NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE
AT THE MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE
PRESENTS

JULY 24, 2019 – AUGUST 18, 2019

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NYTF’S UPCOMING 2019/20 SEASON

A SEASON OF SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE for 2019–2020
On the heels of its spectacular, sold-out run of the Yiddish presentation of Fiddler on the Roof, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene will present a season of musicals, plays, concerts and readings curated to accompany the exhibit Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away. at the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

This delightful operetta by Avram Goldfaden is one of the very earliest works of Yiddish theatre and the first to be produced in America. This is a fairytaile-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 that 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 that NYTF began in 2017 to restore this classic.

In Yiddish with English and Russian supertitles.

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; and scientists and mystics, with a moving and surprising outcome.

The Tenth Man is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company. In Yiddish with English and Russian supertitles.

NATIONAL YIDDISH THEATRE FOLKSBIENE
Since 1915, the award-winning National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene (NYTF) has presented a window into the world of Jewish culture by engaging, educating, and igniting the imaginations of generations of theatergoers. It is the longest consecutively-producing Yiddish theatre company in the world and NYC’s longest consecutively-producing performing arts company. NYTF presents plays, musicals, concerts, literary events and workshops in Yiddish and English with English and Russian supertitles accompanying most performances. Its mission is to celebrate the Jewish experience through the performing arts and to transmit a rich cultural legacy in exciting new ways.

www.nytf.org

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE–A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST
The Museum has thrived for two decades along the waterfront of New York Harbor, and was created as a living memorial to those who perished, as well as those who survived, 75 years ago. It is the second largest Holocaust museum in the United States and the third largest in the world. Established as a place of learning and reflection, a repository for artifacts and information, and a catalyst for dialogue across all age groups about vital lessons of Jewish history, the Museum serves both local and global communities and creates opportunities for diverse audiences to engage with history and to consider its relevance to the present.

Learn more at mjhnyc.org

ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION
(“Equity”), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors’ Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY (SDC)
The Director of this production is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union. Founded in 1959, SDC is the theatrical union that unites, empowers, and protects professional Stage Directors and Choreographers throughout the United States. SDC’s mission is to foster a national community of professional stage Directors and Choreographers by protecting the rights, health and livelihoods of all our Members; to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities, while educating the current and future generations about the role of Directors and Choreographers; and to provide effective administrative, negotiating and contractual support.
ZALMEN MLOTEK, Artistic Director

Presents

HANNAH SENESH

An award-winning play with music and song

Written and Directed by David Schechter
Developed in collaboration with Lori Wilner
Based upon the diaries & poems of Hannah Senesh
Translated from the Hungarian by Marta Cohn & Peter Hay
Music composed & arranged by Steven Lutvak
“One, Two, Three” composed by Elizabeth Swados

Starring Lexi Rabadi* as Hannah Senesh/Catherine Senesh
with
Michael Bobenhausen*
Rebecca Brudner*

Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
I am thrilled and honored that "Hannah Senesh" and her story is beginning the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene's new season. All the productions this season share the common theme of Spiritual Resistance in the face of oppression. Hannah's life is certainly a shining example of that. The blossoming of a young woman who found within herself a heroic spirit in the face of fascist oppression in a time when so many were paralyzed by the feeling of helplessness or else, if they were safe, turned their eyes away.

There are so many ways in which Hannah feels like a rare soul and her journey a unique one. But really, the spark of courage and compassion that was in her heart is in all of us as well. So let us take a page from her journal, from her life, from her sense of mission and each one be a candle in these difficult times to help illuminate the dark.

–DAVID SCHECHTER
Writer and Director

When I first approached my friend David in 1983 with the opportunity to put together a one-woman show about a historical figure, we had no idea that our collaboration would yield such amazing fruit, and for so long. We began at a now-long-gone Off, Off (maybe one more off) Broadway Theater called Theater 22, then had a remarkably successful run at The Writers Theater, after which we moved Off-Broadway to Cherry Lane Theatre, where we were embraced by audiences and critics alike. Then came an intimate correspondence with Catherine Senesh herself, Hannah’s mother, who was still alive at the time, which led, in turn, to a tour in Israel, performing for the Senesh family and others who knew her, who had jumped with her on her mission, and performances at the National Theatre of Israel and the brand-new Rebecca Crown Hall in Jerusalem ... a Drama Desk nomination, a Hirschfeld, tours and productions in many cities, glowing reviews and acting awards, in each venue in which we played. Hannah’s courage and commitment to standing up to oppression in all its forms is as relevant as ever. I remain very proud of this play and my part in bringing it to life. I had a wonderful time performing it nearly 2000 times, and am thrilled that it has a new life now at the Folksbiene under the mighty baton of Zalmen Mlotek.

–LORI WILNER
Co-Creator and Original Hannah Senesh

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–DAVID SCHECHTER
Writer and Director
KENNETH GOODWIN (Sound Design) Broadway: The Parisian Woman (Assistant), Groundhog Day (Associate), Hedwig and the Angry Inch (Assistant) and On The Town (Assistant). Off-Broadway: Oedipus El Rey (Assistant-The Public Theater), Bullets Over Broadway (Ogunquit Playhouse), The Band’s Visit (Atlantic Theatre Co), The Total Bent (Assistant–The Public Theater), The Wildness Sky-Pony’s Rock Fairy Tale (Associate-Ars Nova), Dry Powder (Associate-The Public Theater), Engagements (Barrington Stage Company), One Day When We Were Young (Edinburgh Fringe Festival), A Doctor In Spite of Himself (Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and The Realistic Joneses (Yale Rep). He has also worked as a mixer and A2 on and off Broadway.

STEPHANIE GONZALEZ (Properties Master) is a freelance prop designer and artisan. Previous props work with NYTF was seen in When Blood Runs Red. Television/film work has been seen at Viacom, In This, Our Time (Lexicon Productions), Tricked! (BYUTV), and Dating Around (Netflix). Theater props work has been seen at Manhattan Theater Club, The Juilliard School, Princeton University, Shakespeare and Company, NYC Comic Con, Utah Shakespeare Festival, New York Stage and Film, and Florida Studio Theatre. She is an alumnus of Juilliard’s Prop Apprenticeship and of Ramapo College. www.stephaniegonzalez.org

BRITNI SERRANO (Production Manager) is from South Florida and has served as production manager in many theaters across the country. She has been the PM for Fiddler on the Roof in Yiddish since it started at the Museum of Jewish Heritage and has been with the Folksbiene for a year and a half. Britni Serrano received her degree in Musical Theater from Nova Southeastern University. She is very happy to be a part of such a beautiful and powerful production.

EMILY PAIGE BALLOU* (Stage Manager) is excited to be working with NYTF for the first time! Recent credits: PSM: The Hello Girls (Prospect Theater Company), Nikola Tesla Drops the Beat (Adirondack Theatre Festival). ASM: Public Servant (Theater Breaking Through Barriers), The Young Girl, the Devil, and the Mill (FlA), A Walk With Mr. Heifetz (Primary Stages). She’d like to thank David, Steven, Tori, and the cast and NYTF team.

TORI PIERCE (Assistant Stage Manager) is a rising Junior pursuing her bachelors degree in Stage Management at Pace University. NYTF Credits: When Blood Ran Red (ASM). Other favorite credits: Broadway’s Babies 2019 Gala—Broadways Babies (ASM), I Do Believe in Fairies—Doghouse Ensemble Theater (PSM). Sunday in the Park with George—Pace University (ASM). In the fall, Tori will be interning at The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon—NBCUniversal. Tori says thanks & sends love to her parents—always!

JAMIBETH MARGOLIS, CSA ( Casting Director) has spent just over 20 years as a professional casting director in New York. She was with Johnson-Liff Casting, Cameron Mackintosh, and Margolis-Seay Casting and is now out on her own as a freelance casting director. Previous credits include the Broadway and National Touring Companies of such mega hits as Les Miserables, The Phantom Of The Opera, Miss Saigon, The Producers, Cats, and Jane Eyre as well as two dozen other shows on Broadway. She also currently casts for Off-Broadway, National Touring Companies and shows for prominent regional theaters and all of the major theater festivals in NYC. Currently Casting: Fiddler on the Roof In Yiddish (Stage 42 Off-Broadway), National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene Season, Sistas: The Musical (Off-Broadway), Rebel Rebel: The Many Lives Of David Bowie (Tour), Cleveland Musical Theatre Season and more.

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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

LEXI RABADI* (Hannah Senesh/Catherine Senesh) Lexi is honored to share this powerful true story and feels privileged to portray this amazing young woman in her Off-Broadway debut. Regional credits include Laura in The Glass Menagerie, Belle in Disney’s Beauty and the Beast (Fulton Theatre); Chava in Fiddler on the Roof (Maine State Music Theatre); and Belle/Mrs. Fred in A Christmas Carol (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Proud honors graduate of Pace University’s BFA in Musical Theater program. Lexi has an immense gratitude for David, Zalmen, Motl, Steven, Jamibeth, Frankie and the team at Wolf Talent Group. She’d like to thank NYTF and its incredible company of artists, as well as express love to her family and “my Matt.” She dedicates this performance to those seeking inspiration to illuminate the darkness and hopes that Hannah may inspire others to ignite their light. You can learn more about Lexi at Lexirabadi.com.

MICHAEL BOBENHAUSEN* (Young Man) is making his Off-Broadway debut in Hannah Senesh. Michael, an MFA graduate of UConn and a two-time graduate of True Acting Institute’s Meisner Certificate Training Program, is an actor/teacher/ukulele player living in New York City. He is grateful for his family and friends for their love and support and would like to thank everyone involved in Hannah Senesh for such a rewarding experience.

REBECCA BRUDNER* (Hannah Senesh/Catherine Senesh u/s) is so excited to be a part of Hannah Senesh and to return to the Folksbiene, where she got her start at age 10 as Beryl the schoolboy in On Second Avenue! Her favorite (adult) credits include R&H’s Cinderella, Matilda (Tuacahn); Fiorello! (Berkshire Theatre Group); Oklahoma! (Goodspeed); and Carousel, Pajama Game (College Light Opera Co.). A proud Yale graduate, Rebecca thanks David, Zalmen, Jamibeth, Motl, The Roster, and her wonderful family!

*Denotes a member of Actors’ Equity Association
CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID SCHECHTER (Writer, Director, Adapter/Composer of Soon) A high point of David’s life was when Hannah Senesh was performed for Hannah’s mother and brother. David co-wrote Steve Buscemi’s Independent Spirit Award-nominated film *Interview* and Stanley Tucci’s film *Blind Date*. Additionally, he co-wrote and/or directed over 150 productions, including *Soul Doctor* (Broadway, co-writers: Shlomo Carlebach, Danny Wise), *The Jungle Book* (Broadway, co-writer: Barry Keating), *Almost September* (seven L.A. Dramalogues, eight Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, co-writer: Steven Lutvak), *A Talmud Tale* (co-writer: Ned Ginsburg), *The Brechtspiel* (co-creator: Lynne Greene), *Guarding the Garden* (published in Torah of the Earth), *East Towards Home* (by Billy Yalowitz), four original musicals for Theareworks USA and four for Making Books Sing. David adapted Isaac Bashevis Singer’s *Gimpel the Fool* (La MaMa), receiving Singer’s personal endorsement. Regional directing includes *Angels in America*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Miser*, *Antigone*, *Three Sisters* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. He was Artist-in-Residence for Roots and Branches Intergenerational Theatre (Arthur Strimling, founder). He performed in Liz Swados’ *Runaways* (Broadway), *Three Penny Opera* (Starring Sting). His one man show, *Seen*, created with Billy Von Hoene, (with Murphy Cross, Paul Kreppel) is becoming a book. Profound thanks to his parents and to Billy for helping to light the way.

Complete works and contact info: www.DavidSchechter.com

STEVEN LUTVAK (Composer, Arrangements) Broadway debut: composer/co-lyricist of *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*: Drama League, Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, Tony Awards, all for Best Musical: two National Tours: productions in Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, Melbourne, Stockholm. FILM: *Title song, Mad Hot Ballroom*. Two CDs: *The Time It Takes, Ahead of My Heart*. Numerous songwriting awards; numerous live performances singing his own music. Steven teaches songwriting at his Alma Mater, NYU, and lives in NYC with his two loves, husband choreographer Michael McGowan, and their daughter, Eliot Rose. Strange and lovely that his music for Hannah Senesh is being performed… 33 years later.

ELIZABETH SWADOS (Composer of *One, Two, Three*) was a writer, composer, and director who had been working in the theater for more than 40 years. She’s been nominated for Tony, Drama Desk, Ace and Emmy Awards. She’s won several Obies, Outer Critics Circle Awards, a PEN Citation, and an Anne Frank National Foundation for Jewish Culture award. She has created nearly 50 musical theater pieces and hundreds of songs; music for movies and TV; and novels, non-fiction and several children’s books.

LORI WILNER is thrilled that the play she co-created over 30 years ago is having a new life. **Broadway:** *The Assembled Parties, On a Clear Day You Can See Forever, A Catered Affair, The Diary of Anne Frank, Fiddler on the Roof* (both the 2005 and 2015 productions), *Awake and Sing!, Domesticated, The People in the Picture, Everett Beekin, Those Were the Days.*


**TV/Film:** New Amsterdam, Second Guessing Grandma, Gebirtig, Wagner’s Jews, Guiding Light. **Other Awards:** Henry, Charles Bowden, CT Critics Circle.


IZZY FIELDS (Costume Design) is based in NYC. Her recent New York theatre credits include *Camp Morning Wood* at Playwrights Horizons; *Bernie and Mickey’s Trip to the Moon* at 59E59; *Pound* at The Lion Theatre; *The Oregon Trail, The Wedge Horse, At the Table, Breathing Time and The Faire for Fault Line Theatre Company; Amerike the Golden Land, The Golden Bride, Lies My Father Told Me and Fyvush Finkel Live!* at National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene; *The Crucible, The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek and The Love of the Nightingale* at Atlantic Theatre Company; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Secret Theatre; *Consent* at Roundabout Black Box; *American Dance Machine* at Joyce Theatre; and *Ships* at The Wild Project. She won the NY Innovative Theatre award for Costume Design in 2017 for her work on *Anais Nin Goes to Hell*. Izzy is a graduate of NYU Tisch and is a proud member of 829.

www.izzyfieldsdesigns.com

VIVIEN LEONE (Lighting Design) Vivien is pleased to be working with director David Schechter once again. Her previous designs with David include the original Off-Broadway production of *Hannah Senesh, The Three Sisters* and *Jungle Book*. Vivien can most often be found working as an Associate Lighting Designer on Broadway. Recent credits include *Tootsie* and *Anastasia* (Don Holder, LD); *The Iceman Cometh* (Peggy Eisenhauer and Jules Fisher, LD); and ongoing since 1988 *The Phantom of the Opera* (Andy Bridge, LD).