

Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford

Zachs Campus, 333 Bloomfield Ave. Suite B, West Hartford, CT 06117 860-727-6171 www.jhsg.org

**Press: Harriet J. Dobin, Over The Top Marketing
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The Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford Presents **“Hartford Remembers: Sophie Tucker, The Last Red Hot Mama”** *New Exhibit Opening June 3 Celebrates Hartford’s Show Business Legend*

(West Hartford, CT., March 23, 2007) Sophie Tucker, “The Pride of Hartford”, is coming home.

The Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford will host “*Hartford Remembers – Sophie Tucker, The Last Red Hot Mama*” an exhibition showcasing the twentieth-century show business saga of Hartford’s legendary Queen of Jazz. The first-time ever retrospective of her six decade career will be on display at the Jewish Historical Society gallery on the Zachs Campus, 333 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut from June 3 through November 30, 2007.

Long before today’s pop divas, Sophie Tucker was entertaining millions with her outsize voice and glamorous stage persona from before World War I until her death at age 82 in 1966. Famous for her vaudeville style, extravagant costumes and racy lyrics, Hartford’s own Queen of Showbiz was the first female entertainer to challenge age, size, societal and gender stereotypes through comedy and song. The exhibition will follow Sophie Kalish Abuza from her early Russian immigrant years on Hartford’s Front Street, to a front row seat at the world’s concert halls where she crooned her way to superstardom. Visitors will experience “La Tucker’s” stage, radio, film and television triumphs and hardships in Hartford, New York, Chicago, Hollywood, and Europe. This sentimental journey behind the scenes will be told through a rare collection of photographs, letters and quotes, musical scores, recordings and mementos. Exhibit-goers will discover Sophie Tucker, the brilliant performer, generous philanthropist and extraordinary American Jewish woman.

A member of the Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame, Sophie Tucker’s hit songs included “Some of These Days”, the title of her autobiography, “My Yiddish Momma”, “After You’ve Gone” and “Cheatin’ On Me”. She was married three times and had one son Bert. The alto-voiced entertainer staged many benefits, raising millions for the State of Israel as well as entertainment, labor, civil rights and Jewish charities, including Hartford’s Hebrew Old People’s Home, now Hebrew Health Care. She headlined four Broadway musicals, appeared in ten films and performed on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *What’s My Line* and *The Tonight Show*. She shared billings with Judy Garland, Jack Benny, Will Rogers and Fanny Brice. Her advice is widely quoted: “From birth to 18, a girl needs good parents. From 18 to 35, she needs good looks. From 35 to 55 she needs a good personality. From 55 on, she needs good cash”. Sophie Tucker is buried in Emanuel Synagogue cemetery in Wethersfield, Connecticut. More than three thousand people attended her February 9, 1966 funeral.

The exhibit is supported by a grant from the Women’s Education and Leadership Fund, a legacy of the Hartford College for Women at the University of Hartford. It is being curated by Estelle Kafer, Executive Director and designed by Elizabeth Lewis with Bea Brodie, Project Assistant and Margaret Mair, Archivist. Student artists at Civic Design, Hartford Art School, University of Hartford are designing the exhibit panels. The Jewish Historical Society is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford.

An Opening Exhibit Gala and Patron Reception on Sunday June 3, 2007 at 6 PM will feature a Live Cabaret with performances by Heather Auden as “*Miss Sophie Tucker*”, refreshments, door prizes and surprises. Individual Tickets for the June 3 Gala are \$36 (\$30 for Society members). Patron sponsorship packages start at \$100 Ziegfield Patron, \$250 Jazz Patron and \$500 Vaudeville Patron. Exhibit Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 4 PM and by appointment through November 30, 2007, when the show will go on the road as a traveling exhibition. For more information, directions and tickets contact Estelle Kafer, Executive Director, Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, Zachs Campus, 333 Bloomfield Avenue, Suite B, West Hartford, CT. 06117, 860-727-6171, and visit www.jhsg.org.

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CALENDAR LISTINGS INFORMATION

What: Exhibition “Hartford Remembers Sophie Tucker – The Last Red Hot Mama”

A sentimental journey behind the scenes of Sophie Tucker’s red-hot show business career and turbulent personal life. Legendary vaudeville performer, stage, cabaret and recording star; Her story told through a rare collection of personal photographs, letters and quotes, musical scores, recordings and mementos.

**Where: Gallery of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford
Zachs Campus, 333 Bloomfield Ave., Suite B, West Hartford, CT 06117**

When: June 3 – November 30, 2007.

**Exhibit Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1- 4 pm and by appointment.
Exhibit is free and open to the public**

**Opening Exhibit Gala: Sunday June 3, 2007, 6 PM
Live Cabaret featuring entertainment by
Heather Auden as “Miss Sophie Tucker”,
Refreshments, Door Prizes and Surprises.
Tickets from \$36 (\$30 for Society members)
Patron Tickets Available.**

Information and Directions: www.jhsgh.org, 860-727-6171

**To Book Traveling Exhibit: Estelle Kafer, Exec. Dir. 860-727-6171,
ekafer@jewishhartford.org**

Photos available.