



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

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DIVE INTO THE HORNETS' NEST AT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Geva's nationally recognized program of thought-provoking theatre begins on November 13 with *Molly's Hammer* by Tammy Ryan.

Rochester, N.Y., November 7, 2017 - Few experiences can ignite a great conversation like a thrilling night in the theatre. **The Hornets' Nest** series has theatre-goers itching for that conversation.

The Hornets' Nest series of script-in-hand readings with professional actors and directors returns with three plays investigating the most challenging and controversial ethical dilemmas of our time. Following each reading, audience members will have the opportunity to engage in open discussion with key figures from the Rochester community. Since its inception in 2007, the Hornets' Nest series of readings has become nationally recognized and lauded as one of the most innovative theatrical initiatives in the country.

The 2017-2018 series begins on **November 13** with ***Molly's Hammer* by Tammy Ryan**. In 1980, Molly Rush, a Pittsburgh housewife and mother of six, walked into a G.E. plant in King of Prussia, PA and took a hammer to the nosecone of a nuclear warhead in protest of the buildup on our nuclear arsenal. She and her fellow activists, the Plowshares 8, went to trial and spent time in prison. Was her action justified? Would it still be today? With the threat of the nuclear option *newly* suspended over our heads, an activist must decide "how far is too far?" How do we balance the need of a single voice to be heard with the knowledge that it may come at the expense of the family?

Tammy Ryan's award-winning plays have been produced across the country and internationally. She won the 2012 Francesca Primus Prize awarded by the American Theater Critics Association for her play, *Lost Boy Found in Whole Foods*, and in 2015 two of her plays, *Tar Beach* and *Molly's Hammer* were both nominated for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at The Alliance Theater Company, Dorset Theater Festival, Florida Stage, Marin Theater Company, The REP at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, City Theater, Bricolage, and the New Harmony Project and the Lark among others, and has been featured at NNPN's National Showcase of New Plays. In addition, her plays for young audiences have twice

received the National Playwriting for Youth Bonderman Award, including *The Music Lesson* which also received the American Alliance of Theatre in Education's Distinguished Play Award. Other honors include grants from the Heinz Endowments, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Creative Achievement Award and fellowships from Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Hambidge Center, the Sewanee Writers Conference and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Inspired by the book *Hammer of Justice*, by Liane Ellison Norman. *Molly's Hammer* premiered at the Repertory Theatre of St Louis in 2016.

Following the reading of *Molly's Hammer*, audience members will have the opportunity to discuss the questions that the play poses with a panel of members of the community brought together specifically for this event.

The play reading is at 7:00pm in the Fielding Stage. Tickets are free and, due to the popularity of this series, are limited to two per person. Reservations are recommended. Due to anticipated demand, all unclaimed tickets will be released at 6:45pm on the day of performance. Patron discretion is advised: *Molly's Hammer* deals with adult subject matter. To reserve tickets phone the Box Office: (585) 232-Geva (4382) or reserve online at www.gevatheatre.org.

The Hornets Nest series continues on March 20, 2017 and May 8, 2017.

The Fielding Stage is supported in part by the Gouvernet Arts Fund at The Rochester Area Community Foundation. Leadership support for the Hornet's Nest is provided by The Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Trust, and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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 Nextstage 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.

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