CONTACT: Denise Schneider and Ata Younan **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **August 24, 2022**

**MARY BETH FISHER, KIRSTEN FITZGERALD, ANNE E. THOMPSON AND BUBBA WEILER TO STAR IN**

***SWING STATE* – PLAYWRIGHT REBECCA GILMAN AND DIRECTOR ROBERT FALLS’ 6TH COLLABORATION IN FOUR DECADES**

**\*\*\*THE WORLD-PREMIERE MARKS GILMAN’S 10TH GOODMAN THEATRE PRODUCTION, MAKING HER ITS MOST-PRODUCED CONTEMPORARY PLAYWRIGHT; *SWING STATE* APPEARS OCTOBER 7 – NOVEMBER 13 IN THE OWEN THEATRE\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright **Rebecca Gilman** marks her 10th production at Goodman Theatre, her longtime creative home, with *Swing State*—directed by Tony Award-winner **Robert Falls** in their 6th collaboration over 35 years. Hailed as “one of Chicago’s hottest playwrights” (*Chicago Tribune*), Gilman is the most-produced contemporary playwright in Goodman history with nine world premieres out of 10, including five commissions. A cast of Chicago powerhouses—**Mary Beth Fisher** (Peg), **Kirsten Fitzgerald** (Sheriff Kris), **Anne E. Thompson** (Dani) and Chicago native **Bubba Weiler** (Ryan)—appear in Gilman’s contemporary portrait of America's heartland in a time when it feels like everyone's way of life is in danger of disappearing. *Swing State* appears October 7 – November 13 in the 350-seat flexible Owen Theatre; opening night is Sunday, October 16. Tickets ($15 –$45, subject to change) are now available at GoodmanTheatre.org/SwingState or by phone at 312-443-3800. The Goodman is grateful for the support of The Roy Cockrum Foundation (Principal Support); The Edgerton Foundation (New Play Award); and The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation (Production Support).

"I'm beyond delighted to be back at the Goodman, working with Bob and this amazing cast—all artists I love and respect. I can’t imagine a better homecoming,” said playwright **Rebecca Gilman**, whose previous collaborations with Falls include *Blue Surge* (2001), *Dollhouse* (2005), the Goodman commission *A True History of the Johnstown Flood* (2010), the world premiere of *Luna Gale* (2014) and *Soups, Stews and Casseroles: 1976* (2016).

The Goodman’s current 2022/2023 Season is the final line-up of plays that Robert Falls selected as Artistic Director. After 35 years leading creative operations for one of America’s largest theaters, he steps down from that position this month. In this season, he will also direct Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* in Spring 2023.

“I’m excited to once again work with Rebecca, one of my favorite longtime collaborators, on her fantastic new play,” said director **Robert Falls**. “We’ve assembled an extraordinary company of actors—including the great Mary Beth Fisher, who has been a muse of Rebecca’s for more than two decades. It’s a perfect work to kick off the new 2022/2023 Season in the Owen Theatre.”

Understudies for this production include **Jennifer Engstrom** (Sheriff Kris), **Jessica Ervin** (Dani), **Laura T. Fisher** (Peg) and **Jack Lancaster** (Ryan)**.** The creative team includes **Todd Rosenthal** (Set Design); **Evelyn Danner** (Costume Design); **Eric Southern** (Lighting Design); **Richard Woodbury** (Original Music and Sound Design). Casting is by **Rachael Jimenez**, CSA and **Lauren Port**, CSA. **Patrick Fries** is the Production Stage Manager and **Neena Arndt** is the Dramaturg.

Falls first encountered Gilman nearly 25 years ago, when he read *The Glory of Living* (written in 1998 and a 2002 Pulitzer Prize finalist that was first produced at Circle Theatre). Soon after, Falls commissioned her to write a new play for the Goodman, and *Spinning Into Butter* premiered in the Goodman Studio in 1999, directed by Les Waters, and was subsequently produced at Lincoln Center Theater (2000) and made into a feature film starring Sarah Jessica Parker. On the heels of that success, Gilman’s second Goodman commission, *Boy Gets Girl*, premiered at the Goodman in 2000 (directed by the late Michael Maggio), transferred to Manhattan Theatre Club and was named by *Time* magazine as one of the “Best Theatre Productions of the Decade.” Falls later directed both *Blue Surge* (2001) and *Dollhouse* (2005)—a modern interpretation of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. Gilman’s *The Crowd You’re In With*, directed by Wendy C. Goldberg, made its Chicago debut in 2009 at the Goodman. Her next three works—the Goodman commission *A True History of the Johnstown Flood*; the world premiere of *Luna Gale*; and *Soups, Stews and Casseroles: 1976*—were all directed by Falls in 2010, 2014 and 2016, respectively. *Luna Gale* earned the 2016 LA Drama Critics Circle, as well as the 2015 Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award and the 2014 Jeff Award for New Work. More recently, *Twilight Bowl* directed by Erica Weiss, appeared in the Owen in 2019.

Rebecca Gilman is an artistic associate at Goodman Theatre. Her plays include*Luna Gale; A True History of the Johnstown Flood; Dollhouse; Boy Gets Girl; Spinning Into Butter; Blue Surge* (all of which were originally produced by the Goodman); *Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976* and *The Crowd You’re in With*(also at the Goodman); *The Glory of Living; The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*and *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Gilman is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award, The Harper Lee Award, The Scott McPherson Award, The Prince Prize for Commissioning New Work, The Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, The Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, The George Devine Award, The Theatre Masters Visionary Award, The Great Plains Playwright Award, a Global Connections Grant by Theatre Communications Group, an American Scandinavian Foundation Creative Writing Grant and an Illinois Arts Council playwriting fellowship.*Boy Gets Gir*l received an Olivier nomination for Best New Play. Gilman was named a finalist for the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for *The Glory of Living*. She is a member of the Council of the Dramatists Guild of America and a board member of the ACLU of Illinois. A graduate of the MFA in playwriting program from the University of Iowa, Gilman is now a professor of playwriting and screenwriting at Northwestern University as part of its MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage program. In 2016, she was inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame.

Hailed as “Chicago’s most essential director” (*Chicago Tribune*), Tony Award-winner **Robert Falls**’ theater and opera work over four decades has included ground-breaking new plays, reimagined classics, large-scale musical works and more. Falls’ major recent projects include a new production of *Don Giovanni* (Lyric Opera of Chicago/Dallas Opera); David Cale’s *We’re Only Alive for a Short Amount of Time* (Goodman Theatre and the Public Theater NYC); *The Winter’s Tale; An Enemy of the People*; a new adaptation for the stage of Roberto Bolaño’s epic novel *2666*; and *The Iceman Cometh*, starring Nathan Lane and Brian Dennehy (Brooklyn Academy of Music). Two of Falls’ most highly acclaimed Broadway productions—*Death of a Salesman* and *Long Day’s Journey into Night*—first staged at the Goodman, were honored with seven Tony Awards and three Drama Desk Awards. Other noteworthy Broadway productions include *Desire under the Elms*; *The Night of the Iguana*; Conor McPherson’s *Shining City* (Tony Award nomination); Eric Bogosian’s *Talk Radio* (Tony Award nomination); *The Rose Tattoo* at Circle in the Square (Tony Award nomination); Horton Foote's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Young Man from Atlanta;* and *Elton John and Tim Rice’s Aida.* Off-Broadway productions include Beth Henley’s *The Jacksonian*; Rebecca Gilman’s *Blue Surge*; Nicky Silver’s *The Food Chain*; and Eric Bogosian’s *subUrbia* at Lincoln Center Theater (Obie Award). For the Goodman, Falls’ extensive credits include *King Lea*r; *Uncle Vanya*; *Measure for Measure; Galileo; The Tempest; Hughie; A Touch of the Poet; The Misanthrope; Landscape of the Body; Three Sisters; Uncle Vanya;* his own adaptation of *The Seagull*; and the Rodgers and Hart musical *Pal Joey* for which he wrote a new book. He also directed the American premiere of Alan Ayckbourn’s *House* and *Garden,* and the world premiere of Arthur Miller’s final play *Finishing the Picture*. He is the recipient of multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards, as well as such prestigious honors as the O’Neill Medallion (EugeneO’Neill Society) and the Savva Morozov Diamond Award fromtheMoscow Art Theatre. In 2015, Falls was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame.

**THE COMPANY OF *SWING STATE***

***For images, bios and additional information about the artists, visit the*** [***Play Detail Page***](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/swingstate)***.***

Peg………...............Mary Beth Fisher  
Sheriff Kris…………Kirsten Fitzgerald  
Dani…………………..Anne E. Thompson

Ryan………………….Bubba Weiler

Understudies for this production include Jennifer Engstrom (Sheriff Kris), Jessica Ervin (Dani), Laura T. Fisher (Peg) and Jack Lancaster (Ryan).

Set Design by Todd Rosenthal

Costume Design by Evelyn Danner

Lighting Design by Eric Southern

Original Music and Sound Design by Richard Woodbury

Casting is by Rachael Jimenez, CSA and Lauren Port, CSA. Patrick Fries is the Production Stage Manager and Neena Arndt is the Dramaturg.

**ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES**

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

ASL-Interpreted: Friday, October 28 at 8pm – An American Sign Language interpreter signs the action/text as played.

Touch Tour and Audio-Described Performance: Saturday, November 5, 12:30pm Touch Tour; 2pm performance – The action/text is audibly enhanced for patrons via headset. *NOTE: 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.*

Spanish Subtitles: Saturday November 5 at 8pm.

Open-Captioned: Sunday, November 6 at 2pm – An LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.

Please note: Our current Health and Safety Protocols require masks while in the theater. These protocols are subject to change and patrons will be notified in advance of their performance of any shift in our policies. Review our current policy at GoodmanTheatre.org/Protocols.

**ABOUT GOODMAN THEATRE**

Chicago’s theater since 1925, **Goodman Theatre** is a not-for-profit arts and community organization in the heart of the Loop, distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and community engagement. The theater’s artistic priorities include new play development (more than 150 world or American premieres), large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics. Artists and productions have earner two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and more than 160 Jeff Awards, among other accolades. The Goodman is the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle.” Its longtime annual holiday tradition *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers in Chicago. The Goodman also frequently serves as a production and program partner with national and international companies and Chicago’s Off-Loop theaters.

Using the tools of the theatrical profession, the Goodman’s Education and Engagement programs aim to develop generations of citizens who understand the cultures and stories of diverse voices. The Goodman’s Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement is the home of these programs, which are offered free of charge for Chicago youth—85% of whom come from underserved communities—schools and life-long learners.

As a cultural and community organization invested in quality, diversity and community, Goodman Theatre is committed to using the art of theater for a better Chicago. Goodman Theatre’s [Action Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism and Access (IDEAA)](https://www.goodmantheatre.org/Accountability) was born out of the belief that progress means action, which includes building on the decades-long commitment to using art, assets and resources to contribute to a more just, equitable and anti-racist society.

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 on the new Goodman center in 2000.

Today, Goodman Theatre is led by Artistic Director **Robert Falls** (**Susan V. Booth** will assume that role this fall) and Executive Director **Roche Schulfer**. Theater leadership also includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective: **Rebecca Gilman**, **Dael Orlandersmith**, **Henry Godinez**, **Steve Scott**, **Kimberly Senior**, **Chuck Smith**, **Regina Taylor** 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.

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