



Midnight Theatre Collective

www.myspace.com/midnighttheatrecollective

Midnight Theatre Collective is a company of self-producing artists in Vancouver, British Columbia. Our inaugural production of "The Quarrel" by David Brandes and Joseph Telushkin will run from January 25-February 17 at Pacific Theatre.

We believe in the essential role of storytelling in human society, and in the power of theatre to engage and transform culture. The heart of artistic creation is collaboration. We are self-producing professional artists committed to working in tandem with emerging actors and designers in the creation of passionate theatre. We are dedicated to presenting both marginal and traditional stories with a creative, relevant edge.



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 Artistic Director Ron Reed, and it continues to thrive under 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 63 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).

Director and Cast Biographies

Morris Ertman | Director

Credits for Pacific Theatre include the direction of *Shadowlands*, *Halo*, *Espresso*, *Master Harold... and the boys*, *Hospitality Suite*, *St. Joan* and *Damien*. Morris has directed and/or designed for Chemainus Theatre, Mirvish Productions, The Canadian Opera Company, The Stratford Festival, The National Arts Centre, The Citadel Theatre and Vancouver Opera, among others. He is also responsible for the writing (with co-author Ron Reed) and direction of the acclaimed production of *Tent Meeting*. Morris is the Artistic Director of Rosebud Theatre, where credits include *The Drawer Boy*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Diviners*, *Godspell*, *Cariboo Magi*, and *Shadowlands*. He is the recipient of nine Sterling Awards and a Dora Award for the Canadian Opera Company's *Beatrice et Benedict*.

Nathan Schmidt | Chaim

Nathan is from Rosebud, AB where he currently works as an actor with Rosebud Theatre and instructs acting and stage combat with Rosebud School of the Arts. Nathan spent a year at Chemainus Theatre where he was seen as Rolph in *The Sound of Music* and Lysander in *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Rosebud credits include: Joe Mackey in *Cariboo Magi*, Matt Freidman in *Talley's Folley*, Leon Schwab in *Voice of the Prairie* and a turn as Daddy Sherry, the oldest man in the world, in W.O. Mitchell's *The Kite*. This last summer Nathan played Jesus Christ in the *Canadian Badlands Passion Play*.

Dan Amos | Hersh

Dan is the founding producer of Midnight Theatre Collective. In addition to working on staff at Pacific Theatre, he has appeared onstage in *A Bright Particular Star*, *Shadowlands*, *Halo*, *Hamlet* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. Other credits include *The Pirates of Penzance* (Chemainus) and the role of Jesus in the *Canadian Badlands Passion Play*. He was recently seen on the TV series *Blood Ties*. Dan is also a director and sound designer. He would like to thank Mr. Reed, Mr. Brandes and all of the associated artists and producers for making this dream possible. He's especially thankful to his beautiful wife, Erin.

Michael Wipf | Joshua

Michael Wipf resides in Vancouver, BC and is a graduate from Trinity Western University with a BHK and concentration in Theatre. Past theatrical productions include *Mail Order Bride*, A Maze of Grace Productions *Entangled/Untangled*, *ASK*, and *Known*. His film credits include Phanttom Films Independent feature *Quest for Samurai* and the short film *Meme*. Michael is currently the Artistic Producer of Eadoin Productions - a multi-media non-profit company supporting local emerging artists. He works as a part time instructor at TWU in the fine arts department and is also in pre-production for Integra Entertainment's multi-media magic show MAGICON.



A Foreign Language Guide

Misnagid:

Hersh Rasseynar is described as a devout misnagid (as opposed to a Chasidic) rabbi.

- ⊗ Misnagidim/Mitnagedim is a designation for the opponents of the Chassidim.
- ⊗ Misnagidim tend to be skeptical and critical of credulity and authoritarianism.
- ⊗ Although originally the name arose from the bitter opposition to the Chassidic movement, in the course of time it lost its connotation of actual strife, and became a positive description.

Yeshiva:

Hersh and Chaim were at Yeshiva together.

- ⊗ An institution for Torah study and the study of Talmud.
- ⊗ Yeshiva is the umbrella term for the entire system of schools that teach Torah, Mishnah & Talmud.

Torah:

Chaim is amazed Hersh could set up a Yeshiva, thinking no one is any longer interested in the Torah.

- ⊗ Refers generally to the 5 Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy.
- ⊗ More specifically, "torah" can also be used to refer to the entire Jewish bible (the body of scripture known to non-Jews as the Old Testament and to Jews as the Tanakh or Written Torah), or in its broadest sense, to the whole body of Jewish law and teachings.

yamach shmo (sometimes yimach shmo)

Hersh uses the term yamach shmo in reference to Hitler.

- ⊗ the word "yimach" comes from the verse, "macho timche et zecher Amalek" - a commandment to "macho" the memory of the Biblical chief, Amalek, for attacking the Israelites in the desert.
- ⊗ "macho" is generally translated "to erase" or "to blot out" so this would be a commandment to wipe out Amalek, or in the modern "yimach shmo" to obliterate the memory of the evil one.

chutzpah

Chaim challenges Hersh: "And you have the chutzpah to apologize to me?"

- ⊗ Yiddish term for courage bordering on arrogance, roughly equivalent to "nerve" or "audacity"

Talmud

Chaim challenges Hersh to forget his Talmud.

- ⊗ The most significant collection of the Jewish oral tradition interpreting the Torah.

Shabbos (Shabbat, Sabbath)

Chaim grows nostalgic speaking with Hersh about Shabbos, "The only time we ate well."

- ⊗ Shabbat is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. The word "Shabbat" comes from the root Shin-Bet-Tav, meaning to cease, to end, or to rest.

nigun

Chaim, nostalgic, asks Hersh if he remembers Rav Yaakov's nigun.

- ⊗ a Hebrew term meaning "humming tune."
- ⊗ Usually, the term refers to religious songs and tunes that are sung by groups, often without any lyrics or words, although sounds like "bim-bim-bam" or "Ai-ai-ai!" are often used.
- ⊗ Sometimes, Bible verses or quotes from other classical Jewish texts are sung repetitively in the form of a *nigun*.
- ⊗ *Nigunim* are largely improvisations, though they could be based on thematic passage and are stylized in form.
- ⊗ *Nigunim* are also sung as a Jewish prayer in the form of a lament. Other *nigunim* may be joyous or victorious.

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shtoch

Hersh says that his father got in a shtoch.

- ⊗ Jewish humor is the long tradition of humor in Judaism dating back to the Torah and the Midrash, but generally refers to the more recent stream of verbal, self-deprecating and often anecdotal humor originating in Eastern Europe and which took root in the United States over the last hundred years.
- ⊗ Rabbi Moshe Waldoks, a scholar of Jewish humor, argued: "You have a lot of shtoch, or jab, humor, which is usually meant to deflate pomposity or ego, and to deflate people who consider themselves high and mighty."

tzimis

Chaim remembers his father making big tzimis on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

- ⊗ a Jewish dish – sweet potato and dried fruit

mincha

Hersh's student is concerned about the fact that Hersh has missed mincha.

- ⊗ Afternoon prayer services

mensch

Hersh tells Chaim he has become a real mensch.

- ⊗ Mensch is a German noun meaning a "human".
- ⊗ In Yiddish, *mensch* roughly means "a good person."
- ⊗ A "mensch" is a particularly good person, like "a stand-up guy," a person with the qualities one would hope for in a dear friend or trusted colleague.

Chaim Grade (1910-1982)

Author of "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseynner", on which *The Quarrel* is based

- ⊗ Born in Russia, was one of the 20th Century's most prominent writers of Yiddish prose & poetry
- ⊗ began publishing stories in 1932, after receiving both secular and religious education
- ⊗ was a founding member of the "Young Vilna" – an experimental group of artists from various mediums
- ⊗ Fled during WWII, seeking refuge in the Soviet Union; relocated to the USA in 1948
- ⊗ his post-war compositions are largely concerned with Jewish survival following the Holocaust (his wife was among the millions of victims)
- ⊗ Grade's most highly acclaimed novels: *The Agunah* (1961) and *The Yeshiva* (1967-68)

David Brandes | Playwright

David grew up in a small Ottawa Valley town on the Prescott Highway. His mother tongue is Yiddish. He started off as a journalist with CJOH TV and moved to CBC TV in Ottawa, but the allure of film tempted him to the UCLA Film School. Mr. Brandes is the award winning writer and producer of the film version of *The Quarrel*. He is the executive producer and co-creator of the TV series *My Life as a Dog* for Showtime. He has written for *Fraggle Rock*, and was the writer of Roger Corman's all time best selling video, *The Dirt Bike Kid*. Brandes was writer and producer on *American Hero*, an independent feature based on the Atari game of the same name. He has won numerous international awards for his work including a "best writer" nomination for a Genie. Brandes lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two daughters.

Joseph Telushkin | Playwright

An ordained rabbi, Telushkin is the author of *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, its People and Its History*. His most recent book, *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible*, was a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. His other books include *Words That Hurt*, *Words That Heal* and *Jewish Humor: What the Best Jewish Jokes Say About the Jews*. Telushkin's novel *An Eye for an Eye* became the basis for four episodes of the TV show *The Practice*. Telushkin lives in New York with his wife and children.



In Association with:



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Jan. 3, 07

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in JANUARY calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Julie Sutherland
604.731.5483 julie@pacifictheatre.org

Pacific Theatre hosts New Company – Midnight Theatre Collective – with the Canadian Premiere of **The Quarrel**, by David Brandes & Joseph Telushkin

At Sinai, God made a covenant with the Jewish people. At Auschwitz, he broke it.

IN SHORT: Midnight Theatre Collective is a new company of self-producing artists in Vancouver. It believes in the essential role of storytelling in human society, and in the power of theatre to engage and transform culture. Midnight Theatre Collective is comprised of self-producing professional artists committed to working in tandem with emerging actors and designers in the creation of passionate theatre. Dedicated to presenting both marginal and traditional stories with a creative, relevant edge, Midnight Theatre Collective is proud to premiere *The Quarrel* in Canada, a play in which two men ultimately learn they are seeking the same redemption, but looking down different pathways to find it.

Runs Jan 25-Feb 17. For tickets (\$16-\$32) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org. MEDIA CALL: Wednesday, Jan. 24, 12-1pm

Vancouver, BC – Runs January 25 to February 17, 2007 (opens Jan.26)

Rosh Hashanah. **1948.** When two intelligent, traumatized men meet on a park bench in Montreal, the ensuing struggle is at turns tender and intense. Chaim has lost all his faith; Hersh radiates his bitterness with extreme religiosity. This dialogue-driven story of hope and friendship in the face of genocide offers an intellectually vigorous discourse of great minds struggling to find common ground.

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Morris Ertman, a recipient of nine **Sterling Awards** and a **Dora Award** for the Canadian Opera Company's Beatrice et Benedict, will direct Pacific Theatre's own **Dan Amos**, seen before in *Halo*, *Shadowlands*, *Hamlet*, and *A Bright Particular Star*. He is joined by **Nathan Schmidt**, a resident company member of Rosebud Theatre in Alberta, where he has featured in *Voice of the Prairie*, *Cariboo Magi*, and *The Kite*. *The Quarrel* features scenic design by Stephen Waldschmidt (*A Bright Particular Star*), stage management by Charlene Crawford (*Broken*), sound design by Luke Ertman (*The Hungry Season*), and lighting design by Graham Bedwell (*Lilia!*).

Details:	THE QUARREL by David Brandes and Joseph Telushkin
When:	Jan 25-Feb 17, 2007 (opens Jan 26), Wed-Sat at 8pm / Sat matinees at 2pm
Where:	Pacific Theatre , 1420 West 12 th Ave (at Hemlock), Vancouver, BC
Tickets:	\$16 - \$32 – To reserve call 604.731.5518, or visit pacifictheatre.org, or in person. Pay-What-You-Can preview Jan 25 (or book in advance for \$10)



In Association with:



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Dec. 6, 2006

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in DEC. and JAN. calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Julie Sutherland
604.731.5483 julie@pacifictheatre.org

Atheism and Orthodoxy Lock Horns in
Pacific Theatre and Midnight Theatre Collective's **The Quarrel**,
by David Brandes and Joseph Telushkin

**"At Sinai, God made a covenant with the Jewish people. At
Auschwitz, he broke it."**

IN SHORT: The sense of betrayal and despair following the holocaust is depicted in the unexpected rendezvous of two old friends who both survived death camps in Europe. One has lost all faith in God, the other any hope in humankind. The viciousness of their debate is only heightened by the ecstasy of their reunion. An engaging exploration of faith and friendship amidst a backdrop of deep anger and emotion.

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Based on the short story, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseynner" by Chaim Grade, *The Quarrel* was made into a Genie-nominated Eli Cohen film in 1991. Pacific Theatre is proud to host Midnight Theatre Collective's inaugural production of this **Canadian premiere**, directed by **Morris Ertman**, a recipient of nine **Sterling Awards** and a **Dora Award** for the Canadian Opera Company's *Beatrice et Benedict*. Mr. Ertman has a long history with Pacific Theatre, having directed the critically acclaimed *Espresso* by Lucia Frangione, and the **Jessie award winning** *Master Harold...And the Boys*. Most recently he was nominated as **Best Director** for 2005's *Shadowlands*.

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Pacific Theatre and Midnight Theatre Collective are delighted to present, **for the first time in Canada**, this play in which two men ultimately learn they are seeking the same redemption, but looking down different pathways to find it.

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