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# LADY DAY



AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL

MARCH 5 - 31, 2024

Directed by Jeffrey L. Page

By Lanie Robertson

Musical Arrangements by  
Danny Holgate

Musical Direction by  
Will Brock

Produced in  
Association with  
Philadelphia Theatre  
Company



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Welcome to Emerson's Bar and Grill! I'm so delighted to share Broadway director Jeffrey L Page's intimate production of *Lady Day* with you, as he and his design team make all of Geva feel like an extension of the bar where Billie Holiday gave one of her final performances. It's wonderful to have Jeffrey back after his gorgeous production of *Ain't Misbehavin'* last season, and to welcome Laurin Talese, who is an American Cultural Ambassador as well as a renowned singer, in the iconic title role, as Billie Holiday.

It's been an exciting couple months here at Geva! We're so excited to have our new Executive Director, James Haskins, here with us in Rochester. James brings a wealth of experience, most recently as Managing Director at the Guthrie in Minneapolis, after many years at Philadelphia's Wilma Theatre, to the role. I hope you'll join me in giving him a warm welcome when you see him in the theatre!

We're also so happy to have launched the new ROC Geva Pass with the City of Rochester! Through this partnership, 200 tickets are available free of charge for every subscription show to Rochester residents in the following zip codes: 14521, 14605, 14608, 14611, 14619, 14606, 14613, 14615, and 14616. We launched the program last month, and sold out almost immediately! However, we have a wait list, and will be continuing the program with the city for the next ten years.

We have some exciting engagement events in conjunction with this production; I hope you'll be able to join us for **Mondays at Geva** on Monday, March 11, which will feature black out poetry inspired by Billie Holiday from Annette Daniels Taylor, the Buffalo-based award winning theater artist, poet, and artist-filmmaker. **Geva Insights**, the post-performance discussion, will be held Tuesday, March 12; Rachel DeGuzman will be joined by Rochester's own Doug Curry, who hosts *Blacks & Blues* on WRUR to discuss *Lady Day*. Please also save the date for our upcoming Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Awards on Thursday, March 28!

As always, I'm so grateful for the essential support of our sponsors ESL Credit Union, Geva's 23/24 Season Sponsor, and Dr. Dawn Lipson, our Honorary Season Producer; and our Media Sponsors 13 WHAM and Jazz 90.1.

Thanks so much for being with us – I hope you enjoy the show!



Elizabeth Williamson  
Artistic Director

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**TICKETS** Tickets can be purchased online at [GevaTheatre.org](http://GevaTheatre.org), or by phone at 585-232-4382.  
Box Office Hours are:

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**Gift Certificates** in any dollar amount may be purchased year round from the Box Office.

**Group Rates** are available for groups of 10 or more. Call the Box Office at 232-4382 or email [groups@GevaTheatre.org](mailto:groups@GevaTheatre.org) for more information.

**Student Rush Tickets** are available from \$15 for all non-sold out performances, beginning 2 hours prior to curtain time. Students must present valid ID. One ticket per person.



**ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON**

*Artistic Director*

**JAMES HASKINS**

*Executive Director*

*Presents*

# **LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL**

By **LANIE ROBERTSON**

Musical Arrangements by **DANNY HOLGATE**

Directed by **JEFFREY L. PAGE†**

*Music Director*

**WILL BROCK\***

*Scenic & Lighting Design*

**THOM WEAVER†**

*Costume Design*

**TIFFANY BACON†**

*Sound Design*

**DAKOTA ERICKSON†**

*Projection Design*

**TAJ RAUCH†**

*Associate Scenic Design*

**ANDREW ROBINSON**

*Production Stage Manager*

**KEVIN GREGORY DWYER\***

*Assistant Stage Managers*

**JULIA BREGY\*  
KATE DUPREY\*  
SHANNON TOOT\***

*Production Manager*

**PATRICK HEYDENBURG**

**Produced in Association with Philadelphia Theatre Company**

*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* was first produced in New York by the Vineyard Theatre.



Geva is a proud partner of  in the Geva-Brockport Alliance.

A Spanish-language version of this program is available at the Box Office and online at [GevaTheatre.org](http://GevaTheatre.org). Translator: Marisol Galarza-Ruiz.

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THE CAST

Billie.....Laurin Talese\*  
 Pianist.....Will Brock\*

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Open Captioner.....Samantha Geffen  
 Sign Interpretation Program Coordinator.....Luane Davis Haggerty  
 Director of Artistic Sign Language.....Troy Chapman  
 Sign Interpreters.....Mabel Najarro and Danny Huntley  
 Audio Description Program Coordinator and Consultant.....Rene Latorre  
 Audio Describer.....Dave Baxter



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



†Members of the the Stage Directors and 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 a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the American Theatre.



Geva Theatre Center is a 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.**

# Shining a spotlight on creativity.

The arts enrich all our lives and are an integral part of our culture and heritage. It's why we support arts organizations within our community. They inspire, entertain, move, and inform us in so many ways. Without the arts our community would not be the vibrant and diverse place we enjoy today.

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Portrait of Billie Holiday by Carl Van Vechten.

Billie Holiday performed for the last time at a small dive bar in south Philadelphia called Emerson's Bar and Grill at Fifteenth and Bainbridge Street in 1959. She was Philadelphia-born, Baltimore-raised, and among the first to populate the burgeoning village of Harlem. After her time at Alderson Prison, Holiday sought refuge in Philadelphia when the New York City Police Department banned her from performing in bars and clubs of her beloved Harlem. Soon after Billie Holiday's appearance in south Philly, she conclusively returned to Harlem and succumbed to cirrhosis and heart failure. This play, written by Lanie Robertson, represents something more than a simple accounting of Billie Holiday's final days in Philadelphia. Perhaps this moment analogizes to *Lady Day* relieving her heavy load and readying herself for something beyond what she can fully understand.

There is a Kemetic belief in the rites of passage into the afterlife, where the deeds (good and bad) and woes of a person's life are imprinted and stored within their heart, thereby making the heart heavy. During the judgment within the afterlife, the heart was weighed against the feather of Maat, the goddess of truth and justice. If the heart was heavier than the feather, it signaled that the person had not fully released their concerns about the world. The heavy-hearted would, therefore, not be granted passage. But if the heart balanced the feather, it signified that the person has what was needed from their time on earth to reckon with and release their troubles. In this case, that person would gain passage into a forever paradise. Vestiges of this belief are present in many contemporary systems of thought, and I imagine such a belief symbolically ignites the impressionism of this play.

The theater serves as a way to contextualize the complexities of the human experience. While Billie Holiday's final public performance inspires the events within *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, Lanie Robertson's play exemplifies the expansiveness of metaphor. This play is a final accounting of Billie Holiday's life, flashing before her eyes as she supplicates and readies herself "to be a partner of that heaven up above." Her songs trigger memories and clarify the blank spots as she faces her mortality. As we watch her – in real-time – uncover battles with various facets of abuse, racism, sexism, self-torture, love, and loss, we also witness her gain a cathartic release. *Lady Day* journeys through stages of heavy-heartedness to becoming unbound: something from which we should all learn.

Jeffrey L. Page  
Director

# A TIMELINE OF BILLIE HOLIDAY'S LIFE

Compiled by Fiona Kyle, Literary Manager & Artistic Associate



Billie Holiday, performing at Carnegie Hall

**1915, April 7:** Billie Holiday is born as Eleanora Fagan in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Sarah Julia "Sadie" Fagan and Clarence Halliday.



Billie Holiday, Aged 2 in 1917

- Shortly after Eleanora was born, Halliday left her and Sadie to pursue music. Sadie and Eleanora move to Baltimore, Maryland to live with Sadie's sister, Eva Miller.

**1927:** Eleanora finds employment doing errands for a brothel and cleaning in neighborhood homes; it is around this time that she first hears the music of Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith.

**1928:** Sadie relocates to Harlem in New York City and Eleanora joins her in 1929.

**1930:** Eleanora begins to appear at various Harlem clubs, under the name "Billie Halliday" – an ode to an actress she admired, Billie Dove, and her jazz musician father. She eventually changes the spelling to "Holiday."

**1933:** Holiday is discovered by producer John Hammond while performing at a club in Harlem. She begins to gain recognition for her unique vocal style and emotional delivery.



"Your Mother's Son-in-Law" record

- Holiday begins her recording career for Columbia Records, providing the vocal refrain for "Your Mother's Son-In-Law" with Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. Holiday starts to garner national attention for her recordings and live performances over the next several years.

**1935:** Holiday is signed to Brunswick Record Corporation and records "I Cried for You" with Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra.

"Summertime" record

**1936:** Holiday releases her rendition of "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess* for Brunswick Record Corporation, under the billing Billie Holiday and Her Orchestra.

**1937:** Saxophone player and Holiday's close friend, Lester Young, gives her the nickname "Lady Day." Holiday has a brief stint as lead vocalist with the Count Basie Band.

**1938:** Holiday partners with bandleader Artie Shaw, becoming the first Black woman to work with an all-white orchestra. Despite her talent, she faces discrimination and racism while touring with the band, including segregated accommodations and limited opportunities for advancement.

**1939:** Holiday first performs "Strange Fruit" at Café Society, New York City's first integrated nightclub. It becomes one of her most well-known songs.

**1941:** Holiday co-writes and records another of her most beloved and well-known songs, "God Bless the Child."



Billie Holiday in court during a contract lawsuit in 1949 (Credit: Los Angeles Daily News)



Billie Holiday, with Pianist Bobby Tucker, Performing at Carnegie Hall

**1944:** Holiday records "Lover Man" for Decca Records, which reaches #16 on the charts.

**1947:** Holiday is arrested for drug possession in Philadelphia, leading to legal troubles and a temporary loss of her cabaret card, which prevents her from performing in New York City clubs where alcohol is served. Her struggles with substance abuse and the criminal justice system take a toll on her career and personal life.

**1948:** Holiday performs her first sold-out performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and then begins a run of *Holiday on Broadway* at the Mansfield Theatre on Broadway.

**1952:** Holiday records and releases her first full-length studio album for Clef Records, *Billie Holiday Sings*. Songs include "I Only Have Eyes for You" and "Blue Moon."

**1953:** Holiday released her second full-length studio album with Clef Records, *An Evening with Billie Holiday*. Songs include "Stormy Weather" and "Lover Come Back to Me."

**1954:** Holiday releases her third full-length studio album, *Billie Holiday*, for Clef Records. Songs include "Love for Sale" and "What a Little Moonlight Can Do."



Billie Holiday performing in 1954 (Credit: Charles Hewitt, Picture Post, Hulton Archive, Getty Images)



Lady Sings the Blues, first edition

**1955:** Holiday's next full-length studio album, *Music for Torching*, is released by Clef Records. Songs include "It Had to Be You" and "I Get a Kick Out of You."

**1956:** Holiday's final studio album for Clef Records, before its absorption into Verve Records, *Velvet Mood: Songs by Billie Holiday*, is released. Songs include "Prelude to a Kiss" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It."

- Holiday publishes her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*, co-written with William Dufty, for Doubleday. Her autobiography details her struggles with racism, poverty, and addiction. It becomes a bestseller. An album of the same name is released, including many of her most famous songs such as "Lady Sings the Blues," "Strange Fruit," and "God Bless the Child."

**1957:** Holiday releases two full-length albums, *Body and Soul* and *Songs for Distingué Lovers*, for the new recording company, Verve Records. Songs include "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Embraceable You," "One For My Baby," and "Just One of Those Things."

- Holiday performs at The Ridgecrest Inn in Irondequoit, NY, a popular nightclub in the Greater Rochester Area.

**1958:** Holiday, in her final collaborations with record producer Norman Granz, releases *Stay with Me and All or Nothing At All* for Verve Records. Songs include "Ain't Misbehavin'," "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm," "Cheek to Cheek," and "Our Love is Here to Stay."

- Holiday releases her full-length album for Columbia Records, *Lady in Satin*. Songs include "I'm a Fool to Want You" and "It's Easy to Remember."

**1959:** Holiday completes recording her album entitled *Billie Holiday* for Columbia Records in March; it is released after her death, and retitled *Last Recording*. Songs include "Don't Worry 'Bout Me" and "All the Way."



Lady in Satin in 1957 (Credit: Don Hunstein)



Billie Holiday performing Storyville club in Boston in 1955 (Credit: Mel Levine)

- In March, Holiday performs at Emerson's Bar & Grill in Philadelphia.

- On May 25, Holiday gives what will become known as her final performance at the Phoenix Theatre in New York City.

- On July 17, Billie Holiday dies from complications of cirrhosis of the liver at the age of 44.

**1973:** Holiday is posthumously inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

**2000:** Holiday is posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

# The PROM

Music by **Matthew Sklar**  
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# 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. For more information, contact Ms. DeGuzman at [rdeguzman@gevatheatre.org](mailto:rdeguzman@gevatheatre.org).

**Engagement at Geva programs are sponsored, in part, by Volvo Cars Rochester.**

## 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!

**MONDAY, MAR 11** 6 - 8 p.m.

Featuring BlackOutPoetic art created by **Annette Daniels Taylor** from printed text about Billie Holiday. Daniels Taylor will present a black out poetry workshop at the opening.



## 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 23/24 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.

**TUESDAY, MAR 12**

immediately following  
the performance

Featured Guest for Lady Day:  
Host of BlackNBlues radio show,  
**Doug Curry**



Engagement Program  
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## **Geva Theatre is pleased to announce the launch of its Engagement Committee**

**The Engagement Committee** will offer advisement to the Geva Engagement Department on its artistic and cultural inclusion practices as well as on its connectivity to people and organizations with whom Geva has had little or no relationship in the past. The Committee will also provide a forum in which to collectively expand members engagement to people, spaces, places, and to dream. Rachel Y. DeGuzman, Geva's Director of Engagement, Community Partnerships & Public Curation, will facilitate the Engagement Committee.

### **The Geva Engagement Committee:**

Amanda Ashley Rodriguez  
Jayme Bermudez  
Dr. Mark Broomfield  
Christopher K. Coles  
Tania Day-Magallon  
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Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj  
Kathryn Murano Santos  
Victor RANGE Zarate  
David Shakes  
Kristen Walker  
Thomas Warfield  
Sarah Yarger

## WHO'S WHO

**Laurin Talese (Billie)** (she/her) is an actress,



composer and vocalist who has been captivating audiences with her pure tone and poignant lyrics since childhood. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Talese was classically trained at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Cleveland School of the Arts and later earned a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Talese is proud to represent the U.S. as a cultural ambassador with American Music Abroad, an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by the Association of American Voices. Following in the footsteps of former Ambassadors Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck, Talese performs for international audiences and leads masterclasses and educational workshops to bring jazz to new populations throughout Africa, Asia, South America and Europe. However, Talese also enjoys serving her local community on a variety of boards, including the Recording Academy's Philadelphia Chapter, for which she has served as vice president. Ms. Talese made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut performing repertoire including her original composition, "This Love" conducted by Yannick Nezet-Seguin. In 2022, Laurin premiered her newest work, *Museum Of Living Stories*, commissioned by Chamber Music America and in 2023, Ms. Talese made her theatrical debut starring as Billie Holiday in *Lady Day At Emerson's Bar and Grill* at Philadelphia Theatre Company.

**Will Brock (Pianist)** is a singer, song writer, producer and performer for many international acts including himself. He's been in the theater as musical director, composer, and director for around 30yrs.



## ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE TEAM

**JEFFREY L. PAGE (Director)** (he/him) – Nominated and MTV VMA- winning director and choreographer. Broadway 1776; Violet. Choreographer on Beyoncé's *Run the World* and FOX's *So You Think You Can Dance*. Commercial Direction and Choreography: Ain't

*Misbehavin'* (Barrington Stage Company, Geva Theatre Center, Westport Country Playhouse); *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Choir Boy* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); *Jamie, Memphis* (HoriPro, Inc. Japan). Regional Choreography: *Who Could Ask for Anything More?*, *Company*, *Broadway Bounty Hunter* (Barrington, Berkshire Theatre Award); *Mlima's Tale* (Westport). Philadelphia Theatre Company Resident Artist. American Repertory Theatre Artist Fellow. Lecturer in Theatre, Dance, and Media at Harvard University.

**TIFFANY BACON (Costume Design)** (she/her) Tiffany Bacon, the Creative & Production Director for WURD Radio, began her career in radio in 1990 at WRTI. At Power 99FM she created *Inner City*, a show that broke new artists like Jill Scott, Musiq Soulchild and more. Tiffany Bacon is the co-author of a health & wellness program for African American teens. *Talking Matters* is currently being tested for effectiveness by the Research & Evaluation Group at Public Health Management Corporation. Tiffany is also a freelance costume designer whose recent work includes: *Fat Ham*, *The Wilma Theatre*; *Gallilee*, *Azuka Theatre*; *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, Philadelphia Theatre Company; *Hymn*, *Inis Nua Theatre*; *Tuck Everlasting*, Centre Theater; *Good Grief*, Hedgerow Theater; *Meet Me at Dawn*, *Inis Nua Theatre*; *American Fast*, InterAct Theatre and *The Light*, Theatre Exile. Tiffany is the 2022 winner of the BroadwayWorld.com/ Philadelphia Best Costume Design Award for a Play or Musical for the Theatre in the X production of *Dreamgirls*.

**DAKOTA ERICKSON (Sound Design)** (he/him) is originally from Arizona and has gone to work in other theatres and Festivals throughout the country such as Lyric Rep Theatre, Black Hills Playhouse, SummerScape 2023 and the Contemporary American Theatre Festival (*Oklahoma!*, *Murder for 2*, *Tokens of Affection*, *Dom Juan*). Recent endeavors include working in IATSE Local 8 at Philadelphia and serving as audio supervisor for Philadelphia Theatre Company in their 2022-2023 season (*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Tattooed Lady*, *Empathatrax*). He now continues to reside in Philadelphia as a systems designer and theatrical consultant for Hewshott, as well as working a freelancer for sound design in the Philadelphia area.

**TAJ RAUCH** (*Projection Design*) (he/they) is a recent graduate of the Directing, Playwriting and Production program at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, as well as the co-founder of the theater company, Speakeasy 932. Taj's body of work consists of existential commentaries on nihilistic worlds through film, installation, writing and choreography.

**ANDREW ROBINSON** (*Associate Scenic Design*) (he/him) is a Philadelphia based scenic designer and is excited to be a part of this production. He has worked at multiple professional theaters in Philadelphia including; Lantern Theater, Center Theater, Act Two Playhouse, Azuka Theatre, Delaware Theatre Company, and InterAct. Andrew's portfolio can be viewed at [andrewrobinsondesigns.com](http://andrewrobinsondesigns.com) or follow him at [ar\\_scenicdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/ar_scenicdesigns)

**THOM WEAVER** (*Scenic and Lighting Design*) (he/him) Off-Broadway: *Sandra* (Vineyard), *The Total Bent* (Public), *Kingdom Come* (Roundabout), *Exit Strategy* (Primary Stages), *King Hedley II*, *How I Learned What I Learned*, *The Liquid Plain* (Signature Theatre Company); *Teller's Play Dead* (The Players Theater). Regional: Huntington, Arden, Wilma (Associate Artist), Philadelphia Theatre Company, Milwaukee Rep, Chicago Shakespeare, Getty, Children's Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Portland Center Stage, Folger Theatre, Alliance, Round House, Hangar, CenterStage, California Shakespeare Theater, Syracuse Stage, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Williamstown, Spoleto, Lincoln Center Festival, and Yale Repertory Theatre, as well as numerous designs with Pilobolus. Awards: two Jeff Awards, Helen Hayes Award, six Barrymore Awards and two AUDELCO Awards. Education: Carnegie Mellon and Yale. Program director of Theater Design and Technology, UArts.

**JAMES HASKINS** (*Executive Director*) (he/him) is honored to join Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson, the Board, and staff of Geva Theatre as its new Executive Director. Most recently, James served as Managing Director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis after having completed a twelve-year tenure as Managing Director of The Wilma Theater in Philadelphia in partnership with Artistic Director Blanka Zizka.



James began his work in theater administration at Circle Repertory Company and went on to work with a variety of theaters in New York and Seattle, most notably the Seattle Group Theatre. Upon moving to Philadelphia, he first worked as Managing Director of InterAct Theatre Company, while also serving on the Board of the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia as Chair of the Barrymore Awards Oversight Committee. He subsequently moved into the Executive Director position of the Theatre Alliance before joining the Wilma. As a theater artist, James acted in many productions before turning to theater administration and is most proud of his directorial and dramaturgical work on the plays of his husband Michael Whistler. James holds an MFA from the University of Washington and a BA from The College of Wooster in Ohio, where he previously served on the alumni board. Following the pandemic shutdown, Haskins joined committees of the Minnesota Arts and Culture Coalition and the Professional Non-profit Theatre Coalition to help build support and funding for arts and culture. In Philadelphia, he served on the Cultural Advisory Committee under former Mayor Michael Nutter, who officiated his wedding ceremony. James looks forward to immersing himself into the Rochester community, where he will foster a culture that values the joy of live performance at Geva Theatre.

**ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON** (*Artistic Director*)



(she/her) joined Geva as Artistic Director in 2022, to launch the theatre's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season. An Obie Award-winning director, Williamson is known internationally for her work as a dramaturg, director, adapter, and producer. Broadway: Matthew López' *The Inheritance* (Tony, Olivier, Critics Circle, Evening Standard, GLAAD, and Drama Desk Awards for Best Play, Outer Critics Circle Honoree), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony Award for Best Musical), *Anastasia*. West End: *The Inheritance*. Off-Broadway: Sarah Gancher's *Russian Troll Farm*, Dan O'Brien's *The Body of an American*. Regional: About Face Theatre, ACT, the Alley, Cal Shakes, Court, Hartford Stage, the La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer Theatre, Steppenwolf, Theatre de La Jeune Lune, TheaterWorks Hartford, TheatreSquared, the

## WHO'S WHO

Westport Country Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival. Williamson previously served as Associate Artistic Director and Literary Manager at Pioneer Theatre Company in Salt Lake City and as Associate Artistic Director and Director of New Play Development at Hartford Stage. She received a 2007 NEA Fellowship in Literary Translation and is a member of SDC and LMDA. Education: M.St., Oxford University; B.A., Bennington College; trained at the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq.

**KEVIN GREGORY DWYER (Production Stage Manager)** (he/him) Geva: *FRIDA...A Self Portrait*, *A Christmas Carol 2023*. Regional: *A Chorus Line*, *EVITA* (The REV Theatre Co). National Tours: *The Book of Mormon*. Chicago: *An American in Paris*, Disney and Cameron Macintosh's *Mary Poppins*, *The Color Purple*, *And Then There Were None*, *Matilda*, *Mamma Mia!*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Macbeth*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *Madagascar*, *King Charles III*, and *Othello* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *This Is Our Youth* and *Lord of the Flies* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Dutchman/TRANSit* (American Blues Theater). Boston: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *Betrayal*, *Private Lives*, *Captors* (Huntington Theatre Company). Mr. Dwyer received his BA in Stage/Production Management from Emerson College and is a proud AEA Member.

**JULIA BREGY (Assistant Stage Manager)** (she/her) is thrilled to be returning for Geva's 2023/24 season. She would like to thank her family and friends for all of their support. New York: *DiscOasis NYC* (Constellation Immersive), *Proud Ladies* (James William Productions). Regional: *Russian Troll Farm* (Geva Theatre), *Measure for Measure* (Fiasco Theatre/Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Christmas Carol* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Fun Home* (Speakeasy Boston), *Little Women*

(Perseverance Theatre). International: *Little Mermaid* (Metta Theatre London/Underbelly Fringe Festival), *I Do Need Me & I'm Not a Bit Like a Clown* (Metta Theatre London).

**KATE DUPREY (Assistant Stage Manager)** is delighted to be back backstage at Geva. Past credits with Geva include *Constellations* and *Cry It Out* (ASM), and *Vietgone* and *A Christmas Carol* (Run Crew). As a local Stage Manager in the Rochester area, some favorite credits include *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Seagull*, and *Richard II* (The Company Theatre), *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged* (WallByrd), and *Into the Woods* and *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Geneva Theatre Guild). Currently, she is teaching a class in Stage Management at the University of Rochester. As always, thank you to my family, and my husband for their amazing support.

**SHANNON TOOT (Assistant Stage Manager)** (she/her) - ASM credits at Geva include *A Christmas Carol*, *Aimess* and *Yoga Play*. Shannon has also been on stage crew for *Vietgone*, *How to Catch Creation*, *Sister Act*, *Somewhere*, *Russian Troll Farm*, *And So We Walked*, *Cinderella*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Other ASM credits include *Spring Awakening* and *The Seagull* at The Company Theatre. Shannon studied Theatre at SUNY Brockport and had her first internship with Geva in 2014.

**PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY** Founded in 1974, Philadelphia Theatre Company engages and strengthens the Philadelphia community through exceptional productions of new and contemporary plays, inspiring education programs, and mutually beneficial civic partnerships. Now led by Artistic Directors Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky, PTC has produced over 150 world premiere plays, more than half of which went on to have additional productions in New York and elsewhere. PTC is proudly located on the Avenue of the Arts in the beautiful Suzanne Roberts Theatre in Philadelphia, PA.

SAVE THE DATE

ESSIE CALHOUN  
DIVERSITY  
IN THE ARTS  
AWARDS

March 28, 2024

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2024 RECIPIENTS:

Gateways Music Festival

Lisa Helen Hoffman (posthumous)

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The Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Award recognizes that art allows for the expression of truth and beliefs, and helps us gain an understanding of one another and the world. It is presented annually by Geva Theatre Center to individuals and organizations who embody these values in their work.

Past recipients of the Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Award are:

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## ABOUT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

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.

Founded in 1972 by William Selden and Cynthia Mason Selden, Geva was originally housed in the Rochester Business Institute building on South Clinton Avenue. In 1982, Geva purchased and converted its current space – formerly a NYS Arsenal designed by noted Rochester architect Andrew J Warner and built in 1868 – and opened its new home at the Richard Pine Theatre in March 1985. Geva operates two venues – the 516-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage and the 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage.

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](http://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.



Graphic by Eric E. Doxtator

### **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](http://ganondagan.org).

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*We are in the process of reimagining our Geva recognition and giving societies. Please look for changes in future Playbills.*

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 Arena's Florist  
 Tom Bachmann, Dream Vacations  
 Baker Street Bakery  
 Balsam Bagels  
 BayCreek Paddling Center  
 Blackfriars Theatre  
 Blu Wolf Bistro  
 Bodymind Float Center  
 Peggy Boucher  
 Breathe  
 Bristol Valley Theater  
 Buffalo AKG Art Museum  
 Buffalo Sabres  
 Margaret & Tim Busch  
 California Closets  
 CenterStage Theatre at the JCC  
 Comedy at the Carlson  
 The Corning Museum of Glass  
 Crisp Rochester  
 Crumpets  
 Deborah Jean & Co.  
 Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse  
 The Distillery  
 Dogtown  
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 Hope Drummond  
 Empire Attractions  
 Encore Chocolates  
 Ethan Allen at Eastview Mall  
 Eye Openers Optical Fashions  
 F. Oliver's  
 Finger Lakes Coffee Roasters  
 Finger Lakes Opera  
 Gallery Salon  
 Genesee Country Museum  
 Genrich's Florist & Greenhouse  
 George Eastman Museum  
 The Glimmerglass Festival  
 Joanna & Michael Grosodonia  
 Guglielmo Sauce  
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*We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of these donor lists. However, if you see an error or omission, please accept our apology, and kindly call the Development Office at (585) 420-2049.*

SAVE THE DATE

GEVA THEATRE  
CURTAIN CALL

JUNE 7, 2024

6:00PM - 9:00PM

A fundraising gala and auction in support of Geva Theatre's education and engagement programming

Visit [gevatheatre.org/curtaincall](https://gevatheatre.org/curtaincall) for more information on tickets, sponsorships, and more!



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