

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 7, 2008

From hysterical comedy to brilliant drama, Chutzpah!'s theatre line-up will provoke and entertain

Vancouver, BC – Chutzpah! 2008 is thrilled to present an amazing line-up of theatre—local and international. There are three Vancouver premieres this year, a Canadian premiere, and two companies direct from Israel.

“There’s an outstanding blend of theatre this year,” says Chutzpah! Artistic and Managing Director, Mary-Louise Albert. “Audiences will cry with *Rose*, laugh hysterically with the Lipshitz Brothers and Tracey Erin Smith, be transported into a place of great reflection with *The Timekeepers* and *Hello, I Must Be Going*, grow with *Edges*, and be ‘shlectured’ with the celebratory stories and songs of Robbie Gringas and Adam Mader.”

TWO FOR THE BUSH

Written and performed by Tracey Erin Smith

Directed by Rebecca Northan

Vancouver Premiere

“**** Four stars ... A definite must-see.” –*EYE WEEKLY*

In this hilarious sequel to *The Burning Bush* (Chutzpah! 2007), the stripping rabbi returns from a World Tour to numerous Hollywood offers. But she turns them all down to embark on a seniors’ homes tour with her fellow stripping preachers. Then, after “something” happens, the group goes on the lam... Tracey Erin Smith will have audiences crying from laughing so hard in this one-woman show where she plays characters ranging from stripping rabbi Barbara Baumawitz to Jackie Mason.

Tracey Erin Smith created Soul-O-Theatre®, a company that helps people turn their own stories into stage pieces. She also teaches theatre at Ryerson University and has taught at Second City in Toronto. She’s been a guest expert on *Matchmaker* (The Life Network). Her production *The Burning Bush* travelled all over Canada (winning Best of the Toronto Fringe) and to New York where it won an Audience Choice award. It’s currently being adapted for the screen into a full-length feature film.

When: Sunday, February 24 at 5:00 pm
Sunday, February 24 at 8:00 pm
Monday, February 25 at 6:30 pm

Where: Wosk 2nd Stage, JCCGV

THE TIMEKEEPERS

Direct from Israel

By Dan Clancy

Directed by Lee Gilat

Starring Rami Baruch, Roy Horowitz and Omer Etzion

“... Dan Clancy's *The Timekeepers* is an essential roller-coaster journey, which manages to strike and shock nearly at every turn... Go and see for yourselves. Satisfaction guaranteed.

–*The Pink Times*

“***** Five stars” –Global TV

Benjamin, a Jewish horologist, and Hans, a gay non-Jewish German, meet in a German concentration camp in Nazi Germany where they are to fix the many watches stolen from prisoners. Hans has pretended he knows how to fix watches and must depend on Benjamin to teach him. In this often humorous and moving play, under the eye of prisoner-elevated-to-guard, Capo, the relationship between the two who have little in common — other than a love for Italian opera — evolves and moves towards friendship as they work to survive.

The Timekeepers premiered in Tel Aviv in 2002, and has toured Israel for more than four years to great acclaim. Playwright Dan Clancy won two awards for the work: the Hudson River Classics Playwright's Award and the Writer's Digest Playwright's Contest Award. Actors Baruch, Horowitz and Etzion are all accomplished with credits including an Israeli Theatre Academy Award for Baruch and a Best Actor award for Horowitz at the International Children and Youth Festival in Haifa.

When: Monday, February 25 at 7:00 pm
Tuesday, February 26 at 9:00 pm

Where: Norman Rothstein Theatre, JCCGV

ROSE

By Martin Sherman

Starring Rosy Frier-Dryden

Directed by Stephen Heatley

Musical Direction by Wendy Bross Stuart

Music by Charles E. Jacobs performed by Wendy Bross Stuart, Andrea Minden and Fiona Stuart
Vancouver Premiere

“Sherman's play is sharp and focused, detailing in exquisitely chosen words the life story of one feisty Jewish woman who, as she puts it 'stinks of the last century.' ... Bring a handkerchief. You will be sobbing before the evening is over, just as surely as you will jump to your feet cheering and applauding wildly at its triumphant end.”
–*Talkin' Broadway*

Rose, fittingly, features one character, Rose, a holocaust survivor who sits on a wooden bench in Miami Beach sitting shiva for the last time. We don't know who for, but the audience travels on a journey with her through the 20th century, specifically Jewish life in the 20th century—from a Ukrainian shtetl to the Warsaw ghetto to Atlantic City to Florida. “I wanted to tell the full story of this woman's life. I wanted to present the experience of what it was like being a European Jew in this century,” said the playwright in an interview with *donshevey.com*. *Rose* premiered at London's Royal National Theatre starring Olympia Dukakis where the run sold out. This production includes live music by ethnomusicologist, musical director, choral director/arranger and piano accompanist/arranger extraordinaire, Wendy Bross Stuart; flutist, found sound instrumentalist and teacher, Andrea Minden; and Vancouver Island songwriter, Fiona Stuart.

ROSE was produced in 2000 by Lincoln Center Theatre, New York City.

When: Sunday, February 24 at 2:30 pm
Monday, February 25 at 8:30 pm
Tuesday, February 26 at 6:30 pm

Where: Wosk 2nd Stage

THE J.A.P. SHOW: THE PRINCESSES OF COMEDY
Starring Cory Kahaney, Jessica Kirson, and Adrienne Tolsch
Direct from New York
Canadian Premiere

"... a loosely stitched but loving comic tribute, [that] conjures side-splitting Borscht Belt bawdiness with the revisionist twist of allowing female comedians to take center stage—and thus "give nachas" to their forebears. – Adam R. Perlman, *Newsday*

Three zany New York ladies will bring their special brand of irreverent comedy and humour to **Chutzpah!'s Opening Night event**. The Canadian Premiere of the *The J.A.P. Show: The Princesses of Comedy*, direct from New York, will have audiences in hysterics. Cory Kahaney (The J.A.P. Show creator), Jessica Kirson and Adrienne Tolsch are set to bring their Off-Broadway show to the Norman Rothstein Theatre with original stand-up and tell great tickle-the-funny-bone stories, while at the same time paying homage to, and essentially performing with, the Princesses of the past. The show will be peppered with vintage footage of past Jewish American comedy queens including Belle Barth and Totie Fields.

When: Chutzpah! Opening Night Gala: **Where:** Norman Rothstein Theatre, JCCGV
Saturday, February 23 at 8:00 pm
Encore Performance: Sunday, February 24 at 1:00 pm

EDGES: A SONG CYCLE
By Benj Pasek and Justin Paul
Featuring Josh Epstein, Lauren Bowler, Shira Elias and Matt Palmer
Musical Direction by Steven Greenfield
Canadian Premiere

"Overflowing with talent and humor..." –*Miami Hurricane*

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul began their collaboration when they were first-year BFA students at The University of Michigan where they wrote *Edges*, inspired by such works as *Jacques Brel*. The show has to date been performed more than 60 times all over the US, and will be seen for the first time in Canada at Chutzpah! *Edges* is a story about growth and self-discovery told through modern pop songs and humour. It also contains the now famous "Facebook Song." Pasek and Paul were named by *Dramatist Magazine* as "50 Dramatists to Watch." And, they are the youngest winners of the Jonathan Larson Award.

Actor Josh Epstein has performed across Canada in productions such as *The Lord of The Rings* (Mirvish), *Hairspray* the movie, and this summer's smash hit *The British Invasion* (Charlottetown Festival.) He is well-known to Vancouver audiences for many performances including those with the Arts Club Theatre, Bard on the Beach, the Playhouse, and is remembered by Chutzpah! for his one-man show *Wow, I Didn't Know She Was Jewish* (2005). Lauren Bowler has just finished a successful run playing the lead in *Gypsy* at the Arts Club Theatre, where she has also appeared in *Funny Girl*. Currently she is starring as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* (Gateway.) Shira Elias returns to Chutzpah after studying Musical Theatre at the University of California at Irvine. She will be appearing in *West Side Story* (Royal City) in April. Matt Palmer has been playing leading roles all over Vancouver in shows such as *Jacques Brel*, *Forever Plaid*, *Suds*, *Urinetown*, *Beauty and The Beast*, *The Number 14* and most recently *Company* and *Seussical*.

When: Thursday, February 28 at 6:30 pm **Where:** Wosk 2nd Stage, JCCGV
Saturday, March 1 at 9:30 pm
Sunday, March 2 at 8:00 pm

THAT'S WHY I'M (STILL) HERE

Direct from Israel

By Robbie Gringas

Performed by Robbie Gringas and Adam Mader

"... By the time the shlecture was over I realised that I had learned, thought, laughed, cried, ached and even sung along. It was a sheer delight."

—Dr. Alick Isaacs, Melton Hebrew University, and Hartmann Institute

From the creator of the 2005 Chutzpah! festival hit *About the Oranges* comes *That's Why I'm (Still) Here*, a celebration of all sides of life in Israel told through stories and songs, featuring Robbie Gringas and Israeli musician Adam Mader. Gringas is an Israel-based theatre artist whose plays have been performed around the world including in London's West End. Gringas grew up in Britain and moved to Israel in 1996. He graduated through the ranks of Oxford University, then received training in physical theatre, movement, contact improvisation, story theatre, voice and dark clown. He's also the former artistic director of Besht Tellers Theatre Company (UK).

Following standing ovations at the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) annual conference in Boston, *That's Why I'm (Still) Here* is now touring the world.

When: Thursday, February 28 at 7:00 pm
Sunday, March 2 at 6:30 pm

Where: Norman Rothstein Theatre, JCCGV

HELLO, I MUST BE GOING

By Bessie Wapp, Judy Wapp and Nicola Harwood

Starring Bessie Wapp

Vancouver Premiere

Based on the Wapp family's true story (Judy and Bessie are mother and daughter), *Hello, I Must Be Going* shows—via a stunning one-woman performance—four generations of Lithuanian Jewish women forced to flee their homes because of war and occupying forces: the Russian army, Soviets, Nazis, Soviets again, then America during World War II and the Vietnam War. The play examines war and peace, the notion that we often think "it's always somewhere else," as these women did, and that fleeing to places where war isn't happening doesn't bring peace to the world. All the world must be in peace for there to be any true peace for anyone.

Bessie Wapp was Artist-in-Residence at Nelson's Oxygen Art Centre when she co-created *Hello, I Must Be Going*. She is a theatre artist and musician formerly with Mortal Coil Theatre Company and two-time Jessie nominated actor, recently seen at the JCCGV in the May 2007 Electric Company and Only Animal remount of the award-winning show, *The One That Got Away*. She also performs and tours with Zeellia, a women's Eastern European music ensemble.

When: Wednesday, February 27 at 6:30 pm
Thursday, February 28 at 8:30 pm
Saturday, March 1 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, March 1 at 3:00 pm

Where: Wosk 2nd Stage, JCCGV

LIPSHITCK!: A LIPSHITZ BROTHERS SHOW!
Starring Ryan Beil, Toby Berner, and Dan Hershfield

The Lipshitz Brothers are the last scions of a once-great theatre dynasty that wowed Eastern Europe for decades. They speak no Yiddish, and the scripts their ancestors performed have been lost to history, but every now and then, their genetic legacy draws them together to improvise a play and 'make with the funny'. The brothers —AKA Toby Berner, Ryan Beil, and Dan Hershfield—will reveal their story of arrival in the “new country” from the “old” in three performances that will each be totally spontaneous and hilarious with plenty of audience participation.

Toby, Ryan, and Dan are all current or alumni players in/of Vancouver TheatreSports® League. Ryan Beil recently won a Jessie Richardson Award for being an outstanding newcomer, has a BFA in Acting from UBC, and has a regular show in town called the Sunday Service. Dan Hershfield is recipient of the CBC Jim Burt Prize for Film, a former cast member with Theatresports in Toronto (now Bad Dog Theatre), and has an MFA in Creative Writing and Theatre from UBC. Toby Berner, former star of the Comedy Network's comedy sketch show *Suckerpunch*, is a Jessie-nominated actor and graduate of Studio 58.

When: Tuesday, February 26 at 8:30 pm
Wednesday, February 27 at 8:30 pm
Sunday, March 2 at 6:00 pm

Where: Wosk 2nd Stage, JCCGV

- end-

Media inquiries:
Jodi Smith, JLS Entertainment
T: 604 736 4939 E: jlsmgmt@lightspeed.ca

Visit the Festival's website at www.chutzpahfestival.com for complete information. Tickets can be purchased by phone (604-257-5145), online at www.chutzpahfestival.com or www.ticketstonight.ca, or in person at the JCCGV beginning Jan. 15 (950 West 41st Ave).