

Sabes Jewish Community Center
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jon Ferguson Directs World Premiere of
Chaplin: The Son of Isidore and Hanna Thornstein
By Deborah Stein – Commissioned by the Sabes JCC

Minneapolis, Minn... Paris, 1927. Three young artists set out to make a splash in the new motion picture industry, modeling their films on the comedies of their idol, Charlie Chaplin.

The Sabes Jewish Community Center in Minneapolis will complete its 2008–2009 Performing Arts Professional Season with an original commission. This world premiere of *Chaplin: The Son of Isidore and Hanna Thornstein* by Deborah Stein, directed by Jon Ferguson, will perform May 2–17, 2009; Thursdays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., and Friday morning matinees at 10 a.m. All of the productions will take place at the Sabes JCC's Dolly & Edward Fiterman Theatre, located at 4330 S Cedar Lake Road in Minneapolis, MN, 55416, and are open to the public with disabled accessibility. Tickets are \$20 for the general public, \$18 for JCC members, \$16 for students and seniors, and \$12 for groups of 8 or more. Additional discounts available for larger groups and industry artists. For more information and tickets, please visit www.sabesjcc.org or call 952.381.3499.

THE PLAY: Blending clowning with melodrama, this play takes at its starting point the rumor that Chaplin was a Polish Jew, born to Isadore and Hanna Thornstein. The fact that the real Chaplin was neither Jewish nor from Poland doesn't matter to these young idealists, who see in their hero a mirror of their desire to make something out of nothing and find their own luck.

THE ARTISTS: *Chaplin* features Guthrie BFA Actors: Christine Weber, Brant Miller, and Breana Jarvis, as well as local teen performers Avi Aharoni and Rebekah Mogilevski. Erica Zaffarano is set designer, Anna Lawrence costumes, and Neal Spinler is sound designer.

THE PLAYWRIGHT: Deborah Stein's plays have been produced and developed nationally at the Guthrie, Seattle Rep, Boston Court, Stages Rep, Women's Project, Wilma, Live Girls, Dance Theatre Workshop, and Theatre Artaud; and internationally in Poland, Ireland, Edinburgh (the Traverse) and Prague. Between 2000 and

2006, she collaborated with the Pig Iron Theatre Company on six new works, for which she was twice nominated for the Barrymore for Best New Play. She is a producing director of the Workhaus Collective and has been a resident artist at Hedgebrook, Princeton University, and Swarthmore College. Her writing is published in *Theatre Forum*, *Play: A Journal of Plays*, and *The Best American Poetry of 1996*. Current commissions include the Actors Theatre of Louisville and the Children's Theatre Company. Deborah received her MFA from Brown University, two Jerome Fellowships at the Playwrights' Center, and is member of New Dramatists.

THE DIRECTOR: Jon Ferguson is from Durham, in the Northeast of England. He trained in London at Middlesex University. Jon is a director, play-maker and theater educator and has worked with some of the leading physical theater, ensemble and clown companies in the UK and US. Awards for his creation and directing work include: "2005 City Pages Artist of the Year", "Outstanding Experimental Theater Production of 2005" - Star Tribune, "Best Stage Production" - City Pages - Best of the Twin Cities 2006, "Time Out London Critic's Choice", "Sunday Times Ensemble Award", "Best Comedy Awards" and "City Pages - Top 10 Plays of the Year 2008". Jon has taught physical theater and clowning throughout the UK and US, and extensively at The Theatre Royal Bath, The Bristol Old Vic, Stages Theatre Company, St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Arts and The University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program, as well as teaching countless independent workshops. Jon is the theater programming director at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis. His new play *Super Monkey* can be seen in the Dowling Studio, at the Guthrie Theater in September of 2009.

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The Sabes JCC's Performing Arts Professional Season is part of the Robert and Janet Sabes Center for Jewish Arts and Humanities. Visit www.sabesjcc.org for more information.

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