A SHAYNA MAIDEL

BY BARBARA LEBOW DIRECTED BY VANESSA STALLING

Timeline Theatre Company

BACKSTORY YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

A MESSAGE

FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PJ POWERS

Dear Friends,

Welcome to TimeLine's 22nd season and Barbara Lebow's *A Shayna Maidel*.

We first featured this play in February as part of our TimePieces play reading series. That one-night, standing-room-only event was a remarkable and emotional night, confirming the belief of TimeLine's Company Members that this play's resonance deserved a wider audience during our 2018-19 season.

Those at the reading shared moving stories and personal connections with Barbara's play—accounts of family members in the Holocaust, or tales from other eras and parts of the world, describing when and under what circumstances their family came to the United States, seeking refuge and new possibility. They also spoke about family members who were not so fortunate—those unable to flee their homelands, without a path to join this country of immigrants.

A Shayna Maidel transports us to New York City in March 1946 as a Jewish family—the Weisses—are reunited after being fractured before World War II. Throughout the play, we see how some made it to America from Poland, safely avoiding the rise of the Nazis, while others could not.

The beauty and universality of the play—which is full of moments of reconnection, remembrance and attempts toward reconciliation—shines a light not only on the plight of many throughout Europe in the 1930s and '40s, but also on families split apart during many other moments in time.

Today, as our country is enmeshed in passionate debate and profound disagreement about policies at the nation's borders and how family units are handled or separated, Barbara's play is a poignant reflection on both the time in which it is set, and the times during which we share it with you.

Befitting TimeLine's mission to make connections between past and present, *A Shayna Maidel* underscores how vital it is to better comprehend history in order to best inform our future. Even as conspiracy theories still linger about the truth of the Holocaust, a disturbing report released in April revealed that 22 percent of American millennials haven't heard of, or aren't sure if they've heard of, the Holocaust. The survey also revealed that 58 percent of Americans believe that something like the Holocaust could happen again, and that 68 percent believe that anti-Semitism is present in America today. Fifty-one percent say there are "many" or "a great deal of" neo-Nazis in the U.S. today.

We are grateful to the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie for their collaboration, and proud to share Barbara's play with you, directed by the amazing Vanessa Stalling, whose recent work has distinguished her as one of Chicago's finest for ensemble building and insightful storytelling.

A Shayna Maidel begins a 2018-19 season that will explore numerous decades and locales, including Terrence McNally's widely acclaimed *Master Class* (presented at Stage 773), plus Chicago premieres from two of the most dynamic new writers to emerge in American playwriting—Hansol Jung's *Cardboard Piano* and Jiréh Breon Holder's *Too Heavy For Your Pocket*.

And we're thrilled to partner with Firebrand Theatre on their fall production of Tony Kushner and Jeanine Tesori's heralded musical *Caroline, or Change*, presented at The Den Theatre in Wicker Park.

Thank you for joining us for our 22nd year of experiencing yesterday's stories, discussing today's topics, and imagining tomorrow's possibilities.

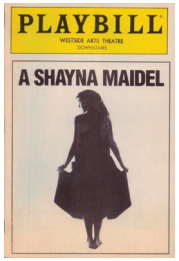
PJ

THE PLAYWRIGHT

BARBARA LEBOW AND *A SHAYNA MAIDEL*

Barbara Lebow grew up in New York and relocated to Atlanta in the 1960s. There she became involved with the Academy Theater, ultimately becoming a playwright in residence. She is an award-winning playwright, and a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Playwriting, the Atlanta Mayor's Fellowship in the Arts, a TCG/Pew Theatre Artists Residency, and an NEA/TCG Residency. In addition to *A Shayna Maidel*, her plays include *Killing Spiders, The Hebbles, The Left Hand Singing, Tiny Tim is Dead*, and *Plumfield, Iraq*. She currently resides in California.

In addition to writing her own plays, Lebow engages in creative work with disenfranchised populations, a passion she also nurtured in Atlanta. She worked with teenage boys in an area prison, developing a program in which they created and performed their own scenes. She continues to facilitate creative opportunities for at-risk youth, disabled individuals, homeless individuals, and women in prison, and has received a Distinguished Service Award from the Santa Barbara County Probation Department for her work at Los Prietos Boys Camp, a juvenile detention center in California.



Playbill from the New York City premiere.

Written in 1984, *A Shayna Maidel* was developed at the Academy Theater, where Lebow directed a workshop production in April 1985 and a mainstage production in April 1986. The play was selected by Theatre Communications Group for Play in Progress in 1984-85, and received its Equity premiere at Hartford Stage in 1985. The New York premiere, directed by Mary B. Robinson, opened in October 1987 at the Westside Arts Theatre Off-Broadway, and ran for 15 months. The play continues to be produced consistently in regional theaters, is frequently staged at colleges, and has been staged internationally in countries including Holland, Belgium, Australia, and Israel.

For more information, visit *barbaralebow.com*.

THE TIMELINE:
THE RISE OF HITLER, THE THIRD REICH, AND THE HOLOCAUST

November 9, 1918 Amid uprisings in Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates as German Emperor and King of Prussia.

November 11, 1918 World War I ends. Germany, having exhausted its resources and lost a massive number of lives, signs an armistice agreement with The Allies.

June 28, 1919 The Treaty of Versailles is signed. German allies also sign their own treaties, stating that the Central Powers would take full responsibility and pay reparations. Germany's war debts are in the billions.

August 11, 1919 The Constitution of what would later be referred to as the Weimar Republic is adopted in Weimar, Germany. The early years of the Weimar Republic will see a growing economy, an increase in trade, and a decrease in unemployment.

Efforts will be made to stabilize German currency to help the economy stay afloat as the country recovers from its war debts and continues its reparation payments. But the German government's strategy of printing more currency will eventually lead to hyperinflation and a sharp and rapid decline in the economy.

The Weimar period also will become well known for its clubs, cabaret scene, art, and cultural decadence.

January 5, 1919 The German Workers' Party (DAP) is established by journalist Dietrich Eckhart and toolmaker Anton Drexler. The party calls for prevention of non-German immigration, nationalization of businesses, and declares that Jews are not members of the German nation.

"I never spoke it, but I always understood her ... I like to say she spoke love." *– Playwright Barbara Lebow, about her grandmother*

The name "Yiddish" is derived from "Yid," the German word for "Jew," and Yiddish is not a dialect, but a Germanic language with its own set of dialects. There are varying theories about its exact origin, but it is roughly 1,000 years old, and can be considered a blend of Hebrew and medieval German. Yiddish is written using the Hebrew alphabet, and is thus written and read right to left, but uses grammar and vocabulary of a Germanic language.

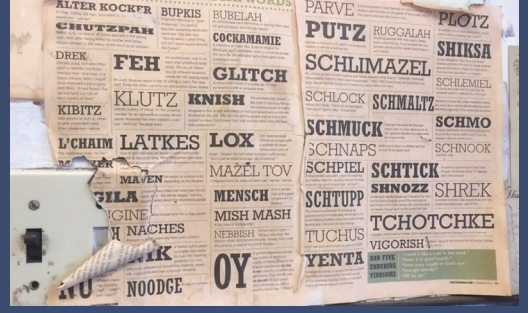
Yiddish is a part of the rich cultural history of Ashkenazi Jews (Jews of Eastern European descent). As the primary historic spoken language for a large part of the Jewish diaspora, its folklore, music, proverbs, and humor are woven deeply into many Jewish communities' and families' traditions and customs.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Yiddish was emerging as a major presence in European education and popular culture. Particularly after the October Revolution in Russia (October 25, 1917), Yiddish literature was widely published. For instance, Sholem Rabinovitsch (better known as Sholem Aleichem) published his stories about *Tevye der milkhiker* ("Tevye the Dairyman")—which were later the inspiration for *Fiddler on the Roof*—every few years beginning in 1895. Yiddish film and theater saw a surge of success. In some countries (particularly Poland), formal Yiddish instruction became widespread in schools following World War I.

In 1925, YIVO, then the Yiddish Scientific Institute, now the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, was founded in Berlin, Germany and Wilno, Poland. Today, the organization remains a comprehensive resource for information regarding Eastern European Jewish history and Yiddish studies, as well as a home to artifacts and archives, and an educational institution.

By the beginning of World War II, there were between 11 and 13 million Yiddish speakers worldwide, a number severely diminished by the murder of 6 million Jews, the majority of whom were Yiddish speakers, during the Holocaust. In the ghettos, Yiddish theater, songs, poems, and archives were viewed as a form of resistance—a way to maintain dignity and identity in the face of the dehumanizing actions of the Nazis. In the concentration camps, writing materials were unavailable, but Yiddish poems and songs, like the one heard in *A Shayna Maidel*, remained prominent in the concentration camps, again, as an effort to preserve morale and strength of spirit.

A poster in Yiddish and Polish for Sholem Aleichem's play Tevye der milkhiker ("Tevye the Dairyman") *at the Kraków Jewish Theater, featuring Rudolf Zaslavsky. Printed by C. Laskowa and Sons, Vilna. (YIVO)*



Phrases well-woven into English vernacular, familiar in everyday speech of Jews and non-Jews alike—mensch, schmutz, schlep, oy vey—all originated in Yiddish. This list can be found on a wall at Koch's Deli in Spruce Hill, Philadelphia.

The 1940 U.S. census indicated 1,751,100 Jews in America who reported that Yiddish was the language they spoke as children, but YIVO argues that the number of Americans who could speak and/or understand Yiddish in 1940 was significantly larger. Even after the Holocaust wiped out an enormous number of Yiddish-speaking Jews, Yiddish remained the most-spoken language among Jews worldwide. However, as survivors scattered, the redevelopment of Yiddish speaking communities was obstructed. Additional forces in the second half of the 20th century reduced Yiddish speech even further: assimilating Jews in America were acculturating and abandoning Yiddish, Stalin outlawed Yiddish in the Soviet Union, and Palestine and modern Israel repressed Yiddish in favor of adopting Hebrew.

Today, Yiddish is spoken by about 700,000 people worldwide, most of whom are part of the ultra-Orthodox Hasidic sect of Judaism, a population that continues to speak Yiddish as its main language in many communities. But Yiddish remains, for Jews of varied generations and nationalities, religious and secular, an aspect of Jewish culture that provides a certain nostalgic link to tradition. Even for those who grew up speaking no Yiddish, it is a connection to ancestral Jewish roots and family history.

Playwright Barbara Lebow speaks no Yiddish herself, but fondly remembers her grandmother, who spoke only Yiddish to her. "I never spoke it, but I always understood her," she recalls. "I like to say she spoke love."

September 12, 1919 Adolf Hitler attends his first DAP meeting and joins the party.

February 24, 1920 The German Workers' Party changes its name to National Socialist German Workers' Party, commonly called the Nazi Party, and outlines its political platform in 25 points.

April 1925 The SS (Schutzstaffel), initially Hitler's personal body guards, later the Nazi Party's militia, is formed.

July 4, 1926 The League of German Worker Youth (Hitler Youth) is officially formed. The party has had a youth section since its inception, but over the next 10 years, the Hitler Youth will come to include more than half of Germany's Aryan boys.

1929 The Great Depression begins, bringing worldwide economic decline. In Germany, unemployment will double by 1932. The existing government, a mix of left-wing and conservative politicians, collapses. President Paul von Hindenburg creates a new government.

September 1930 The Nazi Party wins 18% of the vote in government elections, a victory that secures its place as the second largest party in Germany.

Spring 1932 President Hindenburg, now age 84, seeks reelection despite his age, and wins. Adolf Hitler wins 37% of the vote. The German economy remains in a state of crisis. In the upcoming summer, the Nazis will win 37% of the seats in the Reichstag, Germany's parliament.

January 30, 1933 President Hindenburg appoints Hitler Chancellor of Germany.

February 27, 1933 The Reichstag building in Berlin catches fire. The cause of the fire remains unknown, but the Nazi Party claims that Communist revolutionaries are responsible, and Hitler convinces Hindenburg to issue

During rehearsals, dramaturg Deborah Blumenthal (DB) spoke with playwright Barbara Lebow (BL) about her process creating the play and its resonance in today's world.

(DB) What was your inspiration in writing this play?

(BL) It came in pieces. I saw three people [in my mind], an older man and his two daughters. I didn't know anything about them. They hung around a lot in my head, and I know if I keep thinking about [something] I have to pursue it and find out what it is.

I always write about survival. As a child, I loved desert island shipwreck survival stories. And I always know the end of the play. I figure out what got me emotional about an event or history or a moment in time, and that's the way I want the audience to feel at the end. So then I go backwards.

(DB) Was it inspired at all by people in your own family?

(BL) My grandfather was an old-world patriarch. He started out pushing his pushcart over the Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan, and set up a stand which wound up becoming a successful handkerchief and scarf business. He was very tough on his children. And his personality informed [the character] Mordechai a great deal.

[The character] Rose was not the essence of me personally—I was a kid

Playwright Barbara Lebow.

[when the play takes place]—but she is between me and my mother in time, and that was another part of what interested me. I think that must've been in me from the time I became aware that I was lucky to have been born in this country. None of the family I knew had been survivors—they came the previous generation—but I saw that [the character] Lusia in some way had to represent what might have been.

(DB) What kind of research did you do when you were writing the script?

(BL) I spent a couple of years speaking to people and reading. [When] interviewing survivors, I always began by asking them, "What happened the moment you were freed?" and all of them wanted to tell me what happened before. Almost every one [of the women] said that they had either a sister or a close friend who helped them survive. [One woman] said, "People tell me how wonderful I am to be a survivor ... All I did was live." She wasn't being modest. She was being genuine.

Other people would say they wondered why they lived and other people didn't. I encountered, to my surprise, a wry sense of humor, which I think must be essential to any kind of survival. I think it's one of the things that keeps people going somehow. [Another woman] emigrated afterwards to Australia and her sister to New York. A lot of her story—not her exact story, her emotional story—found its way [into the play].

(DB) This play is about 30 years old, but it seems to be more and more pertinent to things going on in this country every day. What do you hope people take away from watching your play now?

(BL) When the play was done at Hartford Stage, I got a letter from a woman saying she worked with Cambodian refugees at the time, and what she wrote was maybe the best thing that made me the happiest of anything I've ever read about this play.

She said that seeing the play made her understand what they were going through: the trouble with the language, the difference with the culture, all of that. I couldn't foresee it, but I recognize now some of the same—I hate to use this word because of its current context, but—walls they have to climb, the walls that are put up from people who have lived here, either hidden or legal. And of course there were people before that, treated like that—maybe at least one wave of people per generation that were shunned in some way with some of the same words we're hearing now.

[One woman] said, "People tell me how wonderful I am to be a survivor ... All I did was live." She wasn't being modest. She was being genuine.

Images from A Shayna Maidel *rehearsals at TimeLine. Pictured (clockwise from top left): Sarah Wisterman, Emily Berman, Emily Glick, Vanessa Stalling, Charles Stransky, and Bri Sudia.*

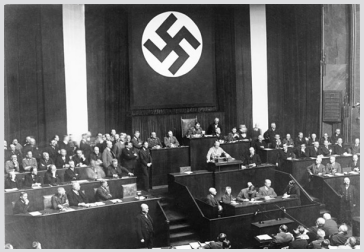
a Decree of Protection of People and State in response to the perceived emergency. This grants Nazis a great deal of power, and lays the groundwork for Hitler's militarized police state.

March 1933 Dachau, one of the first concentration camps, opens. At this time, it imprisons political opponents of the Nazis—Communists and Socialists.

February – April 1933 Hitler defines German foreign policy as an effort to secure more "living space" for the "master race." The Communist party is banned. Hitler orders a special election, in which the Nazis win 44% of the vote.

The Reichstag passes the Enabling Act, granting Hitler the power to make laws without consulting the Reichstag for four years. The Gestapo, the Nazi Party's secret police, is formed, and the party takes over local governments.

The Nazis start arresting Communists and Socialists. Guards begin training at Dachau.



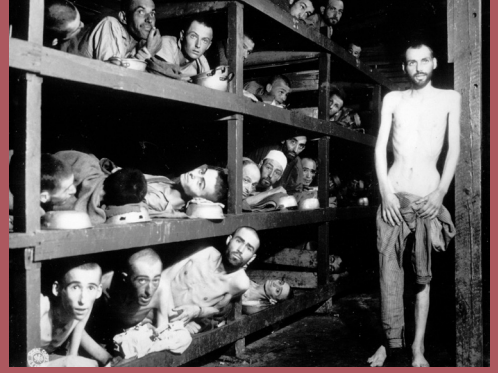
Adolf Hitler gives a speech to the Reichstag at the Kroll Opera House, March 23, 1933, to promote the Enabling Act. (Wikimedia Commons)

April – October 1933 Special courts are organized to punish political dissenters. Laws are passed forbidding Jews from holding positions in civil service, law, medical professions, and teaching at universities.

May 10, 1933 At the encouragement of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi's Head of Propaganda, 25,000 "un-German" books are burned.

In April of this year, *The New York Times* and other media outlets cited a study by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany: Forty-one percent of American adults do not know what Auschwitz was. A staggering 66 percent of millennials (defined in the study as those between the ages of 18 and 34) similarly could not say what the death camp was. Forty-nine percent of millennials were unable to name a single Nazi concentration camp. Thirty-one percent of American adults and 42 percent of American millennials believe the Nazis killed 2 million Jews or fewer, unaware of the actual death toll of about 6 million. Fifty-two percent of those surveyed wrongly believe that Hitler rose to power by force. And 70 percent said that "fewer people seem to care about the Holocaust than they used to."

The Holocaust is fading from the knowledge base for subsequent generations of Americans, but the question is often asked: What did the average American know about the Holocaust as it was happening? For much of the seven decades since most of the concentration camps began operation, contemporary Americans have argued that Americans in the 1940s knew very little, because American press provided little or no information about what was going on. A 2000 survey by the Holocaust Education Foundation of American news source



Prisoners at Buchenwald in April 1945. Author Elie Wiesel is in the middle bunk, 7th from the left. (United States Army)

coverage from September 1939 to December 1942 found that *The New York Times* "generally relegated the news concerning Jews to the inside or back pages of the paper" and cites 31 news items throughout the period.

In 2016, in light of a new initiative piloted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., *Smithsonian Magazine* argued that Hitler's atrocities against Jews simply "went unchallenged," the result of a combination of denial, anti-Semitism, and, according to the Holocaust Museum, military victory taking priority over humanitarian issues during the war.

The project, "History Unfolded: U.S. Newspapers and the Holocaust," a major contribution to the recently opened "Americans and the Holocaust" exhibit, asked the public to find articles, political cartoons, and letters relating to 20 major events in their local newspapers from the time, to gain a more comprehensive sense of 1930s and '40s America's awareness not only of the Final Solution, but of Hitler's rise to power and implementation of anti-Jewish legislation along the way. The exhibit challenges a dominant narrative and offers unsettling evidence that news coverage of the Nazis reached well into middle America, and that by 1942, even without photographic evidence, Americans knew more about the Final Solution than many have long believed.

"The German authorities are treating the Jews shamefully and the Jews in this country are greatly excited. But this is also not a governmental affair." *– President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1935*

July 14, 1933 All political parties other than the Nazis are banned in Germany.

October 1933 Germany withdraws from the League of Nations, an international organization formed as a result of the end of World War I.

August 2, 1934 President Hindenburg dies. Hitler combines the offices of Chancellor and President, and declares himself Führer.

1935 Hitler announces the Nuremberg Laws, a series of laws that strip German Jews of their civil rights. The laws define Jews as a separate race from Germans and forbid marriages between Jews and non-Jewish Germans. Between the establishment of the Nuremberg Laws and the start of World War II, more than 120 laws eliminating the rights of Jewish people will be introduced.

February – March 1935 Hitler establishes the Luftwaffe, the German Air Force, and expands the German Army, in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

March 14, 1938 Germany takes over Austria in the Anschluss, with no bloodshed.

November 1938 The Night of Broken Glass occurs. It is a free-for-all of physically destructive anti-Semitism, during which 1,000 Jewish synagogues are set on fire, 76 are burned down, 7,000 Jewish homes and business are looted, 100 Jews are killed, and 30,000 are arrested with plans for them to be sent to concentration camps.

August 23, 1939 Despite a statement by Great Britain guaranteeing the freedom of Poland, Germany allies with Russia and the two countries split Poland in two. Western Poland is incorporated into Germany and its Jews are forced into ghettos. In total, more than 350 ghettos will be established across more than five countries, in small towns and large cities alike. The ghettos are filthy, overcrowded, and short on food. Many Jews starve to death.

September 3, 1939 Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.

November 23, 1939 Jews age 10 and older living in German territories are required to wear yellow Stars of David.

New York newspaper headline on September 4, 1939.


NEW YORK Herald Tribune 3 a.m. EDITION

PARIS, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1939

Great Britain and France Declare War on Germany When Hitler Refuses to Call Off Attack on Poland

Nation Told By Roosevelt 'I Hate War'

1,200 Set as Toll In Nazi Air Raids On Polish Centers

Britain Enters Conflict at 11 a.m., France at 5p.m.; Fleet Blockades Reich; U.S. Studies Arms Embargo

Text of King George's Speech

Fighting Speech Made to Nation By Chamberlain

Australia, New Zealand Join Hostilities, Canada Pledges Its Support to Britain; Nazis Reject French Ultimatum, Ignore London's Japanese Promise Neutrality

April – May 1940 Germany invades Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France.

1941 – 1942 Six death camps begin operating in Poland—first Chelmno in late 1941, and then Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibór, and Maidanek in 1942. Jews had been methodically killed by the Nazis before the camps were operational, but the camps enable this to take place in vast numbers.

December 11, 1941 After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States declares war on Japan. Germany declares war on the U.S.

January 20, 1942 The Wannsee Conference takes place. At this meeting, Nazi officials agree to the Final Solution, a detailed plan whose goal is to transport and kill all of Europe's 11 million Jews. Ultimately, half of Europe's Jewish people will be murdered by the Nazis, in addition to millions of disabled people, political opponents, non-Jewish Poles and Roma, homosexuals, and others.

March 4, 1943 Allied bombings of Germany begin.

June 6, 1944 D-Day, the Allied invasion of Normandy, takes place.

July 23, 1944 Maidanek is the first camp to be liberated, to be followed by Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 1945; Dachau, Buchenwald, and Bergen-Belsen in April 1945; and Mauthausen and Theresienstadt (Terezín) in May 1945.

April 30, 1945 Hitler commits suicide.

May 2, 1945 German forces begin surrender, leading to the end of World War II.

THE INTERVIEW

DIRECTOR VANESSA STALLING

Vanessa Stalling.

During rehearsals, we (TL) caught up with director Vanessa Stalling (VS) about the complexity, resonance, and heart of this play.

(TL) What have you discovered along the way about this story?

(VS) It's a story about what sits between the family members as much as it is about the circumstances in which they find themselves. The horrors of trauma are not something one can readily put words to, and the very act of engaging in communication about it may actually do more harm than good. And for this family, although the trauma suffered is not directly being discussed, it lives in the rooms with them, and they are actively struggling with how to be in response to it.

(TL) What has resonated most personally with you about the play?

(VS) So much! One thing is the obvious nature of history repeating itself. Here we are in a moment where our country is tearing family members apart, and denying people access to immigration as they try to seek safety and a better life. And our story picks up right after World War II, where a family has been torn apart and kept from one another—based on laws, based on war, based on white supremacy (created and inspired by a man who came to power through a democratic system, as well as laws our country instituted in order to prevent immigration). The second element that strikes me the most is this script holds a magic to it. It feels very realistic, yet there is this layer of spirituality and faith and magic woven through the play in such a beautiful way. And lastly, my father who passed away in 2011—I miss him every day. Often I hear his voice in my head or a memory of him plays out in a daydream.

(TL) These characters feel so real. Do you think audiences will connect them with their own families?

(VS) One can't help but see their family in the characters in this play. And it's so fantastic here at TimeLine—such an intimate setting. As the family is having breakfast, the audience is pretty much sitting at the breakfast table with them. So it's quite natural to ponder our own relationships—who we are as we navigate the spaces between our family members and ourselves. We are our mothers and our fathers and our grandparents and our great grandparents. That the play allows us to ponder ourselves as a walking line of our family is really powerful.

(TL) As a director, how do you describe how you work in the rehearsal room?

(VS) First and foremost, I believe a play can only be made by those who are in the room. So my direction is always in response to who has gathered around the table. I work by listening to the actors and the other artists who are in the room, while fostering an atmosphere of creativity and a place to make discoveries. This ensemble is absolutely amazing and I've been super blessed by how quickly we feel like a little family unit. Their work and the work of the designers is really inspiring.

(TL) What do you hope audiences walk away with after seeing this play?

(VS) I think when audience members walk away from this play their hearts are going to be full, but in a really complicated way. They will be full of hope for the possibility of what it means to be connected, and how we can lift each other up and hold on to one another. I think their hearts may also be full of concern—concern for those who have suffered great trauma as well as concern for how close we seem to be walking in the footsteps of history that led to the horrors of World War II. And then with that full heart, perhaps wonder what our responsibilities are as Americans in our country right now.

BACKSTAGE

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Kassie Davis.

We are honored to recognize one of our most dedicated longtime supporters–Kassie Davis.

In 2006, Kassie became the first Executive Director of CME Trust and then the Executive Director of CME Group Foundation with its creation in 2008. She is responsible for overall operation of the Foundation and Trust, including strategy development, proposal review, grant evaluation, communications, and investment management.

Kassie saw her first TimeLine production, *Not About Nightingales*, in 2000 when she was consulting for The Chicago Community Trust and was asked to review a grant proposal submitted by TimeLine. She was quite impressed with the production and equally impressed when she met with Artistic Director PJ Powers and other Company Members. "The company was able, at an early stage in its development, to understand the importance of and practice good nonprofit management," she notes. "This trait is rare among new, emerging arts organizations and very much appreciated by funders."

More than just TimeLine's art and administration struck a chord with Kassie: "We can't forget the importance of TimeLine's Living History Program. Its ability to work with teachers and students in the classroom, then bring the story to life onstage, really makes history come alive for young people."

As a friend of the theatre for the last 18 years, Kassie has seen TimeLine grow significantly, including expanding the play selection from predominantly classics in the early days to many more Chicago and world premieres now. "I've also observed the addition of younger and more diverse artists to the company, something I believe is very healthy for any arts organization."

Among the many TimeLine productions Kassie has seen, her favorites include *Hannah and Martin*, *Fiorello!*, *The History Boys*, *All My Sons*, *Frost/Nixon*, *33 Variations*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Apple Family Plays*, *Paradise Blue*, and *The Audience*. She really enjoys the experience of following Company Members over the years, seeing them in new and classic works, and also "discovering with each new production how the designers completely rework the theatre space so creatively."

A big fan of small theater companies, Kassie also happily supports Steep Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, and Griffin Theatre.

Looking ahead, Kassie is "looking forward to TimeLine establishing a new home that will transform the ability of the company to do even more creative productions."

BACKSTORY:
THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy & Historical Research by Deborah Blumenthal

Written by Deborah Blumenthal, with contributions by PJ Powers, Lydia P. Swift, and Lara Goetsch

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Backstory is published four times each season.

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.

THE TIMELINE FLEXPASS

THE BEST WAY TO SEE AND SAVE ON THE REST OF OUR SEASON

OUR 2018-19 SEASON

MASTER CLASS

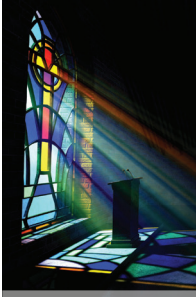
BY TERRENCE MCNALLY

DIRECTED BY NICK BOWLING MUSIC DIRECTED BY DOUG PECK

STARRING JANET ULRICH BROOKS

A glorious, raw, and bittersweet play about the formidable opera star Maria Callas, inspired by a series of classes she taught at Juilliard in the 1970s.

OCTOBER 19 – DECEMBER 9, 2018 at **Stage 773**, 1225 W. Belmont Avenue



CHICAGO PREMIERE

CARDBOARD PIANO

BY HANSOL JUNG

DIRECTED BY MECHELLE MOE

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