

HOW MANY BUSHELS AM I WORTH?



PROVIDENCE, RI - JANUARY 9-12
AS220 BLACK BOX THEATRE

BROOKLYN, NY - JANUARY 16-26
THE MARK O'DONNELL THEATER

PROGRAM NOTE

How Many Bushels Am I Worth? is about one of the great moments in Jewish history: the saving of hundreds of thousands of Jews living in the Soviet Union. This momentous period occurred as the United States established — through policy, social service agencies, grass-roots advocacy, benefactors, and more — a robust infrastructure for refugee resettlement.

Bena Shklyanoy's story captures the realities of the lives of many such Jews who came to America from the former Soviet Union.

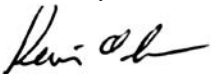
In exploring any narrative, fascinating parallels can emerge. I'd like to share two stories from our production with you.

Jake Malavsky, who plays the role of Alex, is the great-grandson of the legendary Cantor Samuel Malavsky, who toured the world with his children as the famed Malavsky Family Choir. Cantor Malavsky grew up in the city of Smila, near Kiev, and came to the United States when he was 20 years old. He recorded many solo cantorial albums as well as duets with his mentor Yossele Rosenblatt. Many of Malavsky's compositions have become classics of the cantorial genre.

In addition, we use music from the recently released CD *Beregovski Suite*, which you will hear as pre-show music as well as in between scenes. Moshe Beregovski, known as the "foremost ethnomusicologist of Eastern European Jewry," saved thousands of beautiful folk songs, klezmer dance tunes and religious melodies. You can read more on page 6 in this program about him and the story of this captivating music reinvented by Alicia Svigals and Uli Geissendoerfer.

We hope that you discover your own connections to the play, which illuminates such universal themes as identity, values and solidarity, still relevant for refugees fleeing oppressive regimes around the globe today.

Thank you for taking this journey with us.



Kevin Olson

Director and Co-playwright

HOW MANY BUSHEL AM I WORTH?

By Bena Shklyanoy and Kevin Olson

Based on Bena's family history, found on appledoesnotfall.com.

Produced by appledoesnotfall.com and FirstHand Theatrical

PROVIDENCE, RI - JANUARY 9-12

AS220 Black Box Theatre
95 Empire Street

BROOKLYN, NY - JANUARY 16-26

The Mark O'Donnell Theater
160 Schermerhorn Street

CAST

Bena.....Hannah Antman
Alex.....Jake Malavsky

Kevin Olson, Director and Co-Playwright
Bena Shklyanoy, Co-Playwright

Dave Feldman, Lighting Designer
Michael Goldberg, Music Coordinator
Surrey Houlker, Assistant Director and Stage Manager
Clara Tomaz, Animated Motion Graphics Designer
Saul Ulerio, Tech Director, The Mark O'Donnell Theater, Brooklyn
Dan Wright, Tech Director, AS220 Black Box Theatre, Providence

Copies of *How Many Bushels Am I Worth?* and its companion piece *And Then What?*
as well as CDs of *Beregovski Suite* will be for sale after all performances.

COMPANY

HANNAH ANTMAN (Bena) Hannah is delighted to return to FirstHand Theatrical. A Chicago theater artist, she played Bena last summer in the inaugural production of *Bushels*. Her acting credits include work with The Arc Theatre, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, Theatre L'Acadie, and Improv Playhouse. Hannah is also an arts critic and theater educator, and recently received her BFA in Acting from the School of Theatre at Boston University. Learn more about her at hannahantman.com.

JAKE MALAVSKY (Alex) Jake is thrilled to work with FirstHand Theatrical in helping to tell Bena's story. A Brooklyn-based actor originally from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Jake is a recent graduate of Bucknell University. His favorite roles include Kreon (*Antigone*), Voltaire (*Emilie La Marquise Du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight*), and Dromio of Syracuse (*The Comedy of Errors*). Jake is currently an MFA Acting candidate at The Actors Studio Drama School at Pace University. Follow him at [@jake.malavsky](https://twitter.com/@jake.malavsky).

KEVIN OLSON & FIRSTHAND THEATRICAL (Co-Playwright and Director) Kevin established FirstHand Theatrical in 2013 and has created five original scripts for the company. FirstHand Theatrical conceives original theater productions using primary source material from diverse personal, cultural, and social histories.

Kevin holds an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and a bachelor's degree in Speech and Theatre from SUNY Oneonta. He has directed numerous productions in myriad settings. He received a Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle KUDOS Award for his production of Brian Friel's *Translations* at University of Minnesota Theatre. He is an adjunct faculty member in the Theatre, Dance, Film Department at Providence College; the Theatre and Communications Department at the University of Rhode Island; and the Performing Arts and English departments at the Community College of Rhode Island.

BENA SHKLYANOV (Co-Playwright and Creator of appledoesnotfall.com) Bena was born in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, when it was part of the Soviet Union. After finishing at Kiev State University with a graduate degree in Russian Language, she worked as a technical translator and editor. In 1976, she immigrated to the United States with her husband and two young daughters. Her family was featured on the cover of the *Chicago Tribune* when her parents arrived several

months later; her mother was the 1000th Soviet Jew to arrive in Chicago, their new home. Bena eventually worked in information technology in the United States.

In 2004, her family story project began, spanning more than 150 years and taking 11 years to complete. Her history and compelling insights into Soviet culture are documented on appledoesnotfall.com. A natural storyteller, Bena makes keen observations about how government and history can influence and drive personal decisions that affect future generations.

DAVE FELDMAN (**Lighting Designer**) Dave has provided lighting design and consultation for television, video, music, architecture, alternative spaces, dance, and theater for more than 30 years. His theatrical designs have been seen in more than 25 countries at such prestigious theaters as: London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Millennium Dome, Rwanda's Genocide Museum, Cambodia's Phare Circus, The National Theatre of Taiwan, The Eblana Theatre in Dublin, Emerson Paramount Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Joyce Theater, and Lincoln Center.

His designs for television and video have been seen on: SiriusXM, NBC, HBO, MTV, VH1, Comedy Central, AXS-TV, PBS, E! Entertainment, Lifetime, NBA-TV, and Disney television. Dave also is a production designer and member of Global Arts Corps and has worked as a guest artist and teacher at Wright State University and Princeton University. Dave received the New York Dance and Performance award "The Bessie" for outstanding creative achievement as a lighting designer.

MICHAEL GOLDBERG (**Music Coordinator**) Michael is excited to work with FirstHand Theatrical again after creating and performing the soundscape for its 2016 Providence Fringe production of *Lifepoems in Motion* and sound design for *And Then What?* in 2017. Michael began playing drums at 5. He received his BA in Music from URI in 1974 and in the years before and since has sung in choirs and performed as a percussionist with jazz ensembles, choirs, orchestras, rock groups, musical theater pit bands, wedding bands, klezmer bands, and polka bands in and around New York City, Boston, and Rhode Island.

SURREY HOULKER (**Assistant Director and Stage Manager**) Surrey is a Boston-based actor and educator with a deep love for clam chowder and Kevin Kline. She recently graduated from Emerson College with a BFA in Theatre Education and Performance; her credits include Ensemble in *Love and Information* (dir. Shana Gozansky), Viola in *Twelfth Night* (dir. Kelly Downes), and Lorrie Daniels in

The Clinic (dir. Madison Goldberg). She has worked extensively with The Gamm Theatre's education department, serving as an assistant director for its Summer Intensive, and with ArtsEmerson as a box office manager. Surrey also is an avid painter and thrifter and loves to roller skate. She is thrilled to work with FirstHand Theatrical. Get to know her at surreyhoulker.com.

ALISSA KAPLAN MICHAELS (Publicist) Alissa is the principal and founder of Michaels Communications, a strategic communications consultancy based in New York City. A hard-news journalist by training, she draws upon her broad and deep experience to achieve optimal results. The bulk of Michaels' diverse clients are nonprofit organizations that seek to make the world a better place. Her work spans human rights, international policy, health care, education, arts and culture, children's issues, and Israel- and Jewish-related matters. She often serves as a spokesperson and has appeared on camera and in print worldwide. Learn more at michaelscommunications.com.

DEANNA SHOSS (Marketing) As CEO of Intercultural Talk, Inc., Deanna helps non-digital natives promote their businesses or life projects with digital, intercultural, and real-life marketing. She takes an intergenerational approach that combines online communication platforms such as websites/blogs, social media, and video with tried and true practices such as partnership building, email marketing, and in-person events. Deanna writes for the National Diversity Council and is the Tech Columnist for *Grand Magazine*. She speaks Portuguese, Spanish, and French, and is a certified Body Pump instructor. Learn more at interculturaltalk.com.

CLARA TOMAZ (Visuals and Motion Graphic Designer) Clara is an Italian-American film/video artist and director. She is the author of several short documentaries including *The Sun Inside* (2017), an autobiographical story of cancer and disability, funded with a 2016 "Upside Down Grant" from the OneRevolution Foundation.

Clara also specializes in stop-motion animation, an "ancient" and traditional technique that uses still photos to create basic cinematic motion. She works with paper cutouts and prints, as well as drawings, paintings, and physical objects. She has taught stop-motion animation for the last five years, introducing hundreds of elementary schoolchildren to the magic of cinema. She is the founder of Media 4 Community NFP, a video contributor to the webzine *Chicago4Community*, and the owner of the video production studio Make Your Movie, Inc. (make-your-movie.com), located in Wilmette, north of Chicago.

ABOUT BEREGOVSKI SUITE

How Many Bushels Am I Worth? uses music from *Beregovski Suite*, featuring Alicia Svigals (violin) and Uli Geissendoerfer (piano), with guest artists Iliya Magalnyk and Vanderlei Pereira.

Beregovski Suite brings to life long-lost Jewish folk melodies rediscovered in the fieldwork of Moshe Beregovski, and reimagines them for the 21st century. Beregovski saved thousands of beautiful Jewish folk songs, klezmer dance tunes and religious melodies on wax cylinders, the medium of the day. Shortly thereafter, the culture he had documented was destroyed in the Holocaust and he was arrested and sent to the Gulag. He never saw his work published in his lifetime and for decades, it was thought that those precious recordings were gone. However, in the 1980s, ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin published Beregovski's transcriptions of his collection. And in the 1990s, with the opening of the Soviet Union, the cylinders were unearthed in a dusty archive in Kiev.

Alicia Svigals is the world's foremost living klezmer fiddler and a founder of the Grammy-winning Klezmatics. She has collaborated with artists ranging from Itzhak Perlman to Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant and Jimmy Page.

Pianist and Arranger Uli Geissendoerfer is a Grammy-nominated jazz and world music pianist and composer who has joined forces with Tito Puente, *Cirque du Soleil*, and many more.

ABOUT THE VENUES

AS220 A non-profit community arts center in downtown Providence, Rhode Island, AS220 maintains four dozen artist live/work studios, about a dozen individual work studios, six rotating exhibition spaces, a main stage, a black box theater, a dance studio, a print shop, a community darkroom, a digital media lab, a fabrication lab, an organization-run bar and restaurant, a youth recording studio, and a youth program (AS220 Youth; formerly named the Broad Street Studio). AS220 is an unjuried and uncensored forum for the arts, open to all ages.

THE MARK O'DONNELL THEATER The Mark O'Donnell Theater at The Actors Fund Arts Center serves as a resource for Brooklyn-based artists and arts groups to aid in the development and sharing of their work, as well as a venue for integrating the residents of The Schermerhorn with the surrounding community through the arts. The venue is operated by The Actors Fund in collaboration with Breaking Ground.

HOW MANY BUSHELS AM I WORTH?

would not be possible without the generosity of our donors.*

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