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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# GEVA'S 47<sup>TH</sup> SEASON CONTINUES WITH ***THE NICETIES***

*ESL Federal Credit Union 2019-2020 Season continues  
with an acclaimed play inspired by real events.*

**Rochester, N.Y., October 8, 2019** – Geva Theatre Center presents *The Niceties*, by **Eleanor Burgess** and directed by **Nicole A. Watson**, in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage from **October 22 through November 17**.

**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.**

**Eleanor Burgess'** plays have been produced at Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter Theatre Center, Huntington Theatre Company, the Alliance Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, the Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Portland Stage Company, and Centenary Stage, and developed with The New Group, New York Theatre Workshop, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Salt Lake Acting Company, the Lark Play Development Center, and the Kennedy Center/NNPN MFA Playwrights Workshop.

In November 2015, students at Yale University filled the campus courtyards in protest, prompting a tense national debate about free speech, racial insensitivity and cultural appropriation. These protests initiated a domino effect at other colleges and universities, making news headlines and engaging the general public in the conflict between a divided administrative and student body. The event that instigated the turmoil occurred a few days before Halloween when the university's Intercultural Affairs Committee sent an email to the student body urging them not to wear costumes that were "culturally unaware and insensitive." Yale Lecturer Erika Christakis took issue with the committee's email and took it upon herself to send one of her own, encouraging students to wear what they like and accusing academic administrations of deliberate censorship and of becoming too prohibitive. Christakis' response outraged many students, who took to social media and public protests to express their disappointment, demanding that colleges be more proactive about

supporting minority students and providing better mental health resources. The controversy, and the scale to which it grew, did not escape the attention of playwright Eleanor Burgess, a graduate of Yale University herself. Eleanor credits the Halloween email controversy and the subsequent response as being the impetus for writing *The Niceties*. *The Niceties* premiered at the Huntington Theatre in 2018.

Making their Geva debuts in *The Niceties* are **Jordan Baker** as Janine Bosko and **Cindy De La Cruz** as Zoe Reed. Jordan Baker's Broadway credits include *Suddenly, Last Summer* (Theatre World Award). Off-Broadway credits include *Three Tall Women* (Original Cast, 1994 Pulitzer Prize). Regional credits include *Native Gardens* at Denver Center; *Luna Gale* at Goodman Theatre and LATC; *Appropriate* at the Humana Festival; *The Normal Heart* at A.C.T.; *Death of a Salesman* at the Old Globe (directed by Pam McKinnon); and *The Philadelphia Story* at the Royal Exchange/England. Film credits include *The Post*, *Land of Steady Habits*, *Five Flights Up*, *The David Dance*, *Paparazzi*, *Another Earth* (Sundance/Alfred P. Sloan Award), *The Out of Towners* and *City Hall*. Television credits include *The Americans*; *Bull*; *FBI: Most Wanted*; *Madame Secretary*; *The Good Wife*; *Blue Bloods*; *New Adventures of Old Christine*; *Ugly Betty* and *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*. **Cindy De La Cruz** is a NYC native and her recent credits include *DreamHou\$e* at ArsNova; *Storm Still* at the Sheen Center; *Our Town* at Olney Theater Center; *Stupid F\*\*king Bird* at Arden Theater and Urbanite Theatre; *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at American Stage; and *Dearly Departed* at WestCoast Black Theatre Troupe. TV credits include *The Village* (NBC); *Blue Bloods* (CBS). Film credits include *Kilroy Was Here* (Dir. Kevin Smith).

*The Niceties* is directed by **Nicole A. Watson**. Nicole is the associate artistic director at Round House Theatre as well as a freelance director and educator. She is an associate artist at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, a New Georges affiliated artist, an alum of the Women's Project Lab, the Drama League, and a member of the SDC. As a director she has worked at the O'Neill Theater Center, Baltimore Center Stage, Playmakers Rep, Theater Latte Da, Asolo Rep, the New Black Fest, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, New Georges, Working Theatre, the Lark, New Dramatists, and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Project. As an educator she has worked at the University of Maryland College Park, NYU, North Carolina School of the Arts, Smith College, Two River Theater, Long Island University, and ACT in San Francisco. Recent credits include *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*; *A Doll's House Part 2*; *Sweat*; and *Skeleton Crew*. Her interest is in new plays, especially those that interrogate history and amplify the narratives of those who have been ignored or misrepresented.

The creative team for *The Niceties* includes **Mariana Sanchez** (scenic design), **Casey McNamara** (costume design), **Emily Stork** (lighting design), **Sinan Refik Zafar** (sound design), **Adriano Gatto** (fight choreographer) and **Francisca Da Silveira** (dramaturg).

The 2019-2020 Season is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. The Honorary Season Producer is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. *The Niceties* is produced with support from Media Sponsors **WXXI** and **WDKX 103.9**.

***The Niceties* begins previews on October 22, opens October 26 and runs through November 17.**

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

## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

**Previews:** Tuesday, October 22 @ 7:30pm  
Wednesday, October 23 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 24 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, October 25 @ 8pm  
Saturday, October 26 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance\*)

**Opening:** **Saturday, October 26 @ 8pm**

**Performances:** Sunday, October 27 @ 2pm and 7pm  
Tuesday, October 29 @ 6pm  
Wednesday, October 30 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 31 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, November 1 @ 8pm  
Saturday, November 2 @ 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, November 3 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm  
Tuesday, November 5 @ 6pm  
Wednesday, November 6 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, November 7 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, November 8 @ 8pm  
Saturday, November 9 @ 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, November 10 @ 2pm (Audio Described performance) and 7pm  
Tuesday, November 12 @ 7:30pm  
Wednesday, November 13 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open Captioned Performances)  
Thursday, November 14 @ 7:30pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)  
Friday, November 15 @ 8pm  
Saturday, November 16 @ 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, November 17 @ 2 pm (Sunday Salon)

**Ticket Prices:** **Tickets start at \$25.**

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