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**JENNIFER MORRISON STARS AS “PENELOPE,” LEADS AN ALL-FEMALE, ALL-CHICAGO CAST OF 13 IN**

**MARGARET ATWOOD’S *THE PENELOPIAD*, DIRECTED BY SUSAN V. BOOTH, CHOREOGRAPHY BY JOANN M. HUNTER**

**\*\*\*BOOTH’S FIRST PRODUCTION TO DIRECT AS NEW GOODMAN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THE CHICAGO PREMIERE APPEARS MARCH 2 - 31, 2024 IN THE ALBERT THEATRE\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) **Susan V. Booth** begins rehearsals for her first mainstage production to direct as new Goodman Theatre Artistic Director, *The Penelopiad* by **Margaret Atwood** (*The Handmaid’s Tale*), starring **Jennifer Morrison** (*Once Upon a Time*, *House*) in the title role of the Chicago premiere. Atwood serves up a new perspective on literature’s most famous domestic vigil by shifting authorial control to Penelope, Odysseus’ long-suffering wife, in this unexpected remix of Homer’s ancient classic. Portraying Penelope’s 12 faithful maids are **Aja Alcazar**, **Demetra Dee**, **Maya Lou Hlava**, **Noelle Kayser, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Helen Joo Lee, Tyler Meredith, Ericka Ratcliff, Andrea San Miguel, Laura Savage, Allison Sill** and **Hannah Whitley**. Casting is by **Lauren Port**, CSA. This ancient tale told anew by “one of the most admired authors in North America” (NPR) features choreography by **JoAnn M. Hunter** (Broadway’s *Bad Cinderella*, *School of Rock*, *On A Clear Day*). The design team includes **Neil Patel** (Sets); **Kara Harmon** (Costumes); **Xavier Pierce** (Lighting); **Willow James** (Sound); **Samuel Davis** (Music Composition); **Jeremy Ramey** (Music Direction); and **Neena Arndt** (Dramaturg). **Kimberly McCann** is the Production Stage Manager and **Jennifer Gregory** is the Stage Manager. Goodman Theatre’s Women’s Board is the Major Production Sponsor of *The Penelopiad*; The BOLD Theater Women’s Leadership Circle is the Production Sponsor; the National Endowment for the Arts provides Production Support; and Winston & Strawn LLP is the Corporate Sponsor Partner. *The Penelopiad* appears March 2 – 31 in the 856-seat Albert Theatre. Tickets ($25 – 90; subject to change) are available at GoodmanTheatre.org/Penelopiad or by phone at 312.443.3800.

“When you think about stories of journeys, there is always someone left at home—and their story tends not to be told. I devoured Margaret Atwood’s funny, subversive novella on a plane ride, immediately struck by the paradigm shift of a story I thought I knew well,” said **Susan V. Booth**, who in 2022 was named Goodman Theatre’s eighth Artistic Director in 97 years, and is the first woman to assume the role. “I’m thrilled to direct this fantastic play as my first as Artistic Director. It just feels like an essential part of my inaugural season leading this theater.”

For the titular role of Penelope, Booth tapped stage and screen star **Jennifer Morrison**, who notes, “As a kid who grew up in Chicago, I was in awe of the productions at Goodman Theatre. It’s truly a childhood dream come true to return to my home town and perform here.” Morrison was raised in Arlington Heights and graduated from Loyola University Chicago. Best known for her roles on television and in films—including Dr. Allison Cameron in the series *House* and Tess in the film *Warrior*—she appeared on Broadway at the Circle In The Square Theatre in *The Miracle Worker* and at the off-Broadway MCC Theater in *The End of Longing*.

Choreographer **JoAnn M. Hunter** has more than 30 credits on Broadway, the West End and Australia. She most recently directed and choreographed *SuperYou, The Musical* (Lyric Theater in London) in the fall of 2023 and a live album concert at Carnegie Hall of *SuperYou* in 2022; *Anyone Can Whistle* with Ted Sperling (Carnegie Hall); *50 Years Of Broadway* (Kennedy Center). Broadway: *Bad Cinderella*, *Disaster*, *School of Rock*, *On A Clear Day*, Broadway Bound. *Love Life* (City Center Encores 2025). National Tour/Regional: *UnMasked: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (World Premier- PMP); *Ever After* (Alliance Theatre); World Premiers of *August Rush* with John Doyle, *Beatsville* by Glenn Slater, *Harmony* (Alliance/Ahmanson Theatre); the world premiere of Marvin Hamlisch and Rupert Holmes’ *The Nutty Professor*. Upcoming projects: *Bran Castle*, *Jo The Musical*, *The Mulan Project*.

**Margaret Atwood** is the author of more than 50 books of fiction, poetry and critical essays. Her novels include *Cat’s Eye, The Robber Bride, Alias Grace, The Blind Assassin,* and the Maddaddam trilogy. Atwood's 1985 classic, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, was followed in 2019 by a sequel, *The Testaments*, which was a global number one bestseller and won the Booker Prize. In 2020 she published *Dearly*, her first collection of poetry in a decade, followed in 2022 with *Burning Questions*, a selection of essays from 2004-2021. Her next collection of short stories,*Old Babes in the Wood,* was published in March 2023. Atwood has won numerous awards, including the Arthur C. Clarke Award for Imagination in Service to Society, Franz Kafka Prize, Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, PEN USA Lifetime Achievement Award and Dayton Literary Peace Prize. In 2019 she was made a member of the Order of the Companions of Honour for services to literature. She has also worked as a cartoonist, illustrator, librettist, playwright and puppeteer. She lives in Toronto, Canada.

**Susan V. Booth** joined Goodman Theatre in the fall of 2022, having previously served as Artistic Director of Atlanta’s Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre, premiering new work that went on to national, international and commercial life. She has directed at the Goodman, 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 has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory Universities. She is past president of the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field.

**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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