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312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **OCTOBER 12, 2023**

**ANNOUNCING THE 2023 *NEW STAGES* FESTIVAL AND *NEW STAGES* RESIDENCY COHORT**

**\*\*FESTIVAL LINE-UP FEATURES NEW MUSICALS BY CHICAGO BLUES LEGEND BOBBY RUSH & STEPHEN HELPER AND**

**RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE’S TOM MORELLO & ZAYD AYERS DOHRN + PLAYS BY MALLORY RAVEN-ELLEN**

**BACKSTROM, KARISSA MURRELL MYERS AND LUCY THURBER, NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 10\*\***

**\*\*\*RESIDENCY COHORT WELCOMES SIX PLAYWRIGHTS: RAMMEL CHAN, DOLORES DIAZ, NJ DRAINE,**

**BRYNNE FRAUENHOFFER, TERRY GUEST AND MATTHEW C. YEE\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) Blues and rock artists headline the 2023 *New Stages* Festival, under new Artistic Director Susan V. Booth, as staged readings of two new musical theater projects + three new plays comprise Goodman Theatre’s 19th annual celebration of innovative new plays—offered free of charge. The line-up includes ***Revolution(s)***with book by Zayd Ayers Dohrn, music and lyrics by Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine), directed by Steve H. Broadnax III; ***Slippin’ Through the Cracks: The Blues Journey of Bobby Rush*** *w*ith book by Bobby Rush and Stephen Helper, songs by Rush, directed by Helper and Arminda Thomas; ***Black Bear Island*** by Karissa Murrell Myers, directed by Henry Godinez; ***Perry Street*** by Lucy Thurber, directed by Thomas Sadoski; and ***Cephianne’s Reflection*** by Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom, directed by Malkia Stampley. *New Stages* Festival appears November 30 – December 10 in the 350-seat Owen Theatre; reservations for free tickets open on October 23 at GoodmanTheatre.org/Festival or by phone at 312.443.3800 (12noon – 5pm, daily). Though the readings are not up for critical review, the Goodman welcomes members of the media to attend and cover the *New Stages* Festival; for ticket arrangements and/or interview requests, email [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) (*media only*).

Booth also announces six playwrights named to Goodman Theatre’s 2023 *New Stages*Residency (formerly the Playwrights Unit)—**Rammel Chan, Dolores Diaz, NJ Draine, Brynne Fraenhoffer, Terry Guest** and **Matthew C. Yee**. This year-long program for Chicago-area theater artists commissions up to four theatrical projects per season—now including single- and multiple-authored works, non-musical and musical alike—with the artists-in-residence meeting bi-monthly with the Goodman’s artistic staff and fellow cohort artists to develop their new works towards mid-point and final readings.

“As Artistic Director, it’s an honor and a thrill to offer such distinguished, diverse collection of new works for our 2023 *New Stages* Festival. Each one of these projects exemplifies something special and singular—a rare treat for audiences who, like me, relish in the discovery of new American theater,” said **Susan V. Booth**. “I’m also excited to welcome these six wildly talented playwrights of our 2023 *New Stages* Residency. We look forward to collaborating with our cohort to help realize the big dreams in their work.”

More than 100 plays have appeared in the *New Stages* Festival since its inception in 2004, the majority of which have since premiered at the Goodman and its peer theaters across the country. Each year, the Festival’s final weekend draws national theater industry and new work professionals to Chicago for exclusive social events, alongside Festival programming. Industry members seeking arrangements to attend **Professionals Weekend** should email Lena Romano ([LenaRomano@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:LenaRomano@GoodmanTheatre.org)). 

The *New Stages* Festival is made possible by The Joyce Foundation, which provides Major Support for Diverse Artistic and Professional Development. The Goodman is grateful for the generosity of its New Work sponsors, including: Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation and the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Major Support of New Work; Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee New Works Fund, Major Support of New Play Development; The Glasser and Rosenthal Family, Mayer Brown LLP, and Shaw Family Supporting Organization, Support of New Work.

**THE 2023 *NEW STAGES* FESTIVAL LINE-UP**

***Revolution(s)***

Book by Zayd Ayers Dohrn

Music and lyrics by Tom Morello

Directed by Steve H. Broadnax III

November 30 | 7:30pm

December 3, 6, 9 |7:30 PM

December 10 | 2pm

Soldier and aspiring musician Hampton Weems comes home from Afghanistan to find the South Side of Chicago is also occupied territory - and he’s accidentally joined the resistance. Featuring songs by Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine, Nightwatchman, Street Sweeper Social Club), *Revolution(s)* is a punk/metal/hip-hop musical about a young artist finding his voice, why violence is as American as cherry pie, and how young radicals, across generations, are still motivated by love.

***Slippin’ Through the Cracks: The Blues Journey of Bobby Rush***

Book by Bobby Rush and Stephen Helper

Songs by Bobby Rush

Directed by Stephen Helper and Arminda Thomas

December 8 | 7:30pm

The Blues journey of Bobby Rush takes us from the sharecropped fields and earthy juke joints of the deep south to the hot Chicago Blues scene where he broke the color barrier on Rush Street. In this new musical, created with writer Stephen Helper, the 89-year-old Blues superstar shares his moving, often hilarious story of “slippin’ through the cracks” he found in the walls of prejudice, hardship and loss to arrive at resilience and reconciliation. A celebration of authentic Black culture, more than 25 of his great Blues and Funk songs will tell the tale and rock the house.

***Black Bear Island***

By Karissa Murrell Myers

Directed by Henry Godinez

December 1 | 7:30pm

December 9 | 10am

When her estranged childhood sweetheart mysteriously dies, Amitra returns home after a 16-year absence to Black Bear Island, which legend says is haunted by a monstrous man-killing bear. As she searches for the truth and her memory starts to clear, the forest begins to engulf the house and Amitra’s past collides with her present. Regret, the unreliability of our own memories, and the paths we choose to become who we are unite in this new gothic thriller.

***Perry Street***

By Lucy Thurber

Directed by Thomas Sadoski

December 2 and 9 | 2pm

Phil and Maggie live a life of leisure in their handsome West Village brownstone. They indulge in the finer things and find special joy bringing aspiring artists into their home and making them part of the family—with a few strings attached. But when their daughter, Becca, returns from Brown University with her new girlfriend, their comfortable dynamic starts shifting in unsettling ways. This provocative new play about family, class and sex asks: what are you willing to pay for the people and things that you desire most?

***Cephianne’s Reflection***

By Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom

Directed by Malkia Stampley

December 2 | 7:30pm

December 10 | 10am

Upon coming of age, the inhabitants of the invisible island of Ma Isle journey into the wilderness, where they are gifted with special abilities. So, it has been for hundreds of years…until Cephianne, the youngest child of their immortal matriarch, fails her seeking ritual, emerging from the woods unchanged and stumbles upon an enthralling man in her mirror. Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom’s new fairytale is penned in homage to the Gullah dialect and colorful culture found off the coast of Georgia, where the descendants of enslaved peoples turn pain into power.

**ABOUT THE 2023 *NEW STAGES* RESIDENCY COHORT**

**Rammel Chan** is a Chicago-based writer, actor and comedian. His recent full-length play *House of the Deaf* was read at the Gift Theatre in 2023 as part of their In The Works reading series. His short plays have been produced by the Gift Theatre as part of TEN as well as the inaugural APIDA Festival, presented at the Goodman Theatre. His half-hour sitcom *Girl Dads* (co-written with Jim Kozyra) was a Semifinalist for the 2021 Scriptation Showcase and the 2022 WeScreenplay Competition. Other writings include: “Tourists” (Asimov’s Science Fiction), “Here” (Empyrean Literary Magazine), “Birds of the North” (The Tiger Moth Review) and “The Story and Sylvia” (Riksha). As a comedian, Chan is an alumnus of The Second City and the sketch comedy groups Stir Friday Night and Robot vs. Dinosaur. As an actor, he has performed at Goodman Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Lookingglass Theatre Company, the late Victory Gardens Theatre, Writers Theatre and Next Act Theatre in Milwaukee, as well as various TV and Film appearances. At the Goodman, he has participated in four *New Stages* Festivals as an actor. He resides in Chicago with his wife Ana and their two children, Winter and Oliver.

**Matthew C. Yee** is a playwright, composer and actor whose recent credits include the world premiere of the hit Country-Western musical *Lucy And Charlie’s Honeymoon*, for which he also wrote a book and lyrics, at Lookingglass Theatre, where he is an artistic associate. Described by the Chicago Tribune as “one of Chicago’s most impressive talents,” acting credits include the Broadway run of *Almost Famous*, *Nightwatch* (Goodman Theatre), *Cambodian Rock Band* (Victory Gardens), *Vietgone* (Writers Theatre) and numerous television credits. Yee’s work, in both music and theater, walks the line between humor and tragedy, darkness and irreverence, and seeks to explore the weird, sad and funny sensation of being human.

**Dolores Díaz** is a Chicago-based Chicana playwright from the border city of Laredo, Texas. Goodman credits: *Zulema*, in partnership with Chicago Park District, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Chicago Latino Theater Alliance and the National Museum of Mexican Art. Upcoming credits: *Black Sunday*, which will world premiere at TimeLine Theatre in 2024. Additional credits and awards include: *Man of the People* (Stage Left Theater), *MetaMorphic* (Shattered Globe Theatre’s Protégé Program, workshopped with WildWind Lab at Texas Tech and Northeastern Illinois University, Semi-finalist 2021 O’Neill Playwrights Conference and Bay Area Playwrights Festival), *The Curse of Giles Corey* (Seven Devils Playwrights Conference finalist and semi-finalist for the 2020 Bay Area Playwrights Festival and blue Ink Playwriting Award), *Los Tequileros* (16th Street Theater Workshop). Additional work includes Broken Nose Theatre, Nothing Without a Company and Teatro Chicano de Laredo. Díaz has taught at Texas Tech University, Columbia College, Northwestern University, and the National High School Institute at Northwestern University. She is a resident at Chicago Dramatists, a graduate of Northwestern’s MFA Program for the Stage and Screen, and currently serves as a Dramatists Guild Co-Representative for the Chicago Region.

**NJ Draine** is a Chicago-based educator, playwright and singer-songwriter, who worked previously at the Goodman for a Future Labs workshop of *The Housing Situation on Neptune*. Through their music and writing practice, they are most interested in exploring the bitingly absurd, the poetic and the surreality of experiences yet to be realized.

**Terry Guest** is a three-time Joseph Jefferson Award-winning playwright, actor, director and teaching artist. In addition to numerous acting appearances, Guest was a member of the Goodman’s 2019/2020 Playwrights Unit. His play *The Magnolia Ballet* had its National New Play Network (NNPN) rolling world premiere in 2022 and has since gone on to win two Jeff Awards (including Best Performer for Terry and Best Production), the NNPN Best New American Play Award and was featured on NPR. Guest went on to direct his play *Marie Antionette and the Magical Negros* at The Story Theatre, which won three Jeff Awards (Best Director, Best New Play for Guest and Best Ensemble). Other works include: *At The Wake of a Dead Drag Queen*, *The Madness of Mary Todd* (Goodman Playwrights Unit Commission), *A Ghost in Satin* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Andy Warhol Presents the Cocaine Play* and *Michael Jackson and the Devil’s Book*. As an actor, Guest has worked at regional theaters including the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Alliance Theatre, About Face Theatre and Actors Express. He is a Governing Ensemble member at The Story Theatre and a teaching artist at Jackalope, Writers Theatre and Chicago Children’s Theatre.

**Brynne Frauenhoffer** (she/her) is a Chicago-based playwright. Past full-length productions of her work include *Vape Naysh* (First Floor Theater, 2020) and *Bury Me* (Dandelion Theatre, 2019). The Kilroys selected her play *Pro-Am* (developed with Sideshow Theatre) for inclusion on The List 2020. Other workshops and readings include *The Young Ones* (First Floor Theater), *Synchronicity* (Salt Lake Acting Company; also named 2018 Semi-Finalist for the O’Neill Center’s National Playwrights Conference), *Pizza Hut Heartbreaker* (Commission Theatre Company) and *Shitty Christians* (Prop Thtr). Frauenhoffer’s short plays have been produced by Broken Nose Theatre, MadLab, American Blues Theater, Commission Theatre Company and the Chicago One-Minute Play Festival. She is currently looking forward to the world-premiere production of Pro-Am with First Floor Theater in May 2024. [BrynneFrau.com](http://www.brynnefrau.com)

**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. Led by Artistic Director **Susan V. Booth** and Executive Director/CEO **Roche Schulfer**, 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 theatrical practice, the Goodman’s Education and Engagement programs aim to develop generations of citizens who understand and empathize with 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 for Chicago youth—85% of whom come from underserved communities—schools and life-long learners.

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’s vast diversity should be reflected on the stages of its largest theater, we acknowledge that our efforts 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.

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.

**Julie Danis** is Chair of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, **Lorrayne Weiss** is Women’s Board President and **Kelli Garcia** is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.

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