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GEVA'S 43RD SEASON CONTINUES WITH *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN*

Eugene O'Neill's classic play is a co-production with the Theatre Royal in Rochester's Sister City of Waterford, Ireland.

Rochester, N.Y., March 14, 2016 – A classic drama by America's only Nobel Prize-winning playwright continues the 2015-2016 ESL Wilson Stage Series as Geva Theatre Center presents *A Moon for the Misbegotten* by **Eugene O'Neill** and directed by **Ben Barnes** in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage from **March 29 through April 24**.

The jaded James Tyrone is on the edge of despair, and the fiercely passionate Josie Hogan is lonely beyond endurance. But on this night, when they meet on a barren patch of earth in the glow of an autumn moon, hope sparks between them. In this bittersweet elegy, two wounded hearts experience the power of redemption—and the saving grace of love. It is a stark look at humanity in its basest and loveliest form by four-time Pulitzer Prize and America's only Nobel Prize-winning playwright, Eugene O'Neill.

When **Eugene O'Neill** (1888 – 1953) began writing for the stage early in the 20th century, the American theatre was dominated by vaudeville and romantic melodramas. Influenced by Strindberg, Ibsen, and other European playwrights, O'Neill vowed to create a theatre in America, stripped of false sentimentality, which would explore the deepest stirrings of the human spirit. In 1914, he wrote: "I want to be an artist or nothing." During the 1920s, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for three of his plays – *Beyond the Horizon*, *Anna Christie*, and *Strange Interlude*. Other popular successes, including *The Emperor Jones*, *The Hairy Ape*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Great God Brown*, and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, brought him international acclaim. In 1936, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature—the only American playwright to be so honored. O'Neill experimented with new dramatic techniques and dared tackle such controversial issues as interracial marriage, the equality of the sexes, the power of the unconscious mind, and the hold of materialism on the American soul. In each of his plays, he sought to reveal the mysterious forces "behind life" which shape human destiny. Three of his final works, written at Tao House, tower over the others: *The Iceman Cometh*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. These autobiographical plays portray, with "faithful realism," the haunting figures of his father, mother, and brother who loom in the background of most

of his other plays. He was awarded a fourth Pulitzer Prize, posthumously, in 1956 for *Long Day's Journey into Night*. In a career which spanned three decades, Eugene O'Neill changed the American theatre forever.

Written in 1943 as a sequel to *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* was the last major play that O'Neill wrote before his death in 1953 and had its world premiere in Columbus, Ohio in 1947. The play has been produced five times on Broadway; the first in 1957, with a cast led by Cyril Cusak, Franchot Tone and Wendy Hiller, and most recently in 2007 featured Eve Best, Colm Meaney and Kevin Spacey.

This production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is a result of a partnership between Geva Theatre Center and the Theatre Royal in Rochester's Sister City of Waterford, Ireland. In early 2014, Geva's Artistic Director, Mark Cuddy was approached by Patrick Burke, the Managing Principal of The Burke Group in Rochester with a proposal: Partly due to the Sister Cities program, Rochester has many business relationships with Waterford, Ireland (Bausch and Lomb for example), but what about creating a cultural exchange? Perhaps the Theatre Royal of Waterford and Geva Theatre Center could discuss a project? It soon became apparent that a partnership between the theatres in the respective Sister Cities would be a good fit, which led to a series of conversations between Cuddy and Ben Barnes, Director of the Theatre Royal (the oldest theatre venue in Ireland). They decided quickly that for whatever play was chosen, the creative team should be as bi-national as possible to ensure a true collaboration between Ireland and America. This meant that the design team and actors would be a mixture of Irish and American professionals, and that Barnes and Cuddy would work together to choose the play. They began conversations discussing Irish playwrights, but it wasn't long before Barnes suggested an Irish American writer who is celebrated in both countries: Eugene O'Neill. The choice of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* seemed timely - a rich play about hope and redemption. "This is a luminous play," comments Mark Cuddy, "and it's so rewarding to tackle giant works such as *Moon* because they require a deep commitment from first-class actors and a first class creative team." The production opened at the Theatre Royal in Waterford on March 10 and opens at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast on March 15.

The cast of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is comprised of Irish and American Actors. **Mark Lambert** (Phil Hogan) is one of Ireland's leading actors. He has appeared in numerous productions for both The Abbey and Gate Theatres including *Heartbreak House*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Previous productions include *Juno and the Paycock* also directed by Ben Barnes at The Albery Theatre, London for which he received an Olivier Award nomination for his role as Joxer. Previous productions with The Abbey Theatre also include *The Gigli Concert*, *Barbaric Comedies* (Irish Times Theatre award nomination) and *Observe the Sons of Ulster Walking Towards the Somme*. Previous productions with

The Gate Theatre include *Molly Sweeney*, *The Three Sisters*, *A Month in the Country*, *Aristocrats*, *Art and Festen*. In London, productions include *Our Country's Good* and *The Recruiting Officer*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Phoenix & Garrick Theatres), *The Memory of Water* (Vaudeville Theatre) winning the Olivier award for Best Production, *All's Well That Ends Well* with Judi Dench, *Tout* and *Red Black and Ignorant* (Royal Shakespeare Company). Recent TV includes "Rebellion" (RTE/Element/Touchpaper), 'Mr Hammond' in all three seasons of the BAFTA-nominated BBC children's series "Roy," series regular 'Des Harte' in "Raw" (Octagon/RTE) and "Single Handed" (Touchpaper Films/RTE/ITV). **Michael Quinlan's** (T. Stedman Harder) theatre credits include *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear* for Theatre Royal Waterford; the Irish tour of *Dreamland* (*Irish Times* Best New Play nomination); *The London Cuckolds* at the Pleasance Theatre, London; *The Starvling* at the Arcola Theatre, London; *Private Thoughts in Public Places* at the Oval Theatre, London; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Julius Caesar* at Principal Theatre; *Michael Collins - A Musical Drama* at Cork Opera House and Olympia Theatre, Dublin); *Dissident*, *Urbs Intacta Manet* and *GTi* at Garter Lane, Waterford. TV Credits include "This is England '90." **Kate Forbes** (Josie Hogan) makes her Geva Theatre Center debut in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Ms. Forbes has appeared in major roles on Broadway, Off-Broadway and at regional theatres all around the U.S. She has also performed at the RSC in Stratford, England. Favorite roles include Portia, Nora, Desdemona, Emilia, Candida, Stella, Lady Macbeth, Elizabeth Proctor, Helena, Lady Teazle and Gertrude, among many others. Television credits include Olivia Fairfax in the PBS series "Mercy Street," *Law & Order*" and various soaps. Film credits include *Hot Summer Nights* (2017), *The Longest Ride*, *Term Life*, *The Sacrament* and *The Substance of Fire*. Ms. Forbes is a popular narrator of audio-books, working for over fifteen years with Recorded Books, LLC. **Donald Sage Mackay** (James Tyrone, Jr.) also makes his Geva Theatre Center debut in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. He primarily works out of Los Angeles and New York, as well as in major regional theatres throughout the U.S. (Signature Theatre/NY, Actors Theatre of Louisville, La Jolla Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, Old Globe, Mark Taper Forum/Ahmanson in LA, and at numerous Shakespeare Festivals). Mr. Mackay is the recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Lead Actor. Film/TV appearances include Guest Stars on "Modern Family," "Elementary," "Blue Bloods," "Law & Order: SVU," "The Good Wife," "Mad Men," "House," "Weeds," "NCIS," "Criminal Minds," "The West Wing," "Frasier," "ER," feature film *Transformers2*, as well as past recurring roles on "Scrubs," "The Practice" and "Providence." **Augustus Cuddy** (Mike Hogan) returns to the Geva stage for the first time in ten years after last being seen in *Our Town*. He is a School of the Arts graduate and alumnus of Geva Summer Academy, currently studies acting at Fordham University at Lincoln Center, and has also studied at the London Dramatic Academy. University credits include *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *We Are Proud....* He has also performed in New York and regionally at the Cape Playhouse.

A Moon for the Misbegotten is directed by **Ben Barnes**, Artistic Director of the Theatre Royal, Waterford and formerly Artistic Director of the Abbey Theatre, Director of the Gaiety Theatre and one of the founding Artistic Directors of Opera Theatre Company (OTC). The design team includes **Joe Vaněk** (scenic and costume design), **Ann G. Wrightson** (lighting design) and **Lindsay Jones** (sound design).

The 2015-2016 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is produced with support from International Exchange Sponsor **The Burke Group**; Co-Producer **O'Connell Electric Company**; Associate Producers **Bond, Schoeneck & King Law Firm** and **Canandaigua National Bank and Trust**; and Media Sponsor **WYSL**.

***A Moon for the Misbegotten* begins previews on March 29, opens April 2 and runs through April 24.**

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

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Previews: Tuesday, March 29 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, March 30 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, March 31 @ 7:30pm
Friday, April 1 @ 8pm
Saturday, April 2 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance)

Opening: Saturday, April 2 @ 8pm

Performances: Sunday, April 3 @ 2pm and 7pm
Tuesday, April 5 @ 6pm
Wednesday, April 6 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, April 7 @ 7:30pm (Community Night: Out at Geva)
Friday, April 8 @ 8pm
Saturday, April 9 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, April 10 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm
Tuesday, April 12 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, April 13 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, April 14 @ 7:30pm
Friday, April 15 @ 8pm
Saturday, April 16 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, April 17 @ 2pm (Audio Description Performance) and 7 pm
Tuesday, April 19 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, April 20 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open-Captioned Performances)

Thursday, April 21 @ 7:30 pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)
Friday, April 22 @ 8pm
Saturday, April 23 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, April 24 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon)

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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