

# English

By **Sanaz Toossi**  
Directed by **Hamid Dehghani**



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# Welcome

Sometimes you feel a play.

I have a vivid memory of sitting in my office reading Sanaz Toossi's play English for the first time, and feeling that play in my bones. Here was a meditation on how we form our identity that wasn't a polemic, wasn't a thought piece...but instead, a quiet little stealth bomb that just infiltrated the senses.

And really, it isn't quiet at all.

Because the way it makes you feel another person's longing is reverberant. And in a moment in time when we are so quick to relegate "the other" to some impossibly unknowable enigma, the capacity of this play to make you truly know another person is big.

Big and necessary.

There's so much in this work that will call your mind into action. But do yourself this favor: let your heart override your head for a bit. Because if you do, Sanaz's play, particularly in the wildly capable hands of director Hamid Dehghani, will leave you bigger and better than when you arrived.

You'll feel it.

**Susan V. Booth**

Artistic Director

# Director's Note

I was born and raised in Iran—where Persian was the only language I used to understand and communicate with the world—but there came a point in my life when my wife and I decided to leave our country in pursuit of a better life. Emerging from the pressures of living in Iran, we dedicated our lives to achieving the American dream. The first step toward this goal was passing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) required for American university applications, which I thought I could do in about six months. A year passed and I still wasn't ready, so I stopped everything else in my life to focus solely on learning English. Even after two years of immersing myself in its study day and night, I still wasn't ready.

Gradually, I realized that I was isolated in the English world and the only people I could connect with were my English classmates. We were a group of dreamers who wanted to change our lives by leaving the country, but we were blocked by the massive, concrete wall of the exam. After three years, I realized that the solution had become the problem. I was losing everything by trying to learn English—the most important loss being myself. I could no longer remember who I was or what I wanted to be. I could see the sadness and worry in my wife's eyes because I was destroying her dreams too. Despite my fear, this drove me to take the exam, which I passed with a much higher score than I needed.

Five years have passed since my wife and I moved to America, and it's taught me that English isn't just about passing the TOEFL, but rather it's about living in the actual world of this language. Even though my English has improved significantly, I still have a Persian accent. I make grammatical mistakes, struggle to find the right words and I'm definitely not as funny (trust me, I'm hilarious in Persian). Yet, the English part of me continues to grow as I write and think in this language, and even dream of it more now than ever before.

Even though I am and always will be Persian, English has created a new version of me—or maybe this is the new me, someone living between two languages.

My story shares similarities with the universal experience of countless immigrants or anyone who speaks more than one language, but to convey this type of journey requires context, a story, life—or perhaps a brilliant play. Sanaz Toossi has masterfully encapsulated the narrative of this experience with English by creating something that allows us to feel and reflect on our relationship with language.

**Hamid Dehghani**

Director

# The Cost of a Global Language

by Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael

Ask anyone why they think English has become the de facto “global language” and the answers will meander through history, politics, culture, commerce, learnability and the internet. At the root, though, all these answers have something in common: power.

Language makes up a significant element of who we are as people. Our ability to communicate—express ourselves—deeply impacts our well-being. When we learn a new language, we not only face vulnerability but also must build a new personality along with linguistic skills. Scholars have dubbed this phenomenon “cultural frame switching,” a term which describes how multilingual speakers exhibit different personalities when using different languages. Along with researching the impacts of multilingualism and language learning on individuals, scholars have also examined why English dominates the world.

From its origins as a regional tongue in the British Isles to its current status as the lingua franca of the modern world, English has undergone a complicated journey of expansion and influence. The reasons behind English’s global hegemony range from colonialism and economic power to technological advancements and cultural impact.

It's no surprise that the British Empire serves as the main catalyst for the spread of English. The so-called "Age of Discovery" in the 16th century inflicted great violence in the name of building empires for the purpose of trade and prosperity. At its peak, Great Britain's occupied territories and colonies stretched across the globe with roots in North America, India, Africa, Australia, China and beyond. Through colonization, English was imposed upon Indigenous populations, often supplanting native languages and becoming the dominant medium of communication while inflicting disease and famine on these communities. Notably, assimilation policies in North America established in English-speaking colonies impacted many Indigenous people including the Cherokee tribe and the member nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. The legacy of British colonialism laid the foundation for English to establish itself as a global language, leaving an indelible mark on the linguistic landscape of the world and its people.

Following World War II, the deadliest and most destructive war in history, globalization accelerated as the United States emerged as a preeminent economic power, wielding significant influence in international trade, finance and diplomacy. American businesses, propelled by the dominance of English-speaking markets, played a pivotal role in spreading the language worldwide. English became the de facto language of commerce, facilitating communication and collaboration across borders. As technology advanced in the background, the stage

again had been set for English to continue its march through societies across the world.

The vast majority of online content ranging from websites and social media platforms to software applications and technical documentation is in English. Viral tweets and hashtags become jokes and trends locked in English despite the advancement of translation services. #Selfie, #TBT, #OOTD—internet shorthands abbreviated from English became the language of cyberspace, enabling seamless information sharing on a global scale. This carries implications for all kinds of labor, as innovations originating from English-speaking countries propelled the language to the forefront of scientific research and academia.

English is so widely taught as a second language in schools and around the world that the type of coursework was abbreviated to ESL, even if most of the globe already speaks two languages or more. Furthermore, the Foreign Language Service Institute created a list that ranks language difficulty and the approximate amount of time it takes to learn. But in this list, English serves as the baseline comparison across all languages. It sits outside the standard, rather than being ranked.

Historically, English-language media has enjoyed wide dissemination, further reinforcing the language's dominance on the global stage. Hollywood movies, British music and American television have global audiences, which shape perceptions and preferences worldwide. Within classrooms



across the world, the tools of learning English lean on a curriculum embedded with clips and sounds of America's beloved stars and artists.

Although the students in English—our play that bears the same name as the language we've traced here—live in Iran, their experiences of learning, vulnerabilities and hopes are universal. Like all English learners, their approach to the language is influenced by its complex history and global context. For these students, English simultaneously represents freedom and burden, opportunity and adversity and expression and repression.

Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael is a journalist, oral historian, educator and the Dramaturg for English.

# Hello. My Name Is...

by **Thomas Connors**

When you're monolingual, you may not think too much about how slippery language can be. Sure, a single word can have multiple meanings, none of which may be right for what you're trying to express, and sometimes you have to read between the lines. But for those speaking a language other than their own, even a simple sentence can leave them wondering "did I hear that right," or "did I say that correctly?"

As Sanaz Toossi's Pulitzer Prize-winning English reminds us, language is more than a tool for negotiating the world—it shapes us through and through. Born and raised in Iran, director Hamid Dehghani feels a real kinship with the teacher and students Toossi has gathered in a Karaj classroom. A relative newcomer to Chicago, he shares more about that language-driven sympathy.

**THOMAS CONNORS:** You earned an MA from Northwestern University in 2022 but began your career in Iran after receiving degrees from theater school at Tehran University of Art. What is the theater scene like there?

**HAMID DEHGHANI:** The government doesn't like theater, doesn't like art. So the resources are small. But the talent is huge. People will rehearse for months, even without getting

paid. But that doesn't mean they are amateurs. They are very talented and well educated.

When you write a play, you have to submit it to a committee. And they may say cut that scene, cut that line. And during the run, they come back again. So it's a constant struggle. But that has its own excitement and adventure too. You have to be careful about what you are doing, but you learn how to use things like metaphors to get around censorship.

**TC:** Are productions ever shut down?

**HD:** That does happen. A hardline journalist might go to a show and denounce it as filth or an affront to Islam. The playwright, director and even the actors could be arrested and go to jail. Some days I could look at the audience before curtain and think tonight it's safe to say that line and do that scene. And the next day it could be the opposite. Going to theater in Iran is a kind of activism or political gesture. And the audiences are so young. Creating a conversation with that young, educated audience was so exciting.

**TC:** What brought you to the United States?

**HD:** Doing theater in Iran was difficult, but so are many other aspects of life there. There was a point where I thought, you only live once, so my wife and I left. The best way to leave the country was through a student visa. I didn't know how to speak English so I started going to class just like the play. I was always fascinated by American theater, and I wanted to learn and to

work. Although America has its flaws, it is alluring. When I was at Northwestern [University], my American friends would complain about this or that and say that America is the worst, and my international acquaintances and I would look at each other and say, “You have no idea, there are worse places to live.”

**TC:** Let’s talk about English. On the surface, it sounds simple—a small group in a room learning English.

**HD:** You’re right. But gradually, you realize how language is so connected to our identities and also our sense of home. The play does that in a very beautiful, very relaxed, nuanced sort of way. When you start learning a new language, you start to create a new identity for yourself. But that identity is on the other side of a wall, so to speak, and passing through that wall, accessing that new identity, can be difficult. It was for me. The reason I wanted to direct this show is because I know these characters, I know that room and that experience.

People in Iran love America. They watch American movies and they dream about going to America. Coming to America is a big achievement and it was a point of pride for my dad. English is so popular, and when I was very young, all families sent their children to English schools. Even if they weren’t necessarily thinking of sending their children to foreign countries, they wanted their children to be educated and wanted them to connect to the world. Many regular Iranians speak a high level of

English compared to other countries—even a taxi driver knows a little English. If you go to Iran, you will be surprised.

Thomas Connors is a Chicago-based freelance writer and the Chicago Editor of Playbill.

# Play on Words: Poetry

**In an exciting new collaboration, the Poetry Foundation partners with the Goodman to commission a different poet to respond to each play in Susan V. Booth's first curated season as Goodman Theatre Artistic Director.**

**ABHI SHRESTHA** is a Chicago-based arts educator, poet and dramaturg originally from Kathmandu, Nepal. They are the Director of Education and Engagement at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Resident Dramaturg and Community Organizer for the Chicago Inclusion Project and a proud board member of the Illinois Caucus of Adolescent Health. In over seven years cultivating a theatrical and administrative practice that champions youth agency and empowerment, Shrestha believes deeply in the liberatory power of arts education and views theater as a civic engagement modality.

LAST WEEK

i called my mom,

hi chora,            how are you,

i'm okay,            how are you,

good,            i miss you.

i miss you too

how's your garden? //

that is when it ends// always with the garden// she didn't know//  
i was spiraling, thinking about// how to shape// my mouth into  
sounds, shape // sounds into words, shape // words into  
language, shape // language into a flower she could// smile the  
color of. she knows// the language of flowers more than i know  
her language// our calls architect silence// that too can feel like  
distance// silence, the sound of a body trying to plant seeds;

**Read Abhi Shrestha's full poetic response to English and  
learn more about Play On Words!**

**[GoodmanTheatre.org/Poetry](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/Poetry)**

# **Goodman Theatre**

presents

## **ENGLISH**

By

**Sanaz Toossi**

Directed by

**Hamid Dehghani**

Set Design by

**Courtney O'Neill**

Costume Design by

**Shahrzad Mazaheri**

Lighting Design by

**Jason Lynch**



Sound Design by  
**Mikaal Sulaiman**

Dramaturgy by  
**Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael**

Casting by  
**Lauren Port, CSA**

Production Stage Manager  
**Patrick Fries\***

“English” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals  
on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

World Premiere

Presented By Atlantic Theater Company and Roundabout  
theatre Company New York City, 2022

In 2020, ENGLISH received the L. Arnold Weissberger Award  
for Playwrighting, jointly administered by the Anna L.

Weissberger Foundations

and Williamstown Theatre Festival

# CAST

Roya.....**Sahar Bibiyan\***  
Elham.....**Nikki Massoud\***  
Marjan.....**Roxanna Hope Radja\***  
Omid.....**Pej Vahdat\***  
Goli.....**Shadee Vossoughi\***

## UNDERSTUDIES

Omid — **Owais Ahmed\***  
Elham/Goli — **Victoria Nassif\***  
Marjan/Roya — **Aila Ayilam Peck**

Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is made.

**SETTING:** 2008. Karaj, Iran.

Language and Dialect Coach — **Vaneh Assadourian**  
Line Producers — **Kat Zukaitis and Malkia Stampley**  
Assistant Director — **Jamal Howard**  
Assistant Lighting Designer — **Andrew Vance**

Production Assistant & Floor Manager — **Olivia Zapater-Charrette**

Stage Management Intern — **Jiawei Pei**

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Goodman productions are made possible in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

Goodman Theatre is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization of nonprofit theaters; the League of Resident Theatres; the Illinois Arts Alliance and the American Arts Alliance; the League of Chicago Theatres; and the Illinois Theatre Association. Goodman Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States; the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union; the United Scenic Artists of America, Local 829, AFL-CIO and the Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local No. 10-208, American Federation of Musicians. House crew and scene shop employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local No. 2.

\*Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

# Profiles

**SAHAR BIBIYAN\*** (Roya) is making her Goodman Theatre debut. Recent theater credits: *Wish You Were Here* (Yale Rep) and *English* (2023 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Drama, Berkeley Rep., West Coast Premiere). Past theater credits: *Haram Iran* (Emerging Artists Theatre) and *Veil'd* (Astoria Performing Arts Center, World Premiere). Recent film credits: *Uncut Gems* (A24) directed by Josh and Benny Safdie. Selected television credits: a recurring role in *Mr. Robot*, *Little America*, *Chicago Justice* and *Bull*. Sahar is the voice of Dimah in the video game *Just Cause 3*.

**NIKKI MASSOUD\***, she/her (Elham) Goodman Theatre debut. Off-Broadway: *Wish You Were Here* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Othello* (New York Theater Workshop). Regional: *As You Like It* (The Old Globe), *A Doll's House Part 2* (Berkeley Rep, The Huntington Theatre), *Our Town* (Portland Center Stage) and *Henry V* (Play On/OSF.) TV: *Life & Beth* (Hulu), *Succession* (HBO), *Love Life* (HBO Max), *Madam Secretary* (CBS) and *Mozart in the Jungle* (Amazon). Massoud is also a playwright, with commissions from Atlantic Theater, Noor Theater and The Acting Company. @nikkimal776

**ROXANNA HOPE RADJA\***, she/her (Marjan) Broadway: *Torch Song*, *Frost/Nixon*, *The Women*, *Boeing Boeing* and others. Off-Broadway: Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club, Second Stage Theatre, Cherry Lane, Rattlestick

Theater and others. Regional: Hedda Gabler (Hartford Stage), Tartuffe, Hecuba, Indian Ink (American Conservatory Theater), Huntington Theater, Shakespeare Theater NJ, Williamstown Theater Festival and others. Film/TV: She Said, Law & Order: SVU, The Good Wife, Blue Bloods, Unforgettable, Puncture and others; MFA/ACT. @rx8hope

**PEJ VAHDAT\*** (Omid) makes his Goodman Theatre debut. Other theater credits include: Blood And Gifts (Lincoln Center), Indian Ink (ACT San Francisco) and Disgraced (PTC Philadelphia). Vahdat spent eight years on the hit show Bones (FOX) and went on to star in Shameless (Showtime), City on A Hill (Showtime), Empire (FOX), Sneaky Pete (Amazon) and is currently in The Old Man (FX). @pejvahdat

**SHADEE VOSSOUGH\***, she/her (Goli) Chicago: Layalina (Goodman Theatre); Selling Kabul (Northlight Theatre); A Distinct Society (Writers Theatre); Deer and the Lovers (First Floor Theater); Black History Month Show, Urban Twist Bob and Curry Showcase (The Second City). Regional: Wish You Were Here (Yale Rep); The Tenth Muse and Romeo & Juliet (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). TV: The Bear (FX) and The Big Leap (Fox). Vossoughi is a recipient of the NBC Universal Second City Bob Curry Fellowship and she is represented by Stewart Talent Chicago. @shadeev

**OWAIS AHMED\*** (US Omid) is grateful to be on the English team. Theater credits: Selling Kabul (Northlight Theatre), Heartland (59E59, Geva Theatre), Guards at the Taj (Milwaukee

Rep), Small Mouth Sounds (Alliance Theatre), The Invisible Hand (Steep Theatre, Jeff Award Recipient), Airness (Geva Theatre), The Hard Problem (Court Theatre), Orange (Mixed Blood Theatre) and The Qualms (Steppenwolf Theatre).

Film/TV credits: Deli Boys (Hulu), Power Book IV: Force (Starz), Chicago Fire (NBC) and Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice. @oaace

**VICTORIA NASSIF\***, she/her (US Elham/US Goli) Goodman Theatre debut! Off Broadway: Cartography (The New Victory Theatre and international tour). Selected Regional: The Tempest, Macbeth, Servant of Two Masters (Great River Shakespeare Festival), American Fast (Constellation Stage & Screen, Capital Rep), 10,000 Balconies (TheatreSquared), Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey) and The Doctor's Dilemma (American Players Theatre). Victoria is also an intimacy director and audiobook narrator.

@victorianass\_if

**AILA AYILAM PECK**, she/her (US Marjan/US Roya) Chicago credits: Selling Kabul, Miss Bennet (Northlight), A Distinct Society (Writer's), Hatefuck (First Floor), Shakuntala (Goodman Future Labs), Night Watch (Raven), This Wide Night, Five Mile Lake (Shattered Globe), Birdland (Steep), The Royal Society of Antarctica (The Gift) and 1984 (Steppenwolf). Regional credits: House of Joy (St. Louis Rep), Brahman/i, Proof (Kitchen), The Who and the What (Huntington Theatre),

A Doll's House, Twelfth Night and Macbeth (American Player's Theatre).

**SANAZ TOOSI** (Playwright) is an Iranian-American playwright from Orange County, California. Her plays include *Wish You Were Here* (Williamstown Audible 2020; Playwrights Horizons 2022; Stavis Award) and *English* (Atlantic/Roundabout 2022; Weissberger New Play Award; Kilroys' List 2019). She is currently under commission at the Atlantic Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, IAMA Theatre and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (American Revolutions Cycle). Toossi is a member of Youngblood and the Middle Eastern American Writers Lab and was the 2019 P73 Playwriting Fellow. She was a recipient of the 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award and the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award. MFA: NYU Tisch. TV: *5 Women*; *A League of Their Own* and *Invitation to a Bonfire*. Toossi is a proud child of immigrants.

**HAMID DEHGHANI** (Director) is a director, playwright and actor. His directing credits in Iran include two original scripts, *From the Environs of Milad* and *Sohrab's Transgression*; *Nathan and Tabileth* by Barry Bermange; and *Leila* by Morteza Hossein Zadeh (co-director). His regional directing credits include *Selling Kabul* by Sylvia Khoury; *A Moment of Silence* by Mohammad Yaghoubi; *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl; *Bengal Tiger* at the Baghdad Zoo by Rajiv Joseph; and *Baba* by Denmo Ibrahim. Dehghani co-founded Grass Studio Theatre in 2020, was an



Artistic Fellow at Northlight Theatre and has assistant directed at the Metropolitan Opera, Court Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. He holds a BA in Theatre Directing from Tehran University of Art and an MFA in Directing from Northwestern University.

**COURTNEY O'NEILL** (Scenic Designer) Goodman credits include Father Comes Home From the War (Parts 1, 2, & 3), and New Stages: Layalina and Night Watch. Chicago: Steppenwolf, Lookingglass Theatre, Writers Theatre, Court Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, among others. Regional: Kansas City Repertory, Denver Center, Baltimore Center Stage, The Apollo Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theatre, Cleveland Play House, South Coast Repertory, Marin Theatre Company, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Milwaukee Repertory. Awards: Jeff Award, USITT Scene Design Award and Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award. Education: MFA (Northwestern University) and BFA (DePaul University). [courtneyoneill.com](http://courtneyoneill.com)

**SHAHRZAD MAZAHERI**, she/her (Costume Designer) Regional Credits include: The Good John Proctor, Becky Nurse of Salem, Sweeney Todd, Sueño (Trinity Repertory Company), English (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), La Gringa (American Stage Company) and Carmela Full of Wishes (Children's Theatre Company). More information at [shahrzadmazaheri.com](http://shahrzadmazaheri.com). [@scheherezade.mzr](https://www.instagram.com/scheherezade.mzr)

**JASON LYNCH**, he/him (Lighting Designer) returns to the Goodman, where credits include Lucha Teotl, The Nacirema Society, Layalina, the ripple, the wave that carried me home, Fannie (The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer), School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play, I Hate It Here, Ohio State Murders, The Sound Inside and Lottery Day. Additional recent Chicago credits include work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, among others. Lynch is represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA829 of the IATSE and The Gersh Agency. [jasondlynch.com](http://jasondlynch.com)  
[@jasonlynch.design](mailto:@jasonlynch.design)

**MIKAAL SULAIMAN** (Sound Designer) is a multi-disciplinary artist who works in theater, TV, film and podcasts. His sound design has been featured in Broadway productions such as Enemy of the People, Doubt, Macbeth, Death of a Salesman and the Pulitzer Prize-winning Fat Ham. Awards: Tony Award Nomination, Drama Desk Nomination, Obie Award, Creative Capital Award, Henry Hewes Award and CTG Sherwood Award. [www.mikaal.com](http://www.mikaal.com). Instagram: [@mikaal](https://www.instagram.com/@mikaal). X (Twitter): [@mikaalsulaiman](https://www.twitter.com/@mikaalsulaiman).

**YASMIN ZACARIA MIKHAIEL**, she/they (Dramaturg) returns to Goodman Theatre after dramaturging Layalina in the 22/23 season. She is a journalist, oral historian and educator with roots in and around Chicago. As a queer, fat, brown femme, they endeavor to amplify stories that go lost/stolen/forgotten. Mikhaiel holds an MA in Performance as

Public Practice from UT-Austin and a BFA in Dramaturgy/Criticism from The Theatre School at DePaul, where they also serve as adjunct faculty. [YasminZacaria.com](http://YasminZacaria.com)  
**PATRICK FRIES\*** (Production Stage Manager) most recently stage managed *The Matchbox Magic Flute*. Other credits include work with Goodman Theatre, Audible Theatre, Berkeley Rep, *The Hypocrites*, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Next Theatre, Northwestern University, Powerhouse Theatre, National High School Institute, Porchlight Music Theatre, Teatro Vista and *The Second City*. Pat is an ensemble member with Rivendell Theatre Ensemble in Chicago.

**LAUREN PORT**, she/her (Casting) joined the Goodman as Casting Director in August of 2019 after eleven years casting in NYC, where she worked on many Goodman productions over the years, including *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, *Disgraced* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Broadway: *Junk*; *Meteor Shower*; *A Doll's House, Part 2*; *The Front Page*; *It's Only a Play*; *Disgraced*; *Fish in the Dark*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Grace*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Seminar*; *Stick Fly*; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Fences*. Television/Film: *New Amsterdam* (NBC); *American Odyssey* (NBC) and *Steel Magnolias* (Sony for Lifetime). Port is a five-time Artios Award winner, a recipient of the 40th Annual Media Access Awards, and a proud member of the Casting Society of America.

**THE GUTHRIE THEATER** (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) is an esteemed center for theater performance that seeks to illuminate our common humanity and transform our world through the power of live theater. Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and firmly rooted in the community since 1963, the Guthrie is dedicated to producing classic and contemporary works with excellence, cultivating artists and inspiring the next generation of theatergoers. Open to the public year-round and welcoming more than 350,000 patrons annually, the Guthrie houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms and dramatic public spaces. [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

**SUSAN V. BOOTH** (Goodman Theatre Artistic Director) 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 and a 2024 Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellow.

**ROCHE EDWARD SCHULFER** (Goodman Theatre Executive Director/CEO) became executive director in 1980. He has produced more than 400 plays, initiated the Goodman's annual production of A Christmas Carol, and oversaw the theater's relocation to the North Loop in 2000. Schulfer has served in leadership roles with numerous theater and arts advocacy groups, including being a founder of the League of Chicago Theatres. He has been recognized for his work by a wide variety of media, civic, and arts organizations including an Honorary Doctorate from North Central College. He has taught at DePaul, Southern Methodist, and his alma mater Notre Dame. Schulfer has presented his study on the economics of the performing arts at theaters and organizations around the country. He is a lifelong Chicago area resident and was recently named a 2023 Chicagoan of the Year by the Chicago Tribune.

NOTE: Bios are current as of April 19, 2024. Full bios also appear online at **[GoodmanTheatre.org/English](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/English)**.

# about us

**AMERICA’S “BEST REGIONAL THEATRE”** (Time magazine), the Goodman is a premier not-for-profit organization distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and civic engagement. Led by Artistic Director Susan V. Booth and Executive Director/CEO Roche Schulfer and committed to core values of Quality, Diversity and Community, the Goodman makes inclusion the fabric of the organization through its artistic priorities—including new play development, large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics. Distinctions include two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and nearly 200 Jeff Awards. The Goodman was first to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle,” and its annual *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers. The Goodman also serves as a production partner with local, national and international companies.

Our nationally recognized Education and Engagement programs use the tools of our profession to inspire youth, lifelong learners and audiences to find and/or enhance their voices, stories and abilities. The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement (est. 2016) is the home of such programming, most offered free of charge, and has vastly expanded the theater’s

ability to serve our city (with 85% of youth participants from underserved communities).

Goodman Theatre was founded by William O. Goodman and family in honor of their son, Kenneth, a figure in Chicago's early 1900s cultural renaissance. The family's legacy endures through Albert Ivar Goodman who, with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the funds for the new Goodman center in 2000. Today, Goodman leadership also includes the distinguished members of the Artistic Collective. Julie Danis is Chairman of Goodman Theatre's Board of Trustees, Lorryne Weiss is the Women's Board President and Kelli Garcia is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.

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; learn more at **[GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability)**.



# **accessible & enhanced performances**

**Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour:** June 8 at 2pm, Touch Tour at 12:30pm

**American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreted Performance & Farsi Subtitles Performance:** June 7 at 7:30pm

**Open-Captioned Performance:** June 9 at 2pm

**Spanish Subtitles Performance:** June 8 at 7:30pm