folio Theatre); *Holes* (Adventure Stage Chicago) and *We Live Here* (Theatre Seven of Chicago). Film and television credits include *Chicago P.D., You’re So Talented, King Rat* and *Imperfections.* He is a company member of TimeLine Theatre Company and a member of the Chicago Inclusion Project. Mr. Dabu attended Columbia College Chicago and is represented by Paonessa Talent. Behzaddabu.com

**LAWRENCE E. DISTASI\*** (*Rudolph/Cabman*) last appeared on the Goodman stage in Philip Glass’ opera *Galileo Galelei*, directed by Mary Zimmerman. He is a founder of The Actors Gymnasium Circus and Performing Arts School, as well as a founding ensemble member of Lookingglass Theatre Company. He has performed in over 30 Lookingglass shows, among them the Tony Award-winning production of *Metamorphoses* and the Jeff Award-winning productions *Lookingglass Alice, The Arabian Nights* and *Hard Times*. At Lookingglass, he also directed and adapted *The Baron in the Trees*, for which he received a Jeff Award nomination*.* He was seen most recently as Long John Silver in Lookingglass’ *Treasure Island*. Mr. DiStasi has appeared on television in *Early Edition* and on film in *Since You’ve Been Gone.* He received his BA in theater from Northwestern University.

**MARILYN DODDS FRANK\*** (*Flora Van Huysen*) returns to the Goodman, where she previously appeared in *Camino Real, The Clean House*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, The Naked Eye Theatre’s *One Flea Spare* and *Joan Dark* (performed in Linz, Austria). Chicago credits include *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*, *When the Messenger Is Hot*, *The Royal Family*, *Valparaiso*, *Everyman (A Moral Play)*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Time to Burn*, *Fur* and *Disappeared* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *The Last Act of Lilka Kadison*, *The Idiot*, *George*, *Metamorphoses* and *Hard Times* at Lookingglass Theatre Company; *Electra* at Court Theatre; *Love and Anger* at Next Theatre Company; *Broken Eggs* at Teatro Vista; *Fur* with Chicago Latino Theatre Company; *The Physicists* at A Red Orchid Theatre; *Laughter in the Dark* at Remains Theatre; *Methusalem* with New Criminals; *Precious Little* with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble and *Rockaby* at Victory Gardens Theater. New York credits include *Superior Donuts* on Broadway and *The Clean House* at Lincoln Center Theater. She appeared in the original productions of *Conduct of Life*, *The Mothers*, *Hunger* and *What of the Night*, written and directed by María Irene Fornés. Her film credits include *The Company*, *High Fidelity*, *Blink* and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*.

**SYDNEY GERMAINE** (*Minnie Fay*) is a recent graduate of the University of Illinois acting program at Champaign-Urbana. They recently moved to Chicago, where credits include *Zipped* and *Pelted* at the 2015 Chicago Fringe Festival and the role of Sky in the indie queer web series *Afternoon Snatch*. UIUC credits include the Artist/Acrobat/Announcer in *Oh What a Lovely War!*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, George Seacole in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Ernst/Reinhold in *Spring Awakening* and Actor Four in *44 Plays for 44 Presidents*.

**ALLEN GILMORE\*** (*Horace Vandergelder*) returns to the Goodman, where he previously appeared as the Alternate Scrooge in two productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include *The African Company Presents Richard the Third* and *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* (Jeff and Black Theatre Alliance award nominations) at Congo Square Theatre; *Cyrano*, *Endgame, Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (Jeff, BTA and Black Excellence Award nominations), *Jitney, The Misanthrope, Seven Guitars, Waiting for Godot* (Jeff, BTA and Black Excellence Award nominations) and *The Good Book* atCourt Theatre; *Argonautika* and *Arabian Nights* at Lookingglass Theatre Company and also on tour; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (BroadwayWorld nomination) at Writers Theatre and *Fabulation* at Next Theatre Company. Mr. Gilmore was a 2015 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow, a 2015 3Arts awardee and is a proud ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre Company.

MARC GRAPEY\* (*Malachi*) returns to Goodman Theatre, where he previously appeared in *Ask Aunt Susan*, *Race*, *The Iceman Cometh* (also at Brooklyn Academy of Music) and the world premieres of Eric Bogosian’s *Griller* and Noah Haidle’s *Vigils*. Chicago credits include *Mizlansky/Zilinsky or Schmucks, The Chosen, Antigone, Dead Man’s Cell Phone, Oblivion* and *The Birthday Party* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *The Normal Heart* at TimeLine Theatre; *I Sailed with Magellan, Class Dismissed* and Edward Albee’s *At Home at the Zoo* (Jeff Award nomination) at Victory Gardens Theater; *Richard III, The Taming of the Shrew* and *Gypsy* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; *Picnic, Isaac’s Eye* and the upcoming *Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf* at Writers Theatre; *Funny Girl* at Drury Lane Theatre; *The Metal Children* at Next Theatre Company and *Early and Often, The Homecoming, Beautiful Thing* and *Hitting for the Cycle* (Jeff Award nomination) at Famous Door Theatre Company. Regionally, he has appeared at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville and the HBO Comedy and Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado. He made his Broadway debut in 2005 opposite Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick in the hit revival of Neil Simon’s *The Odd Couple*. Film credits include *Keeping Up with The Joneses, Warren, At Any Price, Superbad, Adventureland, Ali, While You Were Sleeping, A Piece of Eden* and *The Daytrippers.* Television credits include *The West Wing, Arrested Development, Two and a Half Men, Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, Conviction* and *Chicago P.D.* He appeared on two seasons of HBO’s *Sex and the City* as J.J. Mitchell and can currently be seen as attorney Peter Kalmick on NBC’s *Chicago Med.*

**ANITA HOLLANDER\*** (*Cook/Gertrude/Harmonia Gardens Musician*) Off-Broadway credits include *Woyzeck* (New York Shakespeare Festival), *Bass For Picasso* (Kirk Theatre), *Murder* (Harold Clurman Theatre), *Songs of Jeremy Beck* (Carnegie Hall) and her original solo musical *Still Standing*, which also played the White House and is available on CDandiTunes. Regional credits include *CATS* (Ocean Theatre), *The Fifth Season* (Olney Theatre, Helen Hayes Award nomination), *Gretty Good Time* (Kennedy Center), *Ragtime* (Gateway Playhouse), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Surflight Theatre), *Shirley Valentine* (Summerfun Theatre) and *Anything Goes* (Trump Plaza/Atlantic City). Ms. Hollander toured Japan and Croatia with *Power Plays* and *A Nervous Smile* (Theatre Breaking Through Barriers) and Europe with *The Absolute Monarch* (LAMDA Theatre Company). Film credits include *Handsome Harry* and *Musical Chairs*. Television credits include *Gotham,* *Law & Order: SVU, OZ, The Sopranos*, *All My Children* and *From the Edge*. She is the national chair of SAG-AFTRA Performers with Disabilities. Anitahollander.com

**RONOBIR LAHIRI\*** (*Ambrose/Harmonia Gardens Musician*) Broadway credits include *The King and I*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Three Sisters* (La MaMa). West End credits include *The King and I*. Regional credits include *Indian Ink* (Helen Hayes Award) at The Studio Theatre; *The Crucifer of Blood* at Berkshire Theatre Festival; *Miss Julie, The Milk Train Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore, Freesailing* and *What Alice Found There* at Williamstown Theater Festival and *Fall* at Trinity Repertory Company. National and UK tours include *The King and I*. Film credits include *Ted 2, Stuart Little 2, You’ve Got Mail, Igby Goes Down* and *American Desi*. Television credits include *Criminal Minds, Cold Case, Two and a Half Men, Numb3rs, Ghost Whisperer, Without a Trace*, *Bones, Dirt*, *Desperate Housewives, Grey’s Anatomy*, *Stitchers, Melissa and Joey, The Sopranos, Law & Order* and *Torchwood.* Mr. Lahiri is also an accomplished composer and sitarist who has released two original albums, *Joy for Silverlake* and *Hypnosis: Deep House Sitar*. He holds a BA from Yale University.

**ELIZABETH LEDO\*** (*Irene Molloy*) returns to the Goodman, where she previously appeared in *Boleros For The Disenchanted* and three seasons as the Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include *The Secret Garden, Tartuffe* (Jeff Award)*, The Misanthrope, The Comedy Of Errors, The Illusion, Titus Andronicus, Uncle Vanya* and *The Real Thing* (Court Theatre); *Charm* and *The Chalk Garden* (Northlight Theatre), *Issac’s Eye* and *Arms and the Man* (Writers Theatre); *The How And The Why* (TimeLine Theatre); *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, As You Like It, Amadeus* and *Funk It Up About Nothin’* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Homebody/Kabul* and *Morning Star* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company) and *Le Switch, The Homosexuals* and *Say You Love Satan* (About Face Theatre, where she is an artistic associate). Regional credits include *Richard III, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Summer Shakespeare at Notre Dame); *Arcadia* (Indiana Repertory Theatre) and over 20 productions with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, including *Almost Maine, Anna Karenina, Wit, Lonesome West, The Crucible* and *Clean House*. Ms. Ledo is a graduate of Loyola University of Chicago.

**KRISTINE NIELSEN\*** (*Dolly Gallagher Levi*) Broadway credits include Christopher Durang’s *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Tony Award nomination, also at Lincoln Center Theater), *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, To Be or Not to Be, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Spring Awakening, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Green Bird, Jackie* and *The Iceman Cometh.* Additional works by Christopher Durang include *Why Torture Is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them* (Drama League and Outer Critics Circle award nominations); *Miss Witherspoon; Betty’s Summer Vacation* (Obie, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle award nominations) and *Mrs. Bob Cratchit’s Wild Christmas Binge.* Additional off-Broadway credits include *Hir, Ubu*, *Crazy Mary, Our Leading Lady* and *Dog Opera* (Obie Award). Regional credits include work with The Old Globe, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Guthrie Theater, Huntington Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Alley Theatre, Edinburgh International Festival and La Jolla Playhouse. Film credits include *Morning Glory, That’s What She Said, The Savages, Adelaide* and *Small Time Crooks.* Television credits include *Political Animals, Smash, Law & Order, Law & Order: Criminal Intent, Third Watch*, NBC’s live broadcast of *The Sound of Music*, *Happyish* and Amazon’s *Zelda*. Ms. Nielsen received her MFA from the Yale School of Drama and BA from Northwestern University.

POSTELL PRINGLE\* (*Cornelius Hackl)* Chicago credits include appearing in and co-creating *Q Brother’s Christmas Carol* (Jeff Award nomination for Best New Musical), *Othello: The Remix* (Jeff Award for Best Ensemble) and *Funk* *It Up About Nothin’* (Jeff Award for Best Ensemble) at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Broadway credits include *A Free Man* *of Color* at Lincoln Center Theater. Off-Broadway credits include *The Urban Retreat* at The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, *The Seven* at New York Theatre Workshop and La Jolla Playhouse, *Song for New York* at Mabou Mines and *Hoodoo Love* at Cherry Lane Theatre. Regional credits include *Broke-ology* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre, *King Hedley II* at American Stage and *The* *Old Settler* at Triad Stage. Film credits include *Unknown Soldier* and *Orange Bow*. Television credits include *Rescue* *Me*, *Unforgettable*, *Law & Order* and *Law &* *Order: Criminal Intent*. Mr. Pringle holds a BA from Bates College. He is a playwright, composer, hip-hop artist/music producer and creative associate of Q Brothers theater company. He is also a member of the Chicago band The ReTar Crew. Follow him on Twitter @posLuv

**RON E. RAINS\*** (*Joe Scanlon/August*) returns to Goodman Theatre, where he has appeared in nine seasons of *A Christmas Carol*; *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*; *Passion Play: a cycle in three parts* and *The Revenge of the Space Pandas*. His Chicago credits include *The Tempest*, *Pinocchio* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Billy Elliot* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Juno* (TimeLine Theatre); *The Quiet Man Tales* (Smock Alley Theater); *I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change* (Royal George Theatre); *The Good War* and *Enter the Guardsmen* (Northlight Theatre); *Incident at Vichy* (Writers Theatre) and *The Ballad of Little Jo* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). He also has a recurring role as *The Onion*’s head film critic, Peter K. Rosenthal, on their web series *Film Standard*. Mr. Rains is a member of Erasing the Distance, a company of artists whose aim is to shed light on issues of mental health through theater (ErasingtheDistance.org). He holds a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. RonRains.com

THORNTON WILDER (*Playwright, 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 next-to-last 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). His play *The Matchmaker* ran on Broadway for 486 performances (1955-1957), Mr. Wilder’s Broadway record, and was later adapted into the record-breaking musical *Hello, Dolly!* Mr. 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 Mr. Wilder’s life, and since his death, three volumes of his letters have been published. Mr. 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 after 1930 and where he died on December 7, 1975. Mr. Wilder’s work 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 of the National Endowment for the Art’s “Big Read” Program. In recent years Mr. 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 Mr. Wilder, the Thornton Wilder Society sponsored the first international conference on Mr. Wilder in fall 2008.

HENRY WISHCAMPER (*Director*) is a member of the Goodman’s Artistic Collective. His 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 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 work with Manhattan Theatre Club, LCT3, Atlantic Theater Company, New World Stages, Katharsis Theater Company and Keen Company. Regional theater and other directing credits include work at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe and at Hartford TheaterWorks. He has served as the assistant director of 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. Mr. Wishcamper was the artistic director of Katharsis Theater Company in New York and the Maine Summer Dramatic Institute (MSDI) in Portland. He is a Drama League directing fellow and a graduate of Yale University.

**NEIL PATEL** (*Set Designer*) Broadway credits include *Side Man* (also in the West End and at the Kennedy Center) and *[title of show]*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Lion; Pretty Filthy; Indian Ink; Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play; Stage Kiss* and *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Additional credits include the world premiere of Bright Sheng’s *Madame Mao* (Santa Fe Opera) and Amon Miyamoto’s production of *Cosi Fan Tutte* (Nissay Theatre in Tokyo), as well as production design for HBO’s Peabody Award-winning *In Treatment*. He has twice been recognized with an Obie Award for sustained excellence and has been the recipient of the Helen Hayes Award and numerous Henry Hewes and Drama Desk nominations. Mr. Patel is a graduate of Yale College and the University of California at San Diego.

**JENNY MANNIS** (*Costume Designer*) returns to Goodman Theatre, where her previous credits include *Teddy Ferarra, Venus in Fur, The World of Extreme Happiness* and *The Little Foxes*. Chicago credits include *Domesticated* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Marjorie Prime, Isaac’s Eye, Days Like Today* and the upcoming *Death of a Streetcar…* (Writers Theatre) and *Blood and Gifts* (TimeLine Theatre Company). New York credits include work with Manhattan Theatre Company, Second Stage, MCC Theater, Atlantic Theater Company, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theater, Primary Stages*,* Play Company and the Juilliard School. Regional credits include work with the Guthrie Theater, Cleveland Playhouse, The Old Globe, Huntington Theatre Company, Hartford Theater Works, Barrington Stage, Two Rivers Theatre, Studio Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Bay Street Theater and Yale Repertory Theatre. Film credits include *Beloved* (Elevation Filmworks) and *All Saints Day* (Washington Square Films). Ms. Mannis has been nominated for Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel awards. She holds her MFA from the Yale School of Drama (Lerman Fellowship in Design). Jennymannis.com

**DAVID LANDER** (*Lighting Designer*) returns to the Goodman, where he previously designed lighting for *The Little Foxes*, *Other Desert Cities* and *I Am My Own Wife*. Other Chicago credits include *Muscle* by James Lapine and William Finn (Pegasus Players) and the workshop production of *I Am My Own Wife* (About Face Theatre). Broadway credits include *The Heiress* with Jessica Chastain and Dan Stevens, *The Lyons* with Linda Lavin, *Master Class* with Tyne Daly, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* with Robin Williams (Drama Desk, Tony and Outer Circle Critics award nominations), *33 Variations* with Jane Fonda (Tony and Outer Critics Circle award nominations), *A Man for All Seasons* with Frank Langella, *I Am My Own Wife* (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle award nominations), *Dirty Blonde* (Drama Desk Award nomination) and David Henry Hwang’s *Golden* *Child*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Lady from Dubuque* with Jane Alexander, *King Lear* with Kevin Kline, *Macbeth* with Liev Schreiber and Jennifer Ehle, *Address Unknown* with Jim Dale and *Modern Orthodox* with Molly Ringwald and Jason Biggs. Regional credits include *Master Class* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre with Rita Moreno); *Venecia* (George Street Playhouse with Chita Rivera, directed by Arthur Laurents) and *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Funny Girl* and *Dear World* (Sundance Theatre). His designs have been seen at the St. Louis Muny, The Old Globe, Long Wharf Theatre, the Alley Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Kennedy Center and La Jolla Playhouse. International credits include productions in London, Dublin, Caracas, Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore and Japan.

**RICHARD WOODBURY** (*Composer* and *Sound Designer*) is the resident sound designer at the Goodman, where his credits include music and/or sound design for *2666; Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; *The Little Foxes; stop. reset.; Rapture, Blister, Burn; Ask Aunt Susan*; *Luna Gale*; *Measure for Measure*; *Teddy Ferrara*; *Other Desert Cities*; *Crowns*; *Camino Real*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Red*; *God of Carnage*; *The Seagull*; *Candide*; *A True History of the Johnstown Flood*; *Hughie/Krapp’s Last Tape*; *Animal Crackers*; *Magnolia*; *Desire Under the Elms*; *The Ballad of Emmett Till*; *Talking Pictures*; *The Actor*; *Blind Date*; *Rabbit Hole*; *King Lear*; *Frank’s Home*; *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove*; *A Life in the Theatre*; *Dollhouse*; *Finishing the Picture*; *Moonlight and Magnolias*; *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia*?; *Lobby Hero* and many others. Steppenwolf Theatre Company credits include *Slowgirl*, *Belleville*, *Middletown*, *Up,* *The Seafarer, August: Osage County*, *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, *Hysteria*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Memory of Water*, *The Libertine* and others. Broadway credits include original music and/or sound design for *Desire Under the Elms*, *August: Osage County*, *Talk Radio*, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Young Man from Atlanta*. Mr. Woodbury’s work has also been heard at Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada; London’s Lyric and National theaters; in Paris and at regional theaters across the United States. Mr. Woodbury has received Jeff, Helen Hayes and IRNE awards for Outstanding Sound Design and the Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Collaborative Artist, as well as nominations for Drama Desk (New York) and Ovation (Los Angeles) awards. Mr. Woodbury has composed numerous commissioned scores for dance and has performed live with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane and Merce Cunningham Dance companies.

**NEENA ARNDT** (*Dramaturg*) is the dramaturg at Goodman Theatre. In seven seasons, she has dramaturged more than 20 productions, including Robert Falls’ productions of *Measure for Measure*, *The Iceman Cometh* and *The Seagull*, David Cromer’s production of *Sweet Bird of Youth* and the world premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s *Luna Gale*. She has also worked with the American Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the New Harmony Project and Actors Shakespeare Project, among others. Ms. Arndt has taught at Boston University and DePaul University. She holds an MFA in dramaturgy from the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University, and a BA in linguistics from Pomona College.

**KATHLEEN PETROZIELLO\*** (*Production Stage Manager*) returns to Goodman Theatre, where she was previously a stage manager for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Two Trains Running, Brigadoon, Venus in Fur*, *A Christmas Carol* (2013, 2014 and 2015), *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *Joan Dark* (performed in Linz, Austria). Other credits include *The Wheel*, *The Birthday Party*, *Time Stands Still*, *Sex with Strangers*, *Fake* and *Of Mice and Men* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *The Great Fire*, *The Last Act of Lilka Kadison*, *Trust*, *Our Future Metropolis*, *Argonautika* and *Nelson Algren: For Keeps and a Single Day* at Lookingglass Theatre Company; *Death of a Salesman*, *Avenue Q* and *A Number* at the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company; *Panic* and *Final Curtain* at the International Mystery Writers Festival and the Chicago productions of *Altar Boyz* and *Million Dollar Quartet*.

**ALDEN VASQUEZ\*** (*Production Stage Manager*) has stage-managed 25 productions of *A Christmas Carol* and more than 70 productions at Goodman Theatre. His Chicago credits include 14 productions at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, including the Broadway productions of *The Song of Jacob Zulu* (also in Perth, Australia) and *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*. His regional theater credits include productions at American Theater Company, American Stage Theater Company, Arizona Theatre Company, Ford’s Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Northlight Theatre, Peninsula Players Theatre, Remains Theatre, Royal George Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company and the Weston Playhouse. He teaches stage management at DePaul University, is a 31-year member of Actors’ Equity Association and a US Air Force veteran.

**NIKKI BLUE\*** (*Stage Manager*) returns to the Goodman, where she previously served as production stage manager for *Objects in the Mirror* at the *New Stages* Festival. Other Goodman credits include working as the floor manager for the 2013/2014 season in the Albert Theatre and the 2014/2015 season in the Owen Theatre. Chicago credits include the International Voices Project 2015 with Victory Gardens Theater (stage manager), *The Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat* and *Belleville* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company (stage manager apprentice) and *Die Fledermaus* and *Albert Herring* with Bienen School of Music (assistant stage manager). Regional credits include stage managing the haunted house “Zombie Mortuary” with Busch Gardens Howl-O-Scream in Tampa and work with Mad Cow Theatre and Florida Studio Theatre. Ms. Blue is a graduate of the University of Central Florida.

**MIKE PRZYGODA** (*Music Director*) is a freelance composer, multi-instrumentalist and music director from Chicago, where he has composed music for theater, dance and film; performed as a pit and session musician and conducted ensembles in a variety of genres. He most recently served as music director and led the band for *Another Word For Beauty* at the Goodman. He was awarded a Jeff Award for artistic specialization in percussion. He works in the dance department at the Chicago High School for the Arts and also performs with and produces recording sessions for local bands.

**Robert Falls** (*Goodman Theatre Artistic Director*) Most recently, Mr. Falls reprised his critically acclaimed production of *The Iceman Cometh*, featuring the original cast headed by Nathan Lane and Brian Dennehy, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Last season, he also directed Rebecca Gilman’s *Luna Gale* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Los Angeles and a new production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Other recent productions include *Measure for Measure* and the world and off-Broadway premieres of Beth Henley’s *The Jacksonian*. This season at the Goodman, Mr. Falls and Goodman Playwright-in-Residence Seth Bockley will co-direct their world premiere adaptation of Roberto Bolaño’s *2666*, and Mr. Falls will also direct the Chicago premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976*. Among Mr. Falls’ 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 premiere of Elton John and Tim Rice’s *Aida*. Mr. 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. He was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame last year.

**ROCHE EDWARD SCHULFER** (*Goodman Theatre Executive Director*) is in his 36th season as executive director. On May 18, 2015, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the League of Chicago Theatres. In 2014, he received the Visionary Leadership Award from Theatre Communications Group. For his 40th anniversary with the theater, Mr. Schulfer was honored with a star on the Goodman’s “Walkway of Stars.” During his tenure he has overseen more than 335 productions, including close to 130 world premieres. He launched the Goodman’s annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, which celebrated 38 years as Chicago’s leading holiday arts tradition this season. 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. Under 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 US, the Pulitzer Prize for Lynn Nottage’s *Ruined* and many Jeff Awards for outstanding achievement in Chicago area theater. Mr. Schulfer has negotiated the presentation of numerous Goodman Theatre productions in many national and international venues. From 1988 to 2000, he coordinated the relocation of the Goodman to Chicago’s Theatre District. He is a founder and two-time chair of the League of Chicago Theatres, the trade association of more than 200 Chicago area theater companies and producers. Mr. Schulfer 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 450 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 65 leading US theater companies); Lifeline Theatre in Rogers Park and the Arts & Business Council. He is honored to have been recognized by Actors’ Equity Association for his work promoting diversity and equal opportunity in Chicago theater; the American Arts Alliance; the Arts & Business Council for distinguished contributions to Chicago’s artistic vitality for more than 25 years; *Chicago* magazine and the *Chicago Tribune* as a “Chicagoan of the Year”; the City of Chicago; Columbia College Chicago for entrepreneurial leadership; Arts Alliance Illinois; the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee for his partnership with Robert Falls; North Central College with an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree; 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 the Vision 2020 Equality in Action Medal for promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace. Mr. Schulfer is a member of the adjunct faculty of the Theatre School at DePaul University and a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he managed the cultural arts commission.

**HISTORY**

**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 Tony Awards and two Pulitzer Prizes. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer, the Goodman’s priorities include new plays (over 100 world or American premieres in the past 30 years), reimagined classics (including Falls’ nationally and internationally celebrated productions of *Death of a Salesman*, *Long 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 are primary cornerstones of the Goodman’s mission; over the past 25 years, more than one-third of Goodman productions (including 31 world premieres) have featured artists 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, 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 theatregoers 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. The Chairman of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees is Joan E. Clifford; Swati Mehta is President of the Woman’s Board.

**From the Goodman Archives: The Skin of Our Teeth (1992)**

Thornton Wilder’s plays have been staples of the
Goodman’s repertory since *Our Town* made its Goodman premiere in 1939. *The Skin of Our Teeth* has been especially popular, produced four times beginning with a Goodman School of Drama production in 1952. Wilder’s whimsical portrait of the prototypical Antrobus clan and their endurance through dinosaur attacks, the Ice Age and more modern catastrophes was last seen in 1992. Directed by then-Artistic Associate David Petrarca, this staging brought a late-20th century sensibility to Wilder’s text: the Antrobuses were now a racially mixed family, and the third-act warfare which threatened to decimate modern society mirrored the ongoing racial strife in America. The production featured a then-little known actress as the family’s ascerbic maid Sabina: Marcia Gay Harden, who would soon find fame (and an Academy Award) for such films as *Pollock* and *Mystic River*.

**­­THE THEATER**

GOODMAN THEATRE | 170 North Dearborn Street | Chicago, Illinois 60601 | 312.443.3800 | GoodmanTheatre.org

Box Office Hours: Daily 12–5pm

**SUBSCRIPTION AND TICKET INFORMATION**

Subscriptions and tickets for Goodman productions are available at the Goodman Box Office. Call 312.443.3800 or stop by the box office. All major credit cards are accepted: American Express, Discover, Mastercard and Visa. Tickets are available online: GoodmanTheatre.org

**GROUP DISCOUNTS**

Discounts are available for your group of 10 or more for most Goodman productions, except A Christmas Carol, for which the minimum is 15. Call Kim Furganson at 312.443.3820 or email Groups@GoodmanTheatre.org and ask about discounts, full-house sales, dinners and receptions for your group event.

**GREAT GIFTS FROM THE GOODMAN**

You’ll find a number of popular items related to the Goodman and Goodman productions—from posters, T-shirts, pins and mugs to published scripts—at the Goodman Gift Shop in the theater’s lobby. Gift certificates are available in any denomination and can be exchanged for tickets to any production at the Goodman. To order Goodman Gift Certificates, call the Goodman Box Office at 312.443.3800, or stop by the next time you attend a show.

**PARKING**

DON’T MISS OUT ON THE NEW $16.50 PARKING RATE!
On your next visit you can receive a discounted pre-paid rate of $16.50\* for Government Center Self Park by purchasing passes at InterParkOnline.com/GoodmanTheatre. If you do not purchase a pre-paid parking pass and park in Government Center Self Park, you can still receive a discounted rate of $22\* with a garage coupon available at Guest Services. Government Center Self Park is located directly adjacent to the theater on the southeast corner of Clark and Lake Streets. Learn more at GoodmanTheatre.org/Parking. \*Parking rates subject to change.

**USHERING**

We are looking for people who love theater and would like to share their time by volunteer ushering at the Goodman. Ushering duties include stuffing and handing out programs, taking tickets at the door and seating patrons. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, please call the ushering hotline at 312.443.3808.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE DISABLED**

The Goodman is accessible to the disabled. Listening assistance devices are available at Guest Services at no charge to patrons. Information on additional services available at GoodmanTheatre.org/Access.

**MEZZTIX**

On the day of the performance, all remaining mezzanine level seats are available at half-price with code MEZZTIX. Tickets are available online beginning at 10am at GoodmanTheatre.org or in person beginning at noon. All MezzTix purchases are subject to availability; not available on Goodman’s mobile site or by phone; handling fees apply.

**10TIX**

On the day of the performance, all remaining mezzanine seats in the last three rows in the Albert Theatre are available for $10 with the code 10TIX. Tickets are available online beginning at 10am at GoodmanTheatre.org or in person beginning at noon. $10 student tickets are available in the balcony of the Owen Theatre for purchase anytime with code 10TIX. Limit four tickets per student ID. A student ID must be presented when picking up tickets at will call. All 10TIX purchases are subject to availability; not available on Goodman’s mobile site or by phone; handling fees apply.

**GOODMAN PREFERRED PARTNERS** **HOTEL**

Chicago Kimpton Hotels are the exclusive hotels of Goodman Theatre. The Kimpton Hotels are an acknowledged industry pioneer and the first to bring the boutique hotel concept to America. They are offering Goodman patrons special discounted rates at Hotel Allegro, Hotel Burnham and Hotel Monaco. All rates are based on availability. These rates are not applicable at the Hotel Palomar.

Rooms must be booked through the Chicago VIP reservations desk based at the Hotel Allegro at 312.325.7211. You must mention the code GMT to access the rates.

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**Bella Bacino’s** | 75 East Wacker Drive | 312.263.2350

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**Catch Thirty Five** | 35 West Wacker Drive | 312.346.3500

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**IN CONSIDERATION OF OTHER PATRONS**

Latecomers are seated at the discretion of management. Babes-in-arms are not permitted. Please refrain from taking video or audio recordings inside the theater. Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones and watches. Smoking is not permitted.

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**Engaging Communities. Expanding Minds. The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement at Goodman Theatre Opens This Spring**

By Teresa Rende

Goodman Theatre believes that theater is more than a play or a place: it is an inspiring, expansive lens on the world that can profoundly engage communities and expand minds. Goodman programs promote literacy and learning, inspire self-confidence and empowerment — and effect positive change in society. The new Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement at Goodman Theatre will offer nationally-renowned, arts-centered programs for Chicago teachers, students and lifelong learners. These programs will be immersive and illuminating, impacting thousands of students through in-depth teacher training, and will bring theater’s transformative powers directly to individuals. The Goodman will work in active collaboration with educators and other community partners to create a home for all.

Over the past three decades, the Goodman has been recognized for its extraordinary level of artistic excellence, cultural inclusiveness and civic engagement. The theater has extended its award-winning skills and resources beyond the footlights through its ambitious education and community engagement efforts. These programs are distinguished by their depth and continuity of experience. Currently serving nearly 8,000 Chicagoans each year, this all-important, ever-expanding education and engagement work has long been up against limitations of space and proximity. Programs are often held in found spaces. As the Goodman’s offerings grow to meet rising demand, the theater is bursting at the seams. A new dedicated area located on the second floor of the existing Goodman Theatre complex will become the home for these critical education and engagement programs. The flexible space will allow for the classrooms, rehearsal spaces and conference and audition rooms required to accommodate further program growth.

The Center for Education and Engagement will enable Goodman Theatre to partner with a wider range of organizations and audiences in ways that are relationship-specific and stem from the content on our stages. Initiatives will include:

• A year-round arts-based program serving ages 14–18 and modeled after the Goodman’s PlayBuild Youth Intensive, which focuses on empowerment and socio-emotional learning.

• A year-round destination for the Goodman’s growing high school student program that allows peer-to-peer learning and the opportunity to develop self-identity, mutual respect and community.

• Increased professional development for teachers focused on differentiated instruction and project-based learning, empowering teachers to facilitate discussions and build community within their own classrooms and schools. This will build on an established program for teachers incorporating theater into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) classroom curricula.

• A hands-on learning environment/lab for STEM education.

• Concentrated experiences for Chicago-area high school students, with a high ratio of teaching artists/mentors to students.

• Year-round intergenerational programming that allows youth to work collaboratively with adults.

• Panels and discussions based on topics drawn from plays on Goodman stages, especially those related to social justice.

To learn more about The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement, and to read about the Goodman’s current programming, please visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Center.

**On Stage Now**

now extended through march 20 | owen Theatre

**2666**

based on the book *2666* by roberto bolaÑo
adapted and directed by robert falls and seth bockley

The epic adaptation of Roberto Bolaño’s internationally acclaimed novel, named the “Best Book of 2008” by *Time* magazine and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, is a not-to-be-missed theatrical event.

Please note: *2666* contains adult language, nudity and descriptions of extreme sexual violence. Recommended for mature audiences only.

**Coming Soon**

april 30 – june 5 | Albert Theatre

**The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window**

by Lorraine Hansberry

directed by anne kauffman

*A Raisin in the Sun* playwright Lorraine Hansberry’s final work, which premiered just three months before her untimely death in 1965 at age 34, is restaged by Obie-winning director Anne Kauffman.

april 2 – May 1 | Owen Theatre

**Carlyle**

by thomas bradshaw
directed by Benjamin Kamine

“Darkly hilarious provocateur” (*The Village Voice*) Thomas Bradshaw presents an outrageous comedy of political culture clashes—just in time for election year.

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