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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA'S 43RD SEASON CONTINUES WITH *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

Rochester, N.Y., January 25, 2016 – Geva Theatre Center presents Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* as part of the 2015-2016 ESL Wilson Stage Series. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is adapted by Christopher Sergel and directed by **Mark Cuddy**, with original music by **Gregg Coffin**. The production begins previews on **February 16, opens on February 20** and runs in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage until **March 20**.

Set in a small Alabama town during the Great Depression, Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning American masterpiece follows the journey of Jem and Scout Finch, whose father has been appointed to defend a black man framed for a crime he didn't commit. As the trial progresses, the children witness racial injustice envelop their community, while their father seeks the truth with quiet integrity, courage and compassion.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960. The plot and characters are loosely based on Lee's own observations of her family and neighbors, as well as an event that occurred near her hometown when she was 10 years old. The book was an immediate success, won the Pulitzer Prize, and has become a classic of American literature. In a 1991 survey by the Library of Congress, *To Kill a Mockingbird* came second only to the Bible as the book that made a difference in readers' lives. A mysterious figure, Lee has not granted an interview since 1964 and *Mockingbird* was her only published novel until July 2015 with the publication of *Go Set a Watchman*. *Go Set a Watchman*, which hit the top of the bestseller lists, was written in 1957 and was actually the first draft of the novel that would become *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The cast of Geva's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a blend of Geva favorites, young actors from local colleges and area children. **Skip Greer** (Geva productions of *Clybourne Park*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Superior Donuts*, *The Music Man* and *Evie's Waltz*, among others) is Atticus Finch, one of the most iconic characters in American literature and **Brigitt Markusfeld** (Geva productions of *Stranded on Earth*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Over the Tavern*, *A Christmas Story* and *The Weir*), as the adult "Scout," Jean Louise, looks back on her childhood and leads the audience through the story. Other returning Geva favorites include **Nora Cole** (Geva productions of *Katherine's Colored Lieutenant*, *Voices of the Spirits in My Soul*, *You Can't Take It*

With You and Fences) as Calpurnia; **Munson Hicks** (Geva productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *My Fair Lady*, *1776*, *Twelve Angry Men*) as Sheriff Heck Tate; **Sean Patrick Reilly** (Geva productions of *Good People*, *Doubt* and *American Buffalo*) as Boo Radley; **Robert Rutland** (Geva productions of *The Odd Couple*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Amadeus* and *Inherit the Wind*) as Walter Cunningham/Judge Taylor; **Remi Sandri** (Geva productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Wait Until Dark*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs*, *My Fair Lady* and *Camelot*) as Bob Ewell and **David Shakes** (Geva productions of *Two Trains Running*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *Member of the Wedding*) as Reverend Sykes. Making their Geva debuts are **Ellen Horst** (National tour and West End production of Hal Prince's *Show Boat*) as Mrs. Dubose, and young actors **Sallie Koenig** as Mayella Ewell and **Lorenzo Shawn Parnell** as Tom Robinson.

Children play an important role *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the story is told through their eyes. The role of the young Jean Louise "Scout" Finch will be played by **Erin Mueller** and **Alden Duserick**. Both of these young ladies have appeared on the Wilson Stage in *A Christmas Carol*. **Harry Franklin** and **Nicholas Kinney** making their Geva debuts share the role of Jem Finch. **Andrew Beel**, who makes his Geva debut and **Sawyer Duserick**, who has appeared on the Wilson Stage in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Music Man*, share the role of Dill Harris.

To Kill a Mockingbird is directed by **Mark Cuddy**. The design team includes **John Haldoupis** (scenic and costume design), **Paul Hackenmueller** (lighting design), **Dan Roach** (sound design) and **Bekah Carey** (wig design). Featuring fight choreography by **Adriano Gatto** and dialect coaching by **Kathleen Mulligan**, *To Kill a Mockingbird* features an original score by **Gregg Coffin** (Geva productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Five Course Love* and *Convenience*).

Mounting a production such as involves the cooperation of the entire community and for this production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* Geva has partnered with a number of local educational and non-profit organizations. Geva has a long-standing relationship with **School of the Arts (SOTA)** and this season has partnered with them for **The Stage Door Project: *To Kill a Mockingbird***. Throughout the entire rehearsal process, students from SOTA will shadow their professional counterparts. This project culminates in a unique and rare opportunity. After rehearsing the show independently at their school, the students from SOTA will perform their own version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the Wilson Stage on the set of Geva's production for a special one-night performance on **Tuesday, March 15**.

The George Eastman Museum holds in its collection a print of the 1962 film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* starring Gregory Peck – part of Martin Scorsese's own collection held at the museum. The Museum will be screening this Oscar-winning film on **Friday, February 12 at 8pm** in the Dryden Theatre. **Writers and Books**

will be hosting a class, “Re-imagining *To Kill a Mockingbird*” on **March 23** to consider the “what-ifs” in Harper Lee’s novel. These are opportunities for the public to get closer to the story both before the production opens and after the show closes at Geva.

The 2015-2016 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is produced with support from Lead Co-Producer **The Rochester Division of Oppenheimer Funds, Inc**; Co-Producer **Harter Secrest & Emery, LLP**; Associate Producer **SUNY Brockport** and Media Sponsors **Fox Rochester** and **WDKX. Canandaigua National Bank and Trust** is the Sponsor of the P.L.A.Y. Student Matinees and **Frontier Communications of Rochester** is the sponsor for the March 4 performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* begins previews on February 16, opens February 20 and runs through March 20.**

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:
Dawn Kellogg, Communications Manager, (585) 420-2059.**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Previews: Tuesday, February 16 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, February 17 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, February 18 @ 7:30pm
Friday, February 19 @ 8pm
Saturday, February 20 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance*)

Opening: Saturday, February 20 @ 8pm

Performances: Sunday, February 21 @ 2pm and 7pm
Tuesday, February 23 @ 6pm
Wednesday, February 24 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, February 25 @ 7:30pm (Community Night: Out at Geva)
Friday, February 26 @ 8pm
Saturday, February 27 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, February 28 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm
Tuesday, March 1 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, March 2 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, March 3 @ 7:30pm
Friday, March 4 @ 8pm
Saturday, March 5 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, March 6 @ 2pm (Audio Described Performance) and 7pm
Tuesday, March 8 @ 7:30pm

Wednesday, March 9 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open Captioned Performances*)
Thursday, March 10 @ 7:30pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)
Friday, March 11 @ 8pm
Saturday, March 12 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, March 13 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm
Friday, March 18 @ 8pm
Saturday, March 19 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, March 20 @ 2pm

Ticket Prices: Tickets start at \$25.

Reservations: (585) 232-GEVA (4382), Website: www.gevatheatre.org

Location: Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd, Rochester, NY 14607

*Open captioning is provided with support from Hearing Loss Association of America – Rochester Chapter.

GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's leading professional theatre, Geva Theatre Center is the most attended regional theatre in New York State, and one of the 25 most subscribed in the country, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 526-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage is home to Geva's own series of contemporary drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornets' Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. In addition, the Fielding Stage hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva Theatre Center offers a wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Since 1995, the organization has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

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