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Presents

THE DYBBUK



Eul Taltumudist.

November 20 - December 7 1991 at 8.30 pm
Town Hall Motors, 126 Carlisle Street, St Kilda
(opposite Town Hall)

Bookings: Bass 11500 and 529 2880

Special Saturday night late shows: Nov, 30 and Dec, 7 at 11.30pm
(No performances Monday and Friday nights)

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Design Students:

The Gilgul Theatre Company thanks the following students of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Architecture Department and the PhilUp Institute Art School.

Nadine Cocks, Elizabeth Glazebrook, Ronen Goren, Kathryn Healy, Naideen Hillier, Paula McCarthy, Simon Shiel; particular thanks to Tara Leckey and Martin Gil.

Advisory Board:

Isaac Apel	Robyn Bardas
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Biographies

Peter Corrigan (*Set and Costume Designer*) Peter is an architect who works widely as a stage designer. In 1982 Edmond & Corrigan Pty. Ltd. were invited by the French Government to exhibit at the Paris Biennale; his work was included in the Australian and British Stage Design Exhibition in Adelaide.

In 1983/4 he was invited as a Guest Professor to Harvard University in Boston. He teaches at R.M.L.T. The office work has been published widely in Australia, Italy, Japan and England.

In July this year he was invited to lecture at the Faculty of Architecture, Politecnico di Torino, Turin, Italy and in September Edmond & Corrigan exhibited work at the Venice Biennale. His last work with Barrie Kosky was "Belshazzar".

Barrie Kosky (*Director*) In 1985, Barrie Kosky formed Treasons of Images and directed production of "L'Orfeo", "La Calisto" and a joint production of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" and Wedekind's "Lulu Plays". In 1989 he attended the 1989 International Forum for Young Directors in Berlin and returned to direct the Australian premiere of "The Knot Garden" for the 1989 Spoleto Festival. In 1990 he directed "The Barber of Seville" for the Victoria State Opera's country tour, Robyn Archer's "Cafe Fledermaus" for Playbox and Belvoir St. Theatre (Sydney), Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" with Robyn Archer for The Seymour Group and the premiere of Douglas Krehan's "Ascension of Robert Flan" for the Australian Opera's 1990 National Opera Workshop. Most recently, Barrie directed Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" for the Victoria State Opera. In 1989, he was awarded the Channel 10 Medibank Private Young Achiever of the Year (Arts Category) and a Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Scholarship.

Thomas Wright Thomas studied at Melbourne University from 1985 ~ 1989 where he performed in Andrew Ross's production of "Roundheads and Partyheads" and Barrie Kosky's adaptation of Wedekind's "Lulu plays". Since leaving university he has appeared in Gas Theatre's "Othello" at the Universal Theatre, "Tossspots" for the Melbourne Comedy Festival and "Titus Andronicus" at the Ada Factory.

Elisa Gray Elisa has been performing since the age of six, including six years with the Actors Theatre (Richmond) and eight years at the National Theatre, St Kilda. Elisa has appeared in three A.U.J.S. revues, including one for the 1989 Spoleto Fringe Festival and three Salt Pillar Theatre productions including "The Suicide" and "Big AI". Elisa has also appeared with the Melbourne Yiddish Youth Theatre and is a member of corporate training films.

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Yoni Prior Yoni has been working as an actor, director, writer and designer for the past 10 years. She has worked with the A.P.G., the M.T.C., La Mama, The Melbourne Writers Theatre and in many independent theatre and television productions. Between 1985 and 1989 she worked with the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv as an actress, director and translator. Since returning from Israel she has performed with Flying Pig Theatre and directed "Gigolo from the Congo" for the Comedy Festival. Yoni is currently a Lecturer in Drama at Victoria College.

Michael Kantor Michael studied at Melbourne University from 1985 - 1989, where he performed and directed a number of productions ranging from Barrie Kosky's production of "Troilus and Cressida" to Breugel Bums Theatre's "Tower of Babel". Since leaving university he has performed in Gas Theatre's productions of "Twice Born" at the Atheneum II and "Titus Andronicus" at the Ada Factory. In 1988 he participated in workshops at the Phillippe Gauller School and the Monika Pagneux School in Paris. Most recently Michael was Assistant Director to Jean-Pierre Mignon for "The Marriage of Figaro" (M.T.C./Anthill).

Production Notes

Vilna Theatre Troupe In occupied Vilna in 1916, a group of Yiddish actors took over an old wooden circus building. It was filthy and dilapidated. The stage floor has broken boards. Puddles of rainwater came through the roof. The performers received a few rubles each week to perform both Yiddish plays and translations of Schnitzler, Sudermann, Moliere and O'Neill. Everybody in Vilna lived off ration cards and everybody was hungry. When at an afternoon rehearsal in the middle of a sentence an actress fainted, somebody found her a baked potato and one glass of water and in fifteen minutes the rehearsal continued. The Vilna Troupe reflected the emergence of serious Yiddish literature. In 1920 they presented "The Dybbuk" by S. Anskit. was their greatest success and they were identified with it thereafter; The original motivation for the production was more sentimental than aesthetic. Anski has tried for years to persuade the company to produce his play, and though they had considered it, they finally changed their minds, to his great disappointment. But when he died, they mounted a production as a memorial, waiting the customary thirty days after his burial. The Dybbuk took Warsaw by storm. The Polish tram conductor who drove regularly past the theatre at show time used to call out not the name of the street but simply, "Anski". Increasingly the "Dybbuk" atmosphere attached itself for all the Vilna Troupe's plays. They became identified with "The Dybbuk" and so did Yiddish theatre as a whole. The Vilna Troupe toured Europe, winning high praise from critics and audiences everywhere.

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The Jewish masses in Western Europe were proud of the Vilna Troupe, but preferred to spend their money on less demanding entertainments. The Yiddish community offered no solid support for the Vilna Troupe's maintenance and inevitably the group was bound to disintegrate. In 1924 the company arrived in New York and there the group splintered. Each splinter toured, claiming to be the "original" Vilna Troupe. Ten years later there were companies calling themselves the Vilna Troupe on the strength of one member who had belonged for awhile to one of the touring companies.

Tombstones (Hebrew "matjevah") Jewish graves are marked with a tombstone bearing the Hebrew name of the deceased, his or her date of death and an inscription. Although these stones are mostly simple slabs, they do occasionally have a carved emblem indicating the status or profession of the person concerned. Thus, priests might have two outstretched hands, the sign of the priestly blessing; Levites might have a carving of a vessel with water, since one of their tasks was to wash the priests' hands. The original purpose of the stone was to indicate that there was a grave there to be avoided by priests, lest they become defiled by contact with the dead, and by farmers who were working the land. The erection of a stone was considered by the Kabbalists as an aid to the soul of the deceased in attaining rest. The Talmud warns people against reading tombstone inscriptions, since this makes one forget one's learning.

Burial (Hebrew "kevarah") The traditional method of disposal of the dead is by burial in consecrated ground as an affirmation of the belief in the resurrection of the body in the age of the Messiah. Cremation is regarded as a negation of the idea of resurrection and is not sanctioned in Orthodox practice. Jewish literature traces the custom of burial back to Adam, who did not know what to do with his dead son Abel until he saw a raven burying a dead raven in the ground. Before burial, members of the burial society wash the body, anoint it and dress it in a shroud. Some earth from the land of Israel is placed in the coffin or in the grave so that the dead Jew is, as it were buried in the Holy Land. It is customary to place a small stone on the grave after visiting the cemetery. This relates to a time when it was necessary to mark a grave with a heap of stones.

Kabbalah (Hebrew for "received tradition"). General term for the mystical tradition but, more exactly, those esoteric teaching which first began to emerge in Southern France and Spain in the 13th century. Kabbalistic theosophy explored the inner workings of the divine in its relationship to man and theurgic influence of man's actions on God. The influence of Kabbalah on exoteric Judaism was wide ranging, presenting Jews with a powerful set of mystical symbols, spreading the belief in the transmigration of souls, determining new rituals and customs and giving magical practices respectability as elements of practical Kabbalah.

Circumambulations (*Hebrew "hakkafot"*) A custom in certain communities, to circumambulate a corpse prior to burial, chanting verses to protect the deceased from the power of demons and scattering coins in different directions to encourage them to depart. The mystics recommended seven circumambulations of the graves of the righteous in times of drought, when seeking to avoid impending trouble or when an individual wished for children, health etc. It is also customary for at least ten men (minyan) to walk around the perimeter of a cemetery seven times when consecrating the ground for Jewish burials and for a bride to circumambulate her groom seven times in traditional marriage ceremonies.

Alphabet The Hebrew alphabet is made up of twenty-two letters and five final letters. The letters are seen as conveying messages based on the alliteration of their names. Each Hebrew letter also has numerical value, words, phrases or sentence with the same value may be related together. The Kabbalah regards the letters of the alphabet as having creative power, since God created the world through words. Knowing how to combine the letters correctly not only gives the mystic the ability to engage in contemplation but also enables him to create animals and men. The sanctity of prayers related to the spiritual forces in the letters which the utterance of the words liberates. Any small changes in the prayers upset the balance of these forces. Ancient scribes counted 600,000 letters in the Bible, one for each Israelite who participated in the Exodus.

Mikveh (*Hebrew for "gathering"*). A pool of "living" water, gathered together from rain or from a spring, which is used for ritual purification and ablution. Once a mikveh is constituted out of the minimum amount of natural water, then piped water may be added. Proselytes bathe in a mikveh as part of their conversion to Judaism, this being the origin of the Christian baptism. Married women use the mikveh after menstruation before resuming sexual relations with their husbands. Cooking utensils bought from a Gentile are dipped in a mikveh before being used in the preparation of food. People influenced by Kabbalistic teaching bathe there on the eve of shabbat or in the case of members of the Chasidic movement, every day before prayers. What a woman sees on emerging from her post-menstrual bath in a mikveh will influence the child she conceives during conjugal relations that night. If she meets a dog, the child will have an ugly, dog like face; if an ass, it will be stupid; as if an ignorant man, it will be ignorant. There are even reports of women being led home blindfolded, so they could think only of meeting a pious man.

Ezekiel Prophet of priestly descent who was among the Babylonian exiles in the 6C BeE. He was granted a vision of the heavens opening, in which he saw four creatures and four wheels within wheels. This vision was the subject of mystical speculation, which for a time led to the vision being banned from public reading. Ezekiel is buried in central Iraq, with a synagogue built over his tomb.

Yad (*Hebrew for "hand"*). Pointer in the shape of a hand with an outstretched index finger used during the public reading of the Torah. A pointer is needed to follow the text since it is forbidden to touch the scroll, with the bare hand. It is recorded in ancient items that, when synagogues or Bible schools were attacked, the sharp pointed yad was used as a weapon of defence. The five fingers of the hands are a prophylactic against evil, and the image of a hand is often put up on a wall of the home or a gravestone toward off evil spirits.

Dybbuk A malignant spirit which attached itself to the living and takes over their personality. A dybbuk is a "snake soul" which is not at rest or subject to transmigrating and must find an already occupied body left vulnerable by sin. The dybbuk speaks through a person's mouth with a new voice, and a change of personality takes place. It can be driven out through exorcism.

Tefillin (*Hebrew for "prayer objects"*). The two black leather boxes containing four biblical passages and written by a scribe which are attached by leather straps to the left arm and upper forehead. In the meditation before putting them on the tefillin of the hand are understood as a reminder of God's outstretched arm when he took the Israelites out of Egypt. The head tefillin are meant to subjugate the sense and thoughts of the brain for God.

Wandering Jew Based on early medieval legends about a Jewish shoemaker called Ahasuerus who disbelieved in Jesus and mocked him. He was told by Jesus that would be cursed never to die but would wander till the day Jesus returned, only resting long enough to eat his meals. His appearance was thought to be the harbinger of some natural catastrophe.

Shechitah (*Hebrew for "slaughter"*). Method of ritual killing of animals and birds by drawing a sharp knife quickly across the front of the throat. Shechitah is prescribed by the dietary laws in order for the meat to be kosher. There is a Kabbalistic belief that the soul of sinners have reincarnated into the bodies of animals and they are released from the process of transmigrating of souls by being killed in the holy act of shechitah.

Sambatyon Legendary river which flows strongly for six days and only rests on the shabbat. Some of the Ten Lost Tribes are thought to be exiled beyond the Sambatyon. There have been various attempts to locate the river in Ethiopia, India, China, Arabia and near the Caspian Sea. According to some versions of the legend, the Israelite tribes were carried away into exile by a pillar of cloud and the river Sambatyon started flowing out of Paradise behind them.

Angel of Death (*Hebrew "malakhha-mavet"*). One of the angels whose specific task is to end human life. The Angel of Death is covered with eyes, so that those who see him gape in amazement, and a drop of poison from his sword falls into their open mouths. When someone dies, therefore, all water in the house should be poured away in case poison from the angel's sword fell into it.

Demons Demons were made on the Friday evening of creating, and God did not have time to give them bodies, as shabbat was approaching, so they remained disembodied spirits. They have no shadows or thumbs, fly through the air, know the future and are mortal. Demons surround humans on all sides, rubbing against them to wear out their clothes and causing disease. They haunt trees, ruins and toilets, and there was even a prayer to say before going to the lavatory.

Shofar (*Hebrew for "horn"*) Ancient instrument blown to awaken people from their spiritual slumber and summon them to repentance. The most commonly used shofar is made from a hollowed out ram's horn and there are three basic sounds for the shofar blowing: tekiah, a long plain note; shevarim, three broken notes; and turuah, a series of short trumpet notes.

Gehinnom (*Hebrew for "valley of Hinnon"*). Hell or purgatory. Originally a valley near Jerusalem where idolatrous child sacrifices took place in biblical times. The name was later used to refer to the endless expanse of the netherworld. Most people spend a period up to a maximum of twelve months in gheinnim, being purged of their sins by its river of fire. The punishments undergone there are related to a person's sin. Thus, malicious gossip is punished by hanging from one's tongue and sexual immorality by immersion in boiling semen.

Maaseh Merkavah (*Hebrew for "work of the chariot"*). Early mystical practices of heavenly ascent associated with Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot and the throne of glory in heaven. A Merkavah mystic spent several days preparing himself to ascend to heaven in order to stand in the presence of God. He fasted, meditated with his head between his knees, contemplated water in a glass, chanted hymns and songs, used letter combinations and recited angelic names to pass to a vision of the divine throne. The mystic was transformed by his experience from man to angel, his hands and feet being spiritually burnt away by the tongues of heavenly fire he had passed through.

GLIK

(MUSIC: ALEXANDER OLSHANETSKY/LYRIC: BELLA MEISELL)

*Joy you come to me, but a bit too late
Joy you took my heart and filled it with happiness
I don't want to think what the morning will bring to me
As long as I have had my one moment of joy in
my hands and I have danced a last dance with you*

VOS IS GEVOR'N FUN MAYN SHTETELE?

(LYRIC: ISAOORE LILLIAN/MUSIC: ABRAHAM ELLSFEIN)

*What has happened to my town?
What has happened to my old home?
Oh how I long for my old town.
I spend my youth there: - the street, the synagogues,
The little trees, the little shops.
Will I ever see it again?
What has happened to my town?
What has happened to my old town?*

IKH VEL VART'N OYF DIR?

(MUSIC: ISAOORE LILLIAN/MUSIC: ABRAHAM ELLSFEIN)

*I will wait for you, no matter how long it takes.
I will wait for you, because you are my longing.
I will wait for you, everyday, every hour.
Even if it takes years and I become old and grey.
I will wait for you until the last minute.
Because there will never be someone who will take your place.
You stole my heart, my joy and you must bring them back
For I love only you,
I will wait for you.*

ROZHINKES MIT MANDL'N

(WORDS AND MUSIC: ABRAHAM GOLDFADEN)

~~Under~~, your ~~cradle~~
Stands a pure, white goat
The ~~goat~~ is going to market.
That ~~wi~~U be your calling
Raisins and Almonds,
Sleep my child
Sleep.

HOPKELE

(LYRIC: JACOR JACOBS/MUSIC: ALEXANDER OLSHANETSKY)

Fathers and mothers strive to provide for their children
Because that's their greatest joy.
And with God's help they see their child ~~under~~ the bridal canopy.
The Father screams to the musicians:
"So let's ~~a~~U do a little dance
A lovely dance
So faster: Hop, hop, hop, hop
Our whole life means nothing without dancing
So let's dance as long as we are able
Our whole life means nothing without dancing
Ufe itself is nothing more than a dance".

NARISHE TATES

(LYRIC: ISADORE LILLIAN/MUSIC: ABRAHAM ELLSTEIN)

Usten, dear brother, to what ~~te~~U you
What's the use of debates
We sacrifice for our children.
Therefore we remain foolish fathers

You worry, you're in debt, you have no peace
You rush, you toil
And yet you remain
A foolish father
However wild you are,
A foolish father
You know what to do.

You have dedicated yourself w your children and
VWhat have you to show?
You must now realise yourself, that you are foolish father.
Have a good look, your efforts have no purpose.
When your son becomes a father he will hear the same words:
You are a foolish father!

VOS GENVEN IZ GEVEN UN' NITO

(WORDS AND MUSIC: DAVID MEYERROWITZ)

What is past, has passed and is gone.
Gone are the years, the hours.
How quickly our youthful joy flies past
And we cannot bring it back
What is past has passed and is gone.
Our energy is drained our hair goes grey.
We clothe ourselves,
We make ourselves beautiful
But we deceive only ourselves
Because what is past, has passed and is gone.

Australia's First Professional Jewish Theatre Company

Aims and Objectives:

- To establish Australia's first professional Jewish theatre company.
- To fund the company through a variety of sources predominately drawn from the Australian Jewish Community.
- To provide an innovative, enriching and stimulating artistic focus for young Jewish performers drawing upon Jewish history and culture, current Jewish concerns and the particular complexity and diversity of the Australian diaspora.
- To provide an opportunity for non-Jewish audiences to experience Jewish culture in a form previously unseen in Australia.
- To provide an opportunity for professional Jewish performers to develop their theatrical talents by working on productions that are outside the repertoire of current professional or amateur companies.
- To provide a focus for artistically related activities by encouraging young Jewish painters and writers to work with the company on particular projects.
- To satisfy the continuing need for knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment within the Jewish community by exploring these concerns within an artistic environment.
- To eventually develop the company on a national and international level, through touring productions.

Robert Lehrer - GENERAL MANAGER

Barrie Kosky - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR