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GEVA THEATRE CENTER NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-C.E.O

***Christopher Mannelli joins New York State's most attended regional theatre
following national search.***

Rochester, NY. January 6, 2016 – Joanna Grosodonia, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Geva Theatre Center, has announced that, following a national search, **Christopher Mannelli** will join the theatre as Executive Director and partner with Artistic Director **Mark Cuddy** as co-C.E.O.

Christopher Mannelli comes to Geva from Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago, a 41-year-old, Tony Award-winning institution dedicated to new plays and playwrights, where he has served as Managing Director. During his five-year tenure he led the reorganization of the institution and has been responsible for the strategic planning, fundraising and audience development initiatives that have created the theater's new business model. Under his leadership, Christopher has overseen numerous award-winning productions, increased contributed income, and launched innovative membership and audience engagement initiatives. Prior to his work with Victory Gardens, Christopher served as Deputy Director at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, one of the largest nonprofit theatres in Chicago. He oversaw operations and helped to produce the theatre's "World Stage" international programming, including Chicago Shakespeare's first ever tour to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland. Before moving to Chicago, Christopher was the Managing Director for HotCity Theatre in St. Louis, Missouri. In this capacity, he was instrumental in the company's financial and programmatic growth, which included educational outreach programs, new play initiatives and several collaborations with prominent arts organizations. He currently serves on the board of directors of the League of Chicago Theatres, is a steering committee member for Enrich Chicago (a group of arts organizations in Chicago working collectively to address racial equity), is a board member for the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the community board of Emerald City Theatre.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Geva Theatre Center I extend a warm welcome to Christopher Mannelli as our new executive director," commented Joanna Grosodonia. "Christopher brings over 20 years of experience in the theatre industry. He has a proven track record of strategic thinking, leadership, and

marketing that will benefit and promote Geva as this area's premier regional theatre. The board sought an individual who will further strengthen Geva's finances, increase and diversify audiences and maximize Geva's soon-to-be-renovated theatre spaces. We believe we have found the right person to co-lead Geva with Artistic Director Mark Cuddy as Geva embarks on an exciting new physical transformation and continues to produce high caliber theatrical productions, educational programs and community outreach."

Mr. Mannelli, who will start full-time at Geva Theatre Center at the end of February, grew up on Long Island and began his career as an actor and a musician, touring nationally and internationally. He holds a B.A. in opera performance from the SUNY Geneseo School of Performing Arts, an M.F.A. in Arts Leadership from DePaul University.

"I am thrilled to be joining the team at Geva Theatre Center and honored to have the opportunity to serve as Executive Director," said Mr. Mannelli. "When I began my career as a performer, it was at Geva where I had my first professional role. It's incredibly special to come back, nearly 20 years later, and have the privilege to partner with an inspiring leader such as Mark Cuddy."

Theatre executive search consultants Albert Hall & Associates were retained to conduct a nationwide search for an Executive Director/Co-CEO. Semi-Finalists and Finalists visited Rochester in November and December to meet with trustees and staff. The search committee, chaired by trustee **Richard Gray** and composed of current trustees, worked closely with Albert Hall & Associates.

"Over the past three months, our seven-member committee worked alongside our national search consultants to conduct a thorough process that yielded Christopher Mannelli," said Richard Gray. We are confident that we have found the right leader to partner with Mark Cuddy and continue to build the ongoing success of Geva Theatre Center."

"I am truly excited to have such an experienced and enthusiastic theatre administrator join me in leading Geva at this time," remarked Mark Cuddy. "Our momentum has never been greater, and I know that Christopher will seize upon our current accomplishments to bring us into the next era. I especially look forward to welcoming Christopher back to where he first started performing professionally nearly two decades ago, and to introduce his wife Rita and their two children to our terrific community."

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