

DAVID HERMAN  
THEATRE  
at the Kadimah  
in Melbourne

presents



דוד הערמאן  
טעאטער

בני דער "קדימה"

אין מעלבורן

פרעזענטירט

שלום עליכמ'ם

# "שווער צו זיין אַ ייד"

פאלקס-דראמע אין 3 אקטן

רעזשי:

יאשא שער

Directed by

JASHA SHER



אין דער הויפט-ראל:

רהל האלצער

Leading Actress

RACHEL HOLZER

SHOLEM ALEICHEM'S

## "HARD TO BE A JEW"

PROGRAMME  
פראגראם



מעלבורן-סידנעי

יוני, 1975

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# דוד הערמאן טעאטער

ב"י דער „קדימה“ אין מעלבורן

פרעזענטירט

## „שווער צו זיין א ייד“

פון שלום עליכם

מיט דער בינע-קינסמלעדין

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# DAVID HERMAN THEATRE

AT THE "KADIMAH" IN MELBOURNE

PRESENTS

## "HARD TO BE A JEW"

BY SHOLEM ALEICHEM

with the distinguished actress

**RACHEL HOLZER**

### CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

IVAN IVANOVITCH IVANOW	.....	MENDEL SZMERLING
HERSHKO SHNEYERSON	.....	JOSEPH CHABERMAN
SIOMA SHAPIRO	.....	HARRY LUSTIG
SARAH SHAPIRO	.....	RACHEL HOLZER
BETTY SHAPIRO	.....	CYLA MEERKIN
DAVID SHAPIRO	.....	JASHA SHER
KETZELE	.....	MAIR CEPROW
PRISTAV	.....	SHIA TIGEL
DVORNIK	.....	MAIR CEPROW

★

★

★

*Directed by: JASHA SHER* ● *Decor by: SHIA TIGEL*

*Lighting by: ARTIN*

● *Stage Manager: B. LUSTIG*



# “HARD TO BE A JEW”

## PROLOGUE

At a graduation party, Russian students celebrate their completion of High School, and look forward to University. At the height of the fun, Ivan notices the dejection of his friend Hersh, who explains that obtaining entrance to a University is a great problem for him because he is Jewish. Ivan scoffs, pointing out that Hersh has the highest grades in the entire class and is the recipient of a gold medal. When Hersh persists in his predictions of difficulties, Ivan challenges him to exchange identities for the year to come, during which time he insists that Hersh's anti-Semitism bugaboo will be proved wrong. Despite Hersh's forebodings, he finally agrees. Ivan announces that he has now assumed the identity of Hersh and that Hersh has become Ivan.

## ACT ONE

Ivan, now posing as Hersh, presents himself as a boarder at the home of David Shapiro, his wife Sarah and their children, Betty and Sioma, in the town where both Hersh and himself the real Ivan (now Hersh) have come to apply for entrance to the University. Their new boarder seems strangely un-Jewish to the Shapiro's. He doesn't even know that as a Jew, he has no right to live in this town which is "beyond the Pale" without special permission. He must obtain this permit before he even begins to apply for University entrance. The real Hersh presumably Ivan, is called in to assist, and he confirms David Shapiro's advice that the preliminary stratagem is to apprentice the "Jewish" student to a Dentist. Shapiro and the boys go off to accomplish this, but not before it becomes evident that the impostor-boarder is attracted to Betty.

## INTERMISSION

## ACT TWO

Two months have passed, it is Betty's birthday, and the boarder has given her an expensive gift — a bracelet — which, of course, excites her parents who cannot understand why he hasn't first approached them. When the real Hersh, alias Ivan, arrives to join the celebration, Sarah Shapiro interrogates him about the boarder's background. Hersh deflects her queries, but quickly understands that his stand-in is seriously interested in Betty, and takes him aside to warn him of the consequences. Ketzelle, a friend of the family brings the tragic news of a "Blut-Bilbul", a blood libel, accusation of murder. A Christian child has been murdered by the Jews for the sole purpose of using the blood

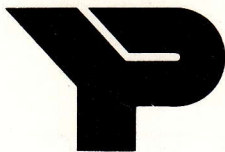
# - ENGLISH SYNOPSIS

for the Passover ritual. A "Hersh Shneyerson" is accused of being the culprit. Against this ominous background, wine and cake are produced and the birthday party begins. Shapiro toasts human brotherhood and reminds the group of Isaiah's prophecy of universal peace.

## INTERMISSION

### ACT THREE

It is the eve of Pesach. The Shapiro's are upset, having learned that an Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanow has been to the Rabbi, Levi Halperin, making inquiries about conversion to Judaism because he is in love with Betty. Of course, the Shapiros think of Ivan their boarder's friend — not the boarder himself. When the real Hersh arrives to the Seder (he has been invited as a gentile guest), he is confronted by Betty who demands to know why he has so embarrassed her by his visit to the Rabbi; while he denies any knowledge of this, he quickly understands what his friend has been up to. When the two students are alone in the room, they quarrel heatedly. The real Hersh further confuses Betty by expressing the depth of his own feelings for her, promising to untangle the confusion at the end of May (when the years agreement is over). As they all sit down to the table, a police officer bursts in, he is looking for a Hersh Movshov Shneyerson, seeking to pin the blood-libel on him. While the real Ivan protests that he is Hersh, the real Hersh announces his true identity. The police arrests both boys, as the dumbfounded Shapiro family tries to understand what has happened. David Shapiro's parting words to Ivan are: "Go in the best of health, Ivan, and tell your people all that you have seen and heard. Let them know that it is easy to write about, to speak of, to laugh at, to accuse and to libel Jews. But to be a Jew is not so easy. **It's hard to be a Jew**"



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