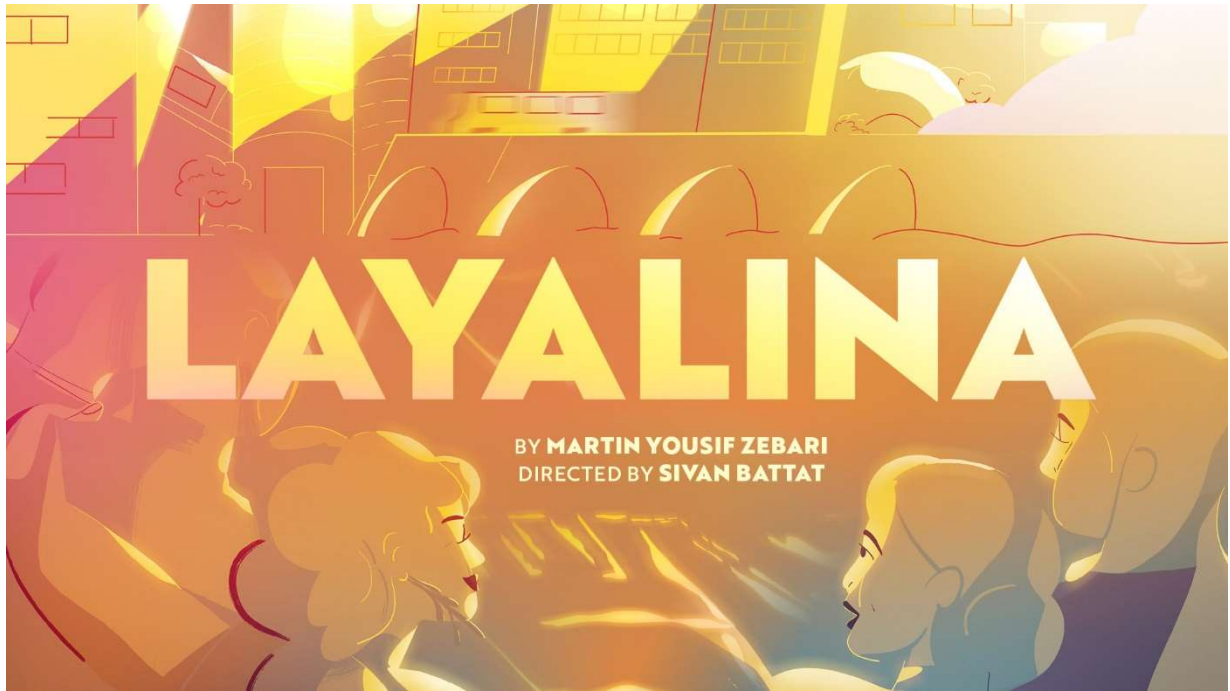


# Layalina

By **Martin Yousif Zebari**  
Directed by **Sivan Battat**



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# Welcome

**There is this notion that any story can be told through the lens of family—and that, conversely, the story of any family will somehow be the story of all families.**

Martin Yousif Zebari's *Layalina* bears this truth out in the most elegant of fashions. The global story of immigrants and the particular story of Iraqis coming to the United States are told here not as polemics but as a glowing and open-hearted story of multi-generational family. And within the specifics of this Baghdad-born and Skokie-homed group of siblings and parents are the wildly universal archetypes of the young teaching the old and the elders making room in their narratives for new ideas and viewpoints.

It is a brave and wonderful thing to write a play. To take the stories of your heart and give them to actors, directors and designers—and then, vulnerably—to audiences. A world premiere is a particularly rich and vital ritual in our art form, and it is not complete without all of you. All of you with your own stories that are about to collide with and be aligned with the story of *Layalina*. Creating these communities of shared narratives is the best thing our work can do, and I am so grateful to you for your essential role in making it happen.

Welcome, and thank you.

**Susan V. Booth**  
Artistic Director

# Finding Family

An Interview with the Playwright

By Ata Younan

**When the sun sets in Baghdad, ushering in a cool breeze and the surprisingly calming clatter of dishes being passed around the table, the world seems to slow down. Nighttime for the desert-dwelling community is special and transcendent, revealing an air of romance, ritual and revelation. And at the heart of Layalina, which translates to “our nights” in Arabic, is a multigenerational family and their efforts to create a new sense of belonging in a country thousands of miles away from their home in Baghdad. As the title might give away, most of the play takes place during the evening and night hours, when siblings and lovers peel their protective layers, revealing a more vulnerable approach to understanding each other’s differences and shortcomings. Martin Yousif Zebari, the playwright who hails from Baghdad, sits down to discuss the play's inspiration and the journey it has taken to find a home at Goodman Theatre.**

**ATA YOUNAN: What inspired you to write Layalina, a play about a family emigrating from Baghdad to Skokie, IL?**

**MARTIN YOUSIF ZEBARI:** This story is only autobiographical in that it is inspired broadly by my own family's journey of emigrating from Baghdad to Skokie. I've always been in awe of the ways in which displacement followed by assimilation has shaped my family's future. Their need to

simultaneously fit in and stand out. I've weaved in real events, exaggerated truths and fictional resolutions to show not what my own family is like but what any family can look like. I don't want my work to only highlight pain. I want it to show by example what love can do when we let it in.

**AY: It's been quite the journey for this play at the Goodman. Starting from Future Labs in January, 2021 to the New Stages Festival, and here we are now—a fully staged production in the Owen. What should folks expect from the world premiere of Layalina?**

**MYZ:** With every stage of development of this play, we've had gradually more support to bring this story to life. The Future Labs workshop focused solely on the script; the New Stages workshop production expanded our focus to how this play exists in a physical space, and now with the world premiere, we're hoping to bring all the visual and textual storytelling elements to life so our audience can just watch the story unfold. So if you're returning to Layalina, you can expect all the love and joy you saw before but with more depth and nuance. If you're new to Layalina, you can expect a story about a multi-generational family looking for ways to find each other again after being torn apart.

**AY: We meet the Ibrahim family—who are fiercely loyal to one another. They're about to go through a major upheaval, their way of life changing as they migrate to a new country.**

**In what ways might a typical audience member connect with them?**

**MYZ:** The Ibrahim family is just like any other family in that they love each other deeply, they piss each other off, they argue, they share their dreams and they know exactly how to bring a smile to each other's faces. They can be each other's ultimate comfort. But just like any other family whose love and trauma are entangled in one another, there is no one who can disappoint as much as those closest to them.

**AY: Take us to the Ibrahim home. How does it smell? What does it feel like to live there?**

**MYZ:** Both Ibrahim family homes smell like food, first and foremost. You'll get a waft of meat cooking, spices toasting, followed by the smell of cleaning products. In Baghdad, the Ibrahim family home feels grand, rigid and safe. In Skokie, the Ibrahim family home feels cozy and open, but the weight of generational burdens feels more prevalent. There is no place to hide in both homes.

**AY: Can you speak to the significance of nighttime in Layalina? Why is the nighttime so special for SWANA folks?**

**MYZ:** There are many South West Asian establishments named Layalina and I think that speaks to the importance of nighttime to our people. In a SWANA household, the nighttime is family time. It's a time to unwind and let your true self shine. After a long day of the beating hot sun, the nighttime brings with it a

cool breeze—a time when dreams are shared, promises are spoken and food is cooked and eaten. The best sleep you'll ever have is on a rooftop bed during the summer in Baghdad.

Ata Younan is the Publicity Manager for Goodman Theatre.

# Beyond Borders

Assyrian Roots from Mesopotamia to Skokie

By Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael

**There is a certain sense of power and peace that occurs in finding the space that sees and understands you,** that place which equips you with resources to root and grow in spite of the world's harshness. At the heart of Layalina is an Assyrian family, the Ibrahims, who leave their beloved homeland. For them, those resources are intergenerational; familial patterns emerge, and draw us into their story.

To further understand Assyrian history and culture is to acknowledge, at once, the implications of borders and political nation states, as well as a fierce love for family and community. The Assyrian ancestral homeland is spread over Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. Centered in Mesopotamia c. 21st century BCE–present-day Iraq–the Assyrian empire was one of the most powerful of the ancient world. Despite the decline of the empire and the subsequent arrival of Arab and Turkish conquerors, Assyrians have maintained a presence in the region for thousands of years, along with a deep cultural, historical and ancestral connection to the land. According to the Assyrian Policy Institute, about 300,000 Assyrians live in Iraq, making it



“the largest remaining concentration of the ethnic group in the Middle East.”

Assyrians began migrating to the United States in significant numbers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The end of World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire led to greater instability in the region, and many Assyrians found themselves living in newly-formed nation-states that were hostile to their ethnic and religious identities. Additionally, economic opportunities and political stability in the United States were attractive factors for many Assyrian immigrants. Over time, the Assyrian community in the United States continued to grow. New waves of immigration in the latter half of the 20th century were driven by ongoing conflict and instability in the Middle East—some of which was instigated by the U.S., even as it remained an aspirational home to immigrants.

In the early 2000s, during the Iraq War and in its aftermath, discrimination and persecution made Assyrians vulnerable to violence and displacement. Even though the class status of the Ibrahims shielded them from some of the region’s challenges, the country’s ongoing violence and conflict made it a time of great uncertainty. Many Assyrians survived by forming social and political organizations to advocate for their rights while some relocated to other countries.

Assyrians settled in cities across the United States—including Skokie, Illinois—where they established their own community centers and places of worship in an effort to maintain their

culture and heritage for future generations. Skokie remains a home to many cultural and religious organizations, businesses and events that serve the Assyrian community. Assyrian-language schools, like Motwa-Skokie, teach reading and writing, while over a dozen Assyrian churches can be found in Skokie and across Chicagoland. On King Sargon Boulevard in West Rogers Park, the annual Kha B’Nissan parade marks the Assyrian New Year and features dances like the popular khigga. And this year, District 219 under the Niles West School Board became the first in the nation to allow high schoolers to take an Assyrian language class for credit.

In spite of historic persecution and displacement, the Assyrian community in Skokie and nationwide has continued to flourish. Yet, as fears around government persecution persist in the United States, the Assyrian population may be massively undercounted: while the 2018 American Community Survey estimated 104,381 Assyrians nationwide, Illinois community leaders believe the same number to reside in this state. Such a discrepancy leads to further marginalization, when tools like the census can lead to greater representation in Congress or resources in their neighborhoods. Efforts to bolster the Assyrian community on a local level include community leaders’ census outreach execution, and on an international level through organizations like GISHRU, which organizes humanitarian and educational trips to the homeland for Assyrians born in the diaspora.

What some may find surprising is that the majority of Assyrians are Christians and belong to the Assyrian Church of the East, although there are also smaller groups who belong to other Christian denominations. The Assyrian community continues to value their Christian heritage and traditions, which has helped to maintain its religious identity despite the challenges of globalization and assimilation. Religion remains an integral part of Assyrian life, with regular attendance at church and religious festivals serving as an important way to connect with the community and preserve cultural heritage.

With family at the center of Assyrian life, household gatherings and meals are an important way to maintain close family ties and pass on cultural traditions. Elaborate meals mark special occasions and a manner with which to welcome guests. We see this throughout the play as family members come bustling with tea or platters. And dolma is always stuffed and rolled in the face of heartbreaking news.

These elements of life transcend geography, but the status of Assyrians, a minority ethnic and linguistic group, varies greatly depending on the region in which they live. In Iraq they have faced decades of political and religious oppression, leading to significant population loss and displacement. In 2015, PBS NewsHour reported 60 percent of Iraqi Assyrians have fled the country since the Iraq War began. However, the Assyrian community in Iraq and across the world is still active and continues to maintain its cultural and religious identity. Like all

immigrant communities, Assyrian life remains a mixture of challenges and resilience.

Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael is a Dramaturg for Layalina.

# Land Acknowledgement

Goodman Theatre was built on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. We recognize that many other Nations consider the area we now call Chicago as their traditional homeland—including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten and remains home to many Native peoples today.

While we believe that our City of Chicago, in its vast diversity, should be reflected in the plays on the stages of its largest theater, we acknowledge that the Goodman's efforts towards inclusive programming have largely overlooked the voices of our Native peoples. This omission has added to the isolation, erasure and harm that Indigenous communities have faced for hundreds of years.

We have begun a more deliberate journey towards celebrating Native American stories and welcoming Indigenous communities who may have never felt that the “American theater” is a space for them. On the eve of our Centennial Anniversary (2025), the Goodman is prioritizing how we use our art, assets and resources to contribute to a more inclusive, just, equitable, anti-racist society through our Action Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism and Access (IDEAA)—an ever-evolving document that includes the ways we as an organization intend to live our values, on stage and off.

**Visit [GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/Accountability) to learn more.**

# **Goodman Theatre**

**Susan V. Booth**, Artistic Director

**Roche Schulfer**, Executive Director/CEO

presents

## **Layalina**

By

**Martin Yousif Zebari**

Directed by

**Sivan Battat**

Set Design by

**casaboyce**

Costume Design by

**Dina El-Aziz**

Lighting Design by

**Jason Lynch**

Sound Design by

**Eric BackusRonnie Malley**

Casting by  
**Rachael Jimenez, CSA**  
**Lauren Port, CSA**

Dramaturgy by  
**Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael**  
**Jonathan L. Green**

Production Stage Manager  
**Jaci Entwisle\***

Stage Manager  
**Abigail Medrano\***

Layalina was produced in a developmental production by Goodman Theatre in the New Stages Festival 2021. It received earlier development by Goodman Theatre in the Future Labs program and as part of the Criminal Queerness Festival by National Queer Theater.

TW

Corporate Sponsor Partner

THE ELIZABETH MORSE CHARITABLE TRUST

Lead Funder of IDEAA Programming

# LAYALINA

## CAST

Sahir/Amin.....	<b>Waseem Alzer*</b>
Karima/Layal.....	<b>Atra Asdou*</b>
Young Mazin/Yousif.....	<b>Ali Louis Bourzgui*</b>
Yasir/Mazin.....	<b>Mattico David*</b>
Young Layal/Marwa.....	<b>Becca Khalil*</b>
Voices of Young Marwa, Young Yousif and Young Amin.....	<b>Rumi and Noah Haidar-Essajee</b>
Voice of Farid.....	<b>Jonathan Shaboo</b>
Voice of Samira.....	<b>Shadee Vossoughi*</b>

## UNDERSTUDIES

Young Layal/Marwa — **Angel Alzeidan\***

Young Mazin/Yousif, Sahir/Amin — **Chris Khoshaba**

Yasir/Mazin — **Jonathan Shaboo**

Karima/Layal — **Shadee Vossoughi\***

Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is made.



**SETTING:**

Act One: Baghdad, Iraq; March, 2003.

Act Two: Skokie, Illinois; March-June, 2020.

Line Producer.....**Jonathan L. Green**

Assistant Director

and Intimacy Facilitator.....**Gloria Imseih Petrelli**

Assistant to the Costume Designer.....**Steph Taylor**

Assistant Lighting Designer.....**Brenden Marble**

Script Assistant.....**Layla Bahmanziari**

Stage Management Intern .....**Emi Suarez**

Arabic Language Coach.....**Martin Yousif Zebari**

Dialect Coach.....**Louis Sallan**

Vocal Coach.....**Eva Breneman**

Khigga Instructor.....**Phaedra Darwish**

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.

The Goodman is supported by a Grant of U.S. Department of Treasury funds through the City of Chicago. The opinions, conclusions and recommendations expressed in our work are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Treasury or the City of Chicago.

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

**ALI LOUIS BOURZGUI\*** (Young Mazin/Yousif) makes his Goodman and Chicago debut. Credits include the Broadway national tour of *The Band's Visit* (Haled). Select regional credits include *Fun Home* (Theaterworks Hartford); *West Side Story*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Shakespeare in Love* (Hope Rep); and *Spring Awakening*, *The Tempest* (Ghostlit Rep). Voice over credits include *Quiet Part Loud* (Jordan Peele/Gimlet). @ali.louis

**MATTICO DAVID\***, he/him (Yasir/Mazin) Off-Broadway credits include *Selling Kabul* and *Noura* (Playwrights Horizons). Regional credits include *Noura* (Shakespeare Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Detroit Public Theatre, Marin Theatre Company); *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Boeing, Boeing*, *A Stone Carver*, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, *Best of Friends*, *Apartment 3A*, *Corktown*, *Bleeding Red*, *Consider the Oyster*, *Growing Pretty*, *White Buffalo* (Purple Rose Theatre Company); *American Buffalo*, *Disgraced* (Jet Theatre); *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (Flint City Theatre).

**BECCA KHALIL\*** (Young Layal/Marwa) is overjoyed to be making their Goodman Theatre debut. Credits include *Settlements*, *Ritu Comes Home* (InterAct); *Iphigenia in Aulis* (PAC Theatre); !!!CAAMMPPP!! (LA Fringe Festival); *Brainpeople* (Shoebox Theatre); *Hulu Motel* (Hulu); and early readings of Heather Raffo's *Noura*, among others. Film and

television credits include Run the World (Starz); High Maintenance (HBO); Aloo, Basement, Love, The Farewell (Amazon Prime). Khalil is currently represented by Natasha Matallana at Take 3 Talent. beccakhalil.com @beccakhalil

**ANGEL ALZEIDAN\***, she/they (US Young Layal/Marwa) makes her Chicago and Goodman Theatre debut. Credits include Siluetas (Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center and Power Street Theatre Company). Alzeidan has received their training from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in NYC and is currently working towards her BFA in musical theater from The New School in NYC. Alzeidan is represented by MMV Talent. @angelalzeidan\_\_

**JONATHAN SHABOO** (Voice of Farid, US Yasir/Mazin) is thrilled to be making his Goodman debut. Chicago credits include the world premiere of Peabody (Young People's Theatre of Chicago). U.S. national tour credits include Evil Dead: The Musical. International credits include We Will Rock You (Starvox Ent.); North American premiere of Julie: After Strindberg (Untold Wants.); Greater Expectations (Second City Toronto) and The Ministry of Mundane Mysteries (Outside The March Theatre). Shaboo is a SWANA-Canadian director and award-winning comedian. He is a graduate of The School at Steppenwolf, a founding member of Bramble Theatre Company in Chicago and is slated to direct their world premiere of Evil Perfect in the fall of 2023.

**SHADEE VOSSOUGH\*** (Voice of Samira, US Karima/Layal) is an Iranian-American actor and improviser based in Chicago. Goodman Theatre credits include Layalina (New Stages Festival). Chicago credits include My Dear Hussein (Silk Road Rising); Deer and the Lovers (First Floor Theater); Black History Month Show, Urban Twist, The Bob Curry Fellowship 2018 Showcase (The Second City). Regional credits include The Tenth Muse and Romeo and Juliet (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Television credits include The Big Leap (FOX). Vossoughi is a recipient of the NBCUniversal Second City Bob Curry Fellowship. She is represented by Stewart Talent Chicago. @shadeev

**CHRIS KHOSHABA** (US Young Mazin/Yousif, US Sahir/Amin) makes his Goodman debut. Born and raised in Skokie, IL, Chris' past theater credits include Rent (Porchlight Music Theatre); The Tragedy of King Christophe (The House Theatre of Chicago); I Call My Brothers (Interrobang Theatre Project) and King Lear (Redtwist Theatre). He has a BFA in Acting from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

**MARTIN YOUSIF ZEBARI**, he/they (Playwright) is an Iraqi-born, Assyrian-American actor and playwright based in Los Angeles. Their play Layalina received two workshops and staged readings as part of Goodman Theatre's Future Labs and National Queer Theatre's Criminal Queerness Festival, and most recently received a workshop production in Goodman Theatre's New Stages Festival. As an actor, their credits include

Yasmina's Necklace and The Winter's Tale (Goodman Theatre); Drowning in Cairo (Golden Thread Productions); For the Right Reasons (Atlantic Theatre Company); Mosque4Mosque (National Queer Theatre); Guards at the Taj (Steppenwolf Theatre); Mary Stuart (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); The Hard Problem (Court Theatre); Human Terrain (Broken Nose Theatre); A Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); Macbeth, Comedy of Errors, Failure: A Love Story and The Magical Mind of Billy Shakespeare (Illinois Shakespeare Festival). They have appeared on NBC's Chicago Med. They hold a BFA in Acting from the Arts University of Bournemouth, England and are represented by Stewart Talent Chicago.  
MartinYousifZebari.com

**SIVAN BATTAT** (Director) is a theater director and community organizer who has developed work with companies including Roundabout, NYTW, Drama League, Atlantic, Ars Nova, National Queer Theatre, New Georges, New York Stage & Film, Cape Cod Theatre Project, MCC and more. New York credits include Who the Fuck is Ahmed (Lincoln Performing Arts Centre); She He Me (National Queer Theater); Baba Karam & McArabia (Atlantic Middle Eastern Mixfest); Pie Shop Play (Corkscrew Theater Festival) and East o', West o'!, (ANTFest, Ars Nova). Assistant directing credits include Trouble in Mind on Broadway. Regional credits include Heroes of the Fourth Turning (Studio Theatre); Edessa of Baghdad (B-Street Theatre); His Majesty, Herself (Adventure Theatre MTC); The Night Traveller (Cutting Ball Theater); Close to Home (Uprising

Theatre) and Coexistence My Ass (Harvard University/Tour). They are the associate artistic director of Noor Theatre, and an alum of the Roundabout Directing Fellowship, the Musical Directing Fellowship with the Drama League and Theatre Communications Group's Rising Leaders of Color.  
SivanBattat.com

**CASABOYCE** (Set Designer) is a Chicago-based creative and production studio bridging art, architecture, design and storytelling for live events and performance founded in 2020 by Andrew Boyce and Adrianna Desier Durantt, whose multidisciplinary projects span theater, opera, dance, music, fashion, television and film. Past productions at the Goodman include Dana H., Lady in Denmark and Another Word for Beauty. Recent Chicago credits with Steppenwolf, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, Chicago Shakes, Court Theatre and Drury Lane. Recent New York credits include SS23 NYFW Runway for Lela Rose and ASHLYN. casaboyce.com

**DINA EL-AZIZ**, she/her (Costume Designer) Off-Broadway credits include The Vagrant Trilogy (The Public Theater); Weightless (WP Theater); Spindle Shuttle Needle (Clubbed Thumb); Heartland (Geva Theater/59E59); First Down (Noor Theater/59E59) and Hindsight (Fault Line Theater). Regional theater credits include A Distinct Society (Pioneer Theater); English (Studio Theater); Selling Kabul (Seattle Rep); Unseen (OSF); When Monica Met Hillary (Miami New Drama); This is

Who I Am (OSF, Woolly Mammoth, The Guthrie, ART, PlayCo); 9 Parts of Desire (Portland Center Stage); King Lear (Northern Stage); Noura (The Guthrie, The Old Globe) and Selling Kabul (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Other theater credits include One Night, P\*ssyC\*ck Know Nothing, Marjana and the Forty Thieves Pay No Attention To The Girl (Target Margin Theater). El-Aziz holds an MFA in Design for Stage and Film from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. [dinae.me](http://dinae.me)

**JASON LYNCH** (Lighting Designer) returns to the Goodman, where credits include the ripple, the wave that carried me home, Fannie (The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer), School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play, I Hate It Here, Ohio State Murders, The Sound Inside and Lottery Day. Additional Chicago credits include work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, TimeLine Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, among others. Regional credits include Alley Theatre, Alliance Theatre, American Players Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Barrington Stage Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, City Theatre Company, Dallas Theater Center, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Geva Theatre Center, Huntington Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theatre, The Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Seattle Repertory Theatre and Trinity Repertory Company. He was the recipient of the 2022 Equity Jeff Award for his work on Choir Boy at Steppenwolf and the 2019 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, which recognizes emerging theatrical



designers within the Chicago area. Lynch is a proud member of The Association for Lighting Production and Design and is represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE and The Gersh Agency. [jasondlynch.com](http://jasondlynch.com)

**ERIC BACKUS** (Sound Designer) is a Chicago-based composer and sound designer. Recent Chicago credits include *Plano* (First Floor Theater, Steppenwolf LookOut), *Short Shakes! Comedy of Errors* (Chicago Shakespeare) and *Every Brilliant Thing* (Windy City Playhouse). Off-Broadway credits include *Hollow/Wave* (United Solo Festival) and *Churchill* (SoloChicago Theatre). Regional credits include *Dad's Season Tickets*, *Mark Twain's River of Song*, *The All Night Strut* (Milwaukee Rep); *Shakespeare in Love*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (TheatreSquared); *Legally Blonde* (Northern Stage); *Working: A Musical*, *Murder for Two* (Merry Go Round Playhouse). In addition to theater, he has composed and sound designed for podcasts and film. [ericbackus.com](http://ericbackus.com).

**RONNIE MALLEY** (Sound Designer) is a multi-instrumentalist musician, actor, composer, sound designer, producer, playwright and educator. For over 15 years, he has worked on regional and international theatrical productions, including with renowned award-winning directors Mary Zimmerman, David Cromer and Aaron Posner. Chicago credits include *Layalina*, *The Jungle Book*, *Mirror of the Invisible World* (Goodman Theatre); *Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *A Disappearing Number* (TimeLine Theatre); *Great*

Expectations (Silk Road Rising/Remy Bumppo, Jeff-nominated for Best Original Music), Ziryab, The Songbird of Andalusia (author and solo performer), Obstacle Course (Silk Road Rising); Scenes from 73 Years (Medina Theatre Collective); The Shroud Maker, The Sultan's Dilemma (International Voices Project); and American Griot (co-author, MVCC/Silk Road Rising, Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Award 2020). Other credits include The Band's Visit (North American tour); The White Snake (Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Arabian Nights (Lookingglass, Arena Stage, Berkeley Rep Theatres); Little Syria (co-creator, Brooklyn Academy of Music); and Mo (Netflix). Malley has a BA in Global Music Studies from DePaul University and is currently a graduate student at the University of Chicago. He is also a teaching artist and frequent guest lecturer at universities. Malley performs regularly with several global music ensembles and was awarded the 2023 Michael Jaffee Visionary Award from Chamber Music America. Malley is a member of Actors' Equity Association and the American Federation of Musicians.

**RACHAEL JIMENEZ**, she/her (Casting) originally from the Los Angeles area, is in her eighth season in the Goodman Theatre casting department. In addition to her work at the Goodman, she has cast productions at Theater Wit, Windy City Playhouse, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company and Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival. She is a proud member of CSA (Casting Society of America) and part of the Casting Director Trainer team in Broadway for Racial Justice's Casting Directive

program. Jimenez received her BA in Theatre Arts, Entrepreneurship and Comparative Religious Studies from California State University, Fullerton.

**LAUREN PORT**, she/her (Casting) joined the Goodman as Casting Director in August of 2019 after having spent eleven years casting in NYC, a decade of that at Caparelliotis Casting where she worked on a number of Goodman productions over the years, including *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, Parts 1, 2 and 3, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, *Disgraced* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Lauren has also worked on countless Broadway/ Off-Broadway and other regional theatre productions. Some Broadway highlights include: *Junk*, *Meteor Shower*, *A Doll's House Part 2*, *The Front Page*, *It's Only a Play*, *Disgraced*, *Fish in the Dark*, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Grace*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Seminar*, *Stick Fly*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Fences*. TV/Film includes: *New Amsterdam* (NBC). *American Odyssey* (NBC) and *Steel Magnolias* (Sony for Lifetime). Lauren is a four-time Artios Award winner, a recipient of the 40th Annual Media Access Awards and a proud member of the Casting Society of America.

**YASMIN ZACARIA MIKHAIEL**, she/ they (Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, journalist and oral historian with roots in and around Chicago. As a queer, fat, brown femme, they endeavor to amplify and archive stories that go lost/ stolen/forgotten. Their writing and research explore possibility models for a more

inclusive and sustainable theater culture and industry. Mikhael holds a M.A. in Performance as Public Practice from The University of Texas at Austin and a B.F.A. in Dramaturgy/Criticism from The Theatre School at DePaul University. They are City Bureau's digital producer and teach as part-time faculty at TTS DePaul. [YasminZacaria.com](http://YasminZacaria.com)

**JONATHAN L. GREEN** (Dramaturg) is the Director of New Works for Goodman Theatre, where his dramaturgy credits include the world premieres of Christina Anderson's *How to Catch Creation*, Rogelio Martinez's *Blind Date*, Charles Smith's *Objects in the Mirror*, and Doug Wright's, Scott Frankel's and Michael Korie's *War Paint*, as well as works in development by Charise Castro Smith, Octavio Solis, Abe Koogler, Bess Wohl, Paola Lázaro, and Dave Harris. As a director, he has worked with Sideshow Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Diversionary Theatre, TheatreWorks, Greenhouse Theater Center, Silk Road Rising, Playwrights' Center, Chicago Dramatists, and more. Green served as the Artistic Director of Sideshow Theatre Company from 2007-2020, where his directing credits include *X*, *HeLa*, *truth and reconciliation*, *Antigonick*, *The Happiest Place on Earth*, and *Stupid F\*\*king Bird*.

**JACI ENTWISLE\*** (Production Stage Manager) returns to the Goodman and *Layalina* after having been with the show for New Stages Festival. Other Chicago credits include *Dreamgirls* (Paramount); *Elf* (Drury Lane); *Lookingglass Alice* (Lookingglass Theatre); *Blue Man Group Chicago*; *She the*

People, #DateMe and the 108th and 109th Mainstage revues (Second City); Victims of Duty, Simpatico (A Red Orchid Theatre); Travesties, Our Class (Remy Bumppo Theatre). Regional credits include Nothing to Lose (But Our Chains) and She the People (Woolly Mammoth Theatre).

**ABIGAIL MEDRANO's** (Stage Manager) credits include The Notebook (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley (Northlight Theater); Next to Normal, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Witch (Writers Theatre); and The Humans (American Theater Company). Other credits include Paradise Square: A New Musical (Chicago Production); and Still Ready (Actors Theatre of Louisville).

**SUSAN V. BOOTH** (Goodman Theatre Artistic Director) rejoined Goodman Theatre in the fall of 2022, having previously served as the theater's director of new play development. In the intervening years, she was the Artistic Director of Atlanta's Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre, where she initiated both local and national programming serving artists, young people, educators, and civic partners. Under her leadership, the Alliance premiered new works from Pearl Cleage, Tarrell McCraney, Stephen King, Kristian Bush, Mike Lew and many others, as well as originating commercial partnerships on such projects as The Prom; Tuck Everlasting; Ghost Brothers of Darkland County; The Color Purple; Bring It On: The Musical; Twyla Tharp's Come Fly Away; Sister Act: The Musical; Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk; and Jesus Christ Superstar GOSPEL.

She has directed nationally at Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, Ford's Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and others. She holds degrees from Denison and Northwestern Universities and was a fellow of the National Critics Institute and the Kemper Foundation. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory Universities and is a past president of the board of directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field. She has been a grants panelist for the Doris Duke, Mellon, Heinz, USAA, and NEA, and has been a frequent TEDx speaker. Booth's leadership is underwritten by the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle, an initiative to support and promote women's theater leadership funded by the Helen Gurley Brown Foundation. She serves on the board of the Emory Center for Ethics and is a member of the International Women's Forum. She is married to Max Leventhal and is the proud mother of Moira Rose Leventhal.

**ROCHE EDWARD SCHULFER** (Goodman Theatre Executive Director/CEO) started working in the Goodman Theatre box office and became executive director in 1980. Since that time he has overseen more than 400 productions including more than 200 premieres. He initiated the Goodman's annual production of A Christmas Carol, which celebrated 45 years as Chicago's leading holiday arts tradition in 2022. 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 a 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, *Why Not For Profit Theater*, has been seen at numerous theater companies and conferences around the country. Mr. Schulfer was born in Chicago and is a lifelong resident of the area.

**NOTE:** Bios are current as of February 13, 2023. Full bios also appear online at [GoodmanTheatre.org/Layalina](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/Layalina).



# 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 Susan V. Booth 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 Robert Falls’ productions of *Death of a Salesman* and *The Iceman Cometh*). Goodman Theatre artists and productions have earned two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards, over 160 Jeff Awards and many more accolades. In addition, the Goodman is the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle;” and its annual holiday tradition *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers. The Goodman also frequently serves as a production partner with local off-Loop theaters and national and international companies by providing financial support or physical space for a variety of artistic endeavors.

Committed to three core values of Quality, Diversity and Community, the Goodman proactively makes inclusion the fabric of the institution and develops education and community engagement programs that support arts as education. This

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

Goodman Theatre was founded by William O. Goodman and his family in honor of their son Kenneth, an important figure in Chicago's cultural renaissance in the early 1900s. The Goodman family's legacy lives on through the continued work and dedication of Kenneth's family, including Albert Ivar Goodman, who with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the necessary funds for the creation of the new Goodman center in 2000.

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

# **accessible & enhanced performances**

## **Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour**

**Touch Tours for the 2022/2023 Season will not have access to the stage due to current health and safety protocols, but will feature alternate pre-show sensory introductions.**

**NOTE: Touch tours start at 12:30pm**

**Layalina | Sunday, March 26 at 2pm**

**The Cherry Orchard | Saturday, April 29 at 2pm**

**Antonio's Song | Sunday, May 21 at 2pm**

**Unlock tickets with promo code AUDIO.**

## **American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreted Performance**

**Layalina | Saturday, April 1 at 2pm**

**The Cherry Orchard | Friday, April 28 at 8pm**

**Antonio's Song | Saturday, May 27 at 2pm**

**Unlock tickets with promo code SIGN.**

## **Open-Captioned Performance**

**Layalina | Sunday, April 2 at 2pm**

**The Cherry Orchard | Sunday, April 30 at 2pm**

**Antonio's Song | Sunday, May 28 at 2pm**

**Unlock tickets with promo code OPEN.**

## **Spanish Subtitles Performance**

**Layalina** | Saturday, April 1 at 8pm

**The Cherry Orchard** | Saturday, April 29 at 8pm

**Antonio's Song** | Saturday, May 27 at 8pm

**Unlock tickets with promo code SPANISH.**

## **Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance**

**The Who's Tommy** | Saturday, July 22 at 2pm.

**Unlock tickets with promo code SENSORY.**

The Goodman is proud to offer an inclusive range of programs and services that help make performances accessible to more audiences, including enhanced performances, accessible seating, braille and large print programs and complimentary Assistive Listening Devices and Sensory Bags. Complimentary tickets for Personal Care Assistants and professional caregivers are also available. For additional information, assistance or an accommodation not listed, visit our Guest Services Desk today or e-mail [\*\*Access@GoodmanTheatre.org\*\*](mailto:Access@GoodmanTheatre.org).

More details about accessibility services can be found at [\*\*GoodmanTheatre.org/Access\*\*](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/Access).

## **ELIZA AND NEIL STERN**

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## **LENORE ENLOE AND MATTHEW HOLTANASL**

Interpreted Performance Sponsor