

School Girls; Or, the African Meal Girls Play

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



**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 – Top of Her Class

Page 6 – Skin Deep

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

Page 14 – Artist Profiles

Page 25 – About Goodman Theatre

welcome

A Note from Artistic Director Robert Falls

According to an old theater adage, dying is easy, but comedy is hard. Even harder, I believe, is infusing a humorous play with serious, relevant themes without diluting or distorting it. Jocelyn Bioh's play *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* delivers laugh-out-loud comedy based on the familiar trope of the "mean girl," who in this case is a Ghanaian high school senior in 1986. But this girl, the queen bee of her small boarding school, doesn't know 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.

Jocelyn, a Ghanaian-American playwright and actor, 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. The play established her as a vital contemporary voice, and I'm thrilled to welcome her to the Goodman for the first time.

I also warmly welcome back Lili-Anne Brown, who directed last year's premiere of Ike Holter's *Lottery Day*, a critical and audience favorite in our Owen Theatre. I have long considered Lili-Anne an important Chicago artist; in addition to serving as the Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago—where she won a Jeff Award for her production of *Dessa Rose*—her credits

include work at Jackalope Theatre, American Theater Company and Firebrand Theatre, among others. Lili-Anne's precision and sharp sense of timing allows her to adeptly showcase the humor in *School Girls*, while her passion for social justice enables her to thoughtfully render the characters' confrontations with racial discrimination.

I invite you to laugh wholeheartedly at the characters and situations Jocelyn has created. That laughter need not detract from the empathy I hope you will feel for the complex young women depicted on stage. In fact, the humor might open your heart an extra inch.

Robert Falls

Artistic Director of Goodman Theatre

Top of Her Class

Lili-Anne Brown isn't afraid of high school mean girls—or directing a big, boisterous play about them either.

By Thomas Connors

For most of us, success doesn't come overnight, but it can appear that way to others when good things seem to happen all at once. Take Chicago's Lili-Anne Brown. She has been performing and directing for years, making a name for herself locally, but these days, her career trajectory is taking off. On top of her laudable credits as Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago. She won Joseph Jefferson Awards for her 2019 staging of *Caroline, or Change* with Firebrand Theatre and Timeline Theatre Company and her 2018 staging of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* at American Blues Theater. Just last year, she helmed two much-lauded productions: *The Color Purple* at Drury Lane Theatre and the world premiere of Ike Holter's *Lottery Day* at Goodman Theatre. Now, she returns to the Goodman to direct the Chicago premiere of Jocelyn Bioh's *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*.

“I started my directing career in summer stock, so I work very fast, but stay loose and ready for Plan Z,” says Brown, offering a glimpse of her work ethic. “I came into my own in storefront theaters, so I have my eye on the budget, no matter where I am now. I abhor wasting resources.” As for engaging with performers, she notes that she spent 15 years as a professional actor, adding “I know what actors go through. So my prime

directive is simply, 'how I can help them get out of their own way?' That's all they really need me for.”

Brown started out in musical theater and comedy, genres she still holds dear. “I will find the absurdity in even the most serious piece,” she says. “I will bring out the music and rhythm and high theatricality in a straight play. If you want a hyper-real, grimy kitchen sink drama, I am probably not your girl. I would want that kitchen sink to run with blood or glitter.”

School Girls is set in a Ghanaian high school in the 1980s and revolves around that volatile mix of envy, ambition and admiration that rules the lives of young people, especially young women. Looking back at her own years at St. Ignatius College Prep, Brown says, “I may have had some inadvertent mean girl moments early on. I was bullied in elementary school and I was anxious to reinvent myself as cool in high school—but by senior year, I pulled a Jerry Maguire in my bougie social group over some mean girl stuff that was happening. It sucked. I lost my friend group that I'd been with all four years, and I didn't get to do any of the fun graduation or prom stuff, all because I stood up for someone who was being slandered—who I think still ended up hanging out with these girls anyway. That's high school!”

As her career continues to pick up speed, Brown exudes the enthusiasm of an artist for whom passion is everything and the future is rich with possibility. “At the end of the day, all this is in service to the why—why this story, why now, why this way?” she says. “I think any ‘you're in the big leagues now’ nerves are gone. It feels like coming home to return to the Goodman.”

Thomas Connors is a Chicago-based freelance writer and the Chicago Editor of Playbill.

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 (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 “slaves” 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.

As for the current state of the crown, just last year, the four United States-based pageants (Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Teen USA and Miss Universe) were all won by black women for the first time ever. The current reigning Miss Universe, Zozibini Tunzi, is a black South African woman. In reflecting on her win, Tunzi said, “may every little girl who witnessed this moment forever believe in the power of her dreams and may they see their faces reflected in mine.”

The young characters in *School Girls*, coming of age in Ghana in the 1980s, long to grow into their own power and beauty. But what or 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
Adam Belcuore, CSA
Lauren Port, CSA

Dramaturgy by
Fatima Sowe

Production Stage Manager
Alden Vasquez*

Stage Manager
Kimberly Ann McCann*

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 Used by
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School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play Cast

Gifty.....**Adia Alli**
Ama.....**Katherine Lee Bourné***
Ericka Boafo.....**Kyrie Courter***
Nana.....**Ashley Crowe**
Paulina Sarpong.....**Ciera Dawn***
Mercy.....**Tiffany Renee Johnson***
Headmistress Francis.....**Tania Richard***
Eloise Amponsah.....**Lanise Antoine Shelley***

Assistant Director.....**Am’Ber Montgomery**
Voice and Dialect Coach..... **Phyllis Griffin**
Dance Consultant.....**Cheretta Hill**

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 Prentiss–*Mercy/Gifty/Nana*; Adhana Reid–*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 (*Gifted*) 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.

KATHERINE LEE BOURNÉ* (*Ama*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include *Beauty and the Beast*, *Newsies* (Paramount Theatre); *Mamma Mia!*, *A Christmas Carol* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Heartbreak Hotel* (BIC Broadway Playhouse); *Marie Christine* (BoHo Theatre); *New Faces Sing Broadway 1959* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Songs for a New World* (Blank Theatre Company). @katherineleebourne

KYRIE COURTER* (*Ericka Boafo*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include *Next to Normal* (Writers Theatre, Jeff nomination for Performer in a Supporting Role); *Marie Christine* (BoHo Theatre, Jeff nomination for Performer in a Principal Role); *Legally Blonde* (Paramount Theatre); *Seussical*, *The Color Purple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Company*

(Venus Cabaret Theater); *BLKS* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Thaddeus and Slocum* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Dreamgirls*, *Applause*, *Babes in Arms* (Porchlight Music Theatre). She is represented by Stewart Talent.
@kyriecourter

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*. Ashley is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago and is represented by Big Mouth Talent.

CIERA DAWN* (*Paulina Sarpong*) makes her Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits include: *A Man of No Importance* (Pride Films and Plays); *We Are Proud To Present...* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *The Mutilated* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *Next to Normal* (BoHo Theatre); *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Little Mermaid* (Paramount Theatre); *Madagascar* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Other Than Honorable* (American Blues Theater). Film & TV credits: *Chicago Fire* and *Pitch Perfect*. Education: Emerson College, Theatre Performance and The School at Steppenwolf.
cieradawn.com | @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_](https://www.instagram.com/TiffanyReneeJ_)

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* and *The Chi*.

LANISE ANTOINE SHELLEY* (*Eloise Amponsah*) returns to the Goodman, where previous credits include *An Enemy of the People* and *Stop.Reset*. Chicago: *Familiar* (Steppenwolf Theatre) and work with Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Victory Gardens and Backroom Shakespeare. Regional: *Glass Menagerie*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *King Lear*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Sueño*, ... *Young Lady From*

Rwanda, 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, Kansas City Rep. International: *Macbeth, All My Sons, Aeneid* (Stratford Festival); *Nutcracker Turbo* (Moscow Art Theatre). TV/Film: *Chicago Fire, Chicago Med, The Inner Room, Discovery World* and *Macbeth HD*. She was the Stratford Shakespeare Festival's 2016 Chicago Fellow and she received her MFA from ART/MXAT at Harvard University.

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*) returns to the Goodman, where she recently directed *Lottery Day* by Ike Holter. A native Chicagoan, Brown works as a director, actor and educator, and has performed in, directed and produced many award-winning shows, both local and regional. She is the former Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago, where she focused programming on Chicago-premiere musicals and new play development with resident playwrights. Recent credits include *The Color Purple*

(Drury Lane Theatre) and *Put Your House in Order* (La Jolla Playhouse). She is a member of SDC, AEA, and SAG-AFTRA, is a graduate of Northwestern University and is represented by William Morris Endeavor.

YU SHIBAGAKI (*Scenic Design*) is a Chicago and NYC based set designer, born and raised in Japan. Recent Chicago credits include *The Brothers Size* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *X* (Sideshow Theatre); *Cambodian Rock Band, Fun Home* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Witch, Vietgone* (Writers Theatre); *Mansfield Park* (Northlight Theatre); *The Father* (Remy Bumppo Theatre) and more. Regional credits include *Cambodian Rock Band* (Merrimack Repertory Theater, City Theatre Company); *Pride and Prejudice* (Heritage Theater Festival); *Engaging Shaw, Maids, The Island, The Year of Magical Thinking* (American Players Theatre).

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 *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, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, among others. Regional credits include work with Alley Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is also 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.

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); Assistant Dramaturg for *Paradise Blue* (TimeLine Theatre) and *Scottsboro Boys* (Porchlight Music Theatre). Additional Chicago

credits include 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 Company).

ALDEN VASQUEZ* (*Production Stage Manager*) has stage managed over 85 productions at Goodman Theatre, including 29 productions of *A Christmas Carol*. 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 Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, Ford's Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Northlight Theatre, Peninsula Players Theatre, 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 35-year member of Actors' Equity Association and a U.S. Air Force veteran.

KIMBERLY ANN MCCANN* (*Stage Manager*) is in her sixth season with Goodman Theatre, having most recently worked on *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include *Mansfield Park*, *The Book of Will*, *Miss Bennet* and *You Can't Take It with You* at Northlight Theatre and *Million Dollar Quartet*. Broadway credits include *Curtains*. Off-Broadway credits include *Bill W. and Dr. Bob*, *How to Save the World* and *John Ferguson*. Regional credits include work with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Skylight Music Theatre, Tuacahn Center for the Arts and The Juilliard School.

ROBERT FALLS (*Goodman Theatre Artistic Director*) recently revived his 2014 production of *Don Giovanni* for the Lyric Opera, and he will direct Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney* at the Goodman this spring. Last season, Falls directed Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and David Cale's *We're Only Alive for A Short Amount of Time* (Goodman Theatre, Public Theater). Other recent productions include *Pamplona*, starring Stacy Keach; Rogelio Martinez's *Blind Date*; and his own original adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. Recent credits also include *2666*, adapted from Roberto Bolaño's epic novel and co-directed with Seth Bockley; *The Iceman Cometh*, starring Nathan Lane and longtime collaborator Brian Dennehy (Brooklyn Academy of Music); and Beth Henley's *The Jacksonian*. Falls' Broadway productions include *Death of a Salesman*, starring Dennehy; *Long Day's Journey into Night*, starring Dennehy, Vanessa Redgrave, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robert Sean Leonard; Eric Bogosian's *Talk Radio*; the American premiere of Conor McPherson's *Shining City*; and Horton Foote's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Young Man from Atlanta*. His Broadway production of Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*, for which he also co-wrote the book, continues to be produced around the world. Previous Goodman productions include, most notably, Arthur Miller's *Finishing the Picture*; *The Seagull*; *Uncle Vanya*; *Measure for Measure*; *King Lear*; *Desire Under the Elms*; *The Misanthrope*; *Pal Joey*; *Galileo*; the American premiere of Alan Ayckbourn's *House and Garden*; the world premieres of Rebecca Gilman's *A True History of the Johnstown Flood*, *Blue Surge*, *Dollhouse* and *Luna Gale*; and Gilman's *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976*. 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), the Distinguished Service to the Arts Award (Lawyers for the Creative Arts) 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 fourth 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: Brian Dennehy, Rebecca Gilman, Henry Godinez, Dael Orlandersmith, Steve Scott, Kimberly Senior, Chuck Smith, Regina Taylor, Henry Wishcamper and Mary Zimmerman. David W. Fox, Jr. is Chairman of Goodman Theatre's Board of Trustees, Denise Stefan Ginascol is Women's Board President and Megan McCarthy Hayes is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.