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MIKE BURSTYN SET TO STAR IN FOLKSBIENE'S "THE ADVENTURES OF HERSHELE OSTROPOLYER"

ELEANOR REISSA'S NEW MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF YIDDISH CLASSIC BEGINS FIVE-WEEK OFF-BROADWAY RUN MAY 25; OPENS JUNE 3

(April 14, 2010) The international stage, film and television star Mike Burstyn has just been cast to play the title role in the world premiere of a new musical, "The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer," which the Drama Desk Award-winning National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene presents this spring beginning May 25. Burstyn, a two-time Kinor David-winner (Israel's Oscar), starred in Folksbiene's widely acclaimed hit musical revue "On Second Avenue" for which he earned a 2006 best actor in a musical Drama Desk nomination.

"The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer," a new musical adaptation written, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa of the classic Yiddish play by Moyshe Gershenson, runs Off-Broadway in a five-week engagement from May 25 to June 27, at The Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Avenue (at 25th Street). The world premiere's opening night is on Thursday June 3 at 7pm.

"The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer" is performed entirely in Yiddish, with English and Russian supertitles. The show's original score features a sumptuous mosaic of rare and well-known Yiddish theatre and folk songs compiled by the Yiddish musicologist Chana Mlotek; Zalmen Mlotek (the show's music director, who is also responsible for the arrangements); and Reissa, a singer and actress (title role in Folksbiene's critically acclaimed "Yentl") and Tony Award-nominated director ("Those Were the Days").

In this rollicking musical comedy, the beloved folk hero Hershele Ostropolyer, often referred to as the Jewish Robin Hood, battles injustice armed only with his wits. Ever resourceful, Hershele mobilizes an entire community to thwart the miserly Reb Kalmen, whose love for gold stands in the way of a young couple's love for one another. Just one encounter with Hershele and we promise his name will trip effortlessly off your tongue and the memory of his masterful ruse against avarice and deceit will turn cartwheels in your heart forever.

Burstyn, who grew up performing around the world in Yiddish with his sister Susan and famous parents, Pesach Burstein and Lillian Lux, still alternates between projects in English and Yiddish. He starred on Broadway in "Barnum" and "Ain't Broadway Grand," Off-Broadway in "The Rothschilds," and in the national tour of "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife" (with Valerie Harper). In the musical "Jolson" he portrayed Al Jolson, a

contemporary and friendly rival of his father. He was seen in New York last year in the one-man show "Lansky" which ran Off-Broadway.

With Burstyn leading the way, "Hershele's" cast of 9 also includes Shane Baker; I. W. "Itzy" Firestone; Edward Furs; Dani Marcus; Daniella Rabbani; Steve Sterner; Nimmy Weisbrod, and Lori Wilner. Marci Skolnick is the production stage manager. The show's 4-piece klezmer band features the emerging clarinetist Dmitri Splepovitch. Penny Ayn Maas is the associate choreographer.

The production design team includes Roger Hanna (scenic design); Kirk Bookman (lighting design); Gail Cooper-Hecht (costume design), and Bruce Ellman (sound design).

"The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer" begins performances at Folksbiene's new home -- the 220-seat Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Avenue (entrance on 25th Street, between Lexington and 3rd Avenues) -- on Tuesday May 25 at 2pm, and runs for five weeks through Sunday June 27 at 6pm, with an opening on Thursday June 3 at 7pm. The schedule is as follows: Tuesdays at 2pm (except June 1 at 2pm & 8pm); Wednesdays at 2pm & 8pm (except June 2 at 2pm only); Thursdays at 2pm & 8pm (except June 3 at 2pm & 7pm), and Sundays at 2pm & 6pm. For tickets, which are \$55, call The Baruch Performing Arts Center box office at 646/312-5073, or visit www.folksbiene.org

Now in its historic 95th consecutive season, The National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene, presents plays in English and Yiddish that either preserve the great legacy of the Yiddish theatre or add to it. In the past 10 seasons, 10 out of 13 mainstage productions have either been new works or first-time adaptations.

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