



Media Contact:
Abbey Noble
Marketing and Communications Coordinator
Office: 585-420-2059
Cell: 585-355-6576
anoble@gevatheatre.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2022

The Chinese Lady

Geva Theatre Center to open ‘The Chinese Lady’ Kitchen Theatre Company production runs April 20 – May 8

Rochester, N.Y. – Geva Theatre Center will open “The Chinese Lady” by Lloyd Suh on April 20. Based on the true story of Afong Moy, who is believed to be the first Chinese woman to have set foot in the United States, the play is the most-produced play in the country for the 2021-22 season, according to American Theatre. The production, directed by Aileen Wen McGroddy, comes to Geva from the Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca and runs on Geva’s Fielding Stage through May 8.

In 1834, a 14-year-old girl is brought to the U.S. from Guangzhou, China. She is put on display for the American public and billed as “The Chinese Lady.” For over 45 years, she is toured around the U.S. as a sideshow act, accompanied by Atung, her assistant and closest acquaintance. Suh’s piercing tale examines the ways in which one woman’s life is impacted by exploitation and the white gaze and explores the mystery surrounding Moy’s later years. The Hartford Courant called it “a layered intimate psychological drama,” and The New York Times described the play as “moving and often sharply funny.”

Suh began work on “The Chinese Lady” in 2015, after learning the story of Afong Moy while researching another play. “I wasn’t terribly self-aware of the ways in which she was haunting me at the time,” Suh said in an interview with American Theatre. “But as I began to think about her and research more, and then eventually began to start exploratory writing, the layers of that haunting just kind of grew until I knew that I had to do something with it. It became a play once I realized that I couldn’t wrestle with it just on my own in my head in some theoretical way. That I needed to get in the room with peers and wrestle with this together.” The play had its full world premiere — a

commissioned co-production with Ma-Yi Theater Company — at Barrington Stage Company's St. Germain Stage in Massachusetts in July 2018.

Overseeing the production is director Aileen Wen McGroddy, a Chinese and Irish American theatre director, educator, and live event producer. "The Chinese Lady" was the first time she learned of Afong Moy. "In the American history classes I took growing up, the story of Asian Americans was limited to mentions of the Transcontinental Railroad and the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII," McGroddy said. "As Lloyd Suh has put it, the story of Afong Moy is American history, and like other experiences of marginalized groups in this country, it must be incorporated into the story we tell ourselves about our past." McGroddy adds that, after reading the play, she knew she had to direct it.

The production features Christina Liang as Afong Moy and Roger Yeh as Atung. Yeaji Kim (scenic design), Amanda Gladu (costume design), Madeleine Reid (lighting design), Julian Crocarno (sound design), Anna Cunningham (production stage manager), Brendan Komala (technical director), Stiller Zusman (scenic artist), and Lisa Donadio (casting director) complete the creative team.

Tickets for "The Chinese Lady" are on sale now and can be purchased by calling 585-232-4382, online at GevaTheatre.org, or in person at the box office Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 8 p.m.

Geva's 49th Season is sponsored by ESL Federal Credit Union. Dr. Dawn Lipson serves as honorary season producer. The Fielding Studio Series is supported in part by The Government Arts Fund at The Community Foundation. "The Chinese Lady" is presented with support from media sponsor WXXI.

The season continues with "Yoga Play" by Dipika Guha, May 10 – June 5 on the Wilson Stage.

Geva is taking special care to keep everyone safe, including requiring proof of either COVID vaccination or a negative test for entry, along with masking. Patrons can find the theatre's current indoor safety procedures at GevaTheatre.org/covid-safety.

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.

END