

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Beck Lee (718) 403-0939
beckblitz@aol.com

**FOLKSBIENE PRESENTS OFF-BROADWAY PREMIERE OF "KLEYNKUNST!"
REBECCA JOY FLETCHER'S ACCLAIMED CABARET THEATRE SPECTACLE**

STEPHEN MO HANAN STARS WITH FLETCHER

**PERFORMANCES FROM NOVEMBER 18 TO DECEMBER 30
TICKETS ON SALE OCTOBER 1**

(September 24, 2007) The creative, social and political ferment of Jewish Warsaw between the Wars is brought to stunning life in "Kleynkunst! Warsaw's Brave and Brilliant Yiddish Cabaret" Rebecca Joy Fletcher's impressively researched celebration of the cabaret culture that flowered on the heels of Polish independence and would go on to defy extinction under the boot of Nazi terror. "Kleynkunst!" an original theatre performance piece filled with authentic period theatre songs and political satire (much of which has not performed in over 60 years until rediscovered by Fletcher), inaugurates the venerable National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene's historic 93rd consecutive season. "Kleynkunst! Warsaw's Brave and Brilliant Yiddish Cabaret" begins previews on Sunday November 18 en route to an Off-Broadway opening on Thursday November 29 at 7:30pm. The show's limited 7-week engagement at The JCC in Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Avenue, runs through Sunday December 30.

Researched, written and originally produced by Fletcher, "Kleynkunst!" is directed by Michael Montel, with music direction and arrangements by Bob Goldstone. Tickets go on sale on October 1 via Ticket Central -- by phone at (212) 279-4200 or online at www.ticketcentral.com.

Performed bi-lingually in English and Yiddish, "Kleynkunst!" is made fully accessible to non-Yiddish speakers through the use of simultaneous English supertitles when Yiddish is spoken or sung. Russian supertitles are also projected throughout for Russian speakers.

Fletcher's co-star is the Broadway veteran Stephen Mo Hanan. Hanan, who memorably rocked the boat as the Major General in Folksbiene's wildly received, Drama Desk-nominated Yiddish version of Gilbert & Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance" (which premiered and was extended by popular demand last season), made his Broadway debut in the Ronstadt/Kline English version of "Pirates," also a watershed production. In recent years he starred in "Jolson & Co." Off-Broadway.

In addition to her work as a performer and playwright, Rebecca Joy Fletcher, a graduate of Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music, serves as the cantor for the Temple Israel congregation in Staten Island. From 2003 to 2006 she was the cantor for the Hebrew Tabernacle in Washington Heights. She is fluent in Hebrew, and is an ongoing student of Yiddish language and culture.

When it world premiered in the Kabarett Fête in January (in four sold-out performances), TheaterScene.net called "Kleynkunst!" "...mezmerising. It is what cabaret can be about." Writing for Jewish Currents, Rokhl Kafrissen said it was "unlike anything I've ever seen. Funny, sexy, ironic, dramatic, the stuff I live for!" Cabaret Scenes said, "the show is as poignant as it is entertaining." The Forward called it "a journey into the beauty and rawness of the era."

Spanning the years 1921 (Polish independence) to 1941 (the year of the first actions to forcibly liquidate Warsaw's Jews) "Kleynkunst" captures the unique cosmopolitanism that flowered in the popular *kleynkunst teaters* ("little art theaters") of Warsaw. Like Berlin's cabarets of the same period this was a world of jarring opposites. But, unlike Berlin the scene was created by Jews for Jews, and performance in Yiddish was an ideological act. Drawing on such varied sources as Weimar kabarett, Hassidic niggunim, American jazz, Russian folk, Argentinian tango and cantorial music Fletcher reveals the many strains and contradictions of this richly patterned social collage: indeed secular fervor coexisted with religious devotion, sexual bawdiness was juxtaposed with naiveté, and political infighting went hand-in-hand with partisan camaraderie. "It is not by chance that we share so much with these early Modernists," Fletcher explains. "Our worlds are surprisingly similar. They began a conversation about feminism, about Zionism, about urban poverty, racism, consumerism, and jazz -- these same issues engage us today. Living between the Wars in Warsaw and envisioning a new world order -- these young artists seem to be talking directly to us."

"Kleynkunst!" performs 29 times. Schedule varies. Tickets, which are \$40 (\$50 for special stage-side cabaret seating), can be purchased via Ticket Central -- by phone at (212) 279-4200 or online at www.ticketcentral.com. For more information visit www.folksbiene.org. The state-of-the-art JCC in Manhattan, where Folksbiene is in residence for a fifth straight season, is located at 334 Amsterdam Avenue (76th Street).

For clips from Kabarett Fête visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZBQCKrqr4E>

#