SOMEBWHERE

By Matthew López  • Directed by Zi Alikhan
Choreographed by Karla Puno Garcia

OCTOBER 18 – NOVEMBER 13, 2022
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—Joyce, Summit resident

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THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR JOINING US FOR SOMEWHERE!

I’m so delighted to get to share one of my favorite plays by my long-time collaborator and friend Matthew López with you all! Matthew is an extraordinary writer whose work spans multiple worlds: from the Civil War (The Whipping Man) to contemporary romance (the upcoming movie Red, White, and Royal Blue) to his Tony and Olivier Award winning epic, which I commissioned and dramaturged, The Inheritance.

Someplace is one of the most personal of Matthew’s plays. His relationship to West Side Story is unusual in that his father, who was 14 at the time, was in the film as an extra (you can see him in the scene on the playground!). Matthew’s parents showed him the film as a child, and he talks about that as the first time he’d seen any kind of popular entertainment with Puerto Rican characters.

Years later, rewatching the musical as an adult, he was shocked at how thinly drawn the Puerto Rican characters seemed. As he said himself last fall in an interview with The New York Times:

I realized how much the Puerto Rican characters — and thereby the performers playing them — were not invited to the party, so to speak. A meal had been laid out and half the cast seemed left to go hungry. My family loved West Side Story, but as I thought about it, I realized their love for the show wasn’t reciprocated by it.

All of this led me to begin writing Somewhere. A Puerto Rican family of dancers and performers who dream of being cast in West Side Story (or anything Jerome Robbins created) but who, by the realities of their situation, are only left dreaming. I think in some ways, I was attempting to tell the offstage story that you don’t see.

We couldn’t be happier to be sharing that story with you today! Make sure also to check out Victor “Range” Zarate’s wonderful graffiti in the lobby (which is available for sale!). We’re grateful to IBERO-American Action League for their partnership both on Somewhere and across our season, to Jayme Bermudez, Borinquen Dance Theatre, Ramon “Sunshine” Perez, and Puerto Rican Voices: Rochester. We would also like to thank our Season Sponsor across our season, to Jayme Bermudez, Borinquen Dance Theatre, Ramon “Sunshine” and

Frank Novak
Shree Pandya
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Thanks so much for joining us!

Elizabeth Williamson
Artistic Director
Who's Who

Originally presented at the Summer Play Festival
in association with The Public Theatre.

Subsequently produced by Hartford Stage Company, Hartford, CT.

Presented

SOMEWHERE

By MATTHEW LÓPEZ

Directed by ZI ALIKHAN

Choreography by KARLA PUNO GARCIA

Scenic Designer
CHIKA SHIMIZU

Costume Designer
RODRIGO MUÑOZ

Lighting Designer
MATTHEW RICHARDS

Composer
JULIAN HORNK

Sound Designer
ANDREW MARK WILHELM

Dramaturg
CHRISTIN EYE CATO

Wig Designer
MICHAEL KING

Casting
STEWARD/WHITLEY

Director of Production
JENN LYONS

Stage Manager
DARLENE MIYAKAWA*

Assistant Stage Manager
JESSICA AMES

THE CAST (in order of appearance)

Alejandro Candelaria.................................................................Eddie Gutierrez*
Francisco Candelaria..............................................................Ean Castellanos*
Rebecca Candelaria.................................................................Maria Cristina Posada Slye*
Inez Candelaria.........................................................................Zuleyma Guevara*
Jamie............................................................................................Zach McNally*

SETTING

ACT I – New York City, Summer, 1959

ACT II – New York City, Summer, 1960

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Dialect Consultant.................................................................Mary Méndez Rizzo

Fight Choreography Consultant..............................................Adriano Gatto

*Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by the United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

Geva Theatre Center operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation; Actors Equity Association (AEA), the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States; the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), an independent national labor union; and United Scenic Artists (USA), a union of scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers.

Geva Theatre Center is also a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the American Theatre.

Geva Theatre Center is an associate member of the National New Play Network, an alliance of non-profit professional theatres dedicated to the development, production, and continued life of new plays.

Please note that the taking of photographs or use of recording devices during the performance is not permitted. Cell phones and all other electronic devices are strictly prohibited in the theatre.
Being Puerto Rican in 1959 New York City: An External View of Matthew López’ Play Somewhere
By Christin Eve Cato

In Matthew López’ play Somewhere, the Candelarias, a talented family with hopes of stardom and artistic success, struggle to live and work in the San Juan Hill area of New York City. For Puerto Ricans in 1959, it was easier to dream of being in show business than to actually accomplish it— and many would argue this is still the case today, considering the current disparities of Latiné representation in theater and television. For the Candelarias, and many Puerto Ricans in 1959, opportunities were scarce, discrimination was high, and financial barriers were a common setback. Like most families who migrate to the United States, the Candelaria family tirelessly pursues the American Dream. However, to be Puerto Rican in 1959 also meant experiencing major social and economic oppression.

From 1950-1960, more than 450,000 Puerto Ricans left the island of Puerto Rico and migrated to the United States. This surge of emigration was an effect of Operation Bootstrap, a system of incentives and tax breaks that attracted private U.S. capital to Puerto Rico, which turned the island from a sugar monoculture into an industrialized platform for producing exports. Before the establishment of Operation Bootstrap in 1947, the conditions in Puerto Rico were already devastatingly poor. The Great Depression destroyed the island and created widespread hardship, especially among the rural population of Puerto Rico. During World War II a federal program of road construction to connect the military bases led to the development of local cement plants and other factories producing goods for the local market. Then American capital invested more into the consumer goods industries that military bases led to the development of local cement plants and other factories producing goods for the local market. Then American capital invested more into the consumer goods industries that

The San Juan Hill neighborhood in New York City became a popular destination for these newly arrived Puerto Ricans, located in Manhattan from 59th to 65th Streets, between Amsterdam and West End Avenues. San Juan Hill had been the home for thousands of African-Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Puerto Ricans. The neighborhood embodied a vibrant culture that was also the breeding ground for jazz music. San Juan Hill was the birthplace of Bebop and was the childhood home of jazz legend Thelonious Sphere Monk, where he grew up alongside pianist James P. Johnson, creator of the Charleston Craze. San Juan Hill featured many tenement basement dives and high-end clubs, including the infamous Jungle Cafe. There were also billiard rooms, saloons, dance halls, and bordellos. As dynamic as the San Juan Hill community was in the 1940s, it was declared a slum because of the poor living conditions and crime that swept the neighborhood. San Juan Hill was also a stomping ground for gang-related violence because of the frequent clashes between Irish residents in Hell’s Kitchen and Black residents in San Juan Hill. As a result, it became a place of interest when Title I of the 1949 Housing Act was enacted.

The 1949 Housing Act was the first government legislation to recognize slums as a national problem. The U.S. Congress implemented this act in the wake of a post-war housing shortage to adhere to the evolving issues of slums. The project complexes built in Manhattan under Title I (also known as Slum Clearance and Community Development and Redevelopment) were constructed to provide suitable housing and living environments for constituents. Title I also offered financial incentives to private investors who wanted to clear slum areas and increase residential housing. However, the loophole associated with Title I was that it had no stipulations regarding whether or not the slum clearance needed to result in new public or private housing units. For instance, the local community may decide that the cleared slum land would be beneficial as a park. Robert Moses, chairman of the city-sponsored Committee on Slum Clearance, saw San Juan Hill as an opportunity to build a cultural center for the arts. When Moses received space inquiries from The Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, and Fordham University, he took action against the San Juan Hill slum, demolished its buildings, and constructed the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Over 17,000 residents were displaced, relocating uptown to Harlem and the Bronx. In Somewhere, this massive city project would be the culprit of the Candelarias’ tragic uprooting.

Even though New York City completely erased San Juan Hill, its legacy lives on as the inspiration behind the Broadway sensation West Side Story. In fact, the opening scenes of the West Side Story film, later produced in 1961, were shot there before the demolition. Some parts of the film even capture the aftermath— revealing piles of debris left over from the destroyed buildings. However, before it became an acclaimed film, West Side Story had a significant impact on Broadway. The show opened at the Winter Garden Theatre on September 26, 1957, and captured the hearts of many Americans with its memorable songs and brilliant choreography that broke musical theatre traditions. It became one of the most revered shows on Broadway because it engaged with issues like racial unrest, urban violence, immigration, and altercations with the police. Despite how resonant and timeless some parts of the show have been, West Side Story also included historical inaccuracy about the conditions Puerto Ricans struggled with at that time. An example of this historical distortion
can be found in the lyrics of “America,” by Stephen Sondheim, discussing the poverty in Puerto Rico and glorifying how much better it is to live in America. The song failed to reveal the reality of the Puerto Rican experience in America, and ignored that the United States was exponentially responsible for the high unemployment and poverty rate found among Puerto Ricans.

West Side Story has also received criticism for reinforcing negative stereotypes (comparing Puerto Ricans to cockroaches) and was condemned for putting White actors in brown makeup. The recent 2021 remake of the West Side Story film, directed by Steven Spielberg, aimed to fix some of these wrongs by properly casting actors of Latiné descent in Puerto Rican roles by including a majority of Puerto Rican actors. Spielberg also exposed the truth about what happened to San Juan Hill. In the opening scene of the 2021 remake, the camera pans through piles of rubble, revealing a sign that reads: SLUM CLEARANCE. Aside from Spielberg’s attempt to portray a realistic version of West Side Story, and despite its relevance with issues plaguing America today, the musical itself is still written by men with no experiences of the stories they were trying to tell.

In contrast, Matthew López’ Somewhere takes the narrative of West Side Story – the hopes, dreams, discrimination, poverty, racism, and displacement – and tells us an authentic story about the Puerto Ricans living in the San Juan Hill area at that time. López’ account of the slum conditions, Puerto Rican/Nuyorican culture, and economic oppression in 1959 New York City are compellingly specific as we witness the lives of the Candelaria family unfold. López’ world and the world of West Side Story are uniquely parallel. The lyrics for “Somewhere,” by Stephen Sondheim, beautifully illustrate the aspirations that the Candelaria family shares:

“There’s a place for us, somewhere a place for us; peace and quiet and open air; wait for us, somewhere; There’s a time for us […] time together with time to spare, time to learn, time to care […] We’ll find a new way of living, we’ll find a way of forgiving […] Hold my hand and we’re halfway there; hold my hand and I’ll take you there; Somehow, Someday, Somewhere!”

These lyrics echo the strong familial bond and love that the Candelarias have for each other as they envision a better life for themselves. They work together as a family to ensure that they make ends meet while carrying on with their goals for success. Although the Candelarias face setbacks and hardships, they will go the distance to get to their Somewhere together while steadfastly dreaming about their ideal world. In his play Somewhere, Matthew López gives us an honest view of how it was to be a Puerto Rican with dreams in 1959 New York City.

EDDIE GUTIERREZ
(Alejandro Candelaria)

is honored to rejoin the Candelaria family in his Geva Theatre Center debut. Off-Broadway: Paul San Marco in A Chorus Line (New York City Center); Miss Abigail's Guide... opposite Joyce DeWitt and Christine Pedi. Other NYC: Moments created with Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project; Jimmy Maize's 100-person production of Spoon River Anthology; and Eddie's one-man show Loveology, which debuted at Ars Nova. Regional: A Chorus Line at the Hollywood Bowl; Matthew López’s Somewhere alongside Priscilla Lopez (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley); the World Premiere of Tony Meneses’s The Hombres (Two River Theater); and West Side Story at Musical Theatre West. Film/TV: Safe & Sound (Cannes Film Festival Short selection); This is Me, Conan. Upcoming films: One Week in Heaven; A Tangled Web; and Rhapsody in Blue. As a director and choreographer, Eddie works with Baayork Lee and the Michael Bennett estate re-staging Bennett’s original Broadway direction and choreography for productions of A Chorus Line around the country. B.F.A. NYU/Tisch. Thank you to Zi, Karla, everyone at Geva y mis Candelarias for making theater at a time when we need it most. Thank you to my team at KMR, mi familia, and Steven and Michael for believing in me and the endless support — I am eternally grateful. @eddieology

MARIA CRISTINA POSADA
SYE (Rebecca Candelaria)

Maria Cristina is a proud Cuban American woman and a daughter of an immigrant. She is honored to be a part of this story amongst such an incredible team! Endless gratitude to the doctors, nurses, front line workers, first responders, ushers, maintenance staff and science for helping us get to where we are today. New York Theatre: Evita (Mistress, New York City Center, Encore!), American! (Understudy Ceci/Swing, Off-Broadway). National Tours: Hello, Dolly!, The Bodyguard Musical, Ghost the Musical, and Elf the Musical. Regional: West Side Story (Anita, Virginia Repertory Theatre/Florida Rep Theatre), Jesus Christ Superstar (The Muny), The Bodyguard Musical (Paper Mill Playhouse), Seven Brides... (Dorcas, Ogumquit Playhouse), A Chorus Line (Diana, Engeman Theatre), Buddy Holly (Maria Elena, North Shore Music Theatre), In the Heights (Caria, Hangar Theatre). Honor to God and thanks to the most supportive family imaginable! Endless gratitude to Brian at Artists & Advocates Agency! Proud AEA member. All Black lives matter! ¡Patria y Vida! Ig: @m_c_posada_sye www.mariacristinaposadasyle.com

EAN CASTELLANOS
(Francisco Candelaria)

is proud to make his professional stage debut in Somewhere. A recent graduate of AMDA, his television credits include Michael Morales on the Apple+ series Five Days at Memorial, Tommy (CBS), and High Maintenance (HBO). He is grateful to his friends, family, and girlfriend Mimi for their love and support and would like to thank his team and Geva Theater for this opportunity.

ZULEYMA GUEVARA
(Inez Candelaria)

Ms. Guevara is a NY based actress whose most recent stage credits include NY Times Critic's Pick Bruise & Thorn for Pipeline Theater, Grand Horizons at People’s Light Theater in PA, and Azul for Diversionary Theater in San Diego. Previous theater credits include the New Jersey premier of Water by the Spoonful at Kean University, Columbia Stages La Paloma Prisoner and The Hour of The Star, the world premieres of Seven Spots on the Sun at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Working Theatre's production of La Ruta and Uncommon Sense for Tectonic Theater. TV credits include Sonia’s Choice for the Smithsonian campaign, Law and Order: Limitless, Gotham and various commercial credits. Film credits include Rope Art, New York State of Mind, the recently released Third Trinity, and upcoming: The Meal and Tumba Del Mar.

ZACH MCNALLY (Jamie)

is thrilled to make his debut at Geva Theatre! Broadway: West Side Story, Fiddler on the Roof. Off-Broadway: The Big Mix (Little Island), Help (The Shed), The Lucky Ones (Ars Nova), Seeing You (Ryan Heffington, Dir.), Sleep No More. Television: Recurring roles on STARZ’ Nighttown and HBO’s The Plot Against America, and Guest Star on CBS’ Blue Bloods. Thanks to my family, friends, Jesse, and Team Katz for their unending love & support! Follow Zach: @ZachMcNally

MATTHEW LÓPEZ (Playwright) is an American playwright and screenwriter. His play The Inheritance, directed by Stephen Daldry, is the most honored American play in a generation, sweeping the “Best Play” awards in both London and New York, including the Tony Award, Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award, Evening Standard Award, London Critics’ Circle Award, Outer Critics Circle Honors, Drama League Award, and GLAAD Media Award. He is the first Latino writer to win the Tony Award for Best Play. In New York, Matthew’s work has been seen Off-Broadway with The Whipping Man and The Legend of Georgia McBride. Other works include Somewhere and Reverberation, The Sentinels, and Zoey’s Perfect Wedding. Matthew is currently co-writing the musical adaptation of the classic film Some Like It Hot. Matthew is also working on a reimagining of the iconic 1992 Whitney Houston box office hit, The Bodyguard, for Warner Bros, as well as a feature film adaptation of the novel Leading Men for Searchlight Pictures, which centers on Tennessee Williams and his longtime partner Frank Merlo. Matthew will be making his directorial feature debut with the LGBTQ+ romantic comedy Red, White & Royal Blue for Amazon Studios. In addition to directing the film, Matthew has adapted the script, based on Casey McQuiston’s bestselling novel. In October 2020, he signed an overall television development deal with Amazon Studios.

ZI ALIKHAN (Director)

Zi Alikhans is a queer, first-generation South Asian-American, culturally Muslim theater director. DIRECTING: Sanctuary City (Pasadena Playhouse), On That Day in Amsterdam (Primary Stages), Snow in Midsummer (Classic Stage Company), The Great Leap (Portland Center Stage), Manik Choksi’s The Ramayana (currently in development at Ars Nova), Ragtime (Playmakers Repertory Company). UPCOMING: A Nice Indian Boy at Olney Theatre Center and RENT at Paper Mill Playhouse. Zi was named one of TCG’s Rising Leaders of Color in 2021.

KARLA PUNO GARCIA (Choreographer) is a proud Filipina-American artist based in NYC. She has performed on Broadway, National Tours, TV, and film for years. Most recently, she was a swing in Hamilton: An American Musical for 6 years. As a female choreographer of color, Karla strongly emphasizes musicality and unapologetic individuality to create worlds and bring characters to life. She is excited to tell NEW stories where all perspectives are seen and exist naturally. Favorite choreography credits include additional scenes in the Netflix film Tick, Tick... BOOM!, directed by Lin Manuel-Miranda; ENCORES Off-Center production of GONE MISSING; the world premiere of Other World at Delaware Theatre Company; the Prospect Theater Company production of 1001 Nights and A Day; and Virginia Repertory’s production of IN THE HEIGHTS for which she received the Richmond Theatre Critics Award for Best Choreography. She most recently choreographed a new musical
NOIR, written by Duncan Sheik and Kyle Jarrow, and directed by Darío Tresnjak, which premiered at the Alley Theatre. Her short films The Spot, They Wake, and Bustin' Loose were selected for several film festivals including San Francisco Film Festival, Indie Shorts Awards, and Experimental Dance/Music Festival. www.KarlaPunoGarcia.com

Love to Mommy, Jitter, Rocky, Daddy above, and my David.

CHIKA SHIMIZU (Scenic Design) Chika Shimizu is a New York based scenic and projection designer. Her design credits include The Great Wave (Berkeley Rep), Sanctuary City (Pasadena Playhouse), The Great Leap (Portland Center Stage), The Winning Side (Epic Theatre Ensemble), Awake (The Barrow Group), The Naturalists (Soho Rep), Vietgone, Tiger Style! (TheatreSquared), The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Yale Rep, CT Critics Circle Award Nom.). Her installation credits include Another Dream, Un(re)solved (Ado Ato Pictures, 2022 SXSW Innovation Award). MFA in Design from Yale School of Drama. chikashimizu.com


MATTHEW RICHARDS (Lighting Design) GEVA: Premier. Broadway: Ann starring Holland Taylor. Opera: Macbeth at LA Opera. Off-Broadway: Is God Is at Soho Rep; The Killer, Tamburlaine, and Measure For Measure at Theatre For A New Audience; The Atlantic; B.A.M.; LCT3; MCC; Playwrights Horizons; Play Co.; Primary Stages; Second Stage; Rattlestick Theater. Regional: Actor’s Theater of Louisville; Arena Stage; Baltimore’s Center Stage; Cincinnati Playhouse; Cleveland Playhouse; Dallas Theater Center; Ford’s Theatre; The Goodman; Hartford Stage; The Huntington; Long Wharf; The Old Globe; Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; Shakespeare Theatre; Syracuse Stage; Westport Playhouse; Williamstown Theatre Festival; Yale Repertory Theatre.

ANDREW MARK WILHELM (Sound Design) Andrew is the current Sound Department Supervisor for Geva Theatre Center, as well as a Sound Designer. He most recently was the Associate Sound Designer for Jane Eyre. Previous Geva credits include Sound Designer for How To Catch Creation, Aimee, Ring of Fire, Once the Musical, and Revival: The Resurrection of Son House & Video Engineer for The Real James Bond...Was Dominican. He spent most of pandemic working on digital audio and video content for Geva, including the Recognition Radio festival, Christmas Carol on WARM 101.3, and Where Did We Sit on the Bus? Before Geva, he was a Sound Engineer and Resident Designer for PCPA in Santa Maria, California. Hailing originally from the Detroit area, with a BFA in Theatre Technology & Design from Oakland University, Andrew is fortunate to have worked in theatres from Florida to California, before settling here in Rochester at Geva.

JULIAN HORNIK (Composer) Julian Hornik is a composer, lyricist, and librettist whose work has been performed at, amongst others, The Kennedy Center, New York City Center, Ars Nova, Symphony Space, Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Hall, and the Yale School of Drama. He has written for the New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Gay Men’s Choruses, and developed shows at Rhinebeck Writer’s Retreat, Vineyard Arts Project, Orchard Project, the Johnny Mercer Songwriter’s Project, and the ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop. Film and TV projects include Share (Sundance and Cannes official selection), and the animated musical series Hellova Boss. Julian is the recipient of the 2017 Lucille and Jack Yellen Award and the 2018 Sammy Cahn Award from the ASCAP Foundation, Yale’s Norman Holmes Pearson Prize, and is a 2020 Jonathan Larson Grant finalist.

CHRISTIN EVE CATO (Dramaturg) is a playwright and performing artist from the Bronx. She holds an MFA in Playwriting from Indiana University and completed her BA in Political Science and Philosophy at Fordham University. Cato is also a graduate of Florio L. LaGuardia High School for Music and Art and the Performing Arts. She is affiliated with NYC theater companies, Pregones/PRTT (ensemble member & former Resident Dramaturg), INTAR Theatre (UNIT 52 ensemble member), and the Latinx Playwrights Circle. Cato’s artistic style is expressed through Caribbean culture and the Afro-Latina diaspora, honoring her Puerto Rican and Jamaican roots. Recent off-broadway productions include The Good Cop (DAUF 2022). Upcoming productions include Sancoco (Vision Latino Theatre Company/ Destinos, 5th Chicago International Latino Theater Festival); American Made (Samuel French OOB Festival(NYC)); and an audio play journey, The Mayor of Hell’s Kitchen Presents: A Time Traveling Journey Through NYC’s Wild West (The Parsnip Ship & Playwrights Horizons/ NYC). Publication/Contributor credits include: We Are Not Neutral (Amazon Books) and, launching soon, Latixon Actor Training (Routledge). She has developed her work with The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Harlem9, Pregones Theater, Milagro Theatre, Borderlands Theater, Teatro Vivo, Smith College, Indiana University, Texas State University, Cardinal Stage, The Road Theatre Company, The Kennedy Center, Piper Theatre Productions, and many others. Cato is also the 2020 Greater Good Commission recipient for Afro-Latina writers and the 2021 Reimagine New Plays in TYA grant. She is a 2021-2022 PWCC Apprentice Playwright. An aspiring screenwriter, she is currently represented by 3 Arts Entertainment. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America.


DARLENE MIYAKAWA (Stage Manager) is happy to be part of Geva's 50th Anniversary Season! At Geva: Yoga Play (SM), How to Catch Creation (ASM), Vietgone (SM). Other current and past credits include: LA Dance Project, Barrington Stage Company, Opera Maine, Piedmont Opera, Long Beach Opera, Opera San Jose, East West Players, South Coast Repertory, California Symphony, Gelsey Kirkland, Fort Worth Opera, Tri-Cities Opera, Opera San Antonio, Playwrights' Arena. New York City Opera, Opera Memphis, La Philharmonic. Based in Los Angeles.

JESSICA AMES (Assistant Stage Manager) Jess (she/her) is thrilled to be living the dream making theatre amongst such a wonderful community! Jess has stage managed many handfuls of shows, including most recently: Generic Male (Push Physical Theatre), Rise: A New Rock Musical (JCC SummerStage), Little Shop of Horrors (JCC CenterStage), Tracy Jones (JCC CenterStage), Vietgone (Geva Theatre Center), and Something Rotten! (JCC SummerStage). Much love to Haydon and me Mum.
WHO'S WHO

ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON  
(Artistic Director) has built a distinguished career as a producer, director, dramaturg, and adaptor. She has worked extensively throughout the U.S. and around the globe, including on Broadway, off-Broadway, and in London’s West End before becoming the Artistic Director of Geva Theatre in 2022. For Geva Theatre, she directed and adapted Jane Eyre to launch the 50th Anniversary season. Other recent projects include dramaturging the Young Vic/West End/Broadway production of Matthew Lopez’ The Inheritance (Tony, Olivier, Critics Circle, Evening Standard, GLAAD, and Drama Desk Awards for Best Play, Outer Critics Circle Honorée); dramaturging the Hartford Stage/Broadway productions of A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (Tony Award for Best Musical) and Anastasia; artistic producing, co-directing and dramaturging the online version of Sarah Gancher’s Russian Troll Farm (TheaterWorks Hartford/TheatreSquared/The Civilians, New York Times’ “Best Theater of 2020”); directing and adapting Jane Eyre (Hartford Stage); dramaturging Bess Wohl’s Make Believe (Outer Critics Circle Honorée, New York Times’ “Best Theater of 2019”); and directing Henry V (Hartford Stage). Williamson’s extensive organizational leadership experience includes serving as Associate Artistic Director and Literary Manager at Pioneer Theatre Company in Salt Lake City from 2008 – 2012 and as Associate Artistic Director and Director of New Play Development at Hartford Stage from 2012 – 2020. As a freelance artist, she has also worked for About Face Theatre, the Act French Festival, ACT, Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, Court Theatre, Figureatre i Nordland in Norway, HERE, the La Jolla Playhouse, Steppenwolf Theatre, the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, Primary Shakes, Theatre de La Jeune Lune, Universal Studios, Westport Country Playhouse, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and London’s Young Vic. Education: M.St. Oxford University, B.A., Bennington College, trained at the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris and with Complicité. She is the 2007 recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Literary Translation. Member: SDC, LMDA.

CHRISTOPHER MANNELLI  
(Executive Director) joined Geva in 2016 from Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago, a Tony Award-winning institution dedicated to new plays and playwrights, where he has served as Managing Director. During his five-year tenure he led the reorganization of the institution and was responsible for the strategic planning, fundraising, and audience development initiatives that created the theatre’s new business model. Chris oversaw numerous award-winning productions, increased contributed income, and launched innovative innovative and audience engagement initiatives. Prior to his work with Victory Gardens, he served as Deputy Director at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, one of the largest nonprofit theatres in Chicago. He oversaw operations and helped to produce the theatre’s “World Stage” international programming, including Chicago Shakespeare’s first ever tour to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland. Before moving to Chicago, Chris was the Managing Director for HotCity Theatre in St. Louis, Missouri. In this capacity, he was instrumental in the company’s financial and programmatic growth, which included education programs, new play initiatives, and several collaborations with prominent arts organizations. He has served on the board of directors of the League of Chicago Theatres, as a steering committee member for Enrich Chicago (a group of arts organizations in Chicago working collectively to address racial equity), and as a board member for the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce and the community board of Emerald City Theatre. In 2017 he was appointed to the New York State Council on the Arts’ Theatre Advisory Panel, where he served for two years. He has also served on the board of directors for the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), and the Washington Square Park Community Association. He currently serves on the corporate board for the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center and the board of the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC) as a member of the executive and nominating committees. Chris grew up on Long Island and began his career as an actor, dancer, and musician, touring nationally and internationally. He holds a B.A. in opera performance from the SUNY Geneseo School of Performing Arts, an M.F.A. in Arts Leadership from DePaul University, and an Executive Scholars Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.

WHO'S WHO
Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to creating and producing singular theatre productions and programs that serve the Rochester region and beyond, by illuminating the fullness of our many human experiences.


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. We draw upon the talents of some of the country’s top actors, directors, designers, and writers who are shaping the American Theatre scene.

Geva’s Education Department serves thousands of students annually through student matinees, in-school workshops, the acclaimed Summer Academy training program, and other programs. Geva’s New Play Development Programming offers new and established writers a nurturing environment from which to take their work to the next level. Geva has presented approximately 400 play readings and workshops since its inception. Nearly 70 Geva-developed plays have had subsequent productions around the country. Geva’s Engagement Department produces multifaceted programs such as Geva Insights that deepen the appreciation of the work on our stages, provide opportunities for regional dialogues, and help fulfill Geva’s anti-racism commitments through collaborative programming.

An active member of the Rochester community, Geva offers a multitude of opportunities for our audience and community members to engage with live theatre and the country’s best artists. Since the breadth of Geva’s programming cannot be sustained on ticket sales alone, this contribution to the region’s cultural, social and economic vitality is recognized by grants and charitable contributions from federal, state and local government agencies, national and local foundations, and businesses and individuals from throughout the region.

For more information: GevaTheatre.org.

A land acknowledgement creates a more accurate picture of the history of the lands and waterways we call home and pays respect to the Indigenous People who have stewarded them from time immemorial. At Geva, we offer this statement as part of our anti-racist values and to help us all unlearn and relearn the history that has brought us here to the land we call the United States. With this understanding, we can envision a new path forward, led by the principles of equity and justice.

American society as it exists today owes its identity and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams and resources to making the history that led to this moment. Some were stolen and enslaved here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in search of a better life, and some have stewarded this land for more generations than can be counted. Acknowledging the hardships and atrocities that many peoples have suffered on American soil is critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. By honoring this truth, we begin this effort to acknowledge what has been purposefully buried.

There are 567 federally recognized Indian Nations (variously called tribes, nations, bands, pueblos, communities and Native villages) in the United States. Additionally, there are tribes located throughout the United States who are recognized by their respective state governments.

There are 30 Indian Nations in the Rochester area:
- Onöndowa’ga (Seneca)
- Mohawk
- Cayuga
- Oneida
- Tuscarora
- Onondaga

Geva’s Acknowledgment
We are gathered in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Onöndowa’ga, or “the people of the Great Hill.” In English, they are known as Seneca people, “the keeper of the western door.” Together, with the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Tuscarora, the Seneca make up the sovereign Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We pay respects to their elders, past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, genocide and migration that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

To learn more about the Native people in our region and the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794, visit ganondagan.org.

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Geva’s 50th Season was developed by the artistic staff with the invaluable input from our Artistic Council, made up of: Shawn Brown, Luticha André Doucette, Toniia Iakonikohnito Galban, Stephanie Paredes, Mojgan Rabbani, and Esther Winter.
ENGAGEMENT AT GEVA

Engagement at Geva Theatre’s overarching objective is to connect more people and organizations with the art presented on its stages. To build more connected relationships with existing patrons and partners. To build new and meaningful relationships with people and organizations with whom we have traditionally had no or little connectivity, the sticky kind of connectivity that endures.

Leading these initiatives is Rachel Y. DeGuzman, Geva’s Director of Engagement.

Geva Insights

Geva Insights is a series of post-performance conversations with thought leaders, experts, and members of the community who contextualize or provoke more in-depth consideration of play’s themes presented in Geva’s 50th season. It was conceived of as a unique opportunity to strengthen our connectivity to new and existing communities in our region. These unscripted, unrehearsed chats are productions of Geva’s Engagement department. All Geva Insights conversations are videotaped and posted on Geva Theatre’s YouTube page.

Featured Conversation for Somewhere:

Guest: Jayme Bermudez  
Host: Rachel Y. DeGuzman

Tuesday, 10/25  
Immediately following the 6 p.m. performance

Later This Season:

1/24  Zoe Walker-Itoh  
Ain’t Misbehavin’  
Host: Rachel DeGuzman

2/7  TBD  
Woody Sez  
Host: Rachel Y. DeGuzman

3/7  Sarah Yarger  
Russian Troll Farm  
Host: Rachel Y. DeGuzman

3/28  Harrison David Rivers  
we are continuous  
Host: Thomas Warfield

4/19  Pete Hill  
(Cayuga, Heron Clan)  
And So We Walked  
Host: Rachel Y. DeGuzman

5/16  Dr. Elizabeth Johnston  
Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella  
Host: Rachel Y. DeGuzman

Mondays at Geva

The stages are dark on Monday evenings at Geva, so the art and action shift to the lobby and café where brilliant local visual artists, performers, musicians, and speakers broaden our consideration of the onstage productions. Geva Theatre invites the community to join us for a series of art openings and to party for a couple of hours each month!

Featured Artist for Somewhere:

Trailblazing Rochester-based graffiti artist Victor “Range” Zarate of Fua Krew

Monday, 10/24  
6 – 8 p.m.

With performances by Borinquen Dance Theatre choreographed by Jayme Bermudez and accompanied by percussionist Ramon “Sunshine” Perez

Later This Season:

1/23  Luvon Sheppard, David Shakes  
Ain’t Misbehavin’  
Host: Thomas Warfield

2/27  Henry Avignon  
Russian Troll Farm

3/27  Adam Eaton with Luna Sol Child  
we are continuous

4/10  Perry Ground  
(Onondaga, Turtle Clan), Daystar Rosalie Jones  
(Pembina Chippewa), Haudenosaunee artists  
And So We Walked

5/16  Gold Party with honorary host Her Majesty Queen Marie-Adéline l  
Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella
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