

**31st ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH THEATRE
CONFERENCE**



**FEBRUARY 5 – 8, 2012
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

***JEWISH THEATRE
REFLECTING AND SHAPING
A SHIFTING WORLD***

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AJT Conference Committee: David Chack, Stacie Chaiken, Jeannine Frank, Alan Friedenthal, Wendy Graf, Aaron Henne, Carol Rosen, Ronda Spinak, Richard Stein, Carol Rosen - Los Angeles Coordinator **Volunteers:** Rachel Silvert, Eli Taylor, Hannah Jacobs, Annette Mann, Sharon Chernoff and Nalsey Tinberg **Special Thanks:** Raul Subia and Perla Karney at UCLA Hillel

SCHEDULE

Sunday February 5th Day One

9-9:45 **Registration and Continental Breakfast** at UCLA Hillel Dortort Arts Center and Check-in

10:00 **Welcome by David Y. Chack**, President of the Association for Jewish Theatre
Spiegel Auditorium (center)

10:15 – 11:30 **Workshops**

- On Being a Producer and Self-production – Mel Weiser
- Israeli Drama -- Diane Gilboa
- Community Development and Audience Engagement - Hannah Hessel
- Jewish Theatre And Identity - Writing a Personal Drama -- Keren Goldberg
- European Theatre and Jewish Inflections - Noemi Schlosser
- Movement and Story – Wendy Jehlen, Artistic Director ANIKAI Dance/Akhra, Inc.
- Rabbi Sam and the People's Violin - Charlie Varon
- Learning from *The Fireflies* a play done at Terezin – Lauren McConnell

11:45 - 1:00 **Conference Sponsored Lunch Honoring Ed Asner** *Gindi Dining Room 2nd Fl.*

Due to the unique role Mr. Asner has played in television, theatre, and film the Association for Jewish Theatre pays tribute to one whom exemplifies the highest aims of the Association for Jewish Theatre and the theme of this conference. Mr. Asner helped lead the way for American theatre and popular entertainment to go in new directions as well as promoting social justice causes -- through the Compass Players and Second City in Chicago, to the Mary Tyler Moore Show on television, and on through many progressive projects and documentaries. Mr. Asner also supported one of AJT's leading member theatres, the Arizona Jewish Theatre and he has been extremely generous with his time by supporting young emerging playwrights such as Emilie Beck and her Holocaust related play, *Number of People* which was done in Chicago at the Piven Theatre Workshop. Clearly the Jewish saying *Tzedek, Tzedek, Tirdof* – Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue, applies here. Therefore knowing of these talents and strong Jewish roots -- AJT honors Mr. Ed Asner.

1:15 – 2:45 **“Comedy and Drama of Ethical Values in Jewish Theatre”** *Kalsman Hall 3rd Fl.*

Moderated by Rabbi Ed Feinstein Senior Rabbi Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, California; Jamie Pachino, playwright/TV/screenwriter; Stephanie Liss, playwright/TV writer/documentary producer; Herb Isaacs, director-producer West Coast Jewish Theatre; Ronda Spinak, artistic director Jewish Women's Theatre; Michael Halperin, playwright/TV /novelist; Naomi Pfefferman Magid, Arts & Entertainment Editor of the Los Angeles Jewish Journal

3:00 - 3:30 pm **Conference Synthesis**

3:30 Dinner on Own in the Santa Monica Playhouse area

7 pm **Solo Performers/Set Theatre Showcase** Santa Monica Playhouse Main Stage

10 pm **Jeannine Frank presents LATE NIGHT SHOW** Sunday, Monday Comedy/Cabaret Showcases
www.frankentertainment.com

Monday February 6th Day Two

8:30 **Continental Breakfast** at UCLA Hillel Dortort Arts Center and check-in ***Gindi Dining Room 2nd Fl.***

9 - 10 **Introduction to all participants in conference** (PechaKucha style) ***Gindi Dining Room 2nd Fl.***

10:15–11:30 **Keynote Speaker/Q& A on *Jewish Theatre Reflecting and Shaping a Shifting World***
Kalsman Hall 3rd Fl.

Richard Montoya from Culture Clash In keeping with the theme of shaping a shifting world, a conference highlight will be a presentation by **Keynote Speaker Richard Montoya**, of renowned LA's Culture Clash -- one of the leading proponents of "performance collage", mostly Chicano/Latino based, but also has incorporated crypto-Jewish-roots elements. Montoya comments: "My justification for the piece is that this history is worth an investigation and a journey," he said. "I'd like to try to answer some questions so my children will know that their great-great-grandfather might be from Damascus but your great-great-grandmother may have lit Shabbat candles on Friday night. That takes the issue off the newspaper headlines and the lefty blogosphere so that I can take a beat and a moment and explore this question of my family. It just surprises me that so many people don't want me to do that." For the last fifteen years, Culture Clash has been focusing on site-specific theater, weaving personal narratives culled from interviews into an ongoing dramatic tapestry. Theatre companies in Miami, San Diego, New York, Houston, Boston and San Francisco, among others, have commissioned Culture Clash to create performance pieces specifically for their cities. Their work has been produced by the nation's leading theaters including the Mark Taper Forum, Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Huntington, The Alley Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Seattle Repertory, The Goodman Theatre, among others. Culture Clash is the recipient of numerous awards, commissions and grants, including a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Latino Spirit Award, the Los Angeles Hispanic Media Award, the Nosotros Golden Eagle Award for Outstanding Theater Group, The Liberty Hill Foundation award and dozens of city and state proclamations commendations. Their videos, short films and art exhibits have been shown at The Smithsonian; The Whitney Museum of American Art; Sundance Film Festival; The San Juan, Puerto Rico Film and Video Festival; The Art Institute of Boston, Palm Springs Film Festival and The Los Angeles Film Festival, among others.

11:30 **Group Reflection Discussions**

12:00 **Lunch on own**

2-3:30 **New Directions in Jewish Performance** ***Kalsman Hall 3rd Fl.***
Emilie Beck, LA playwright (moderator); David Chack – President of AJT and Artistic Director of ShPIeL-Performing Identity in Chicago; Tali Tadmor – Six Points Fellow; Wendy Graf – Los Angeles Playwright; Aaron Henne – Los Angeles playwright and director of Theatre Dybbuk

5:30 –7 **Affinity Dinners** (not AJT hosted) at suggested restaurants in the area, according to groupings of directors, producers, performers, and others.

7:30 **Playwright's Forum at UCLA Hillel Dortort Arts Center** ***Kalsman Hall 3rd Fl.***

10 **Jeannine Frank presents LATE NIGHT SHOW** Sunday, Monday Comedy/Cabaret Showcases
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Tuesday February 7th USC DAY
“Witness & Responsibility” Day at USC

Presenting sponsor: *USC Shoah Foundation Institute* Co-sponsored by USC Schools & Departments: *Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life; Dornsife College of Letters & Sciences; Hebrew Union College; Hillel; the Libraries; the Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics; Office of Religious Life; the School of Theatre.*

8:45 Bus leaves from UCLA Hillel – Be Prompt (Breakfast on own)

10:00 Welcome at USC

10:10 **Performance: *Next Year in Jerusalem*** **Doheny Library - Room 240**
Written and performed by *Stacie Chaiken*

10:30 **The Art of Witness - A Meditation on Testimony and Story-making:** A Conversation with *Stephen Smith, Executive Director of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute* **Doheny Library - Room 240**

11:45 Break

12:00 **Artists Panel: Metabolizing Testimony and Artistic Expression**
A conversation with artists who engage with first-person testimony and historical artifact as raw material for their work. Panelists include comedienne *Betsy Salkind*; *Laurie Woolery*, associate artistic director of Cornerstone Theatre; painter *Ruth Weisberg*; and playwright *Velina Hasu Houston*. Moderated by *Stacie Chaiken*. **Doheny Library - Room 240**

1:45 Lunch

2:15 **Producers Panel: Engaging, Including and Challenging our Communities**
A conversation with artistic directors and producers of Jewish-identified culture who are pushing the envelope, presenting new and unexpected work. Panelists: *Joseph Stern*, artistic director, the Matrix Theatre, Los Angeles; *Beth Hogan*, associate artistic director and *Ron Sossi*, artistic director, the Odyssey Theatre, Los Angeles, *Madeline Puzo*, former creative producer, Center Theatre Group, the Guthrie Theatre, Taper, Too, and Dean, USC School of Theatre. Moderated by *Selma Holo*, Director, Fisher Art Museum USC **Doheny Library - Room 240**

4:00 Break

4:15 - 6 PM BREAKOUTS

Tape rots: Preservation to the Bit: Insuring preservation of one of the largest testimony archives in perpetuity. A visit to the Information Technology Services, where the Visual History Archive is housed. **Shoah offices, ITS**

Introduction to Visual History Archive: How to access and use the Shoah tapes. *Dan Leshem, Associate Director for Academic Outreach and Research, USC Shoah Foundation Institute.* **Shoah offices, Leavy Library**

Guided visits to the Leo Feuchtwanger Memorial Library (led by *Michaela Ullmann, Librarian*) and the Holocaust & Genocide Research Collection (led by *Lynn Sipe, Associate Dean, Collections*) **Doheny Library**

Practicum with USC School of Theatre faculty member and TO practitioner *Mady Schutztman* who works with local and international communities, harvesting and telling their own stories. **Doheny Library-Room 240**

Holocaust Online Theatre Collection Theatre *Moti Sandak* **Intellectual Commons, Doheny Library**

6:15 **Evening event at USC Hillel; Cocktails & Dinner Music from Yiddish and American Theatre:** *Rebecca Joy Fletcher* and *Herb Isaacs*

8:30 Bus returns to Westwood

Wednesday, February 8th - Final Day at UCLA Hillel

9:30-11 **Brunch** *Gindi Dining Room 2nd Fl.*
Elections by General Membership and AJT Business

11-12:30 **"The Shifting Role of Jews in Theatre, Television and Film"** – *Kalsman Hall 3rd Fl.*
Rabbi Jerry Cutler from the Temple for the Creative Arts (moderator), Jennifer Maisel – playwright and screenwriter. Carl Reiner – producer, writer, television creator; Mel Weiser - Mel Weiser Productions, Inc and Differing Views Theatre Company