

★★ CHICAGO PREMIERE ★★



My NAME IS Asher Lev

BY AARON POSNER

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY CHAIM POTOK

DIRECTED BY KIMBERLY SENIOR

BACKSTORY

YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS



YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

Timeline
Theatre Company

PRESENTED AT





Dear Friends,

Welcome to TimeLine's 18th season. We're thrilled to share this collection of plays with you—all new to Chicago.

Once again we're performing at Stage 773, outside our home on Wellington Avenue so that we can expand our audience, making it easier for you to experience our work and introduce TimeLine to others.

It also allows us to do two shows at once! A few blocks away on Wellington this fall, you also can see Dominic Orlando's *Danny Casolaro Died for You* (September 23 – December 21). Then later this winter we have the theatrical event of two of Richard Nelson's acclaimed *Apple Family Plays* (performed separately on alternating nights), followed in the spring by Michele Lowe's *Inana*.

But first is this Chicago premiere of Aaron Posner's adaptation of Chaim Potok's beloved novel *My Name is Asher Lev*.

While a work of fiction, the story is rooted in Potok's personal experiences and the history and culture of Hasidism in Brooklyn after World War II.

We follow the journey of young Asher's artistic evolution, torn between his religious upbringing and his aspiration to be a painter. The play unquestionably examines the intersection of faith and artistry. But it's also about the struggles we face to find our life's calling, especially when that pursuit clashes with our family, culture or heritage. Whether your own bold venture includes questioning your faith, sexuality, political ideology, family trade, or the community in which you were raised—you'll find a kindred spirit in Asher as he courageously forges his own path.

It's also about the struggles we face to find our life's calling, especially when that pursuit clashes with our family, culture or heritage.

Although Asher's paintings play an enormous role in the story, the script specifically asks that his work remain in your imagination, to empower you to envision Asher's artistic style for yourself. (For those who wish to dig deeper, an internet search will lead you to the art of Chaim Potok, himself a painter who created images similar to some mentioned in the play.)

Potok—an artist in many respects and fields—fashioned a distinguished career as a novelist during the later 20th Century with work that often grappled with young Orthodox

Jewish characters trying to assimilate into modern America. More recently his writing has transformed eloquently to the stage thanks to playwright Aaron Posner, who also adapted the much-lauded *The Chosen*.

We enthusiastically welcome back one of our favorite collaborators, Kimberly Senior, just before she makes her Broadway debut directing the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Disgraced* by Ayad Akthar. When I first mentioned *My Name is Asher Lev* to her, I knew immediately that we'd found the perfect match. She exclaimed over the phone her

deep love for the novel, noting that the pages of her paperback are marked with tears from first reading it years ago.

Kimberly and her team of designers have created a canvas on stage that can be as transformative as that of Asher's, complemented by three musicians fusing Andrew Hansen's compositions into this moving story.

Thank you for joining us, and I look forward to our conversations throughout 2014-15.



The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, at the Lag BaOmer parade in Brooklyn, 1987.

HISTORY

While Judaism's inception is a Biblical event, dating back thousands of years, Hasidism was founded only a few hundred years ago. This religious movement first took shape in Podolia—a province of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—where Jews were ravaged by Cossack massacres in the middle of the 18th Century. More than half of the Jewish population living in Ukraine and Poland was murdered, devastating hundreds of Jewish communities. These tragedies caused a sharp decline in Jewish practice. The Judaism that remained focused on intense Talmudic study and was relegated to wealthy scholars.

In the early 1700s Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov set out to make Judaism accessible to all. Known as the Baal Shem Tov, or "Besht," he connected Eastern European Jews with religious traditions that were previously unknown or abandoned entirely. He opposed the more prevalent academic

Judaism and showed people that costly education and strict adherence to Talmudic Law were not required to practice Judaism. He and his disciples spread Hasidism's spiritual teachings in an effort to empower followers with the new idea that passionate prayer was at the center of connecting to God. In his own words, "Before you can find God, you must lose yourself ... The central aspect of worship is the feeling of being at one with God."

The emergence of this new Jewish movement quickly spread across Eastern Europe. The charismatic disciples of the Baal Shem Tov showed people, community by community, that Judaism was indeed something they could participate in. By reclaiming tradition and introducing a previously unknown mysticism to the movement, followers of Hasidism accessed a fervent sense of faith that quickly became a profound new aspect of Jewish life.

The term Hasid derives from the Hebrew word *chessed*, meaning "loving-kindness."

TIMELINE OF RELEVANT EVENTS

September 1, 1939 Nazi troops invade Poland, initiating World War II in Europe.

March 19, 1940 Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the sixth Rebbe of the Lubavitch Hasidic movement, arrives in the United States. He is granted diplomatic immunity and receives assistance from the State Department for his transfer from Nazi-occupied Warsaw to New York.

December 7, 1941 Japan bombs the United States naval station at Pearl Harbor.

December 8, 1941 The United States declares war on Japan, officially entering World War II.

January 16, 1942 The Nazis begin the mass deportation of more than 65,000 Jews to the Chelmno extermination camp, located in Nazi-occupied Poland.

1942 – 1945 The Nazis continue the systematic deportation and murder of Jews, and other dissidents, throughout Europe via a wide network of concentration and extermination camps.

January 27, 1945 Soviet troops liberate the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp, located in Nazi-occupied Poland.

April 12, 1945 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies in office. Vice President Harry S. Truman assumes the presidency.

April 29, 1945 American forces liberate the Dachau concentration camp, located in Germany.

May 8, 1945 Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day) is celebrated as the Allies of World War II accept Nazi Germany's surrender.

Hasidism continued to flourish throughout the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Leading up to World War II, more than 90 percent of the world's Hasidim lived in Eastern Europe. But the Holocaust dealt a terrible blow. Just 200 years after the religious movement was formed in order to rival its oppressors, 95 percent of Europe's Hasidim were murdered by the Nazis. All of the major Hasidic communities of Eastern Europe were destroyed.

Those who managed to flee, and the very few who survived, began to re-group after the war. Most emigrated to Palestine or America and attempted to re-root the Hasidic lifestyle in new homelands. The largest number of Hasidim settled in the Crown Heights and Williamsburg neighborhoods of Brooklyn, but communities also formed in other American metropolitan centers, as well as Montreal and London.

While there are dozens of different sects—also known as “courts”—headquartered in Brooklyn, one of the largest is the Lubavitch movement. Also known as Chabad, Lubavitch Hasidism proclaims love and responsibility toward all Jews, regardless of religious affiliation. Chabad saw tremendous growth in the 1950s. With the passing of the sixth Rebbe in 1950, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson assumed

leadership of the sect the following year. He sent emissaries all over the world to spread Chabad to new communities, and to places where Jews struggled to practice. These emissaries are now known as *shluchim*. They are a thriving aspect of the Chabad movement and one of the reasons for its continued global connectivity.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Hasidic Judaism can be fundamentally identified as a call to lead a hallowed lifestyle through sanctified daily activities. An essential concept of the movement, derived from Kabbalah, is *deveikut*. Meaning “dedication” or “attachment,” *deveikut* supposes that “the starting point of religious life is complete adhesion to and communication with God.”

Hasidim adhere strictly to the teachings of the Torah and Talmud. The Torah outlines commandments and *mitzvot* (Hebrew for “good deeds”) that Hasidim follow literally in order to honor the word of God. These deeds include

It is estimated that there are approximately 200,000 Hasidic Jews currently living in America, most of whom reside in the New York area.

keeping kosher, wearing the beard long, growing payos (traditional hair worn long at the temple) and observing Shabbat. The Sabbath is integral to Hasidism, featuring several religious services and festival meals. Many daily activities, such as driving, cooking and using electricity, are suspended in order to focus on prayer and family.

THE REBBE

The rebbe, or *tzaddik*, is a central tenet of Hasidic Judaism. The rebbe is an all-encompassing and powerful position, functioning as the leader of a specific group of people. He not only performs religious ceremonies, but is also a pillar of moral guidance. He is an intermediary between his people and God, and uses his faith to protect and advance the spiritual needs of the community. In return, devotees show their loyalty to a specific rebbe and his paternal line. As such, there is no universal Hasidic Jew. For example, one is a Lubavitcher Hasid specifically, and thus a follower of the Lubavitch Rebbe.

THE HASIDIC HOME

Hasidim live in tight-knit communities, often in isolation from secular America. The Hasidic home is commonly bilingual, switching between Yiddish and English. In the Hasidic education system, boys and girls are schooled separately. Male students primarily study Torah and Talmud, while females focus more on language arts and history. Hasidim typically do not attend secular American universities—many instead take on trade jobs that provide services to the Hasidic community. It is not uncommon for the woman of the household to be the primary breadwinner so that the husband may focus on his studies.

Rules of modesty govern the Hasidic female's appearance. Once married, she wears a wig. According to a law from the Torah, a wife may not show her natural hair in public since it is a thing of beauty. Dress is also modest, with very little skin exposed. The intention is to protect the beauty of the female, and direct the male's focus toward honoring God. As such, men and women are separated during congregational services and women typically do not participate in prayer.



Satmar Hasidic Jews of Brooklyn.

SUMMARY

Though difficult to obtain an accurate number—when the Lubavitcher Rebbe was asked how many followers he had, he responded, “How many Jews are there in the world?”—it is estimated that there are approximately 200,000 Hasidic Jews currently living in America, most of whom reside in the New York area. Though there is some tension among sects—and even within sects, as old rebbes pass away and new ones assume leadership—Hasidic Judaism continues to function as a vibrant enclave of the modern American Jewish movement. With its high fertility rate, early marriages and general lack of attenuation, the numbers and religious fervor remain strong today.

July 17 – August 2, 1945

The Potsdam Conference takes place. The “Big Three”—U.S. President Harry Truman, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (replaced by Clement Attlee on July 26) and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin—meet in Potsdam, Germany, to discuss terms for the end of World War II.



Churchill, Truman and Stalin in the garden of Cecilienhof Palace before meeting for the Potsdam Conference, July 25, 1945.

August 6, 1945 The United States drops an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

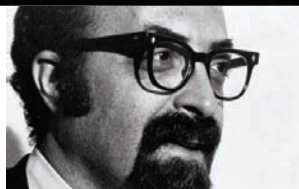
August 9, 1945 The United States drops a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan.

September 2, 1945 Japan formally surrenders to the United States, officially ending World War II.

1945 – 1952 More than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons reside in camps and urban facilities in Germany, Austria and Italy. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration manage these sites.

December 1945 President Harry Truman issues a directive loosening quota restriction on immigration of persons displaced by the Nazi regime. As a result, 41,000 displaced persons immigrate to the United States. 28,000 are Jews.

June 5, 1947 In a speech to the Harvard University graduating class, Secretary of State George



Author Chaim Potok.

Asher Lev and his transgressions find roots in Potok's personal life, but are informed by his creative instincts.

At the heart of Chaim Potok's work there is what he calls a "core-to-core cultural confrontation." There is a protagonist raised squarely in one world who comes face-to-face with another. Potok successfully explores this universal experience through the narrowest of scopes. For the most part, his novels deal with young adults raised in the closed-off Orthodox Jewish communities of Brooklyn, who come to face modern American secular life for the first time.

His popularity stems from the ability to infuse his novels with personal experiences and challenges. Born in the Bronx in 1929, he was raised in an Orthodox Jewish community. Both his parents came from prestigious Hasidic dynasties and cultivated a very religious home.

Potok began experimenting with art at a young age: he started to paint at age nine. This caused great tension in the Potok household. Because of this, Potok shifted his mode of expression toward literature, which is more in line with

the Jewish tradition. His own creative evolution can be seen in the way he describes this essential aspect of Judaism:

Since all of drama and all of graphic creativity was involved with the [pagan] gods, the Jew backed away from that and funneled all of his creative energy into the one area of human expression where image-making was not three-dimensional—words.

As a teenager, Potok had his first seminal experience with writing. Following his yeshiva exams, he decided to read a secular novel: Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. It was one of his first experiences with prose. He immediately recognized its power:

It was the use of words and rhythms to weave patterns of private imagination, all of which somehow created strange worlds that drew me into them.

This was not only instructive in terms of how to use language to create stories, but also resonated with him on an emotional level. He marked that he was "actually inside the feelings of people."

And so after growing up amidst the backdrop of the Great Depression and World War II, Potok pursued a further education, setting out a specific goal for himself:

...to attempt to clarify my own personal experiences by utilizing the medium of serious storytelling, to mold, to give shape to and to probe the nature of what it is that we do with our lives, human experience.

He was inspired to explore the essential collision of his upbringing and cultivated the appropriate education to do so. After receiving a B.A. in English Literature from Yeshiva University, he obtained a rabbinical degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. This was not to become a rabbi, but rather to further absorb a world he intended to explore.

Following his graduation from rabbinical school in 1954, Potok carried out his required military chaplaincy in Korea. In 1958, he married Adena, who he met at Camp Ramah in the Poconos. The two set up their primary residence in

Philadelphia, where Potok was the scholar-in-residence at Har Zion Temple. They also spent time in Jerusalem.

It was not until 1967 that *The Chosen* was published. It has sold more than 3.4 million copies worldwide and spent 39 weeks on *The New York Times* Bestseller List.

Potok admits one of the great motivators in writing the novel was his need to come to terms with the fundamentalism of his religious upbringing. This exploration brought Potok critical success and popularity, and opened the door for his continued interest in the fusion of two opposing cultures.

Five years later, Potok wrote *My Name is Asher Lev*. The work certainly has autobiographical notes: the Lev family follows a rebbe from Ladov, which would make them Ladover Hasidim. This is a fictional town—and branch of the movement—but Potok confirms its resemblance to the Lubavitch sect of Hasidism, formed in Lubavitch, a small town in White Russia. The losses that Potok experienced at a young age also permeate *My Name is Asher Lev*. His father received a letter one day from Europe, stating that the entire European branch of the Potok family had been killed by the Nazis. In total, 103 relatives were lost.

Most notably, Potok's initial sense of creative expression came through painting. He acknowledges he views the world as an artist, creating imagery through his work. In his 1985 novel, *Davita's Harp*, Potok unpacks what he learned from Picasso's work. He discovers:

The ability to restructure reality in terms of a single individual's vision of it and have that change people's eyes is what the artist's power is all about.

This notion is central to Potok's work, but conflicts directly with Orthodox and Hasidic Judaism. As much as he reveals a problematic fundamentalism, he also values the strong sense of family and spirituality. His work approaches both ends of this complex spectrum with tremendous respect.

Potok ultimately chose to leave the Orthodox community and live with a more open-minded and re-defined Judaism. In the end, he finds in writing what he was taught to find in prayer:

Writing at its best is an exalted state, an unlocking of the unconscious and imagination and a contact with sanctity.

Marshall calls for a comprehensive plan to rebuild Europe.

February 1948 Pro-Soviet communists take control of Czechoslovakia. They now control Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and Romania.



An American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee field representative gives food to a Jewish child at a displaced persons refugee center in Vienna, 1945.

May 14, 1948 The state of Israel declares its independence. The United States recognizes the newly established homeland for the Jewish people.

November 1948 Harry Truman is elected to serve a second term as president of the United States.

1948 The U.S. Congress passes the Displaced Persons Act, providing approximately 400,000 displaced persons immigration visas. Under this law, 68,000 Jews come to the United States.

April 4, 1949 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is formed in response to the strengthening of Soviet military presence across Eastern Europe. It states that an attack on one of its member organizations shall be considered an attack on all of them.

August 29, 1949 The Soviet Union successfully tests its first atomic bomb.

1950s Many Jews living in the Soviet Union after World War II are imprisoned and subjected to the harsh conditions of the Soviet Gulag, a system of forced

Posner was excited to explore the challenge of a piece with a first-person narrator that spans more than 20 years.

Chaim Potok's novel *My Name is Asher Lev* was published in 1972. Five years earlier, Potok wrote *The Chosen*, which established him as prominent American novelist. In 1999, theatre artist Aaron Posner collaborated with Potok to adapt *The Chosen* into a play. It premiered at the Arden Theatre in Philadelphia.

Posner was interested in exploring Jewish themes and began to seek out works to adapt for the stage. Potok, who lived in Philadelphia at the time, met Posner several times at the Arden. Posner decided to ask Potok's advice on Jewish stories to adapt and, after reading *The Chosen*, realized he had found the kind of story he was looking for. Potok, who previously adapted *The Chosen* into a 1981 film, was interested in the collaboration and the two men began working together.

Posner assumed the majority of the adapting and Potok read drafts, wrote specific scenes and offered perspective throughout the process. In order to accurately portray the details of Jewish (and Hasidic)



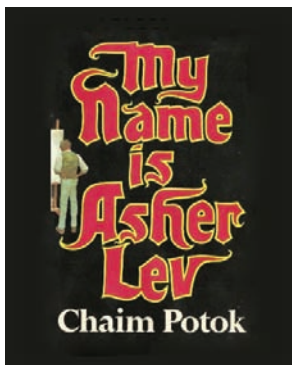
Playwright Aaron Posner.

Brooklyn in the 1940s, Posner was in constant conversation with Potok and his wife Adena.

The Chosen went on to have successful productions around the country, including a Steppenwolf for Young Adults staging in 2004 and a Writers Theatre staging in 2006.

During this collaboration, they discussed another of Potok's novels, *My Name is Asher Lev*, and how this rich story with a similar theme might translate to the stage. Posner was excited to explore another of Potok's works and take on the challenge of a piece with a first-person narrator that spans more than 20 years.

Book cover for first publication of the novel *My Name is Asher Lev*.



After Potok's death in 2002, Posner carried on the discussion with Potok's wife, Adena, and they decided to pursue the project. As he had done with Chaim Potok, Posner and Adena collaborated closely on the adaptation. The play premiered at the Arden Theatre in 2009. Adena is credited as the artistic consultant and Posner, the adaptor and director.

My Name is Asher Lev was awarded an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award and the adaptation has already seen several successful productions, including a Milwaukee Repertory staging in 2010. Long Wharf Theatre's critically acclaimed 2012 staging transferred to the Westside Theater off-Broadway, where it ran for nine months. The Fountain Theatre produced the Los Angeles premiere earlier this year. TimeLine Theatre's production marks the play's Chicago premiere.



A set of Talmud volumes.

Bar Mitzvah: Religious ritual and family celebration commemorating the religious adulthood of a boy on his 13th birthday

bris: A ritual ceremony on the eighth day of a male's life, in which the circumcision is performed

Eretz Yisroel: Land of Israel

goysiche: Non-Jewish

guttenu: A term of endearment for God, often used as an exclamation

Hasidus: Hasidic philosophy and way of life

Kibud ov: Parental honor

moshiach: The anointed one; connected to a belief in the ultimate redemption, an awaited era of world peace, prosperity and wisdom, and the belief that the dead will be resurrected at that time

narishkeit: Nonsense; foolishness

nu: so?; or well?

payos: Traditional sidelocks, hair worn long at the temple

Pesach: The Passover festival, which primarily celebrates the Jewish Exodus from Egypt after generations of slavery

Rashi: Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, one of the most renowned medieval Jewish scholars, known for his simple and profound contributions to the Talmud

Ribbono Shel Oylom: Master of the Universe

Rosh Hashanah: A major festival celebrating the beginning of the Jewish New Year

schul: Temple

Shabbos: Shabbat; or, the Sabbath; the divinely ordained day of rest. Ushered in Friday at sundown, the Sabbath features festive meals and the weekly public Torah reading

Sitra Achra: The other side; distinct from, and opposed to, holiness

tallis: Prayer shawl worn by male Jews during daily religious services

Talmud: Spanning thousands of pages, an authoritative body of Jewish tradition and law; a primary source of study for Hasidic and devout Jews

Torah: The Hebrew Bible

yeshiva: A Jewish academy of Talmudic and biblical studies for young men

Zemiros: Jewish hymns typically sung after Shabbat meals

A Hasidic man wearing payos.



labor camps that hold the Soviet Union's criminals and political prisoners. Accurate numbers are unknown, but some estimate that 40 to 50 million people serve sentences in the Gulags between 1928 and 1953.

1951 Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson succeeds his recently deceased father-in-law as Rebbe of the Lubavitch Hasidic movement in Brooklyn. He sends covert emissaries to the Soviet Union, disguised as tourists, to help sustain Judaism among oppressive communist regimes.

January 13, 1953 In the so-called "Doctor's Plot," the Soviet media reports that certain Kremlin doctors, most of whom are Jewish, devised a conspiracy to poison high-ranking Soviet officials. The reports increase hostility toward Jews in the Soviet Union, and many doctors are arrested.

January 20, 1953 Dwight D. Eisenhower assumes the office of president of the United States. He will serve until 1961.

March 5, 1953 Joseph Stalin dies suddenly at the age of 74.

1953 Rabbi Schneerson establishes the Lubavitch Women's Organization, allowing women to study Torah.

1953-1957 Hundreds of thousands of prisoners are amnestied from the Soviet Gulag following Stalin's death.

Prisoners of the Soviet Gulag, circa 1936-1937.



During rehearsals for *My Name is Asher Lev*, Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) spoke with Associate Artist Alex Weisman (AW) about portraying the title character. This is an edited version. To read the entire interview, including Alex's reflections on his breakout role in TimeLine's *The History Boys*, his work on NBC's *Chicago Fire*, and much more, visit timelinetheatre.com/asher_lev/resources.htm.

PJP: How familiar were you with Chaim Potok's novel?

AW: I wasn't! I heard of the play before I knew it was based on a novel. Now the book hasn't left my side in two months. I had a teacher who told me that the best thing an actor can do to learn about character study is read a novel in first-person narrative. It's the medium that allows the most insight into a character's motivation, intention and inner thoughts. So to have this resource was essential, it was like an appendage of inspiration.

PJP: Playwright Aaron Posner is specific that the audience never sees Asher's paintings. Have you crafted a vision of what you're painting?

AW: I can't draw what they look like. But I can tell you how I see them. I'm a big fan of the BBC's *Sherlock*, and whenever Holmes is figuring something out, the screen explodes with



Alex Weisman.

images and words swirling and overlapping around him. That's how I imagine Asher sees the world and his paintings. Once an "image enters him," it lives and breathes alongside him. When I look at the art in our production, which is blank, I don't see a 2-D rendering of the picture, I see the living, breathing moment Asher hopes to capture.

PJP: How is it working with director Kimberly Senior?

AW: It's been amazing. I can be very hard on myself, and Kimberly is able to encourage and support and also be firm and get me out of my own way. Her personal connection to the story has been clear from day one and a great director, like Kimberly, inspires each member of the team to think of the play in the same way.

PJP: TimeLine audiences have seen some of your own artistic evolution, starting with *The History Boys*. What has TimeLine meant to you as an artist?

AW: I joke about this, but it's pretty true. I owe everything to TimeLine. In college I had been playing dads and best friends and older men. But doing *The History Boys* allowed me to strip away artifice and embrace truth. The character of Posner was the darkest role I'd ever done and the simplest work I'd ever done. In 2011 I became an Associate Artist and felt a responsibility to represent TimeLine as a professional in all of my work. And now Asher, my most challenging role to date. We'll see how this goes!

PJP: What's next for you?

AW: I'm doing *The Good Book* at Court Theatre in March. After that, who knows?! I would love to do more TV work, a dramatic Shakespearean role, a Pinter or Mamet play. I would love to do a great new play by a Chicago playwright, maybe Calamity West or Phillip Dawkins or Andrew Hinderaker or Ike Holter. Those are people whose work excites me right now. And if I'm dreaming big, sign me up to play a sidekick in a superhero movie!

TimeLine's work truly would not be possible without our donors. In appreciation for their generosity we are delighted to offer special benefits designed to bring them closer to the art, artists, and organization they have chosen to support. Benefits include a donor breakfast, private play reading, opening night celebrations, first rehearsals, a History Makers Event to celebrate our major donors, dinner with the artistic director, and opportunities for exclusive access to exciting Chicago cultural events.

For details about all the benefits of being a TimeLine donor, please visit timelinetheatre.com/donate.



A group of TimeLine donors and friends had an incredible time seeing *The Last Ship* during its pre-Broadway Chicago run and were honored to hear personally from Sting about his experience creating the new musical.

Save the Date: Step Into Time 2015

Mark your calendar for TimeLine's biggest party of the year—our Step Into Time Gala benefit—scheduled for **Friday, March 13, 2015** at the Ritz Carlton Chicago—A Four Seasons Hotel. The evening includes cocktails, a formal dinner, silent auction, exclusive entertainment and more! All proceeds benefit TimeLine's mission and programs. For updates about Step Into Time, visit timelinetheatre.com/step_into_time.



Guests enjoy TimeLine's Step Into Time: Hollywood 1939 benefit gala last spring, including entertainment featuring singers Marya Grandy, Jordan Brown and Emily Glick.

TimeLine Board News

As TimeLine embarks upon our 2014-15 season, we would like to recognize the commitment and leadership of our Board of Directors. In particular, we are pleased to congratulate this year's newly elected Board leadership: **John M. Sirek** (President), **Rick Gray** (Vice President), **Susan A. Payne** (Secretary) and **Katherine Feucht** (Treasurer).

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy & historical research by Josh Altman

Written by Josh Altman, PJ Powers, Lydia P. Swift and Lara Goetsch

Edited by Lara Goetsch

Behind-the-scenes photography by Lara Goetsch

Step Into Time photography by Shane Welch Photography

Graphic Design by Bridget Schultz

My Name is Asher Lev illustration by Grip Design, Inc.

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Director Kimberly Senior; actor Alex Weisman; actors Lawrence Grimm, Weisman and Danica Monroe; set model by scenic and lighting designer Brian Sidney Bembridge; Bembridge; and actors Monroe and Weisman.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

FLEXIBILITY. CONVENIENCE. PRICE.
2014-15 FlexPasses are still available!



[TimeLine] is known for **taking care of its patrons.**
It is a theater that **audiences trust.**

— Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune*

WHAT IS THE FLEXPASS?

Use your admissions in any combination and select dates that work best for you!
4-Admission FlexPasses (ensures you can see everything still to come this season)
and 3-Admission FlexPasses (see just one of *The Apple Family Plays* or skip another
production) are now available.

STILL TO COME THIS SEASON:

CHICAGO PREMIERE

DANNY CASOLARO DIED FOR YOU

BY DOMINIC ORLANDO DIRECTED BY NICK BOWLING

September 23 – December 21, 2014

A thriller based on the true story of Danny Casolaro, a freelance reporter who was mysteriously found dead a year into his journey to uncover the truth about high-level corruption in Washington, D.C.

CHICAGO PREMIERES / PRESENTED ON ALTERNATING NIGHTS

**THE APPLE FAMILY PLAYS:
THAT HOPEY CHANGEY THING and SORRY**

BY RICHARD NELSON DIRECTED BY LOUIS CONTEY

January 13 – April 19, 2015

Set on dates of historic significance—THAT HOPEY CHANGEY THING as polls close on the 2010 mid-term elections and SORRY on the morning of the 2012 presidential election—the widely celebrated series of Apple Family plays provide “a rare and radiant mirror on the way we live” (*The New York Times*) as they explore politics, change and family dynamics.

NOTE: These plays may be fully enjoyed on their own, or together, in no particular order. Each play requires a separate Subscriber FlexPass admission to attend, so if you would like to see both plays, two admissions must be redeemed.

CHICAGO PREMIERE

INANA

BY MICHELE LOWE DIRECTED BY KIMBERLY SENIOR

May 6 – July 26, 2015

Against a background of international intrigue and burgeoning romance, an Iraqi museum curator plots to save treasured antiquities from destruction during the U.S. invasion of Baghdad.

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any combination

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