

Sabes Jewish Community Center  
Jay and Rose Phillips Building  
Barry Family Campus  
4330 S. Cedar Lake Rd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55416



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## The Sabes JCC Presents the World Premiere of *Anschel and the Missing Chanukah Gelt*

For Immediate Release: December 1, 2008

*Minneapolis*—The Robert and Janet Sabes Center for Jewish Arts and Humanities in Minneapolis is pleased to continue its already-successful 2008-2009 Performing Arts Professional Season with *Anschel and the Missing Chanukah Gelt* by Mark Rosenwinkel. Performances will take place December 4 through 21; Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 8 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 Jewish Community Center's Dolly & Edward Fiterman Theatre, located at 4330 S Cedar Lake Road in St. Louis Park, MN, 55416, and are open to the public with handicap accessibility. Tickets are \$14 for the general public, \$12 for JCC members, \$10 for students and seniors, and free for children 4 years old and under. Group discounts are also available. For more information and tickets, please visit [www.sabesjcc.org](http://www.sabesjcc.org) or call 952.381.3499.

**THE PLAY:** Things are not what they appear to be. Tormented by his father's disappearance, young Anschel toils as a tailor's assistant to help his mother support the family. With little to show for their hard work, during Chanukah they make the most of the blessings they are able to share with friends and family. When Anschel is given a mysterious key by an acquaintance of his missing father, he and his friends Yasha and Magda set off on an exciting odyssey that takes them in search of a secret Shephardi treasure. Through danger and mayhem, Anschel must make the choice between his own desperate need, doing what is right and survival. Mark Rosenwinkel, famed Guthrie actor and the man who most recently wrote and starred in the JCC's production of *Wellstone!* writes of a fantastical world in this whimsical holiday tale for the whole family.

**ARTISTS:** The cast for *Anschel and the Missing Chanukah Gelt* consists of local St. Louis Park youth among other local talent. *Anschel* is directed by Todd Bruse, and stars Katie Kaufmann, Nate Hessburg, Damon Brook, Sarah Baker, Andrew Tamarkin, Maya Raz, and Cole Bacig as Anschel. The design team includes Erica Zaffarano (set), Lori Opsal (costumes/props), Michael Croswell (sound), and Josh Iley (lights).

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### **SUPPLEMENT: ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Mark Rosenwinkel (Playwright)** is a member of the Playwrights' Center of Minneapolis, a past recipient of their Jerome Fellowship in playwriting, and a participant in their annual Playlabs reading series. His plays have had

productions, readings and workshops with numerous theaters around the country, most notably his adaptation of *Moby Dick*, which was chosen as the North American representative to the International Assn. for Theatre for Young Audiences (ASSITEJ) Festival in Rostov, Russia. His play, *Sanctus*, won the Writers' Digest Literary Award for best play, and his original script, *Wellstone!* about the late Minnesota Senator, was recently revived at the Sabes JCC featuring Mark in the title role. In addition to playwriting, his professional acting career spans nearly three decades, including work with the Great American History Theatre in such productions as *Sisters of Swing* and *Hiding in the Open*. He has extensive experience as a teacher of acting and holds an MFA in acting from the Asolo Conservatory in Sarasota, FL, and currently serves as Visiting Professor of Theatre at Concordia University in St. Paul.

**Todd Bruse (Director)** Todd attributes his experience with the Dell'Arte Player's Company of Blue Lake, California as the touchstone for his work. Their often improvised and physical, craftsman's approach to the creative process has given him ownership of the skills necessary to succeed in creating theater from nothing. As a company member with the Dell'Arte Player's, Todd gained invaluable breadth and depth in the theory and practice of a successful touring theatre troupe. An intimate and influential mask and physical theatre ensemble, Dell'Arte had a profound impact on Todd's development and understanding of the enjoyment, potential and craft of the theatre.

While living in Chicago, Todd produced and performed at a number of theaters and studied improvisation at The Second City Theater. There he was able to study with Del Close, Viola Spolin, Don DePollo and Mick Napier. An added perk to his study at Second City was the ability to participate with and observe, on a nightly basis, some of our modern comic masters as they created such characters as Wayne Campbell, Matt Foley and other current popular culture icons. Since moving back to Minnesota in 1993, Todd continues to instruct, perform, direct, design and create theatre. As a Resident Artist at Stages Theater Company in Hopkins, and co-creator of the Musical Theater Training Program at Escalate Dance and Theatre Studio in Maple Grove, Todd has played an active role in mentoring young performers and training theatre students. He believes that by sharing the experience of focused fun on the stage, every young artist can excel.

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**Cole Bacig (Anschel)** is excited to be returning to the Sabes JCC Playhouse. He made his acting debut here in the title role of *Oliver* in 2006 and returned in 2007 as Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*. Cole has also performed at Stages Theater and the Children's Theatre Company, most recently as both a Gypsy boy and Pepito's understudy in *Madeline and the Gypsies*.

**Sarah Baker (Petra)** has participated in performing arts since she was young. At present, she is a sophomore at SPCPA in St. Paul. Aside from the Sabes JCC, she has also worked with YPC, Stages, Bryant Lake Bowl and Circus Juventas.

**Damon Brook (Ivan)** has been acting in the Twin Cities for three years. Highlights include: *Autistic License* and *Festival of Lights* at the Illusion Theater, *Hamluke* at the Lowry Lab, *War with the Newts* with Sandbox Theatre and the *Awesome 80s Prom* at the Hennepin Stages. In the Minnesota Fringe Festival: *Elephant Shoes and Olive Juice* with 20% Theatre Company, *Who We Found Instead* with Warm Gun Products and *Borderlines* with Three Sticks Theater Company. Damon also coaches speech at Eagan High School and works right here at the Sabes JCC for the Jewish Arts and Humanities Department during the day.

**Michael Crowell (Sound Designer)** is a composer and sound designer working primarily as a composer of incidental music for theater. He has worked with Frank Theatre, The Jungle Theater, Stages, 10,000 Things, The History Theater, Gustavus Adolphus College, Mn State Mankato, University of Nebraska Omaha, and The Nebraska Shakespeare Festival. Michael's incidental music has been licensed through CBS television for episodes of 48 Hours and 48 Hours Mystery Series. In 2003 Michael received a McKnight Composer Fellowship and in 2005 he was a Jerome Composer Commissioning project recipient. Recent work includes a commission from Arena Dances and Choreographer Mathew Janczewski to compose a score for New York based String Quartet "Ethel" that premiered at The Southern Theater. Prior collaborations at the Sabes JCC include *Wellstone!* and *Sight Unseen*.

**Nate Hessburg (Herschel)** is excited to work with the JCC for the first time. He is an active member of ComedySportz Twin Cities, sells wine for a living and works most often with Urban Samurai Productions. Favorite

roles include Linus in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Pseudolus in *Forum*, Dan in *Closer*, Kulygin in *Three Sisters*, Otto in *Protection Program* and Godfather Drosselmeyer in *The Nutcracker*.

**Katie Kaufmann (Mama)** received her training in physical theatre and ensemble creation at the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in Blue Lake, CA. She moved to the Twin Cities seven years ago for a year long performance apprenticeship with Theatre de la Jeune Lune and decided to stay. In addition to her work with Jeune Lune, she has performed with many theatre companies in the Twin Cities including The Guthrie Theater, 3 Legged Race, Off-Leash Area, Skewed Visions, Jon Ferguson Theater, Teatro del Pueblo, Starting Gate Productions, Hardcover Theater and 3 Sticks. Her performance in 20% Theatre Company's production of *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* received acclaim from the *City Pages* and *Lavender Magazine* as one of the best performances of 2007.

**Shannon Kiley (Stage Manager)** is the resident stage manager and theatre technician here at the JCC. This marks the third show with the JCC having also stage managed *The Fence* and *Wellstone!* Shannon also works with the local company, Urban Samurai, having stage managed *The Diana Story: The Musical* this summer at the Minneapolis Fringe Festival, and most recently *Touch*. She will also have a chance to work with 20% Theatre Company this winter, stage managing *Perfect Pie*. Shannon has worked with several other theatre companies in Fargo, St. Cloud, and Minneapolis, working as a stage manager, lighting designer, and technical director.

**Maya Raz (Magda)** has been attending StageCoach Theatre Arts school since she was five years old. She has also been playing violin since that age. She is currently 12 and is attending SLP Junior High. She graduated from Park Spanish Immersion School and in addition to speaking Spanish and English, Maya also speaks Hebrew.

**Andrew Tamarkin (Yasha)** is excited to perform at the Sabes JCC for the first time. Andrew most recently performed in *How I Became a Pirate* at Stages, *James and the Giant Peach* at Lyric Arts Mains Street Stage and *The Will Rogers Follies* at the Maple Grove Senior High. He currently attends Escalate Dance and Theater Studio in Maple Grove.

**Erica Zaffarano (Set Designer)** was a founding member of four theatre companies: the Iowa State Mime Troupe, Masque Seattle, The School of Performing Arts of the Virgin Islands and Iowa's Old Creamery Theatre Company. Erica got her MFA in Theatrical Design from the University of Washington. She spent years in California working with the Old Globe in San Diego, as head scenic for the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts in Santa Maria, ACT in San Francisco, Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills and with The Lobero Playhouse in Santa Barbara. While living in L.A., Erica worked in a specialty prop house, was a scenic artist and art directed commercials, films and TV. Since moving to Minneapolis, her work has been seen at the Jon Hassler Theater, the Guthrie's Dowling Theater, Stages, the Southern, Ten Thousand Things and the Mixed Blood. She started her affiliation with the Sabes JCC a year ago with *Sight Unseen* and feels this theater is a yet undiscovered diamond! She is delighted to team up once again with Todd Bruse and Lori Opsal in interpreting Mark Rosenwinkel's script. "Mark asked me if the design process for "Anschel" was fun...with this team, how could it NOT be?"

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The Performing Arts Department a pivotal part of the Robert and Janet Sabes Center for Jewish Arts and Humanities at the Sabes JCC. From the traditional to the cutting-edge, we aim to nurture the development of theatre, dance, and music artists by creating opportunities that will provide them a forum for Jewish expression. Exploration of the Jewish experience find a home where their work is at the center of the arts experience. There is something for everyone, from plays that address serious issues for adults to commissioned works that appeal to the entire family. For more information, contact Claire Avitabile, Director of Performing Arts, at 952-381-3447 or [cavitabile@sabesjcc.org](mailto:cavitabile@sabesjcc.org).

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