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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Geva to Host Author and Broadcaster
Michael Lasser
in Conversation with Artistic Director Mark Cuddy**

Lasser's new book, *City Songs and American Life*, takes readers on a fascinating journey through the Great American Songbook.

August 19, 2019, Rochester, N.Y. Geva Theatre Center is delighted to announce that author and broadcaster **Michael Lasser** will be in conversation with Artistic Director Mark Cuddy in the **Fielding Stage at 7pm on September 23**. Lasser's third book, *City Songs and American Life* (University of Rochester Press: \$34.50), has been recently published, and he will be appearing at Geva to talk about this latest book.

Michael Lasser is a former teacher and theatre critic and is host of the syndicated public radio show *Fascinatin' Rhythm* (winner of the Peabody Award) and the author of two previous books.

Nothing defines the songs of the Great American Songbook more centrally than their urban sensibility. During the first half of the twentieth century, songwriters such as Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields, George and Ira Gershwin, and Thomas "Fats" Waller flourished in New York City, the home of Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Harlem. Through their songs, these artists described America -- not its geography or politics, but its heart -- to Americans and to the world at large.

In *City Songs and American Life, 1900-1950*, Michael Lasser offers an evocative and probing account of the popular songs -- including some written originally for the stage or screen -- that America heard, sang, and danced to during the turbulent first half of the twentieth century. Many songs portrayed the glamor of Broadway or the energy and Jazz Age culture of Harlem. But a city-bred spirit -- or even a specifically New York City way of feeling and talking -- also infused other widely known and loved songs, stretching from the early decades of the century to the Twenties (the age of the flapper, bathtub gin, and women's right to vote), the Great Depression, and, finally, World War II. Lasser's deftly written book demonstrates how the soul of city life

-- as echoed in the nation's songs -- developed and changed in tandem with economic, social, and political currents in America as a whole.

Following the 7pm discussion with Mark Cuddy in the Fielding Stage, Lasser will be signing copies of his book, which will be available for purchase.

Tickets for the event are free, but reservations are required. You may reserve your seats via Geva's website: www.GevaTheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at (585) 232-4382.

GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's flagship professional theatre, Geva 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 20,000 students.

Geva operates two venues – the 516-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage and the 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage. As one of the country's leading theatre companies and a member of the national League of Resident Theatres, Geva produces a varied contemporary repertoire from musicals to world premieres celebrating the rich tapestry of our diverse community. The theatre draws upon the talents of some of the country's top actors, directors, designers and writers who are shaping the American Theatre scene.

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.

For more information: GevaTheatre.org

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