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## FOLKSBIENE GOES INTERNATIONAL

### STARS FROM AROUND THE WORLD ALIGN ON MAY 2 FOR CELEBRATION OF YIDDISH CULTURE AT ROSE HALL AT JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

#### “FROM THE GOLDEN LAND TO THE PROMISED LAND” FEATURES GLITTERING CAVALCADE OF TALENT LED BY CHAVA ALBERSTEIN

*(February 15, 2010)* A galaxy of stars from around the world will gather in New York for a unique evening of music and theatre presented by the Drama Desk Award-winning National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene on Sunday May 2 at 7pm at the Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Broadway at 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

In a rare New York appearance, the Israeli cultural icon **Chava Alberstein** headlines the gala concert, “From the Golden Land to the Promised Land,” that celebrates the remarkable resurgence in recent years of Yiddish across many communities and countries. For the first time ever, Folksbiene, the longest continuously producing Yiddish theatre company in the world, brings together on one stage talents from Israel’s Yiddishpiel of Tel Aviv, as well as members of the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theater of Montreal. The evening’s co-hosts will be the Emmy and OBIE-winning stage and television star **Fyvush Finkel** and the actress and singer **Eleanor Reissa** (who is also a Tony-nominated director). Joining them will be a nebula of New York names, including klezmer superstar **Frank London** -- leading his Klezmer Brass All Stars -- and the husband and wife acting team of **Allen Lewis Rickman** and **Yelena Shmulenson**, who are featured, with Finkel, in the 9-minute all-Yiddish opening scene of the Oscar-nominated “A Serious Man.”

“From the Golden Land to the Promised Land,” this year’s brand new installment of Folksbiene’s must-see annual gala, which **Masha Leon** of The Forward calls “as entertaining as it is important for the Jewish community, and enriching for everyone,” will feature a milkyway of talents and even sensibilities. “The amazing, cross-generational diversity of our cast underscores the rich variety of expression pulsing through Yiddish culture today,” says the evening’s producer **Moishe Rosenfeld**. The show’s music director is **Zalmen Mlotek**, the world-recognized Yiddish music expert and conductor (and also Folksbiene’s artistic director).

Throughout the evening, as Folksbiene serves up this wonderful cultural feast, several tireless proponents and supporters of Yiddish culture will be honored. **Aaron Lansky**, the founder of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst Massachusetts (responsible for rescuing more than a million volumes in Yiddish), and **Bryna Wasserman**, artistic director of Montreal’s Segal Centre for the Arts and director of the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre, will both be awarded the annual Mlotek Prize for Yiddish Culture. The late Yiddish cultural leader Joseph Mlotek will

be remembered in a special tribute. (A new short film about his life's work and legacy will be screened, marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing.) The evening will also pay tribute to the memory of Joseph Mlotek's sister, Sara Rosenfeld, who received the Order of Canada for her lifelong leadership role in preserving Yiddish culture in Canada.

In recognition of his crucial stewardship of the New York City public school system, **Joel I. Klein**, the New York City Department of Education's Schools Chancellor, will be honored for distinguished service. Also among the tributes will be remembrances of Mina Bern -- grande dame of the Yiddish theatre -- and Abraham Sutzkever, the great Yiddish poet, both of whom passed away in January.

Now in its historic 95<sup>th</sup> consecutive season, The National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene is enjoying something that would have seemed impossible just a few years ago: mainstream success. With its Drama Desk Award in 2007 for special achievement, and a string of critically acclaimed crossover hits (Folksbiene received Best Musical Revival Drama Desk nominations for "On Second Avenue" in 2006 and for the Yiddish version of Gilbert & Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" in 2007), the company has made impressive strides at broadening and diversifying its audience. This season's "Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears" starring Theodore Bikel broke all Folksbiene box office records. The company's two-fold mission is to preserve the legacy of the Yiddish theatre -- dating back to the 1870's in Europe -- as well as to add to this legacy by developing new work.

For tickets, which range from \$50 to \$500, call Folksbiene at 212/213-2120 or online at [www.folksbiene.org](http://www.folksbiene.org)

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