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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Your Invitation to the Writers' Studio
Geva's Festival of New Theatre 2016
Today's Writers + You = New Stories Onstage

Rochester, N.Y., September 27, 2016 - Geva Theatre Center unveils its line-up for the ***Festival of New Theatre 2016*** to be held in the Fielding Stage from **October 12 – October 23**. ***FONT 2016*** 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.

FONT 2016 is a celebration of the theatrical imagination, an exciting glimpse into the creative process, and YOUR opportunity to contribute to the future of theatre in Rochester and around the world. During the Festival, you're invited to take a glimpse into the writers' studios as they work on new ideas, tell new stories and explore new forms. Your part in it all is crucial – writers need to hear an audience's response in order to fully understand the impact of their work. 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 your 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, "From its inception, Geva has been committed to developing new plays for the American theatre. In the last five years alone, we've developed 30 plays, which have gone on to 30 productions around the country, including six world premieres right here in Rochester. This year's Festival of New Theatre is especially exciting, with the first public reading of a Geva-commissioned play about the friendship between Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, the return of playwright Carter Lewis (*Evie's Waltz*), further development of David Andreatta's *Fielder's Choice*, and a new incarnation of Geva's partnership with the College of Brockport."

Admission to the *Festival of New Theatre 2016* 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 2016 Festival of New Theatre:

Wednesday, October 12, 7pm & Saturday, October 15, 7pm

***The Agitators: The Story of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass* by Mat Smart**

A commission from Geva Theatre Center and the New York State Council on the Arts

Directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton

Frederick Douglass said, "Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are people who want crops without plowing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning." *The Agitators* tells the story of the thunder and lightning of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass' 45-year friendship. After meeting in Rochester in the 1840's, they became great allies and, at times, great adversaries. They agitated the nation, they agitated each other and, in doing so, they helped shape the Constitution and the course of American history.

Friday, October 14, 7pm

***Fielder's Choice* by David Andreatta**

Directed by Jean Gordon Ryon

To rejuvenate their strained relationship, Frank and his son Owen revive a tradition of visiting all the major league baseball parks. When trouble arises back home with his new wife and stepson, Frank is faced with difficult decisions about loyalty, tradition, and how to define family.

Wednesday, October 19, 7pm

***Your Wings Have Eyes* by Micheline Auger**

Directed by Francis X. Kuhn

Your Wings Have Eyes explores the treacherous terrain of gender and sexuality on a college campus. Asked to write about how gender influences behavior among young people, playwright Micheline Auger has crafted a tale of youth, trust, betrayal, fear, and self-realization. The play was commissioned by the Farm Theatre in New York City to be produced at three different colleges, beginning with The College at Brockport, this academic year. Students from Brockport have been working with the playwright since last spring as she has developed the script.

Thursday, October 20, 7pm

***With* by Carter W. Lewis**

Directed by Skip Greer

From the first time the doorbell rings in Carter W. Lewis' new play *With*, we know that Clifford and Minnie have taken their "for better or worse" vows quite seriously. On the complicated road toward their final moments, they are tripped up by laughter and stumble with great heartbreak. Minnie and Clifford fight off a winter storm, a long lingering Christmas, a stranger in the bathroom, and a rat in the kitchen as they struggle to maintain their dignity with humor.

Saturday, October 22 & Sunday, October 23, 3pm:

Young Writers Showcase

Selected from an open submission pool of Rochester area students, the Young Writers Showcase features short plays by writers aged 13-18. This event provides a rare opportunity for young writers to have their works performed by professional actors and a glimpse into the process of moving a play from page to stage. These plays had a staged reading in the spring, and received further rehearsal and development this fall, and will be produced by Rochester-area directors. Lindsay Warren-Baker, Matthew Ames, Patricia Lewis and Shawnda Urie direct the following six plays:

***Escape* by Mitchell Duncan**

***Night Shift* by Rob Kellogg**

A Rapid and Polyphloisboisterous Descent into the Depths of the Ocean and the Darkest Recesses of the Mind

by Denis Lomakin

***Bunny Ears* by Emma Mittiga**

***Red and the Wolf* by Meena Potter**

***The Wedding Dress* by Alannah Scardino**

THE PLAYWRIGHTS

DAVID ANDREATTA is a newshound by day and a theatre junkie by night. When he's not penning a column for the *Democrat and Chronicle*, he's trying his hand at writing and acting for the stage. *Felder's Choice* is his second play to be read at Geva's Festival of New Plays. His first, *The Presstitutes* (2012), was produced locally by Everyone's Theatre Company Inc. and staged at MuCCC in July 2016.

MICHELINE AUGER received the 2015 Innovative Theater Award for Outstanding Original Full-Length Script for her play, *Donkey Punch*. She was voted one of Indie Theater's 2014 People of the Year and was awarded with National Theatre Conference's Paul Green Award by producer Liz McCann. Her work has been developed or produced by Dixon Place, Primary Stages, Rising Phoenix Rep, Westside Theatre, Ivy Theater Company, Amoralab, FringeNYC, New York Madness, OMPF, Horse Trade Theatre Group, Riot Act, Caps Lock Theatre Company, Sugarspace and Highways Performance Complex, among others. She is the creator and editor-in-chief of Theaterspeak and Theaterspeak's event, WRITE OUT FRONT which has put over 200 playwrights in the window of the Drama Book Shop writing new plays on view of the public in the Times Square Theater District. For more information, www.michelineauger.com.

CARTER W. LEWIS is currently serving as Playwright-in-Residence at Washington University. Prior to that, he was Literary Manager & Playwright-in-Residence for Geva Theatre Center. He is the winner of numerous national playwriting awards including The Julie Harris - Playwriting Award, The State Theatre - Best New American Play, The Cincinnati Playhouse Rosenthal New Play Prize (1996 & 2001), New Dramatist Playwriting Award, Playwright's Center Jerome Residency, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Award, (2003) and he is a two-time nominee for the American Theatre Critics Award. He is delighted to be returning to Geva Theatre to work on his new play, *With*.

MAT SMART wrote *Tinker to Evers to Chance*, which premiered at Geva in 2014 and has since been produced at Merrimack Rep. Other plays include *The Royal Society of Antarctica* (Gift Theatre, 2015 Equity Jeff Award for Best New Work in Chicago), *Naperville* (Slant Theatre Project, currently at Theater Wit), *Samuel J. and K.* (Williamstown Theatre Festival, Steppenwolf), *The Hopper Collection* (Magic Theatre, Huntington) and *The 13th of Paris* (City Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre). Awards & Fellowships include 2014 Otis Guernsey New Voices Award from the William Inge Center for the Arts, Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, two Jerome Fellowships and a McKnight Advancement Grant. An avid baseball fan and traveler, Smart has been to all 30 of the current MLB stadiums, all 50 states and all of the continents. He is a proud member of The National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House.

THE DIRECTORS

VALERIE CURTIS-NEWTON has worked with theatres across the country including: The Guthrie Theater, Intiman Theatre, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Mark Taper Forum, New York Theatre Workshop, Tacoma Actors' Guild, Southern Repertory Theatre, Capitol Repertory Theatre, and Northwest Asian American Theatre among others. Her credits include productions of Nathan Louis Jackson's *Broke-ology*, Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop*, Marc Blizstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, Stephen Adly Guirgas' *The Motherf*cker with the Hat*, John Patrick Shanley's *Dirty Story*, Constance Congdon's *The Midwife's Apprentice*, Kia Corthron's *The Venus De Milo Is Armed*, Lynn Nottage's *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, Charlayne Woodard's *Flight*, Goerge C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum*, Alice Childress' *Wedding Band*, Ntozake Shange's *Spell #7* and Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. Her productions have won numerous awards for directing, acting and design. The Head of Performance

at the University of Washington School of Drama, Valerie also serves as the Artistic Director for The Hansberry Project, a professional African American theatre lab. She has been awarded the National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group (TCG/NEA) Career Development Grant for Directors, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation's (SDCF) Gielgud Directing Fellowship, the Seattle Stranger Genius Award in Performance and the Crosscut Courage Award for Culture. Valerie holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Washington.

SKIP GREER serves as Artist in Residence and Director of Education at Geva Theatre Center. His directing credits at Geva include *Red*, *The Mountaintop*, *Last Gas*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (co-director); *Freud's Last Session*; *On Golden Pond*; *Over the Tavern*; *Almost, Maine*; the world premiere of *The House in Hydesville*; *Doubt*; *American Buffalo*; *Inherit the Wind*; *Key West*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Lobby Hero*; *Below the Belt*; *The Weir*; *Women Who Steal*; *Beast on the Moon*; *Triumph of Love* and *Geometric Digression of the Species*. This summer he was the Co-Producer for *Journey to the Son: A Celebration of Son House*. He directed *King Lear* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Other regional directing credits include Studio Arena Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Sacramento Theatre Company, State Theatre of Austin and Gary Marshall's Falcon Theatre, where he directed *Golf with Alan Shepard* starring Jack Klugman and Charles Durning. Mr. Greer has also been an actor at Geva appearing in *Clybourne Park* (Russ, Dan), *You Can't Take It With You* (Paul Sycamore), *Superior Donuts* (Arthur), *The Music Man*, (Mayor Shinn) *Evie's Waltz* (Clay), *Our Town* (the Stage Manager), *Hamlet* (Ghost/Player King), *1776* (John Hancock), *House and Garden* (Giles), *Art* (Serge), *Twelve Angry Men* (Juror #1), *A Girl's Life* (Ken and Louis Pasteur), *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor* (Alexander), *The Illusion* (Alcandre), *Picasso at the Lapine Agile* (Sagot) and *State of the Union* (Spike McManus). Regional credits include seven seasons in the resident acting company of Sacramento Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival and Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts. Film and TV credits include "Bloodhounds," "LA Law" and "VR5." Mr. Greer has toured Europe, Africa, Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia and the Cook Islands, teaching and performing.

FRANCIS X. KUHN has directed for theatres and opera companies throughout the country. Theatre work includes work for McCarter Theatre, Princeton Rep, Delaware Theatre Company, Mill Mountain Playhouse, Warehouse Theatre, and numerous others. His production of *Godspell* for Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre in Pennsylvania was named best professional musical of 2011 by the *Lehigh Valley Press*; he was named "Best Director" of 2006 in the *Denver Post's* statewide Ovation Awards for his production of *Sweeney Todd* at Creede Repertory Theatre; and the *New York Times* praised his "engaging" and "lively" production of W.H. Smith's *The Drunkard* at New York's Metropolitan Playhouse. His most recent opera work was a staging of Handel's *Orlando* for Sacramento Opera. He has also directed for Virginia Opera, OperaDelaware, Opera Festival of New Jersey, and Curtis Institute of Music. He has served as artistic director for Allegheny Highlands Regional Theatre and producer for Gretna Theatre, as well as literary manager for Creede Repertory Theatre. He is a professor of theatre at The College at Brockport (SUNY) in western New York.

JEAN GORDON RYON serves as New Plays Coordinator at Geva Theatre Center where, among other duties, she produces the Regional Writers Showcase and the Young Writers Showcase. Her dramaturgical credits at Geva include *1776*, *Shear Madness*, *The Underpants*, *Almost Maine*, *The Music Man*, *Company*, *Perfect Wedding*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Spamalot*, *Red*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Geva's current production of *A Christmas Carol*. Ms. Ryon holds a degree in drama from Tufts University and a Master's degree in Arts Administration from Goucher College. Her most recent directing credits in the community include *The Gin Game* for Blackfriars, *The Chosen* and *The Immigrant* for JCC's CenterStage, *Faith Healer*, *The Hostage*, *Love in the Title*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Dublin Carol*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Shining City*, *The Field* and *The Seafarer* for RCP's Irish Players, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* for RCP's Shakespeare Players and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and *Holiday* for Screen Plays. Ms. Ryon is also the Artistic Director of The Geriactors, a traveling troupe of mature actors.

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 522-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.