

"Across an emotional spectrum from saucy irreverence, high spirits and nostalgia to the bitterest despair and back to hope...

Ms. Fletcher delivers a richly rounded and eventually heartbreaking performance... illuminating, ultimately touching."

- The New York Times

*"[Rebecca Joy Fletcher's] intimate two-person show, funny and snazzily presented, serves as a documentary of an art form that grew in significance as the world outside was going mad. It's also a terrific showcase for two exceptional performers who mix show-biz pizzazz, sharp comedy skills, tragic pathos and strong, vibrant singing voices... Great art often emerges from great sorrow and **Kleynkunst!**, even when it's at its silliest and most irreverent, is a memorable tribute to the importance and lasting power of art."*

- Broadwayworld.com



**REBECCA JOY FLETCHER
AND
SPENCER CHANDLER**



Researched and written by Rebecca Joy Fletcher
Starring Rebecca Joy Fletcher and Spencer Chandler
Director: John-Richard Thompson
Musical Direction and Arrangements: Bob Goldstone
English lyrics: Jeremy Lawrence and Stephen Mo Hanan

Warsaw, 1920s: a rising class of secular, passionate Jews, eager to see and be seen, frequent *kleynkunst teaters* -- Yiddish cabarets. Inside these "little art theaters," our hipster Yiddishists soak up the satiric music, laugh at anti-Semitism, drink whiskey, and learn to dance the Charleston. They were riding the waves of Polish independence, hoping for a brighter, freer world. Their hopes were dashed with the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, and, not long after, with the institution of the Warsaw Ghetto. Yet, even within the Ghetto's stifling walls, these hipsters continued to create brave and biting new cabaret.

KLEYNKUNST! reflects the spirit, bravado, and optimism of Jewish Warsaw between the Wars. This show brings to life the *kleynkunst teater's* songs, sketches, and spirit, in Yiddish and English translations. We pay homage to a world of brilliance and bite which no longer exists.

No Yiddish knowledge required - most of the show's in English!

www.goldenland.com

www.rebeccajoyfletcher.com

"It is unlike anything I've ever seen. Funny, sexy, ironic, dramatic, Rebecca Fletcher's Kleynkunst! is the stuff I live for."

- Jewish Currents

"Kleynkunst! brought an historic truth to our audience along with a healthy box office."

- Georgia Buchanan
Managing Director
The National Yiddish
Theatre Folksbiene

"American Jewish theatre owes Rebecca Joy Fletcher a standing O. Her carefully researched, sensitively crafted Kleynkunst! recreates a too-often overlooked chapter of theatre history. That would be the Warsaw Yiddish cabaret of the 1920s, with all its grim humor, outsized sentiment, in-your-face ribaldry and daring political bite.

Fletcher herself is a gifted, versatile performer.

There are a couple of numbers in Kleynkunst! that make your heart stand still."

- Ellen Schiff
theatre scholar and editor
Awake and Singing: Six Great
American Jewish Plays

Rebecca Joy Fletcher (Author/*The Shining Nightingale*) is an ordained cantor and playwright, and a scholar and performer of International Jewish cabaret, highlighting the remarkable contributions of Jewish cabaret artists in Yiddish, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, and English. *Kleynkunst! Warsaw's Brave and Brilliant Yiddish Cabaret* was originally produced by Kabarett Fête in January 2007, and then in an expanded version Off-Broadway by the National Yiddish Theater-Folksbiene in November 2007. *Degenerate*, her original show exploring the heyday of Berlin's cabaret culture, was developed under the auspices of the Makor/Steinhardt Center of the 92nd St Y Artists-in-Residence program, and premiered at Makor (NYC) in 2005. In both 2004 and 2005, she headlined as *The Cabaret Artist* in the Washington Heights Arts Stroll, a festival for the arts in upper Manhattan. Upcoming: *A Little Yearning*, a round-the-world look at the cabarets of the 20's and 30's and *GINGI*, a trio of women cantor-performers premiering this spring with a show in honor of Israel's 60th. Ms. Fletcher also serves as cantor of Temple Israel, in Staten Island.

Spencer Chandler (MC) is an actor, director, writer, filmmaker, pianist, composer, cartoonist, painter, linguist, chef, inventor, and clown. Mentors and inspirations include Benjamin Franklin, Buster Keaton, Woody Allen, and director Peter Sellars. He is proud to have been the first American invited to join the international troupe of clowns who perform Slava's Snowshow around the world, including two and a half years Off-Broadway at the Union Square Theater in New York City and touring in the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, and San Francisco. He is the artistic director and founder of Cannery Works, a nonprofit that provides production support to independent artists working in theater, music, film, and visual art (www.canneryworks.org). Spencer has also appeared in several principal roles on prime-time television: *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Deadline*, and FOX's *Jonny Zero* (guest-starring as Luther the Skinhead). Film credits include *Mendy*, in which he played an ex-Satmar Hasidic drug dealer; *Solidarity*; and *Young Goodman Brown*. He has been working professionally in theater for over 20 years including three seasons with the Folksbiene-National Yiddish Theater. With love for his grandmother, who was born in Poland.

John-Richard Thompson (Director) John-Richard Thompson is the author and director of *Indigo Rat*, a musical revue set in Berlin between the wars, which ran for two years in Greenwich Village and won the prestigious MAC Award (Manhattan Association of Cabarets) and Best Director Award and Best Theatrical Show from Theatermania.com. *Indigo Rat* was a follow-up to John-Richard's cult hit *Erik and the Snow Maidens*, which ran from 1997 through 1999 and won a combined seven awards, including Best Director Award. New York productions include *Angel Mountain* (2006), *18 Rabbit* (2006), *A Lightening of Fireflies* (2005), *Water Sheerie* (2004), and *Rain House* (2003). A longtime advocate for children and adults with disabilities, he is co-author of two books with Anne Ford, *Laughing Allegra* and *On Their Own*, both designated as Finalists for the Books for a Better Life Awards.

Bob Goldstone (Musical Direction and Arrangements) On Broadway, Bob was orchestral pianist for *Evita* and assistant conductor for *Charlie and Algernon*. Off Broadway, he was musical director and arranger for *Asylum: The Strange Case of Mary Lincoln*, *Tallulah Hallelujah* (with Tovah Feldshuh), *Bubbe Meises*, *Das Lusitania Songspiel* (with Sigourney Weaver and Christopher Durang), *Guilt Without Sex* (with Marilyn Sokol), and *The Coolest Cat in Town*. Among the top cabaret and concert artists Bob has worked with are: Eileen Fulton, Tovah Feldshuh, Karen Akers, Bruce Adler, Marni Nixon, Marilyn Sokol, Liliane Montevecchi, Eddie Fisher, and Dick Shawn. Bob did the musical arrangements for the feature film *High Stakes* and composed the score for the indie film, *The Skip*. Bob's many show orchestrations include: *The Little Rascals*, *Hannah 1939*, Michael Legrand's *A Christmas Carol*, *The Housewife's Cantata*, *Dragons*, and *The Phantom Tollbooth*. In the classical world, he was accompanist for the New Haven Opera, has participated in chamber music recitals at the Manes School, and has played orchestral piano for concerts by the 92nd Street Y Symphonic Workshop Orchestra and the Center Symphony.