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**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE**

FLORIDA'S PREMIER PROFESSIONAL THEATRE • SARASOTA

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Media Contact: Steph Gray, Public Relations Coordinator  
941.351.9010 ext. 4800; Steph\_Gray@asolo.org**Asolo Repertory Theatre Presents: *YENTL****Isaac Bashevis Singer's play makes its first English appearance since its Broadway debut*

(SARASOTA, Fla.)- An innovative production of ***YENTL***, with new music composition by singer-songwriter Jill Sobule, will premiere at Asolo Repertory Theatre on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The production, directed by New York director Gordon Greenberg (Asolo Rep credits: *Working* and *Barnum*) will draw from Isaac Bashevis Singer's original story *Yentl*, *The Yeshiva Boy*, Orthodox Judaism traditions and Singer and Leah Napolin's script.

***YENTL*** will feature a klezmer/folk rock band within the production with all songs written by Sobule. With eight albums and two hit singles, "Supermodel" and the original "I Kissed A Girl" to her credit, Sobule can claim her place among the stellar New York singers-songwriters of the last decade. The band will feature accordionist Nancy Seibert, local musicians Carolann Evans and Joe Cerrito and the third year FSU/Asolo MFA students. Seibert's original compositions can be heard on Grammy-winning Jimmy Sturr Orchestra's albums.

In 19th century Eastern Europe, options for young women are few, and education is forbidden. But Yentl has been able to secretly pursue her studies, which are her life's passion, under the tutelage of her father. After he dies, her only hope of achieving her dreams is to disguise herself as a boy. When she falls in love, Yentl must decide whether or not to reveal the truth. This show contains mature themes and brief nudity. ***YENTL*** will run January 20- April 26, previews begin January 18. Ticket prices for previews start at \$20 and all other performances start at \$24.

Tickets can be purchased by calling the Asolo Rep Box Office at 941.351.8000 or at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org).

"***YENTL*** is an absolutely beautiful, fresh and immediate production of a classic story made to seem brand new.

It's beautifully staged; the music is wonderful, the acting is superb. It's a wonderful piece of art," said Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards, "With new music by Jill Sobule, it promises to be one of the most exciting things we do in this season."

Director Gordon Greenberg hopes to shed light on the integral subjects in the story-gender discrimination,

transgender identities and religious schooling all while remaining true to Singer’s original script.

“This production of **YENTL** melds a great comedic story with a quirky Klezmer score that gives it a vibrant new twist. The show's central ideas of searching for your identity amidst the adrenaline rush of young love is timeless — and we highlight that in our musical and design language, which feel at once traditional and contemporary,” said Greenberg, “It's full of profoundly rich ideas, high octane comedy, and a great new score by pop rock singer Jill Sobule. What an exciting project this is to discover!”

The cast features Chicago-based actors **Hillary Clemens** (Yentl/Anshel in **YENTL**, May Daniels in *Once In a Lifetime*), **Andrew Carter** (Avigdor in **YENTL**, Jerry Hyland in *Once In a Lifetime*) and introducing New York based guest artist **Gisela Chipe** (Hadass in **YENTL**). Repertory actors include **Doug Jones** (*La Bête, Equus*), **Carolyn Michel** (*Deathtrap, The Imaginary Invalid*) and former Producing Artistic Director **Howard Millman** as well as a familiar face in guest artist **Jason Bradley** (George Lewis in *Once In a Lifetime, Boeing Boeing*) and the FSU/Asolo Conservatory’s third year MFA students.

## **YENTL**

By: Leah Napolin and Isaac Bashevis Singer

Based on *Yentl, The Yeshiva Boy* by Isaac Bashevis Singer

Directed by Gordon Greenberg

Featuring original music composition by Jill Sobule

Previews: January 18-19, 2012

Performances: January 20, 2012- April 26, 2012

### **Creative Team:**

Gordon Greenberg      Director

Brian Sidney Bembridge Scenic Design

Mattie Ullrich          Costume Design

Paul Miller              Lighting Design

Josh Rhodes            Choreographer

Jill Sobule              Composer

Patricia Delorey	Voice & Dialect Coach
Michelle Hart	Resident Hair & Make-Up Design
Lauryn E. Sasso	Resident Dramaturg
Kelly A. Borgia*	Stage Manager
Nancy Seibert	Music Coordinator
Dane Urban	Stage Management Intern
Clyde C. Compton	Assistant to the Director
Tim Reed	Student Lighting Assistant

**Cast (in order of appearance):**

Hillary Clemens*	Yentl/Anshel
Howard Millman	Reb Todrus/Reb Alter Vishkower/Rabbi of Bechev/Ensemble
Carolyn Michel*	Rivka/Frumka Vishkower/Yachna/Ensemble
Jake Staley	Lemmel/Yussel/Zelig/Ensemble
Douglas Jones*	Reb Nata/Feitl/Solomon the Healer/Ensemble
Luke Bartholomew	Nehemiah/Dovid/Cantor/Ensemble
Jason Bradley*	Mordecai/Laibish/Zlateh/Sheftel/Ensemble
Jon-Michael Miller	Gershon/Lazar/Messenger/Ensemble
Geoff Knox	Treitl/Shmuel/Ensemble
Gretchen Porro	Zisheh/Chambermaid/Ensemble
Benjamin Boucvalt	Yitzhok/Avram/The Mohel/Ensemble
Megan Delay	Nachum/Raizeleh/Finkl/Zeldah Leah/Ensemble
Tony Stopperan	Fulcha/Moishe/Chaim/Jester/Ensemble
Andrew Carter*	Avigdor
Gisela Chipe*	Hadass
Summer Dawn Wallace	Pesha/Ensemble

Ashley Scallon

Nechele/Ensemble

*\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

**YENTL** artist bios:

**ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER** (playwright, *Yentl*) The crowning moment in Isaac Bashevis Singer's life was when he received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1978. This recognition of Singer's writings also glorified the beauty and power of the Yiddish language. Born in Radzymin, Poland, on July 14, 1904, into a long line of rabbis, Singer's young life in the Jewish shtetls of Poland was steeped in Hassidism. He was educated in the Jewish schools and at one time he was enrolled in a rabbinical seminary. In 1950, his novel *The Family Moskat* was translated into English by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Singer became instantly famous and he received the Louis Lamed Prize. An Italian translation, in 1968, won him Italy's Bacarrella Prize. Many of Singer's writings reflected his experiences as a youth in Poland. The shtetl, mysticism, folklore, the supernatural and religion were frequent themes. He also wrote stories for children and was acclaimed for *Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories*, a children's book about animals, children, and supernatural creatures. Singer, whose writings have been translated from Yiddish into Hebrew, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Norwegian, and Finnish, stands as a giant and legend of the Yiddish writers of our time.

**GORDON GREENBERG** THIRD SEASON (Director, *Yentl*) Gordon's credits include the acclaimed new production of *Working for Broadway* In Chicago (developed at Asolo & Old Globe ), *Guys & Dolls* (National tour), the Off-Broadway revival of *Jacques Brel...* (Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Award noms), *Band Geeks!* (co-writer - Goodspeed), *Disney's Believe* (Disney Creative Entertainment), *33 Variations* (Capital Rep), *Pirates!* (Huntington, Goodspeed, Paper Mill), *Barnum* (Asolo), *Floyd Collins* (Signature), *Happy Days* (First National Tour, Boyett Theatricals), *Theory of Three* (NYStage & Film), *1776* (Paper Mill), *Citizens Band* (Spiegel Tent, NY), *The Baker's Wife* (Paper Mill, Goodspeed), *We The People* (Lortel), and numerous television commercials. Upcoming: *Stars of David* (Daryl Roth Productions), *Single Girls Guide* (writer, Ars Nova), *Pirates!* (MUNI), *Jacques Brel* (UK 2012), *Guys & Dolls* (UK 2013). Education: Stanford/NYU Film.

[www.gordongreenberg.com](http://www.gordongreenberg.com)

**ANDREW CARTER\*** GUEST ARTIST FIRST SEASON (Avigdor, *Yentl*;) makes his Asolo Rep debut. Chicago: Robert Lyon in *The Pitman Painters* (dir. BJ Jones); David Frost in *Frost/Nixon* (dir. Louis Contey); Irwin in *The History Boys* (dir. Nick Bowling; Equity Jeff Awards 2009: Best Production, Best Ensemble); *Pravda* (dir. Louis Contey); *This Happy Breed* (dir. Nick Bowling; Jeff Citation 2004 – Best Play, Best Ensemble) all with TimeLine Theatre Company. He has worked with Goodman, Writers', Chicago Shakespeare, Drury Lane Oakbrook, American Blues, Mary-Arrchie, and Irish Repertory. Regional: Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* (dir. Randy White; Cardinal Stage Company).

**GISELA CHIPE\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Hadass, *Yentl*) appeared Off-Broadway in *Emancipation* (Classical Theatre of Harlem) and *Laws of Motion* (PS122). Other credits include *The Clean House* (Syracuse Stage), *Dracula* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *pride@prejudice* (Chester Theatre), *Midsummer*, *Bat Boy! The Musical*, *The Seagull*, *Comedy of Errors* (Great Lakes Theatre/ISF), *Macbeth* (Stonington Opera House), *1001*, *9 Parts of Desire* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival), *The Crucible* (North Carolina Shakespeare Festival), *Merchant of Venice* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival), *Misalliance*, *Major Barbara*, and Barrymore Award-winning *Tuesday* (PTTP).

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**HILLARY CLEMENS\*** GUEST ARTIST, FIRST SEASON (Yentl/Anshel, *Yentl*) is delighted to make her Asolo Rep debut. In Chicago, her work includes *Cloud 9*, *Three Sisters*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Hurlyburly* (The Gift Theatre Company), *As You Like It* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *The Illusion* (Court Theatre), *Ski Dubai* (Steppenwolf), *Picnic* (Writers' Theatre), *A Room With a View* (Lifeline Theatre), and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Apple Tree Theatre). Regionally, she has worked with American Players Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Coterie Theatre, and the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival. She is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago and The School at Steppenwolf.

Corporate sponsors for **YENTL** are Sarasota Bay Club, The Jewish Federation, The Observer and Williams Parker.

Tickets for the **YENTL** are available through the Asolo Repertory Theatre box office by calling 941-351-8000 or toll-free, 800-361-8388. Tickets are also available online at [www.asolorep.org](http://www.asolorep.org).

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Now in its 53rd season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is widely recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in the Southeastern United States. One of the few true repertory companies in the nation, Asolo Rep presents a diverse repertoire of newly commissioned plays, bold reinterpretations of contemporary and classical works, and provocative new musical theatre experiences each season. With its ambitious theatrical offerings and groundbreaking education, outreach and audience development programming, Asolo Rep is more vibrant and its work more relevant than ever before.