

Geva
THEATRE

2023-2024 GEVA THEATRE

IMPACT REPORT

Elizabeth Williamson | Artistic Director

James Haskins | Executive Director



Rosé in *The Wizard of Oz*. Carnetha Anthony, Chuckie Benson, Nubia Monks, Nambi Mwassa, and Dennis W. Spears in *The Color Purple*. Kia Nicole Boyer, Danny Gardner, and Awesta Zarif in *Dial M for Murder*. Photos by Ron Heerkens Jr.

INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

James Haskins began his tenure as Geva's Executive Director in January of 2024 after a nation-wide search. Haskins and Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson restructured the Senior Leadership Team to elevate the position of General Manager and bring Education, Engagement, and Access under the umbrella of Connectivity. When announcing the 2024-25 Season, they introduced the One Geva philosophy by announcing a season model that incorporates the same commitment to Artistic Courage and Excellence in all performances in all spaces, including all experiences and encounters with Geva whether within the brick walls of the theatre building itself or beyond the building and into the Rochester region. After 27 years of service, Alana Sansone retired from her position as Geva's Director of Finance and Operations. Gerianne Puskas served as Interim Development Director during the search for a permanent member of Senior Leadership.

ARTISTIC & LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS

Elizabeth Williamson's sophomore season as Artistic Director continued to build on her first and was filled with bold theatricality, exciting new voices, and amazing partnerships that celebrated diverse experiences and the full breadth of our shared humanity.

AN EXCITING SEASON FOR "SOPHOMORES": In addition to it being Williamson's second season, Geva invited back several incredible artists for the second time in Season 51. Director Jeffrey L. Page returned to direct *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* after his turn as Director/Choreographer for the *New York Times'* Critic's Pick production of *Ain't Misbehavin'* in Season 50. The season ended with Director Daniel J. Bryant returning to Geva, after his production of *How to Catch Creation* from Season 49, to direct the co-production of *The Color Purple* with Theatre Latté Da.

INTRODUCING NEW COLLABORATORS: Artistic Director, Elizabeth Williamson, introduced two of her long-standing collaborators to the Geva Theatre community: Director Rachel Alderman and acclaimed Playwright/Poet Dan O'Brien. Alderman, who served with Williamson at Hartford Stage, directed the sumptuous co-production of *Dial M for Murder* with Dallas Theatre Center; Alderman will continue make an artistic home at Geva, and she'll direct in 2024-25 and 2025-26. Geva produced the World Premiere of O'Brien's poetic and deeply resonant play, *Newtown*, which explored the moments before and following the horrific massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. His powerful work was sponsored by The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation's Theatre Visions program; that sponsorship is awarded to only one American play per year for excellence in playwriting. Geva was honored to partner with the Mental Health Association of Rochester for the first time to provide pre- and post-show support for audience members at every performance from their staff of trained mental health advocates, as well as to support the cast, creative team, and production crew. Directed by Williamson, the production featured three Broadway veterans including Max Chernin,

Kellie Overbey, and Jonathan Walker, as well as Off-Broadway's Kate Abbruzzese. Williamson continued her creative partnerships with frequent Broadway Sound Designer André Pluess, who made his Geva debut, as well as Broadway and Off-Broadway's Costume Designer Ilona Somogyi, and interdisciplinary artist and Scenic Designer Nick Vaughan.

CO-PRODUCTION AND PRESENTING PARTNERSHIPS: Geva's season featured many partnerships with other regional theatres. Traditional co-productions help regional theatres share financial resources; presenting productions produced by other theatres helps Geva share stories that resonate with all communities. Geva was thrilled to remount Vanessa Severo's powerful one-woman show *Frida... A Self Portrait*, directed by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park's Associate Artistic Director, Joanie Schultz, which had received productions in Missouri, Oregon, and Ohio, before joining us in Rochester. Jeffrey L. Page's production of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* was produced in association with Philadelphia Theatre Company, where it ran in 2023. The first presented production came to Geva's Fielding Stage from the Boston Playwrights' Theatre: celebrated playwright Melina Lopez collaborated with renowned actor and educator Maurice Emmanuel Parent, and BPT's Artistic Director, Megan Sandberg-Zakian, on the moving solo show *Mr. Parent*. The play followed Parent's experiences as an educator in the Boston public school system, which resonated deeply with Rochester area teachers who attended. Geva had previously presented work from Ithaca's Kitchen Theatre Company, including Llyod Suh's *The Chinese Lady* in Season 49, and was proud to present Pulitzer Prize-winner Martyna Majok's play *Sanctuary City*. Rochester, NY is a *Sanctuary City*, and it was an honor to share the experiences of DREAMers and immigrants on our Fielding Stage. At the end of the 51st Season, Geva was thrilled to partner with Theatre Latté Da in Minneapolis, MN on *The Color Purple*. Theatre Latté Da is known for their intimate and chamber reimaginations of classic musicals, and we were pleased to be connected to them by our Artist in Residence, and Twin Cities-resident, Harrison David Rivers.

THREE MUSICALS: Capitalizing on the success of musicals in Season 50, Geva again programmed three musicals on the Wilson Stage. Geva launched the 51st Season with RuPaul's Drag Race's Rosé starring in *The Wizard of Oz*. She shared several reels on her Instagram of the process and production to over 80 million followers. *The Wizard of Oz* also featured Broadway's Savy Jackson as Dorothy and Jennifer Sanchez as the Almira Gulch/The Wicked Witch, local actor/dancer Thomas Warfield as Professor Marvel/The Wizard, and a company of mostly trans* and nonbinary performers in a queer-reimagination of the iconic family favorite. Jeffrey L. Page's production of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* transformed the Wilson Stage: Scenic and Lighting Designer Thom Weaver worked closely with Geva's production team to bring bar seating on stage. Weaver and Page's vision brought Geva patrons to the intimate Emerson's Bar & Grill, close enough to touch Lady Day herself. The production starred the internationally renowned vocalist Laurin Talese, a United States Cultural Ambassador with American Music Abroad - an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Geva closed the season with *The Color Purple*, based on the novel by Pulitzer Prize-winner Alice Walker, and featuring book by Pulitzer Prize-winner Marsha Norman. Daniel J. Bryant's production starred lauded actor and playwright Nubia Monks as Celie, Broadway's Angela Wildflower as Shug, and featured Music Direction by Sanford Moore, the award-winning founder of jazz ensemble Moore by Four.

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE: Geva continued the Artist in Residence program, which began in Season 50, wherein Geva engages a BIPOC artist for a two-year residency. In the Artist in Residence's first year, Geva features their work onstage, commissions a new work, and supports the development of a work-in-process. Our Artist in Residence program firmly centers BIPOC artists in the decision-making process at Geva by including them in Senior Leadership, Strategic Planning, and in Season Planning. Noted standup comedian, writer, and actor, Baron Vaughn, who starred in Netflix's longest running series *Grace & Frankie*, began his residency in 2022. He immediately got to work by curating Geva's first "comedy-in-development" series *The Work Out Room*, which allows comics to "work out" their new material with a live audience. He launched the series himself and identified his Geva commission in the process: a solo show about his experience of fatherhood. He used the second leg of *The Work Out Room* to continue to explore his upcoming commission. The third installment of *The Work Out Room* introduced Rochester to Emmy-nominated Kiran Deol, whose special *JoySuck* debuted on Comedy Dynamics and Amazon Prime Video.

IN DEVELOPMENT: In advance of its World Premiere, Geva hosted a developmental workshop of Dan O'Brien's *Newtown*. Geva took advantage of a rare moment in the entertainment industry: due to the SAG-AFTRA strike, many wonderful actors, typically booked for film/TV, were available to join us in Rochester. These actors included Kelly AuCoin, known for his roles in *Billions*, *The Americans*, and *The Bold Type*, and AnnaSophia Robb, who made her debut in *Because of Winn-Dixie*, followed by star turns in Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and The CW's series *The Carrie Diaries* as the young Carrie Bradshaw. After thirteen seasons of the beloved adaptation by Mark Cuddy and Gregg Coffin, Geva commissioned Artist in Residence Harrison David Rivers to adapt a new *Christmas Carol* to unveil in the 2024-25 Season. We also engaged Dramaturg Sally Lobel, who co-adapted in collaboration with Rivers, to help bring in a Disability Justice lens to the adaptation, reframing the story to imagine Tim Cratchit for our times.

SEASON AT A GLANCE



The Wizard of Oz

(By L. Frank Baum; Music & Lyrics by Harold Arlen & Ey Harburg)

August 30 - October 1, 2023

Frida...A Self Portrait

(Written and Performed by Vanessa Severo)

October 17 - November 12, 2023

Mr. Parent

(By Melinda Lopez with Maurice Emmanuel Parent; Conceived with Megan Sandberg-Zakian. A Boston Playwrights' Theatre Production)

November 1 - November 19, 2023

A Christmas Carol

(Charles Dickens; Adapted by Mark Cuddy;

Music/Lyrics by Gregg Coffin)

November 28 - December 30, 2023

Dial M for Murder

(Adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher from the original by Frederick Knott)

January 16 - February 11, 2024

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill

(By Lanie Robertson. Produced in association with Philadelphia Theatre Company)

March 5 - March 31, 2024

Newtown

(By Dan O'Brien)

April 16 - May 12, 2024

Sanctuary City

(By Martyna Majok)

March 20 - April 7, 2024

The Color Purple

(By Alice Walker; Book by Marsha Norman; Music & Lyrics by Brenda Russel, Allee Willis, & Stephen Bray; Co-production with Theatre Latté Da)

May 28 - June 29, 2024

The Work Out Room?

(Series Curated by Baron Vaughn)

Dates -with Baron Vaughn

Dates - with Kiran

BY THE NUMBERS

PRODUCTIONS AND ATTENDANCE:

Number of Productions	9
Number of Performances & Events	323
Number of Tickets	89,642
Number of Subscribers	6,383
Subscriber Renewal Rate	81%

DONORS:

Number of Individual Donors	1,284
Number of Institutional Donors	159
Donor Renewal Rate	72%
% of Subscriber Households Donating	18%

EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Full-time, Part-time & Seasonal Employees	66
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FINANCIAL RESULTS

OPERATING RESULTS: Geva Theatre's Fiscal Year 2024 budget (August 1, 2023-July 31, 2024) shows total revenue of \$6,869,586 and expense of \$8,283,245 resulting in a change in net assets of (\$1,413,659). The organization's operating deficit was covered by cash reserves, as per a Board authorized restructuring of investments at the end of FY2023. No endowment funds were impacted.

Geva continued to experience inconsistent post-pandemic audience behaviors in season subscription and single ticket sales, similar to those seen at peer theatres across the country. Overall, FY24 earned revenues were up by 3% over FY23 primarily due to strong single ticket sales for certain productions.

FY24 contributed income decreased by 5% from FY23 as a result of significant transitions in Executive and Development staffing.

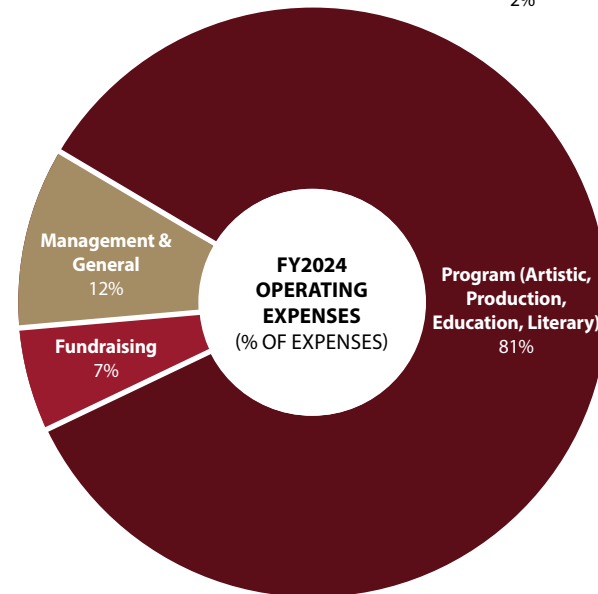
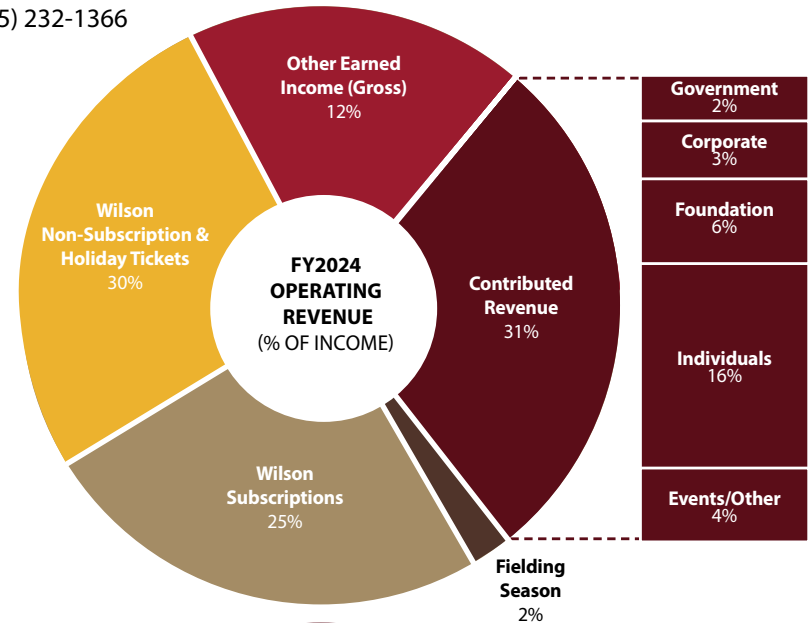
The draw on cash reserves resulted in a 13% reduction in net assets, while investments grew by 5%.

Geva management continued to carefully monitor expenses to ensure adequate staffing and resources to produce a full season of programming, while seeking out cost cutting measures with minimal impact to operations.

FY2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31,	TOTALS		
	2023	2024	
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash, Cash Equivalents, CD's, and Current Investments	\$ 3,406,042	\$ 1,854,259	
Accounts, Contributions and Grants Receivable, Net	\$ 437,978	\$ 423,889	
Prepaid Expenses and Other Current Assets	\$ 222,206	\$ 254,270	
Total Current Assets	\$ 4,066,226	\$ 2,532,418	
Property and Equipment, Net	\$ 7,661,206	\$ 7,402,779	
Pledges Receivable, Net of Discounts and Allowances	\$ 129,965	\$ 136,000	
Right-of-Use Asset - Operating Lease	\$ 753,895	\$ 711,973	
Investments	\$ 3,221,929	\$ 3,396,776	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 15,833,221	\$ 14,179,946	
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 235,594	\$ 324,370	
Deferred Revenue, Net of Deferred Expense	\$ 1,869,616	\$ 1,703,198	
Current Portion of Long Term Debt	\$ 51,671	\$ 125,495	
Current Portion of Operating Lease Liability	\$ 25,727	\$ 28,473	
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 2,182,608	\$ 2,181,536	
Long-Term Liabilities	\$ 2,533,198	\$ 2,294,655	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 4,715,806	\$ 4,476,191	
NET ASSETS	\$ 11,117,415	\$ 9,703,755	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 15,833,221	\$ 14,179,946	
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31,	TOTALS		
	2023	2024	
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Earned Revenue including Investment Activity	\$ 4,472,129	\$ 4,616,350	
Contributions, Grants and Support	\$ 2,401,176	\$ 2,253,236	
TOTAL REVENUE, SUPPORT AND RELEASES	\$ 6,873,305	\$ 6,869,586	
EXPENSES			
Program Services	\$ 6,974,313	\$ 6,728,731	
Management & General	\$ 1,064,531	\$ 992,186	
Fundraising	\$ 445,612	\$ 562,328	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 8,457,456	\$ 8,283,245	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ (1,584,151)	\$ (1,413,659)	
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ 12,701,566	\$ 11,117,414	
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 11,117,415	\$ 9,703,755	



CONNECTIVITY AT GEVA

As a component of the One Geva vision for the future, Engagement, Education, and Access programming now live under the umbrella of Connectivity, providing opportunities for community members, students and patrons with (dis)abilities to engage with Geva programming inside the theatre and beyond.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Geva Theatre's **Education Programming and initiatives** reach a diverse student population from urban, suburban, and rural schools. These programs aim to use theatre as an educational tool, providing access to learning opportunities for all students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

STUDENT MATINEE SERIES (AGES 6-18)

The **Student Matinee Series** curates productions that offer significant educational value for student audiences. Each performance is supplemented by comprehensive resources including discovery guides, interactive workshops, and talkbacks. This integrated approach ensures a holistic educational journey, allowing students to immerse themselves in the artistic process and connect meaningfully with the material. Through the RCSD Passport Program, Geva provides nearly 2,000 free tickets to Rochester City School District students, ensuring that they can attend live theatre performances and benefit from the full range of educational programming.

SUMMER ACADEMY

Geva's **Summer Academy** is a five-week conservatory for youth aged 12-18, focusing on immersive training in Shakespeare, musical theatre, and other dramatic arts. Guided by both local and national faculty, the program culminates in a showcase performance.



Photo by Ron Heerkens

COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

Geva maintains a long-standing partnership with SUNY Brockport and other local colleges, offering internships and educational collaborations. Internships provide practical experience in various theatre disciplines and prepare students for careers in the performing arts while strengthening Geva's connections with academic institutions.

ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

ROC GEVA PASS

The **ROC Geva Pass**, in partnership with the City of Rochester, was introduced in January 2024 and provides 200 complimentary tickets per production for Geva's Subscription Series to residents in specific Rochester zip codes (14621, 14605, 14608, 14611, 14619, 14606, 14613, 14615, and 14616). This initiative ensures broader community access to live theatre. All ROC Geva Passes for the inaugural season were completely sold out.



INDIGENOUS THEATRE SYMPOSIUM: CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES

The **Indigenous Theatre Symposium: Centering Indigenous Voices** was a free, two-day event presented in partnership with Friends of Ganondagan and RIT/National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) on June 27 & 28, 2024. The symposium featured panel discussions, performances, and workshops that celebrated and amplified Indigenous perspectives in theatre, fostering a greater appreciation of Indigenous storytelling and cultural heritage. The Symposium was presented in tandem with performances of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's production of *The Mush Hole* at NTID and was livestreamed through HowlRound Theatre Commons.



See the full symposium event at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLv4a59hf6UNdEEvzzLvtiPjakMYgayK9s>

MONDAYS AT GEVA

On Monday evenings, **Mondays at Geva** transforms the theatre's lobby and café into vibrant spaces showcasing local visual artists, performers, musicians, and speakers. This free series invites the community to engage with local talent and explore diverse perspectives, providing a dynamic complement to the theatre's mainstage productions.

ESSIE CALHOUN DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS AWARD

Geva Theatre annually presents the **Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Award** to honor individuals or organizations that promote diversity in the arts. Named after Essie Calhoun-McDavid, a retired Chief Diversity Officer at Eastman Kodak Company and a passionate advocate for diversity, the award highlights contributions to cultural inclusivity and artistic expression. 2024 recipients included Gateway Music Festival, audio describer Lisa Helan Hoffman (posthumous), Monroe County Board of Elections Recruiter/Voter Registration Coordinator Annette Ramos, and Rochester

Philharmonic Orchestra trumpeter Herbert Smith. The Essie Calhoun Diversity Award in the Arts was designed by Rochester glass artist Nancy Gong, and symbolizes Geva's commitment to fostering diverse artistic voices.

GEVA INSIGHTS

Our **Geva Insights** program provides a platform for post-performance conversations with regional thought leaders, experts, and community members during the run of each Wilson and Fielding Stage productions. These discussions delve into the themes presented in the plays, encouraging deeper reflection and community dialogue. Recordings of these conversations are available on Geva's YouTube channel, extending their impact beyond the theatre. The program reinforces Geva's role as a cultural hub and strengthens constituent connections within the Rochester region.

ACCESS PROGRAMMING

Accessibility is paramount at Geva as we want all of our patrons to enjoy our performances and engagement activities. Geva is dedicated to making the live theatre experience and related events accessible to all. Over the years, we have expanded our accessibility initiatives, including open captioning, sign interpretation, audio description, and translated materials, including playbills in Spanish and Braille.

ARTISTIC TEAMS FOR GEVA PRODUCTIONS FEATURED IN PHOTOS

COVER

The Wizard of Oz: By L. Frank Baum; Music & Lyrics by Harold Arlen & Ey Harburg; Background Music by Herbert Stothart; Directed by Zi Alikhan; Music Direction by David Thatcher Maglione; Choreography by Phil Colgan; Scenic Designers: Mark Wendland and Theron Wineinger; Costume Designer: Lux Haac; Lighting Designer: Cha See; Sound Design: Ryan Hickey; Orchestrations: Anessa Marie; Wig & Makeup Design: Brittany Hartman; Dramaturg: Jenni Werner; Associate Director/Choreographer: Jayme Bermudez; Projection Design: Nicholas Hussong; Puppetry Design: Emma Wiseman.

The Color Purple: By Alice Walker; Book by Marsha Norman; Music & Lyrics by Brenda Russel, Allee Willis, & Stephen Bray; Co-production with Theatre Latte Da; Directed by Daniel J. Brant; Music Director: Sanford Moore; Choreographer: Heather Himes; Scenic Design: Eli Sherlock; Costume Design: Jarrod Barnes; Lighting Design: Bentley Heydt and Jason Lynch; Sound Design: C Andrew Mayer; Wig, Hair, & Makeup Design: Emma Gustafson; Props Design: Abbee Warmboe.

Dial M for Murder: Adapted by: Jeffrey Hatcher; From the Original By Frederick Knott; Directed by Rachel Alderman; Choreographed by Karla Puno Garcia; Scenic Designers: Christopher and Justin Swader; Costume Designer: An-Lin Dauber; Lighting Design: Emma Deane; Voice & Dialect Coach: Claudia Hill-Sparks; Dramaturg: Fiona Kyle; Sound Designer: Andrew Mark Wilhelm; Wig, Hair, & Makeup Design: Nicolas-Lunch Voris.



Geva THEATRE

www.GevaTheatre.org
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Rochester, NY 14607

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