

2012-2013 Season

BODY AWARENESS

By Annie Baker

August 25-September 23

Press Night: Wednesday, August 29 at 7:30

OUR CLASS

By Tadeusz Słobodzianek

October 10-November 4

Press Night: Monday, October 15 at 7:30

WOODY SEZ

November 8-December 2

Press Night: Sunday, November 11, at 7:30

VOICES FROM A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST FESTIVAL:

APPLES FROM THE DESERT

By Savyon Liebrecht

December 15-January 6

Press Night: Tuesday, December 18 at 7:30

BOGED:

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

by Boaz Gaon and Nir Erez

Based on the play by Henrik Ibsen

January 12-February 3

Originally Produced by the Beersheva Theatre

At Georgetown University's Gonda Theatre

Press Night: Tuesday, January 15 at 7:30

RACE

by David Mamet

February 6-March 17

Press Night: Sunday, February 10 at 7:30

ANDY AND THE SHADOWS

By Ari Roth

April 3-28

Press Night: Monday, April 8 at 7:30

THE HAMPTON YEARS

By Jacqueline E. Lawton

May 29-June 30

Press Night: Monday, June 3 at 7:30

Theater J

Washington DCJCC

1529 16th Street NW

Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater

Tickets: (800) 494-TIXS

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THEATER J ANNOUNCES 2012-2013 SEASON:

THIS IS WHO WE ARE FEATURING THREE WORLD PREMIERES,
TWO AREA PREMIERES AND TWO PLAYS BY ISRAELI AUTHORS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sunday, April 22, 2012

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(Washington, DC) –Theater J announces its 2012-2013 season, “**THIS IS WHO WE ARE: Beginnings, Belonging, Becoming & Breaking Through,**” a line-up of eight shows charting the drama of finding one's calling, one's voice, and the negotiation of race and identity in a changing world. The upcoming season builds on the theater's 2011-2012 inaugural **Locally Grown: Community Supported Art Festival** with a full production of **Jacqueline E. Lawton's *The Hampton Years***. Also featured as part of this season's Locally Grown festival is the world premiere of Theater J Artistic Director **Ari Roth's** deeply personal ***Andy and the Shadows***. The new season also marks the return of Theater J's *Voices from a Changing Middle East* festival, featuring twin productions exploring religious, social, industrial and environmental schisms within Israeli society, using the Negev Desert as backdrop. Theater J continues its rich history of artistic collaboration, involving an international partnership with Beersheva, Israel; National partnerships in Chicago and North Carolina and a local pairing with Georgetown University. The season also encompasses exciting work by nationally acclaimed playwrights **Annie Baker** and **David Mamet**, and a stunning new play by European sensation **Tadeusz Słobodzianek**. As a special season add-on, Theater J presents a touring musical celebration of the life of **Woody Guthrie**.

"It's a season where we're doubling-down on the things that define us," says Roth. "Our twin festivals will engage internationally and locally based artists telling intimate tales of young people coming into their own, giving rise to burgeoning new cultural and social justice movements. This season we'll experience mature treatments of WWII as experienced by Polish Catholic and Jewish classmates, and a provocative legal procedural from one of our sharpest, acid-tongued dramatists. We'll celebrate the family in all its forms, unconventional and history-hobbled, rendering the parent-child dynamic with complexity and love. And we'll end by celebrating the triumph of African-American artists breaking through to paint portraits of their lives-inspired by an Austrian Jewish refugee." Roth believes the current season is "more collectively defining as to who we are—and what we believe in at our core—than any previous season in Theater J's history."

August 25 – September 23

BODY AWARENESS

by Annie Baker

Directed by Eleanor Holdridge

PRESS NIGHT: Wednesday, August 29, 7:30 pm

"An engaging new comedy by a young playwright with a probing, understated voice..." — *The New York Times*

It's "Body Awareness" week on a Vermont college campus and Phyllis, the organizer, her partner, Joyce, and Joyce's adult son (who may or may not have Asperger's Syndrome) are hosting one of the guest artists; a painter famous for

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his female nude portraits. Both his presence in the home and his chosen subject instigate tension from the start. Phyllis is furious at his depictions, but Joyce is actually intrigued, even going so far as to contemplate posing for him. As sexuality, identity, role modeling and political-correctness get stirred up, the results are both touching and hilarious.

Nominated for the Drama Desk Best New Play Award, and directed by Eleanor Holdridge, on the heels of her hit production of *The Gaming Table* at Folger Theatre, and *Something You Did* at Theater J.

October 10 – November 4

OUR CLASS

by Tadeusz Słobodzianek

English version by Ryan Craig

Directed by Derek Goldman

Featuring Laura C. Harris, Ashley Ivey and Joshua Morgan

PRESS NIGHT: Monday, October 15, 7:30 pm

“A remarkable and powerful play”- *The Daily Telegraph*

Spanning 80 years, moving between Poland and America, this epic play has profoundly affected audiences and critics since its premiere at London’s National Theatre. As ten Polish classmates – five Catholic, five Jewish – grow up, their lives take dramatically unexpected turns as their country is torn apart by invading armies, first Soviet, then German, then Soviet again. Friend betrays friend and violence quickly escalates, reaching a crescendo that will forever haunt the survivors. Based on true events in the Polish town of Jedwabne and inspired in part by Jan Gross’s controversial book “Neighbors,” this play received raves for its American premiere earlier this season at Philadelphia’s Wilma Theatre.

For *Our Class’s* DC premiere, Theater J welcomes back director Derek Goldman, who staged Theater J’s 2011 Helen Hayes Award-winning *In Darfur*.

Special Event!

November 8 – December 2

WOODY SEZ: The Life & Music of WOODY GUTHRIE

Devised by David M. Lutkin with Nick Corley

and Darcie Deaville, Helen Russel and Andy Teirstein

PRESS NIGHT: Sunday, November 11, 7:30 pm

“A high spirited celebration”- *The Guardian*

Celebrate the 100th birthday of Woody Guthrie, the creator of American classics like “This Land is Your Land” and “The Ballad of Tom Joad”! This boisterous retelling of the life of America’s troubadour blends musical numbers, scenes from Guthrie’s life and excerpts from his progressive newspaper column. The infectious and moving piece brings to life a true American hero, who proudly declared he would “always be there whenever working folks fight for their rights.”

This internationally-acclaimed production, courtesy of New York’s Melting Pot Theatre Company, played London’s West End last season to great acclaim after receiving raves at the Edinburgh Festival.

December 15 – January 6

Part One of Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival

APPLES FROM THE DESERT

by Savyon Liebrecht

Directed by Johanna Gruenhut

PRESS NIGHT: Tuesday, December 18, 7:30 pm

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“Savyon Liebrecht is one of [Israel’s] most popular authors... She writes intelligently about ordinary people in situations that reveal the depths and passions of their lives.”- *The Jerusalem Post*

A romantic comedy about love and reconciliation adapted by one of Israel's most beloved authors from her own short story, this hit Israeli play follows the young Sephardic Rivka, a religious teenager, who falls for Dooby, a secular kibbutznik, at a dance class in Jerusalem. She arranges to follow him back to his kibbutz in the Negev Desert, but not before Rivka's orthodox parents bar her from leaving, forcibly at first, only to chase after Rivka as she flees. A timeless and timely confrontation between tradition and modernity becomes a moving reckoning, as the sweetest of meals is offered and two generations learn to make peace. Winner of Israel’s Best Play Award, 2006.

Making her Theater J mainstage directing debut is Baltimore-based director and Israel scholar Johanna Gruenhut, who has directed readings by Israeli playwrights Anat Gov and Dafna Rubinstein as part of Theater J’s Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival.

January 12 – February 3

Part Two of Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival

BOGED: An Enemy of the People

by Boaz Gaon and Nir Erez

Based on the play by Henrik Ibsen

Directed by Joseph Megel

Originally Produced by the Beersheva Theatre

**Presented in Partnership with Georgetown University and StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance
At the Gonda Theatre at the Davis Performing Arts Center**

PRESS NIGHT: Tuesday, January 15, 7:30 pm

Emerging from Israel’s social justice movement of the past year, this timely adaptation of Ibsen’s classic play of environmental activism is the brain child of the Israeli playwright and adapter of Ghassan Kanafani's *Return to Haifa*, produced by the Cameri Theatre so successfully at Theater J in 2011. A sudden chemical leak shakes up a small Southern town at the edges of the Israeli desert. The town’s Mayor is quick to cover it up so that he can continue developing the profitable neighboring industrial park. However, his brother Tommy knows that the factories polluting the town's aquifer indeed may lead to the poisoning of Israel's water supply. What begins as a family feud quickly turns into all out political war, threatening to rob Tommy of his reputation, livelihood, family and future.

The StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance is an award-winning professional performing arts and educational center based in Chatham County, North Carolina. Founded in Chicago in 1992, StreetSigns has presented nearly fifty productions in its nearly twenty-year history.

Boged will be directed by StreetSigns Co-Artistic Director Joseph Megel, who recently earned accolades with *The Underpass* at Georgetown University, and directed Jennifer Maisel's *The Last Seder* for Theater J in 2003.

February 6 – March 17

RACE

by David Mamet

Directed by John Vreeke

PRESS NIGHT: Sunday, February 10, 7:30 pm

“Scalpel-edged intelligence...a topical detective story”- *The New York Times*

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This latest work by the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *American Buffalo* and *GlenGarry Glen Ross* ruthlessly examines guilt, betrayal, and racial posturing. Two high-profile lawyers—one black, one white—are called to defend a wealthy white client charged with the rape of an African American woman, but soon find themselves embroiled in a complex case where blatant prejudice is as disturbing as the evidence at hand. "The messy race-and-privilege-soaked case of one Dominique Strauss-Kahn... so closely mirrors the apparent actions in Mamet's play that you'd swear Mamet had written this piece in response to that real-life case," writes *The Chicago Tribune* in 2012 of Mamet's scalding, "intellectually salacious" play which first appeared on Broadway years ahead of its time.

This sizzling potboiler will be directed by DC favorite John Vreeke, who recently earned a Helen Hayes nomination for his direction of Woolly Mammoth's *A Bright New Boise*.

April 3 – 28

ANDY AND THE SHADOWS

by Ari Roth

Directed by Daniella Topol

PRESS NIGHT: Monday, April 8, 7:30 pm

"A graceful, fluid writer"- *The Washington Post*

Part of Locally Grown: Community Supported Art

A comedy about family with a dollop of surrealism and pre-marital angst. Andy Glickstein is the son of Holocaust refugees who fears he can't get married because he hasn't suffered enough. His family's gathered on the South Side of Chicago to celebrate his engagement to clear-headed Sarah, but party preparations are interrupted as Andy is pulled by memories of garage-roof-hopping with neighborhood bullies and pre-adolescent enchantments of his mother's bath-time stories recounting her dramatic escapes from the Nazis. Andy's search for his duendé—the Spanish expression of soulfulness and tragic ecstasy made popular in Ernest Hemmingway novels--leads him to make a movie mythologizing his mother's triumphant legacy and, when that fails, his father's unsung Zionist heroism, but he ultimately finds more meaning in a jar of jam and a hospital bed that sleeps two. Winner of the Streisand Award for Playwriting, by the author of *Born Guilty*, *Life in Refusal*, and *Love and Yearning in the Not-for-Profits*.

Director and new-play developer Daniella Topol returns to Theater J, where she last earned acclaim directing Anna Ziegler's new drama *Photograph 51*.

May 29 – June 30

THE HAMPTON YEARS

by Jacqueline E. Lawton

World premiere commissioned by Theater J and part of Locally Grown: Community Supported Art

Directed by Shirley Serotsky

PRESS NIGHT: Monday, June 3, 7:30 pm

"[Lawton writes] like a stew, with tasty ingredients chopped and swirling in a bubbly cauldron" – *DC Theatre Scene*

Emerging from Theater J's inaugural Locally Grown Festival, this breakthrough premiere explores the development of great African-American artists, John Biggers and Samella Lewis under the tutelage of Austrian Jewish refugee painter and educator, Viktor Lowenfeld. Focusing on the pivotal years at Hampton Institute, Virginia during WWII, this richly researched tapestry of African American luminaries like Elizabeth Catlett reveals the dreams and travails of young artists in a still segregated society while examining the impact of World War II on a Jewish immigrant and his wife finding shelter in the US and his controversial influence in shaping the careers of African American students.

Shirley Serotsky, who helmed Theater J's world premieres of *The Rise and Fall of Annie Hall* and *The Moscows of Nantucket*, American premiere of *Mikveh*, and East Coast premiere of *The History of Invulnerability* will direct.

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ALL PLAYS, DATES, AND THEATRES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

THEATER J INFORMATION:

LOCATION: The Washington DC Jewish Community Center's Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater at 1529 16th Street NW in Washington, DC, 4 blocks east of Dupont Circle.

PARKING & METRO: Limited parking in the Washington DCJCC lot; additional parking available at Colonial Parking, 1616 P Street NW; limited street parking. Dupont Circle Station RED line.

TICKETS: Starting at \$30. Box Office Tickets (800) 494-TIXS or boxofficetickets.com.

For discounts for groups of 10+ call (202) 777-3214 or email becky@theaterj.org

Theater J is handicapped accessible and offers assisted listening devices for interested patrons.

High resolution digital images are available upon request. More information about this production is available at (202) 777-3230 or theaterj.org.

Theater J, a program of the Washington DCJCC, produces thought-provoking, publicly engaged, personal, passionate and entertaining plays and musicals that celebrate the distinctive urban voice and social vision that are part of the Jewish cultural legacy. Acclaimed as one of the nation's premiere playwrights theaters, Theater J presents cutting edge contemporary work alongside spirited revivals and is a nurturing home for the development and production of new work by major writers and emerging artists exploring many of the pressing moral and political issues of our time. Dedicated first to a pursuit of artistic excellence, Theater J takes its dialogues beyond the stage, offering an array of innovative public discussion forums and outreach programs which explore the theatrical, psychological and social elements of our art. We frequently partner with those of other faiths and communities, stressing the importance of interchange among a great variety of people wishing to take part in frank, humane conversations about conflict and culture.