

NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE



For Immediate Release:

Press Contacts:

Joanne King

E: joanne@anatgerstein.com C: 347-361-7049

Jeff Simmons

E: jeff@anatgerstein.com C: 917-673-0024

Nate Svogun

E: nate@anatgerstein.com C: 347-853-2980

**National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene –
The company that brought you *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* in Yiddish –
Unveils Its Season of “Spiritual Resistance”**

**-- 105th Season Includes: Theatrical Productions, Concerts and Readings.
Artistic responses to oppression.
--Tickets are available at www.nytf.org**

(MAY 2, 2019, New York, NY)— On the heels of its spectacular, sold-out run of the Yiddish presentation of *Fiddler on The Roof*, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene (NYTF) has announced the 2019-2020 season. For the first time ever, NYTF will present a season with four mainstage productions with a flexible season subscription. The productions, concerts and readings were curated to accompany the incoming exhibit *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away* on display at the Museum of Jewish Heritage beginning on May 8, 2019.

The mainstage productions are the Drama Desk Award nominated *Hannah Senesh*, a restored Yiddish musical gem *Di Kishefmakherin (The Sorceress)*, the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Michael Korie’s new opera *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* presented in partnership with New York City Opera, and a newly commissioned Yiddish translation of Paddy Chayefsky’s Tony Award nominated *The Tenth Man*.

NYTF's signature programming is primarily held at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, Edmond J. Safra Plaza, 36 Battery Place, Battery Park, Lower Manhattan. Tickets and information are available at www.nytf.org.

“This upcoming season, **the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene** will focus on works that explore the themes of resistance and the triumph of the spirit. We are in residence at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, which is presenting ***Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.*** As their artistic collaborators, we will offer theatrical experiences through the filter of how oppression shapes us and inspires us as individuals and as a community in the worst possible circumstances,” said NYTF's Artistic Director, **Zalmen Mlotek**. “It is our mission to keep finding new ways to present the Yiddish cultural experience. With new audiences interested in our work because of the phenomenal success of our *Fiddler*, we offer a rich exciting season of new work, revered plays, and passionate performances.”

Additional programming will be announced later this year. But just in the coming months, rounding out the 2018-2019 season, will be City Parks Foundation SummerStage on June 12, 2019, a free event in Central Park that showcases The New York Cantors as seen on PBS.

2019-2020 MAINSTAGE SEASON

HANNAH SENESH (a play with music and song)

An award-winning play. Written and Directed by David Schechter.

Developed in collaboration with Lori Wilner.

Based upon the diaries and poems of Hannah Senesh, translated from the Hungarian by Marta Cohn and Peter Hay

Music composed and arranged by Steven Lutvak.

Previews July 24 – 28, 2019; Performances July 29 – August 18, 2019

On the eve of the Holocaust, many left Europe for Palestine to save themselves. Very few went back to save others.

This one-woman show tells the true story of Hannah Senesh, the heroic young Jewish woman who escaped from Axis-allied Hungary in 1939 to the safety of British Mandate Palestine. There she joined the Haganah and then bravely volunteered for a daring Special Operations mission to parachute back into Europe to save Jews from the approaching Holocaust. Hannah's story and indomitable spirit, along with the moving diary and poetry that she left behind, serve as an enduring inspiration to people everywhere standing up to the powers of hatred and oppression.

In English.

Tickets: Previews starts at \$39 | Performances start at \$49

THE SORCERESS (DI KISHEFMAKHERIN)

by Avrom Goldfaden

Directed by Motl Didner

Musical Direction by Zalmen Mlotek

Choreographed by Merete Muentner

Previews December 1-5, 2019; Performances December 8 – 29, 2019

This delightful operetta by Avrom Goldfaden is one of the very earliest works of Yiddish theatre and the first to be produced in America. This is a fairytale-like story of a pure-hearted young woman who triumphs over her tormentors, a scheming stepmother and a wicked witch. The fully restored orchestrations are based, in part, on pre-Holocaust musical arrangements which were saved from destruction at the hands of the Nazis by the famed "Paper Brigade" of the YIVO in Vilna, who risked their lives to save thousands of unique documents and manuscripts. This fully-staged work is the culmination of a project which NYTF began in 2017 to restore this classic.

NYTF's Global Restoration Initiative identifies the best examples of Yiddish operettas, musicals and plays, reassembles librettos and scores in a digital format (rendering them useable to artists and scholars) and presents the work to audiences, often for the first time in a half century or more.

In Yiddish with English and Russian subtitles.

Tickets: Previews starts at \$49 | Performances start at \$59

THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS

presented in partnership with the New York City Opera
the world premiere of a new opera

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon, Libretto by Michael Korie

based on the novel by Giorgio Bassani, which was adapted for the Oscar Award Winning Best Foreign Language Film of 1970

4 shows only! Wednesday, Feb 12, 2020 - Tuesday, Feb 18, 2020

The aristocratic Italian-Jewish Finzi-Contini family owns a stunning estate. As World War II rages around them, their lush garden becomes a refuge for the Jews of Ferrara, who are being increasingly excluded from Italian society. The family's denial of the persecution of the Jews of Europe, which is systematically taking place around them, is the setting for a beautiful love story to unfold. But as Mussolini's government collapses and the Germans occupy Italy, the Holocaust abruptly ends the safety of their illusory isolation.

In English

Tickets: Previews starts at \$49 | Performances start at \$59

Tickets available soon!

THE TENTH MAN

by Paddy Chayefsky (three-time Academy Award-winning author of *Network*, *Marty* and *The Hospital*) in a newly commissioned Yiddish translation and directed by Tony Award-nominated director Eleanor Reissa.

Previews May 17-21, 2020; Performances May 21 – June 11, 2020

Set in a small suburban synagogue, the Tony Award-nominated play, THE TENTH MAN is an American retelling of the dybbuk story as a touching human comedy in which we must question who is really possessed: the young passionate religious granddaughter of one of the elderly congregants or the successful yet cynical Manhattan lawyer? This play captures the struggle between Jewish generations, youth and old age, cynics and believers, scientists and mystics with a moving and surprising outcome.

In Yiddish with English and Russian translation supertitles.

Tickets: Previews starts at \$39 | Performances start at \$49
Tickets available soon!

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS INCLUDE

The Golem (Staged Reading) – SOLD OUT

by H. Leivick

Directed Motl Didner

Tuesday May 7, 2019 at 7 PM

This groundbreaking 1922 dramatic poem is among the most important works of the Yiddish theater, tracing the roots of anti-Semitism and the blood libel which has been the pretext for anti-Semitic violence for centuries.

THE NEW YORK CANTORS

In association with Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage

Wednesday June 12, 2019 at 7 PM

At SummerStage in Central Park

Originally airing on PBS in 2018, The New York Cantors features three young Cantorial superstars who lead three vibrant congregations in the New York area. **Azi Schwartz** leads at Park Avenue Synagogue, **Yanky Lemmer** leads at Lincoln Square Synagogue and **Netanel Hershtik** leads at The Hamptons Synagogue. They will be accompanied by a 16 piece orchestra, conducted by NYTF Artistic Director **Zalmen Mlotek**. Special guests joining the show include **Shulem**, a young Chassidic singing star and recently signed Universal Music/ Decca Gold recording artist; Grammy-winning klezmer icon **Frank London**, a founding member of the Klezmatics, who will perform the world premiere of his new klezmer concerto for trumpet.; and emcee **Rabbi Joseph Potasnik**, Chairman of the New York Board of Rabbis and co-host of "The Rabbi and the Rev" weekly radio program on WABC.

FREE OUTDOOR CONCERT (seating on a first come, first served basis)

WHEN BLOOD RAN RED (Enhanced Reading)

by Ben Gonshor

Directed by Kenneth Ferrone

Sunday, June 16, 2019 at 2 PM and 6 PM

This new, award-winning work, ***When Blood Ran Red***, chronicles the darkest era in the Soviet Union, when former wartime heroes of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were persecuted as enemies of the state for daring to report on the truth of the Holocaust in the German-occupied East. ***When Blood Ran Red*** is a winner of the NYTF David and Clare Rosen Memorial Play contest.

In English.

Tickets are \$25.

THE WALL

By Millard Lampell

From the novel by John Hersey

Tuesday, July 30, 2019 at 7 PM

This staged reading of the Broadway play with songs by Millard Lampell is based on the novel by John

Hersey. It is the inspiring story of forty men and women who escape the Warsaw Ghetto, facing the Nazi persecution and their own struggles against dehumanizing cruelty. "The Wall (Lampell)" is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company.

In English.

FREE staged reading (RSVP Required)

THE MIRACLE IN THE WARSAW GHETTO (DER NES IN GETO)

Tuesday, August 13, 2019 at 7 PM

A staged reading of a play by H. Leivick, remarkably written just 18 months after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It is an historic dramatic account of the brave resistance of a small group of Jews who kept an implacable enemy at bay for 30 days, told through one family and their neighbors.

In Yiddish with English subtitles.

FREE staged reading (RSVP Required)

BAR KOKHBA

by Avrom Goldfaden

Sunday, September 22, 2019 at 2 PM

NYTF's Restoration Project continues with a concert version of the acclaimed 1883 Yiddish operetta chronicling the heroic Jewish uprising against the Roman occupation of ancient Judea. The premiere of this work in Imperial Russia sparked a ban on Yiddish theatre.

In Yiddish with English subtitles.

Tickets start at \$35

SOUL TO SOUL (An Annual MLK Jr. Day Tradition)

Sunday, January 19, 2020, at 2 PM and 6 PM

An electrifying concert exploring the intersections between African-American and Yiddish musical traditions during the Civil Rights Era. It includes Yiddish theatre songs, songs of Jewish immigrants, jazz and classic spirituals. Conceived and directed by NYTF Artistic Director Zalmen Mlotek, it stars Lisa Fishman, Cantor Magda Fishman, Elmore James and Tony Perry.

In Yiddish and English with English supertitles.

Tickets start at \$35

GHETTO TANGO

Originally conceived, performed and recorded by Zalmen Mlotek and Adrienne Cooper.

April 2020

A remarkably moving and uplifting concert capturing the spiritual resistance of European Jews during the Holocaust era told through music and spoken word as documented in the artistic creations of Jews in Warsaw, Lodz, Vilna and Cracow ghettos, partisan encampments, labor camps and later in displaced persons camps.

In Yiddish and English with English subtitles.

Tickets start at \$35

THE INVESTIGATION

3 Performances around NYC with 1 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust (Date TBA)

Presented in partnership with Theater of War Productions, this 1965 play by Peter Weiss is adapted from the transcripts of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials of 1963-1965, when 22 mid- and lower-level Nazi officials were tried for crimes against humanity in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. A diverse cast of performers will read selections from the play, followed by community panelist responses, culminating in a facilitator-led audience discussion. In addition to the reading at the Museum, THE INVESTIGATION will also be read at two other venues around NYC, to be announced.

In English.

FREE

And there's more on the horizon (with further details to be released at a later date):

Invite the Folksbiene Troupe to your community! These young performers are passionate about bringing Yiddish language performances to audiences everywhere. To find out more about having the Folksbiene Troupe perform at a venue near you, contact Motl Didner at mdidner@nytf.org.

For tickets visit NYTF.org or call 212-213-2120 Ext. 200. For group sales and membership call 212-213-2120 Ext. 204.

Now celebrating its 105th season, Tony Award-nominated and Drama Desk Award-winning **National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene (NYTF)** is the longest consecutively producing theatre in the US and the world's oldest continuously operating Yiddish theatre company. NYTF is in residence at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust**. Under the artistic direction of Zalmen Mlotek, NYTF is dedicated to creating a living legacy through the arts, connecting generations and bridging communities. NYTF aims to bring history to life by reviving and restoring lost and forgotten work, commissioning new work, and adapting pre-existing work for the 21st Century. Serving a diverse audience comprised of performing arts patrons, cultural enthusiasts, Yiddish-language aficionados and the general public, the company presents plays, musicals, concerts, lectures, interactive educational workshops and community-building activities in English and Yiddish, with English and Russian supertitles accompanying performances. NYTF provides access to a century-old cultural legacy and inspires the imaginations of the next generation to contribute to this valuable body of work.

The **Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** will present the most comprehensive exhibition about Auschwitz ever seen in North America, ***Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.*** from May 8, 2019 – January 3, 2020. (Tickets are available now at auschwitz.nyc.) The exhibition features more than 700 original objects and photographs from over 20 international institutions, including rare artifacts. As visitors walk through the 20 thematic galleries, they will see the development of Nazi ideology and the transformation of Auschwitz from an ordinary Polish town known as Oświęcim to the most significant Nazi site of the Holocaust—at which ca. 1 million Jews, and tens of thousands of others, were murdered. This exhibition was produced in partnership with the international exhibition firm Musealia and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland.

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