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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GEVA'S 44<sup>TH</sup> SEASON BEGINS WITH A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM**

***Geva kicks off season with Sondheim's rollicking Roman musical romp.  
Broadway vet (and Rochester native) Steve Rosen stars as Pseudolus.  
Forum is the first production in the newly-renovated Geva.***

**Rochester, N.Y., September 6, 2016** – Audiences are in for an outrageously hilarious time as Geva Theatre Center presents *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* with a book by **Bert Shevelove and Larry Gelbart** and music and lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim** and directed by **Melissa Rain Anderson** in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage from **October 4 through November 6**.

**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!"**

Inspired by the plays of the Roman playwright Plautus, and featuring a book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* was the first musical for which Stephen Sondheim wrote both the music and the lyrics. It opened on Broadway in May of 1962 where it ran for two years and garnered several Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Author of Musical. It has enjoyed several Broadway revivals including a 1972 production starring Phil Silvers (later replaced by Tom Poston) and a 1996 production starring Nathan Lane (later replaced by Whoopi Goldberg and David Alan Grier). The 1966 film starring Zero Mostel was nominated for a Golden Globe Award as Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy, and won the 1967 Academy Award for Best Music, Scoring of Music, Adaptation or Treatment.

**Steve Rosen** will star as Pseudolus. A Rochester native, Mr. Rosen originated roles in the Broadway productions of *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *The Farnsworth Invention* and the 2009 revival of *Guys and Dolls*. He co-created and co-starred in the long-running late night comedy-improv benefit *Don't Quit Your Night Job* and the musical *The Other Josh Cohen*, for which he was nominated for six Drama Desk Awards, a Lucille Lortel

Award and an Off-Broadway Alliance Award. In addition to his stage credits he has appeared on screen in “Elementary,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Nurse Jackie,” “The Good Wife,” “Masters of Sex,” “Psych,” “Elementary” and “Kings.” He is featured in Woody Allen’s newest film, *Café Society*, in theatres now.

Rosen is joined by Broadway veterans **Bill Nolte** (Broadway productions of *Cats*, *The Secret Garden*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Amour, 1776*, *Jane Eyre*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *King David*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Me and My Girl*) as Marcus Lycus; **Michele Ragusa** (Broadway productions of *Young Frankenstein*, *Urinetown*, *Titanic*, *Ragtime* and Geva’s production of *Company*) as Domina and **John Shuman** (Broadway’s *La Cage Aux Folles* and *13 Rue de L’Amour*) as Erronius. **James Michael Reilly** (International Tour of *West Side Story* and Geva’s production of *Inherit the Wind*) appears as Senex.

Making their Geva debuts are **Mark Bedard** (Off-Broadway’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Pearl Theatre and *Fashions for Men* at Mint Theater) as Hysterium; **Anna Bucci** as Philia, **Jessica Murphy** and **Dennis O’Bannon** (Broadway’s *White Christmas* and the national tour of *The Little Mermaid*) as the Geminae Twins, **Elyse Niederee** as Panacea,; **Robert Riordan** as Hero, **Tim Rogan** (National Tours of *Camelot* and *Disney’s Beauty and the Beast*) as Miles Gloriosus and **Mackenzie Warren** as Gymnasia. **Nicole Eras** returns to Geva following last season’s *Spamalot!* as Tintinabula.

As previously announced, this production of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* features 2 Ring Circus. Their four members, **Lani Corson**, **Joshua Dean**, **Ben Franklin** and **Kenneth Ziegler** will play Vibrata and the Proteans respectively.

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is directed by **Melissa Rain Anderson** (last season’s sell out hit production of *Monty Python’s Spamalot* and 2013’s *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) with musical direction by **Don Kot**, choreography by **Rommy Sandhu** and circus direction by **2 Ring Circus**. The design team includes **Adam Koch** (scenic design), **Devon Painter** (costume design), **Brian J. Lilienthal** (lighting design) and **Bart Fasbender** (sound design).

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is the first production in the newly-renovated Geva Theatre Center. This \$10 million, six-year renovation project began with structural repairs to the 148-year old edifice and has recently concluded with renovated lobby and café areas, new seats in the Wilson Stage and wheelchair access to the balcony. The theatre now boasts the new Dawn & Jacques Lipson, M.D. Lounge – an entertainment suite which can accommodate up to 120 people.

The 2015-2016 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. The Honorary Wilson Stage Series Sponsor is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is produced with support from Lead Co-Producer **Boev Clinic PLLC**; Associate Producer **The College at Brockport** and Media Sponsors **13WHAM TV** and **WARM 101.3**.

***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* begins previews on October 4, opens October 8 and runs through November 6.**

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:  
Dawn Kellogg, Communications Manager, (585) 420-2059.**

## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

**Previews:**                    **Tuesday, October 4 @ 7:30pm**  
                                      **Wednesday, October 5 @ 7:30pm**  
                                      **Thursday, October 6 @ 7:30pm**  
                                      **Friday, October 7 @ 8pm**  
                                      **Saturday, October 8 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance\*)**

**Opening:**                    **Saturday, October 8 @ 8pm**

**Performances:**            Sunday, October 9 @ 2pm and 7pm  
                                      Tuesday, October 11 @ 6pm  
                                      Wednesday, October 12 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Thursday, October 13 @ 7:30pm (Community Night: Out at Geva)  
                                      Friday, October 14 @ 8pm  
                                      Saturday, October 15 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
                                      Sunday, October 16 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm  
                                      Tuesday, October 18 @ 6pm  
                                      Wednesday, October 19 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Thursday, October 20 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Friday, October 21 @ 8pm  
                                      Saturday, October 22 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
                                      Sunday, October 23 @ 2pm (Audio Described performance) and 7pm  
                                      Tuesday, October 25 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Wednesday, October 26 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Thursday, October 27 @ 7:30pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)  
                                      Friday, October 28 @ 8pm  
                                      Saturday, October 29 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
                                      Sunday, October 30 @ 2 pm (Sunday Salon) and 7pm  
                                      Tuesday, November 1 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Wednesday, November 2 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open Captioned Performances)  
                                      Thursday, November 3 @ 7:30pm  
                                      Friday, November 4 @ 8pm  
                                      Saturday, November 5 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
                                      Sunday, November 6 @ 2pm

**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**

\* Partial support for open captioning provided by Theatre Development Fund.

**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 Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage 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 Fielding Stage 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.