



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 2, 2006

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in AUGUST & SEPTEMBER calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Julie Sutherland
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Pacific Theatre Launches its 23rd Season with the internationally-acclaimed, one-woman show, **LILIA!**

IN SHORT: Pacific Theatre presents the internationally-acclaimed, one-woman show, LILIA!, written and performed by Libby Skala, the granddaughter of Oscar nominee Lilia Skala. This moving piece relates Lilia's challenges as she experiences the rude displacement from Austrian stage star to factory worker in New York City. After fleeing Hitler-invaded Austria, Lilia finally rises to Hollywood fame in *Lilies of the Field*, acting alongside Sidney Poitier.

Playing Sept. 20 to Oct. 7. For tickets (\$16-\$32, GST incl.) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org.

Vancouver, BC – September 20 - October 7 (opens September 22)

Pacific Theatre is excited to be launching its 23rd season with **LILIA!, an internationally-acclaimed, one-woman show**, currently touring North America. Written and performed by Libby Skala, the granddaughter of **Oscar nominee Lilia Skala**, this moving piece relates Lilia's challenges as she experiences the rude displacement from Austrian stage star to factory worker in New York City. After fleeing Hitler-invaded Austria, Lilia finally rises to Hollywood fame in *Lilies of the Field*, acting alongside Sidney Poitier.

Libby Skala ingeniously plays both her grandmother, Lilia, and herself, as she presents to the audience a tale of two spirits so alike they often suffer the ironic antagonism that comes with deep love. In this creative way, Libby relates the **true story** of her Austrian grandmother's escape from war-torn Europe, and the shame she suffers in this "demotion" to refugee and zipper-factory worker, to the final, victorious stardom on the American silver screen. She also tells of a proud woman reaching into her own experience to aid her granddaughter in the trials of seeking notoriety both in film and live theatre in America.

Despite her harsh criticism of Libby's theatrical efforts, Lilia guided her granddaughter well. Libby Skala has performed *LILIA!* to sold-out houses in **Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Toronto** and **Winnipeg** (where it was selected "Best Show" out of 118 shows by CJUM Radio at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival). She has performed *LILIA!* with The Mirror Repertory Company in New York, at The Piccolo Spoleto Festival, The St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, The Cape Cod Theatre Project, the Toronto, **London** and **Edinburgh** Fringe Theatre Festivals.

Pacific Theatre is proud to be a venue on this North American tour in a play which *The New York Times* calls, "**Magnetic! Marvelous! Cloaked in magic!**"

Details:	LILIA! by Libby Skala (North American Tour)
When:	Sept. 20 – Oct. 7 (Opens Sept. 22), Wed-Sat at 8pm, Sat at 2pm (\$10 Previews Sept. 20 and 21)
Where:	Pacific Theatre , 1420 West 12th Ave (at Hemlock St), Vancouver, BC
Tickets:	\$16-\$32 (GST incl.) – To reserve call 604.731.5518 , or visit pacifictheatre.org , or in person at the Box Office.

Images available at pacifictheatre.org/press.html – contact Julie for interviews or further info.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 30, 2006

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in AUGUST & SEPTEMBER calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Julie Sutherland
604.731.5483 julie@pacifictheatre.org

Pacific Theatre hosts Libby Skala in *LILIA!*, a granddaughter's captivating tale of a remarkable woman.

IN SHORT: Pacific Theatre presents the internationally-acclaimed, one-woman show, *LILIA!*, written and performed by Libby Skala, the granddaughter of Oscar nominee Lilia Skala. This moving piece relates Lilia's challenges as she experiences the rude displacement from Austrian stage star to factory worker in New York City. After fleeing Hitler-invaded Austria, Lilia finally rises to Hollywood fame in *Lilies of the Field*, acting alongside Sidney Poitier.

Playing Sept. 20 to Oct. 7. For tickets (\$16-\$32, GST incl.) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org. **MEDIA CALL Tues., Sept. 17, 4-5pm; **TALK BACKS** with the artist on Fridays, Sept. 29 and Oct. 6**

Vancouver, BC – September 20 - October 7 (opens September 22)

Critics across North America are lauding this **one-woman show**, which tells the tale of a truly remarkable woman. Lilia Skala refused to be impeded by the political and social pressures she faced in early twentieth-century Europe, despite numerous obstacles: her sex, her ambition, her conservative parents, her inter-faith marriage with a Jewish man during the rise of the Third Reich.

Lilia Skala wanted to be an architect – her hometown university of Vienna refused women, and so she achieved this degree from the University of Dresden, and became the **first female architect** in Austria. She also wanted to act, despite the then-held view that well brought up women did not become actresses. Actresses were at best considered the mistresses of the aristocracy.

When Hitler invaded Austria, she fled with her Jewish husband, eventually arriving in the United States. There she supported her family by working in a zipper factory until she made her break only two years later in *Letters to Lucerne*, on Broadway, in 1941. Dedicating her professional life to film and stage, her efforts were formally rewarded in 1963 with an **Oscar nomination** for her portrayal of the strong-willed Mother Maria in *Lilies of the Field*, starring alongside Sidney Poitier. Television fanatics of the 1960s may remember her in *Green Acres* and the '80s generation in the movie *Flashdance*.

The play which bears her name, however, does not focus so much on her professional life, but rather on her **personal life**. Written and performed by her actual granddaughter, Libby Skala, audiences are invited to share in the most personal aspects of Lilia's life. Libby is not betraying her grandmother's secrets. To the contrary, Lilia charged her granddaughter to document the venerable woman's life: "Write a part for me," she said. "Because Hollywood writers – they don't know what to do with an old woman with an accent. They think we love to scrub floors and have ten children. But you could do something interesting. Do it. Write a part for me. DO IT! It's not too late."

And so she did. And did it well. Libby Skala has performed *LILIA!* to sold-out houses in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Toronto and Winnipeg, and also at the London and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals.

Talk Backs will be held on Friday nights after **LILIA!** (on Sept. 29 & Oct. 6) to allow our audience the opportunity to discuss the work with the artist herself.

Details:	LILIA! by Libby Skala (North American Tour)
When:	Sept. 20 – Oct. 7 (Opens Sept. 22), Wed-Sat at 8pm, Sat at 2pm (\$10 Previews Sept. 20 and 21)
Where:	Pacific Theatre , 1420 West 12th Ave (at Hemlock St), Vancouver, BC
Tickets:	\$16-\$32 (GST incl.)- To reserve call 604.731.5518 , or visit pacifictheatre.org , or in person at the Box Office. Pay-what-you-can previews Sept. 21 & 22 at the door (\$10 in advance).

MEDIA CALL: Tuesday, Sept. 17, 4-5pm – Camera footage, interviews, photos please RSVP to Julie Sutherland. Images available at pacifictheatre.org/press.html or upon request.

Playwright's Notes

As a child I would listen as my grandmother told remarkable stories of her life, always emphasizing that with God all things are possible. She had become the first female architect in Austria, and then a stage star in many of Max Reinhardt's productions, performed all over Europe.

In 1939, she was forced to flee Austria from Hitler's onslaught, and became a political refugee in America. She arrived in New York penniless and without a knowledge of the English language. She began attending night school while working in a zipper factory during the day. Because of her unstoppable determination and belief in what she had to give to the world, within two years she was cast in her first Broadway show. For the next five decades her acting career flourished.

As a teenager, when I began studying acting, my grandmother passionately worked with me on the different scenes and monologues I needed to perform for class. When she "demonstrated" how to perform the ingénue roles, she transformed so completely that I believed she was sixteen years old more than I'd ever believed anyone was sixteen. She transformed completely. To this day, she was the greatest actress I've seen.

In 1995, while living in Seattle, I came upon a wonderful improvisation and acting workshop taught by Gary Austin. During the improvisational work in class, he asked each student to talk for five minutes about someone either real or fictitious who we find interesting, compelling or fascinating. I spoke of my grandmother, and he put me in a scene in which I played her working in the factory. It was the moment that the "Lilia" character, based on my grandmother was born. When Mr. Austin learned who my grandmother was and about her amazing life, he told me, "You've got to write a one-woman show about this woman!" Over the next couple of years, Mr. Austin would involve my "Lilia" class at times, and the "Lilia" character continued to evolve within me.

Several individuals were instrumental towards the growth of "Lilia." Gary Austin's belief in the project inspired its development. Carol Fox Prescott, a wondrous acting teacher, helped to move me to the heart and essence of the material.



Photo Grace Polk

Playwright/teacher Jeffrey Sweet, also, was of great help in illuminating the show. Artistic New Directions provided a community of artists and fellow students who supported and inspired my process.

In 1999, Molly Lyons invited me to perform "Lilia," for the first time in full-length as a work-in-progress at the Greenwood Studio in Seattle. Until then, it had only been performed in 10-15 minute increments. This led to an invitation to debut "Lilia" in Kelowna, British Columbia shortly afterwards. In April, 2000, when I performed the play in New York City, I received additional direction from director/teacher Gregg Goldstein.

As LILIA! moves forward, I continued to plumb the depths of each nuance and life lesson to be gleaned from my grandmother's experiences. Lilia often said, "I've barely scratched the surface in terms of what's inside me – what I can give of myself to mankind." She was constantly trying to guide me, but I wasn't always receptive. Well, it's never too late.

The lessons continue as I have the privilege of performing this play – not only as a tribute to my grandmother, but as an ever-evolving experience between actor and audience.

About Lilia Skala

Lilia Skala was educated at the University of Dresden in architecture, and was the first female architect in Austria, before launching her stage career in her hometown of Vienna, where she briefly worked with the celebrated Max Reinhardt, starring in his celebrated theatre company. She fled the Nazis in 1939, along with her husband and two sons, eventually moving to America, where she contributed to supporting her family by working in a zipper factory. Shortly thereafter, this formidable woman was taking her bows on Broadway, in *Letters to Lucerne* in 1941. Dedicating her professional life to film and stage, her efforts were formally rewarded in 1963 with an Oscar nomination for her portrayal of the strong-willed Mother Maria in *Lilies of the Field*, starring alongside Sidney Poitier. Television fanatics of the 1960s may remember her in GREEN ACRES and the eighties generation in the movie *Flashdance*. Lilia lived until the age of 98.



European Stage

- DAS GLUECK (Vienna, 1938)
- FRAUEN VON NEW YORK (Bruenn, 1937-38)
- DER VERSCHWERDER (Vienna, 1937)
- NATHAN DER WEISE, GENTLEMEN (Euro. tour, 1937)
- AXEL AN DER HIMMESTUER (Austrian tour, 1937)
- FRL. ELSE (Vienna, 1936)
- DIE ERSTE FRAU SELBY (Bruenn, 1936)
- JURISTEN (Vienna, 1932)
- SECHS PERSONEN SUCHEN EINEN (Euro. tour, 1934)
- MANN MIT DEN GRAUEN SCHLAEFEN, FESTGEFAHREN (ON THE ROCKS) (Munchner Kammerspiele, 1934)
- IN JEDER EHE (Vienna, 1932)
- DER ENTZUEKEN DE MENSCH (Vienna, 1931-32)
- ELISABETH VON ENGLAND (Euro. tour, 1931)
- SEPTEMBER (Vienna, 1930)
- VERSCHIEDENE (Vienna, 1930-31)
- HERR LAMBERTHIER (Tour to Czech., 1930)
- MADONNA IM SCHLAFCOUPEE (Buehne, 1929)
- OLYMPIA, GRAND HOTEL, HERR LAMBERTHIER (Euro. tour, 1929)
- TWELVE THOUSAND (Marienbad, 1928)

European Filmography

- UNEXCUSED HOUR (1937)
- FLOWERS FROM NICE (1936)
- GIRL'S DORMATORY (1936)
- MADAME WANTS NO CHILDREN (1933)
- HIS MAJESTY, KING BALLYHOO (1931)
- PURPUR UND WASCHBLAU (1931)

American Filmography

- MEN OF RESPECT (1991)
- HOUSE OF GAMES (1987)
- FLASHDANCE (1983)
- TESTAMENT (1983)
- THE END OF AUGUST (1982)
- HEARTLAND (1980)
- SOONER OR LATER (1978)
- ROSELAND (1977)
- ELEANOR AND FRANKLIN: THE EARLY YEARS (1976)
- DEADLY HERO (1975)
- PROBE (1972)
- SPLIT SECOND TO AN EPITAPH (1970)
- CHARLY (1968)
- THE SUNSHINE PATRIOT (1968)
- CAPRICE (1967)
- IRONSIDE (1967)
- SHIP OF FOOLS (1965)
- LILIES OF THE FIELD (1963)
- CALL ME MADAM (1953)

American Stage (Highlights)

- SABRINA FAIR (Colorado, 1976)
- MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT (Colorado, 1976)
- MEDEA AND JASON (Broadway, 1974)
- CABARET (Colorado, 1975/65)
- THE RIVALS (Colorado, 1973)
- DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (Broadway, 1955/58)
- THE THREE PENNY OPERA (NYC, 1965)
- ARMS AND THE MAN (NYC, 1948)

LILIA! Original Creative Team

Photo Doug Minor



LIBBY SKALA (actress / playwright)

Libby began developing LILIA! in a Seattle improvisation workshop taught by Gary Austin (founder of THE GROUNDINGS in Los Angeles). After several works-in-progress performances, many of which were sponsored by Artistic New Directions in New York City, she performed LILIA! to sold-out houses in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Toronto and Winnipeg. In 2001, Gabriel Barre came on board as director for performances at The Players Club in New York, the Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival, The Cape Cod Theatre Project and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In New York LILIA! was produced by The Mirror Repertory Company. Libby's second show, A TIME TO DANCE, was developed with a fellowship from The Field Organization and in works-in-progress sponsored by Artistic New Directions. It opened at the Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival in July 2006, followed by a performance in St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival's Sunday Series.

In New York, Libby appeared at The Jewish Museum with Rosemary Harris, Marian Seldes, Elizabeth Ashley, Jayne Atkinson, Ronald Rand and David Margulies, reading from books published by The Feminist Press. She also appeared in new works at The Solo Arts Group and at The Drama League. In Canada, she played Viola in the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival's production of TWELFTH NIGHT. Additionally, she has performed in Seattle at The Annex Theatre, Seattle Theatre Project and New City Theatre; in Washington, D.C., she appeared in Jeffrey Sweet's VALUE OF NAMES at Theatre J; in Spokane she performed at InterPLAYERS in Tina Howe's PAINTING CHURCHES; and in Los Angeles at The Stoppap Theatre. She starred in a film version of Romeo and Juliet for the Director's View Film Festival, and makes appearances in the award-winning film festival hit Dogs in the Basement aka Unscrewed, and in Jonathan Glazer's Birth, starring Nicole Kidman. A graduate of Oberlin College, she was nominated for an Irene Ryan Award as Best Actress by the American College Theatre Festival for her role in CINDERS by Janusz Glowacki. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild and lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

GABRIEL BARRE (additional direction)

Gabriel directed the off-Broadway musical THE WILD PARTY, by Andrew Lippa, which was nominated for numerous awards, including five Outer Critics Circle Awards and thirteen Drama Desk Awards (both including Best Direction), and for which he won the Calloway Award. He also directed the national tour of Rodgers and Hammerstein's CINDERELLA, starring Eartha Kitt. Other off-Broadway credits include: JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN PARIS, JOHN & JEN, HONKY-TONK HIGHWAY, STARS IN YOUR EYES and SUMMER OF '42. At the Goodspeed Opera House, he directed the revivals of SWEENEY TODD (winner of four Connecticut Critics Circle Awards, including Best Direction), FINIAN'S RAINBOW and the new musicals HOUDINI, FANNY HILL, and DORIAN. As an actor he was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical and has appeared often on Broadway and off, on television and in film.

CAROL FOX PRESCOTT (acting coach)

Carol has worked in the professional theater as actress, director and teacher for close to forty years. She was taught acting by such masters as Robert Lewis, Morris Carnovsky, Charles Nelson Reilly, Joshua Shelley and Michael Moriarty. As an actress she played featured and leading roles, including such varied characters as Tzeitel in A FIDDLER ON THE ROOF with Zero Mostel and again with Luther Adler, Agnes Nolan in GEORGE M! with Mickey Rooney, Catherine in PIPPIN, directed by Bob Fosse and Guitel in THE ROTHSCHILDS opposite Hal Linden. She appeared as Kate in Shakespeare's THE TAMING OF THE SHREW and Celia in AS YOU LIKE IT as well as the title role in Ibsen's HEDDA GABLER. Most recently she was standby for Ellen Burstyn on Broadway in SACRILEGE. She has also directed multiple award winning productions. Her teaching career began with a nine year tenure at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and Five years at the T. Schreiber Studio in New York City after which she created her own studio -- Carol Fox Prescott: Acting. She is featured in Larry Silverberg's *The Actor's Guide to Qualified Teachers in New York*, published by Smith & Kraus.

GREGG GOLDSTON
(additional direction)

Gregg has recently directed NYC and L.A./HBO Work-space productions of Victoria Labalme's ICEBERGS IN AFRICA. He is Artistic Director and Dramaturg for A CHRISTMAS CAROL scheduled for L.A. production next year, and is Artistic Director of The Invisible People Mime Theatre. As a performer, Goldston has toured his one-man show internationally for 20 years and has performed with Marcel Marceau. Gregg founded The Goldston & Johnson School for Mime Theatre where M. Marceau serves as Artistic Advisor. Currently he teaches mime and physical comedy in NYC and works as a consulting director for plays, solo performances, and films. www.goldmime.com

GARY AUSTIN
(Director of Works in Progress)

Gary Austin received a BA Degree in Theatre at San Francisco State University. He performed with the improv company, THE COMMITTEE, in San Francisco, and created THE GROUNDINGS, an improvisational theatre company in Los Angeles. Gary conducts workshops in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Chicago, and Nashville. He also co-teaches with Carol Fox Prescott, Wendy MacKenzie and Lindsay Crouse. Gary Austin has formed an alliance with award winning Deaf West Theatre in North Hollywood, California, "The Gary Austin Workshops in Association with Deaf West Theatre." Gary conducts workshops composed of both deaf and hearing actors. Gary is developing theatre projects in New York and Los Angeles, some of which are currently in production. He also directs WORKS IN PROGRESS for Artistic New Directions in New York, and produces and directs WORKS IN PROGRESS in Los Angeles and Seattle. "My purpose in presenting these original works is to help people develop projects of their own." Gary has performed his solo show, "CHURCH," in New York at various venues, including Center Stage/NY and The 78th Street Lab Theatre, Los Angeles at various venues, including The Groundling Theatre, Santa Fe, Seattle, and in Fort Collins, Colorado at Bas Bleu Theatre. Gary's students work throughout the world of entertainment, and many work in other fields of endeavor. The principles, concepts, and techniques of the workshops are carried into the workplace. Gary's students include: Lindsay Crouse, Megan Follows, Jennifer Grey, Helen Hunt, Lisa Kudrow, Pat Morita, Paul Reubens, Helen Slater and Lillias White.

About PACIFIC THEATRE

Pacific Theatre was founded in Vancouver in 1984 as a professional theatre company which aims to delight, provoke, entertain and engage its audience by presenting stories that explore the spiritual aspects of human experience in a non-propagandist way that respects all faith orientations, and which strives to operate with artistic, spiritual, relational and financial integrity. The company was founded by current Managing Artistic Director Ron Reed, and it continues to thrive his leadership.

Pacific Theatre is a member of the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, the Alliance For Arts & Culture and an affiliate member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres. To date the company has produced 62 shows, including nearly 2 dozen premieres, such as ESPRESSO by Lucia Frangione, and received over 65 Jessie Award nominations. In our 2005-06 season, Pacific Theatre received 16 Jessie nominations and 4 awards, the highest of any theatre. What's more, in June, 2004, Pacific Theatre was voted "ONE OF VANCOUVER'S FAVOURITE LIVE THEATRES" in the Stars of Vancouver Readers' Choice Awards, Vancouver Courier (along with the Arts Club and The Vancouver Playhouse).