



Media Contact: Dawn Kellogg
Communications Manager
(585) 420-2059
dkellogg@gevatheatre.org

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***THE AGITATORS: The Story of Susan B. Anthony and
Frederick Douglass* by Mat Smart
IS THE BEST-SELLING WORLD PREMIERE IN GEVA'S
45-YEAR HISTORY**

Over 15,000 people saw this Geva-commissioned play.

Theatre filled to 97% capacity for each of the 32 public performances of the run.

Additionally, nearly 2,000 students from area schools attended sold out student matinees.

Rochester, N.Y., November 14, 2017 – Geva Theatre Center's production of *The Agitators: The Story of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass*, written by **Mat Smart** and directed by **Logan Vaughn**, was the best-selling world premiere and one of the best-selling dramas overall in the theatre's 45-year history. Over 15,000 people attended the production, crafted *in* Rochester, *for* Rochester over a four-week period with 32 public performances. Four additional student matinees were sold out and attracted students from the Rochester City School District, suburban schools and schools from as far away as Union Springs. As with *In the Heights*, the first production of the 2017-2018 Season, the theatre intentionally maintained low ticket prices to ensure that as many people from the Rochester community as possible were able to see this production about its two most famous citizens. The final week of performances was sold out with only standby tickets available.

When Geva commissioned this play from Mat Smart over two years ago, the vision was to produce it on the Wilson Stage in 2017 – to coincide with the centenary celebrations of Women's Suffrage in New York State. As 2020 approaches, marking the Centenary of the 19th Amendment, this play assumes an enduring and nationwide resonance.

Making their Geva debuts in *The Agitators* were **Cedric Mays** as Frederick Douglass and **Madeleine Lambert** as Susan B. Anthony. *The Agitators* was directed by **Logan Vaughn** and the creative team included **Jack Magaw** (scenic design), **Jessica Ford** (costume design), **Christine Binder** (lighting design), **David Wilson** (sound design), **Juliette Jones** (Composer), **Dave Bova** (Wigs and Makeup Design) and **Jenni Werner** (Literary Director/Resident Dramaturg).

Geva has a long history of premiering new work for the American theatre. Recent world premieres at Geva include *Other Than Honorable* by Jamie Pachino, *Katherine's Colored Lieutenant* by Nora Cole, *The Road to Where* by Cass Morgan, *Women in Jeopardy!* by Wendy McLeod, *Tinker to Evers to Chance* by Mat Smart, *Informed Consent* by Deborah Zoe Laufer and *The Book Club Play* by Karen Zacarías.

Over 11,000 people from all over the Greater Rochester region have subscribed to Geva's 2017-2018 Season – a testament to the shows, quality of productions and service that Geva offers. The number of Geva subscribers exceeds those of any Rochester-based sports teams or arts organizations. Geva's subscription base ranks in the top 25 in the nation, serving the 51st largest metro area. As a proud member of the Rochester community, Geva partners regularly with other area organizations. Geva would like to thank their community partners for *The Agitators*, **The National Susan B. Anthony House and Museum**, the **Rochester Historical Society** and the **Local History & Genealogy Division of the Rochester Public Library**, which gave playwright Mat Smart and dramaturg Jenni Werner access to their collections from the very inception of this project.

Productions at Geva are created right here *in Rochester for Rochester* - the theatre employs 51 full-time and over 200 part time staff and artists. Geva retains casting directors in New York City and, as with all its productions, auditions were held there and in Rochester this past spring. The cast of *The Agitators* began rehearsals at Geva on September 19. With any new play, script changes are to be anticipated and changes were made to the text right up until the official opening performance on October 21. Throughout the past two months of rehearsals and performances, the two Chicago-based cast members have been enjoying the sights, sounds and tastes of Rochester including visiting local landmarks (including the National Susan B. Anthony House and Museum, Mt. Hope Cemetery and the Frederick Douglass Monument) shopping in our stores and dining at area restaurants.

The 2017-2018 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union** and **Rochester Regional Health**. The Honorary Wilson Stage Series Sponsor is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. *The Agitators* was produced with support from Associate Producer **M & T Bank**; and Media Sponsors **13WHAM TV** and **WHAM 1180**. *The Agitators* was commissioned by Geva with support from the **New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature**. *The Agitators* was a recipient of an **Edgerton Foundation New Play Award**.

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:
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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.