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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA ANNOUNCES 2019-2020 SEASON

47th Season features two musicals and a world premiere set in the labs of Kodak.

Mark Cuddy celebrates his 25th Anniversary as Artistic Director with the 2019-2020 Season.

*ESL Federal Credit Union Sponsors the Season with
Honorary Season Producer Dr. Dawn Lipson*

Monday, March 11, 2019. Rochester, N.Y. – Geva Theatre Center’s **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy** and **Executive Director Christopher Mannelli** are proud to announce the 10 major productions and 2 festivals of the much anticipated 2019-2020 Season, the non-profit theatre’s 47th 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 continues its commitment as the Sponsor for the Geva Theatre Center 2019-2020 Season. **Dr. Dawn Lipson** will serve as Honorary Season Producer.

The Wilson Stage features one of musical theatre’s biggest hits; a nail-biting drama set in a university; a new play from the writer of *Women in Jeopardy!*; a joyously melodic musical based on an award-winning film; a world premiere tale about beauty, truth and perception; and an all-American comedy about two very new Americans.

Geva also announces the return of the theatre’s magical production of Dickens’ classic tale of redemption, the KeyBank production of *A Christmas Carol*, which has truly become Rochester’s holiday tradition. Geva will present a full line-up in the Fielding Stage throughout 2019-2020: nurturing new plays in the Festival of New Theatre, and an eclectic range of contemporary plays in the Fielding Studio Series. Additionally, the Fielding Stage will be a venue for the KeyBank Rochester Fringe Festival.

Geva is committed to serving diverse artists and communities. As with this current season, over half of next season’s productions are written and directed by women. Three plays featured in the 2019-2020 Season are written by playwrights of color and five plays will be helmed by directors of color.

“We continue our commitment to producing the newest stories for Rochester – all but one show was written in the 21st Century. Rochester deserves the very best, and our playwrights, directors, actors and designers will represent the diverse talent of the American Theatre.” stated **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy**. “With a world premiere set in Kodak Park, our Rochester Stories project in 2020 follows the premieres of *The Agitators* and *Revival: The Resurrection of Son House*.”

“At the core of what we do is the celebration of the human experience,” commented **Executive Director, Christopher Mannelli**. “In next year’s season we are proud to bring stories on our stage that will inspire and entertain all of the Rochester community.”

“It is ESL’s honor to support Geva Theatre Center, one of the greatest assets to Rochester’s arts community,” said **Celeste Kier, Senior Vice President/Director of Customer Experience, ESL Federal Credit Union**. “At ESL, we celebrate and support those organizations who demonstrate devotion to our community and commit to bettering people’s lives. For more than 40 years, Geva has been instrumental to the arts and cultural experience in Rochester, and we are excited to support their 2019-2020 Wilson and Fielding Stage Series.”

The 2019-2020 Season will be a landmark one for Mark Cuddy who celebrates his 25th Season as the theatre’s Artistic Director. His tenure has seen numerous changes for Rochester’s leading professional theatre including the establishment of Education, Literary, and now Engagement Departments to serve residents; introducing over two dozen world premieres on Geva stages; the addition of the 180-seat Fielding Stage in 2000; and the \$9 million renovation of Geva’s historic home and acquisition of artist housing in 2016. During his time at Geva he has worked alongside talented and dedicated staff, artists and trustees to build Geva into a theatrical powerhouse boasting one of the largest audiences of any professional regional theatre in the Northeast with a reputation for excellence in education programming and new play production.

Since 1973, 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.

2019-2020 Season

Wilson Stage Series

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

Book by Harvey Fierstein

Music and Lyrics by Jerry Herman

Based on the play by Jean Poiret

Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson

Musical Director Don Kot

Choreography by Sam Hay

September 3 – October 6, 2019

In sunny St. Tropez, Georges and Albin run a glamorous nightclub with fabulous drag performers. Their blissful existence is turned upside down when Georges' son announces that he is getting married...to the daughter of one of France's most conservative politicians. Georges and Albin do their best to ensure that the marriage goes off without a hitch, with hilarious results. One of musical theatre's biggest all-time hits, *La Cage aux Folles* features an exuberant score by Jerry Herman (*Mame; Hello, Dolly!*). Winner of six Tony Awards including "Best Musical" when it premiered in 1983, both the 2004 and 2010 Broadway revivals won the Tony Award for "Best Revival of a Musical." Celebrating his 25th Anniversary at Geva, Artistic Director Mark Cuddy will star as nightclub owner, Georges.

Wilson Stage Series

THE NICETIES

By Eleanor Burgess

Directed by Nicole A. Watson

October 22 – November 17, 2019

In this explosive play, Zoe, a driven black student, and respected white professor Janine meet to discuss a paper Zoe is writing about the American Revolution. Polite conversation of grammar and Google quickly becomes a powder keg of race, history, and power, from which neither woman will leave unscathed. An explosive and provocative nail-biter.

Fielding Studio Series

QUEEN

By Madhuri Shekar

Directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh

November 7 – November 24, 2019

Two PhD candidates, Sanam and Ariel, have spent the last seven years exhaustively researching vanishing bee populations across the globe. Just as these close friends are about to publish a career-defining paper, Sanam stumbles upon an error which could jeopardize everything. Both women must make an impossible choice – look the other way and save the bees, or tell the truth and face the consequences.

Wilson Stage Series

SLOW FOOD

By Wendy MacLeod

Directed by Skip Greer

January 14 – February 9, 2020

Peter and Irene’s anniversary celebration in Palm Springs is off to a rocky start, but they are looking forward to a nice meal in a local restaurant. It’s just their luck to be served (or not) by a perfectionist waiter who won’t bring them their food and has them questioning everything – from their menu selections to the state of their marriage. A new comedy by Wendy MacLeod (*Women in Jeopardy!*).

Wilson Stage Series

ONCE

Book by Enda Walsh

Music and Lyrics by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová

Based on the Motion Picture Written and Directed by John Carney

Directed by Mark Cuddy

Music Director Don Kot

A Co-production with Syracuse Stage

February 19 – March 22, 2020

The story of a guy who gave up on love and music, and the captivating woman who inspired him to dream again. He spends his days working at his father’s Dublin fix-it shop and his nights playing music in pubs. He is on the verge of giving up music altogether when he meets her: a Czech immigrant who refuses to let him abandon his guitar. Over the course of a week, this friendship grows into a musical collaboration and, ultimately, a powerful (but complicated) love. Featuring all of the magical songs from the critically-acclaimed 2007 film, including the Oscar-winning “Falling Slowly,” this beautiful, joyously melodic show celebrates the power of music to connect us all. Winner of eight Tony Awards including “Best Musical” and “Best Book,” and the Grammy Award for “Best Musical Theatre Album.”

Fielding Studio Series

CRY IT OUT

By Molly Smith Metzler

Directed by M. Bevin O’Gara

A production of the Kitchen Theatre, Ithaca

March 5 – March 22, 2020

Cooped up with a new baby and starved for conversation, Jessie invites her funny and forthright neighbor Lina, also a new mom, for coffee in the yard between their duplexes. Despite their vastly different finances, they become fast friends during naptimes—while someone watches from the mansion on the cliff overlooking Jessie’s yard. This comedy by a writer/producer of *Shameless* takes an honest look at the challenges of being a new mom, being at home with a baby, and the dilemma of returning to work.

Wilson Stage Series

World Premiere

LOOKS LIKE PRETTY

By Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder

Directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton

March 31 – April 26, 2020

In 1963 in a lab at Kodak Park, Mr. Walters and his younger colleague Charlie are putting the finishing touches to the newest color film technology. When Gloria, a new African American employee at Kodak, questions the authenticity of color in the film, the success of the whole project is at stake. Innovation, revolution, commercialism and perception are tested in this historical fiction inspired by the real science of color film evolution. Co-Commissioned by Geva Theatre Center and the Ensemble Studio Theatre / Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project.

Fielding Studio Series

WHERE DID WE SIT ON THE BUS?

Written and Performed by Brian Quijada

Directed by Chay Yew

April 23 – May 10, 2020

With pulsing rhythms and original rhymes set to a live, looped soundtrack, Brian Quijada's electric one man show is a hip-hop autobiography about falling in love with performance, the power of family, and growing up Latinx in a world that categorizes everyone in black and white. "An explosion of energy, raw emotion, and irresistible storytelling." –*The Chicago Sun Times*.

Wilson Stage Series

VIETGONE

By Qui Nguyen

Original Music by Shane Rettig

Directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh

May 5 – May 31, 2020

It's 1975 and Saigon has fallen. He lost his wife. She lost her fiancé. But now in a new land of Harleys, hot dogs and "howdy!", they just might find each other. This modern twist on the classic boy-meets-girl story takes audiences on a hilariously rip-roaring adventure across 1970s America with a hot soundtrack that serves up hip-hop, sass and comic-book quick cuts.

Special Productions and Events

KEYBANK ROCHESTER FRINGE FESTIVAL

In the Fielding Stage

September 10-21, 2019

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 7 – October 20, 2019

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 27 – December 29, 2019

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.*

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 2019-2020 Season a memorable one: ESL Federal Credit Union; Dr. Dawn Lipson; Rockcastle Florist; All-Occasions Catering; Hedonist Artisan Chocolates; imaginé Photography; Julia K Caters; Madeleine's Catering; Marshall Street Bar & Grill; Native Bar & Eatery; Salena's Mexican Restaurant; Tasteful Connections Catering; and Media Sponsors 13 WHAM TV, 98PXY, Fox Rochester, WARM 101.3, The Drive, WDKX, WHAM 1180, News10NBC, WROC TV, WYSL, and WXXI Public Broadcasting.

Subscriptions for the full 9-Play 2019-2020 Season are on sale now from \$224.50. The Wilson Stage Series and Fielding Studio Series may be purchased separately, from \$133 and \$91.50 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 2019-2020 Season visit: <https://www.gevatheatre.org/subscribe/> Subscribers to the 2019-2020 Season will be able to purchase tickets for *A Christmas Carol* in July 16. Tickets to all individual shows (excl. *A Christmas Carol*) will go on sale to the general public on July 16, 2019. Tickets to *A Christmas Carol* will go on sale to the general public on Monday, September 23. ***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 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.

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 2019-2020 SEASON

Artists:

- Over 5,950 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
 - 23 Tony Award winners and 77 Tony nominees
 - 34 Drama Desk Award Winners and 94 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 360 play readings and workshops since its inception. More than 68 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 530 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 93 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 \$8 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 \$260 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 welcomes 160,000 people through its doors each season and over its 46-year history has served over 4.9 million theatergoers.