



GEVA THEATRE'S 24/25 SEASON SPONSOR

NINA SIMONE

FOUR WOMEN

January 14 - February 9, 2025



Geva
THEATRE

Written by
CHRISTINA HAM

Directed by
CHARLOTTE BRATHWAITE

Music Direction by
JUSTIN HICKS



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*Nina Simone: Four Women***



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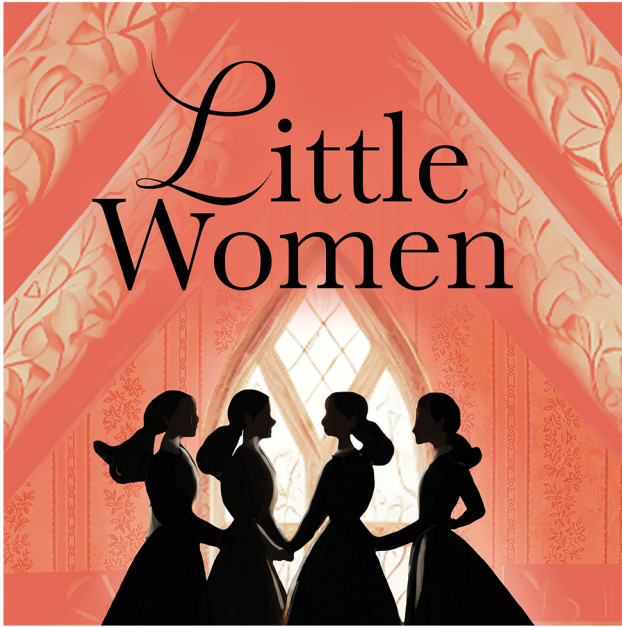
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COMING UP NEXT...

ON GEVA'S WILSON STAGE



FEB 25 - MAR 23

Louisa May Alcott's classic novel comes to fresh life in this inventive, theatrical adaptation which follows as the March sisters - Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy - gather in the family attic. From making up fairy stories, writing for their pretend newspaper, and playing make believe, they graduate to scenes of love, loss, and - for Jo - artistic self-discovery, as they come of age against the backdrop of the American Civil War.

By Louisa May Alcott | Adapted by Heather Chrisler

Directed by Rachel Alderman, director of last season's

DIAL M for **MURDER**



UPCOMING SHOWS



PURE NATIVE

Brewster's back after almost a decade and things have changed. Brews is proud of his success working for a large corporation, and wants to share it with the people of his Rez in Upstate New York. After all, it's been a bad year, and Brews believes partnering with his corporation on a new bottled water factory would be a great opportunity for the Rez to create its own industry and sustain itself. But to his old love Connie, it's a betrayal of everything the Haudenosaunee stand for. Who will win?

04/15 - 05/11

WILSON STAGE



Beautiful

The Carole King Musical

Before she was hit-maker Carole King, she was Carole Klein, an up-and-coming songwriter from Brooklyn. Beautiful: The Carole King Musical is the inspiring story of how she made her mark on the music industry - and found her own voice in the process. Features the unforgettable songs "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," "You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling," "Natural Woman," and "I Feel the Earth Move" from King's iconic songbook.

05/28 - 06/29

WILSON STAGE

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

GEVA THEATRE February Break Camp 2025

For Students in Grades 4 - 6

Join us for a week-long intensive February break camp for youth in grades 4-6. This camp will run the week of Feb 17 - Feb 21 from 9am - 5pm. Modeled after our Summer Academy, students will spend the day in Musical Theatre training, taking classes in Acting, Movement, and Voice, led by local theatre!

02/17 - 02/21

THE Work Out ROOM A COMEDY SERIES

Join us on the Fielding Stage for this season's *The Work Out Room*, Artist in Residence Baron Vaughn's comedy series where comedians develop their specials with a live audience! Some of the country's most exciting comedians will be here at Geva to test out new material and sketches well before their work hits a streaming service near you.

03/12 - 03/22 & 06/11 - 06/21

FIELDING STAGE

For Tickets & More Info,
Visit [GevaTheatre.org](https://www.gevatheatre.org), or call or visit
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Gift Certificates in any dollar amount may be purchased year round from the Box Office.

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Available for groups of 10 or more.
Call the Box Office at 232-4382 or email groups@GevaTheatre.org for more information.

STUDENT RUSH TICKETS

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.

MESSAGE FROM GEVA'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome! Thank you so much for joining us for Geva's first show of 2025, *Nina Simone: Four Women*.

I've been very excited by the approach our director Charlotte Brathwaite is taking with this play about the iconic musician and activist. Working closely with playwright Christina Ham, Charlotte has always thought of the women in the song "Four Women" as elements of the same woman, different iterations of Nina Simone. She has activated that so that all the performers in our show are playing versions of Nina Simone herself. So Peaches, Sarah, Sephronia, Sweet Thing, and (new for this production) Eunice/Pianist are all also Nina herself.

We're very fortunate to have Rochester native (and Tony and Grammy nominee!) Kenita R. Miller returning to Geva in this show, along with a wonderful cast all around. Perhaps as you hear them sing these songs, brought to fresh life through the wonderful work of Yatta (aka. Ricky Sallay Zoker) and Justin Hicks, you will find, as I do, that they speak to you as powerfully today as when they were written. If you want to dive more deeply into conversation about Nina Simone's legacy and her impact on music and activism, I hope you'll join us for our Geva Insights conversation January 21, following the 6pm performance, with Dr. Jeffrey McCune and Dr. Jordan Ealey of the University of Rochester. And if you feel like hearing more music, please join us for our Mondays at Geva on January 27th 6pm - 8pm featuring Mel Henderson Trio ft. Quiana Joseph-Muhammad.

In our Connectivity Department, we're piloting a new winter break camp for grades 4-6, focused on musical theatre!, in February here. If you'd like to learn more, please visit <https://gevatheatre.org/education/>

As always, I'd like to thank our sponsors, our 24/25 Season Sponsor ESL Federal Credit Union, Honorary Season Producer Dr. Dawn Lipson, Lead Producer Buckingham Properties, and our Media Sponsors WROC 8 and Jazz 90.1. And this New Year, as always, I am most grateful for all of you!

Thank you for joining us!

Elizabeth Williamson
Artistic Director



PRODUCTION CREDITS

ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON
Artistic Director

Geva
THEATRE

JAMES HASKINS
Executive Director

Presents

NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN

By **CHRISTINA HAM**
Directed by **CHARLOTTE BRATHWAITE**†
Music Direction by **JUSTIN HICKS**

Scenic & Lighting Design
KENT BARRETT†

Costume Design
MARSHA GINSBERG†

Sound Design & Composition
YATTA (aka. ricky sallay zoker)†

Hair & Wig Design
CASSIE J. WILLIAMS

Production Stage Manager
KEVIN GREGORY DWYER*

Assistant Stage Manager
KATE DUPREY*

Casting Director
ERICA JENSEN, CSA
CALLERI JENSEN DAVIS

Associate Producer
JASMINE B. GUNTER†

Production Manager
JOSEPH BIAGINI

General Manager
THALIA SCHRAMM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN was commissioned by Park Square Theatre, St. Paul, Minnesota Richard Cook, Artistic Director, C. Michael-jon Pease, Executive Director, and received its first public performance on March 8, 2016

Additional developmental support for *NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN* provided by Kansas City Repertory Theatre: Stuart Carden, Artistic Director, Angela Gieras, Executive Director
Milwaukee Repertory Theater: Mark Clements, Artistic Director, Chad Bauman, Executive Director

NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN is presented by special arrangement with United Talent Agency

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. Translator: Marisol Galarza-Ruiz

PRODUCTION CREDITS

THE CAST

(In order of appearance)

Peaches/Nina.....	Garnet Williams*
Sarah/Nina.....	Kenita R. Miller*
Sephronia/Nina.....	Sojourner*
Sweet Thing/Nina.....	Hillary Jones*
Eunice/Pianist/Nina.....	X'ene Sky*

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Assistant Director/Movement.....	Audrey Elaine Hailes
Associate Costume Design.....	Ilir Ahmetaj
Assistant Scenic Design.....	Roma Cervino
Assistant Lighting Design.....	Mbhali Edwards
Production Assistant.....	AnneMarie Giannandrea
Open Captioner.....	Samantha Geffen
Sign Interpretation Coordinator.....	Luane Davis Haggerty
Director of Artistic Sign Language.....	Tamara Walton
Sign Interpreters.....	Ali Giudice and Danny Huntley
Audio Description Program Coordinator and Consultant.....	Rene Latorre
Audio Describer.....	MJ Savastano

TIME

September 16, 1963 - Today

SETTING

The stage. Nina's Mt. Vernon, NY living room and the ruins of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. A collision of the literal and the figurative as the design aims to capture a moment in time in the creative process.



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



†Indicates members of the Stage 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 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 is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the American Theatre.



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.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Trouble in Mind

By Richard M. Jones

Mississippi Goddam

By Nina Simone

Courtesy of WC Music Corp. (ASCAP) Used by permission.

Sea Lion Woman

Traditional African American folk song

Old Jim Crow

By Jackie Alper, Nina Simone and Ron Vander Groef
Courtesy of WC Music Corp. (ASCAP) Used by permission.

God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again

Traditional Hymn

Lyrics by Jeremiah Eames Rankin, Music by William Gould Tomer

His Eye is on the Sparrow

Traditional Gospel Hymn

By Civilla D. Martin and Charles H. Gabriel

If He Changed My Name

Traditional spiritual

By Robert MacGimsey

Images

By Nina Simone

Courtesy of WC Music Corp. (ASCAP) Used by permission.

Sinnerman

By Composer and Author Trad and Nina Simone
Courtesy of WC Music Corp. (ASCAP) Used by permission.

Everything Must Change

Written by Benard Ighner

Courtesy of Almo Music Corp. Used by permission.

To Be Young Gifted and Black

Written by Weldon Irvine and Nina Simone

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Shout Oh, Mary

Written by Christina Ham

Four Women

Written by Nina Simone

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CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity 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.

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

Mondays at Geva

Mondays at Geva Event for *Nina Simone: Four Women*:

MONDAY, JAN 27 6 – 8 p.m.



**Mel
Henderson**



**Sean
Jefferson**

We invite you to be part of our Mondays at Geva series, where we will pay tribute to the timeless musical legacy of Nina Simone. This special event will take place on Monday, January 27th, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the welcoming lobby of Geva Theatre. Experience the captivating fusion of jazz standards and Nina Simone's iconic tunes, brought to life by the talented Mel Henderson Trio, featuring Quiana Joseph-Muhammad.



**Quiana
J-Muhammad**



**Chris
Northington**

Enjoy an evening of rich music, meaningful collaboration, and community. Refreshments will be served.

Geva *Insights*

Geva Insights Event for *Nina Simone: Four Women*:

TUESDAY, JAN 21 Post-6pm Performance



**Dr. Jeffrey Q.
McCune, Jr.**



**Dr. Jordan
Ealey**

Geva is proud to be partnering with the University of Rochester's Black Studies Department on several post-show discussions this season. Department Chair Dr. Jeffrey Q. McCune, Jr. will be joined by Dr. Jordan Ealey to discuss Nina Simone's legacy and her impact on music and activism.

SAVE THE DATE!

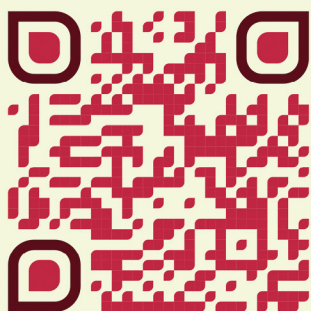
ENCORE

The Season Summer Soirée

June 6, 2025

Geva Theatre

Join us to celebrate our 24/25 Season, featuring encore performances by some of your favorite actors this season, including an exclusive sneak peek of a show from the upcoming season!



Suggested Attire: Create an outfit from your favorite show of the 24/25 season! Awards and prizes for Best Dressed will be given out during the event.

Updates and more information can be found by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera.

***Nina Simone: Four Women* by Christina Ham Directed by Charlotte Brathwaite**



The four girls murdered in the church bombing during Bible study in Birmingham, Alabama L to R: Addie Mae Collins (14), Cynthia Wesley (14), Carole Robertson (14), and Carol Denise McNair (11)

An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times.
- Nina Simone

Nina Simone was forever changed the moment the lives of four young girls were consumed by a terrorist bomb at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. A reverberation of rage stirred in her at the senseless violence towards the innocent. A revolutionary artist of the highest calling, Nina Simone refused to look away. Armed with deeply rooted spiritual fortitude and rigorous artistic acumen, she told the truth of what she saw and felt, she sang out loud what others were afraid to say. She became a portal for unflinching bravery, porous vulnerability and steadfast resilience. She reflected us to ourselves through her music - what she called her "burden and [her] gift".

Only an artist can tell what it's like to die. Or to have somebody die. What it's like to fear death. What it's like to fear. What it's like to love. What it's like to be glad. Hymns don't do this, churches really cannot do it. The trouble is the price the artist has to pay himself and that you the audience must also pay is a willingness to give up everything. To realize that even though you spent years acquiring this house, this furniture, this position, raising this child, none of it belongs to you. You can only have it by letting it go. It is not a day at the bargain counter, it is a total risk of everything. Of you, of who you think you are. Who you think you'd like to be, where you think you'd like to go. - James Baldwin

We are living in unprecedented times. The hatred that fueled violence on that fateful day in 1963 is festering today more than 60 years later. It is a part of our story, it is a part of who we are. So, what are we going to do about it?

...All I'm trying to do all the time is just to open people up so they can feel themselves, and let themselves be open to somebody else.
That is all. That's it. - Nina Simone

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Nina Simone is embedded in the characters Peaches, Sarah, Sephronia, Sweet Thing and Eunice, a celebration of Black womanhood, survivors of American terrorism from slavery till today. The songs they sing remind lovers of life and freedom not to shy from the fight, nor the yearning to be human beings, but to lean fiercely arms locked into all that is life-affirming.

Deepest gratitude to Nina Simone, Lorraine Hansberry, Angela Davis, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Meshell Ndegeocello and Tamar Kali for fertilizing the seeds of this production.



Nina Simone, outspoken, revolutionary artist with friend, writer and activist Lorraine Hansberry, and SNCC Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members Avon Rollins and Marion Barry. Photo: courtesy Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The New York Public Library.



Nina Simone with friend, writer and activist James Baldwin. Her social/political circle was made up of these revolutionaries including Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael), Langston Hughes, Miriam Makeba, Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz. Photo: Bernard Gotfryd courtesy Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The New York Public Library.



Nina Simone in her home after returning to the United States from a self-imposed exile. Photo: David Becker, Los Angeles Times

Nina Simone A Timeline Of Her Life and Career

Compiled by Fiona Kyle, Literary Manager and Artistic Associate



(Photo Credit: David Redfern/Redferns)

Nina Simone was a renowned American singer, pianist, songwriter, and civil rights activist. Her music seamlessly blended classical, jazz, blues, gospel, and pop, earning her the title “High Priestess of Soul.”

• **February 21, 1933:** Eunice Kathleen Waymon was born in Tryon, North Carolina, the sixth of eight children.

• **1936-1937:** She began playing piano around the age of 3 or 4, and displayed remarkable musical ability.

• **1940:** She started formal piano lessons with Muriel Mazzanovich (Miss Mazzy), an English piano teacher who recognized and nurtured her classical abilities. She practiced up to eight hours a day, playing Bach, Brahms, Debussy, among many others.

• **1950:** She graduated as valedictorian from Allen High School for Girls in Asheville, North Carolina.

She enrolled at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, studying piano with a focus on classical music. She supported herself by working as an accompanist and giving piano lessons.

• **1951:** She applied to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, hoping to pursue a career as a classical pianist, and her family relocated there to be closer to her. She was denied admission, which she believed was due to racial discrimination.

• **1954:** She adopted the stage name Nina Simone when she began playing at the Midtown Bar & Grill in Atlantic City, New Jersey. “Nina” (meaning “little girl” in Spanish) was a nickname from her then-boyfriend, and “Simone” was inspired by French actress Simone Signoret. She used the name to hide her nightclub performances from her family, who might disapprove of her playing “the devil’s music.”

• **Mid-1950s:** While performing at nightclubs, Simone began blending classical piano techniques with jazz, blues, and pop, influenced by the demands of her audience. Her unique style quickly gained attention and helped establish her as a versatile musician.



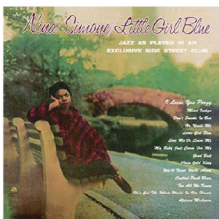
Nina, aged 8, in Tryon, NC (Photo Credit: Saving Places / Nina Simone Project - Tryon, NC)



Advertisement in the Atlantic City Press

• **1957:** Simone recorded her debut album, *Little Girl Blue*, featuring a blend of jazz, blues, and classical music. It would be released several years later.

• **1958:** She briefly married Donald Ross, but the marriage ended shortly afterward due to differences in their aspirations and lifestyles.



• **1959:** Signed with Bethlehem Records and released her debut album, *Little Girl Blue*. The album included her first hit, "I Loves You, Porgy," a song by George and Ira Gershwin from their opera *Porgy & Bess*, which became her breakout success.

She signed then with Colpix Records and released several albums soon after, including *Nina Simone at Town Hall* and *The Amazing Nina Simone*.

• **1961:** Married Andrew Stroud, a New York City police detective who became her manager. Their marriage was tumultuous, marked by physical and emotional abuse. The couple moved to Mount Vernon, New York.

• **1962:** Simone gave birth to her daughter, Lisa Celeste Stroud, in Mount Vernon. The home became a hub for intellectual and activist gatherings, often hosting influential figures from the Civil Rights Movement. They lived near to Malcolm X, and their children became close friends.

• **1963:** In response to the assassination of Medgar Evers and following the tragic 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, which claimed the lives of Carol Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins, four young Black girls, Simone wrote "Mississippi Goddam." The song, released in 1964, became an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement.

• **1964:** Simone signed with Philips Records, allowing her to record songs reflecting her African American heritage. She released the album *Broadway - Blues - Ballads*.

• **1965:** Performed "Mississippi Goddam" and other civil rights songs in Selma, Alabama, during the historic marches led by Martin Luther King Jr. and other activists, further solidifying her role as a voice for justice.

She released the albums *I Put a Spell on You*, *Pastel Blues*, and *Let It All Out*.

• **1967:** She released the albums *High Priestess of Soul*, *Nina Simone Sings the Blues*, and *Silk & Soul*.

• **1969:** She released the album *Black Gold*, featuring the song "To Be Young, Gifted and Black," which she wrote in honor of her dear friend, activist-playwright Lorraine Hansberry, who had died in 1965.

Simone left Stroud after enduring years of domestic abuse. The separation was a turning point in her life, but it also left her financially vulnerable, as Stroud had managed most of her career and finances.



Nina Simone and Andrew Stroud.
(Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Estate of Alfred Wertheimer)

PROGRAM FEATURE

- **1970:** Simone left the United States, disillusioned by racism, civil rights struggles, and tax issues. She initially moved to Barbados.
- **1971:** Simone moved to Liberia for a short time at the invitation of friends. Simone described this period as one of emotional and spiritual renewal, though it was also marked by instability.
- **1973:** She relocated to Switzerland, then later to the Netherlands and France, as she searched for stability in her personal life and career. Her finances and mental health declined during this time due to unresolved tax issues and her struggles with bipolar disorder.
- **1974:** Simone released *It Is Finished*, her final album with RCA Victor.
- **1982:** Simone released *Fodder on My Wings*, recorded in France. The album reflected her personal struggles, financial woes, and the isolation she felt while living abroad.
- **1987:** Simone's career was revived when her song "My Baby Just Cares for Me" was used in a Chanel No. 5 perfume commercial, leading to renewed interest in her music.
- **1990s:** She settled permanently in Carry-le-Rouet, France, near Marseille, where she lived a reclusive life but continued to perform occasionally.
- **1993:** Simone published her autobiography, *I Put a Spell on You*, offering an unflinching look at her life, career, and struggles.
She released her final album, *A Single Woman*.
- **2000:** Simone was the recipient of a Grammy Hall of Fame Award for her rendition of "I Loves You, Porgy."
- **2003:** Simone was awarded an honorary degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, which had denied her admittance earlier in her life.
- **April 21, 2003:** Passed away at her home in Carry-le-Rouet at the age of 70.
- **2018:** Her childhood home in Tryon, North Carolina, was designated a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
Simone was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- **2019:** "Mississippi Goddam" was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Recording Registry for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."



Nina Simone, left, at Wilhelmina "Coo Coo" Tubman's birthday party. (Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Parker family collection, Monrovia, Liberia)



Nina Simone performing in Hamburg, 1997 (Photo Credit: PA Images)

ACTING



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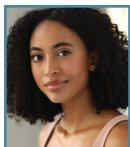
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*The bar & café are always open at least 2 hours
ahead of performances. Check online for details.*

CAST

SOJOURNER (Sephronia/Nina) (she/her) is currently in the cast of *Hadestown* on Broadway! Other credits include *Elsbeth* on CBS, an upcoming feature - *The Snare*, NBC's "Scene in Color Series," and Hollywood Bowl's *Beauty and the Beast*. Sojourner worked



as a recording artist for Walt Disney Records' DCappella and premiered with the group on American Idol, Disney Channel, Freeform, and *The Incredibles 2* movie soundtrack. She is currently recording her debut folk album and continues to write and publish poetry. Her poetry was recently published in *Black Love Letters*, with a foreword by John Legend (available at Barnes & Noble and bookstores nation-wide). NYU Tisch. Grateful to God, family, and the opportunity to tell this story about one of her biggest musical inspirations. sojournerbrown.com [@sojournerbrown](https://www.instagram.com/sojournerbrown)

HILLARY JONES (Sweet Thing/Nina) (she/her) Can we shift the energy in this industry for the better? - a question at the center of Hillary Jones' mission statement. Born and raised in chocolate city Washington D.C, Hillary started her journey as an artist at Duke



Ellington School of the Arts and went on to graduate from the SUNY Purchase BFA acting conservatory. Since then she has trained her breath and body in Europe, worked on-camera and on-stage in projects ranging from national commercials to her work at the National Theatre as the lead in *Imagine*. Her skill set is diverse in that she also works as a Movement choreographer, Fight coordinator, Writer, Creative director, and Activist. Her next strides will be in creating film and theatre with a focus on working with artists who can Disrupt, Change and heal our industry.

KENITA R. MILLER (Sarah/Nina) (she/her) is thrilled to be back at Geva!!! Broadway: *For Colored Girls* (Lady In Red/Tony Nomination, Drama Desk & Drama League), *Come From Away* (Hannah), *Once On This Island* (Mama Euralie/Grammy Nom.), *The Color Purple* (Celie), *Xanadu* (Erato/Kira understudy). Off-



Broadway: *Dessa Rose* (Dessa Rose Standby), *Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Granny) (Encores!), *Bella: an American Tall Tale* (Miss Cabbagestalk/Mama), *Merrily We Roll Along*

(Encores!), *Wild Party* (Encores!), *Langston In Harlem* (Zora Neale Hurston - Drama Desk Nom./Audelco Award), *Working* (Drama Desk Award), Avenue Q. Regional: *Parade* (Minnie McKnight, Angela/2014 Barrymore Award Outstanding Featured Actress), *Once On This Island* (Timoune/Mama Euralie), *Ragtime* (Sarah). Film/TV: *Tick Tick Boom*, *Sesame Street*, *Bull*, *Hostages*, *Blacklist*. Band: The Hawtplates Instagram: [@eminanina81](https://www.instagram.com/eminanina81) [@thehawtplates](https://www.facebook.com/thehawtplates) Facebook: Kenita Miller

X'ENE SKY (Eunice/Pianist/Nina) (she/her) is a classically trained pianist, vocalist and composer from Los Angeles, California. She has studied at the Highschool of Performing and Visual Arts and holds degrees in piano performance and musicology from The University



of Texas at Austin. A descendant of the musical legacy of both Nina Simone and Beethoven, her teachers include Kana Mimaki, Betty Mallad, Nancy Garrett, Sophia Gilmon, Tracy Satterfiled, Lindsay Kesselman, and Micaela Tobin. She has performed with the Houston Grand Opera, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and most recently was the titular performer in Justen LeRoy's opera, *X'ene's Witness*. X'ene's compositional work focuses on ritual, repetition, slavery and the environment. She is currently working on her own opera *GOAT* and a visual album, *Vengeance* expected Fall 2025.

GARNET WILLIAMS (Peaches/Nina) (she/they) is an actor, writer, and singer originally from Atlanta, GA. Some favorite roles include Bombalurina in *Cats: The Jellicle Ball*, City Weed in *Brooklyn*, Pythio in *Head Over Heels*, and a co-star on *American Horror Story NYC*. For Lucile.



CREATIVE & ARTISTIC TEAM

CHRISTINA HAM (Playwright) (she/her) Christina Ham's plays have been developed and produced both nationally and internationally with the Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, Center Theater Group, The Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Goodman Theater, Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Tony Award winning producer Arielle Tepper Madover off-Broadway at Theater Row, South Africa's The Market Theatre, the Tokyo International

Arts Festival among many others. Her theater for young audiences play *Four Little Girls: Birmingham: 1963* was directed by Tony Award winning actress Phylicia Rashad and performed in front of a sold-out audience at the Kennedy Center to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. It was simultaneously presented in 47 states across the country and streamed worldwide to commemorate the bombing with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Attorney General Eric Holder conducting the post-show discussion in Birmingham. Her theater for young audiences musical *Ruby!: The Story of Ruby Bridges* was the best-selling show in the history of St. Paul's SteppingStone Theatre. Christina is a two-time recipient of a McKnight Fellowship in Playwriting and a Jerome Fellowship from the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, the Marianne Murphy Women & Philanthropy Award in Playwriting, a MacDowell Colony Artist Residency, and a previous nominee for Center Theater Group's Richard E. Sherwood Award for Distinguished Emerging Theater Artist. She has received commissions from the Kennedy Center, The Guthrie Theater, and Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, among many others. Her plays are published by Dramatic Publishing, Heinemann, PlayScripts, Inc., Smith and Kraus, and Oberon Books. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California and holds an MFA in Playwriting from The UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television where she was a Graduate Opportunity Fellow. Christina is an Affiliated Writer at the Playwrights' Center where she is a member of its Advisory Council. She is a member of the WGAWest, The Dramatists Guild of America, The Kilroys, and the Playwrights Union. American Theatre magazine named her one the top 20 most-produced playwrights of the 2018-19 season. She was a Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Pillsbury House Theatre. She was a Supervising Producer for the Emmy Award winning series *Westworld* starring Evan Rachel Wood, Thandie Newton, Jeffrey Wright, Aaron Paul, Ed Harris, and Tessa Thompson for HBO.

CHARLOTTE BRATHWAITE (Director) (she/her/we) is a creator, director, and producer of original genre-defying works that illuminate the realities and dreams of those whose stories have been marginalized, silenced and ignored. Her trans-disciplinary inquiry manifests as immersive gatherings of color, music, and she has collaborated with noted artists such as Meshell Ndegeochello, Jacqueline Woodson, adrienne

maree brown, Justin Hicks, Ayesha Jordan, Peter Sellars, Kyle Abraham and Malick Welli amongst others. Recipient of major grants, awards and fellowships including Doris Duke, United States Artists, Art Matters, Creative Capital and the Princess Grace, her works have been presented across the globe in North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Co-Founder of Forgotten Paradise Projects in Dakar, Senegal. MFA Yale University. charlottebrathwaite.com

JUSTIN HICKS (Music Director) (he/him) is a songwriter, vocalist, and sound artist who has collaborated with numerous musicians and artists, including Abigail DeVille, Kaneza Schaal, Cauleen Smith, Meshell Ndegeocello, Hilton Als, Darius Jones, Steffani Jemison, Charlotte Brathwaite, Sunder Ganglani, June Cross, Janani Balasubramanian, and Toshi Reagon. Spanning conceptual art, alternative jazz, experimental opera, avant-garde theater, sound installation, and design, his work has been presented by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The Public Theater, Baryshnikov Art Center, Festival steirischer herbst (Graz, AT), Symphony Space, JACK, Koko London, The Bushwick Starr, and in the permanent collection at The Albertinum Museum in Dresden, DE. Hicks was a member of Kara Walker's 6-8 Months Space and holds a culinary diploma from ICE in New York City.

KENT BARRETT (Scenic & Lighting Design) (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary designer and artist. Kent currently teaches design and technology at Dickinson College. He is a former company member with The Wooster Group, an NEA Grant recipient, and instructor at MIT. Kent is proud to be a longtime collaborator with Charlotte Brathwaite. A prolific technologist and designer, Kent's work has been seen at venues such as The Park Avenue Armory, Harlem Stage, La MaMa, Signature, The Public, The Brooklyn Lyceum, and Lincoln Center as well as internationally. In addition to his work in theater, dance, and performance, Kent has also collaborated widely on independent films, art installations, and with architectural lighting firms. Kent is one of the founding members and Co-Artistic Director of Valley Traction Arts Collective - an experimental performance group creating work in, for, and about the Cumberland Valley.

MARSHA GINSBERG (Costume Design) (she/her) is a visual artist and stage designer working between performance, opera and photo/installation formats. She received her MFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and BFA from the

WHO'S WHO

Cooper Union School of Art with post-grad studies at the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. She has designed spaces and clothes for live performances in major theaters and museums in New York City, and regionally throughout the United States. Internationally — work in Germany, Switzerland, France, Greece, UAE, including Festival D'Automn Paris, HKW Berlin; Opera Basel; Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar; Opéra National de Bordeaux; Athens Epidaurus Festival, etc. Current: *Primary Trust*, by Eboni Booth at Roundabout, Laura Pels, NYC; *Treemonisha* by Scott Joplin with orchestrations and prologue/epilogue by composer Damien Sneed, Opera Theater of St. Louis. *Letters from Max* by Sarah Ruhl at Signature Theater, NYC; Benjamin Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* in Repertory at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Theater, NYC. Grants/Awards: 2023 Obie Award for the Creative Team for Sanaz Toosi's *English*.

YATTA (aka. ricky sallay zoker) (Sound Design & Composition) (they/them) is a Sierra Leonean-American composer, vocalist, and multimedia artist. Their approach to sound and performance is characterized by improvisation, sampling, and spirituality. Their debut EP, *Spirit Said Yes!*, planted their stake in NYC's experimental music scene, performing at venues like MoMA and The Kitchen. *WAHALA*, their second album, served as the score for *An Episode: Ricky's Room*, a solo theatrical production commissioned by The Shed. In 2020, YATTA released *Dial Up*, a collaborative album with Moor Mother, which the duo premiered at The Getty. This year, YATTA debuted *PALM WINE*, named one of *The Wire's Best Albums of 2024*. ricky's compositions have been featured in award-winning films like *Nanny* and *Seeking Mavis Beacon*. They hold an MFA in Music/Sound from Bard College.

CASSIE J. WILLIAMS (Hair and Wig Design) Design credits include *Arms and the Man* (Theatre Row), *Otherworld* (Delaware Theatre Company), *Glimmerglass Opera Festival 2021 Summer Season*, *No Cowards in Our Band* (Syracuse Opera and WCNY), *Deathtrap* (The Cape Playhouse), *Ragtime* (Theatre Under the Stars). Co-Design credits include *Sally and Tom* (Public Theatre), *Love All* (La Jolla Playhouse). Associate Design credits include *Our Town* (Broadway), *Purlie Victorious* (Broadway), *Once Upon One More Time* (Broadway), *Be More Chill* (Broadway) (London). Education: BFA Costume Design at State University of New York at Fredonia

AUDREY ELAINE HAILES (Assistant Director/ Movement) (she/we) is a movement-theatre artist based up and down the Eastern Seaboard and currently works closely with Maria Bauman as associate artistic director of MBDance. Audrey has had the privilege of collaborative and performative relationships with Nina Angela Mercer, Paloma McGregor, Ebony Golden, Okwui Okpokwasili, Ani Taj, among others and has served as movement consultant for institutions including New York University Abu Dhabi, The Kennedy Center and Atlantic Theatre Co. Our own choreography has been commissioned by Gibney Dance, Dance Theatre Etc, Movement Research, BAAD! and New York Live Arts.

KEVIN GREGORY DWYER (Production Stage Manager) (he/him) Previously at Geva: *How I Learned What I Learned*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *A Christmas Carol 2023*, and *Frida...A Self Portrait*. Regional: *Bandstand*, *Jersey Boys*, *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*, *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). Boston: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *Betrayal*, *Private Lives*, *Captors* (Huntington Theatre Company). Proud AEA Member and Emerson College Alum.

KATE DUPREY (Assistant Stage Manager) (she/her) is delighted to be back backstage at Geva. Past credits with Geva include *The Color Purple*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Constellations*, *Cry It Out* (ASM), *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.

STAFF LEADERSHIP

ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON (*Artistic Director*)



(she/her) joined Geva as Artistic Director in 2022, to launch the theatre's 50th 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 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.

JAMES HASKINS (*Executive Director*) (he/



him) is honored to serve as Geva Theatre's Executive Director alongside Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson, and Geva's Board and staff. Prior to coming to Geva, 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

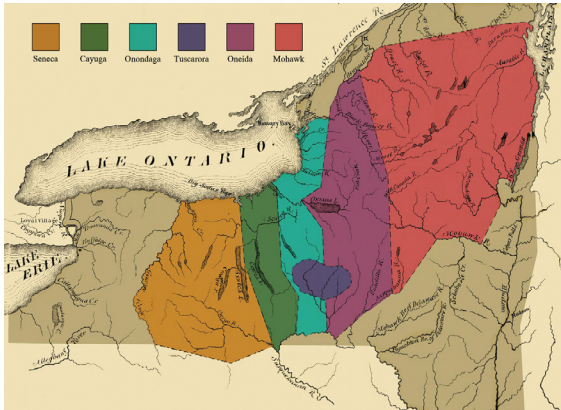
Board of the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia as Chair of the Barrymore Awards Oversight Committee. He subsequently moved into the Executive Director position of the Theatre Alliance before joining the Wilma. As a theater artist, James acted in many productions before turning to theater administration 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, James 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.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

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.

Geva Theatre 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 Connectivity 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.

Geva Theatre's 2024/2025 Student Matinee series!

Teachers: Bring your students to an exceptional, professional school-day performance; we'll make it easy, enriching, and fun. When you make a Student Matinee reservation, you're buying more than a ticket; you're choosing a complete educational journey for your students.



Every Student Matinee reservation includes:

- A teacher preview ticket
- 1 complimentary chaperone ticket for every 15 student tickets purchased
- A Discovery Guide (available in both English and Spanish) curated by Geva artist-educators, packed with information about the play, relevant context, suggested discussion questions, and related activities
- A post-show talkback with members of the cast

The Passport Program provides free tickets to RCSD groups and charter schools within the city limits of Rochester. Passport tickets are limited and available on a first come, first served basis.

Visit www.gevatheatre.org/education/ for complete details!

"I find that teaching hard subjects is made easier by coming to it through the arts first. The Discovery guide was incredible. We used it, almost in its entirety. It provided the perfect background information to discuss and prepare them for what they would see. Geva does a phenomenal job of helping to convey the emotional and intellectual accessibility and stimulation of Geva's productions for young people."



"My students were mesmerized and blown away! They are still talking about it days later - particularly the use of movement in storytelling."

"We are a social justice school and having opportunities to bring our students to Geva's shows fits with our mission. Some of our students have been to a live theater production. At the talkback with the cast, the first three hands raised were from my school! This was an invaluable experience."



Geva Theatre's Student Matinees are supported by: William & Sheila Konar Foundation, ESL Charitable Foundation, Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation, Donald F. & Maxine B. Davison Foundation, Rubens Family Foundation, Joseph & Irene Skalny Charitable Trust, Guido & Ellen Palma Foundation, Robert and Susan Touhsaent, Richard & Joan Fenton, Elizabeth Rennert, Cornell/Weinstein Family Foundation, Dr. Tomás C. Hernandez & Dr. Keith S. Reas, and Kathleen and Alfred Laitenberg

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