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312.443.5151 or [Press@GoodmanTheatre.org](mailto:Press@GoodmanTheatre.org) **May 20, 2024**

IMAGES: [Goodman Press Room](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bg6o5a3t1j3vjlhfowiwd/ALvOBJ29caD4sLLTPQCbqrY?rlkey=q9nfpmhagsdy9xqzfiq131tyw&st=881m31cl&dl=0)

**PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING *ENGLISH* BY SANAZ TOOSSI OPENS TONIGHT AND EXTENDS BY POPULAR DEMAND**

**\*\***[**VIEW PHOTOS AND VIDEO**](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bg6o5a3t1j3vjlhfowiwd/ALvOBJ29caD4sLLTPQCbqrY?rlkey=q9nfpmhagsdy9xqzfiq131tyw&st=881m31cl&dl=0) **OF HAMID DEHGHANI’S CHICAGO-PREMIERE PRODUCTION, FEATURING SAHAR BIBIYAN, NIKKI MASSOUD, ROXANNA HOPE RADJA, PEJ VAHDAT AND SHADEE VOSSOUGHI, ON STAGE THROUGH JUNE 16\*\***

**\*\*\*ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE FARSI- AND SPANISH- SUBTITLED, ASL-INTERPRETED, AUDIO-DESCRIBED (WITH TOUCH TOUR) AND OPEN-CAPTIONED PERFORMANCES\*\*\***

(Chicago, IL) Tonight, Goodman Theatre opens **Sanaz Toossi**’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *English* in a co-production with Guthrie Theater—and adds five performances due to high demand for tickets. The cast of Iranian director **Hamid Dehghani**‘s Chicago-premiere production features **Sahar Bibiyan**, **Nikki Massoud**, **Roxanna Hope Radja**, **Pej Vahdat** and **Shadee Vossoughi**; [access photos and broadcast-quality video here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bg6o5a3t1j3vjlhfowiwd/ALvOBJ29caD4sLLTPQCbqrY?rlkey=q9nfpmhagsdy9xqzfiq131tyw&st=881m31cl&dl=0). “English only” is the governing mantra in a classroom of four Iranian adults studying to take a language exam—one of the many barriers standing in the way of the next chapter of their lives. Chasing fluency through a maze of word games, listening exercises and show-and-tell sessions, the four students soon realize that learning a new language can lead to the unraveling of their sense of identity. A co-production with Guthrie Theatre, *English* appears through June 16 with five performances just added on June 13 at 7:30pm, June 14 at 7:30pm, June 15 at 2pm and 7:30pm and June 16 at 2pm. Tickets ($15 - $55; subject to change) are available at GoodmanTheatre.org/English or by phone at 312.443.3800. Goodman Theatre is grateful for the support of ITW (Corporate Sponsor Partner), Jenner & Block LLP (Contributing Sponsor), Image Star (Technology Sponsor), and The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust (Lead Funder of IDEAA Programming).

“The reason I wanted to direct this show is because I know these characters, I know that room and that experience,” said director **Hamid Dehghani**, who earned an MA from Northwestern University after receiving degrees from theater school at Tehran University of Art. “It’s about rediscovering the world based on our shared culture and lived experiences—and feels like a reunion not just with fellow Iranian artists but with my very identity as a theater director. I am excited to invite our audience into this world, to let them feel Iran, think about language and identity and consider what it’s like learning English through the lens of many immigrants in this country.”

Four adult students in Karaj, Iran are studying for the Test of English as a Foreign Language—the key to their green card, medical school admission or family reunification. As they gather and support one another in their quest for fluency, adamant that English will make them whole, they soon learn that it might be splitting them each in half.

**Full Company of *English*** (in alphabetical order)

By Sanaz Toossi

Directed by Hamid Dehghani

**Sahar Bibiyan**…..Roya

**Nikki Massoud**……Elham

**Roxanna Hope Radja**…..Marjan

**Pej Vahdat**……Omid

**Shadee Vossoughi**……Goli

**Creative Team**

Set Designer…..**Courtney O’Neill**

Costume Designer ……**Shahrzad Mazaheri**

Lighting Designer…..**Jason Lynch**

Sound Designer ….**Mikaal Sulaiman**

Assistant Lighting Designer…..**Andrew Vance**

Assistant Director….**Jamal Howard**

Casting is by **Lauren Port**, CSA. **Yasmin Zacaria Mikhaiel** is the Dramaturg. **Patrick Fries** is the Production Stage Manager.

**ENHANCED AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES AT GOODMAN THEATRE**

Farsi-Subtitled Performance: June 7 at 7:30pm – An LED sign presents Farsi-translated dialogue in sync with the performance.

ASL-Interpreted Performance: June 7 at 7:30pm – Professional ASL interpreter signs the action/text as played.

Touch Tour\* and Audio-Described Performance: June 8, 12:30pm Touch Tour; 2pm performance – The action/text is audibly enhanced for patrons via headset.

Spanish-Subtitled Performance: June 8 at 7:30pm – An LED sign presents Spanish-translated dialogue in sync with the performance.

Open-Captioned Performance: June 9 at 2pm – An LED sign presents dialogue in sync with the performance.  
  
*Visit Goodman theatre.org/Access for more information about Goodman Theatre’s accessibility efforts.*

**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 earned 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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