UPSTAGE

A PUBLICATION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT ROUNDABOUT THE ATTRI COMPANY

UPSTAGE Callboard



WHAT

Kicking off the sixth season of Roundabout Underground, *Bad Jews* is a world premiere comedy by Joshua Harmon about the holy and the holier-than-thou. Daphna Feygenbaum is a Real Jew—just ask the Israeli boyfriend she met on Birthright. So when her cousin Liam brings home his shiksa girlfriend Melody and declares ownership of their grandfather's Chai necklace, it sparks a viciously hilarious brawl over family, faith and legacy.



A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TODD HAIMES:



To me, the play is intriguingly difficult to pin down. In fact, that's part of its charm. Somehow, playwright Joshua Harmon has found a way to be both reverent and irreverent on the subject of religion. At the same time, he creates characters who will feel like part of your own family but can express themselves in far funnier ways than most. I suppose that calling the play a comedy is closest to the truth (because the laughs are indeed plentiful), but that characterization shouldn't make you think that this writer isn't getting down to serious business. What could be more serious than being stuck in a studio apartment...with your family?

http://www.roundabouttheatre.org/Shows-Events/Bad-Jews.aspx

WHEN

March, not quite winter, not quite spring

WHERE

New York City, Upper West Side

WHO



Daphna Feygenbaum,
22, Liam & Jonah's first cousin.
2/3 body, 1/3 hair. Thick, intense, curly, frizzy, long brown hair.
Hair that clogs a drain after one shower. Hair you find on pillows and in corners of the room and in your refrigerator six months after the head from which it grew last visited. Hair that could not be straightened even if you had four hours and three hairdressers double-fisting blow driers in each hand. Hair that screams: Jew.



Liam Haber, 25. Daphna's cousin: his mother is the sister of Daphna's father. U of Chicago Asian studies PhD student. Former Fulbright scholar in Japan. Has as much of a sense of humor as an overdue library book.



Jonah Haber, 21, Liam's younger brother. Sometime-UVM sophomore. Less lanky than his brother. Less brainy. More brawn. More heart.



Melody, 24, Liam's girlfriend. Stick-straight blonde hair. Which she wears with a barrette. To be extra cute. Mousy. She looks like someone who would have been abducted when she was nine but returned to her parents unharmed. Works for a non-profit.

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Interview with Playwright Joshua Harmon

Before rehearsals began, Education Dramaturg Ted Sod interviewed playwright Joshua Harmon about his work on *Bad Jews*.

Ted Sod: Tell me about yourself.

Joshua Harmon: I was born in Manhattan and spent what I like to call my formative "year" in Brooklyn before my parents basically ruined my life and moved us to the suburbs, which is where I grew up. The suburbs are fine, but I think I understood from an early age that if I ever had a shot at being cool, I would have had to stay in Brooklyn.

TS: At what point did you know you were going to be a writer?

JH: I've always wanted to be a writer. In middle school and high school I wrote poems and short stories, and some of them were published in the school's literary magazine, but in secret, I was also writing plays which almost no one saw. When I was 14, I started writing my first full-length play about an anorexic girl who is best friends with her housekeeper. I wrote it in longhand in a speckled notebook which I carried with me everywhere. One night I left it in my backpack in my Dad's car and someone broke into his car and stole my bag and that was the end of my play. I'm sure the thief took my discman (yes, this was the 90's) and then just threw away my bag, but in my mind I imagined large circles of erudite intellectuals sitting around on fancy sofas drinking fancy drinks reading my play aloud, mocking me. It didn't occur to me that the notebook was probably decomposing in a landfill somewhere.

I went to Northwestern for college, and even though I had thought of myself as this young writer, when I got to college, I stopped. I didn't come from an artistic family, so I couldn't imagine how you would pursue that as a career. I loved theatre, and Northwestern has a great theatre program but that felt totally impractical, and I loved music but I didn't think I was talented enough to be a music major. I spent a long time feeling lost. I tried on several more practical majors but none of them felt right and I didn't know what to do, and then one night I was surfing the Northwestern website, so depressed, looking for anything that might speak to me, and I stumbled upon this major I never knew existed, a little program in the English Department called the Drama program (which is different from the Theatre program—different college, different building, etc.) which let you design your own course of study, and even though it was "theatrey" it was still in the English Department, so it felt safer somehow than being a full-fledged theatre major and so I finally signed up for that. So I never consciously decided to be a playwright, but I think becoming a Drama major ultimately sealed my fate. And that's when I got to study with Mary Zimmerman—she really changed my life. She taught a class called Performance of Poetry that just lit my brain up like a pinball machine. In my final project for that class, I spliced an Adrienne Rich poem called "For Ethel Rosenberg" with historical text from the actual trial and at the end of it I basically electrocuted a photo of Ethel Rosenberg with my eyes. Very intense. But a total game-changer for me. And I took a great playwriting class with Penny Penniston and completed my first full-length play, and then I graduated and came back to New York and worked for several years as an assistant in film and theatre. Then I moved to Pittsburgh and got my MFA at Carnegie Mellon, and then I moved to Atlanta for a year because I won this very cool fellowship from the National New Play Network to be the Playwright-in-Residence at a theatre down there called Actor's Express, and then I went back to Pittsburgh to work as an assistant again. and then I quit that job and came back to New York and was living with my parents, unemployed, terrified about the future, trying to remember what had compelled



me to get an MFA in Playwriting and how useless that degree is and how stupid it was to pursue playwriting at all, and of course, that's when I got the call that Roundabout wanted to meet to discuss my play.

TS: What inspired you to write Bad Jews?

JH: I didn't realize it at the time, but the seed for this play was planted at a depressingly unmoving Yom Hashoah service I attended my sophomore year of college. The theme of the service was "Grandchildren of Survivors," so instead of a survivor speaking, a group of fellow students whose grandparents had survived the Holocaust spoke. It was strange and sterile and laden with clichés but lacking in genuine feeling and it scared me. A year or so later I came up with the title Bad Jews and started taking notes about the characters during my senior year, but then I put that notebook away for many years (fortunately it wasn't stolen). I think I felt like this play would either be the worst thing I would ever write, in which case, what was the rush; or, it might be the best thing I had ever written, and I somehow understood at 21 that I wasn't good enough to write something really good. So I sat on it for many years, like a chicken a little bit, you know, hatching my eggs. In December of 2010, I went to the MacDowell Colony, in New Hampshire. I felt embarrassingly unworthy, like I had somehow conned these very nice people into thinking I was a legitimate writer, so to prove myself worthy of the honor, I felt like I needed to write a Really Important Play, which, word to the wise, when you set out to write a Really Important Play you wind up writing the opposite, i.e. the WORST PLAY EVER. I brought this piece I had been working on about gay bullies and whales, and I spent three and a half weeks trying to write it, but it just wasn't happening, it was terrible, and I felt horrible about myself, churning out junk in the same studio where Alice Walker had worked. So I had a little ceremony to say goodbye to the gay whale play: I spent a night watching Schindler's List which is my go-to movie when I'm depressed, and I sobbed, and the next day I said to myself, you know, I have to leave here with something, so I looked at my list—I make "Plays I Want to Write Before I Die" lists every so often—and Bad Jews kept making the list going on six years and I guess I got tired of seeing it stare back

at me, unwritten, so I figured why not, and I left MacDowell with the first thirty pages and finished the first draft later that spring. Is it worth noting that when I finished the first draft I had a serious panic attack because I felt in fact I had just written the worst thing I'd ever written? My friend Libby talked me off the ledge. I was seriously ashamed of this one. Several workshops and readings later, here we are.

TS: What would you say the play is about?

JH: Purely in terms of plot, the play is about a young woman named Daphna Feygenbaum who comes to New York for her grandfather's funeral and has something of a battle royale with her cousin over an object that belonged to their grandfather which they both want very badly, albeit for very different reasons. And though there is nothing in that humorless description to indicate the play is a comedy, it's supposed to be funny. If any larger ideas or themes are at work, I really don't feel it's my place to lead that discourse. My job as the writer is to tell a story and then get out of its way. What resonates with the audience is for them to discover for themselves, not for me to dictate. The play, like all my writing, comes from a very personal place.

TS: What kind of research did you have to do in order to write this play?

JH: Eudora Welty has a great quote about this: "I am a writer who came from a sheltered life. A sheltered life can be a daring life as well. For all serious daring starts from within." Which is to say, I didn't do any research. I just lived my life and thought about the world around me and the world I know and then I wrote about it. And by no means am I putting myself in the same category as the people I'm about to mention, but I consider them some of my heroes, and I don't think Tennessee Williams had to do much research to write A Streetcar Named Desire except maybe familiarize himself a little bit with the Napoleonic code, and Wendy Wasserstein might have had to reference a few art history books to write The Heidi Chronicles but no research was required to understand the challenges and fears that Heidi faces, and Alfred Uhry didn't have to research too much to write Driving Miss Daisy, he just had to live in the South when he did and then be brave enough to write about what that was like. And yes, I say brave, because Welty's right: daring starts from within. Always. Our interior lives are so much more terrifying than anything outside ourselves. But I think that's where the best material lives.

TS: What was the most challenging part of writing your play? What part was the most fun?

JH: The most fun part was writing those insanely angry monologues. I'm not a very angry person in my day to day life, so trying to tap into all of that rage was new for me, and kind of thrilling to discover.

The most challenging part is the fact that the play takes place in one room, in one night, in real time. At one time, *Bad Jews* was going to take place over a weekend, but my friend Molly Smith Metzler wrote a killer one room/one night play called *Elemeno Pea*, and she encouraged me to give it a shot. It's daunting to try and imagine how an entire story can be told in an hour and a half in one room, and to let the audience feel like they've really gone on some kind of journey, without any tricks or magic or scene changes. Just, come sit in this living room and watch what happens. That sounds unbearably boring to me... which is why it's such a challenge, to try to find the ecstasy in that situation.

TS: Can you describe what you look for in a director?

JH: The writer-director relationship is a sort of marriage, because the goal is to procreate and make a little baby-play and raise it right and get it back on track when it veers off course and then send it out into the world. So you want someone who will balance you out and bring a set of skills you lack, someone you can trust to co-parent your kid. I guess the playwright is the mother because the writer really has the longest period of gestation and then gives birth and feels waves of post-partum depression while everyone else stands around and looks at this thing that has lived inside you and judges it. I'm not going to pursue this metaphor any further. I'll just say I feel extraordinarily lucky to have Daniel Aukin as my coparent. He has a genius mind and a light, delicate touch and he has devoted his entire career to working on new plays, so I know I'm in the most capable, excellent hands.

TS: What did you look for in casting this play?

JH: The comedy in this play doesn't come from pratfalls and yucking it up but just from playing moments truthfully, so we looked for actors who could live in this world and be honest and truthful. And also, we wanted people who weren't going to be afraid to be ugly at times, to be despised by the other characters in the room and maybe even the entire audience. Fearless, truthful, comic, smart actors.



Interview with Playwright Joshua Harmon

CONTINUED

TS: Has the script changed since the reading at Roundabout last winter?

JH: The script changed a lot leading up to the reading at Roundabout and went through a big workshop last spring in Atlanta. Now the work is really moment-to-moment, making sure the play is economical and pared down to the bone. I'm doing some rewrites before rehearsal to improve what I know I can improve. Basically, if I hear something and it makes me want to die because it's so badly written, that's something to rewrite. But I think we are all aware that we are going to learn so much in rehearsal and hopefully everyone will be brave and willing to try new things and stay open to lots and lots of new pages.

TS: Who are your favorite playwrights?

JH: Wendy Wasserstein is my favorite. Which is not very hip to say. You really won't find a lot of emerging playwrights who are huge Wasserstein lovers, I promise you. But she is my icon, guru, touchstone—call it what you will. Her plays are so personal, and so funny, and so heartbreaking, and that's a combination that I have always held up as the holy trinity of playwriting. Which is probably why I love Kenneth Lonergan, David Lindsay-Abaire, Annie Baker, Alfred Uhry, and many others. I also love Tennessee Williams—early on I wrote a lot of bad beginnings of plays that had atrocious southern accents because I thought if you wanted to be a playwright, your characters had to be either southern or British. William Inge is an amazing example of someone who found his subject matter and kept attacking it from every angle possible. I'm leaving a lot of writers I love off this list, I'll be kicking myself later. And so many emerging/younger/youngish playwrights are writing such beautiful plays. I saw Stephen Karam's Speech & Debate three times here. I just kept coming back. I can't believe my play is going up in the same space.

TS: Do you find seeing plays helpful?

JH: Seeing plays is helpful, but reading plays is valuable, too (and cheaper). Laughing at a play in a theatre is great, but when you laugh out loud alone in your room reading a play... there's no greater feeling. I think we often laugh when we recognize something is true—so when someone you have never met has been able to look at the world and find a way to express something that is true to her and she writes it down and has her play produced and then published and then you find that published manuscript and read it and it makes you laugh because it rings true for you, too... what's better than that?

TS: What advice would you give to a young person who wants to write for the theatre?

JH: Oh boy. Ugh. Advice? I mean, good luck. I guess for starters, don't listen to bad advice. Really. Or don't feel like a failure if someone else's good advice isn't useful to you. Like "write every day"? I certainly don't do that. I don't have something to say every day. Yes, you have to force yourself to write, because if you just waited until you were inspired or whatever, you'd write for ten minutes a month, but don't hate yourself if you don't write every day.

I'll just tell you what I did when I was first starting out but frame it as advice and we can pretend that's my advice, ok? Read and see a lot of plays. Don't over-



analyze them, not yet, but hold onto the ones you absolutely love, the ones that speak to every bone in your body, and when you have a nice stack of those, take another look at them, and try to figure out what the connective tissue is, what commonalities exist among this disparate collection of plays that all speak to you? Because whatever it is, that is going to be your trinity, your north star, the thing you aspire to. You should aspire to write plays that belong in the stack of your favorite plays, that are as good—not imitative, but equally exceptional. It will take you a long time to write anything that even remotely comes close, and most of what you write won't. That's ok. But aim high. You can't aim higher than your own personal definition of what is great. Aspire to write the kind of play you want to see.

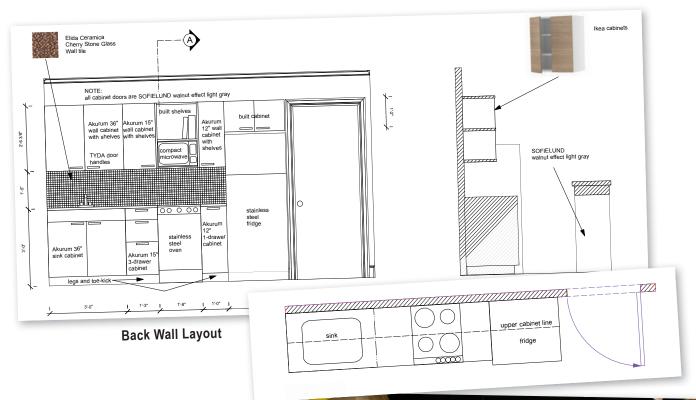
Also, see above re: Eudora Welty's advice. Another way of saying what she said: gut yourself like a fish. In your writing. Put another way: re-read *The Glass Menagerie* and then read Williams' bio, and then you tell me if it would have been easy for him to watch that play sitting next to his mother or sister.

TS: What are you working on now besides the Roundabout Underground production of *Bad Jews*?

JH: This fall, I'm starting at the Playwrights Program at Juilliard. I have wanted to go there forever. It will probably be the last time in my life I'll officially be a student, so I'm going to try to enjoy it as much as I can. I just finished the first draft of a new play, and I'm taking some notes on the next one. But mostly, I just feel incredibly lucky to be having a production like this at this moment in my career.

The visual world of *Bad Jews*

Set Designer Lauren Helpern shared her research and drafting for the kitchen in Bad Jews.



Director Daniel Aukin's thoughts on the visual world of *Bad Jews*:

One of the considerations that we had when we were looking at floor plans of the apartment was: is it useful for there to be as much room as possible for the actors to move around in so that they can easily get from one section of the stage to another? Or is there greater value in there not being quite enough room for people to move around in, creating obstacles and difficulty? A lot of design meetings were spent talking about the family that bought this apartment and why they bought this apartment, how long they've had this apartment, what their income and socioeconomic background is, how they see this apartment and how it might be furnished to reflect all that.



The Chai

years. Hebrew symbols, words, and stories have been passed down for many generations. Because of their ancient roots, Jewish texts and traditions have influenced other religions and even laws in many western societies. Today, many Jews are not fluent in Hebrew but are still familiar with the meaning of certain words and symbols. Even with Jewish people living all over the world, speaking different languages and eating different foods, common beliefs and traditions are part of what holds their culture together. It is part of what makes Judaism more than a religion, more than a race, but an identity that engenders strong connections in its people.

In Bad Jews, Daphna and her cousin Liam both want their grandfather's chai necklace. In the context of the play, the necklace is important because of its ties to their grandfather's survival of the Holocaust. But a chai itself carries deep meaning for all Jewish people. The chai (pronounced like "hi" in English) is a potent symbol that all Jews, young and old, traditional and reform, recognize and understand. The two Hebrew letters, Chet (17) and Yud (3) make the chai. The literal translation of the chai is "live," "living," and/or "The living God."





The chai also has numerological meaning. The "gematria" is a mystical tradition that assigns a numerological value to Hebrew letters. The Hebrew letters that make up the chai, Chet (万) and Yud (勺), add up to 18 (Chet=8, Yud=10). Thus,18 is a lucky number to the Jewish people. At Jewish weddings and other celebrations, guests often give the bride and groom gifts of money in multiples of 18, symbolizing a gift of luck or life.

The chai is such a prominent symbol that it can be found in all sorts of places that have nothing to do with religion, like t-shirts, coffee mugs and home decorations. And as in the play, it is often worn as jewelry.

The chai is an important symbol to a nation of people that throughout history has faced many obstacles. The literal translation of the chai is "live," a command; a command to live by God's laws, to survive, and to live a life worth living. To the Jewish people, the chai is a reminder to value the time you have on earth. Do not simply exist, but work, struggle, laugh, cry, smile, and love.

Interview with Director Daniel Aukin

Before rehearsals began, Education Dramaturg Ted Sod sat down with director Daniel Aukin to discuss his work on *Bad Jews*.

Ted Sod: Would you tell us a little about yourself?

Daniel Aukin: I was born in London. My father, David Aukin, was Artistic Director of several theatres, including the Hampstead Theatre in London, and he also ran the Haymarket in Leicester, England. Later he ran the National Theatre with Richard Eyre. My mother, Nancy Meckler, is American and a theatre director. She has directed all over England and internationally. For about 20 years, she has been the Artistic Director of the Shared Experience Theatre Company in London.

TS: Did you know you wanted to be a director from an early age?

DA: It was buried if it was there at all. I was at the theatre a lot because my parents worked in it, but I did very little acting and theatre in high school. I ended up going to college in the United States. I went to the University of Chicago and found myself directing my first semester. There was no theatre major per se, but there was a vibrant student-run theatre organization. Because it was student-run, none of it was tied in academically. I was able to direct much more than might be typical at a school where there is a theatre department, where sometimes, I understand, it can be a few years before you get a shot.

TS: Did you come to New York immediately after finishing school in Chicago?

DA: I went from Chicago to Austin, Texas and started a theatre company there called Physical Plant with Steve Moore and Mike Martin. Austin rocks. A year later, I came to New York and had various jobs and temped and read movie scripts and tried to make a living, but by then I did know I wanted to be a theatre director.

TS: Was that in the 1990s?

DA: Yes, it was in the mid-nineties. I was a resident director at Jim Simpson's The Flea Theater close to when it was starting. At the time, there was a thriving theatre and performance scene on the Lower East Side around this organization called Todo Con Nada. Todo Con Nada was like a year-round festival, and it was run by this visionary, Aaron Beall. Aaron made it very possible for people to do work there without losing huge amounts of money. It was one of the few places where you could perform something and they just took the money from the first few tickets sold every night and everything else was yours. You couldn't really make any money, but you weren't losing money either. That was my first experience self-producing in New York.

TS: How did you get involved with *Bad Jews*? Who approached you with the play?

DA: I was asked to read it and I thought it was an extremely personal, painful, and very funny piece of writing. At that point, Roundabout Underground had already committed to doing it. It just struck a huge chord for me.

TS: Where did you conduct your first meeting with Josh Harmon, the playwright? Did you know right away that you would be good collaborators?

DA: I still don't know, but I have every intention and expectation that we will be. Our meeting was arranged at Robyn Goodman's office. She was there as well as Jill Rafson, the Literary Manager at Roundabout, and Josh Fiedler, who is Robyn's associate. So I met Josh in a group setting. We talked for a bit about the play and they told me about its path to date. They asked me some questions about it, how I responded to it. Then Josh and I went out and just had coffee and talked. That was really it. But as in all of these things, collaboration is a delicate thing and you just go with your gut.



TS: Can you talk about how the script resonated for you personally?

DA: I was instantly struck by what a confident voice Josh has as a playwright. The strength of his writing was apparent just from reading a few pages. The play deals with the specifics of a very particular family and the legacy of the Holocaust on subsequent generations. Yet I would never call it an 'issue play.' It all feels very specific and pointed. He's exploring many sides of a complicated issue. It deals with the legacy of history and how we live authentically in the present in relationship to the past. I also felt like it was a piece of writing—and you'd have to ask Josh if this is true—that the writer had to write, needed to write, and that he was using it to try to understand something for and about himself.

TS: How did you prepare for directing this play?

DA: I asked the playwright if there was anything I should read. I spend as much time with the text as possible without actually trying to figure too much out. I just read it over and over again and then have a lot of discussions. Talking about set design usually provokes a lot of questions about who these people are. As we start to talk about the space that the characters are living in, one question leads to another and it often becomes a very useful dramaturgical discussion about the play as a whole and how it's operating, who these people are and how they live. Anything from income levels to how they dress.

TS: Will you talk about casting *Bad Jews*? What were you looking for from the actors specifically?

DA: If I go into casting with a fixed idea, I'm usually disabused of that fact. In my case, because I hadn't been a part of previous readings, it was one of my first times hearing some of the text read aloud. You learn so much about the play. Auditions can be great opportunities to provoke all kinds of discussions with the playwright about the play. For example, if an actor brings something into the audition room and his or her attack on the role causes you to have a disagreement with the playwright, it becomes a way to get a clearer sense of what the play is. For me, casting for *Bad Jews* was blissfully difficult because there were many, many incredible actors who auditioned for it.

TS: Can you talk about choosing and collaborating with your design team? How will the play manifest itself visually?

DA: I know it's a cliché, but the most important thing for me is that the design serves the play and gets out of the way. One of the considerations that we had when we were looking at floor plans of the apartment was: is it useful for there to be as much room as possible for the actors to move around in so that they can easily get from one section of the stage to another? Or is there greater value in there not being quite enough room for people to move around in, creating obstacles and difficulty? A lot of design meetings were spent talking about the family that bought this apartment and why they bought this apartment, how long they've had this apartment, what their income and socioeconomic background is. how they see this apartment and how it might be furnished to reflect all that. We looked at various moments in the play and tried to imagine how they might work in different configurations. A lot of it is moving little stick figures around thinking, Does this work? Is this good? And, inevitably, anytime you say yes to a choice, you're saying no to at least a hundred other choices. You just hope and pray that the things you're saying yes to are the things that are the most important for making something that has a fighting chance of really singing.

TS: Do you expect the script to change much?

DA: It's possible it may change. You can think of a play a bit like a house and a house needs four supporting pillars. I feel like those supports are in place in this play and it does stand up. The story gets told very convincingly. When you get into a rehearsal situation, things can be revealed and sometimes opportunities arise that you didn't anticipate. I'm not going into rehearsals imagining there's going to be massive amounts of rewriting.

TS: Do you have a certain way in which you approach a writer when something isn't working? It can be very sensitive, can't it?

DA: It depends on where the play is in its development. It depends on whether I've just been asked to read a play and give feedback or if it's actually something that I'm going to direct. If I have the sense that something isn't working, I point it out. I don't think it's necessary to be completely prescriptive. And I don't think that it's always about an opportunity to fix something that's broken. Sometimes it's something that I don't understand. I might say, "I don't understand this moment and it isn't working for me and here's why. Can you help me understand it better?" And sometimes the playwright will help me understand it and I'll say, "Oh... oh! That's really what they're talking about." And then that section that seemed problematic to me suddenly becomes understood. Or the playwright might say, "I agree." And it might begin a conversation about rewriting.

TS: I want to talk about the contrast between the characters of Liam and Daphna. What do you think motivates them?

DA: I don't know if Josh would agree with this, and it may be too simplistic, but one way to look at it is that they're both people who are trying to live very conscious lives and that means completely different things to each of them. To Daphna, that means a wholesale immersion in, and living through, what she understands as the legacy of her religion, and, I think, the Holocaust. Daphna sees that as a deeply authentic way to live and to be a conscious human. I think Liam might say that a lot of those things are empty of value and not meaningful to him. To pay lip service to something that isn't meaningful to him would be inauthentic. So, in his own way, he's living an authentic life even though to Daphna that comes across as a wholesale rejection of her choices. As a director, I'm looking to validate all the characters in some way.

TS: What about the relationship between Daphna and Liam's brother, Jonah—what is your take on that?

DA: I feel that however outrageous Daphna's behavior is at times, she is struggling with the same issues that the character of Jonah is; and just as deeply. It's just obnoxious to be around. And Jonah is a character who is somewhat easy to dismiss as not part of the main thrust of the piece. And when the audience learns that Jonah, who is somebody who seems somewhat peripheral, is actually right in the middle of all the same stuff, I think it's amazing. In Josh's writing, your opinion of the characters evolves and changes as the play goes on. By the end of the play, one must view them in a much more complex way than one did at the top. And that's really exciting.

TS: How do you keep yourself inspired? Do you see other people's work?

DA: I enjoy reading and certainly I see as much theatre as I can. I don't actually think about being inspired. I love being in a rehearsal hall working on a play with actors and I find that very electric. I really enjoy that adventure. No matter how much you prepare for a project, once you are actually in a rehearsal hall with actors it's going to be different from whatever you've prepared for or imagined.

TS: What advice would you give to young people who want to direct for the theatre?

DA: I feel like I learned most about being a director from doing it. It took me a relatively long time after college, or after moving to New York at least, to realize that no one was ever going to invite me to do it. It's really through self-producing that I got to direct, initially. And some of the things I failed at, I learned so much from. I would say the more you can do on your own, the better. Especially early on, while nobody is paying attention to what you're doing and you're just working in obscurity. It may be lonely as hell. But the internal obstacles to takings risks and exploring the areas you feel most unsure of are lower at that point in your career than at any other time: Fail. Fail. Accelerate. Fail.



When you get to the theatre...

BELOW ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR THEATRE-GOING EXPERIENCE MORE ENJOYABLE.

TICKET POLICY

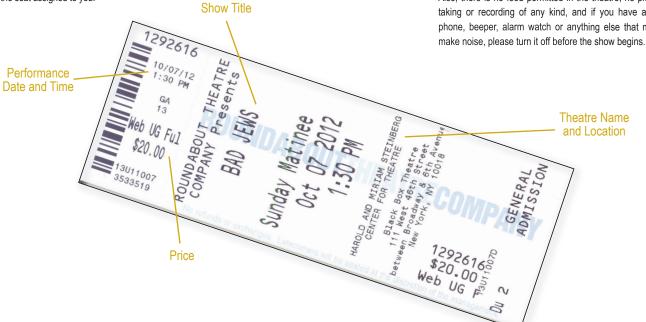
As a student participant in Producing Partners, Page To Stage or Theatre Access, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone, beeper, alarm watch or anything else that might make poise please turn it off before the show begins



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