

NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE

AT

NYF



MUSEUM OF
JEWISH HERITAGE
A LIVING MEMORIAL
TO THE HOLOCAUST

EDMOND J. SAFRA HALL



פליטים צוזאמען

pleytem tsuzamen

Refugees Together



**MUSEUM OF
JEWISH HERITAGE**
A LIVING MEMORIAL
TO THE HOLOCAUST

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Survivors:
Faces of Life
After the Holocaust

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to the Museum of Jewish Heritage –
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Museum's exhibitions for one person.

Expiration: June 30, 2023

פאלקסבינע

National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene

(Zalmen Mlotek, Artistic Director, Dominick Balletta, Executive Director)

at

Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

and

Waletzky Music

co-present the American Premiere of a new Yiddish Theatrical Concert

פליטים צוזאמען

pleytem tsuzamen

Refugees Together

Presented with English and Ukrainian subtitles

Music and lyrics by

Josh Waletzky

Book by

Jeyn Levison

Directed by

Michael Barakiva

Featuring

Daniel Kahn, Sveta Kundish, Sasha Lurje, Merlin Shepherd, Polina Shepherd,
Ilya Shneyveys, Jake Shulman-Ment, Beth Silver, Deborah Strauss, Josh Waletzky

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March 26, 2023

At Edmond J. Safra Hall

Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Originally commissioned by: Yiddish Summer Weimar

Cast

(alphabetically)



Kahn Daniel



Kundish Sveta



Sasha Lurje



Merlin Shepherd



Polina Shepherd



Ilya Shneyveys



Jake Shulman-Ment



Beth Silver



Deborah Straus



Josh Waletzky

Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

NIGN AKHDES / Song of Solidarity	Company
HOST ZIKH MIT DAYN NIGN / You, With Your Melody	Border Crosser
DI FINFTE KASHE / The Fifth Question	Questioner
DEM SHTAYG ARIBER / Beyond the Cage	Songbird
YEDER FOYGL A DINOZAVER / Every Bird A Dinosaur.....	Host
NISHT DERFAR / Not Because.....	Border Crosser
GOLD UN BROYN-UN-BLO / Gold and Black-And-Blue.....	True Heart
UN DER ZEYGER GEYT / And The Clock Is Running	Questioner, Host, Company

ACT TWO

EREV FRILING / On the Eve of Spring	Two Violins
UNDZER SHMUESL / Our Little Talk	True Heart and Songbird
MAYNE, DAYNE, UNZERE / Mine, Yours, Ours	Questioner
GEY MIT MIR A TENTSL / Dance With Me a Little	True Heart
DI HEYBNS TSVEY / The Two Midwives	Songbird
A GLIK HOT MIR GETROFN / My Lucky Day	Border Crosser, Questioner, Host, Company
PLEYTEM TSUZAMEN / Refugees Together	Company

Artists Notes

pleytem tsuzamen / Refugees Together / פליטים צוזאַמען is a call for solidarity in threatened and threatening times—no matter where you find yourself on this blue marble. The songs, composed in a displaced language, are written for all displaced people, whether by political violence, climate disaster, foster care, or any other forces that move us from place to place.

We hope that *Refugees Together* connects you not only to our community but to your own, and helps us all foster the courage we need to “link arms and take to the streets together against bloodshed and hatred.”

Jeyn Levison and Josh Waletzky

Who's Who

Michael Barakiva (*director*) is an Armenian/Israeli-American director, writer, and producer who lives with his husband in NYC. He is Founder and Creative Director of Novel Readings (www.novelreadings.com), a company that uses the performance of text to produce social justice events and develop writers' work, and was the Artistic Director of the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY (2015-2020). Michael is the author of two award-winning queer romantic comedy young adult novels, *One Man Guy* and its sequel *Hold My Hand* as well as the upcoming contemporary YA fantasy epic *These Precious Stones*. The recipient of multiple fellowships, grants, and residencies, Michael has presented at the National Puppet Theatre in Sofia, Bulgaria, as well as at the International Theater Festival at UNAM in Mexico City. He is a graduate of Vassar College and the Juilliard School, where he studied as an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Directing.

Detroit-born, Hamburg-based troubadour **Daniel Kahn** (*voice, accordion, guitar; Questioner*) mixes Yiddish, English, German, klezmer, punk, and folk. His projects and groups include The Painted Bird, Brothers Nazaroff, Semer Ensemble, The Internationale, Bulat Blues, the solo album *word beggar*, and his forthcoming duo with Jake Shulman-Ment, *The Building & Other Songs*. He played the original Perchik in Folksbiene's hit *Fidler afn Dakh*, Biff in New Yiddish Rep's *Death of a Salesman*, and the Badkhn in the Netflix series *Unorthodox*. He works frequently as composer and actor at Hamburg's Thalia and Berlin's Gorki Theater and co-founded the Shtetl Berlin festival.

Sveta Kundish (*voice; True Heart*) was born in Chernobyl, Ukraine and moved to Israel with her family at the age of 13. Now based in Germany, Sveta is a cantor in the Jewish community of Braunschweig—the first female cantor in the history of the Jewish communities of Lower Saxony. Sveta performs throughout Europe and is regularly featured with Patrick Farrell, Alan Bern, the Trickster Orchestra, and Regalim Kapelye. A frequent teacher and performer at Yiddish Summer Weimar, Klezkanada, Ashkenaz, Shtetl Berlin, Klezmore Vienna, and LvivKlezFest. She plays the singer Rushka in the Hollywood film *Harry Haft* by Oscar-winning director Barry Levinson.

Jeyn Levison (*book*) is a playwright, screenwriter, creative producer, and social justice strategist in pro-democracy and racial, gender, disability, LGBTQ+, and Jewish justice movements. Theatrical writing credits include *Shtil*, *Mayn Corazon - A Yiddish Tango Cabaret*, *Don't Kiss Me I'm In Training*, *The Scams Of Scapin*, *Wissotsky's Tea*, *Ezekiel's World*, *Hell Is Other People*, and *The Last Dybbuk*. Screenwriting credits include *Copy Shop*, *Sorry!*, *You're So Vein*, and with Steve Klausner, *Straight As An Arrow*, *The Golem Of Avenue B*, and *Queen Of Thieves*. Jeyn is the former Director of Performing Arts at the JCC Manhattan, Creative Producer of the Jewish Plays Project, and 2014 LABA fellow. A recipient of multiple grants, awards, and residencies for playwriting, Jeyn has taught theater at KlezKanada, Yiddish New York, and Bates College and holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU.

Sasha Lurje (*voice; Songbird*) was born in Riga, Latvia, and has been singing since she was three years old. A performer of folk, jazz, rock, and pop, since 2003 Sasha has researched traditional Yiddish singing style and repertoire, and, with her band Forshpil, integrating the traditional sound into a modern context. Sasha is a co-founder of the Berlin Yiddish music festival Shtetl Neukölln, a member of Alan Bern's all-star band Semer Ensemble, and a longstanding artist and faculty member at Yiddish Summer Weimar. Sasha has collaborated with Daniel Kahn on STRANGELOVESONGS and with the Brooklyn-based band Litvakus on Goyfriend.

Sam Morales (*associate director*) is an Actor, Director & Educator. Her upcoming directing work includes *Emilie: La Marquis De Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight* by Laura Gunderson at The University of Scranton. As an Actor, her credits are as follows: Off-Broadway: *Medea* (starring Rose Byrne & Bobby Cannavale, BAM); *The Tempest* (The Public); *Pericles* (dir. Trevor Nunn), *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Measure for Measure* (TFANA); *The Courage to Right A Woman's Wrongs*, *Paradise Lost*, *Volpone* (Red Bull Theater). Regional: *The Mousetrap* (Hartford Stage); *The House on the Hill* (World Premiere, CATF); *Woman in Mind* (Delaware REP); *Teach, Last Night in Inwood* (Gulfshore Playhouse). Television: *Blue Bloods*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *FBI*. As an Educator, she is the current Academic

Department Director for On Camera Performance at AMDA. She's represented by DGRW. officialsam-morales.com.

Merlin Shepherd (*clarinet*) is one of the world's leading players of Eastern European klezmer clarinet. Born in Wales, based in Brighton UK, Merlin has performed and recorded throughout Europe, including with Budowitz and the Klezmatics. Merlin has been musical director and musician at the Royal National Theatre London, Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre London, and for Paula Vogel's *Indecent* at London's Menier Chocolate Factory. He has taught at all the world's leading Klezmer seminars and workshops. Merlin's recent recordings include Sklamberg & the Shepherds *Aheym – Homeward*; Hamsa *Lawless, Winged & Unconfined*, and Terry Pack's *Trees - Into the Woods*.

Polina Shepherd (*voice, pianist, Border Crosser*) is a prolific composer, performer, educator, and cultural activist, originally from Siberia, now living in Brighton UK. Grew up singing with her grandfather at gatherings of her Cossack / Jewish family and later joined Simcha—Russia's first post-Perestroika klezmer band. Since her early 20s she has been a Yiddish choir leader, composer, bandleader, singer, an international touring musician, educator and festival organizer, touring internationally with her Quartet Ashkenazim. Among her latest projects is 150 Voices in collaboration with Lorin Sklamberg of the Klezmatics and five choirs in the UK and the USA.

Originally from Riga, Latvia, now based in Brooklyn, NY, **Ilya Shneyveys** (*accordion*) is a multi-instrumentalist, educator, composer, arranger, and producer of Yiddish music. With expertise spanning from traditional klezmer accordion to experimental and fusion projects, Ilya performs and teaches at Jewish festivals around the world, in venues ranging from local bars to Carnegie Hall. Ilya is a founding member of Berlin's Neukölln Klezmer Sessions and Shtetl Berlin, and a long-time faculty member of Yiddish Summer Weimar. His notable projects and collaborations include Forshpil, Alpen Klezmer, KaraYam, Caravan Orchestra, Dobranotch, Shekedina, Michael Winograd and The Klezmatics. Ilya has received multiple awards for his work. <https://ilya.shneyveys.com/>

Born in New York City, **Jake Shulman-Ment** (*violin*) tours and records internationally as a soloist and with Midwood, Daniel Kahn, Frank London, Di Naye Kapelye, and Joey Weisenberg. He was featured in Csaba Bereczki's documentary film *Soul Exodus*, HBO's *Succession*, and Martin

Scorcese's *The Irishman*. He studied and performed traditional music in Romania as a Fulbright scholar, and has traveled in Hungary and Greece, learning traditional violin styles. Jake's debut solo album, *A Redele (A Wheel)* was nominated for the German Record Critics' Award and his new group, Midwood, released its first album, *Out of the Narrows* in 2018.

Based in Toronto, **Beth Silver** (*cello*) is equally at home in traditional classical ensembles, band arranging, and exploring new voices for cello, Beth has performed with chamber projects at festivals around the world, including Salzburg's Kammermusik Festival, Ottawa Chamber Festival, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Glatt und Verkehrt Festival in Austria, Ashkenaz Fest, Tirgan Festival, and KlezKanada. Presented across Canada by Jeunesses Musicales, Prairie Debut, and Debut Atlantic as part of the Ladom Ensemble—and recipient of grants from the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council, Beth's awards include the 2014 Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award recognizing musical achievement in the Canadian Jewish community.

Deborah Strauss (*violin*) is one of the leading klezmer violinists of her generation. With her husband, Cantor Jeff Warschauer, she has performed and taught at venues worldwide. Deborah was a long-time member of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, and has performed with Itzhak Perlman, Theodore Bikel, and the Klezmatics. Deborah is the co-author, with Alan Bern, of *Klezmer Duets for Violin and Accordion*, published in 2017 by Universal Edition, Vienna. Deborah studied violin at Rutgers University, ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago, and is currently studying for an MSW at Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work.

Josh Waletzky (*composer, lyricist; voice; Host*) has sung, taught, and composed Yiddish music all his life. Chana Mlotek called his groundbreaking CD of original Yiddish songs, *Crossing the Shadows* "a classic of the American-Jewish folk revival." Upon the release of his newest album of original Yiddish songs, *PASAZHIRN/Passengers*, Mark Slobin hailed Waletzky as "the poet-laureate of new Yiddish songwriting." Waletzky co-produced the Grammy-nominated CD *Partisans of Vilna* and has taught Yiddish song internationally, including at Klezkanada, Yiddish New York, and Yiddish Summer Weimar. An award-winning documentary filmmaker, Waletzky sound-edited the Academy Award-winning film *Harlan County, USA*; directed the films *Image Before My Eyes* and *Partisans of Vilna*; directed Academy Award-nominated *Music for the*

Movies: Bernard Herrmann, and edited the Emmy Award-winning *Itzhak Perlman: In the Fiddler's House*. More recently, he directed and composed the music for four documentaries on Yiddish writers: Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman, Itche Goldberg; Chava Rosenfarb, and Yonia Fain.

Creative Team

Angela Baughman (*Sound Designer*) is a multidisciplinary sound designer whose work spans over 70 theatrical productions, as well as film, radio, live sound, and recording. Selected Theatrical Designs: *Heartland*, 59E59 (associate for designer Kate Marvin); *A Christmas Memory*, The Whale Theatre & Tectonic Theater Project; *School Girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play*, Pittsburgh Public Theater. Selected Other Work: *The Clearing* (2021 London Independent Film Festival award winner); "We Are Nature" (VR experience, Carnegie Museum of Natural History); Monitor engineering for jazz legends touring through MCG Jazz. B.M., Berklee College of Music. Thatsoundgirl.com

Miriam Nilofa Crowe (*Lighting Designer*) is a New York-based lighting designer for theatre, dance and live music. Selected venues include Carnegie Hall, BAM Next Wave, Lincoln Center Festival, St. Ann's Warehouse, The Public, La Mama, HERE, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Apollo Theater, New York City Center, Country Music Hall of Fame, and the Hollywood Bowl. Miriam has toured extensively with Grammy-winners Lila Downs and Rosanne Cash and is an Adjunct Professor in NYU Tisch Drama's Production and Design Studio. A proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829, Miriam holds an MFA in Design from the Yale School of Drama and a BA in English from Yale College.

Shoko Kambara (*set design consultant*) is currently transforming 16000 square feet of the Park Central Hotel in New York City into *The Great Gatsby: The Immersive Experience*. Recent projects include the 2022 Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute Exhibit In America: *An Anthology of Fashion In America: A Lexicon of Fashion*, and the lobby display of the MET Gala as a member of LAMB Design. Selected theater: *Little Girl Blue* (New World Stages) nominated for a Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Awards; world premiere of *Midwives* (George St. Playhouse). MFA NYU Tisch School of the Arts, BA Dartmouth College. www.shokokambara.com

Zhenya Lopatnik (*sand art*) - singer, artist, educator - is a recent emigre to New York City from Kharkiv, Ukraine. Born into an assimilated Ukrainian-Jewish family, Lopatnik only discovered Yiddish in her mid-20s but

quickly made her mark in the field as a songwriter, artist, and educator. She is able to bring deep Jewish experience through any media which she uses. The art of drawing with sand, which Zhenya mastered back in Ukraine, creates a new dimension for the program and offers a visual interpretation of the songs. www.zhenyalopatnik.org

Mackenzie Trowbridge (*stage manager*) is a freelance stage manager based in NYC. She received her BFA in Theatre Design/Technology from Adelphi University. Previous credits include 10 years with the Hangar Theatre Company, and other work with Ma-Yi Theatre Company, The Argyle Theatre, Arc Stages, etc. Mackenzie currently serves as the Resident Stage Manager for Adelphi University's Department of Dance, along with working for Union College's Theatre and Dance Department as stage manager and adjunct faculty member. www.mackenzietrowbridge.wixsite.com/mackenzietrowbridge

Understudies

Raffi Boden (*cello*) is a NY-based cellist, composer, and educator known for his lush tone, groovy bass lines, and versatility in a variety of genres. Equally at home in both classical and klezmer, Raffi has performed internationally in Europe and South America, locally in Carnegie Hall, and with members of the NY Philharmonic. Raffi is a member of the klezmer band Mamaliga, whose debut album of original klezmer compositions, *Dos Gildn Bletl*, was hailed as "virtuosic and vibrant;" and is part of chamber-jazz ensemble Simone Baron & Arco Belo. Raffi holds degrees from Juilliard (MM) and Oberlin College & Conservatory (BM/BA).

Lauren Brody (*accordion*) is an accordionist, singer, researcher, piano technician and Fulbright scholar from New York. A founding member of the groundbreaking klezmer revival band, Kapelye, and the seminal all-female ensemble Mikveh, Lauren was pivotal in the formation of the first US-based Bulgarian traditional folk orchestra, Pitu Guli. She has taught and performed at Balkan and Yiddish festivals worldwide, and has toured and recorded with the Yuri Yunakov Ensemble and the Ivan Milev Balkan Folk Band. Lauren composes and performs new Balkan/Klezmer-inspired music as "Lauren Brody's Accordion Bytes" and with the Bulgaria-based accordion duo Brody-Stoikov. www.SongoftheCrookedDance.com

Isabel Frey (*voice*) is a Yiddish singer and a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology based in Vienna. As a performer, she specializes in Yiddish revolutionary songs and continuing the tradition of Jewish social justice activism both

on stages and at political protests. She regularly performs Yiddish music as a soloist, in the duo Soveles, with the Isabel Frey Trio or in a duo with Benjy Fox-Rosen at various local and international festivals and venues. In September 2020 she released her debut album *Millenial Bundist* and in November 2022 she released her debut album with the Yiddish feminist song duo Soveles. www.isabellefrey.com

Keryn Kleiman (*violin*) is a New York-based violinist. She is a member of a number of klezmer groups, including Bivolita, and has performed classical and folk music internationally and nationally. Notable recent engagements include playing at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. She has taught at Klezkanada and Yiddish New York. Keryn graduated with a degree in ethnomusicology from Columbia University-Barnard College, where she was the student-leader of the Columbia Klezmer Band. She was awarded a grant to research Jewish music and its relationship to co-territorial repertoires in Moldova. She is also currently completing her doctorate in clinical psychology.

D. Zisl Slepovitch (*clarinet*) a native of Minsk, Belarus, is a New York based internationally renowned klezmer, classical, and improvising musician, multiinstrumentalist (woodwinds, keyboards, vocals), ethnomusicologist (Ph.D.), composer, conductor, music and Yiddish educator; musician-in-residence at Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University; founder of critically acclaimed groups Litvakus, Zisl Slepovitch Trio, and

Zisl Slepovitch Ensemble. Zisl's original, restored, and arranged music credits include *Fiddler on the Roof in Yiddish* (Off-Broadway), *The Sorceress*, *King of Chelm*, and *Di Tsvey Brider* (all by National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene), *Defiance* movie, *The Waltz* animation, and *Eternal Echoes* CD with Itzhak Perlman. @zislepovitch

Mikhl Yashinsky (*voice*) was born in Detroit, educated at Harvard. His plays have been performed at Detroit Opera; President Benjamin Harrison's Indianapolis mansion; Lower East Side Play Festival; New Yiddish Rep. Writing: Yiddish-language plays *Di psure loyt khaim* (*The Gospel According to Chaim*) and *Vos flist durkhn oder* (*Blessing of the New Moon*); translation-adaptation of Ephraim Kishon's Hebrew-language play *Romeo vs. Juliet*; Yiddish textbook *In eynem* (co-author); translation of Ester-Rokhl Kaminska's memoirs (forthcoming, Bloomsbury). Performed with Folksbiene in *Fidler afn dakh* and *Di kishef-makherin* (*The Sorceress*, title role). As a LABA Fellow, writing Yiddish-language klezmer musical with the band Mamaliga.

TINC Productions (Production Management) is a theatrical production management firm, as well as a trusted labor provider. Recent theatrical credits include: Broadway: *Paradise Square*, *Slava's Snowshow*, Off-Broadway: *Fiddler on the Roof in Yiddish*, *Sandra*, *American!*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, Tours: *On Your Feet*, Regional: *The Twenty-Sided Tavern*. Visit www.tincproductions.com.

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NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE



National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene

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's *Fiddler on the Roof in Yiddish*, originally produced in 2018, sold out for six months before moving uptown to Off-Broadway's Stage 42, where it played for a year before returning in the fall of 2022 for a celebrated seven-week run. The production won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Revival of a Musical, the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Revival of a Musical, a New York Drama Critics Circle Special Citation, an Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Musical Revival, and a Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical - Steven Skybell. Last year, NYTF also staged the New York premiere of Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman's award-winning *Harmony*.

NYTF is in residence at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Zalmen Mlotek and Executive Director Dominick Balletta, 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, Russian, and Ukrainian 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

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is committed to the crucial mission of educating diverse visitors and community members about Jewish life and heritage before, during, and after the Holocaust. The third-largest Holocaust museum in the world, the Museum of Jewish Heritage anchors the southernmost tip of Manhattan, completing the cultural and educational landscape it shares with the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage maintains a Collection of almost 40,000 artifacts, photographs, documentary films, and survivor testimonies and contains classrooms, a 375-seat theater (Edmond J. Safra Hall), special exhibition galleries, a resource center for educators, and a memorial art installation, Garden of Stones, designed by internationally acclaimed sculptor Andy Goldsworthy.

Each year, the Museum presents over 75 public programs, connecting our community in person and virtually through lectures, book talks, concerts, and more. For more info visit: <http://mjhny.org/events>. Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts.

For more information, visit: <https://mjhny.org>



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SUMMER SOIRÉE

**Celebrating the Students, Educators, and Supporters
of NYTF's Fiddler Education Initiative***

Monday, June 19, 2023

6pm-9pm

The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers

Featuring

Adam B. Shapiro, Master of Ceremonies
from the cast of the award winning *Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish

Special Celebrity Guest Address

Sneak Previews from NYTF's upcoming season
and the Schechter Bergen Children's Chorus

INVITATION TO FOLLOW

*NYTF recently launched our new education program aimed at combating anti-Semitism through the performing arts. On the eve of our 109th season, join us in support of our work to educate and connect young people through stories that speak to our common humanity.

For more information, please contact Joseph Mace
jmace@nytf.org