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GEVA THEATRE Concludes Season 50 with Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella

Rochester, N.Y. — Geva Theatre rounds out its 50th season with *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*, with performances beginning May 10th on the Wilson Stage. *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* is an exciting adaptation of the classic musical, which was nominated for a 2013 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, and was the winner of three Drama Desk Awards, including Best Orchestrations.

Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella was written by the Tony Award-winning, world-renowned musical theatre team Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II (*The Sound of Music*), and features a new book by Tony Award-nominated writer Douglas Carter Beane (*Sister Act*). This adaptation invites everyone to the ball and asks us to make the world "as lovely as it looks." *Cinderella* includes the beloved songs "In My Own Little Corner" and "Impossible / It's Possible" that were made famous by Julie Andrews in 1957.

"We couldn't be more delighted to be welcoming director Shelley Butler back to Geva, helming this beautiful new production of *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*!" said Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson. "Shelley is known nationally for her revelatory productions, and she and her impressive team are celebrating radical kindness in their inclusive take on this beloved fairytale."

When Ella (played by **Alexis Sims**, reprising her role from Shelley Butler's 2021 Alabama Shakespeare Festival production) meets dragon-slaying Prince Topher (played by **Jonah Ho'okano**), she speaks to the issues in the kingdom; together, they work to transform the kingdom into one that centers kindness and empowers the disenfranchised. With the help of a Fairy Godmother, a pumpkin, and a little magic and humor, Ella, Prince Topher, and their generous friends will inspire and delight the whole family in *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella!*

Directing the production of *Cinderella* is Shelley Butler, who has developed six new works at Geva, including the world premiere of *The Magician's Daughter* by Lila Rose Kaplan. Shelley said, "It is an incredible joy to return to Geva and dive back into artistic creation and collaboration with this tremendous company. It is thrilling to stretch the boundaries of what a fairytale can do and find that an age-old tale can feel fresh and new. Empathy, warmth, and kindness can be revolutionary and there is great beauty, humor, and magic as Cinderella becomes a powerful agent of change; discovering her own strength and inspiring those around her."

The creative team also includes choreographer Jessica Chen (*The Portal*, Minetta Lane Theater), music director Angela Steiner (*Cabaret*, Asolo Repertory Theatre), co-scenic designer William Boles (*Men on Boats*, American Theatre Company), costume and co-scenic designer Lex Liang (*May We All*, Tennessee Performing Arts Center), sound designer Andrew Mark Wilhelm (*Somewhere*, Geva Theatre), lighting designer Alan C. Edwards (*Kill Move Paradise*, National Black Theatre), and associate director Jessica Altchiler (assistant director for *May We All*).

In addition to Alexis Sims (*for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*, Broadway; *Dreamgirls*, Dallas Theatre Center) and Jonah Ho'okano (TV: *NCIS: Hawaii*; Lead in *Aladdin*, First National Tour), the talented cast includes Sheila Jones as Charlotte (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, 50th Ann. Nat'l Tour; *Legally Blonde*, Norwegian Cruise Line), Brian Klimowski as Lord Pinkleton (*The Goodbye Girl*, TheatreZone; *Anything Goes*, Lancaster Opera House), Robert Mammana as Sebastian (*Les Miserables*, Broadway; *The Sound of Music*, National Tour), Alexander Mendoza as Jean-Michel (*The Phantom of the Opera*, World Tour; *Mamma Mia!*, North American Tour), Linda Mugleston as Madame (*The Music Man*, Broadway; *Hello Dolly*, Broadway), and Sumi Yu as Gabrielle (*Greater Clements*, Lincoln Center Theatre; *Little Shop of Horrors*, Theatreworks Silicon Valley). Returning to Geva is Ann Arvia (*Mary Poppins*, Broadway) as Marie, who was last seen on the Wilson Stage as Mrs. Van Daan in *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

The ensemble includes Dianna Barger (*Jersey Boys*, National Tour), Kelsey Shergen (*Sunset Boulevard*, North Shore), Emily Song Tyler (*A Christmas Carol*, Geva Theatre Center), and Jackson Siegel (Joffrey Ballet). Geva is thrilled to partner with the college training programs in the Greater Rochester Area and we are proud to include Kate Heffernan (*Curtains!*, Nazareth College), Dylan Isom (*The Addams Family*, Nazareth College), J. Jake Thomas (*Curse of the*

Starving Class, Nazareth College), and Andrew Wicklum (*Curtains!*, Nazareth College) as members of the ensemble.

Produced in conjunction with the production of *Cinderella*, the **Engagement Department at Geva** hosts **The Gold Party** featuring our honorary host, Her Majesty the Queen of the Navassee, Marie-Adelina I. Join us on Monday May 15th from 6:00 - 9:00 pm, single tickets are \$25, for more information visit our [website](#).

Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. *Cinderella* is produced by our Season Sponsors, ESL Federal Credit Union and Dr. Dawn Lipson, Lead Producer St. Johns, Associate Producers M&T Bank, Volvo Cars Rochester, and Woods Oviatt Gilman, and with additional support from Media Sponsors WRMM 101.3 and WHEC Channel 10.

Cinderella begins performances on May 10th and runs on the Wilson Stage through June 4th. Tickets can be purchased online at 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 singular theatre productions and programs that serve the Rochester region and beyond, by illuminating the fullness of our many human experiences.

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 Onödwá'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.

Geva is under the leadership of Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson and Executive Director Christopher Mannelli.

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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