

For Immediate Release

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PHOTOS BY RICHARD FELDMAN

**PEAK PERFORMANCES@MONTCLAIR PRESENTS
JOYOUS NEW PRODUCTION OF "SHLEMIEL THE FIRST"
JANUARY 16-17 AND 20-24**

The hilarious, postmodern-inspired klezmer musical "Shlemiel the First," which received its world premiere at the A.R.T. in Cambridge, MA in 1994, will be freshly minted during Peak Performances@Montclair's 2010 winter/spring season. Produced by Peak Performances, the revived show, which is once again directed and choreographed by David Gordon, will be premiered January 16-17, and 20-24 at Montclair State University's Alexander Kasser Theater. "Shlemiel" is presented at Peak Performances in association with the National Yiddish Theatre-Folksbiene and Pick Up Performance Co(S).

Brimming with wacky wit and humor that disguise its deeper message, "Shlemiel the First" moves with the clangorous speed of its klezmer music score to tell the story of a group of self-proclaimed wise men, each less wise than the next. They order that Shlemiel, played by Michael Iannucci, leave the imaginary town of Chelm to travel the world to spread their ill-informed wisdom. While celebrating the victory of women's common sense over men's self-promoted wisdom, Shlemiel's gullibility and ultimate self-delusions make the musical a witty warning about the dangers of self-regard --all of which is delivered with a directorial sleight of hand. Another twist of fate caused by delusion turned into a happy reality: Shlemiel discovers new love in the old.

MORE

**"SHLEMIEL THE FIRST"
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"Shlemiel the First," based on Isaac Bashevis Singer's play of the same name, was conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein. The lyrics are by Arnold Weinstein and the music is by Hankus Netsky. Music direction is by Zalmen Mlotek. The loopy, lopsided set is based on Robert Israel's original design.

In addition to Michael Iannucci, the Peak Performances cast includes Bob Ader as Dopey Petzel; Jeff Brooks as Gronam Ox; Darryl Winslow as Moishe Pipik; Jesse Means as Zeinvel Schmeckel; Alice Playten as Tryna Ritza; David Skeist as Mendel Shmendrick; and Kristine Zbornik as Yenta Pesha.

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The revival of "Shlemiel the First" has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius.

CURTAIN TIMES, TICKET AND TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Curtain Times: January 16 at 8pm; January 17 at 3pm; January 20 and 21 at 7:30pm; January 22 at 1pm; January 23 at 8pm; January 24 at 3pm.

All tickets are \$15, and are available at the Alexander Kasser Theater Box Office or by calling 973-655-5112 or online at www.peakperfs.org.

Van or bus service is available from New York City (\$10 per person, roundtrip) from the Maritime Hotel on 9th Avenue and 16th Street to the Alexander Kasser Theater for selected performances. For information about bus availability and reservations call 973-655-5112. For train service, available only on weekdays, go online to: www.njtransit.com or call 1-973-275-5555.

Montclair State University is located at 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043

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