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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## GEVA THEATRE CENTER'S 2019-2020 FIELDING STUDIO SERIES BEGINS WITH *QUEEN*

**Rochester, N.Y., October 29, 2019** – Geva Theatre Center's 2019-2020 Fielding Studio Series begins with *Queen*, written by Madhuri Shekar and directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh. The production begins performances on **November 6** and runs in the Fielding Stage through **November 24**.

**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.**

Playwright **Madhuri Shekar** was born in California and grew up in India, and after a couple of quick detours in Singapore and London, made her first grown-up home in Los Angeles. She currently shuttles between Jersey City, Los Angeles and Chennai. Her new audio play, *Evil Eye*, debuted on the Audible best-seller in May 2019. Her play, *House of Joy*, had its world premiere at Cal Shakes in August 2019. Also upcoming in the 2019/2020 season is her new commission from Victory Gardens, *Dhaba on Devon Avenue*. She has received two commissions from Atlanta's Alliance Theatre (*Bucket of Blessings* and *Antigone, Presented by the Girls of St. Catherine's*) which were both produced in subsequent seasons. She has also been commissioned by the Kennedy Center, South Coast Rep and Victory Gardens. She is the 2013/14 winner of the Kendada Graduate Playwriting contest held by the Alliance Theatre for her play *In Love and Warcraft*, for which they did the world premiere production. It is published by Samuel French and has been produced around the country and abroad. She was also the second place winner of the East West Players 2012 Face of the Future Playwriting contest for her play *A Nice Indian Boy*. They subsequently produced the play, which has been produced by the Rasaka Theatre Company (Chicago) and EnActe Arts (Cupertino). Her plays have been developed or showcased at Center Theatre Group, The Old Globe, the Kennedy Center, the Hedgebrook Playwrights Festival (in conjunction with Seattle Rep) and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has been a finalist for the Princess Grace Playwriting Fellowship. *Bucket of Blessings* won the Suzi Bass Award for Outstanding Original Work – Theatre for Young Audiences. She has an M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from USC, and a dual Master's degree in Global Media and Communications from the London School of Economics and USC. She is a 2018 Alumna of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights program at Juilliard. She is an alumna of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the Ars Nova Play Group and the Center Theatre Group Writers Workshop, and a co-creator of the Shakespeare web series, *Titus and Dronicus*. She became a member of New Dramatists in 2019. She is a staff writer for the upcoming HBO show, *The Nevers*.

*Queen* premiered in 2017 at Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago and was nominated for a Joseph Jeff Award for Best New Play. In 2018 it was produced in Seattle (Pratidhwani with ACT) and the Bay Area (EnActe Theatre), and had its New York premiere in February 2019 at the Astoria Performing Arts Center. *Queen* placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Kennedy Center's 2017 Paul Stephen Lim playwriting contest, and is an Edgerton Grant awardee.

The cast of *Queen* all make their Geva Theatre Center debuts. **Ezra Barnes** (Off-Broadway productions of *Breakfast with Mugabe*, *In White America*, *English Bride*) is Dr. Philip Hayes; **Nikhaar Kishnani** (Off-Off-Broadway production of *Veil'd* and TV's *Brown Nation*, *Code Switched*, *Geeta's Guide to Moving On* and *Nepotism*) is Sanam Shah; **Nik Sadhnani** (Off-Broadway productions of *India Pale Ale* and *The Trial of the American President* and Hulu's *The Path*) is Arvind Patel; and **Marina Shay** (NYC productions of *Miss Julie*, *Eurydice* and *A Glorious Vision*, TV's *The Good Fight*) is Ariel Spiegel.

*Queen* is directed by Geva's Director of Engagement/Associate Artistic Director **Pirronne Yousefzadeh** (director of Geva productions of *The Royale*, *Heartland* and *The Lake Effect*). The creative team includes **Reid Thompson** (Scenic Design), **Valérie Thérèse Bart** (Costume Design), **Reza Behjat** (Lighting Designer), **Kate Marvin** (Sound Design), **J.C. Meyer Crosby** (Intimacy Director), and **Jenni Werner** (Dramaturg).

### ***Queen* begins performances on November 6 and runs in the Fielding Stage through November 24.**

The 2019-2020 Season is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. The Honorary Season Producer is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. The Fielding Studio Series is supported in part by the Gouvernet Arts Fund at The Community Foundation. The Associate Producer for the Fielding Studio Series is St John's Rochester and the Media Sponsor is WYSL.

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

**Previews:** Wednesday, November 6 @ 7pm  
Thursday, November 7 @ 7pm  
Friday, November 8 @ 7pm  
Saturday, November 9 @ 2:30pm (Open Captioned)

**Opening:** **Saturday, November 9 @ 7:30pm**

**Performances:** Sunday, November 10 @ 3pm  
Tuesday, November 12 @ 7pm  
Wednesday, November 13 @ 7pm  
Thursday, November 14 @ 7pm  
Friday, November 15 @ 7pm  
Saturday, November 16 @ 2:30pm and 7:30pm  
Sunday, November 17 @ 3pm  
Tuesday, November 19 @ 7pm  
Wednesday, November 20 @ 7pm

Thursday, November 21 @ 7pm  
Friday, November 22 @ 7pm  
Saturday, November 23 @ 2:30pm and 7pm  
Sunday, November 24 @ 3pm

**TICKET PRICES:** Tickets start at \$31.

**RESERVATIONS:** (585) 232-GEVA (4382), Website: [www.gevatheatre.org](http://www.gevatheatre.org)

**LOCATION:** Fielding Stage, Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd, Rochester, NY 14607

#### **GEVA THEATRE CENTER**

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's flagship professional theatre, Geva 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 20,000 students.

Geva operates two venues – the 516-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage and the 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage. As one of the country's leading theatre companies and a member of the national League of Resident Theatres, Geva produces a varied contemporary repertoire from musicals to world premieres celebrating the rich tapestry of our diverse community. The theatre draws upon the talents of some of the country's top actors, directors, designers and writers who are shaping the American Theatre scene.

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 more information: [GevaTheatre.org](http://GevaTheatre.org)

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