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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Your Invitation to the Writers' Studio*  
**Geva's Festival of New Theatre 2017**

*Today's Writers + You = New Stories Onstage*

*Geva dedicates festival to the memory of longtime volunteer, Dee Kamp*

Rochester, N.Y., October 2, 2017 - Geva Theatre Center unveils its line-up for the ***Festival of New Theatre 2017*** to be held in the Fielding Stage from **October 25 – November 5**. ***FONT 2017*** 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 2017** 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. Since 2010, Geva's new play programs have developed 45 new plays, leading to 40 productions around the country and 11 world premieres right here in Rochester. I'm thrilled about this year's festival lineup, and especially about the opportunity to introduce these accomplished artists to our community. The festival is also especially meaningful this year, as we dedicate these two weeks to the memory of longtime volunteer, Dee Kamp. Dee has been a fixture at Geva Theatre Center as long as most of us can remember. She was fierce and funny, strong and stubborn – qualities I look for in the plays and people I love. Every year, Dee greeted audiences

as they entered the theatre for all of our new play readings, prepared meals for actors and crew, and helped our audiences find their seats. I think she'll be with us in spirit this year, and I hope that she'd be moved by this dedication."

Admission to the *Festival of New Theatre 2017* readings is free, but reservations are required. Call the Geva Theatre Center Box Office at (585) 232- 4382 or visit [www.gevatheatre.org](http://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 2017 Festival of New Theatre:

**Wednesday, Oct. 25 at 7pm:**

### ***The Lotus Paradox***

**Written by Dorothy Fortenberry**

**Directed by Shelley Butler**

It's the 25th anniversary of groundbreaking children's book *The Lotus Paradox*, and author Nora Tennant's small celebration quickly derails over sex, booze, and global warming. Her son Hal is a climate scientist who feels compelled by his mother's novels to save the world, but can barely save himself. Her daughter Dealie just wants to be seen and loved. Her editor has come with his own plans for Nora's next publication. They are all thrown into chaos when a passionate teenage fan arrives with a tragic secret. *The Lotus Paradox* is a play about creativity and motherhood. It is a play about using or not using one's children in one's art, about the artist's responsibility to her art and the mother's responsibility to her child. Can those two ever be reconciled?

**Thursday, Oct. 26, 7pm**

### **The Author's Voice with Gabriel Jason Dean**

Join playwright Gabriel Jason Dean (*Heartland*) in a conversation about his work. In conversation with Geva's Literary Director Jenni Werner, Gabriel will share stories about his craft and inspirations, as well as read excerpts from three of his plays, including a scene from *Heartland* which Geva will premiere in March, 2018.

**Saturday Oct. 28 and Sunday October 29, 3pm**

### **Young Writers Showcase**

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 artists, who have rehearsed over the summer for presentation in the festival. The young writers who participate gain a greater understanding of the process of moving a play from page to stage in a collaborative process. Join us as we celebrate these young artists and see how their plays have changed since their first reading.

***Anxiety*** by Maggie Hurley

***I Knew Him*** by Campbell McDade Clay

***The Science of Acceptance*** by Isabella Watts

***Bad Beans*** by Alaina Messineo

***Pure Imagination*** by Blake Lombardo

***Break-Up Song*** by Brennan Saur

**Saturday, Oct. 28, 7pm**

### **Rochester Suffrage Bake-Off**

Back by popular demand: a creative experiment, the outcome of which can never be predicted! Inspired by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, Geva will present a challenge to several playwrights to write something inspired by the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State - all writers must include three elements, which they'll learn about on Oct. 25th. The pieces, which could be scenes, songs, monologues, etc., will be read just three days later, on October 28th. 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 just three days? All signs point to yes!

**Sunday, Oct. 29, 7pm**

### **The Changing Landscape**

Join P. Carl, director and co-founder of HowlRound and co-artistic director of ArtsEmerson, for a wide-ranging conversation around the changing landscape of creating and developing new plays. He will discuss questions of form, ensemble driven work, technological innovations, and making plays in a new cultural and political landscape where issues of representation and viewpoint have become complicated terrain for playwrights to navigate. Open to all who are interested in exploring the future of new plays, and of special interest for theatre artists looking for connections with other artists and audiences across the country.

**Wednesday, Nov. 1, 7pm**

### **Regional Writers' Showcase: *Alexandria***

**Written by Jeffrey W. Jones**

**Directed by Jean Gordon Ryon**

A devoted nun works sequestered in an underground cave, cataloguing an endless stack of books no longer permitted by the government aboveground. One Christmas Eve, she's inexplicably joined by a young woman to aid her labor. In a world full of unspoken secrets, we wonder: How did they come to spend their days here? What's so special about these books? And will each woman find her own salvation?

**Saturday, Nov. 4, 7pm:**

### **The Author's Voice with Catherine Treischmann**

Join playwright Catherine Treischmann (*One House Over*) in a conversation about his work. In conversation with Geva's Literary Director Jenni Werner, Catherine will share stories about her craft and inspirations, as well as read excerpts from three of her plays.

**Sunday, Nov. 5, 7pm:**

### ***The Dust People***

**Written by Catherine Treischmann**

Johanna lives on the same farm her ancestors tilled before the Dust Bowl. She knows the Kansas soil like the back of her hand. When a neighboring farm is taken over by a young, idealistic couple with big ideas about sustainable energy and wind farms, she doesn't take them seriously--until someone turns up dead in one of her fields. A new play about the difficulty of change and the mythology of the American West.

## **THE PLAYWRIGHTS**

**Dorothy Fortenberry's** plays have been produced and developed by Actors' Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, Arena Stage, Center REpertory Company, Iama Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival, among others. She has received commissions from Ensemble Studio Theatre and Yale Rep. She is a winner of the 2011 Helen Merrill Award for Emerging Playwrights and a two-time Finalist for the O'Neill Conference. She lives in Los Angeles, where she writes for television, currently Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and she is writing a

screenplay for Paramount. Fortenberry is a winner of the 2011 Helen Merrill Award for Emerging Playwrights and holds an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

**Gabriel Jason Dean** is a Brooklyn / Austin based theatre-maker who originally hails from Atlanta, Georgia. His plays have been produced or developed throughout the United States. His play, *In Bloom*, was a finalist for the Laurents / Hatcher Award (no award given), received the Kennedy Center's Paula Vogel Prize, and was Runner-Up for the New Dramatist's Princess Grace Award. His play for children, *The Transition of Doodle Pequeño* received the American Alliance for Theatre & Education Distinguished Play Award, the New England Theatre Conference Aurand Harris Award and was selected for the Kennedy Center New Visions / New Voices Conference, Theatre for Young Audiences Award and was Runner-Up for the Harold & Mimi Steinberg National Playwriting Award. He is the recipient of the Essential Theatre New Play Prize and Austin's 2013 B. Iden Payne Award for "Best Original Script" and "Best Comedy" for *Qualities of Starlight*, received an Austin Critic's Table Award for "Best Production" for *Terminus* and his play *Pigskin* won the Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Festival. Other awards include the Kennedy Center's ACTF Ken Ludwig Prize for a body of work from an emerging writer, "Favorite Local Playwright" in Creative Loafing--Atlanta, and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs Playwriting Award. Fellowships include the Hodder Fellowship from Princeton University, James A. Michener Playwriting Fellowship, the Dramatist's Guild Fellowship and the Sallie B. Goodman / McCarter Theatre Fellowship. He has been a finalist for The O'Neill Theatre Conference, Portland Center Stage's JAW Festival, Bay Area Playwright's Festival, Page 73 Fellowship, the Julliard Wallace Fellowship, NNPN Smith Prize and Aurora Theatre Global Age Project. His scripts are published through Samuel French, Dramatic Publishing and Playscripts. Gabriel's poetry, fiction and journalism has been published in Snake Nation Review, The Tower, Eclectica Magazine, The Melic Review, The Louisville Review and Creative Loafing. Gabriel is currently on faculty for Spalding University's Brief-Residency MFA Program, is Visiting Writer in Residence at Muhlenberg College, an Affiliated Writer at The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis and a Usual Suspect at New York Theatre Workshop. BA: Oglethorpe University. MFA: UT-Austin Michener Center for Writers.

**P. Carl** is the Director and co-founder of HowlRound—a think tank and knowledge commons actively making community among theatremakers worldwide through online resource sharing and in-person gatherings. Carl is also the co-artistic director of ArtsEmerson at Emerson College where he develops, dramaturgs, and presents an eclectic array of theatre from diverse artists from around the globe. His most recent projects include commissioning and dramaturging Claudia Rankine's new play, *The White Card* to premiere in February of 2018, and dramaturgy for Melinda Lopez's *Mala*, and Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen's, *How to Be a Rock Critic*. Operating from the core belief that theatre is for everyone, Carl seeks to use the power of live performance in concert with opportunities for international dialogue and activism to foster personal and political transformation through the shared experience of art. Carl is a Distinguished Artist in Residence on the Emerson faculty, and a frequent writer and speaker on the evolution of theater practice and theory. He is the former Producing Artistic Director of the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, the former Director of Artistic Development at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago, and holds a PhD in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society from the University of Minnesota. Born in Elkhart, Indiana, Carl currently lives in Boston.  
<http://howlround.com/authors/p-carl>

A self-described occasional playwright, **Jeffery W. Jones'** work has been produced by The Bridge Theatre Company, Boston, and MCC's Sixth Act. Several of Jeff's short plays have received readings sponsored by Geva and Writers & Books, including *Home Work*, *Anniversary*, *For All Time*, *The Importance of Being...* and *Lost Things*. Jeff can also occasionally be seen on stage, where he has played Iago, Richard III, Malvolio and Henry IV for the Shakespeare Players, on whose steering committee he currently serves.

**Catherine Treischmann's** plays include *The Bridegroom of Blowing Rock*, *Crooked*, *How the World Began*, *Hot Georgia Sunday*, and *The Most Deserving*. Her work has been produced Off-Broadway at the Women's Project,

the Bush Theatre (London), Out of Joint at the Arcola Theatre (London), South Coast Repertory, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the New Theatre (Sydney), Florida Stage, the Summer Play Festival, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, American Theatre Company, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, among others. She has received commissions from South Coast Repertory, Manhattan Theatre Club, and the Denver Theatre Center. She is the recipient of the Weissberger Award, the Otis Guernsey New Voices Playwriting Award from the Inge Theatre Festival, and the Edgerton New Play Award. She also wrote the screenplay for the film *Angel's Crest*, which premiered at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival and was released by Magnolia Pictures. Originally from Athens, Georgia, she now lives in a small town in western Kansas.

## **THE DIRECTORS**

**Shelley Butler's** recent productions include the world premiere of Lucas Hnath's *A Doll's House Part 2* at South Coast Repertory and the Japanese premiere of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo. She has developed over two dozen new plays and musicals at companies including Ars Nova, Primary Stages, E.S.T., Women's Project, Hartford Stage, South Coast Repertory, Denver Center Theatre Company, Geva, New York Stage and Film, Dallas Lyric Stage, PlayPenn, New Dramatists, the Lark, New Georges, Dixon Place, The Playwright's Realm and Keen Company. Shelley is the recipient of a Drama League Directing Fellowship, a 2005 Director's Guild of America Trainee, a member of SDC, the Lincoln Center Directors' Lab and the Women's Project Directors Lab. Shelley spent two seasons as artistic associate in charge of new play development for Hartford Stage and three seasons as artistic associate for Great Lakes Theater Festival. Upcoming: *Human Error* by Eric Pfeffinger for the Denver Center Theatre Company.

Director **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. She has been the dramaturg for many Geva productions, including *1776; Almost, Maine; The Music Man; Company; Perfect Wedding; Wait Until Dark; Little Shop of Horrors; Spamalot; Red;* 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; *The Cripple of Inishmaan, Dublin Carol, A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Field, The Seafarer, and Philadelphia, Here I Come!* for Rochester Community Players' Irish Players; *Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado About Nothing, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* 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.