AUDITION NOTICE

The Segal Centre presents a Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre production of:

Hester Street

A play with music by Sharyn Rothstein

Music and lyrics by Joel Waggoner

Adapted from the film by Joan Micklin Silver

Based on *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto by Abraham Cahan* (1896)

Directed by Ellen David

June 16-27, 2027 Segal Studio

About the play:

The play is a theatrical adaptation of the beloved 1975 film by Joan Micklin Silver, and depicts the uplifting journey of Gitl, a young Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe, who arrives with her son to meet her husband Yankl in the tumult of the late-19th century Lower East Side. Separated from his wife and the provincial limitations of his upbringing, Yankl (now Jake) has fully embraced his new American life — one that has little in common with Gitl's old-time ways. Faced with the disintegration of her marriage in a world she can barely comprehend, Gitl must find her voice, protect her son, and redefine her identity. *Hester Street* resounds with the humour, heartbreak and hope essential to the Jewish immigrant experience.

The company will be comprised of seven principal performers, musicians and an ensemble who play supporting roles.

About the auditions:

Auditions for *Hester Street* will take place on November 1st and 2nd, 2026 and we are presently accepting submissions for the following roles:

Gitl Podkovnik: (20s to early 30s) She is funny and bright and new to America. Gitl (pronounced Gee-tl) speaks Yiddish predominantly and learns English as the play progresses. She is married to Yankl/Jake. Her initial timidity evolves into a quiet strength.

Mrs. Kavarsky: (40s to 50s) She is the landlady of the tenement apartment where the Podkovniks live. She is funny and fierce, witty and wise, practical and protective of Gitl. Having experienced her own immigration, she can now guide Gitl in life and love.

Mamie Fine: (20s to early 30s) She is a Polish immigrant who has assimilated into the New York lifestyle. She is a hard working and financially savvy woman, who has been having a relationship with Jake prior to Gitl's arrival. She lives life on her own terms and is not afraid to go for what she wants.

Yankl/Jake Podkovnik: (mid 20s to 30s) He is Gitl's husband, a charming, ambitious and brash man... desperate to be a "real American" and escape from his perceived limitations of his "former" life. He works as a tailor and has dreams of a bigger and better life.

Mr. Bernstein: (mid 20s to late 30s) He is a deeply religious and sincere man with a quiet and reserved demeanour. He boards with the Podkovniks and works with Jake to make ends meet, while seriously immersing himself in Jewish texts. He is kind to Gitl, and her and Jake's son Yossele.

Yossele/Joey: (7 to 10) He is Gitl and Jake's son who seems poised to adapt well to his new American way of life. He is bright and energetic.

Joe Peltner: (mid 30s to 40s) A fellow local immigrant, dance hall owner, and street busker who navigates the bustling social scene of the neighbourhood. He is a friend to Jake and understands the immigrant desire to assimilate. There is a possibility that Joe is also a musician in the play who is adept on piano and accordion.

About the Musicians:

While not a musical, *Hester Street* is a play with music, and there will be musicians on stage to help tell the story with instruments and song. Please let us know if you are proficient on piano, accordion, clarinet, trombone, or violin.

About the Ensemble:

In addition to the principal characters, there are also some supporting roles that will be played by members of an ensemble who will join as well in the music and street scenes of the piece. We will be addressing these ensemble roles soon after our initial auditions.

Important to note:

This is a non-union bilingual Yiddish/English-speaking production. Knowledge of Yiddish is not required. Yiddish diction coaching is an integral part of the rehearsal process and the DWYT experience. In your submission please identify which languages you are proficient in.

If you are interested in submitting yourself in any capacity to this production, please send your headshot and resumé to:

sslapak@segalcentre.org

Once selected for an audition, the following material will be forwarded to you:

- Sides containing specific scenes related to the character you will be presenting. We ask that you familiarize yourself with the material, but you are not required to be off-book for the audition.

- A short Yiddish text to read, along with an audio and pronunciation guide for assistance.

Additional auditions and call-backs may be added as needed.

Regarding rehearsals:

Rehearsals will begin in January, 2027 and will likely take place on one weekday evening (based on cast availability) AND Sundays during the day. As the months proceed, a few more hours will be added to the schedule weekly. Please indicate in your submission any significant availability conflicts you foresee at this time. Note that not everyone in the cast will be called for every rehearsal.

Tech and Performance:

Technical week is from June 6th to June 15th, 2027.
There will be no rehearsals during Shavuot.
Performances are from Wednesday, June 16th to Sunday, June 27th, 2027.
You would have to confirm your availability for ALL the shows, as there will be no sharing of roles with the exception of young Joey.

We look forward to hearing from you!