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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA ANNOUNCES 2017-2018 SEASON

45th Season features inspiring stories for extraordinary people including a Tony Award®-winning musical by Pulitzer Prize Winner Lin-Manuel Miranda.

ESL Federal Credit Union renews sponsorship of Wilson Stage Series.

Rochester Regional Health joins as co-sponsor of Wilson Stage Series.

Monday, March 27, 2017. Rochester, N.Y. – Geva Theatre Center’s **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy** and **Executive Director Christopher Mannelli** are proud to announce the 11 major productions and events of the much anticipated 2017-2018 Season, the non-profit theatre’s 45th year of making professional theatre of a national standard in Rochester.

Since the 2014-2015 Season, **ESL Federal Credit Union** has sponsored the Wilson Stage Series, and has renewed that commitment for the 2016-2017 Season. They are joined this season by Co-Sponsor **Rochester Regional Health**. **Dr. Dawn Lipson** will again be the Honorary Producer of the Wilson Stage Series which features a vibrant Tony Award-winning musical about life in a borough of NYC; the world premiere of a play about Rochester’s leading historical figures; a hilarious and ingenious musical that was the toast of Off-Broadway in 2014; a true story of love, hope, courage and triumph of the human spirit; the world premiere of a brilliant new comedy by one of the country’s hottest writers; and a beloved comedy about the enduring friendship of six southern spitfires.

Geva also announces the return of the theatre’s magical production of Dickens’ classic tale of redemption, *A Christmas Carol*, which has truly become Rochester’s holiday tradition. Additionally, Geva will present a full line-up in the Fielding Stage throughout 2017-2018: nurturing new plays in the Festival of New Theatre, the return of four songstresses with big skirts and big voices, and an eclectic range of contemporary plays in the Fielding Studio Series supported in part by **The Gouvernet Arts Fund at the Community Foundation** and Media Sponsor **100.5 The Drive**.

“Our 45th Anniversary takes place at a time when Geva Theatre Center can illuminate the stories and characters that are essential to our vibrant American culture,” said **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy**. “The richness of contemporary life and the heroes of history, both here and abroad, weave through the eleven plays and musicals that have been carefully chosen for Rochester. I am proud that Geva will help lead the Rochester region into the future with humanity and creativity. Now, more than ever, we need to come together and share these theatrical experiences.”

“The 2017-2018 Season will continue the long tradition of excellence and artistry by Geva Theatre Center,” adds **Executive Director Christopher Mannelli**. “In addition, we have successfully completed ‘Front & Center: The Campaign for Geva’ raising more than \$11M to support the renovation of the building and grow the theatre’s endowment fund. Through that endeavor we have created a space for our community to gather, a center for arts in downtown Rochester that welcomes each and every member of our city.”

“ESL was proud to sponsor Geva Theatre Center’s 2016-2017 Season, and we are delighted to continue the partnership for a fourth consecutive year,” said **ESL Federal Credit Union Vice President/Director of Marketing William Freeman**. “Through its rich programming, Geva Theatre Center enhances the quality of life in the Greater Rochester area. We are pleased to work with our downtown partner to make Rochester a great place to work, live, and raise a family.”

“The culture and artistic offerings at Geva Theatre Center are an integral part of the Rochester experience,” said **Rochester Regional Health President and CEO Eric Bieber, MD**. “Part of the vision at Rochester Regional is to enable every member of the communities we serve to enjoy a better, healthier life. It is our belief that part of a full life is enjoyment of the arts and we are very pleased to be a co-sponsor of the 2017-2018 Wilson Stage Series.”

Since 1972, the not-for-profit Geva Theatre Center has been Rochester’s professional theatre home, offering patrons the opportunity to enjoy the work of the country’s top artists in an intimate setting right in their own community. Geva Theatre Center is one of the premier cultural and educational institutions in Rochester, the most attended professional regional theatre in the Northeast United States outside Manhattan, and a leader among American professional theatres.

2017-2018 Season

IN THE HEIGHTS

Music & Lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda Book by Quiara Alegría Hudes

Conceived by Lin-Manuel Miranda

Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson

Choreographed by Julio Agustin

Musical Direction by Don Kot

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

September 5 - October 8, 2017

In 'the Heights,' life is always colorful and everybody knows everyone. Here, coffee from the corner bodega is sweet and the air is filled with the sounds of salsa, merengue, soul, hip-hop and R & B. But it's a neighborhood on the cusp of change, where the biggest decisions can be choosing which traditions you keep and which ones you leave behind. This landmark musical by the creator of *Hamilton* was the winner of 4 Tony Awards (including Best Musical and Best Original Score) and a Pulitzer Prize-nominee.

SMART PEOPLE

By Lydia Diamond

Directed by Summer L. Williams

A Production from the Kitchen Theatre Company, Ithaca, NY

Part of the Fielding Studio Series

October 5 – October 22, 2017

On the eve of the 2008 Presidential Election, four intellectuals find themselves embroiled in a complex web of social and sexual politics. Brian, a neuroscientist, is studying the brain's responses to race and its societal implications. Ginny, a psychologist, is studying low-income Asian-American women's reaction to stress. Jackson, a young doctor, has opened a clinic for low-income patients. Valerie, a talented actor, is struggling to make ends meet by working as a maid. Everyone wants to be successful, to find love, and to feel as if they've made a positive impact on the world. But what influence does race have on that quest? A brilliantly hilarious and incisive play by the playwright of the award-winning Broadway play, *Stick Fly*.

World Premiere

THE AGITATORS

The Story of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass

By Mat Smart

A commission from Geva Theatre Center & the New York State Council on the Arts

Directed by Logan Vaughn

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

October 17 - November 12, 2017

The Agitators tells of the enduring but tempestuous friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. Great allies? Yes. And at times, great adversaries. Young abolitionists when they met in Rochester in the 1840s, they were full of hopes, dreams and a common purpose. As they grew to become the cultural icons we know today, their movements collided and their friendship was severely tested. This is the story of that 45-year friendship - from its beginning in Rochester, through a Civil War and to the highest halls of

government. They agitated the nation, they agitated each other and, in doing so, they helped shape the Constitution and the course of American history.

THE OTHER JOSH COHEN

Book, Lyrics and Music by David Rossmer and Steve Rosen

Directed by Hunter Foster

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

January 9 - February 4, 2018

Josh Cohen just can't get a break (or a girlfriend). He's overweight, broke and underemployed. To top it all off, his apartment is robbed of everything but a single Neil Diamond CD. But then a mysterious letter arrives that could change his life forever. This hilarious and ingenious musical comedy by David Rossmer and Pittsford native Steve Rosen was nominated for six Drama Desk Awards and the Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical.

ERMA BOMBECK: AT WIT'S END

By Margaret Engel and Allison Engel

Directed by Mark Cuddy

Starring Pam Sherman as Erma Bombeck

Part of the Fielding Studio Series

January 25 – February 11, 2018

Erma Bombeck, one of our country's most beloved humorists, captured the frustrations of her generation by asking, "If life is a bowl of cherries, what am I doing in the pits?" Starring "Suburban Outlaw" and columnist Pam Sherman, this is the story behind America's favorite average housewife who championed the lives of women with an incomparable wit that sprang from the most unexpected place of all — the truth.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, newly adapted by Wendy Kesselman

Directed by David Ira Goldstein

A Co-Production with Arizona Theatre Company

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

February 13 - March 18, 2018

The Diary of Anne Frank is one of the most important literary works of the 20th century. In this powerful new adaptation, Anne Frank emerges from history a bright and talented young girl with the aspirations of any teenager. This impassioned drama about the lives of eight people in hiding from the Nazis in a concealed Amsterdam attic captures the claustrophobic reality of their daily existence. Anne's story of love, hope, courage and triumph of the human spirit has captivated audiences with its profound message for over 70 years.

World Premiere

HEARTLAND

By Gabriel Jason Dean

Directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh

Part of the Fielding Studio Series

March 17 – April 1, 2018

Dr. Harold Banks is a renowned professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Nebraska. When Nazrullah, an Afghan refugee, suddenly arrives at his doorstep armed only with well-worn copies of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Old Man and the Sea* in his hand belonging to Harold's daughter – an American teacher killed in an attack on an Afghan Girls School - the two men spend the next few months as unlikely roommates. Featuring Artistic Director Mark Cuddy as 'Harold' in his return to the Geva stage, *Heartland* is an emotional journey through love and loss, an examination of culpability and, ultimately, a meditation on the power of forgiveness.

World Premiere

ONE HOUSE OVER

By Catherine Trieschmann

Directed by Mark Clements

A Co-production with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

April 3 – April 29, 2018

When Rafael and Camila Hernandez move in downstairs to help Joanne with her elderly and cantankerous curmudgeon of a father, Joanne breathes a little easier. She needs their help, and they need jobs. But she can't anticipate the complications that arise when "the help" starts to feel like family...and act like it. A brilliant new comedy by one of today's hottest playwrights about boundaries, power, privilege and anxiety in a single backyard.

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

By Robert Harling

Directed by Skip Greer

Part of the Wilson Stage Series

May 8 - June 3, 2018

Truvy's motto at her Louisiana beauty shop is: "There is no such thing as natural beauty." Through clouds of hairspray and over the buzz of blow dryers, six sassy southern spitfires gather every week to gossip, swap recipes and support each other through thick and thin. But those sisterly bonds are about to be tested when M'Lynn and her daughter Shelby face a life-changing event. Heartwarming and humorous, *Steel Magnolias* is a story of love, loss, and enduring friendship.

Special Productions and Events

SPECIAL EVENT: ONE NIGHT ONLY READING OF *HAMILTON*

By Mary P. Hamlin and George Arliss

IN THE WILSON STAGE

Monday, September 25, 2017

To celebrate Geva's production of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights*, and the centenary of the original Broadway play, *Hamilton*, written by West Bloomfield native Mary P. Hamlin and stage and screen star George Arliss, Geva will present a one-night only reading of the play on Monday, September 20. The reading will feature *In the Heights* cast members and is underwritten by Mary Hamlin's grandson, George Hamlin IV, Chairman of Canandaigua National Bank and Trust and his wife, Mary.

KEYBANK ROCHESTER FRINGE FESTIVAL

In the Fielding Stage

September 14-23, 2017

The Fielding Stage will once again be a venue for the KeyBank Rochester Fringe Festival, hosting a wide variety of performances.

FESTIVAL OF NEW THEATRE

In the Fielding Stage

October 24 – November 5, 2017

A two-week showcase of new plays and projects that are currently in Geva's developmental process. More than 330 full-length or short works have received readings and/or workshops as part of Geva's new play development programs, and more than 65 have had subsequent productions around the country and the globe.

Rochester's Holiday Tradition

The KeyBank production of

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens

Adapted by Mark Cuddy Music and Lyrics by Gregg Coffin

Directed by Mark Cuddy

In the Wilson Stage

November 22 – December 24, 2017

On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts who remind him who he was and what he might yet become. He learns the true meaning of the season and that it's never too late to make a new start. The famous tale of redemption for the most despised man in London will awaken your heart and rekindle your spirit in this critically acclaimed adaptation. Recommended for the entire family! (Please remember that children under five are not permitted in the theatre.) **Note: Not a part of the ESL Wilson Stage subscription series.*

THE MARVELOUS WONDERETTES: CAPS AND GOWNS

Written by Roger Bean

Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson

In the Fielding Stage

December 7 – December 24

The girls with big skirts, big voices and big dreams are back with another musical trip down memory lane! We're back in 1958, and it's time for the Wonderettes to graduate in this delightful sequel to last season's

hit! Join Betty Jean, Cindy Lou, Missy, and Suzy as they sing about their final year in high school, celebrate and prepare for their next step toward a bright future. Act Two zooms ahead to 1968, where the girls celebrate Missy's marriage to Mr. Lee! Featuring "Rock Around the Clock," "At the Hop," "Dancing in the Street," "River Deep, Mountain High" and 25 more hits, *The Marvelous Wonderettes: Caps & Gowns* will have you cheering for more!

As in past seasons, Geva will again partner with area cultural and community organizations including Rochester Latino Theatre Company with the theatre's production of *In the Heights* and The Susan B. Anthony House and Museum with *The Agitators*. Geva will announce more details on these, as well as additional cultural and community partnerships, throughout the season.

Because professional regional theatre cannot be sustained on ticket sales alone, Geva Theatre Center thanks those generous individuals and businesses that have already committed to making the 2017-2018 Season a memorable one: ESL Federal Credit Union; Rochester Regional Health, Dr. Dawn Lipson, The Gouvernet Arts Fund at the Community Foundation; KeyBank; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; The Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Foundation; Rockcastle Florist; Gray Locey, CPA, P.C.; Harter Secrest and Emery LLP; St. John's Living; All-Occasions Catering; imaginé Photography; Madeline's Catering; NOX; Salena's; Tasteful Connections Catering; Black Button Distilling; ROC Brewing Co.; and Media Sponsors 100.5 The Drive, 13 WHAM TV, Entercom, Fox Rochester, Legends 102.7, WARM 101.3, WDKX, WHAM Radio, News10NBC, WROC TV and WXXI Public Broadcasting.

Subscriptions for the full 9-Play 2017-2018 Season are on sale now from \$201. The ESL and Rochester Regional Health Wilson Stage Series and Fielding Studio Series may be purchased separately, from \$117 and \$84 respectively. Subscribing is easy, flexible and affordable. Subscribers enjoy the best seats at the best prices, plus a host of exclusive benefits like ticket exchange privileges, priority advance booking and discounts, money-saving coupons to area restaurants, free coat check and more. For more information on subscribing to Geva's 2017-2018 Season visit: www.gevatheatre.org/subscribe-now/. Subscribers to the 2017-2018 Season will be able to purchase tickets for *A Christmas Carol* and *The Marvelous Wonderettes: Caps & Gowns* beginning June 21st. Tickets to all individual shows will go on sale to the general public on July 18, 2017. For information on the 2017-2018 Season, visit www.gevatheatre.org/2017-2018-season. **All plays, artists, schedules and prices are subject to change.**

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 522-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.

FOR RESERVATIONS AND TICKET INFORMATION, CONTACT THE BOX OFFICE AT
(585) 232-Geva (4382), OR VISIT GEVA'S WEBSITE AT www.GevaTheatre.org.

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FAST FACTS ON



AND THE 2017-2018 SEASON

Artists:

- Over 5,600 actors, directors, choreographers, designers, musical directors, musicians, stage managers, and writers have worked at Geva since it was founded in 1972.
- Among Geva's notable alumni are:
 - 1 Pulitzer Prize nominee
 - 4 Academy Award Nominees: Josh Brolin, Robert Downey, Jr., Samuel L. Jackson & Robert Vaughn
 - 22 Tony Award winners and 72 Tony nominees
 - 34 Drama Desk Award Winners and 87 Drama Desk nominees
 - 11 Emmy Award Winners and 47 Emmy nominees.
- Geva casts the country's top artists from auditions held in New York City and Rochester. Our casting director, Paul Fouquet, is a Geva Affiliate Artist and a Rochester native.
- Geva houses out-of-town actors, directors and artists in apartments just 150 steps away from the theatre, which the theatre now owns.
- Geva provides every out-of-town actor, director and artist with a familiarization packet containing information on all there is to see and do in Rochester and the surrounding area.
- Actors who perform at Geva are Rochester residents for an average of 8 weeks and become part of the fabric of the community, dining in area restaurants, shopping in area stores and visiting area attractions.

Writers and New Plays

- Geva has presented approximately 336 play readings and workshops since its inception. More than 67 Geva-developed plays have had subsequent productions around the country and the globe.
- In subsequent productions, plays that premiere at Geva are recognized on the title page of programs, saying "Originally produced at Geva Theatre Center, Rochester, NY."
- Play readings are free and open to the public, and most are followed by a discussion between the audience and the playwright.
- Geva's nationally recognized and innovative "Hornets' Nest" series of play readings uses theatre to facilitate community discussions on contemporary topics.

Productions:

- Geva has made over 500 fully-produced productions of plays and musicals since 1972.
- What audiences see onstage is the culmination of months of work. The artistic team for each show begins collaborating up to 12 months in advance of the first performance on every aspect and detail of the production.
- It takes over 11,000 direct labor hours to produce each show at Geva.

Geva and Geva's Staff:

- Geva employs 89 resident full-time and part-time staff, in addition to some 200 guest actors, designers, directors and other artists.

- As a member of the national League of Resident Theatres (LORT), Geva operates under agreements between Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the US; the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union; and United Scenic Artists (Local USA-829), a union of scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers.
- Geva is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Visit Rochester, the Rochester Business Alliance (RBA), Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC), Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester and TheatreROCS.

Economic Impact:

- Geva operates on a budget of approximately \$7 million, 87% of which is directed toward artistic, production, education, literary and community program expenses.
- Geva's annual economic impact exceeds \$10 million. Since 1972, Geva has contributed over \$230 million in economic activity to the community.
- 86% of Geva's direct expenses are made in New York State, with 71% in the Rochester area.
- Geva's education and work-force training programs serve over 40,000 youth and adults each year.
- Geva has served over 4 million theatergoers.