



Media Contact:  
Victoria Cairl  
victoria@table7strategy.com  
Makalah Sizer  
msizer@gevatheatre.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 19TH

## **GEVA THEATRE PRESENTS**

# **Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie**

Tickets Now on Sale for this toe-tapping tribute to the original folk hero

Rochester, N.Y. — Geva Theatre presents its first show on the Fielding Stage – *Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie*

Devised by David M. Lutken with Nick Corley and Darcie Deaville, Helen Jean Russell and Andy Teirstein, *Woody Sez* provides a glimpse into the life of Woody Guthrie.

“We are excited to welcome *Woody Sez* to our Fielding Stage, and to welcome back some familiar faces to Rochester!” says Jenni Werner, Director of Literary and Artistic Development. “Rochester native Megan Loomis, Maggie Hollinbeck (*Once*) and David Lutken (*Pump Boys and Dinettes*) are all returning to Geva to share with us Woody Guthrie’s enduring songs. Audiences will surely be humming long after they leave the theatre.”

Audiences will also have the opportunity to attend *Geva Insights* on February 7, 2023, a conversation between Geva’s Director of Engagement, Rachel Y. DeGuzman, and G. Peter Jemison (Seneca, Heron Clan). Or, join the cast of *Woody Sez* (and bring your own instruments, voices and songs) for a Hootenanny, a musical jam session in the lobby after Sunday matinees on February 5, 12 and 13.

A poignant, toe-tapping tribute to the original folk hero. Told with his own words and music, *Woody Sez* is the story of Woody Guthrie, whose protest ballads of the '30s and '40s illuminated the beauty and struggles of the common man and inspired a new generation of American songwriters including Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Odetta, Ani DiFranco, and Bruce Springsteen. A cast of four actor-musicians performing multiple instruments bring Guthrie's gripping and sometimes tragic biography to life. The musical features "Bound for Glory," "Pastures of Plenty," "The Ballad of Tom Joad," "This Land is Your Land," and many more of the folk icon's enduring anthems.

Geva is thrilled to have the seasoned cast of *Woody Sez* open up the Fielding Stage. The small and talented cast have credits ranging from Geva, National Tours, Broadway, to the UK. Geva Theatre alumna Maggie Hollinbeck (who appeared in *Once*) returns to the company, along with David Lutken (*Pump Boys and Dinettes*) as well as Rochester native, Megan Loomis who appeared in *The Other Josh Cohen* (Wilson Stage) and *The Road to Where* (Fielding Stage). The production is directed by Nick Corley, and the creative team includes music director David Lutken, scenic designer Luke Hegel-Cantarella, costume designer Jeffrey Meek and lighting designer Emily Stork.

### **Learn more about our cast**

**DAVID FINCH** (he/him) - Mr. Finch has played beside artists as diverse as Alan Cumming, Serj Tankian, Tony Bennett, Amanda Palmer, Kylie Minogue and Dee Snider from Lincoln Center to San Francisco's Castro Theatre. As an actor/musician, Broadway: *Cabaret*; West End: *Woody Sez*. He's performed in two dozen productions of *Woody Sez* Internationally and at regional theatres across the country. He played chromatic harmonica as the Mock Turtle in the opera *Alice In Wonderland* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London and the L.A. Phil at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. PBS special: *Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs*. National/Int. Tours: *Cabaret*, *Fame the Musical*. Off- Broadway: *Allegro*, *Fame on 42nd Street*, *Spring Storm*, *Woody Sez*. Regional: *Almost Heaven* (Riverside), *Indian Joe* (Goodspeed), *Prometheus Bound* (A.R.T), *Hank Williams' Lost Highway* (Stages Rep), *Grapes of Wrath* (Capital Rep), *1940s Radio Hour* (Riverside), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Sacramento Music Circus), *Buddy* (MGR Playhouse). Associate Producer at Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS from 2004–2006. Please visit [fiddlerfinch.com](http://fiddlerfinch.com)

**MAGGIE HOLLINBECK** (she/her/hers) is happy to be back at Geva Theatre Center with this awesome group of humans! Maggie is an actress and musician based in New York City where she's become a fixture in the Actor/Musician genre, playing roles in musicals such as *Once* (1st national tour, PCLO, and Geva); *Red Roses*, *Green Gold* (Off-Broadway); *Woody Sez* (Ivoryton Playhouse); *Ebenezzer Scrooge's Big Playhouse*

*Christmas Show* (Bucks County Playhouse); and others. She's also an original member of the band Ramblin' Rose, which pays tribute to the great women of country music. Her favorite place to make music, though, is in collaboration with her music partner, Graham Sobelman. Together they've recorded five albums: *Another Shade of Blue* (a song-for-song cover of Joni Mitchell's *Blue*) and *Jane Kenyon Sessions Vol. One-Four*. Graham and Maggie recently spent a week at Jane Kenyon's farm in New Hampshire developing a musical based on Graham's compositions, set to the writings of Jane and her husband, Donald Hall. When Maggie isn't performing, she nurtures a thriving private practice as a psychotherapist. Website: [www.maggiehollinbeck.com](http://www.maggiehollinbeck.com) Instagram: @maggiehollinbeck Music: [grahamsobelman.bandcamp.com](http://grahamsobelman.bandcamp.com)

**MEGAN LOOMIS** Native Rochesterian Megan Loomis is thrilled to be returning to Geva where she was last seen in *The Other Josh Cohen* (Wilson Stage), *The Road to Where* (Fielding Stage), and her one-woman show, *The Girl in the Band* (Rochester International Fringe Festival on the Fielding Stage). Fresh off the tour of *Wicked*, she also toured with *War Horse*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Cabaret*, and *Sweeney Todd*. *Woody Sez* productions include the Irish Repertory Theatre, Vienna's English Theatre, Lyric Theatre OK, and at the 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. A proud graduate of Eastman School of Music, she also holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College. Many thanks to David, Darcie, Andy, Helen and the Loomi. [www.megloomis.com](http://www.megloomis.com) @megstheooms

**DAVID M. LUTKEN (Deviser, Performer, Music Director)**

**BROADWAY:** *Inherit the Wind*; *Ring of Fire*; *The Civil War*; *The Will Rogers Follies*.

**OFF-BROADWAY:** *Woody Sez: The Life & Music of Woody Guthrie* (Outer Critics' Circle, Off-Broadway Alliance & Drama League Best Musical nominations); *Southern Comfort*; *Stars in Your Eyes*; *Winter Man*; *The Portable Pioneer and Prairie Show*.

**N.Y. CITY OPERA:** *Paul Bunyan*.

**LONDON:** *Woody Sez* (Evening Standard Best Musical nomination); *Dark of the Moon*.

**REGIONAL UK:** *Bonnie and Clyde*; *A Month In The Country*.

**REGIONAL US:** *Our Town*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Big River*; *Elmer Gantry*; *Finian's Rainbow*; *The Will Rogers Follies*; *Fire On The Mountain*; *Lost Highway*; *Buddy*; *Pump Boys and Dinettes*; *The Love List*; *The Man Who Came to Dinner*; *On Golden Pond*; *Mark Twain's River of Song*; *Almost Heaven*, and most recently, a 'play-with-music' from an original story by his wife, Director/Choreographer Sherry Lutken: *The Porch on Windy Hill* (nominated for four 2021 Connecticut Critics' Circle Awards).

He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, The 92nd St Y, at Cooper Union, Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, with the North Carolina Symphony and the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, on NPR, the BBC, Polskie Radio Troika, ORF Austria, Voice Of America, and The Louisiana Hayride.

With *Woody Sez*, he and his company have toured Europe, the British Isles, China, the Middle East and The United States. David won the Helen Hayes and the Joseph Jefferson Awards for Best Actor for his portrayal of Woody Guthrie.

*Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie* is produced with additional support from media sponsors WXXI and City Newspaper. *Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie* was originally produced as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2007, by The Melting Pot Theatre and Paul Lucas Productions, by special arrangement with Mary and Pierre Cossette. The first American production was at the Lyric Theatre in Oklahoma City OK in, 2009; it's West End premiere was at The Arts Theatre, Leicester Square, London, on January 13, 2011, produced by Mary Cossette Productions

*Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie* begins performances on February 1st and runs on the Fielding Stage through February 19th. Tickets can be purchased online at [gevatheatre.org](http://gevatheatre.org), or by phone, 585-232-GEVA(4382)

### **About Geva Theatre Center**

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs, and services of a national standard.

The 516-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage is home to Geva's series of contemporary drama, comedy, musical theatre, and new play development programs. In addition, the Fielding Stage hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva offers a wide variety of educational, engagement, and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Geva Theatre Center sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the O-non-dowa-gah, 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.

Geva is under the artistic direction of Elizabeth Williamson and Executive Director Christopher Mannelli.

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

### END ###