

## 2011-2012 Season

### IMAGINING MADOFF

By Deb Margolin

August 31-September 25

Press Night: Tuesday, September 6 at 7:30

### PARADE

A co-production with Ford's Theatre  
By Alfred Uhry & Jason Robert Brown

September 23-October 30

At Ford's Theatre

### AFTER THE FALL

By Arthur Miller

October 26-November 27

Press Night: Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30

### THE RELIGION THING

By Renee Calarco

January 4-29

Press Night: Monday, January 9 at 7:30

### ELECTILE DYSFUNCTION: THE KINSEY SICKS FOR PRESIDENT!

February 4-19

Press Night: Sunday, February 5 at 7:30

### NEW JERUSALEM: THE INTERROGATION OF BARUCH DE SPINOZA

by David Ives

February 29-April 1

Press Night: Sunday, March 4 at 7:30

### THE WHIPPING MAN

By Matthew Lopez

April 18-May 20

Press Night: Monday, April 23 at 7:30

### THE HISTORY OF INVULNERABILITY

By David Bar Katz

June 6-July 8

Press Night: Monday, June 11 at 7:30

### Theater J

Washington DCJCC

1529 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW

Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater

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## VOICES FROM A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST READING SERIES IN OCTOBER, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, October 23, 2011

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(Washington, DC) – Theater J is pleased to announce a new installment of its “Voices from a Changing Middle East” program, beginning **October 28, 2011**. This season's five-play, five-week reading series will explore a variety of works pertaining to Israeli society and the antecedents to the Egyptian Revolution. Continuing Theater J's robust, multi-year engagement with countless aspects of Israeli political, social and cultural life, these plays both touch upon, and go beyond, “The Conflict” to tell stories that deal with environmental, social justice and domestic concerns for Israelis and their neighbors in the Middle East. **Theater J Artistic Director Ari Roth** observes that the series is “a good opportunity to maintain our strong dialogue with Israel and its artists as they portray the dramas within and surrounding them, while inviting in other artistic viewpoints to sensitively enlarge the portraiture of so many clamoring voices from the always-changing Middle East region.”

Kicking off the series at 2:15 pm on **Friday, October 28** is a **Tea@2 new play development reading** of **BOGED (Traitor)** by **Boaz Gaon** (adapter of last season's *Return to Haifa*) and **Nir Erez**, based on Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in the **Hyman S. & Freda Bernstein Library**. Directed by **Derek Goldman**, this new adaptation addresses some of the issues articulated by the social justice and environmental movements this past summer on the streets of Israel. This will be the first time this newly translated play, currently in repertory at the BeerSheva Theatre in Israel, will be presented in English.

On **Friday, November 4 at 2:00 pm**, **Laura Gianerelli, Robbie Gringras and Alexander Strain** will read the **specially commissioned one-act, THE BIG BLUE TENT AND JEWISH DISSENT**, written and directed by Robbie Gringras, as part of a second **Tea@2**. This programming invites in **Makom** (the Israel Engagement Project of the Jewish Agency of Israel), to co-host a community conversation about how we respectfully discuss differing perspectives and positions on Israel.

Next is **Taher Najib's** award-winning monologue play **IN SPITTING DISTANCE**, directed by **Richard Stein** and performed (for the first time in English) by **Maboud Ebrahimzadeh** on **Sunday, November 6 at 9:30** at **Busboys and Poets, in Hyattsville, MD**, with Peace Café to follow. *Ynet*, Israel's largest news website, praises the “honesty, pride and tenderness” with which Najib portrays his life growing up in Ramallah and travelling as an Arab in a post 9/11 world. This reading, presented in conjunction with **Rabbis for Human Rights-North America**, also marks a reconnection between the Peace Café and the Washington DCJCC.

**BEST FRIENDS**, by **Anat Gov** and directed by **Johanna Gruenhut**, will be performed at a **Tea@2** reading on **Friday, November 11 at 2:00**. One of Israel's longest running comedies, this spiky, time-bending character study follows an inseparable trio of childhood friends whose bond is tested by the milestones of adulthood.

Concluding the reading series at **7:30 pm** on **Monday, November 28** in the **Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater** is an evening of one-acts exploring portraits of Egypt, before the Revolution, by **Yussef El Guindi**, directed by **Shirley Serotsky**. **SUCH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE IS SAYEDA'S** examines the dominance of an oppressive patriarchy and the challenges of a wife whose voice is literally being squelched in a middle class Egyptian home. **KARIMA'S CITY** tells the story of a young idealist's struggle to speak her mind in a society determined to keep her silent.

**-MORE-**

**Fri Oct 28 at 2:15 pm BOGED (Traitor) by Boaz Gaon and Nir Erez Based on Ibsen's AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE  
Directed by Derek Goldman  
Featuring Jeff Allin, Maboud Ebrahimzadeh, Mark Halpern, Laura C. Harris, Kathryn Kelley, Michael Kramer,  
Richard Pelzman, Micheal Tolaydo and Clark Young  
In the Washington DCJCC Hyman S. & Freda Bernstein Library as part of our Tea@2 New Play Reading Series  
Tickets \$5.00**

A sudden chemical leak shakes up a small Southern town at the edges of the Israeli desert. The town's Mayor is quick to explain that "the crisis is behind us" and that the neighboring industrial park, Eshel City, the economic lifeline of the town, will continue to expand despite "unpatriotic attacks" from environmental activists arguing against its expansion. Simon's brother, Dr. Tommy Douany, knows the true price of Eshel City's continued growth; that the factories polluting the town's aquifer indeed may lead to the poisoning of much 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. He will discover the true price of becoming a *boged*, An Enemy of the People.

Boaz Gaon is one of Israel's leading young playwrights, journalists and political activists. His adaptation of *Return to Haifa* was produced by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv, and presented to wide acclaim as part of Theater J's 2010-2011 season and its Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival focusing on "Portraits of Home," a festival which also included Gaon's *Argentina*, which recently concluded a premiere run at the Haifa Theatre.

**Fri Nov 4 at 2:00 pm THE BIG BLUE TENT AND JEWISH DISSENT by Robbie Gringras  
In conjunction with Makom  
Directed by Robbie Gringras  
Featuring Laura Gianerelli, Robbie Gringras and Alexander Strain  
In the Washington DCJCC Ina and Jack Kay Community Hall as part of our Tea@2 New Play Reading Series  
Tickets \$5.00**

Using interactive groups and live theater, Makom, the Israel Engagement project of the Jewish Agency for Israel, explores dimensions of the Jewish Community's "Big Tent". When Alyssa, a confident and committed Jewish Artistic Director of the Jewish Theater housed in the JCC, commits to producing a play by Toni, a radical lesbian Jewish playwright and activist in Israel Apartheid Week, the myriad responses reverberate throughout the Jewish community. The electric debate spreads throughout the Jewish Federation to Jewish philanthropic organizations and households. This dynamic new piece raises questions of how to create exciting, thought provoking art, while honoring and celebrating the many divergent opinions encompassed by the 'big blue tent' of the Jewish community. It will premiere at The Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly Opening Session on November 6.

**Sun Nov 6 at 9:30 am IN SPITTING DISTANCE a monologue play by Taher Najib , English Translation by Ros Schwartz,  
from the French translation by Jacqueline Carnaud and Taher Najib.  
Presented in conjunction with Rabbis for Human Rights-North America, with Peace Café discussion to follow  
Directed by Richard Stein  
Featuring Maboud Ebrahimzadeh  
At Busboys and Poets, Hyattsville MD  
5331 Baltimore Avenue  
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781  
(301) 779-2787  
Free Admission**

A penetrating, humorous look at growing up in Ramallah and the perplexities of being an Arab traveler after 9/11. This virtuoso solo performance-piece, presented for the first time in English, describes the farcical journey of a Palestinian actor holding an Israeli passport, leaving behind the aimlessness of spitting sunflower seeds in Ramallah for the romance of Paris, who then tries to fly home from France on the wrong day. *In Spitting Distance* won first prize at the TheaterNetto Festival in Tel Aviv, and has since been staged at Peter Brook's Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris.

Taher Najib worked as an actor in Ramallah before moving to Paris. He returned to work with director Ofira Henig on a theatre project in Tel Aviv. It was this journey that prompted him to begin writing *In Spitting Distance*.

**Fri Nov 11, at 2:00 pm BEST FRIENDS by Anat Gov translated by Anthony Berris**

**Directed by Johanna Gruenhut**

**Featuring Laura C. Harris, Rana Kay, Dana Levanovsky, Liz Mamana, Elizabeth Richards and Emily Townley**

**In the Washington DCJCC Hyman S. & Freda Bernstein Library as part of our Tea@2 New Play Reading Series**

**Tickets \$5.00**

A "sizzingly funny" analysis of female friendship by Israel's most successful comic playwright. Tirzah, Sophie and Lelly are a seemingly inseparable threesome, but between adolescence and middle age, mysterious events have led to a rift in their friendship. The play travels from their first bonding experience, sharing cigarettes in the girls' bathroom, to an awkward tea party twenty years later, and asks: Can the bonds of friendship survive diverging fortunes in lifestyle, family and career? This hit play peels back the layers of laughs, bitching and betrayals that take three women through enmity back to friendship.

Anat Gov currently has three plays currently running in repertory at the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv including *A Warm Family*, *Happy End*, and *Oh, God*, and is the author of the hits *Lysistrata 2000*, and *Househusband*.

**Mon Nov 28 at 7:30 pm Portraits of Egypt**

**SUCH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE IS SAYEDA'S and KARIMA'S CITY by Yussef El Guindi**

**Directed by Shirley Serotsky**

**In the Washington DCJCC Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater**

**Tickets \$5.00**

Lyrical, delicate and suffused with moments of haunting theatricality, these plays look into the pulsing soul and private lives of modern day Egypt. In *Such A Beautiful Voice Is Sayeda's*, jinns (spirits) lurk near; flattering dresses and lipstick are evidence of infidelities; and a woman's sudden discovery of her own beautiful singing voice threatens to bring dishonor and ruin to herself and her family.

In *Karima's City*, Karima's beloved metropolis is changing about her at a dizzying pace. The seeds-and-nuts vendor, the fruit seller, and the butcher who used to greet her each morning no longer do. Everywhere concrete monstrosities are rising and the trees are vanishing. These changes make Karima physically ill, and she can no longer keep silent. But whenever she speaks her mind, all manner of suffering befalls her. In a society that judges iconoclasts as shameful, dangerous and a menace, it slowly becomes apparent that Karima's devastating fate has already been written. Touching on issues of enormous significance in the Islamic world, this finely wrought play bubbles with unexpected charm and humor as it leads to its inexorable conclusion.

*"[El Guindi] brings a poetically charged voice to the struggle by Muslim women to sound their own voices in this impressive pair of one acts."* —*The Los Angeles Times*

Yuseff El Guindi is an Egyptian-American playwright living in Seattle, where he just won that city's 2011 Clifford Award for Outstanding Playwright for his play *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* produced by ACT Theatre

All tickets will be available at the door an hour before the event.

*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](http://theaterj.org).*

## **Information:**

**LOCATION:** The Washington DC Jewish Community Center's Aaron & Cecile Goldman Theater and Hyman S. & Freda Bernstein Library are at 1529 16<sup>th</sup> 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:** \$5.00 (800) 494-TIXS or [theaterj.org](http://theaterj.org).

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**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.

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