



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway
at the Museum of the City of New York
Opens Wednesday, March 9, 2016



Day and Night theater still by Kessner's Studio, Museum of the City of New York

***Immersive Exhibition Brings New York's 'Yiddish Broadway' to Life,
Celebrating the Glory and Legacy of a Beloved Institution
and the City's Ability to Incubate and Inspire Creativity***

New York, NY (March 8, 2016): The Museum of the City of New York presents [*New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway*](#), an immersive reimagining of the phenomenon that turned Second Avenue into "Yiddish Broadway" and left a legacy that continues to inform American theater and film today.

Opening Wednesday, March 9, the exhibition will present the most comprehensive exploration of Yiddish Theater to date, featuring over 250 artifacts drawn from the Museum of the City of New York's vast collection and from the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Al Hirschfeld Foundation, American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History, and the Museum of Jewish

Heritage. Combining the collections wealth of so many institutions will allow viewers to experience Yiddish Broadway in a way that is lively, accessible, enveloping and informative.

New York's Yiddish Theater tells the uniquely American and quintessentially New York story of the overcrowded and tenement filled Lower East Side's evolution as an incubator of cultural activity that gave rise to a theater district rivaling Broadway itself. The exhibition will take viewers on a journey spanning over a century – from the waves of immigration by Eastern European Jews that preceded New York's first Yiddish production in 1882, through contemporary adaptations from modern theater icons like Tony Kushner and Mandy Patinkin.

“New York's Yiddish Theater was a beloved institution that helped shape performance art in America as we know it,” said Whitney Donhauser, *Ronay Menschel Director* of the Museum of the City of New York. “The story of how a thriving immigrant community's local entertainment source blossomed into such an influential and widespread phenomenon is an inspiring example of New York City's unmatched ability to incubate and celebrate creativity. We look forward to welcoming visitors and sharing the exciting story of New York's Yiddish Theater – from its beginnings on the Bowery to its influence on Broadway, and finally now, on our walls in East Harlem.”

The fascinating exhibition will showcase theatrical treasures that introduce visitors to the sensation that was Yiddish Theater, including: pint-sized star Molly Picon's costumes from her performances in *Circus Girl*, *Yankele* and *Mazel Tov Molly*; Mae Simon's jewelry and makeup box; Zero Mostel's Tevye costume from *Fiddler on the Roof*; along with set models and costume designs by Boris Aronson that bring the theater to life. The show will also include “spotlight” sections, focusing on specific stars and playwrights like Boris Thomashefsky, Jacob Gordin, Molly Picon, and the Adler Family Dynasty, which still exists today.

New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway is divided into five sections, allowing museumgoers to appreciate the depth of content presented on the Yiddish stage and understand why Yiddish Theater resonated so deeply:

- Creating Yiddish Theater in America
- Popular Theater on Second Avenue
- Art Theater on Second Avenue
- Political Theater on Second Avenue
- Legacies

“Yiddish Theater in New York began as a local entertainment source tailored specifically to Jewish immigrants who enjoyed seeing their own stories brought to life on stage by actors who had shared those same experiences,” explained Edna Nahshon, Guest Curator of the exhibition and Professor of Jewish Theater and Drama at the Jewish Theological Seminary. “How it came to rival – and even influence – Broadway itself is a tribute to the vibrancy and popularity of the Yiddish stage, and a testimony to New York City's celebration of new and diverse cultures.”

New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway is a co-presentation of the Museum of the City of New York, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the National Yiddish Book Center, and the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene in association with the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

For more information about *New York's Yiddish Theater*, visit <http://mcny.org/yiddishtheater>.

About the Museum of the City of New York

Founded in 1923 as a private, nonprofit corporation, the Museum of the City of New York celebrates and interprets the city, educating the public about its distinctive character, especially its heritage of diversity, opportunity, and perpetual transformation. The Museum connects the past, present, and future of New York City, and serves the people of the city as well as visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections. Visit www.mcny.org to learn more.

###

Media Contacts

Jacob Tugendrajch
Amanda Bush

(917) 492-3480 | pressoffice@mcny.org
(646) 490-6446 | amanda@philandcompany.com