



**2021-2022** GEVA THEATRE CENTER

# IMPACT REPORT

Mark Cuddy | Artistic Director

Christopher Mannelli | Executive Director



Adrian Lopez, Damon J. Gillespie, Sam Sherwood, and Sky Seals in *Ring of Fire*. The Cast of *Sister Act*. Tanya De León, Robert Arzia, and Bobby Plasencia in *Somewhere Over the Border*. Photos by Ron Heerkens Jr.

## INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

Following Mark Cuddy's 2021 retirement announcement, Geva's Board of Directors hired Management Consultants for the Arts to conduct a national search for a new Artistic Director. After a thorough search, Elizabeth Williamson was hired in January 2022 and began her tenure as the first woman to serve as Geva's Artistic Director.

## ARTISTIC & LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS

Geva's 49th Season was more like a season and a half, and we were thrilled to return to producing live theatre for in-person audiences!

**OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES:** Geva returned to producing by doing something we'd never done before – producing a play in the parking lot behind the building! *Ring of Fire*, the story of Johnny Cash, was performed on the Six-String Bandstand, sponsored by Excellus, and was directed by Mark Cuddy.

**VIETGONE**, by Qui Nguyen and directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh, was about to head into rehearsals when the COVID pandemic put an end to our producing in 2020. We were thrilled to bring the production, with the originally contracted creative team, back to Rochester as our first post-pandemic indoor production.

**WE MOVED TO OFF-BROADWAY:** After a two-year delay, Geva was excited to revisit our 2018 world premiere production of *Heartland* by Gabriel Jason Dean and directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh. The limited run re-united cast and creative team at the 59E59 Theatre, and included actors Mark Cuddy, Owais Ahmed and Mari Vial-Golden and the original design team of Meredith Reis (scenic), Dina El-Aziz (costume), Seth Reiser (lighting), Pornchanok Kanchanabanca (sound), and Jenni Werner (dramaturg).

**TWO FINAL PROJECTS:** While Season 49 was full of the joy of returning to the theatre, it was also an opportunity to say goodbye to two incredible artistic voices. In his final directing project for Geva, Skip Greer led the production of Chelsea Marcantel's *Airness*, which explored the imaginative and innovative world of air guitar. Nick Payne's *Constellations* was Mark Cuddy's final directing project for the theatre, and examined the idea of the multi-verse, where an infinite number of possibilities all exist at the same time.

**RECOGNITION RADIO:** Following the audio-only production of Christina Anderson's beautiful storytelling, Geva was thrilled to fully stage her play *How to Catch Creation*, which was directed by Daniel J. Bryant, explored how one makes a family and finds true fulfillment.

**WORLD PREMIERE:** Along with Syracuse Stage, Geva co-produced the world premiere production of Brian Quijada's musical *Somewhere Over the Border*, directed by Rebecca Martinez. The musical, inspired by the novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, followed the journey of Quijada's mother from El Salvador to the US in pursuit of the American Dream. The play was then produced by Chicago's Teatro Vista, where it won three of the city's Jeff Awards.

**BUILDING ON PARTNERSHIPS:** Geva continued our partnership with Ithaca's Kitchen Theatre, and presented their powerful production of Lloyd Suh's *The Chinese Lady*. The piercing tale, based on the true story of Afong Moy, examines the ways in which one woman's life was affected by exploitation and the white gaze. Geva also continued to partner with Syracuse Stage to produce a new comedy about authenticity in corporate exercise, called *Yoga Play*, by Dipika Guha and directed by Melissa Crespo.

**TAKE ME TO HEAVEN:** Geva ended the year with a rousing production of *Sister Act*, the adaptation of the 80s hit movie with music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Glenn Slater, and book by Cheri Steinkellner and Bill Steinkellner with additional book material by Douglas Carter Beane. The production was directed and choreographed by Julio Agustin.

**FREE WORKSHOPS:** In December, 2021, we were finally able to return to hosting new play workshops. For one week, Geva hosted a workshop of the music in Brian Quijada's musical, *Somewhere over the Border*. Brian Quijada, orchestrator Yendrys Cespedes, music director Julián Mesri, and director Rebecca Martinez traveled to Rochester to join local artists - bassist Hector Diaz, percussionist Freddy Colon and performer Mary Mendez Rizzo - in an exploration of how the orchestration supports the storytelling in the musical. The Fielding Stage was packed for the presentation of excerpts of the musical, and a facilitated conversation with the team about the process of writing and developing this world premiere.

## SEASON AT A GLANCE



### **Ring of Fire**

(Created by Richard Maltby, Jr.;

Conceived by William Meade)

August 3 - September 12, 2021

### **Vietgone**

(Qui Nguyen; Music by Shane Rettig)

September 28 - October 24, 2021

### **A Christmas Carol**

(Charles Dickens; Adapted by Mark Cuddy;

Music/Lyrics by Gregg Coffin)

December , 2021

### **Airness**

(Chelsea Marcantel)

January 11 - February 6, 2022

### **Constellations**

(Nick Payne)

February 2 - 20, 2022

### **How to Catch Creation**

(Christina Anderson)

February 22 - March 20, 2022

### **Somewhere Over the Border**

(Brian Quijada)

March 30 - May 1, 2022

### **The Chinese Lady**

(Lloyd Suh)

April 20 - May 8, 2022

### **Yoga Play**

(Dipika Guha)

May 10 - June 5, 2022

### **Sister Act**

(Music by Alan Menken; Lyrics by Glenn Slater; Book by Cheri Steinkellner and Bill Steinkellner; Additional Book Material by Douglas Carter Beane)

June 21 - July 24, 2022

## BY THE NUMBERS

### PRODUCTIONS AND ATTENDANCE:

Number of Productions	10
Number of Performances & Events	335
Number of Tickets	64,364
Number of Subscribers	6,289
Subscriber Renewal Rate	78%

### DONORS:

Number of Individual Donors	1,805
Number of Institutional Donors	81
Donor Renewal Rate	43%
% of Subscriber Households Donating	58%

### EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Full-time, Part-time & Seasonal Employees	74
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## FINANCIAL RESULTS

**OPERATING RESULTS:** Geva Theatre Center's operating results decreased from an operating surplus of \$1,445,261 in FY21 to an operating surplus of \$492,283 or 6% of functional expenses in FY22.

Geva had negative cash flow from operations in the amount of (\$489,844) for the year ended July 31, 2022. Unrestricted working capital increased to \$746,650 or 1.09 months of operations.

Total operating revenue, support and releases increased 104.6%, and total operating expenses increased 142%.

Geva had an overall increase of 30% in unrestricted cash contributions, with a 19% increase in individual giving.

Total ticket income increased 257.5% to \$2,929,693 in FY22 from \$818,865 in FY21.

The pandemic continued to have a significant effect on theatre operations in FY22 because of health and safety considerations as well as changes in attendance patterns. Programming during the FY22 season did return to in-person, but masking and vaccine checks were required throughout the season. Attendance was significantly lower than previous seasons, and revenues greatly reduced. However, management worked diligently to control expenses and was also able to continue to utilize significant Federal funding in the form of PPP loans and SVOG grant support, which led to an overall surplus for yearend FY22.

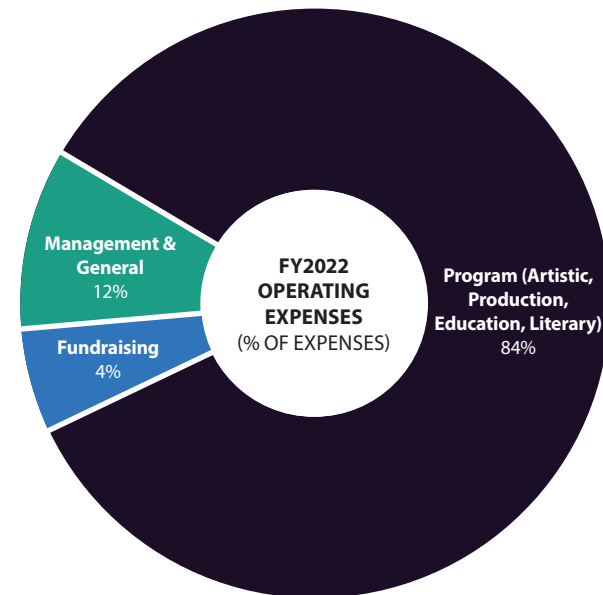
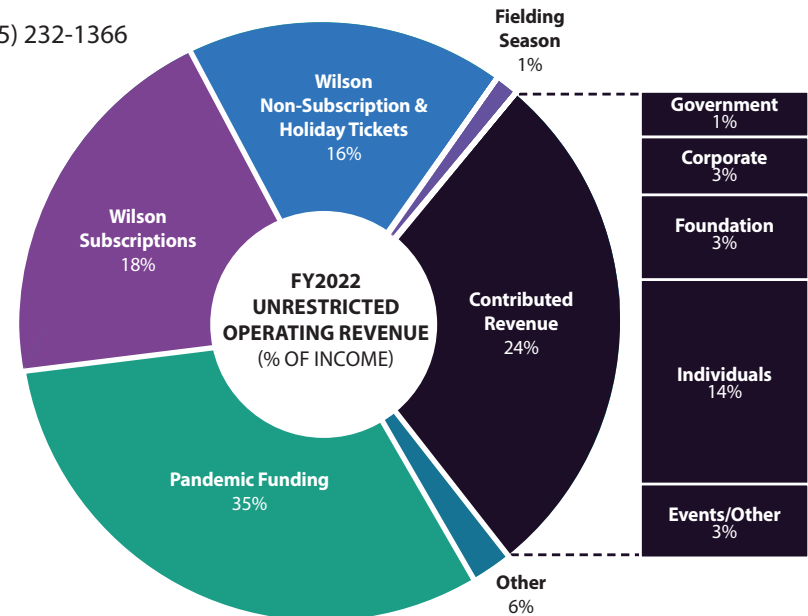
**HISTORIC TAX CREDITS:** In FY17 Geva Theatre Center entered into a Historic Tax Credit arrangement to assist in the completion of the renovation of its historic facility. The financial statements reflect all affiliate organizations.



# FY2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To obtain a copy of the complete audited financial statements, please call (585) 232-1366

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31,	TOTALS		
	2022	2021	
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash, Cash Equivalents and Certificates of Deposit	\$ 2,048,530	\$ 3,031,775	
Accounts, Contributions and Grants Receivable, Net	\$ 894,040	\$ 1,111,792	
Prepaid Expenses and Other Current Assets	\$ 124,501	\$ 195,791	
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,067,071</b>	<b>\$ 4,339,358</b>	
Property and Equipment, Net	\$ 7,918,571	\$ 8,257,292	
Pledges Receivable, Net of Discounts and Allowances	\$ 168,345	\$ 20,387	
Non-Current Certificate of Deposit	\$ -	\$ -	
Investments	\$ 5,560,982	\$ 5,763,962	
Due To/From	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 16,714,969</b>	<b>\$ 18,380,999</b>	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 268,773	\$ 297,753	
Deferred Revenue, Net of Deferred Expense	\$ 2,001,605	\$ 1,763,571	
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	\$ 50,043	\$ 895,962	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 2,320,421</b>	<b>\$ 2,957,286</b>	
<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	<b>\$ 1,838,139</b>	<b>\$ 2,746,932</b>	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 4,158,560</b>	<b>\$ 5,704,218</b>	
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 12,556,409</b>	<b>\$ 12,676,781</b>	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 16,714,969</b>	<b>\$ 18,380,999</b>	
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31,	TOTALS		
	2022	2021	
<b>REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>			
Earned Revenue including Investment Activity	\$ 5,879,360	\$ 4,033,135	
Contributions, Grants and Support	\$ 2,237,667	\$ 1,426,035	
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ -	\$ -	
Capital Contributions netted against Sale of Assets	\$ -	\$ -	
Reclassification	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE, SUPPORT AND RELEASES</b>	<b>\$ 8,117,027</b>	<b>\$ 5,459,170</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program Services	\$ 6,885,776	\$ 2,607,458	
Management & General	\$ 1,032,167	\$ 461,109	
Fundraising	\$ 319,456	\$ 270,188	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 8,237,399</b>	<b>\$ 3,338,755</b>	
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ (120,372)</b>	<b>\$ 2,120,415</b>	
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$ 12,676,781</b>	<b>\$ 10,556,366</b>	
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 12,556,409</b>	<b>\$ 12,676,781</b>	



## EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT IMPACT

### P.L.A.Y. (PERFORMANCE = LITERATURE + ART + YOU) PROGRAM

As we navigated the transitional time between in-person and virtual student matinee performances, where some schools were holding classes in person with protocols in place to keep students masked and 6 ft. apart, and other schools were still virtual or unable to accommodate field trips for their students due to health and safety guidelines, Geva offered some of our student matinee offerings virtually and some in-person.

For *A Christmas Carol*, our first student matinee of the 2021-2022 season, we invited 115 students from Ibero's Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School and from Hillside Family of Agencies to see an in-person student matinee performance of *A Christmas Carol*, with all students masked and sitting 6 ft. apart in the Wilson Stage. We filmed this performance and broadcast it to over 1,500 students and educators virtually throughout the month of December. Over half of those virtual tickets were given to RCSD teachers free of charge.

In lieu of a student matinee performance of *Airness*, a group of students from Gates-Chili High School attended a public performance of the show, complete with a talkback with the cast and curriculum connections and in-depth context from a Discovery Guide crafted by the education department.



In April, as Covid protocols in schools shifted, we were able to offer an in-person student matinee performance of Brian Quijada's *Somewhere Over the Border* to a house of immensely grateful students, many of whom were immigrants, members of the Latinx community, ESL students, students in Spanish language classes, or students who attended with their school's multicultural and diversity clubs. Attendance was fairly evenly divided between students from RCSD schools and small rural schools who came from quite a distance away, many of whom had never been to Geva for a student matinee or arts experience before and for quite a few of those students, *Somewhere Over the Border* was their first live theatre performance ever.

Feedback from educators included:

"Every one of my students in attendance came away with something. I can honestly say it was a moving experience for so many of them as they could deeply relate and apply many aspects of the story to their own stories and that of their families. Empathy towards those who have this direct connection was an experience all in its own. They all loved the personal interaction with the cast and crew at the talkback, and one of my students showed the actor how to lace up the red AirJordan sneakers his character wore the 'right way.' I thought it was very nice of them to engage with him in this way!"

"Our Spanish Club wanted to expand their horizons with a field trip this year, and this seemed like the whole package (and it was!). I wanted them to enjoy being in the beautiful theater, feeling the energy and creativity of the amazing actors and crew, and be inspired by the actors' hard work and brave talent. Of course, I trusted that students would also be inspired and gain empathy from the true and powerful story. The Discovery Guide gave me all the context I needed to prepare the students for the play. I especially appreciated the background information, the interview, and the reflection questions. The talkback really showed that the themes and ideas meant a lot to the actors as individuals, and it was great to see our kids asking questions to the amazing performers and professionals. I believe all the students in the audience gained new perspectives on the reasons why people emigrate. Students were able to see some of the unimaginable sacrifices and dangers that one faces when they leave their home, and I am continuing to work with the students so they will appreciate the hope and determination that immigrants have. When the big day came and we made it to the theater, there were many people helping out and we were so well taken care of. Everything was so organized from the moment I contacted Geva. Again, MUCHAS GRACIAS to everyone for the amazing preparation, communication, and execution of the student matinee! It could not have been a better experience!!!"

Feedback from students included:

"The voices are so on point! Like a pathway into their souls. It was so beautiful." – Red Creel

"It's amazing to take what on the surface looks so light and use that lightness to allow the material to drive us so deep. I can't believe her friends may have died. I just won't believe that." – Albion

"This will have me thinking for a long time." – Spencerport

"This play really took us to a place where we could understand emotionally the risks involved, the courage it takes to get here. These stories are so true, and they must be told." – Attica

## SUMMER ACADEMY

The 2022 Summer Academy program was back in person this year for its 27th year. We welcomed 28 extremely eager and talented young artists, 4 exceptional apprentices (all alumni of the Summer Academy program and 2022 college theatre graduates), and 6 phenomenal faculty members (both new to us and long-standing favorites) from across the country into our building to spend five extraordinary weeks together focusing on the art of musical theatre and crafting a beautiful, meaningful showcase. About 75% of the students were new to us this year, and efforts to connect with young BIPOC artists, young RCSD artists, young LGBTQIA+ artists, and young artists from adjacent counties and rural school districts were successful, and this first in-person Academy after Covid was comprised of many diverse artists and communities, both in students and faculty and apprentices. Of note, we welcomed to the faculty, Sara Bickwheat Penner, who was a Summer Academy student in the second year of the program in 1998. Summer Academy students enjoyed opportunities for connection with Geva's *Sister Act* cast members through artistic visions workshops, and free tickets to see former Summer Academy student Adriana Scalice starring in the *Mean Girls* national tour at RBTL. In many ways, this summer was also a learning and growth opportunity for us as we recognized and continuously adjusted to accommodate the changing landscape of student and faculty needs in a post-Covid world.



A slideshow of what students took away from their summer at Geva can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5QbKtikcUo>

One student said, "This program will always live in my heart. It has made me a better person and performer. Everyone treated everyone else with respect. I've never had an ensemble that cared about each other as much as what I experienced here at Geva. Matthew was the first music director who is a person of color that I've ever worked with. As a person of color myself, it was really meaningful to me to have Matthew in that position and to see that I could do that one day too."

A parent wrote in to let us know, "I truly wish I could put into words just how much (our daughter) has grown because of Geva's program. It gave her a new lease on life, confidence, built her self-esteem, challenged her to overcome her most inner self, helped her allow herself to take down so many of the walls she has had up for years, and given her a support system to keep on growing and to reach out to when she needs it. Honestly I could go on and on. Just the other day she played one of the songs that she was part of in the showcase performance in the car. It brought tears to my eyes remembering the look she had while she was performing - the PURE JOY. Truly, thank you. Between Covid, living a small rural town without theatre opportunities, and other difficulties in her life, it's been a long time since I'd seen her smile or talk as much as she has these past five weeks, but I see her light coming back and I wanted you to know the difference this has made in her life."

### **SUNY BROCKPORT ALLIANCE**

As part of our longstanding alliance with the State University of New York at Brockport, this year we provided two full-time classes in Dramaturgy taught by Jean Gordon Ryon, and Monologues taught by Brigitt Markusfeld. Stage Whispers lectures for theatre majors and minors included conversations with casting director Karie Koppel, actor Royce Johnson, designer Rob Koharchik, actor Hansel Tan, and actor Arusi Santi. Directing Fellow Jenna Cole directed Timberlake Wertenbaker's acclaimed *Our Country's Good* at SUNY Brockport, and students from Brockport interned at Geva as actors in *A Christmas Carol*, as well as the costume shop, the prop shop, the front of house department, and the literary and education departments.

## ENGAGEMENT AT GEVA

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ENGAGEMENT?** Our objective is to connect more people and organizations with the art presented on Geva's stages, to build connected relationships with existing patrons and partners, and to build new and meaningful relationships with people and organizations – especially those within communities with whom we have not been previously connected or had little connectivity. The sticky kind of connectivity that is not transactional and endures.

**THE ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT,** led by Rachel DeGuzman (Producer of Engagement) presented programs curated in conjunction with our productions to expand consideration of the plays on-stage as well as established new and enriched existing internal/external relationships and collaborations.

**GEVA INSIGHTS,** a series of post-performance conversations, were curated in conjunction with plays in Geva's season. For *Constellations*, it featured Marvel's Dr. Strange science consultant Dr. Adam Frank discussing a fictional multi-verse with Mark Cuddy. Rachel DeGuzman hosted several *Insights* conversations with regional thought leaders and experts Annette Daniels Taylor (*How to Catch Creation*), Tania Day-Magallon (*Somewhere Over the Border*), Dr. Elya Zhang (*The Chinese Lady*), Reverend Imani Olear (*Yoga Play*), and Gaynelle Wethers (*Sister Act*). These community-connected conversations are archived on Geva Theatre's YouTube Channel.

**A RACE AND THEATRE SYMPOSIUM:** It was held on May 19, 2022, featuring a keynote and workshop by national expert Kaja Amado Dunn. Among her many credentials and affiliations, Dunn consults with Actor's Equity on issues of race and theatre. It also featured a panel discussion with Carolina Osorio Gil, Delores Jackson Radney, and Daystar Rosalie Jones (Pembina Chippewa) as well as Symposium Karaoke – an open mic where participants could share or ask questions of speakers. Over 40 regional creatives attended this event that was open to the community.

**10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ESSIE CALHOUN DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS AWARDS CEREMONY AND RECEPTION:** It was held on April 10, 2022, Geva celebrated the 10th anniversary of presenting this award by honoring David Shakes with the individual award and the Seneca Art & Culture Center at Ganondagan with the organization award, which was accepted by G. Peter Jemison (Seneca, Heron Clan).

**ENRICHMENT RELATIONSHIPS:** In 2022, the Geva Engagement Department began enriched relationships with Friends of Ganondagan, Ibero-American Action League, Baden Street Settlement, Girls Rock! Rochester, and Beyond the Sanctuary.

**LOBBY EXHIBITIONS:** Engagement at Geva began spotlighting area artists with lobby exhibitions presented in conjunction with onstage productions. Participating artists included Athesia Benjamin, Adam Eaton, Cocoa Rae, Maya Davis, Nancy Gong, and Tania-Day Magallon. This pilot project was inspiration for the new series Mondays at Geva, which launched in October 2022.

# ARTISTIC TEAMS FOR GEVA PRODUCTIONS FEATURED IN PHOTOS

## COVER

***Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash***: Created by Richard Maltby, Jr.; Conceived by William Meade; Adapted from the Broadway production by Richard Maltby, Jr. and Jason Edward; Orchestrations by Steven Bishop and Jeff Linsenby; Additional Arrangements by David Abbinanti; Directed by Mark Cuddy; Music Director: Sam Sherwood; Scenic Designer: Shoko Kambara; Costume Design: Christina Selian; Lighting Designer: Derek Medonia; Projection Designer: Rasean Davonte Johnson; Sound Designer: Andrew Mark Wilhelm; Dramaturgs: Jenni Werner and Francisca Da Silveira.

***Sister Act***: Music by Alan Menken; Lyrics by Glenn Slater; Book by Cheri Steinkeller and Bill Stienkeller; Additional Book Material: Douglass Carter Beane; Based on the Touchstone Pictures Motion Picture "Sister Act" written by Joseph Howard; Directed and Choreographed by Julio Agustine; Music Director: Don Kot; Scenic Designer: Frank J. Oliva; Costume Designer: Kendra Johnson; Lighting Designer: Brian J. Lilienthal; Sound Designer: Megumi Katayama; Wig Designer: Michael A. King; Dramaturg: Jenni Werner.

***Somewhere Over the Border***: By Brian Quijada; Directed by Rebecca Martínez; Music Director: Julián Mesari; Co-Production with Syracuse Stage; Scenic Designer: Tanya Orellana; Costume Designer: Asa Benally; Lighting Designer: Jennifer Fok; Sound Designer: Jacqueline R. Herter; Orchestrations: Julián Mesari and Yendrys Cespedes; Associate Director: Sofia Ubilla; Dramaturg: Kristin Leahey.



[www.GevaTheatre.org](http://www.GevaTheatre.org)  
(585) 232-GEVA  
75 Woodbury Boulevard  
Rochester, NY 14607

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