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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA THEATRE CENTER NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT / ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR *Acclaimed Director Pirronne Yousefzadeh to join Geva's Artistic Staff.*

Rochester, NY. September 12, 2018 – Artistic Director Mark Cuddy and Executive Director Christopher Mannelli have announced that **Pirronne Yousefzadeh** will be joining Geva Theatre Center in the newly-created position of **Director of Engagement / Associate Artistic Director**. She will be a member of the senior leadership team and will be responsible for planning, leading and growing the organization's community engagement efforts. She will also be a key member of the artistic staff, participating in season planning and directing productions in both the Wilson and Fielding Stages. Ms. Yousefzadeh will begin her new position in September, and relocate to Rochester in the spring of 2019. Geva's new Engagement Department is supported in part by a grant from the Allen and Joyce Boucher fund of the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

"In recent years, Geva has been a true artistic home for me as a freelance director," said **Pirronne Yousefzadeh**. "I am thrilled for this opportunity to help build upon Geva's legacy of artistic excellence as an advocate for new voices and a passionate, sustained, and expansive vision for community engagement."

"We are indeed fortunate to welcome Pirronne to Rochester and the Geva family" states **Artistic Director Mark Cuddy**. "Her collaborative talent, fierce intellect, and passionate advocacy for underrepresented voices make her a dynamic addition to our senior team. We are dedicated to impacting our region through our art form, and Pirronne will help lead our considerable efforts."

"Connecting to our community is at the core of what we do," says **Executive Director Chris Mannelli**. "With Pirronne's addition to the Geva team, we have an amazing opportunity to further elevate our work and serve the community with even greater impact. We could not be more excited for what the future holds."

Prior to joining the artistic staff, Ms. Yousefzadeh directed *The Lake Effect* by Rajiv Joseph and the world premiere of *Heartland* by Gabriel Jason Dean at Geva Theatre Center, and later this season she will direct the

Kitchen Theatre Company's production of *The Royale*, part of Geva's Fielding Studio Series. Upcoming productions include *A Doll's House, Part 2* by Lucas Hnath at Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Mr. Burns* by Anne Washburn at Wesleyan University; and *Once* by Enda Walsh, Glen Hansard & Markéta Irglová for Pioneer Theatre Company.

She has directed and developed new work at The Public/Joe's Pub, Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Ars Nova, Soho Rep, New Georges, Partial Comfort Productions, Noor Theatre, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, La Jolla Playhouse, Huntington Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, InterAct Theatre Company, and Hangar Theatre, among others. Pirronne is a Usual Suspect at New York Theatre Workshop, New Georges Affiliated Artist, member of Ensemble Studio Theatre, Resident Director at Colt Coeur, a recipient of SDC's Denham Fellowship and Williamstown's Sagal Fellowship, and an alumna of the 2050 Fellowship at NYTW, Drama League Directors Project, Lincoln Center Directors Lab, New Georges Jam, and Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab. From 2013-2016, Pirronne was a member of Rising Circle Theater Collective, a New York based theatre company dedicated to the work of artists of color. In those three years, she created a season-long series of community events designed to foster new artistic relationships and deepen audience engagement, and worked with fellow collective members to produce *This Time* by Sevan Kaloustian Greene (NY Times Critics' Pick).

Pirronne is a founding member of Maia Directors, a consulting group for artists and organizations engaging with stories from the Middle East and beyond. She received her M.F.A. from Columbia University and is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC).

**For further information, or to arrange an interview with Ms. Yousefzadeh, please contact:
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Attached Photo: Pirronne Yousefzadeh

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 516-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's New Play Reading Series and the Hornet's 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.

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