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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA THEATRE CENTER NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF LITERARY AND ARTISTIC PROGRAMS

Jenni Werner joins New York State's most attended regional theatre and will oversee nationally-recognized new play program

Rochester, NY. July 14, 2011 – Artistic Director **Mark Cuddy** and Executive Director **Tom Parrish** have announced that **Jenni Werner** will join Geva Theatre Center as Director of Literary and Artistic Programs. Ms. Werner's appointment continues Geva's mission to develop and produce new works for the American Theatre and nurture the artists who create them through a spectrum of commissioning-to-fruitation programming characterized by strong dramaturgical support. She will start full-time at Geva Theatre Center at the beginning of September 2011.

Since 1997, Geva Theatre Center has produced nineteen world premieres, one North American premiere, two commercial transfers to Off Broadway, and more than 250 new works that have received readings or workshops. In addition, there have been over 65 productions of Geva-born plays and musicals around the country and the world. Ms. Werner will be responsible for producing all new play development programs, coordinating the season programming selection process, liaising with writers and agents, providing production dramaturgy as well as coordinating other artistic programming.

"I am incredibly proud that Jenni Werner will be joining the Geva artistic team as a senior leader," commented Artistic Director Mark Cuddy. "Her experience and standing in the national field is extraordinary, and her work with playwrights and other theatre artists is sensitive and astute. Welcoming Jenni to Rochester will add even more energy and vitality to Geva's mission of serving our community through art of a national standard."

Ms. Werner comes to Geva after ten years at Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the non-profit theatre field. There, she has served as the director of programming, overseeing the programs and services department, which includes field convenings, professional development, research, field communications, grantmaking and international activities at TCG. In addition, since 2005, Ms. Werner has produced TCG's annual National Conference, curating the content and organizing the logistics for the largest national gathering of professionals in the non-profit theatre field. Previously, she was the artistic programs associate for TCG,

administering several of TCG's grant programs. For the past six years, Ms. Werner has been an adjunct instructor in the Program in Educational Theatre in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University. Before joining TCG, she was the program coordinator for the Empire State Partnerships, an arts-in-education initiative of the New York State Council on the Arts and served as the interim director of education and producer of the international, interdisciplinary conference, *Intersection II*, for New WORLD Theater in Amherst, Mass. Ms. Werner has an M.F.A. in dramaturgy from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a B.A. in theatre and history from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois.

"Geva's commitment to artistic vitality and strong sense of theatre's role in the regional and national dialogue is exciting, and I am thrilled for the opportunity to work with Mark Cuddy and Skip Greer," said Ms. Werner. "I look forward to joining the Geva staff and to playing a part in the cultural community of Rochester."

Artistic Director Mark Cuddy added, "Over the past twelve months we have added a trio of dynamic, successful theatre professionals who will lead and shape Geva Theatre Center for a long time: Jenni Werner, Director of Development Bonnie Butkas, and my partner, Executive Director Tom Parrish. I couldn't be more optimistic about Geva's future."

**For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:
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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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