



TALES FROM ODESSA

A SOCALLED MUSICAL

Music & Lyrics by Josh Dolgin AKA SoCalled
Book by Derek Goldman
Based on the stories of Isaak Babel
Translated by Miriam Hoffman
Directed by Audrey Finkelstein

A Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre Production
Presented by Reitmans
With the generous support of Barbara Seal, CM and Don Seal, QC



Isaak Babel

THEATRE

WORLD
PREMIERE!

JUNE 16 TO
JULY 7, 2013

Reitmans
(CANADA) LTD/LTÉE



SoCalled

Montreal, May 28th, 2013 – The Segal Centre for Performing Arts is proud to conclude its record-breaking 2012-2013 theatre season with the world premiere Yiddish musical *Tales From Odessa*, based on the stories of Isaak Babel, book by **Derek Goldman** and music & lyrics by **Josh “SoCalled” Dolgin**. A Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre production directed by **Audrey Finkelstein**, *Tales From Odessa* runs in the Segal Theatre from **June 16th to July 7th, 2013**; in Yiddish with English and French supertitles.

“Let’s talk about Benya Krik.

He was not always the King... How did he become the King, and why does it matter to us?”

A new tradition is born when the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre meets the vision of Klezmer-pop superstar SoCalled in this new Yiddish musical based on the stories of renowned writer Isaak Babel. Step into the colourful underworld of Odessa in the last days of the Russian Empire, where mob boss Benya “The King” Krik reigns over the bustling Jewish neighborhood of Moldavanka. Chronicling the shady adventures of this anti-hero and his rise to power, *Tales From Odessa* will take you back to a forgotten world of smugglers, peddlers and gangsters, where the dreams of one man reflect the emancipation of a whole population.

Tales From Odessa is based on Russian-Jewish writer Isaak Babel’s seminal cycle of short stories *The Odessa Tales* (first published in 1923) that described the day-to-day life of the Jewish community of the port-town of Odessa, during the beginnings of the Russian Revolution. Montreal-based producer, composer, rapper and singer, **Josh “SoCalled” Dolgin**, collaborates with the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre in the creation of this new production.

Out of an admiration for Babel’s atypical gangster stories, comes the inspiration for *Odessa*: “*The gangster genre has always been one of my favourites,*” says Dolgin. “*Such a rich metaphor with which to tell stories about relationships, families, race, greed, corruption, valour, morality.*” He continues: “*Babel’s work seemed like the perfect material to not only deal with the gangster genre but also to explore pre-Holocaust Ashkenazi Jewish identity in a slightly skewed light.*”

Artistic producer, **Paul Flicker**, commissioned the internationally-renowned musician to compose the music and lyrics after seeing his puppet musical *The Season* at Pop Montréal in the summer of 2011: “*Josh (Dolgin) is one of the most brilliant, talented and creative artists on the Montreal scene. His contemporary approach to traditional music makes him a perfect match for the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre.*”

MUSIC & LYRICS
JOSH “SOCALLED” DOLGIN

BOOK
DEREK GOLDMAN

DIRECTOR
AUDREY FINKELSTEIN

MUSICAL DIRECTION
NICK BURGESS

CHOREOGRAPHY
SASHA KLEINPLATZ
AND ANDREW TAY

SET DESIGN
JOHN C. DINNING

COSTUME DESIGN
MONIKA HERÉDI

LIGHTING DESIGN
NICOLAS DESCÔTEAUX

PUPPET DESIGN
GLEA MINAKER

SOUND DESIGN
PETER BALOV

YIDDISH TRANSLATION
MIRIAM HOFFMAN



WATCH THE TRAILER
AT SEGALCENTRE.ORG

With a book by award-winning stage director and playwright **Derek Goldman**, current Artistic Director of the Davis Performing Arts Center at Georgetown University, and translated into Yiddish by Tony Award-winner **Miriam Hoffman**, *Tales From Odessa* carries on the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre's tradition of presenting original Yiddish-language productions that dramatize the Jewish experience.

After last season's hit Yiddish musical revue *On Second Avenue*, **Audrey Finkelstein** returns to direct this bold and spectacular production, with musical direction by **Nick Burgess** (*Guys and Dolls*), and a remarkable cast of over thirty performers, including **Gab Desmond** (*Houdini, Pirates of Penzance, Those Were the Days*) as Benya Krik and Damian Nisenson as Benya's father Mendel. A longtime collaborator and company member of the DWYT, Finkelstein describes the show as "not your typical Jewish folk story. In his own way, Babel was very forward-thinking, his stories dark and edgy and his characters bold and larger than life. The typical elements of Jewish stories are turned on their head."

Bridging the contemporary and the traditional, the production will feature an authentic seven-piece Klezmer band live on stage, shadow puppets by accomplished puppet designer **Clea Minaker**, with choreography by **Sasha Kleinplatz** (*Chorus II*) and **Andrew Tay**. Set design by **John C. Dinning**, costumes by **Monika Herédi** and lighting by **Nicolas Descôteaux** will transform the Segal stage into the gritty backstreets of 1917 Odessa.

About the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre

The Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT) is the resident theatre company of the Segal Centre for Performing Arts. Since 1958, the DWYT has been dramatizing the Jewish experience and sustaining the Yiddish theatre legacy at home in Montreal and abroad. The Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre has presented over 85 critically-acclaimed plays, ranging from classics and original works, dramas and musicals. Founded by Dora Wasserman, CM, CQ, the company was led to new heights by Dora's daughter, Bryna Wasserman who remains the Honorary Artistic Director. The DWYT continues to celebrate and preserve Yiddish theatre, language and culture through main stage productions and a year-long series of staged readings, films, and concerts.

About the Segal Centre for Performing Arts

The Segal Centre is a meeting place for all of the performing arts, showcasing the best professional artists from here and abroad and playing a leading role in the artistic development of Montreal's youth and the creation of its cultural legacy. Through theatre, music, dance, cinema and the Academy, the Segal Centre is setting a broad vision by recognizing the importance of building bridges through the arts and supporting multicultural projects in Montreal. The Centre's commitment is to ensure that creativity resonates within our community and that it remains accessible and inspiring each and every day, leading the performing arts world of tomorrow. www.segalcentre.org

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For interviews and media inquiries, please contact:

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AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'
THE FATS WALLER
MUSICAL SHOW

2013 **29** > **20**
SEP **OCT**

MEDIA CALL

Thursday, June 13th - 12:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT

Thursday, June 20th - 8:00 p.m.

*Please confirm your presence
by Monday, June 17th

PERFORMANCES

June 16th to July 7th

PREVIEWS

June 16th to June 19th

RUN

Monday - Thursday - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday - 9:30 p.m.

Sunday - 7:00 p.m.

MATINÉES

Sunday - 2:00 p.m.

TICKETS

514.739.7944

www.segalcentre.org

SUNDAY-@-THE SEGAL:

Sunday, June 16th - 11:00 a.m.

GUEST: Josh Dolgin

FREE LECTURE

WHERE

Segal Centre for Performing Arts
5170, ch. de la Côte-Ste-Catherine
Montréal

Metro

Côte-Ste-Catherine/Snowdon

Bus: 129 / 51

