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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Geva Theatre Center announces

Tenacious Women: Shaping Change in Rochester and Beyond

An Extraordinary Commission of 25 New Short Plays

Thursday, March 4, 2021. Rochester, N.Y. – Geva Theatre Center announces its most ambitious new-works commission ever with the unveiling of *Tenacious Women: Shaping Change in Rochester and Beyond*. Inspired by the Rochester Museum & Science Center's (RMSC) community-curated exhibit, *The Changemakers: Rochester Women Who Changed the World*, Geva has engaged 25 playwrights and creators to write short original pieces, each focused around one or more featured Changemaker of their choosing. This series builds on the success of Geva's "Rochester Stories," a series of commissions dedicated to exploring local history and culture, including Keith Glover's *Revival: The Resurrection of Son House* and Mat Smart's *The Agitators*.

Drawing upon the premise of RMSC's *The Changemakers*, the 25 plays and works in other media that comprise the *Tenacious Women* commissions will celebrate the accomplishments of diverse regional and Haudenosaunee women who have impacted the world.

Among the notable collective of artists participating in the project are five local young writers, each of whom created videos for Geva's *John's Children* civic arts project last fall, and six local professional writers. They are joined by some of the most influential and highly regarded American playwrights and artists working today. Each of the young artists being commissioned will be mentored by a living Changemaker featured in the RMSC exhibit.

The commissioned writers are: Siobhan Brown, Reenah Golden, Prince Gomolvilas, Idris Goodwin, Kirsten Greenidge, Naomi Iizuka, Delores Jackson Radney, Tim J. Lord, Mona Mansour, Sarah B. Mantell, Ramiz Monsef, Tara Moses, Brian Quijada, Harrison David Rivers, MJ Savastano, Andrew Siañez-De La O, Penny Sterling, Laura A. Thomas, Katherine Varga, Karen Zacarias, and youth writers Tali Beckwith-Cohen, Autumn Flowers, Amanda Gillen, Ta'Neesha Murphy, and Jyonnah Ware.

“We are thrilled to be working with such an aesthetically diverse and brilliant group of writers as they create new work that reflects the perseverance, richness, and activism of Rochester’s Changemakers, both past and present.” says Pirronne Yousefzadeh, Geva’s Associate Artistic Director and Director of Engagement. “*Tenacious Women* builds on Geva’s commitment to tell Rochester’s stories and galvanizes us all to shape our futures by becoming changemakers ourselves.”

“We are so excited that *The Changemakers: Rochester Women Who Changed the World* has inspired the work of our sister cultural institutions. The exhibit development was an incredible effort, process, and partnership with community curators, organizations, and diversity, equity, and inclusion consultants. Seeing this work live on in new forms is a testament to the power of the diverse stories told in this groundbreaking exhibit,” said Kathryn Murano Santos, Senior Director, Collections & Exhibitions at the RMSC.

The future life of these new works, which are expected to be completed by the end of March, has intentionally been left open in order to foster broad creative latitude. Geva is planning to offer new podcast episodes and Amplify Series community conversations in the next stages of the *Tenacious Women* project, and updates will be provided as the work continues to evolve.

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 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 we pay respect and give 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.

About Rochester Museum & Science Center

The mission of the **Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC)** is to inspire a better future for all through curiosity, exploration, and participation in science, culture, and the natural world. RMSC includes the Science Museum, Strasenburgh Planetarium, Cumming Nature Center, and RMSC Preschool. Offering experiences at the Museum with more than 200 interactive exhibits, the Planetarium with a 65-foot dome, and the Nature Center on 900 acres, the RMSC stimulates community interest in exploration. In addition, the more than 1.2 million RMSC collection items tell the story of the Rochester Region's past and present, including its rich history of social and technological innovation. RMSC receives major funding from Monroe County, where it is one of the top five most visited attractions serving children and families.

For more information about **RMSC**, visit rmsc.org. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

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Geva Theatre Center 48th Season

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