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**GEVA'S 46TH SEASON CONTINUES WITH
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
*HARD CELL***

*ESL Federal Credit Union/Rochester Regional Health 2018-2019 Season
continues with a new comedy by Brent Askari.*

Patrick Noonan and Rochester native Jennifer Cody return in this ensemble cast.

Rochester, N.Y., December 18, 2018 – Geva Theatre Center presents the world premiere of *Hard Cell*, by **Brent Askari** and directed by **Skip Greer**, in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage from **January 8 through February 3**.

A madcap new comedy of errors and mistaken identity. When college professor Nick Abtahi finds himself lost in a small Midwestern town, the welcome mat doesn't exactly get rolled out by its crazy collection of locals. This laugh out loud comedy makes its world premiere at Geva.

Playwright **Brent Askari** is a writer, actor and ensemble member of Mad Horse Theatre Company. Other recent plays include: *Digby's Home* (Semi-finalist O'Neill Playwriting Conference, produced at Mad Horse Theatre); *Cocktails and Travails* (Winner of Neil Simon Festival's National New Play Contest, produced at The Theater Project); *American Underground* (Semi-finalist O'Neill Playwriting Conference); *Bending Reeds* (Semi-Finalist Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Blank Theater's Living Room Series Reading). In addition, he has had plays produced at or developed by Vital Theatre, Melrose Theatre, The 78th Street Theatre, The Boston Theatre Marathon, The Santa Fe Playhouse Different Festival, The John Houseman Theater, New American Theatre, The Drilling Company, Choice Theatricals and Penobscot Theatre Company, He was part of HBO's New Writers Project and has written screenplays for Paramount Pictures, Marvel Films, MTV, and Reveille Entertainment. As an actor, Brent has appeared in numerous theatrical productions and audio dramas. He narrated the syndicated children's television program *Animal Science*, which was nominated for a Daytime Emmy in 2014.

Hard Cell was developed at the 2017 PlayPenn Conference and given a staged reading at EST L.A.'s Winterfest Series, before its world premiere at Geva Theatre Center.

The ensemble cast is a blend of Geva favorites and veteran actors making their Geva debuts. **Jennifer Cody** (Broadway productions of *A Christmas Story*, *The Pajama Game*, *Taboo*, *Urinetown the Musical*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Grease* and *Cats*) returns home to Geva where she has appeared in *Sylvia*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, the world premiere of *Women in Jeopardy!* and *The Odd Couple*. Ms. Cody appears as Terry Burton. **Patrick Noonan** returns for his fifth Wilson Stage production in the role of Evan Weathers. Past Geva shows include *Our Town*; *On Golden Pond*; *The Odd Couple*; and *Almost, Maine*. Making their Geva Theatre Center debuts are **Sean Patrick Doyle** (Broadway productions of *Kinky Boots* and *La Cage Aux Folles*) as Derek Shirley; **Vanessa Morosco** (Off-Broadway production of *Around the World in 80 Days*; *Titus Andronicus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at NJ's Shakespeare Theatre; *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.) as Jane Simons; and **Nuah Ozryel** (*Much Ado About Nothing* at the American Theatre, "The Looming Tower" (Hulu) and NBC's "The Blacklist" as Nick Abtahi).

Hard Cell is directed by **Skip Greer**. The creative team for *Hard Cell* includes **Robert Koharchik** (scenic design), **Christine Pascual** (costume design), **Derek Madonia** (lighting design), **Dan Roach** (sound design), **Jenni Werner** (Co-Dramaturg) and **Becca Poccia Hays** (Co-Dramaturg).

The 2018-2019 Season is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union** and **Rochester Regional Health**. The Honorary Season Producer is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. *Hard Cell* is produced with support from Lead Co-Producer **Joseph & Irene Skalny Charitable Trust**; Co-Producer **Gray Locey, CPA, P.C.**; and Media Sponsors **98 PXY** and **WROC-TV**.

***Hard Cell* begins previews on January 8, opens January 12 and runs through February 3.**

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:
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PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Previews: Tuesday, January 8 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, January 9 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, January 10 @ 7:30pm
Friday, January 11 @ 8pm
Saturday, January 12 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance)

Opening: **Saturday, January 12 @ 8pm**

Performances: Sunday, January 13 @ 2pm and 7pm
Tuesday, January 15 @ 6pm
Wednesday, January 16 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, January 17 @ 7:30pm
Friday, January 18 @ 8pm

Saturday, January 19 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, January 20 @ 2pm and 7pm
Tuesday, January 22 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, January 23 @ 7:30pm
Thursday, January 24 @ 7:30pm
Friday, January 25 @ 8pm
Saturday, January 26 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, January 27 @ 2pm (Audio Described Performance) and 7pm
Tuesday, January 29 @ 7:30pm
Wednesday, January 30 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open Captioned Performances)
Thursday, January 31 @ 7:30pm (Sign Interpreted Performance)
Friday, February 1 @ 8pm
Saturday, February 2 @ 4pm and 8:30pm
Sunday, February 3 @ 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**

* Partial support for open captioning provided by Theatre Development Fund.

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 516-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'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.