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DIVE INTO THE HORNETS' NEST AT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Geva's nationally recognized program of thought-provoking theatre begins on October 15 with *The Cake* by Bekah Brunstetter.

Rochester, N.Y., October 8, 2018 - 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 2018-2019 series begins on **October 15** with ***The Cake* by Bekah Brunstetter**. Della makes cakes, not judgment calls – those she leaves to her husband, Tim. But when the girl she helped raise comes back home to North Carolina to get married, and the fiancé is actually a fiancée, Della's life gets turned upside down. She can't really make a cake for such a wedding, can she? Is it right to follow our moral principles, even when they hurt someone we care about? Can exercising religious freedom become a form of discrimination? Can the right to freedom of religion be limited?

Playwright **Bekah Brunstetter** hails from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and currently lives in Los Angeles. In addition to *The Cake* (Ojai Playwrights Conference), her plays include *Going to a Place where you already are* (South Coast Repertory), *The Oregon Trail* (Portland Center Stage Fall 2016; O'Neill Playwrights Conference; Flying V) *Cutie and Bear* (Roundabout commission) *A Long and Happy Life* (Naked Angels Commission), *Be a Good Little Widow* (Ars Nova, Collaboraction, The Old Globe), *Oohrah!* (The Atlantic Theater, Steppenwolf Garage, the Finborough Theatre/London), *Nothing is the end of the World (except for the end of the world)* (Waterwell productions), *House of Home* (Williamstown Theater Festival) and *Miss Lilly Gets Boned* (Ice Factory Festival.) She is an alumni of the CTG Writers Group, Primary Stages writers group, Ars

Nova Play Group, The Playwright's Realm, and the Women's Project Lab. She is currently a member of the Echo Theater's Playwright's group. She has previously written for MTV ("Underemployed;" "I Just Want my Pants Back") ABC Family's "Switched at Birth," and Starz's upcoming series "American Gods." She is currently a Co-Producer on NBC's "This is Us."

The cast for *The Cake* includes **Danielle Davis**, **Keith Kupferer**, **Tara Mallen**, and **Tuckie White**, all of whom are making their Geva Theatre Center debuts.

The reading of *The Cake* is directed by **Lauren Shouse**. Ms Shouse is a director, dramaturg and teacher and is currently the Associate Artistic Director at Chicago's Northlight Theatre. Her recent directing credits include: *The Cake* at Rivendell Theatre; *The Legend of Georgia McBride* at Northlight Theatre; *Nice Girl* and *Betrayal* at Raven Theatre; *Avenue Q*, *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn*, *Superior Donuts*, and *A Christmas Story* at Nashville Repertory Theatre; the world premiere of *Long Way Down* with 3Ps productions (nominated for American Theatre Critics Association Steinberg New Play Award 2011); the world premiere of *Religion and Rubber Ducks* with Ovvio Arte; *Parallel Lives*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The Last Five Years* and *Chess in Concert* with Street Theatre Company; the world premiere of *Rear Widow* at Chaffin's Barn Theatre, and Sylvia Plath's *3 Women*. As Artistic Associate at Nashville Rep, Lauren directed the Ingram New Works Play Lab and Festival, which developed new works by John Patrick Shanley, David Auburn, Steven Dietz and Victoria Stewart. Lauren also co-founded Ten Minute Playhouse, a company that produces short plays by local playwrights.

Following the reading of *The Cake*, audience members will have the opportunity to discuss the questions that the play poses with a panel of members of the community, or "Instigators," brought together specifically for this event. Instigators for *The Cake* are Attorney **Milo Primeaux, Esq.**; **Mark Brummitt**, Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and **Philip Duquette**, Co-Owner of Premier Pastry.

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: *The Cake* 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 25, 2019 and May 20, 2019.

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 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 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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