

Dear Friend and Theater Lover,

I am proud to lend my name and endorsement in support of a wonderful new initiative, the National Jewish Theater and the American Theater Festival.

The recently founded not-for-profit National Jewish Theater (NJT) will celebrate and preserve the genius and cultural significance of important Jewish theatrical artists and productions highlighting Jewish American composers, lyricists and playwrights of musical theater, drama and comedy.

All of the productions of NJT will be presented in conjunction with its sister service organization the not-for-profit American Theater Festival (ATF), which identifies and supports a group of significant regional theaters and unique productions that deserve to have their work seen by a wider and more diverse audience. This collaboration will broaden the identity of the NJT, as well as ensuring its outreach to all audiences.

One of the National Jewish Theater's and American Theater Festival's (ATF) activities will include a series of produced or presented performances of musicals created in a concert style format performed across America. I am delighted that The Soul of Gershwin: A Musical Journey of an American Klezmer, by Joe Vass, has been selected to launch the work of the NJT and ATF, under an exclusive license from the Gershwin Estates. This remarkable concert musical, featuring an on stage band, singers and an actor portraying George Gershwin, celebrates Gershwin's genius, his urban roots and ranges musically from popular blues and jazz songs to cantorial, classical and klezmer.

....works on so many levels you have to see it twice. - *Miami Herald*

....a rich discovery for us all. - *Palm Beach Post*

....an incandescent tribute to the music of George Gershwin....the breadth and appeal of the production's sheer musicality is unbeatable. - Ft. Lauderdale *Sun Sentinel*

The Soul of Gershwin is currently scheduled to return to the tri-county South Florida area in major theaters and concert halls in spring of 2008. This launch will be followed by an anticipated New York/London engagement and national tour all sponsored by the ATF/NJT. All of the NJT's and ATF's work will be supplemented by an educational enrichment and outreach program that further enhances the significance and values that the production illustrates. Future NJT/ATF plans include other musical presentations as well as productions of comedic and dramatic plays, both contemporary and classical, drawn from the work esteemed and emerging playwrights. The ATF will also extend the life of noteworthy productions by American not-for-profit regional theaters by presenting them to underserved audiences in additional venues after their runs in the originating theaters.

The National Jewish Theater and the American Theater Festival will be advised by a prominent group of citizens and led by their President and Producing Artistic Director Arnold Mittelman. Mr. Mittelman's distinguished career spans over forty years during which he has created over two hundred theatrical productions of both plays and musicals including numerous Broadway shows and world premieres.

I urge you to provide the much needed support and attendance these companies deserve. My experience with live theater has made me realize the importance of maintaining and preserving an art form that has such a remarkable history and impact. I believe the NJT and ATF play a vital role in enriching our society and I look forward to their long and illustrious future.

Best regards,


and 

