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312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **November 21, 2023**

**SUSAN V. BOOTH’S FIRST SEASON IS GOODMAN THEATRE’S MOST SUCCESSFUL FALL QUARTER IN FIVE+ YEARS,**

**OPENING WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE AND ATTRACTING NEW AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

**\*\*NEARLY 40,000 PATRONS EXPERIENCED FALL EVENTS—THE EXTENDED RUNS OF *THE NACIREMA SOCIETY* AND *LUCHA TEOTL* PLUS THE CITYWIDE “PEARL CLEAGE FESTIVAL” AND NEWLY OPENED *THE* *MAGIC PARLOUR*\*\***

**\*\*\*NEW LEADERSHIP IN BOOTH’S FIRST SEASON INCLUDES BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR JULIE M. DANIS AND**

**BOARD PRESIDENT LINDA COBERLY; WOMEN’S BOARD PRESIDENT LORRAYNE WEISS;**

**AND SCENEMAKERS BOARD PRESIDENT KELLI GARCIA\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) Susan V. Booth’s first season as Artistic Director opens to wide critical and popular acclaim, drawing record numbers of audiences to the Goodman this fall—both newcomers to the Goodman and those returning to the theater for the first time since pre-pandemic. The most successful season opener since 2017, Pearl Cleage’s *The Nacirema Society*, directed by Lili-Anne Brown, welcomed nearly 23,000 people to its extended run in the 856-seat Albert Theatre, exceeding the production’s revenue goals. At the same time, 60% of the single-ticket purchasing audience members at *Lucha Teotl* by Christopher Llewyn Ramirez and Jeff Colangelo were new to the Goodman to experience lucha libre in 350-seat flexible Owen Theatre transformed into a professional wrestling ring. The Chicago-premiere production was produced in partnership with Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA) as part of the 2023 *Destinos* Festival. Thousands of theatergoers flocked to 13 events in the citywide “Pearl Cleage Festival,” produced in partnership with six of Chicago’s famed Off-Loop theater companies. Booth, the first woman to be named Artistic Director of Goodman Theatre in its 98-year history, will direct her first Goodman production this spring—Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* (March 2–31, 2024).

“It’s long been important to me, professionally and personally, to produce works that foster a dialogue with the community in which we’re situated. One of the best parts about returning to Chicago has been reconnecting with this audience—generous, smart, wonderfully diverse, and unlike any other in the nation—and welcoming new patrons to the conversation,” said **Susan V. Booth**. “I’m inspired by their enthusiasm for our work, which would not be possible without the partnership of Goodman Executive Director/CEO Roche Schulfer. And I’m excited to work with Julie Danis, our new Board of Trustees Chair, who brings a depth of experience over three remarkable decades of service to the Goodman.”

In addition, the Goodman opened a new performance venue. In an unprecedented partnership with acclaimed third-generation magician Dennis Watkins and Petterino’s restaurant, *The Magic Parlour* found a permanent new home in the heart of the loop in a transformed lower-level space at 50 W. Randolph—and reached record earnings with sales nearly double from the same time period in previous years. Tickets to weekly performances of *The Magic Parlour* are now available into Spring 2024; visit [TheMagicParlourChicago.com](https://www.themagicparlourchicago.com/).

“To launch her first curated season as Artistic Director, Susan Booth selected two top-tier productions of wide-ranging popular appeal; conceived of a citywide celebration of one of America’s most prolific playwrights; and deepened our long-standing partnership with one of Chicago’s most popular fall festivals spotlighting our vibrant Latino theater scene,” said Goodman Executive Director/CEO **Roche Schulfer**. “I’m grateful for Susan’s vision and leadership, and look forward to building on the success of this strong start into the holidays and beyond.”

New leadership named in conjunction with the start of Booth’s first season includes four women who build on longtime service to the Goodman: Board of Trustees Chair **Julie M. Danis** and Board of Trustees President **Linda Coberly**, Women’s Board President **Lorrayne Weiss**; and Scenemakers Board for Young Professionals President **Kelli Garcia**.

The Goodman concludes the calendar year with the 46th annual production of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (November 18 – December 31) and the 19th annual free *New Stages* Festival—featuring projects involving Chicago Blues legend Bobby Rush and Rage Against the Machine’s Tom Morello (November 30 – December 10).In winter 2024, Booth’s first curated season continues with two world-premiere productions: Emmy Award-winner Dana Delany’s *Highway Patrol* (January 20 – February 18 in the Albert) followed by *The Matchbox Magic Flute* Mary Zimmerman’s new theatrical adaptation of Mozart’s beloved opera (February 10 – March 10, in the Owen). Spring welcomes Booth’s first Goodman production to direct: Margaret Atwood’s The Penelopiad (March 2-31, in the Albert) followed by August Wilson’s Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, directed by Chuck Smith (April 13 – May 12, in the Albert). English by Sanaz Toossi, directed by Hamid Dehghani takes the stage in the Owen (May 10 – June 9) and the season concludes with the world-premiere musical *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, based on John Berendt’s iconic non-fiction book, with book by Taylor Mac, music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown, directed by Rob Ashford (June 25 – August 4).

**ABOUT THE FALL QUARTER OFFERINGS**

Booth opened the Goodman’s 2023/2024 Season with the Chicago-premiere production ***The Nacirema Society*** by Pearl Cleage, directed by Lili-Anne Brown, featuring a cast of nine—including Chicago favorites E. Faye Butler, Tyla Abercrumbie and Ora Jones. The production was the centerpiece of a month-long **Pearl Cleage Festival**—a citywide celebration honoring Booth’s longtime creative collaborator and Atlanta’s first Poet Laureate, whose distinguished career spans 40 years and 30+ plays, novels, poems and essays. With accolades from the *New York Times* (Best Seller) to the NAACP (Image Award) to Oprah’s Book Club, Cleage brings to vivid life the joys and sorrows of Black womanhood in 20th century America. Conceived by Booth and curated by Malkia Stampley, Goodman Theatre BOLD Artistic Producer, this first-of-its-kind experience aims to acquaint audiences with a fuller depth and breadth of Cleage’s work. The festival also included *Blues for an Alabama Sky* directed by Mikael Burke at Remy Bumppo Theatre Company—along with events produced in partnership with six of Chicago’s famed Off-Loop theaters: *Mad at Miles* featuring Jackie Taylor (Black Ensemble Theater); *Angry, Raucous and Shamelessly Gorgeous* (Congo Square Theatre); *A Song for Coretta* (Definition Theatre); *Chain* (eta Creative Arts Foundation); *Bourbon at the Border* (MPAACT); *Pointing at the Moon* directed by Lydia R. Diamond and *What I Learned in Paris* directed by TaRon Patton (Goodman Theatre).

Masked luchadores representing Aztec gods vie for domination in ***LUCHA TEOTL***—a no-holds-barred, 90-minute thrill ride about family, honor, tradition and redemption, written and directed by Christopher Llewyn Ramirez and Jeff Colangelo. A full-sized professional wrestling ring and a 15-foot-high Aztec calendar set the stage for the heart-pumping action, transforming the Goodman’s Owen Theatre into an immersive space that encourages audience participation. *LUCHA TEOTL* was conceived by Prism Movement Theatre and produced in partnership with Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA) as part of the 2023 *Destinos* Festival.

***The Magic Parlour***is an intimate evening of classic magic and mind-reading featuring the work of third-generation magician Dennis Watkins. Previously hosted for more than a decade at the Palmer House, the audience participates in much of the performance as Watkins wows the room with classic sleight of hand, unbelievable mind-reading and magical wisdom passed down from his grandfather. Since opening at the Palmer House on New Year’s Eve of 2011, *Dennis Watkins’ The Magic Parlour* has enjoyed phenomenal success and unimagined growth. Offering an intimate

experience with only 60 guests per show, *The Magic Parlour* has been featured in two books (*Chicago Magic: A History of Stagecraft and Spectacle* and *100 Things to do in Chicago Before You Die*).

**ABOUT GOODMAN THEATRE’S LEADERSHIP**

**Julie M. Danis** (Chair, Board of Trustees) is a writer and global strategic marketing professional. She has worked for JWT Worldwide as SVP, Director of Insight and Foresight; FCB Global as SVP, Director of Mind & Mood and Worldwide Director of Future Focus; Mondelez and Frito-Lay, Inc. She was a writer for the award-winning documentary, *The Girl Who Wore Freedom*, a columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* and commentator on public radio’s *Marketplace* program. Her essays have appeared in anthologies and online publications. She was also an adjunct lecturer at Northwestern University’s Medill School. Danis earned an MBA, MA and Certificate in Creative Non-Fiction from The University of Chicago and a BS from Northwestern and is a graduate of The Second City School of Improvisation. She has served on the boards of The American Cancer Society/Chicago Chapter, SERRV International and Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. Currently, she's a member of Northwestern University’s Council of 100 and serves as Honorary Consul of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Midwest.

**Linda Coberly** (President, Board of Trustees) is Chair of the Appellate & Critical Motions Practice at the law firm of Winston & Strawn LLP, which has been a Chicago institution since 1853. She advises clients on strategic legal issues both before and at all stages of litigation, and is known for her expertise in class actions, product liability and copyright/trademark disputes and lawsuits alleging accounting or securities fraud. She attended Princeton University and the University of Michigan Law School and served as a law clerk to Judge Douglas Ginsburg of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and Justice Stephen G. Breyer of the U.S. Supreme Court, before embarking on her law practice here in Chicago. She is a member of the Chicago Network and also serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the United Way of Metro Chicago.

**Lorrayne Weiss** (Women’s Board President) has been a member of the Women’s Board since 2009, holding leadership positions and chairing major benefit events from the Goodman Auction and Gala, as well as major fall fundraisers for Education and Engagement. Weiss is an active member of the Goodman’s Education and Engagement committee and has served as the Women’s Board co-chair of this committee. She has also been a long-time supporter of Goodman Theatre, with a particular focus on education programs. 

**Kelli Garcia** (Scenemakers Board President) is a Vice President in the Foundation and Institutional Advisors group at Northern Trust. As National Manager of Foundation Services she is responsible for the delivery and growth of back-office administration services for private foundation clients. Garcia was previously a Philanthropic Advisor in the Philanthropic Advisory Services group where she specialized in private foundations, philanthropic education and training the next generation of philanthropists. Her duties involved creating philanthropy plans for clients, facilitating family philanthropy retreats, designing grantmaking plans, succession planning for family foundations and establishing and administering charitable vehicles. Prior to joining Northern Trust in 2017, Garcia advised non-profit organizations, for-profit and startup companies on topics relating to strategy, organizational management and internal operations. She also served as Director of Development for the Golden Apple Foundation, where she oversaw corporate, foundation and individual giving.

**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 nearly 200 Joseph Jefferson 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.

The Goodman 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.

**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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