

## **Geva Theatre presents a dynamic portrayal of legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday with *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* beginning March 5**

**Rochester, N.Y.** — Geva Theatre transports its audience back to 1959 with Lanie Robertson's *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, directed by Jeffrey L. Page, with musical arrangements by Danny Holgate. In a small, intimate bar in Philadelphia, Billie Holiday puts on a show that, unbeknownst to her audience, will leave them witnesses to one of the last performances of her lifetime. One of the greatest jazz singers of all-time shares her loves and her losses through her poignant voice and moving songs. *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* runs March 5 - 31 on the Wilson Stage. Tickets are on sale now, visit [GevaTheatre.org](http://GevaTheatre.org) or call the Box Office at 585-232-GEVA(4382).

Director Jeffrey L. Page says, "*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* is a final accounting of Billie Holiday's life, flashing before her eyes. As we watch her — in real-time — uncover battles with various facets of abuse, racism, sexism, self-torment, love, and loss, we also witness her gain a cathartic release."

Geva's Wilson Stage transforms into Emerson's Bar & Grill with a live jazz pianist and an intimate setting. Unique to this production, audience members have the opportunity to "Be in the Bar with Billie" by purchasing a table for two right on stage for only \$100, purchase includes two tickets and two drink vouchers. There is limited availability per show, for more information on how to purchase a table, call the Box Office at 585-232-GEVA(4382).

Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson says, "I am so delighted to welcome Jeffrey L. Page back with his beautifully re-examined production of *Lady Day*, after his stunning reinterpretation of *Ain't Misbehavin'* last season!"

### **The Creative Team & Cast:**

**Jeffrey L. Page** (Director) brought his re-envisioned *Ain't Misbehavin'* to the Wilson Stage during the 50th Season and returns to Geva to direct *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*. He is an Emmy Award-nominated director and choreographer, he spearheaded the 2015 and 2018 Tokyo productions of the musical *Memphis*, which received four Yomiuri Award nominations, including Best Musical. The first African American to be named the Marcus Institute Fellow for Opera Directing at The Juilliard School. Mr. Page won an MTV Video Music Award for his work with Beyoncé, whose creative team have included him for more than 12 years. His work was featured on Beyoncé's "The Formation World Tour," in her historic Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival performance, and in two of her HBO specials. Mr. Page was the associate creative director for Mariah Carey's "Sweet, Sweet Fantasy European Tour," and has been a featured

choreographer on Fox Television's "So You Think You Can Dance." He currently is the creative director for singer-songwriter Jazmine Sullivan, most recently working with her on the 2020 BET Soul Train Music Awards. Mr. Page was in the original, award-winning Broadway cast of *Fela!* He worked alongside Tony Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori to choreograph the hit Broadway musical *Violet* starring Sutton Foster (Roundabout Theatre Company). Page was acknowledged by the Berkshire Theatre Awards for his work at Barrington Stage Company's *Company* and *Broadway Bounty Hunter*. In 2016, he established Movin' Legacy as an Indianapolis-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the ethnology and documentation of contemporary and traditional dance from Africa and the African diaspora. Jeffrey holds a MFA degree, with a concentration in Theatre Directing from Columbia University in New York City, and serves as a lecturer at Harvard University and The Juilliard School. In 2019 he was awarded the Chuck Davis Emerging Choreographer Fellowship from the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Recently, as co-director and choreographer, he worked with Diane Paulus and the American Repertory Theatre at Harvard University to mount the Broadway revival of *1776*.

**Laurin Talese** (Billie Holiday) 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 & 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 30 years.

The creative team includes Scenic & Lighting Design by **Thom Weaver** (he/him) (Philadelphia Theatre Company, Roundabout Theatre Company), Associate Scenic Designer **Andrew Robinson** (he/him), Costume Design by **Tiffany Bacon** (she/her) (Philadelphia Theatre Company, Inis Nua Theatre), Sound Design by **Dakota Erickson** (he/him) (Philadelphia Theatre Company), and Projection Design by **Taj Rauch** (he/they) (The Wilma Theater). **Kevin Gregory**

**Dwyer** (he/him) is the Production Stage Manager and **Julia Bregy** (she/her) is the Assistant Stage Manager.

## **TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**When:** March 5 - 31, 2024

**Where:** On the Wilson Stage, 75 Woodbury Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14607

**To Purchase:** Tickets may be purchased [online](#), by calling 585-232-GEVA(4382), or in-person from the Box Office. *All prices, dates, and times are subject to change.*

**Accessibility:** Learn about our accessibility options [here](#).

Geva's 51<sup>st</sup> Season is sponsored by ESL Federal Credit Union with Honorary Season Producer Dr. Dawn Lipson. *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* is presented with support from media sponsors Channel 13 WHAM and WGMC Jazz 90.1.

*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com). This production is produced in association with Philadelphia Theatre Company.

### **About Geva Theatre**

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre 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 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 leadership of Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson and Executive Director James Haskins.

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).

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