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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## GEVA THEATRE CENTER'S 2011-2012 SEASON CONTINUES WITH *A RAISIN IN THE SUN* *Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 classic play features stellar cast and director.*

**Rochester, N.Y., January 23, 2012**– Geva Theatre Center's 2011-2012 Season continues with Lorraine Hansberry's classic play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, which begins performances on February 21 and runs in the Elaine P. Wilson Mainstage through March 25.

**The Younger family receives an insurance check for \$10,000. Each family member has their own idea about how to use the money. Family responsibility, selfishness and love come to blows in the cold light of poverty and racism. Considered one of the great American dramas, Lorraine Hansberry's play about dreams deferred and a family's determination to live a better life in a changing world was the first play by a black woman ever to be produced on Broadway.**

*A Raisin in the Sun* opened on Broadway in 1959 where it ran for 530 performances in a production starring Sidney Poitier as Walter Lee Younger, Jr.; Claudia McNeil as Lena Younger and Ruby Dee as Ruth. The play was inspired by the Hansberry family's legal battle against racially segregated housing laws in the Washington Park Subdivision of the South Side of Chicago. At the age of 29, Lorraine Hansberry was the youngest American playwright and only the fifth woman to receive the NY Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play with *A Raisin in the Sun*, and the play was nominated for four Tony Awards. The original Broadway cast reprised their roles for the 1961 film for which Hansberry wrote the screenplay. *Raisin*, a musical based on the play, opened on Broadway in 1973 and won the Tony Award for Best Musical. In 2004, *A Raisin in the Sun* was revived on Broadway and nominated for a Tony for the Best Revival of a Play. The cast included Sean Combs as Walter Lee Younger, Jr.; Phylicia Rashad as Lena and Audra McDonald as Ruth. It has twice been produced for television – the first TV movie in 1989 starred Danny Glover and Esther Rolle, and the second, in 2008, reunited the cast of the 2004 Broadway revival and received two NAACP Image Awards. When Geva first produced *A Raisin in the Sun* directed by Woodie King, Jr. during the 1977-78 Season, the cast included a young **Samuel L. Jackson** playing the role of Joseph Asagai.

*A Raisin in the Sun* is directed by **Robert O'Hara** who makes his Geva Theatre Center debut. Mr. O'Hara is one of the country's most sought-after directors and playwrights. He is the recipient of many awards including the 2010 NAACP Best Director Award and an Obie Award. His plays include *Antebellum*, for which he received the



Sunday, March 11 @ 2pm (Audio-described) and 7pm  
Tuesday, March 13 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, March 15 @ 7:30pm (Sign Interpreted)  
Friday, March 16 @ 8pm  
Saturday, March 17 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
Sunday, March 18 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm  
Wednesday, March 21 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, March 23 @ 8pm  
Saturday, March 24 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
Sunday, March 25 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) (closing performance)

**TICKET PRICES:** Tickets start at \$25.

**RESERVATIONS:** (585) 232-GEVA (4382), Website: [www.gevatheatre.org](http://www.gevatheatre.org)

**LOCATION:** Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd, Rochester, NY 14607

#### **GEVA THEATRE CENTER**

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's leading professional theatre, Geva Theatre Center is the most attended regional theatre in New York State, and one of the 25 most attended in the country, attracting over 170,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 552-seat Elaine P. Wilson Mainstage offers a wide variety of shows, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Nextstage is home to Geva's own series of cutting-edge drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornet's Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. The Nextstage also hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva Theatre Center offers a wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Since 1995 the organization has been led by Artistic Director Mark Cuddy.

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