FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Go Inside the Writers’ Studio with

Geva’s Festival of New Theatre 2013

Today’s Writers + You = New Stories Onstage

Rochester, N.Y., October 11, 2013 - Geva Theatre Center unveils its line-up for the Festival of New Theatre 2013 to be held in the Fielding Nextstage from October 23 - November 3. Festival2013 is a vibrant and innovative mix of new works by some of the most exciting playwrights from across the country and around the corner and is part of Geva’s ongoing commitment to developing and producing new work for the American theatre.

Festival2013 invites the audience into the “writers’ studios” as they work on new ideas, tell new stories and explore new forms. The audience plays an incredibly important part in this process – writers cannot fully understand the impact of their work without hearing the audience’s response. And because the readings of new plays are presented concert-style – with actors at music stands, facing the audience – the budget for the set, costumes and other effects is limited only by the audience’s imagination! Audiences will also have the unique opportunity for a post-reading discussion with the playwright.

Geva’s Literary Director/Resident Dramaturg Jenni Werner commented, “Normally when audiences come to Geva, they see a fully-produced play, complete with sets, costumes and lighting. But where did that start? The stories you see onstage come from the inspiration of playwrights – but they don’t spring to life fully-formed, ready for audiences. The stories need to be developed, heard by people who want to participate in the shaping of these stories. That’s where Rochester comes in.”

Admission to the Festival of New Theatre 2013 readings is free, but reservations are required. Call the Geva Theatre Center Box Office at (585) 232-4382 or visit www.gevatheatre.org for tickets. Play readings sell out quickly, but tickets often become available the night of the performance.
Here is the line-up for the 2013 Festival of New Theatre:

**True Home** by Cass Morgan  
**Wednesday, October 23 @ 7:00p**  
Broadway veteran and writer Cass Morgan experiments with the forms of music and storytelling as she searches for her roots in *True Home*. “When I first started working on what would become *True Home*, it was a random bunch of stories, and then songs written from those stories, derived from unresolved issues in my life, and memories that wouldn't let go of me,” she commented. “I didn't know what the piece was, or what I was trying to say. I went through early childhood, through college and marriages, motherhood, into my first Broadway show (*Hair*), and back to lonely old me, trying to let go of the past with love, and move forward. There were two other actors with me, and a band. Some of it worked, but mostly I found it unsatisfying. I put it away and thought I was through with it. Then, two years ago my mother died, and *True Home* began haunting me again. I knew I wanted to bring my home town of Rochester into the story more, and that I wanted to tuck everything into one magical story of my first trip to Ireland. I cut the other actors and decided to try using two musicians who could sing and be part of the action with me. I cut some songs and wrote some new ones, and now here I am, trying it out for the first time.”

**A Conversation with Nora Cole**  
**Friday, October 25 @ 7:00p**  
Writer/performer Nora Cole (*Fences, Voices of the Spirits in my Soul*) lets us in on her process and inspirations for a new work, as yet untitled, about her ancestors, inspired by letters sent between her grandfather, a World War II Tuskegee Airman, and her grandmother. As a resident artist at Geva, funded by the Fox Foundation Actor Fellowship, she has researched her family's stories and will be in residence during the Festival, writing a performance piece inspired by her discoveries. This event will feature excerpts of her writing and a conversation facilitated by Geva’s Literary Director, Jenni Werner.

**Theatre in Progress: Excerpts of New Plays**  
**Monday, October 28 @ 8pm**  
Five of the writers of new plays in Geva’s 2013-2014 Season share their newest works with you. What new ideas are being explored by Greg Kotis (*All Your Questions Answered*), John Cariani (*Last Gas*), Deborah Zoe Laufer (*Informed Consent*), Eric Coble (*Stranded on Earth*) and Mat Smart (*Tinker to Evers to Chance*)? The only way to find out is to attend this evening of excerpts from each of this season’s Geva writers.

**Regional Writer:**  
**Galileo’s** by Bill Capossere  
**Tuesday, October 29 @ 7pm**  
One of two plays featured in last spring’s Regional Writers Showcase at Geva, *Galileo’s* was written by Rochester author Bill Capossere. In this comedy about parents, children, and our place in the universe, one afternoon brings about cosmic shifts for the regular denizens of Margie’s Deli, and the stressed-out stranger in their midst. “I’ve spent the past few years working on *Galileo’s* in the narrow confines of my brain,” said Bill Capossere. “Now, thanks to Geva, I’ve been able to hear the play outside my head for the first time, both directly via the actors’ interpretations and indirectly via the audience and director feedback. This has let me take a step back, see the play in a different light, from different angles and led to a push-pull kind of landscaping process. On the one hand, I’m cutting back the underbrush (or taking down entire trees—two characters so far have fallen to the axe), trying to open up the play so some of its features become more visible. On the other hand, even as I’m cutting, I’m also adding lines and scenes in an attempt to sharpen, clarify, and highlight aspects of character and theme that I want to bring forward, aspects that might have been clear or complete in my own head, but once outside on their own in front of an audience appeared muddy or not fully matured.”

**Love/Sick** by John Cariani  
**Wednesday, October 30 @ 7pm**  
John Cariani (*Almost, Maine* and *Last Gas*) returns to the short form storytelling that inspired *Almost, Maine* in *Love/Sick*, a play about love and marriage, set in an alternate suburban reality. “The play has had one major production and three developmental productions,” said John Cariani. These developmental productions have been so valuable, because they are
allowing me to do the work I need to do. My goal right now is to make the play not feel like an anthology, but like a complete evening. It chronicles the life-cycle of a relationship—from meeting through falling in love through marriage and into the difficulties long-married couples experience...through to divorce...and into starting over. So there's an arc. And there's a recurring theme, which hopefully overarches. There are so many little discoveries I hope to make during FONT--elements that will continue to weave the pieces together. So it feels whole.”

**Rochester “Bake-Off”: New Play Excerpts**
*Wednesday, October 30 @ 9pm*
This is a creative experiment, the outcome of which cannot be predicted! Inspired by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, Geva will present a challenge to five writers: John Cariani (*Last Gas*), Nora Cole (*Fences, Voices of the Spirits in my Soul*), Deborah Zoe Laufer (*Informed Consent*), Eric Coble (*Stranded on Earth*) and Mat Smart (*Tinker to Evers to Chance*). When they arrive in Rochester on October 26, they’ll be given four days to write something, anything, inspired by Rochester, and including three common elements (like a camera, a reference to a ghost or a change in fortune). The pieces, which could be scenes, songs, monologues, etc., will be read at 9pm on October 30th. Audience members may be asked to participate in scenes, or the writers may read the scenes themselves. Will it be exciting and entertaining to see what these writers cook up in four days? All signs point to yes.

**Young Writers Showcase: New Plays in Performance**
*Saturday, November 2 @ 2:30pm*
*Sunday, November 3 @ 2:30pm*
In the spring, Geva presented staged readings of several short plays written by Rochester area writers, ages 13-18. Those plays were then given to local theatre companies, who have rehearsed over the summer for presentation in the festival. By offering this opportunity to the young writer, we expand their understanding of the process of moving a play from page to stage. By participating in a full production, by aligning with local artists, and by having the chance to rewrite their work after hearing a reading for an audience, the writer is able to learn more about the attributes of his/her script and about the collaborative creative process. The five plays which will be presented in this fall showcase are: *Girls with Bite* by Abby Johnson, *Mankind's Benefactor* by Karlie O’Gara, *Tree Climbers* by Angela Rollins, *Intertextuality* by Hannah MacLagger, and *The Housepainter* by Jessica Zeidman.

**THE PLAYWRIGHTS**

**CASS MORGAN** is a Rochester native with credits on Broadway and around the country. Rochester audiences will remember her performance in Geva’s production of *The Music Man* in 2011, as well as the musical she co-created, *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, which was produced just this season. Broadway credits include *Memphis* (Outer Critics Circle nomination), *Mary Poppins*, *Ring of Fire*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Capeman*, *The Human Comedy*, *Pump Boys and Dinettes* (co-creator) and *Hair*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Immigrant* (the musical), *Floyd Collins*, *Violet*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (York revival), and *Inside Out*. Regionally she has appeared in *The Bridges of Madison County*, *1776*, *Picnic* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Saint-Ex* (Weston Playhouse), *Memphis* (La Jolla, Seattle), *Emmet Otter's Jug Band Christmas* (Goodspeed Opera House), *Cabaret* (National Tour), *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *1776* (Raleigh, NC), *Das Barbecue* (Baltimore Center Stage) and *Children of Eden* (Mill Mt. Playhouse).

Geva audiences will remember **NORA COLE** from 2012’s *You Can’t Take It With You*, 2009’s *Fences* and 2011’s *Voices of the Spirits in My Soul*, a solo show based in part on her Kentucky family’s slave history. Broadway credits include *Jelly’s Last Jam*, *On the Town*, and *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*. Other recent credits include the Off-Broadway production of *And God Created Great Whales*, which was also performed at Culture Project, L.A.’s Red Cat and Avenue X, New Harmony Theatre. Other stage credits include *Doubt* at Milwaukee Rep; *Caroline, or Change* at London’s National Theatre; *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* at Studio Arena; *Highway Ulysses* at American Repertory Theatre; *The Colored Museum* at Hartford Stage; *The Good Times are Killing Me* at Second Stage; the title role in *Medea* for Vinnette Carroll Repertory; *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well...* at Santa Fe Stage; and her solo show, *Olivia’s Opus*, an ode to adolescence. Ms. Cole is a graduate of the Goodman School of Drama at the Art Institute at Chicago (B.F.A.), a recipient of the Women in Music Award from Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Fox Foundation Actor Fellowship, and a Hedgebrook Women Writers alumnus.

**JOHN CARIANI** is an actor and a playwright. He has appeared on and Off-Broadway, at regional theatres across the country, and in several films and television shows. As a playwright, he is best known for his first play, *Almost, Maine*, which premiered at Portland Stage Company in 2004, opened Off Broadway in 2006, and has since become one of the most frequently produced plays in the country. John has two new plays in development, both of which premiered at Portland Stage Company: *Last Gas*, which will be produced at Geva later this season; and *Love/Sick*, which will be produced at Hartford TheaterWorks later this season.

**ERIC COBLE**’s plays include *Bright Ideas*, *The Dead Guy*, *Natural Selection*, *For Better*, *Southern Rapture*, *A Girl’s Guide To Coffee*, *The Velocity of Autumn*, *My Barking Dog*, and *The Giver* which have been produced Off-Broadway, throughout the U.S., and on several
continents, including productions at Manhattan Class Company, The Kennedy Center, Playwrights Horizons, Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, the Denver Center, New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, Alliance Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Florida Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Asolo Repertory, Coterie Theatre, Curious Theatre, Actors Theatre of Charlotte, Oregon Children’s Theatre, People’s Light and Theatre Company, Stages Repertory Theatre, Great Lakes Theater Festival, and The Contemporary American Theatre Festival. Awards include an Emmy nomination, the 2011 AATE Distinguished Play Award for Best Adaptation, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, an NEA Playwright in Residence Grant, a TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, the Cleveland Arts Prize, a Creative Workforce Fellowship from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants. Eric is a member of the Cleveland Play House Playwrights Unit. Geva will produce Eric’s play Stranded on Earth in the Fielding Studio Series in March.

GREG KOTIS is the author of many plays and musicals including Michael von Siebenburg Melts Through the Floorboards, Yeast Nation (Book/Lyrics), The Unhappiness Plays, The Boring-est Poem in the World, The Truth About Santa, Pig Farm, Eat the Taste, Urinetown (Book/Lyrics, for which he won an Obie Award and two Tony® Awards), and Jobey and Katherine. His work has been produced and developed in theaters across the country and around the world, including Actors Theatre of Louisville, American Conservatory Theater, American Theater Company, Henry Miller’s Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Stage and Film, Perseverance Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, Soho Rep, South Coast Rep, and The Old Globe, among others. Greg is a member of the Neo-Futurists, the Cardiff Giant Theater Company, ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild, and was a 2010-11 Lark Play Development Center Playwrights Workshop Fellow. He grew up in Wellfleet, Massachusetts and now lives in Brooklyn with his wife Ayun Halliday, his daughter India, and his son Milo. Geva will produce the world premiere of Greg’s play All Your Questions Answered in 2013/2014.

DEBORAH ZOE LAUFER has received the Helen Merrill Playwriting Award and the Lilly Award, and is a two-time recipient of the LeCompte du Nouy grant from The Lincoln Center Foundation. Her play End Days was awarded The American Theatre Critic’s Steinberg Citation and an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Grant and has received over forty productions world-wide. Her other works include Leveling Up, Sirens, The Last Schwartz, The Gulf of Westchester, and Out of Sterno, which premiered at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Actor’s Theater of Louisville’s Humana Festival, Florida State, and Portland Stage. Deborah is a graduate of the Juilliard School and a member of The Dramatists Guild and the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. Geva will produce the world premiere of Deborah’s play Informed Consent in March. deborahzoelaufer.com

MAT SMART is in the process of traveling to every continent and setting a play on each one. He has visited, studied or worked on six continents – recently working as a janitor at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. Plays include The Royal Society of Antarctica – upcoming reading at Primary Stages in NYC; Samuel J. and K. (Africa) – premiered at Williamstown Theatre Festival; The 13th of Paris (Europe) – premiered at City Theatre in Pittsburgh with subsequent productions in Seattle, Atlanta and Chicago; The Bebop Heard in Okinawa (Asia) – workshopped at the O’Neill Playwrights Conference; and Tinker to Evers to Chance (North America) – will premiere at Geva in the 13/14 Season. He has yet to write a play about his trip to Australia in 2009 and hopes to visit South America soon. Geva will produce the world premiere of Tinker to Evers to Chance in May.

BILL CAPOSSERE’S work has appeared in Harper’s Magazine, Colorado Review, Rosebud and other journals, as well as in the anthologies In Short and Short Takes. His non-fiction has been recognized in the “notable essays” section of several Best American Essays anthologies and he has received Pushcart Prize nominations for both fiction and non-fiction in recent years. Along with Galileo’s, he is currently working on completing a book-length collection of creative non-fiction. He lives in Rochester, where he works as an adjunct instructor at Nazareth College and Rochester Institute of Technology.

ABBY JOHNSON, a freshman at Vassar College, is thrilled and honored to be a part of Geva’s Festival of New Theatre. In high school, Abby served as an editor and contributor for Sutherland High School’s literary magazine, Pegasus, as well as serving on the editorial board for Canvas Literary Journal. She also worked at Writers & Books for their SummerWrite program for three years and plans to return this summer. At Vassar, Abby hopes to be involved with both the drama and creative writing departments, so as to grow the skills she acquired while working with Geva on her play.

HANNAH MacLAGGER is a junior Creative Writing major at School of the Arts. She works at Wegmans and plays soccer and softball for her school teams. She won second place in the Sokol High School Literary Awards (2011), a gold key (regional) and silver metal (national) in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards (2012), a silver key (regional) in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards (2013), and an honorable mention in the Gannon University Poetry Contest (2013). She is so thankful to Geva Theatre for this marvelous opportunity and to her Creative Writing teachers, Mr. Craddock and Ms. Gamzon, for being passionate and persistent even when their students are not.

KARLIE O’GARA is a freshman at Nazareth College and is majoring in Inclusive Childhood Education and English Literature. She is very grateful for the wonderful opportunities to grow and learn that Geva Theatre has provided to her through the revision and production processes of her play. Mankind’s Benefactor is now Karlie’s first completed work, and won’t be her last. Because of the overwhelming support she has found from family, friends, and mentors at Geva, she is more than motivated to keep on writing.
ANGELA ROLLINS is a graduated Creative Writing major from School of the Arts who now attends Monroe Community College as a Human Services major. Currently, she is employed as a dining services associate at The Friendly Home. She is very grateful for having the opportunity to work with Geva and learn more about playwriting.

JESSICA ZEIDMAN is a senior at Pittsford Sutherland High School and is honored to be part of Geva’s Young Writers Showcase. Though Jessica’s involvement in theatre has previously been on the stage, having participated in musicals and dramatic plays since she was six years old, she is excited to have the opportunity to explore a different facet of theatre. Additionally, Jessica is the main editor of Sutherland Life Magazine, a student-run publication at her high school, in addition to being president of her school’s drama club and an active member of its AV/broadcasting club.

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, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 524-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 Hornet’s 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.

*ENDS*