

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Today's Date: June 10, 2008

Contacts:

Lora Sommer: 678.812.4078

BOX OFFICE: 678.812.4002

NEW CENTER THEATRE TAKES THE STAGE IN ATLANTA!

Inaugural Season Kicks Off With Outrageous Comedy, Jewtopia!

Exciting 2008-09 Mainstage Productions Include:

The Hilarious "25 Questions for a Jewish Mother" starring Judy Gold;

The Classic Musical, "The Sound of Music;"

Teen Theatre Production of Disney's "High School Musical;" and

Neil Simon's Hit Comedy, "Brighton Beach Memoirs"

(ATLANTA, GA) – Welcome to **Center Theatre** at the MJCCA! Center Theatre is thrilled to take the stage as Atlanta's newest professional theater company. Center Theatre was created to produce work with broad appeal for children, teens and adults. Its mission is to offer quality entertainment that will both entertain and enlighten. Housed in the beautiful Morris & Rae Frank Theatre, located at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (5342 Tilly Mill Road, Dunwoody), Center Theatre's first season has something for everyone: from a classic Broadway musical to the poignant comedy of a Jewish mother, from a lively teen theatre production to an autobiographical hit comedy.

Center Theatre will kick off its 2008-09 season with "***Jewtopia***" (at the 14th Street Playhouse) from June 19 – August 10, 2008. Chris, a gentile, wants to marry a Jewish girl so he'll never have to make another decision. Adam, a Jew, wants to marry a Jewish girl to please his family, but can't get a date. Chris promises to help Adam find the Jewish girl of his dreams if Adam will help Chris shed his gentile-ness. Stereotypes collide, cultures clash and hilarious chaos ensues! Jewtopia will be directed by Center Theatre's Producing Artistic Director, Blake Hall.

(Ticket prices: \$25 – 35, with discounts for MJCCA Members, seniors and college students.)

Jewtopia tickets can only be purchased at www.woodruffcentertickets.org, or by calling 404-733-5000.)

Center Theatre's first mainstage production, "*25 Questions for a Jewish Mother*" starring Judy Gold, is directed by Karen Kohlhaas and runs September 10 – 21, 2008. An Emmy Award-winning actress and comedian, Judy Gold's long-running Off-Broadway show, *25 Questions*, has been called, "Fiercely funny, honest and moving" by *The New York Times*. Judy Gold is 6'3", conservative, kosher, gay and the mother of two boys...not your typical Jewish comedienne. Gold's neurosis about becoming **her** mother spurred a quest to find out what makes a Jewish mother different from all other mothers. Gold and playwright Kate Moira Ryan interviewed over 50 Jewish women and came up with an astonishing album of memorable characters. The result, as described by *Time Out, New York*, is "a hilarious and often poignant look at the mother-daughter bond, Jewish culture and what makes a Jewish mother, well, a Jewish mother."

** Judy Gold will be signing her book, "*25 Questions for a Jewish Mother*" immediately following each show. Her books can be purchased at the Center Theatre Box Office.

(Ticket prices: \$24 – 30, with discounts for MJCCA Members, seniors, and college students.

Tickets for this production go on sale August 11.)

Center Theatre continues its mainstage season with a Holiday Spectacular, the classic musical, *The Sound of Music*. Directed by Bo Cecil, *The Sound of Music* runs November 28 - December 28, 2008. This wonderful musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein has delighted audiences of all ages from Broadway to theaters around the country for years. It never seems to lose its appeal. The governess for a widowed naval captain's seven children gains rapport with the children and captures their father's heart. The family's narrow escape from the Nazis provides a thrilling and inspirational finale.

(Ticket Prices: \$24 – \$35, with discounts for MJCCA Members, seniors, students and children under 12.

Tickets for this production go on sale August 11.)

Come join Center Theatre for *The Sound of Music* sing-along performances on Sunday December 7, 14, 21 & 28 at 7:00 pm! This is karaoke on a grand scale because fans of *The Sound of Music* take things very seriously. If you go along to this evening you can expect people in costume and plenty of chances to sing along to the songs in this classic musical. (Don't worry if you're not sure of all the words to *Edelweiss* – all lyrics will be projected on a screen.)

Center Theatre's next mainstage production is an energy-filled Teen Theatre rendition of *Disney's High School Musical*, running February 11 – March 1, 2009, directed by Barbara Cole-Uterhardt. Get ready for "the start of something new!" This stage production, based on the Disney Channel Original Movie HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL, is brought to life at Center Theatre! Watch the twists and turns of the lovable schoolmates – Troy and Gabriella – as they surf the tricky tides of peer pressure and canteen cliques to follow their dreams and score the leads in the big school show, and a place in each other's hearts.

(Ticket Prices: \$15 – \$25, with discounts for MJCCA Members, seniors, students and children under 12.

Tickets for this production go on sale August 11.)

Center Theatre's season concludes with Neil Simon's hit comedy, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. Running April 29 – May 24, 2009, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* is directed by Robert Egizio and stars Benjamin Apply-Epstein as Eugene. Neil Simon's autobiographical hit comedy is set in pre-World War II Brooklyn, where Eugene Jerome, an ambitious, somewhat starry-eyed teenager who wants to be a writer, lives with his extended Jewish family in a lower-middle-class home that is filled with tension, love and plenty of laughs. The *New York Daily News* calls BRIGHTON BEACH "Simon's funniest, richest, and consequently the most affecting of his plays."

(Ticket Prices: \$22 – \$30, with discounts for MJCCA Members, groups, seniors and students.

Tickets for this production go on sale August 11.)

Kim Goodfriend, Director of the MJCCA's Arts and Culture says, "Just as I am thrilled to welcome the community to our new Center Theatre and its fabulous 2008-09 season, I am equally pleased to introduce Blake Hall as Producing Artistic Director. Blake served most recently as managing director of Jewish Theatre of the South, and prior to that, worked with the Alliance Theatre. In his four years at the MJCCA, Blake has proved himself to be a creative and confident theater professional."

Blake Hall says, "It's my great pleasure to join Kim Goodfriend, Howard Hyman and the rest of the MJCCA's Arts & Culture Committee in inviting you to the new Center Theatre, at the MJCCA. I have been part of the MJCCA's theater family for several years and am thrilled to be here at this exciting time, opening our doors this fall to such an extraordinary inaugural season."

Goodfriend continues, "Center Theatre productions will uphold the established level of excellence you have enjoyed here at the MJCCA. All productions will draw from the pool of Atlanta area theater professionals to maintain the highest possible production values. Our newest addition, the **Teen Theatre** program, will feature Atlanta area teens in the popular *Disney's High School Musical* in February '09."

Howard Hyman, Chairman of the MJCCA's Arts & Culture Committee says, "One more element I believe will greatly appeal to Atlanta theatre-goers is that, in addition to our mainstage season in the Morris & Rae Frank Theatre, we are reaching out to our in-town community by producing one show each year at the 14th Street Playhouse in Midtown. This year's production is the outrageously hilarious comedy, *Jewtopia*, called "One of the biggest theatrical hits" by *The New York Times*."

For additional information, please contact: Lora Sommer, Public Relations Manager at 678.812.4078, lora.sommer@atlantajcc.org; or Kim Goodfriend, Director of Arts & Culture at 678.812.4071, kim.goodfriend@atlantajcc.org.

Please visit www.CenterTheatreAtlanta.org for complete show times or to buy tickets on-line. For ticket information and purchase, call the Center Theatre Box Office at 678.812.4002.

###