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GEVA ANNOUNCES 2016-2017 SEASON

44th Season features "something for everyone!"

ESL Federal Credit Union renews sponsorship of Wilson Stage Series.

Wednesday, March 16, 2016. Rochester, N.Y. – Three productions still remain in Geva Theatre Center's 43rd Season: *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, Eugene O'Neill's play about two lost souls; *Dancing Lessons*, a funny and heartwarming story of an unlikely romance; and the season's grand finale, a fun and fresh new office comedy, *The May Queen*. The 2015-2016 Season continued Geva's innovative efforts to connect patrons and artists and art with the community. The 2016-2017 Season will continue to build on that and also usher in a new era as Geva's historic home completes its renovation and transformation.

With the opening of the 2016-2017 Season, Geva will unveil its transformed lobby and café areas, which include nearly 2000 square feet of entertaining suites and wheelchair access to the balcony. The entire renovation project has taken over four years to complete, beginning with roof replacement (2012); the installation of a new HVAC system (2013 and 2014); and renovation of rehearsal, education and conference center, dressing rooms and administrative offices (2015).

Geva Theatre Center's **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy** and **Executive Director Christopher Mannelli** are proud to announce the 12 major productions and events of the much anticipated 2016-2017 Season, the non-profit theatre's 44th year of making professional theatre of a national standard in Rochester.

ESL Federal Credit Union sponsored the 2014-2015 and the 2015-2016 Wilson Stage Series, and has renewed that commitment for the 2016-2017 Season, which features a beloved Broadway musical comedy lovingly ripped from Roman times; a heartfelt comedy about man's best friend; a fresh adaptation of an Academy Award-winning classic film; a masterpiece by "The Master;" a compelling military drama; and a hit musical about the recording session of a lifetime.

Geva also announces the return of the theatre's magical production of Dickens' classic tale of redemption, *A Christmas Carol*, which has truly become Rochester's holiday tradition. Additionally, Geva will present a full line-up in the Fielding Stage throughout 2016-2017, nurturing new plays in the Festival of New Theatre,

the return of everyone's favorite "Sister," and an eclectic range of contemporary plays in the Fielding Studio Series.

"Each year, the Geva staff analyzes both the artistic achievements of our recent productions and the responses of our patrons to the works of theatre we have created on our two stages," said **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy**. "From there we spend five months reading, listening and discussing ways to program the next repertory of plays and musicals to forward our artistic mission. I am happy to say that next season's line-up will be a theatrical celebration fitting for our transformational building renovation."

"The 2016-2017 Season will continue the long tradition of excellence and artistry by Geva Theatre Center," adds **Executive Director Christopher Mannelli**. "In addition - this summer we complete the Front and Center Campaign and enter the final phase of work on our building. From the moment that patrons walk through the doors next season, they will see the dramatic transformation of the lobby and café areas, along with other updated features to the building, designed to make their experience with us one that will be remembered. This historic home, which we are so proud to inhabit, will be an even more vibrant center for our community. It is a thrilling time to be at Geva."

"For a third straight year, ESL is proud to support our downtown neighbor and sponsor the Wilson Stage Series for the 2016-2017 Season," said **ESL Federal Credit Union President & CEO Faheem Masood**. "Geva provides a great source of entertainment for Rochester and an opportunity to unite the entire community around the arts."

Since 1972, the not-for-profit Geva Theatre Center has been Rochester's theatre home, offering patrons the opportunity to enjoy the work of the country's top artists right in their own community. Geva Theatre Center is one of the premier cultural and educational institutions in Rochester, the most attended professional regional theatre in the Northeast United States outside Manhattan, and a leader among American professional theatres.

2016-2017 Season

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart
Directed by Melissa Rain Anderson
Choreographed by Rommy Sandhu
Musical Direction by Don Kot
Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series
October 4 - November 6, 2016

Stephen Sondheim's Tony Award-winning, rollicking romp is fast-paced, witty, irreverent and one of the funniest musical comedies ever written. Pseudolus, a crafty slave, will do anything to win his freedom, including trying to win the hand of the beautiful (but dim) courtesan-next-door for his young master. With hilarious twists and turns, mistaken identity, slamming doors (and a showgirl or two), *Forum* has "something for everyone, a comedy tonight!"

MOTHER (and me)

A Daughter's Story of Love, Loss and Goulash

By Melinda Buckley
Part of the Fielding Studio Series
November 3 – November 20, 2016

A larger-than-life Hungarian 'Mama Rose,' is slowly slipping into dementia as her Broadway baby, Melinda slips into de'middle age. A brilliantly funny and touching story of two women who are losing everything they've ever been—in very different ways—as they lose each other. Who's it harder for? The one who can't remember? ...Or the one who can't forget? This one-woman tour-de-force by Broadway performer and comedienne Melinda Buckley was an award-winner at the 2014 NY Fringe Festival.

SYLVIA

By A. R Gurney
Directed by Mark Cuddy
Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series
January 10 – February 5, 2017

Empty nesters Greg and Kate have relocated back to Manhattan after two decades of raising their family in the suburbs. As Kate observes: "The dog phase of my life is definitely over." When Greg finds Sylvia, a street-smart Labra-doodle in Central Park and brings her home, she becomes a bone of contention between Greg and Kate, testing their marriage to howlingly hilarious and touching effect.

THE LAKE EFFECT

By Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Pirronne Yousefzadeh

Part of the Fielding Studio Series

February 2 – February 19, 2017

During a fierce winter storm, estranged siblings reunite in their family's restaurant amid pungent memories of tandoors and tikka masala. When a regular customer claims to know more of their family history than they do, Vijay and Priya are forced to consider the future of the business. Pulitzer Prize-finalist Rajiv Joseph serves up a spicy menu of family secrets, sibling rivalry and unlikely friendship.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

Adapted by Todd Kreidler

Based on the Screenplay by William Rose

Directed by Skip Greer

Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series

A Co-Production with Indiana Repertory Theatre

February 14 – March 12, 2017

Joanna surprises her liberal, white parents when she brings home John, her African-American fiancé, to meet them. However, she shocks even John by inviting *his* disapproving parents to dinner. A clash of generations and races ensues when both sets of parents must confront their own unexpected reactions and concerns for their children as their long-held beliefs are put to the test. This funny and poignant stage adaptation offers a fresh interpretation of the beloved Academy Award-winning film.

PRIVATE LIVES

By Noël Coward

Directed by Mark Cuddy

Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series

March 21 – April 16, 2017

Elyot and Amanda have been divorced from each other for five years, so imagine their surprise when, whilst honeymooning on the French Riviera with their new spouses, they find themselves in adjacent suites. Sparks fly, reigniting a passion between them too powerful to fight (although fighting is the thing that they do best) in Noël Coward's 1930 champagne cocktail of a comedy about the fine line between love and loathing.

SEX WITH STRANGERS

By Laura Eason

A Kitchen Theatre Company production

Part of the Fielding Studio Series

April 13 – April 30, 2017

A raging snowstorm traps Olivia, a frustrated 39-year-old novelist, in a secluded cabin with Ethan, a tech-savvy, successful and attractive twenty-something blogger who has gained fame writing about his many

one-night stands. Undeniable chemistry ignites into a night of passion between these two opposites and what could have just been a one-night-stand transforms into something more complicated. Online exploits interfere with real-life connection in this smart, funny and sensual drama, proving that you can't judge book by its author.

WORLD PREMIERE

OTHER THAN HONORABLE

By Jamie Pachino

Directed by Kimberly Senior

Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series

April 25 – May 21, 2017

With her husband deployed to an unknown location, lawyer Grace Rattigan, a former Army officer who resigned her commission under sealed terms, must make life-altering decisions on her own. When she reluctantly takes on a military sexual assault case, it re-opens old wounds and forces her to confront her past, along with the real meaning of the military's codes of Honor, courage and loyalty. A hot new drama by award-winning playwright and screenwriter Jamie Pachino, writer of NBC's "Chicago PD."

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

By Floyd Mutrux and Colin Escott

Directed by Hunter Foster

Part of the ESL 2016-2017 Wilson Stage Series

May 30 – June 25, 2017

On December 4, 1956, four young musicians got together at Sun Records in Memphis for what would become one of the greatest jam sessions ever. Put on your blue suede shoes and join Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins for the recording session of a lifetime. Loaded with classic rock 'n roll hits such as "Great Balls of Fire," "Sixteen Tons," "I Walk the Line," "Hound Dog" and many more.

Special Productions and Events

FESTIVAL OF NEW THEATRE

In the Fielding Stage

October 10 – 23, 2016

A two-week showcase of new plays and projects that are currently in Geva's developmental process. More than 325 full-length or short works have received readings and/or workshops as part of Geva's new play development programs, and more than 65 have had subsequent productions around the country and the globe.

Rochester's Holiday Tradition
The Key Bank production of
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
By Charles Dickens
Adapted by Mark Cuddy
Music and Lyrics by Gregg Coffin
Directed by Mark Cuddy
In the Wilson Stage
November 23 – December 24, 2016

On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts who remind him who he was and what he might yet become. He learns the true meaning of the season and that it's never too late to make a new start. The famous tale of redemption for the most despised man in London will awaken your heart and rekindle your spirit in this critically acclaimed adaptation. Recommended for the entire family! (Please remember that children under five are not permitted in the theatre.) **Note: Not a part of the ESL Wilson Stage subscription series.*

SISTER'S BACK TO SCHOOL CATECHISM:
THE HOLY GHOST AND OTHER TERRIFYING TALES

By Maripat Donovan
In the Fielding Stage
March 7 – April 2, 2017

Sister is preparing her classroom for another long year of Catechism. You are in store for a hysterical lesson with *Back To School Catechism: The Holy Ghost and Other Terrifying Tales*. In this session we find out the Church's take on all the familiar Halloween tales of Ghosts and Goblins. Full of Sister's signature class participation, you may get hands on experience in how to build a Catholic- appropriate Halloween costume.

As in past seasons, Geva will again partner with area cultural and community organizations including Lollypop Farm, the Humane Society of Greater Rochester as a community partner with the theatre's production of *Sylvia*; WXXI/The Little and the Sisters of St. Joseph. Geva will announce more details on these, as well as additional cultural and community partnerships, throughout the season.

Because professional regional theatre cannot be sustained on ticket sales alone, Geva Theatre Center thanks those generous individuals and businesses that have already committed to making the 2016-2017 Season one to remember: ESL Federal Credit Union; The Gouvernet Arts Fund at the Community Foundation; Key Bank; Boev Medical, PLLC; Bond Schoeneck & King Law Firm; The College at Brockport; Flaum Management Company; Gray Locey, CPA, P.C.; Harter Secrest & Emery, LLP; imaginé Photography; JP Morgan Chase; Madeline's Catering; ROC Brewing Co.; Rockcastle Florist; St John Fisher College; Tasteful

Connections Catering; Woods Oviatt Gilman, LLP; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; The Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Foundation; and Media Sponsors News10NBC, WYSL AM/FM, WARM 101.3, WROC TV, 13 WHAM TV, 100.5 The Drive, 102.3 Sunny FM, 98 PXY, Legends 102.7, WXXI Public Broadcasting, Fox Rochester and WDKX.

Subscriptions for the full 9-Play 2016-2017 Season are on sale now from \$193. The ESL Wilson Stage Series and Fielding Studio Series may be purchased separately, from \$114 and \$84 respectively. Subscribing is easy, flexible and affordable. Subscribers enjoy the best seats at the best prices, plus a host of exclusive benefits like ticket exchange privileges, priority advance booking and discounts, money-saving coupons to area restaurants, free coat check and more. For more information on subscribing to Geva's 2016-2017 Season visit: www.gevatheatre.org/subscribe-now/. Subscribers to the 2016-2017 Season will be able to purchase tickets for *A Christmas Carol* and *Back to School Catechism* beginning June 21st. Tickets to all individual shows will go on sale to the general public on June 21st, 2016. For information on the 2016-2017 Season, visit www.gevatheatre.org/2016-2017-season. ***All plays, artists, schedules and prices are subject to change.***

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 subscribed in the country, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 526-seat Elaine P. Wilson Mainstage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Nextstage is home to Geva's own series of contemporary drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornets' Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. In addition, the Nextstage 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 under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

FOR RESERVATIONS AND TICKET INFORMATION,
CONTACT THE BOX OFFICE AT (585) 232-Geva (4382),
OR VISIT GEVA'S WEBSITE AT www.GevaTheatre.org.

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FAST FACTS ON



AND THE 2016-2017 SEASON

Artists:

- Over 5,400 actors, directors, choreographers, designers, musical directors, musicians, stage managers, and writers have worked at Geva since it was founded in 1972.
- Among Geva's notable alumni are:
 - 1 Pulitzer Prize nominee
 - 4 Academy Award Nominees: Josh Brolin, Robert Downey, Jr., Samuel L. Jackson & Robert Vaughn
 - 20 Tony Award winners and 70 Tony nominees
 - 34 Drama Desk Award Winners and 86 Drama Desk nominees
 - 11 Emmy Award Winners and 47 Emmy nominees.
- Geva casts the country's top artists from auditions held in New York City and Rochester. Our casting director, Paul Fouquet, is a Geva Affiliate Artist and a Rochester native.
- Geva houses out-of-town actors, directors and artists in apartments just 150 steps away from the theatre, which the theatre now owns.
- Geva provides every out-of-town actor, director and artist with a familiarization packet containing information on all there is to see and do in Rochester and the surrounding area.
- Actors who perform at Geva are Rochester residents for an average of 8 weeks and become part of the fabric of the community, dining in area restaurants, shopping in area stores and visiting area attractions.

Writers and New Plays

- Geva has presented approximately 325 play readings and workshops since its inception. More than 65 Geva-developed plays have had subsequent productions around the country and the globe.
- In subsequent productions, plays that premiere at Geva are recognized on the title page of programs, saying "Originally produced at Geva Theatre Center, Rochester, NY."
- Play readings are free and open to the public, and most are followed by a discussion between the audience and the playwright.
- Geva's nationally recognized and innovative "Hornets' Nest" series of play readings uses theatre to facilitate community discussions on contemporary topics.

Productions:

- Geva has made over 500 fully-produced productions of plays and musicals since 1972.
- What audiences see onstage is the culmination of months of work. The artistic team for each show begins collaborating up to 12 months in advance of the first performance on every aspect and detail of the production.
- It takes over 11,000 direct labor hours to produce each show at Geva.

Geva and Geva's Staff:

- Geva employs 89 resident full-time and part-time staff, in addition to some 200 guest actors, designers, directors and other artists.

- As a member of the national League of Resident Theatres (LORT), Geva operates under agreements between Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the US; the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union; and United Scenic Artists (Local USA-829), a union of scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers.
- Geva is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Visit Rochester, the Rochester Business Alliance (RBA), Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC), and TheatreROCS.

Economic Impact:

- Geva operates on a budget of approximately \$7 million, 87% of which is directed toward artistic, production, education, literary and community program expenses.
- Geva's annual economic impact exceeds \$10 million. Since 1972, Geva has contributed over \$225 million in economic activity to the community.
- 86% of Geva's direct expenses are made in New York State, with 71% in the Rochester area.
- Geva's education and work-force training programs serve over 40,000 youth and adults each year.
- Geva has served over 4 million theatergoers.