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Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan Announces Fall Theater Arts Line-Up: A STRANGE LOOP in Conversation, Jewish Plays Project Festival, FALLOUT: A New Musical in Concert & More

**Broadway's Ashley Brown, Samantha Massell and Ephraim Sykes
join cast for FALLOUT: A New Musical in Concert**

New York, NY (October 13, 2022) – The **Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan (MMJCCM)** has announced the line-up for fall theater arts programs, happening in-person with the Lambert Center for Arts + Ideas in Goldman-Sonnenfeldt Auditorium and at JCC Harlem. The line-up of October and November events includes a concert presentation of the world premiere musical *Fallout*, a Tom Gold Dance performance, a new play festival with Jewish Plays Project, a conversation with a cast and creative member from *A Strange Loop*, and an Artist Salon with The Workshop.

"I'm thrilled to partner with unique and exciting organizations to highlight work that has been waiting patiently for the world to see," says **Jason Blitman, Program Director of the Lambert Center for Arts + Ideas**. "Not only do we get to share premiere pieces from Tom Gold Dance, but we'll be the first home for The Workshop's multidisciplinary Artist Salon, showcasing the work of Jews of Color, Indigenous, Sephardi & Mizrahi (JOCISM). We also have two exciting theatrical events: the three playwrights who won Jewish Play Project's National Jewish Playwriting Contest during the pandemic will finally get their NY premieres on our stage, and Ukrainian singer-songwriter Dmitry Koltunov is showcasing a concert of his beautiful new folk-rock musical featuring a stellar lineup of Broadway performers."

For its debut at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, **Tom Gold Dance** will present two pieces on October 26: the first complete, in-person performance of *Portraits*, and the world premiere of *B-shert*. Set to chamber music by Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů, *Portraits* was inspired by The Morgan Library & Museum's 2020 retrospective, David Hockney: Drawing from Life. *Portraits* premiered via live stream in February 2021. In August 2022, Tom Gold Dance Company presented a newer work set to selections from the *Gnossiennes* for solo piano of Erik Satie. Now, Gold is expanding that piece into *B-shert*, which will incorporate themes from the *Bless: Design for Good* exhibition currently on display at The Laurie M. Tisch Gallery.

At JCC Harlem on October 24, **Nemuna Ceesay** (associate director) and **Jason Veasey** (original cast member) of Broadway's Tony Award Winning musical ***A Strange Loop***, will join Exploring Black Narratives for a discussion about intersectionality, radical self-acceptance, and belonging. At ***A Night of Broadway and Belonging: Creating the Musical A Strange Loop***, Ceesay and Veasey will talk with **Lonnie Firestone**, founder and director of Exploring Black Narratives. Nemuna will share how she developed the show for its Broadway run and how her own identity—as Black and Jewish—is similar to and different from the show's lead character, Usher. Jason will share what it was like being in the rehearsal room, and how he created a character that represents "thought."

On October 30, the MMJCCM will present a concert performance of ***Fallout***, a new American musical about family, the importance of community, and the bittersweet trials of the American dream. With a book by **David Goldsmith** (*Motown: The Musical*) and directed by **Shaun Peknic** (associate director, *Once*), *Fallout* is inspired by the life of the musical's composer/lyricist, Ukrainian born singer-songwriter and startup founder **Dmitry Koltunov**.

In the new folk-rock Russian/American musical *Fallout*, a family of Ukrainian immigrants escapes from the antisemitism of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of Chernobyl to settle in Brighton Beach, New York. There, Yasha, the 20-something, struggles to bring his family together in the wake of his older sister's untimely death. He finds hope and direction in the burgeoning tech world of the early 2000s while coming up against the buried childhood trauma that threatens to upend them all.

Fallout: A New Musical in Concert will be followed by a talkback with the cast and creative team. The cast of the concert performance includes **David Benoit** (*Jekyll & Hyde, Avenue Q*), **Ashley Brown** (*Mary Poppins, Beauty and the Beast*), **Vicki Lewis** (*Anastasia, Chicago*), **Samantha Massell** (*Fiddler on the Roof*), **Kylie Liya Page** (*Les Misérables*), **Christina Sajous** (*Spongebob Squarepants, the Broadway Musical*), **Ephraim Sykes** (*Ain't Too Proud, Hamilton*), and **Ryan Vona** (*Once, Cirque du Soleil Paramour*), with ensemble members **Ari Axelrod**, **Madsie Flynn**, **Marissa Hecker**, and **Geoffrey Allen Murphy**.

Inaugural fellows of The Workshop, North America's first arts fellowship centering the work of JOCISM (Jews of Color, Jewish-Indigenous, Sephardi, and Mizrahi) artists and culture-makers, will present an evening of works-in-progress at **The Workshop's Artist Salon** on November 14 at the MMJCCM. The Salon will include a music video presentation, a dance piece, scenes from new plays, and a photography exhibit, that interrogate, dissect, provoke, subvert, and play with the many angles of memory and Jewish collective identity. The Salon will feature work from The Workshop's fellows **Avi Amon**, **Nemuna Ceesay**, **Bill DeMeritt**, **Rebecca S'manga Frank**, **Benji Kahn**, **Lilach Orenstein**, and **Daniel Terna**.

On November 30 and December 1, in partnership with Jewish Plays Project, the MMJCCM will present a **Festival of New Jewish Plays**. Since March 2020, three plays have won the Jewish Plays Project's National Jewish Playwriting Contest, but the authors haven't yet received their prize: a trip to New York City with a reading of their brand-new award-winning play. The Festival of New Jewish Plays will feature presentations of 10th Annual Contest Winner **Jenny Berman Eng's** *A Moving Picture*, directed by Rebecca S'manga Frank; 11th Annual Contest Winner **Alice Eve Cohen's** *Oklahoma Samovar*, directed by Eric Nightengale; and 12th Annual Contest Winner **Bess Welden's** *Madeleines*, directed by Annette Jolles.

MMJCCM ARTS + IDEAS 2022 THEATER ARTS LINE-UP

[A Night of Broadway and Belonging: Creating the Musical *A Strange Loop*](#)

Mon, Oct 24, 7:30-8:45 PM

JCC Harlem

Join JCC Harlem and [Exploring Black Narratives](#) for a discussion about intersectionality, radical self-acceptance, and belonging with *A Strange Loop*'s Nemuna Ceesay and Jason Veasey, both of whom were instrumental to the development of this Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning production.

In Michael R. Jackson's *A Strange Loop*, among the most acclaimed shows to reach Broadway in years, a Disney usher (named Usher), struggling to accept his Big, Black, and Queer self, writes a musical to feel seen in his identity. In conversation with Lonnie Firestone, founder and director of [Exploring Black Narratives](#), we will hear from *A Strange Loop*'s associate director Nemuna Ceesay and original cast member (Thought 5) Jason Veasey.

Nemuna will share how she developed the show for its Broadway run and how her own identity—as Black and Jewish—is similar to and different from the show's lead character, Usher. Jason will share what it was like being in the rehearsal room, and how he created a character that represents "thought." You won't want to miss this special night as we dive into the unique narrative of *A Strange Loop* that has resonated so deeply with audiences.

[Tom Gold Dance Company](#)

Wed, Oct 26, 7:30-9:00 PM

Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

For its debut at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, Tom Gold Dance will present two pieces: the first complete, in-person performance of *Portraits* and the world premiere of *B-shert*, both created by company founder and director Tom Gold.

Set to chamber music by Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu, *Portraits* was inspired by The Morgan Library & Museum's 2020 retrospective, David Hockney: *Drawing from Life*. Tom Gold Dance premiered *Portraits* in February 2021 in a live streamed performance from the Nave of the Church of the Heavenly Rest in NYC.

A newer Gold work, *B-Shert*, set to selections from the *Gnossiennes* for solo piano of Erik Satie, premiered this past August. Gold is expanding the work to incorporate themes from the *Bless: Design for Good* exhibition currently on display at The Laurie M. Tisch Gallery at the JCC.

[Fallout: A New Musical in Concert](#)

Sun, Oct 30, 3:00-5:30 PM

Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

In the new folk-rock Russian/American musical *Fallout*, a family of Ukrainian immigrants escapes from the antisemitism of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of Chernobyl to settle in Brighton Beach, New York. There, Yasha, the 20-something, struggles to bring his family together in the wake of his older sister's untimely death. He finds hope and direction in the burgeoning tech world of the early 2000s while coming up against the buried childhood trauma that threatens to upend them all.

For one night only, the creative team of *Fallout*, along with a company of actors and musicians from Broadway and beyond, will take us on Yasha's journey in song. With a book by David Goldsmith and directed by Shaun Peknic, *Fallout* was inspired by the life of the musical's

composer/lyricist, Ukrainian born singer-songwriter and startup founder Dmitry Koltunov. As part of the late-20th century wave of Soviet Jewry to the United States, Koltunov, along with his creative team, have crafted a new American musical about family, the importance of community, and the bittersweet trials of the American dream. The concert will be followed by a talkback with the cast and creative team.

[The Workshop's Artist Salon](#)

Mon, Nov 14, 7:00-9:00 PM

Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

Join the inaugural fellows of The Workshop for an evening of art and culture, as they present works-in-progress that interrogate, dissect, provoke, subvert, and play with the many angles of memory and Jewish collective identity. The event will include a music video presentation, a dance piece, scenes from new plays, and a photography exhibit. Fellows: Avi Amon, Nemuna Ceessay, Bill DeMeritt, Rebecca S'manga Frank, Benji Kahn, Lilach Orenstein, and Daniel Terna

[Jewish Plays Project: Festival of New Jewish Plays](#)

Wed, Nov 30 & Thu, Dec 1, various times

Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan

Since March 2020, three plays have won the Jewish Plays Project's National Jewish Playwriting Contest, but the authors haven't yet received their prize—a trip to New York City. Join us as JPP relaunches with two days of exceptional readings of these brand new, award-winning plays, featuring the city's best actors, directors, and designers.

10th Annual Contest Winner: *A Moving Picture*

By Jenny Berman Eng

Directed by Rebecca S'manga Frank

An NYU student's screenplay about a WWII Mercedes Benz labor camp collides with a legendary professor and the dark secret of his Hollywood success.

11th Annual Contest Winner: *Oklahoma Samovar*

By Alice Eve Cohen

Directed by Eric Nightengale

In 1887, two Latvian teenagers flee the Russian army and become the only Jews in the Oklahoma Land Run. A century later, their daughter reinvents their story, aided by ghosts, blintzes, and strong Russian tea.

12th Annual Contest Winner: *Madeleines*

By Bess Welden

Directed by Annette Jolles

Spiced with poetry, Yiddish, and Spanish, *Madeleines* is about a family of Jewish women grappling with how to love each other through shared grief and the solace of baking.

ABOUT THE MARLENE MEYERSON JCC MANHATTAN

Together with its community, the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan creates opportunities for people to connect, grow, and learn within an ever-changing Jewish landscape. Located on 76th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, the JCC is a vibrant non-profit community center on the Upper West Side. It also presents a robust slate of virtual programming, serving an even wider community. The JCC serves over 55,000 people annually through 1,200 programs each season that educate, inspire, and transform participants' minds, bodies, and spirits. Throughout COVID-19, the JCC has pivoted to meet the community online, exceeding 102,000 registrations to over

3,000 virtual classes and programs in the earliest part of the pandemic. Since its inception, the JCC has been committed to serving the community by offering programs, classes, and events that extend beyond neighborhood boundaries, reaching people at all stages of their lives. Learn more at mmjccm.org

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