

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Paul Zakrzewski, (212) 629-0500 x212

Maxine Springer, (202) 363-6424

Anya Ulinich and Harry Bernstein Win New Emerging Jewish Writer Awards

* * *

Reading and Prize Reception to be held on December 22, 2008 by co-sponsors *Moment Magazine* and the Foundation for Jewish Culture

(Nov 4, 2008) -- The Foundation for Jewish Culture and *Moment Magazine* are pleased to announce that they have teamed up to co-present two leading emerging Jewish writers awards at the Grand Hyatt at 1000 H Street in Washington, D.C. on Monday, December 22, 2008. The reception, to be held in conjunction with the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference, begins at 6:30 pm in Room Independence I. The event is free and open to the public.

The reception provides an exciting opportunity for scholars, writers and the general public to meet and hear some of the most exciting writers working in Jewish letter today. The Foundation for Jewish Culture has just announced that 35-year-old novelist **Anya Ulinich**, author of *Petropolis*, is the 2008 recipient of its **Goldberg Prize for Jewish Fiction by Emerging Writers**. And *Moment Magazine* recently announced that 98-year-old **Harry Bernstein**, author of the memoir *The Invisible Wall*, is the 2008 recipient of the **Handelsman Prize for Jewish Nonfiction**.

Though separated by several decades and a vast range of experiences, both the Russian-born Ulinich and English-born Bernstein explore the challenges and joys of being an outsider. They are part of an exciting new wave of immigrant writers that have transformed and enriched the American Jewish literary world.

Ulinich immigrated to the United States from Russia when she was 17, and received an MFA in painting from the University of California at Davis. *Petropolis*, her first book, was also the 2007 recipient of a National Book Award prize celebrating 5 writers under 35 years of age. *Petropolis* traces the fortunes of one of the most quixotic, winsome heroines in recent fiction. Born in the gloomy Siberian town of Asbestos 2, the biracial, Jewish Sacha Goldberg discovers a talent for art and an even greater talent for survival as she becomes, by turns, an art student, a mail-order bride and a servant and virtual hostage to a rich American family. "The book is remarkable in its ability to sustain humor and pathos," noted author Dara Horn, one of the Goldberg Prize judges.

"Anya Ulinich is not just an emerging writer, but already a major talent in American Jewish writing," says Elise Bernhardt, president and CEO of the Foundation for Jewish Culture. "And we're thrilled to be able to highlight her achievement at this beginning stage of her career. We look forward to many more excellent works by Anya."

Meanwhile, Harry Bernstein's *The Invisible Wall* traces his early childhood in an impoverished English mill town, where Jews and Christians lived in entirely different worlds. Bernstein, who immigrated to the United States as a child, was prompted to begin *The Invisible Wall* after the death of his wife Ruby in 2002. Since it came out, he has published a second memoir, *The Dream*. This year, Bernstein became the oldest person to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship grant for a third book, *The Golden Willow*. Though Bernstein, born in 1910, has been writing since his twenties—an early short story was published alongside works by William Carlos Williams and Gertrude Stein—it would be many decades before his work was again published to wide acclaim.

“Our panel of judges was so moved by Harry Bernstein’s writing that the decision was unanimous,” says *Moment* editor and executive publisher Nadine Epstein. “As this book shows, genius knows no age. Sometimes it takes a whole lifetime to emerge. We are excited that the Handelsman Prize for Jewish Non-fiction is recognizing such an endearing memoir.”

The 2008 fiction finalists were *The Pale of Settlement* by Margot Singer and *The Septembers of Shiraz* by Dalia Sofer. The non-fiction finalists were *Houses of Study* by Ilana Blumberg, *Live From Jordan* by Benjamin Orbach and *Children of Jihad* by Jared Cohen.

Established by the Foundation for Jewish Culture in 1999 and supported through a generous grant from the Samuel Goldberg & Sons Foundation, the Goldberg Prize highlights an outstanding book-length work of fiction, published in the previous calendar year, by a U.S. author who has put out no more than one other book. Previous recipients have included Nathan Englander, Gary Shteyngart, Peter Orner and Lara Vapnyar.

Established by *Moment* magazine in 2005 and supported by a generous grant from Harry and Tamara Handelsman, the Handelsman Prize highlights an outstanding book-length work of non-fiction, by a U.S. author who has put out no more than one other book. Previous winners of *Moment*'s nonfiction award have been Ann Kirschner for *Sala's Gift*, Jennifer Miller for *Inheriting the Holy Land* and Stephanie Wellen Levine for *Mystics, Mavericks, and Merrymakers: An Intimate Journey Among Hasidic Girls*.

* * *

Moment, founded in 1975 by Nobel Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel and author Leonard Fein, was re-launched in 2004. Called a “must read!” by Slate.com, *Moment* is a creative and independent forum for Jewish politics, religion and culture with over 100,000 readers. To subscribe or learn more about *Moment*, please visit www.momentmag.com.

Founded in 1960, The Foundation for Jewish Culture (formerly the National Foundation for Jewish Culture) supports artists and scholars who explore the fabric of Jewish life, creating work that is both contemporary and profound. For more about grant programs and prizes, please visit www.jewishculture.org.

