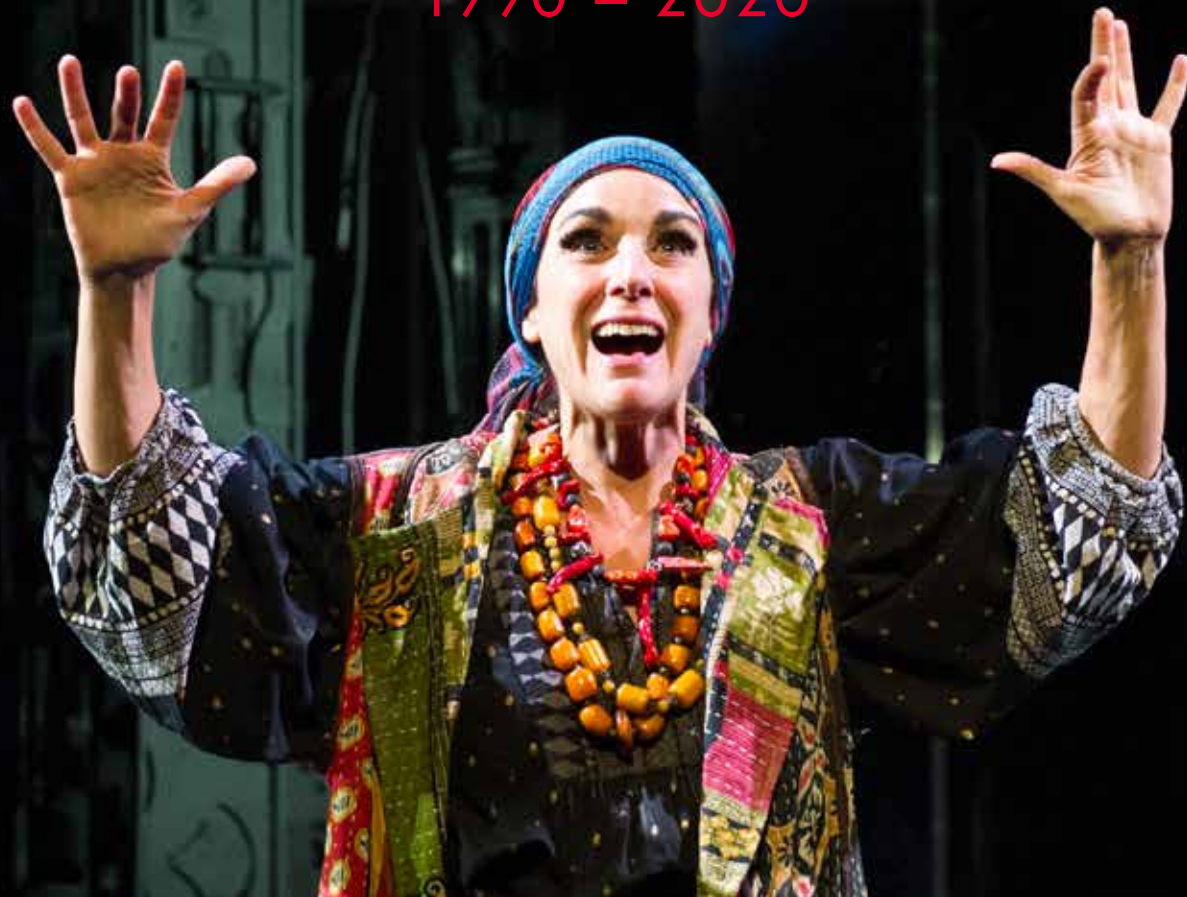


THEATER J
YEARS
30
STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

1990 – 2020



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As of April, 2021.

30th Anniversary Executive Report

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Cover: Susan Rome in Edward Albee's *Occupant*, 2019. Photo by C. Stanley Photography.

This page: Kathryn Tkel and Alexander Strain in *The Wanderers* by Anna Ziegler. Photo by Teresa Castracane.



A photograph of Adam Immerwahr, the Artistic Director of Theater J, sitting on a set of wooden theater steps. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt, a green and white striped tie, grey trousers, and brown leather shoes. He has a beard and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows a theater stage with various equipment and boxes.

A Message from Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr

Dear Friends,

Five years into my time as artistic director of Theater J, I find myself deeply humbled.

We began assembling Theater J's history in preparation for our annual benefit in 2020. We decided to begin the event with a short documentary video, featuring interviews with Theater J's past artistic leaders, community supporters, and Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center staff members whose work transformed us into the theater we are today. As I conducted the interviews, I was overwhelmed and inspired by the powerful stories, meaningful memories, and incredible testaments to the urgent need for Jewish theater. In conversations with my predecessors Martin Blank, Randye Hoeflich, and Ari Roth, I was in awe of the wisdom, the foresight, and the tenacity that they had individually and collectively wielded over decades of leadership. I felt not as much as though I was standing in their shoes but rather standing on their shoulders, lifted up by their vision and their perspicacity.

Theater J's story—particularly of our earliest years—could never be captured by a simple video documentary. Too much was left on the cutting room floor. We assembled this booklet to preserve some of that legacy and history, and to share it with our community in celebration of our thirtieth anniversary as a professional theater company.

More than anything, what became clear for me is the vital importance of Theater J. The existence of a thriving Jewish theater just up the street from the White House is something that has made a difference in so many lives over the past thirty years—artists and audience members alike. Theater J has mattered from political administration to political administration. It has provided a critical venue for dialogue in both the theater and the Jewish communities. And it has preserved the stories and art of a great cultural tradition.

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary community that surrounds, supports, and holds Theater J up. The full history of Theater J is in the thirty years of subscribers, audience members, donors, actors, writers, technicians, designers, directors, ushers, staff members, reviewers, and students who have participated in this art with us. I hope that as we move forward to our next thirty years, we will carry all of those stories with us; they are our true strength.

May we all go together from strength to strength.

Yours,

Adam Immerwahr
Artistic Director, Theater J



A Message from Managing Director Jojo Ruf

Dear Friends,

Theater J has come a long way in 30 years. What began as a handful of productions on a makeshift stage in a rented townhouse has grown into the largest and most prominent Jewish theater in the country. I feel immensely privileged to have witnessed much of that growth, first as an audience member, then as an artist, and now in my third year as the managing director.

The story of Theater J is one of community. We have flourished alongside over 90 professional theater companies in the region, been honored with the DC Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in an Artistic Discipline, and received over 70 Helen Hayes nominations to date. We have produced world premieres alongside forgotten classics, worked with local, national, and international playwrights, and showcased the artistry of actors, directors, designers, and technicians who work all across the DMV at theaters large and small. We are proud to be part of this thriving theater community.

The story of Theater J is one of a Jewish community. As one of the many programs that make up the Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center, it is a beautiful thing to watch a rehearsal while the Anavim preschool class passes by in the hall, to hear actors running lines amidst the distant sound of students practicing Hebrew just one floor up, to have theater patrons and film patrons mingle in the lobby, eagerly anticipating their evening plans. Simply put, our productions resonate more fully in

harmony with our sister programs. It is remarkable to think that building a wooden stage for a few hundred dollars 30 years ago would lead to the thriving program we are today. (See page 7 for the full founding story.)

The story of Theater J is truly remarkable, though, because you are part of our community. While our 30th Anniversary looks different than we planned, Theater J continues in many ways as we always have, through the generosity and support of donors, subscribers, and audience members like you. You lift us up and sustain us. And for that we are immensely grateful.

Thank you for being part of our story, for helping us grow into the thriving theater we are today. Here's to our next 30 years.

Warmly,

Jojo Ruf
Managing Director, Theater J

A Message from Our 20/21 Council Co-Chairs:

Patti Herman and Howard Menaker



Photo by C. Stanley Photography.

The Theater J Council plays a unique and vital role in the life of the theater. We are individuals with an abundance of diverse talents and backgrounds, all joined by one very important commitment: supporting the Jewish mission, values, and success of Theater J.

As our theater is a program of the Edlavitch DCJCC, our Council does not function like most other nonprofit theater boards. With fiduciary and governing responsibilities resting in the EDJCC Board of Directors, the Theater J Council embraces our mission as ambassadors of, and advocates for, our theater. This is the beauty of what we do. We are theater patrons who support the outstanding art on our stage as well as an array of artistic programming. We take distinct pleasure

in spreading the word of our fine work to the Washington-area Jewish community and regional theater patrons in order to increase our audience and bring continued success to our vibrant theater. We support the theater's financial success as well as its creative work, acknowledging that our shared goal of artistic excellence requires considerable resources. We therefore also play a vital role in fundraising and outreach.

As COVID-19 currently challenges to our industry, in-person theater performances have been put on hold throughout the country and around the world. Theater J has met this moment by expanding our online programming through our "Classes for Theater Lovers" and Yiddish Theater Lab readings. Council members have enthusiastically embraced this new fulfillment of Theater J's mission to connect artists and audience members through theatrical experiences, and are using our own personal and professional contacts to open our doors to new online audiences and participants well beyond the Washington Metropolitan area.

The Theater J Council is a group of collegial volunteers, proud to devote our time to our roles as advisors, advocates, and ambassadors. We enjoy close relationships with our dedicated, hardworking staff members that includes frequent communication and personal interactions. Our

Script Discussion Group, where we read and discuss plays, is one very popular and valuable way that Council members learn more about the literary and analytical aspects of plays while sharing insights and questions with Theater J staff.

Council members are particularly proud to celebrate Theater J as the nation's most prominent Jewish theater. As Theater J evolves and grows, moving from strength to strength, the Council will continue to center our Jewish values and culturally specific mission as we connect with our larger family of theater makers and lovers both inside and outside the Washington Jewish community, as we honor our past, celebrate our present, and plot our future.

OUR MISSION

Theater J is a nationally-renowned, professional theater that celebrates, explores, and struggles with the complexities and nuances of both the Jewish experience and the universal human condition. Our work illuminates and examines: ethical questions of our time, inter-cultural experiences that parallel our own, and the changing landscape of Jewish identities. As the nation's largest and most prominent Jewish theater, we aim to preserve and expand a rich Jewish theatrical tradition and to create community and commonality through theater-going experiences.

“

Theater J leads the way in so many ways. It's an inspiration. It's a model. It's supportive of the other institutions and artists in our community and other theaters that are smaller and in other parts of the country. The world looks to Theater J for not only for content but for inspiration and also for leadership and how to run an effective organization.

”

– Hank Kimmel, *Alliance for Jewish Theater Board President*



“All Possibility:” Theater J’s Founding (1990-1993)

Well before the founding of its official theater program, the DC Jewish Community Center frequently presented and produced theater. In the early 1980s, the then-peripatetic community center, bivouacked in a townhouse on P Street NW, produced Clifford Odets’ final play, the comedy *The Flowering Peach*, in the social hall at Ohev Shalom, the capital’s oldest Orthodox synagogue. The production ran for weeks and was by all accounts an enormous success, but the required resources proved too much for the itinerant organization. “It was really quite an undertaking to do sets and designs and lighting and everything that goes into a production in a rented space,” says Founding DCJCC Executive Director Jill Moskowitz.

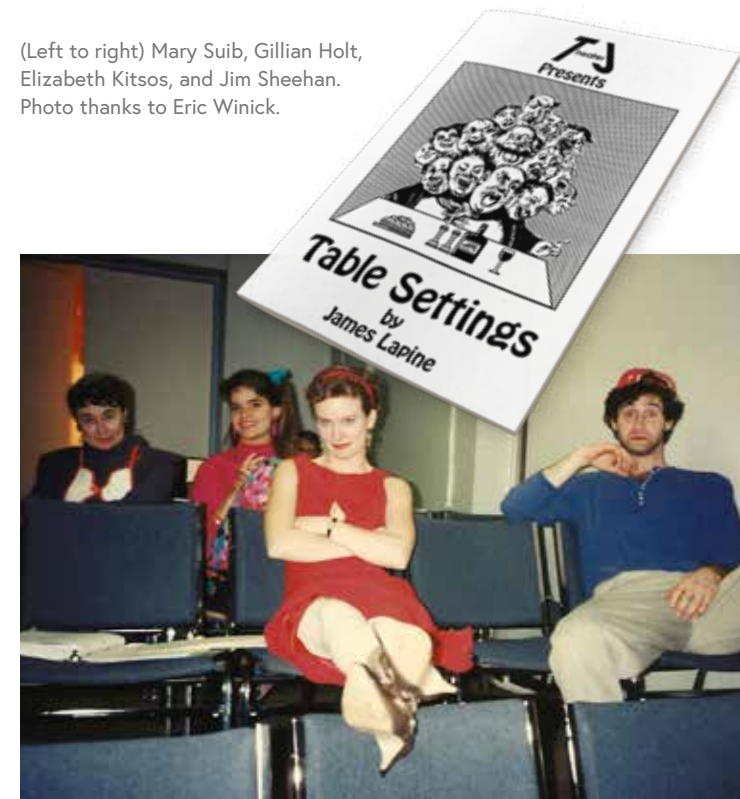
By 1990, the DCJCC was ensconced in yet another townhouse, this time at 1836 Jefferson Place. There, Miriam Mörsel Nathan, the DCJCC’s Director of the Cafritz Center for the Arts, received a grant from the Embassy of Israel to produce a reading of an English translation of *Krum*, a drama by one of Israel’s most celebrated — and most controversial — playwrights, Hanoch Levin. The well-received reading was directed by Martin Blank, whom Nathan had recently hired as cultural arts coordinator at the JCC. “The JCC’s thinking was to wait to open a theater company until after we moved to a permanent building, which was years off,” shares

Blank, “and I said ‘No way, we should just make a theater company now! If you can come up with the money for the wood, I’ll build it!’” Together with maintenance staff member Ralph Williams, Blank constructed a theater inside the townhouse’s snug meeting room. With the DCJCC on board, Blank’s ambitious venture needed a name. Wanting something simple but effective, Blank suggested Theater J. What he didn’t share was his inspiration, an X-rated theater company in Minneapolis called Theater X.

The resolutely makeshift theater on Jefferson Place could only sit 40 to 50 patrons at a time. To exit, audience members had to cross over the stage. The actors had to be careful to not hit their heads on the ceiling at times. After each night’s performance, Blanks and Williams had to remove every stick of the set and every seat so that the DCJCC could use its meeting room during the day. The space sat above the townhouse’s one-car garage, which was reserved for the CEO. “I couldn’t leave the building until intermission because you could hear the garage door going up,” chuckles former Executive Director Arna Meyer Mickelson. “It was all possibility, it was all dream. None of it made any sense to do but we did it anyway. And that’s how we began, on a tiny stage in a tiny building with a shoestring.”

Theater J began with a series of readings, but Blank and colleagues quickly grew the company into a full producing theater. In October 1991, Theater J staged *A Night in Ukraine*, a musical reimagining of Anton Chekhov’s farcical one-act play *The Bear* as a Marx Brothers film. Everyone in the audience was given a pair of Groucho Marx glasses — eyebrows and all. Theater J received its first Helen Hayes Award nomination for only its second production, James Lapine’s *Table Settings*, a nearly unheard-of feat for a new theater company. Soon audiences were quick to book tickets for a night at Theater J.

(Left to right) Mary Suib, Gillian Holt, Elizabeth Kitsos, and Jim Sheehan. Photo thanks to Eric Winick.





1. Linda Kenyon and Garth Kravits in *A Night in Ukraine* by by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus.

2. Brad Wiss and Bill Hollingsworth in *Table Settings* by James Lapine.

3. 2028 P Street NW

4. Jill Moskowitz, Founding DCJCC Executive Director

5. Richard Rohan in *A Night in Ukraine* by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus.

6. Martin Blank, Theater J Found Artistic Director.



Moving Home: Theater J in the Goldman Theater (1993 - 1997)

President Calvin Coolidge laid the cornerstone of the original Washington DC Jewish Community Center on 16th and Q in 1925. From its beautiful, neo-classical home, the Center served its community for decades. In the late 1960s, though, Charles E. Smith, one of the leaders of DC's Jewish community, envisioned a new campus for the Center in Rockville, Maryland, where many Jews were moving amid the decade's turmoil. After selling the historic Q Street building to the city government, the Jewish Community Center left DC.

In 1980, the Rockville JCC assigned Jill Moskowitz to be Branch Director for the reforming Washington DC Jewish Community Center. With a modest budget of \$24,000 and just a truckful of supplies, her job was to create a community program for the 25,000 DC Jews who were not travelling to Rockville. "My greatest hopes," says Moskowitz, "were that the DCJCC would become a neighborhood, a Jewish neighborhood, for the many scattered people that live throughout the District, that it would meet the many unmet needs, and continue to grow and flourish and change with time." Thus, the DC Jewish Community Center began again, programming first in parks and synagogues before twice resting in temporary homes, first a townhouse on P Street and then one at 1836 Jefferson Place.

In the mid-1990s, the reinvigorated DCJCC purchased the original building on 16th and Q. Only two spaces would remain intact after an extensive renovation: the basement-level pool and the historic 16th Street Lobby. The cavernous auditorium had a simple raised-platform stage with a flat seating area. DCJCC Board Member Lee G. Rubenstein, who held leadership roles in both fundraising and building design, oversaw the theater's renovation with Artistic Director Randye Hoeflich Saunders, who succeeded Martin Blank in 1993. "I did not believe the existing design of the building's theater space would be what we would want to have" Rubenstein shares, "I wanted something more intimate and closer together."

Working in consultation with theater professionals from Arena Stage and the designer of the Shakespeare Theatre's Lansburgh Theater, Rubenstein envisioned sloped audience seating with "Juliet balconies" on both sides. This layout would bring the



LEFT
Randye Hoeflich Saunders,
former Artistic Director,
Theater J

ABOVE
Deborah Ratner Salzberg, Irwin
Edlavitch, and Lee G. Rubenstein
celebrating the JCC's return to
its original Q Street home.

audience much closer to the stage and allow for uninterrupted sightlines for everyone in the house—a level of intimacy that has become a signature of Theater J. "I never dreamed of all the details necessary," says Hoeflich Saunders, "everything from deciding the number of bathroom stalls to how many rows of lights overhead we'd need. But the greatest challenge was keeping Theater J running and vibrant and not suffering from a lack of attention while spending so much time planning for the wonderful transition."

In 1997, the DC Jewish Community Center moved into our newly named Irwin P. Edlavitch Building, giving Theater J a permanent home in the refurbished theater, named for Aaron and Cecile Goldman. One of the first productions in the new space was *The Bar Mitzvah of Harry London*, written by Goldman himself.

22 years later, the DCJCC completed another renovation and renamed itself the Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center. The Goldman Theater received new seats, new lights, new climate controls, and a new entrance, along with a spacious lobby and a new ticket office on the Center's ground floor. The stage itself was named the Trish Vradenburg Stage in honor of philanthropist and Broadway playwright Trish Vradenburg, continuing Theater J's longstanding tradition of dedicating performance spaces to philanthropic playwrights.

TOP
Aaron and Cecile Goldman Theater, circa 2000.

BOTTOM
The Cafritz Auditorium prior to becoming the Goldman Theater



Explosive Growth: Theater J Goes International (1997 - 2014)



Ari Roth with playwright David Henry Hwang.

Theater J experienced an extraordinary period of growth under the leadership of its third and longest-serving artistic director, Ari Roth. As a playwright, Roth was no stranger to the DC theater scene, having had his play *Born Guilty* produced and directed by Zelda Fichandler at Arena Stage in 1991. It was as a playwright that Roth first became involved with Theater J when the theater (under the leadership of Martin Blank) produced a reading of his play: *Oh, the Innocents*.

It wasn't until October 1997 that Roth became the Artistic Director of Theater J, shortly after the move back into the building on 16th and Q. "When I first arrived," said Roth, "Theater J had a \$90,000/year budget with only an artistic director, a part time technical director, and a volunteer managing director. Together, we launched a two and a half play season — and were off to double our budget the next year."

Under Roth's leadership, and in collaboration with Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center CEOs Arna Meyer Mickelson and Carole Zawatsky, Theater J grew substantially, obtaining a national

and international reputation. In his early years, the theater partnered significantly with other DC theaters. Woolly Mammoth had lost its performance venue and had yet to build its new home. Woolly's artistic director, Howard Shalwitz, met with Roth and a partnership was formed. Together, the two companies produced four co-productions over three years. "I think the collaboration between Woolly and Theater J left a footprint on both of our organizations," said Shalwitz. "I'm really proud to say that I learned a lot from Ari and the whole approach to audience engagement at Theater J — that really influenced me. And I think that Theater J benefited from Woolly's longer history of producing." Theater J went on to partner with Rorschach Theater, Synetic Theater, and Arena Stage. "Those productions really taught us how to be a professional resident theater company," said Roth.

The first box office hit under Roth's tenure was *The Old Neighborhood* by David Mamet, produced in 1999. As Theater J grew, a series of world premieres by artists of national and international standing helped to put the theater on the map. Wendy Wasserstein, Robert Brustein, Richard Greenberg,

Joyce Carol Oates, Thomas Keneally and Ariel Dorfman all had plays receive world premieres at Theater J. The theater became known for cultivating top directing, designing, and acting talent to its stage.

"We had a reputation that was well beyond Washington," said Mickelson. "We were picking up plays and playwrights from Israel, from Europe. Ari had a passion for theater and a passion for justice. At that time, of course, we also began to touch the questions of where a Jewish theater and its relationship to Israel belonged. And that became an issue."

"It is said that I attracted some controversy in the programming that I did at Theater J," said Roth. "Maybe right from the beginning, with *Waiting for Lefty / Still Waiting*, telling the story of the labor movement from in the '30s up to the present day. So we started with a bang. Ten years later, we got in trouble with Elie Wiesel for a first draft of *Imagining Madoff* that had to be revised. Sandra Bernhard attracted a viral tempest. But the thing that really had staying power with us, in terms of achievement,

acclaim, and controversy, was the Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival. What we were trying to do, in story after story, was put multiple narratives, multiple claims to history on stage and have them argue with each other; to have justice emerge from a kind of synthesis of the audience taking in different stories."

"As artistic director, Ari Roth was fearless, a visionary in his own right" stated Miriam Mörsel Nathan, who oversaw Roth's work during the time she was Director of the DC Jewish Community Center's Morris Cafritz Center for the Arts. "His passion and vision could and did create a challenge, but it was precisely because of those qualities that the theater expanded and grew to the heights that it did." With the passage of time, Roth's iconoclastic and sometimes irreverent approach — however fearless, passionate, or visionary — ultimately created an untenable level of tension for EDCJCC management, at the same time his artistic choices continued to anger and alienate vocal members of the community. This mix eventually proved unsustainable.

Roth's tenure with Theater J and the EDCJCC ended in 2014. His termination caused a storm in both the Jewish and theater communities, with accusations all around. Roth went on to found Mosaic Theater, now located in the Atlas Arts Center on H Street, a position he resigned from in 2020 reportedly amidst further management and artistic controversies. Despite the circumstances of his departure from the EDCJCC, it is unquestionable that Roth left an indelible mark on Theater J, which would not be the theater we know it as today without his 18 years of leadership.

Right: Cast of *Waiting for Lefty* by Clifford Odets.

“
As artistic director,
Ari Roth was fearless, a
visionary in his own right

”
– Miriam Mörsel Nathan



Theater J Council

Theater J's Council, a committee of individuals serving as ambassadors, advisors, and supporters, was created in the late 1990s. Lee G. Rubenstein, a DCJCC board member, remembers opining at the time, "The key to theater is raising enough money." Rubenstein was also a board member of Arena Stage at the time. "Because of my experience at Arena, I felt that we needed not just general fundraising but specific fundraising for the theater," Rubenstein continues. "The money would need to be there so that the theater could take risks and, at times, fail."

Rubenstein approached Patty Abramson (of blessed memory) and Michele Berman, both fellow DCJCC board members, about putting together an event to support the theater. Together, they arranged a dinner at Lauriol Plaza, one of Dupont Circle's landmark restaurants, before the opening night of Arthur Miller's *Danger: Memory!* in 1999. "One hundred and fifty people gathered for a dinner of seafood enchiladas before the performance," shares Ari Roth, Theater J Artistic Director from 1997 to 2014. "We had a wonderful evening," says Berman, "and from that, Patty and I thought that we really should be doing more to support the theater."

The DCJCC formed a committee which soon became called the Theater J Council. "Michele Berman and Patty Abramson excelled at being ambassadors for the theater, and bringing in

others who shared their great enthusiasm," kvells Rubenstein. "That's really been the success of the whole Council. It couldn't have been done without the two of them."

The role of the Council has evolved as Theater J has grown and professionalized. "In the early days," says Berman, "we were really hands-on, driving actors from the airport, putting them up in our homes, bringing food to rehearsals." For many years, Council Members even prepared the food for the Opening Night parties. "It was really fun," continues Berman, "the atmosphere was a group 'Let's put on a play' kind of one." Eventually, much of the day-to-day work shifted to the theater's expanding professional staff, and the Council shifted in their role, forming subcommittees for finances and nominations, and a regular script reading group that advises the artistic director.

An ever-present part of the success of the program, the Theater J Council has 33 members, from many professions and walks of life, who are committed to furthering the work of the theater.

TOP
Patty Abramson and Michele Berman

BOTTOM
Jojo Ruf with Theater J Council members (left to right) Saul Pilchen and Bob Tracy.

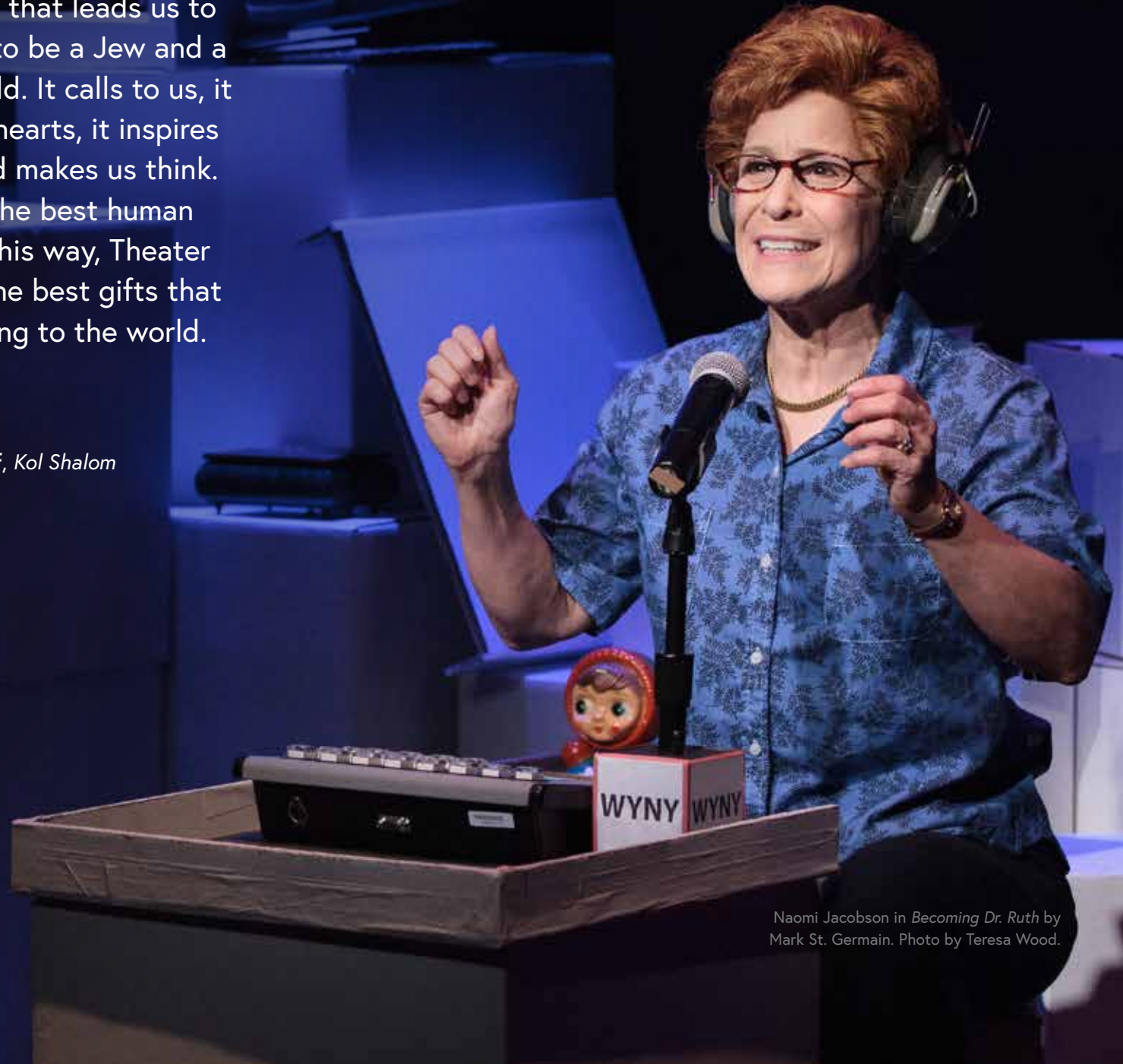


“

Theater J is a gateway that leads us to explore what it means to be a Jew and a human being in the world. It calls to us, it speaks directly to our hearts, it inspires us, it challenges us and makes us think. It engages us to be the best human beings we can be. In this way, Theater J represents some of the best gifts that Jewish people can bring to the world.

”

– Rabbi Gil Steinlauf, *Kol Shalom*



Naomi Jacobson in *Becoming Dr. Ruth* by Mark St. Germain. Photo by Teresa Wood.

Our Theater Now (2014-Today)

After Shirley Serotsky's tenure as interim artistic director in 2014-2015, Immerwahr was brought to the Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center in an international search, led by members of the Theater J Council, the Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center (EDCJCC) Board of Directors, and EDCJCC Chief Operating Officer Carole Zawatsky. Immerwahr quickly followed the suit of his predecessors in producing artistically excellent theater with some of the region's most notable and talented theater professionals while also nurturing the company's national standing and outlook.

In particular, Theater J has refined its mission, upholding and expanding a rich Jewish theatrical tradition. Although Theater J has always been a culturally-specific organization, Immerwahr focuses on plays that celebrate, explore, and struggle with the complexities and nuances of the Jewish experience. Immerwahr has programmed a wide range of Jewish voices and stories, including: Lindsay Joelle's *Trayf*, about a New York 'Mitzvah Tank'; *The Wanderers* — Anna Ziegler's fourth play at Theater J — about the intersecting lives of a Satmar Hasidic couple and a secular couple; and *Becoming Dr. Ruth* by Mark St. Germain, the story of Holocaust survivor and sex therapist Dr. Ruth Westheimer.

Several of Theater J's recent productions have renewed interest in plays deserving of wider attention. The theatrical adaptation of Jonathan

Safran Foer's best-selling novel *Everything is Illuminated* had only received two productions before Theater J mounted it in 2018, leading to many subsequent productions the following year. Theater J has also revived forgotten masterpieces by major American playwrights, such as Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass* and Edward Albee's *Occupant*, both directed by Aaron Posner.

In collaboration with several philanthropic families, Immerwahr established the first two Jewish play prizes in the country in 2019, one to an established writer and one to an emerging female-identifying writer. He has also led the company toward a robust play development program, commissioning four new plays in his first five years of leadership. These innovations have created a robust pipeline of new plays for future Theater J seasons, as well as promote Jewish playwrights and plays nationwide.

Furthering Theater J's reputation as a leading Jewish theater, Immerwahr created the popular Yiddish Theater Lab with the expressed mission of preserving and reviving the literature of the Yiddish Theater, a dominant cultural force from the 1880s to the 1930s all but forgotten today. The initiative engages actors, directors, and scholars on new English language readings, workshops, and commissions which showcase the immense variety of Yiddish plays. To date, the Lab has produced a dozen staged readings as well as one full

production, *The Jewish Queen Lear*, based on Jacob Gordin's *Mirele Efros* in a new English translation by Nahma Sandrow and directed by Immerwahr in 2019. A second production, Rinne Groff's version of Osip Dymov's *The Singer of His Sorrow* entitled *The Red Beads*, which Groff developed through several Lab readings, was scheduled for spring 2021.

Offstage, Immerwahr, arm-in-arm with Theater J's Managing Director Jojo Ruf, is committed to run the theater ethically and with strong Jewish values. With the support of the EDCJCC and the Theater J Council, the company has meaningfully increased artist compensation, streamlined scheduling procedures to aid artists who are parents and caregivers, interrogated standard industry practices that do not positively contribute to rehearsals or performances, and taken many other steps to ensure Theater J remains a safe and welcoming home for artists and audiences alike for years to come.

Erin Weaver and Kimberly Gilbert (left to right) in *Sheltered* by Alix Sobler. Photo by Teresa Castracane.



“

Theater J is a kind place to work. There is a sense of generosity and positivity that helps the artistic process and that I appreciate every single time.

”

– Aaron Posner, *Director and Playwright*



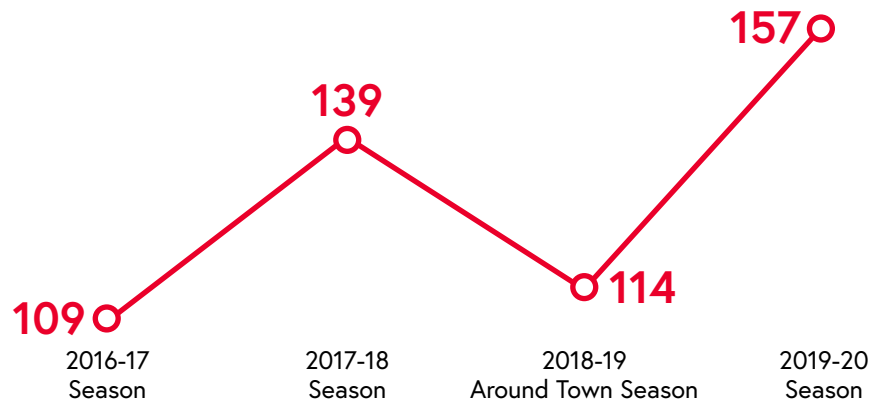
Kimberly Gilbert and Judith Ingber in *Life Sucks* by Aaron Posner. Photo by C. Stanley Photography.



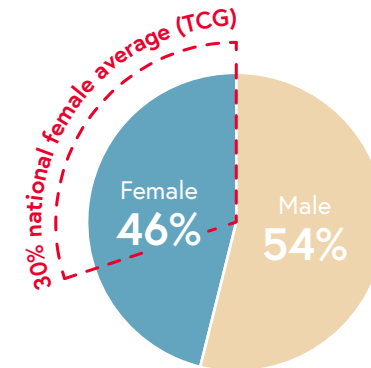
Since 2015, Theater J has continued to grow the company's local and national reputation and resources, with a particular commitment to increasing pay equity and the diversity of our artists.

Adam Immerwahr and Alix Sobler discuss Sobler's play *Sheltered* (2020). Photo by Teresa Castracane

Number of DMV-area artists employed per season since 2015



Percentage of male/female-identifying playwrights since 2015



25%

average increase in actor compensation since 2015

11%

increase in number of subscriptions since 2015

58

Number of Major Donor (\$3000 and above) Households

54%

increase in contributed income since 2015



The Journey of a Theater J World Premiere

Theater J's three most recent world premieres have gone on to multiple productions across the country — and the world — a strong signal of the company's ability to develop scripts and foster relationships with contemporary playwrights.

Life Sucks, or, The Present Ridiculous by Aaron Posner

World premiere, Theater J, 2015

Lookingglass Theatre (Chicago), 2016

Stage West Theatre (Fort Worth, TX), 2017

Manbites Dog Theater (Durham, NC), 2017

Open Book Theatre (Trenton, MI), 2017

New Jewish Theatre (St. Louis, MO), 2018;

Deon-Walsh Productions (St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador), 2018

Aurora Fox Arts Center (Aurora, CO), 2019

Wheelhouse Theater Company (NYC), 2019

CATCO (Columbus, OH), 2019

The Custom Made Theatre Co. (San Francisco, CA), 2019

Corofin Dramatic Society, (Ireland), 2019; Glor Theatre

Queens Girl in the World

by Caleen Sinnette Jennings

World premiere, Theater J, 2015

Everyman Theatre (Baltimore, MD), 2019

Clackamas Rep (Oregon City, OR), 2019

Hangar (Ithaca, NY), 2020

Trayf by Lindsay Joelle

World premiere, Theater J, 2018

New Rep (Boston, MA), 2019

Asolo Rep (Sarasota, FL), 2020 (Postponed)

Winnipeg Jewish Theater (Winnipeg, Canada), 2020 (Postponed)

Timeline

1990 – 1991

Krum (Staged Reading) by Hanoch Levin

A Night in Ukraine (Staged Reading) by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus

"Shiva" (Staged Reading) by Judy Carter

1991 – 1992

Three One-Acts (Staged Readings): *If the Walls Could Talk* by Laurence Klavan; *Sure Thing* by David Ives; and *Stage Directions* by Israel Horowitz

O, the Innocents (Staged Reading) by Ari Roth

A Night in Ukraine by Dick Vosburgh and Frank Lazarus (First full production)

Table Settings by James Lapine

1992 – 1993

Talk Radio by Eric Bogosian

Elephants by David Rush

March 1993 — First Helen Hayes Nomination, Gillian Holt for Best Supporting Actress for *Table Settings*

Bobby Gould in Hell by David Mamet

The Greene House Effect by Charlie Schulman (World Premiere)

Summer 1993 — Randye Hoeflich succeeds Martin Blank as artistic director

1993 – 1994

Whatever It Is, I'm Against It: Groucho Marx on the Air by Richard Rohan

Only Kidding by Jim Geoghan

The Common Enemy by Charlie Schulman

1994 – 1995

Jenny Keeps Talking by Richard Greenberg

Social Security by Andrew Bergman

Catskills Tzimmis by Ernest Joselovitz

1995 – 1996

Nano and Nicki in Boca Raton by Sherry Kramer (World Premiere)

Hanukah Rapping

I Ought to Be in Pictures by Neil Simon

December 31, 1996 — EDCJCC moves back to 1529 16th Street

1996 – 1997

They Never Said a Word by Ron O'Leary

Bed and Sofa Libretto by Laurence Klavan and Music by Polly Pen (First at 1529 16th Street)

The Bar Mitzvah of Harry London by Aaron Goldman

Two by Two by Richard Rodgers, Martin Charnin and Peter Stone

1997 – 1998

September 1997 – Ari Roth succeeds Randye Hoeflich as artistic director

Waiting for Lefty by Clifford Odets, with *Still Waiting* by Ari Roth

Exile in Jerusalem by Motti Lerner

1998 – 1999

The South Side: Racial Transformation of an American Neighborhood by Louis Rosen

Goodnight Irene by Ari Roth

The Old Neighborhood by David Mamet

Uncle Philip's Coat by Larry Block & Matty Selman

Tomorrowland by Neena Beber

Fillerup! A Show About Jewish Women & Food
Written and performed by Deb Filler

1999 – 2000

Danger: Memory! One-Acts by Arthur Miller

The Good Doctor by Neil Simon, based on the stories of Anton Chekhov

Red Diaper Baby Written and performed by Josh Kornbluth

Life in Refusal by Ari Roth (World Premiere)

Red Diaper Trilogy (with *The Mathematics of Change* and *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*) Written and performed by Josh Kornbluth

Collected Stories by Donald Margulies

DP by Roy Friedman (World Premiere Workshop)

A Sunday with Ben by Aaron Goldman (World Premiere)

2000 – 2001

Decoding the Tablecloth by Gabriela Kohen

Via Dolorosa by David Hare

The Chosen Adapted by Aaron Posner & Chaim Potok

God of Vengeance by Sholem Asch

Love & Yearning in the Not-For-Profits & Other Marital Distractions by Ari Roth (World Premiere)

My Left Breast Written and performed by Susan Miller

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan by Arthur Miller

2001 – 2002

Rocket to the Moon by Clifford Odets

The People's Violin Written and performed by Charlie Varon

Shylock Written and performed by Gareth Armstrong

Miklat by Joshua Ford (World Premiere)

Via Dolorosa (Remount) by David Hare

Tommy J & Sally by Mark Medoff (World Premiere)

I Will Bear Witness (Part II) by Victor Klemperer

Born Guilty by Ari Roth

Peter & the Wolf by Ari Roth (World Premiere)

2002 – 2003

Death and the Maiden by Ariel Dorfman

The Last Seder by Jennifer Maisel

Jump/Cut by Neena Beber (World Premiere)

The Mad Dancers by Yehuda Hyman

Talley's Folly by Lanford Wilson

2003 – 2004

God's Donkey: A Play on Moses Produced by the Traveling Jewish Theatre

From Tel-Aviv to Ramallah: A Beat-Box Journey
Starring Yuri Lane, by Rachel Haverlock

Welcome to My Rash & Third by Wendy Wasserstein
(World Premiere)

Homebody/Kabul by Tony Kushner

Passing the Love of Women by Motti Lerner & Israel Zamir (English-Language World Premiere)

Oh, The Innocents Written and directed by Ari Roth

2004 – 2005

A Bad Friend by Jules Feiffer

The Tattooed Girl by Joyce Carol Oates (World Premiere)

Betty Rules: The Exception to the Musical Written and performed by Alyson Palmer, Amy Ziff and Elizabeth Ziff

Hannah & Martin by Kate Fodor

Central Park West/Riverside Drive by Woody Allen

2005 – 2006

There Are No Strangers by Jeanette L. Buck (World Premiere)

The Disputation by Hyam Macoby

String Fever by Jacquelyn Reingold

Betty Rules: The Exception to the Musical Returns!
Written and performed by Alyson Palmer, Amy Ziff and Elizabeth Ziff

The Dybbuk A new adaptation based on the play by S. Anski, adapted by Hannah Hessel and Paata Tsikurishvili

Bal Masque by Richard Greenberg (World Premiere)

Picasso's Closet by Ariel Dorfman (World Premiere)

2006 – 2007

Shlemiel the First Conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein

Spring Forward, Fall Back by Robert Brustein

Sleeping Arrangements by Laura Shaine Cunningham

Family Secrets by Sherry Glaser and Greg Howells

South Side Stories Music and lyrics by Louis Rosen

Either, Or by Thomas Keneally

Shylock by Arnold Wesker

Pangs of the Messiah by Motti Lerner (World Premiere)

2007 – 2008

Accident by Amy Ziff

Speed-the-Plow by David Mamet

Shlemiel the First Conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein

25 Questions for a Jewish Mother by Kate Moira Ryan and Judy Gold

The Price by Arthur Miller

David in Shadow and Light Libretto by Yehuda Hyman, Music by Daniel Hoffman

2008 – 2009

Sandra Bernhard's Without You I'm Nothing by Sandra Bernhard and John Boskovich

Honey Brown Eyes by Stefanie Zadrevac

Theodore Bikel in **Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears** by Theodore Bikel

Dai (Enough) Written and performed by Iris Bahr

The Accident by Hillel Mitelpunkt

Benedictus by Motti Lerner

The Rise and Fall of Annie Hall by Sam Forman

The Seagull on 16th Street by Anton Chekhov

2009 – 2010

Zero Hour Written and performed by Jim Brochu

Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon

Judy Gold is **Mommy Queerest** Book by Judy Gold, Eric Kornfeld and Bob Smith, Lyrics by Eric Kornfeld, Music by John McDaniel

The Four of Us by Itamar Moses

Andy Warhol: Good for the Jews? Written and performed by Josh Kornbluth in collaboration with David Dower

In Dafur by Winter Miller

Mikveh by Hadar Galron

New Jerusalem by David Ives

2010 – 2011

Something You Did by Willy Holtzman

The Odd Couple by Neil Simon

Oy Vey in a Manger Written and performed by The Kinsey Sicks

Return to Haifa The Cameri Theatre Production, adapted by Boaz Gaon from the novella by Ghassan Kanafani

The Chosen Adapted and directed by Aaron Posner, Based on the novel by Chaim Potok, on the Fichandler Stage at Arena Stage

Photograph 51 by Anna Ziegler

The Moscows of Nantucket by Sam Forman

2011 – 2012

Imagining Madoff by Deb Margolin

Parade Book by Alfred Uhry, Music by Jason Robert Brown

After the Fall by Arthur Miller

Ov Yey in a Manger Written and performed by The Kinsey Sicks

The Religion Thing by Renee Calarco (World Premiere)

Electile Dysfunction: The Kinsey Sicks for President!
Written and performed by The Kinsey Sicks

New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza by David Ives

The Whipping Man by Matthew Lopez

The History of Invulnerability by David Bar Katz

2012 – 2013

Body Awareness by Annie Baker

Our Class by Tadeusz Słobodzianek, translated by Ryan Craig

Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie
Devised by David M. Lutken with Nick Corley and Darcie Deaville, Helen Russell and Andy Teirstein

Apples from the Desert by Savyon Liebrecht

Boged (Traitor): An Enemy of the People by Boaz Gaon & Nir Erez

Race by David Mamet

Andy and the Shadows by Ari Roth (World Premiere)

The Hampton Years by Jacqueline E. Lawton (World Premiere)

2013 – 2014

After the Revolution by Amy Herzog

The Argument by Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros

Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Guthrie
(Remount) Devised by David M. Lutken with Nick Corley and Darcie Deaville, Helen Russell and Andy Teirstein

Our Suburb by Darrah Cloud (World Premiere)

Yellow Face by David Henry Hwang

The Admission by Motti Lerner (Workshop Presentation)

Golda's Balcony by William Gibson

Freud's Last Session by Mark St. Germain

The Prostate Dialogues Written and performed by Jon Spelman (World Premiere)

2014 – 2015

YENTL Adapted by Leah Napolin and Isaac Bashevis Singer

The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures by Tony Kushner

Life Sucks (Or the Present Ridiculous) by Aaron Posner (World Premiere)

December 18, 2014 – EDCJCC and Ari Roth part ways

G-d's Honest Truth by Renee Calarco (World Premiere)

The Call by Tanya Barfield

The Tale of the Allergist's Wife by Charles Busch

December 1, 2015 – Adam Immerwahr starts as artistic director

2015 – 2016

Queens Girl in the World by Caleen Sinnette Jennings (World Premiere)

Sons of the Prophet by Stephen Karam

Stars of David: Story to Song Based on the book by Abigail Pogrebin

The Sisters Rosenweig by Wendy Wasserstein

Falling Out of Time Adapted by Derek Goldman

The Body of an American by Dan O'Brien

Another Way Home by Anna Ziegler

2016 – 2017

The Last Schwartz by Deborah Zoe Laufer

The Christians by Lucas Hnath

Oy Vey in a Manger Written and performed by The Kinsey Sicks

Copenhagen by Michael Frayn

The How and the Why by Sarah Treem

Brighton Beach Memiors by Neil Simon

Broken Glass by Arthur Miller

2017 – 2018

Sotto Voce by Nilo Cruz

The Last Night of Ballyhoo by Alfred Uhry

Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*
Adapted by Simon Block

Becoming Dr. Ruth by Mark St. Germain

Roz and Ray by Karen Hartman

Trayf by Lindsay Joelle (World Premiere)

2018 – 2019 (Around Town Season)

The Pianist of Willesden Lane by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Actually by Anna Ziegler

Talley's Folly by Lanford Wilson

The Jewish Queen Lear by Nahma Sandrow

2019 – 2020

Love Sick Written and adapted by Ofra Daniel, Music by Ofra Daniel and Lior Ben-Hur

Edward Albee's *Occupant*

Sheltered by Alix Sobler

The Wanderers by Anna Ziegler



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