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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Geva announces 50th Anniversary Season

First season planned by incoming Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson features a world premiere, reimagined classics, two musicals, and renowned artists

Sponsored by ESL Federal Credit Union

Honorary Season Producer Dr. Dawn Lipson

Rochester, N.Y. — Geva Theatre Center’s incoming Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson and Executive Director Christopher Mannelli are delighted to announce the theatre’s 50th Anniversary Season. The milestone 2022-23 Season, kicking off in September, is the beginning of a new era for Geva. Williamson will lead the return to a full calendar of productions of world-class theatre after the retirement of longtime Artistic Director Mark Cuddy on July 31. The Season is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. **Dr. Dawn Lipson will serve as Honorary Season Producer.**

“I’m thrilled to be joining Geva at such an exciting moment, and can’t wait to introduce Rochester audiences to some of my favorite theatre artists working today,” says Williamson. “The 50th Anniversary is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the past while also diving into the future with some remarkable writers, and this season will take us from reimagined classics to timely contemporary stories, and from bold new comedy to some of the greatest music of the 20th century.”

Williamson is set to launch her tenure and the new season by directing her own adaptation of Charlotte Brontë’s beloved classic *Jane Eyre*, opening on the Wilson Stage in September. Second up on the Wilson Stage will be **Tony and Olivier Award-winning playwright Matthew López’** beautiful coming-of-age drama *Somewhere*, directed by **Zi Alikhan** (*Snow in Midsummer* at Classic Stage Company, former *Hamilton* resident director). The new year will see Jeffrey L. Page (longtime Beyoncé choreographer, *1776* on Broadway this coming fall) bring an illuminating new take to the Fats Waller musical *Ain’t Misbehavin’* in a co-production with Barrington Stage. **Sarah Gancher’s** *Russian Troll Farm*, a timely workplace comedy, will have its world premiere production — helmed by **Tony Award-winning director Darko Tresnjak** — in February. Following that, **DeLanna Studi** will bring her acclaimed dramatic memoir *And So We Walked* to Geva. The season will conclude with director **Shelley Butler’s** (*The Magician’s Daughter* at Geva) production of **Rodgers & Hammerstein’s well-loved musical Cinderella**, celebrating radical kindness and featuring spellbinding stage magic.

Geva will also introduce an exciting new initiative with the upcoming season: **a new playwright in residence program**, which will bring a playwright each season into the heart of Geva's planning and programming. Geva will launch each residency by producing a show by the playwright in residence, commissioning another work, and providing development resources. In addition, the playwright in residence will take a key role in planning the following season and bring their voice to the company's overall vision. **Harrison David Rivers** has been selected as the inaugural playwright in residence, and Geva will produce his intimate family drama, ***we are continuous***, on the Fielding Stage this season.

An additional production on the Fielding Stage will be announced shortly.

"We are thrilled to be sharing this incredible 50th Anniversary Season with the Rochester community," says Mannelli. "We are so thankful to all who have supported Geva and can't wait to celebrate this milestone all next year!"

Geva's 50th Anniversary season was planned by the theatre's artistic staff with the assistance of its Artistic Council, which includes **Shawn Brown, Luticha André Doucette, Tonia Iakonikohnrio Galban, Stephanie Paredes, Mojgan Rabbani, and Esther Winter.**

ESL Federal Credit Union will continue its commitment to Geva as the sponsor of the 50th Anniversary Season. The financial institution has served as season sponsor since 2014. "ESL is excited to once again be the Presenting Sponsor of the Wilson and Fielding Stages for what is sure to be an excellent 50th Season at Geva Theatre Center," says **ESL Federal Credit Union President and CEO Faheem Masood.** "Theatre and the arts have a powerful ability to lift us up, and time and again, Geva has shown its ability to bring people together, inspire, educate and entertain thousands in our community."

Dr. Dawn Lipson will once again serve as Honorary Season Producer.

Subscriptions for Geva's 50th Anniversary Season are on sale now and may be purchased by calling the Geva Box Office at 585-232-4382. Tickets to all individual productions will go on sale to the general public in August.

Geva also announces the return of Rochester's favorite holiday tradition: **A Christmas Carol**. Cuddy will return to direct his acclaimed adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved holiday tale. And the theatre's Fielding Stage will once again be a host for the **Rochester Fringe Festival** from September 14-23, 2022.

50th Anniversary Season (2022-2023)

Jane Eyre

By Charlotte Brontë

Adapted and Directed by Elizabeth Williamson

Wilson Stage

September 6 – October 2, 2022

Charlotte Brontë's revolutionary novel, adapted by Geva's new artistic director, Elizabeth Williamson. *Jane Eyre* is a Gothic story of resilience, in which a penniless orphan is determined to craft a fulfilling life for herself, against all odds. Jane is hired as a governess and falls passionately in love with her brooding employer, only to

discover that he — and his home — are surrounded by dark secrets. When the secrets are revealed, how will Jane preserve her chances for happiness?

Somewhere

By Matthew López • Directed by Zi Alikhan

Wilson Stage

October 18 – November 13, 2022

It's 1959, *West Side Story* has taken Broadway by storm, and from their family's tiny apartment in the San Juan Hill neighborhood of Manhattan, the young Candelaria siblings dream of glamorous careers in show business. However, in their father's extended absence, oldest son Alejandro has had to trade in his tap shoes for a job at the corner store. When the opportunity arises for this talented Puerto Rican family to audition for roles in *West Side Story* itself, all their dreams seem poised to come true — until a neighborhood-wide eviction abruptly threatens everything they have worked for.

Tony Award-winning playwright Matthew López offers a humorous, moving and dance-filled portrait of a family set on edge by gentrification, stubborn idealism, and a profound love of the performing arts. Directed by Zi Alikhan (*Snow in Midsummer*, Classic Stage Company, former resident director, *Hamilton*).

Ain't Misbehavin': The Fats Waller Musical Show

Conceived by Richard Maltby Jr. and Murray Horwitz

Directed and Choreographed by Jeffrey L. Page

Co-production with Barrington Stage

Wilson Stage

January 17 – February 12, 2023

Ain't Misbehavin' is a vibrant celebration of jazz pioneer Fats Waller's extraordinary career. This radical new approach from longtime Beyoncé choreographer and Broadway director Jeffrey L. Page reveals the masks Fats Waller and his musicians assumed while performing for white audiences — as they created the music of a new era.

Featuring classics from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s-40s such as “*Honeysuckle Rose*,” “*Your Feet's Too Big*” and “*T' Aint Nobody's Business if I Do*,” performed by a cast of five and a live, onstage jazz band, this new production of *Ain't Misbehavin'* will energize, enlighten and entertain.

Russian Troll Farm: A Workplace Comedy

By Sarah Gancher • Directed by Darko Tresnjak

Produced in association with Dori Berinstein and Doc Theatre

World Premiere

Wilson Stage

February 28 – March 26, 2023

Steve likes Masha. Masha likes Nikolai. Egor just likes to troll Black Twitter. It's another day at the office in the Russian government's infamous Internet Research Agency, where workers are tasked with manipulating social media to forward the Russian agenda at home and abroad. Office comedy meets political satire in Sarah

Gancher's acclaimed new play based on real events, set in the lead-up to the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.
Directed by Tony Award-winner Darko Tresnjak (*A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*).

And So We Walked: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears

Written and performed by DeLanna Studi • Directed by Corey Madden

Wilson Stage

April 4 – April 23, 2023

DeLanna Studi, Cherokee performance artist and activist, shares a powerful, multi-faceted dramatic memoir in *And So We Walked: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears*. In this frank, heartwarming and inspiring story, she recounts the experience of embarking with her father on an incredible 900-mile journey along the Trail of Tears to truly understand her own identity and the conflicts of her nation. The play recounts the six-week journey, which retraced the path her great-great grandparents took in the 1830s during the forced relocation of 17,000 Cherokee from their homelands.

And So We Walked draws on extraordinary interviews, historical research, and the artist's personal experience to convey the complexities and conflicts with which the Cherokee wrestle. Studi received the 2016 Butcher Scholar Award from The Autry Museum of the American West in acknowledgement of her work on *And So We Walked*.

Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella

Directed by Shelley Butler

Music by Richard Rodgers

Original book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

New book by Douglas Carter Beane

Wilson Stage

May 9 – June 4, 2023

The Tony Award-winning musical from the creators of *South Pacific* and *The Sound of Music*. Douglas Carter Beane's adaptation of this well-loved classic invites us to build a better, kinder world together. When she meets a dragon-slaying young prince who is just assuming control of his government, Ella helps spark transformation and empower the disenfranchised in their kingdom. With the help of her fairy godmother, a pumpkin and a little magic and humor, Ella, Prince Topher and their generous friends will inspire and delight the whole family.

Featuring sumptuous costumes and designs inspired by French pop-up books, this triumphant *Cinderella* fits like a glass slipper! Shelley Butler (*The Magician's Daughter* at Geva) directs.

we are continuous
By Harrison David Rivers
Fielding Stage
Dates TBD

Ora and her son Simon have always been close: when her thoughts turn to him, he'll unexpectedly call, and he knows that she's got his back, no matter what. Even when her husband doesn't know how to accept their son's coming out, she is there for Simon. But will the news of his HIV diagnosis be the undoing of their relationship? By turns intimate, funny, and hopeful, *we are continuous* explores how people change and how love evolves.

Harrison David Rivers is Geva's Playwright in Residence for the 2022-23 Season.

Special Productions and Events

Rochester Fringe Festival
Fielding Stage
September 13 – 24, 2022

Geva Theatre Center's Fielding Stage will once again be a venue for the Rochester Fringe Festival, hosting a wide variety of performances.

A Christmas Carol
Adapted and directed by Mark Cuddy
Music and lyrics by Gregg Coffin
Musical direction by Don Kot
Wilson Stage
November 29 – December 30, 2022

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. Charles Dickens' famous tale of redemption for the most despised man in London will awaken your heart and rekindle your spirit in this critically acclaimed adaptation.

About Geva Theatre Center

Geva Theatre Center is a nonprofit, professional theatre company in downtown Rochester, New York, offering world-class productions and extensive additional programming. Founded in 1972, Geva is the most well-attended regional theatre in New York State with one of the 25 largest subscription bases among regional

theatres in the country. Geva serves as many as 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 20,000 students.

Geva's 517-seat Wilson Stage and 180-seat Fielding Stage each offer a wide-ranging collection of drama, comedy and musical theatre, from classics to world premieres. The company also offers a broad slate of educational, outreach and literary programming to enrich audiences, students and artists of all ages and disciplines. Since 1995, Geva has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

Geva Theatre Center sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Onöndowa'ga, or "the people of the Great Hill." In English, they are known as the Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." They have stewarded this land through generations, and Geva pays respect and gives thanks to their elders, past and present.

Find out more about Geva Theatre Center at GevaTheatre.org or by connecting with us on social media. Facebook: facebook.com/gevatheatrecenter, Twitter: [@gevatheatre](https://twitter.com/gevatheatre), Instagram: [@gevatheatre](https://instagram.com/gevatheatre), LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/geva-theatre-center.

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