



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

An Evening with the Department of Theatre Arts

with Special Guest **Sir Tom Stoppard**
2008 Dan David Prize laureate
and featuring the Ruth Kanner Theatre Group

19th January, 2009 at "176"
176 Prince of Wales Road, London

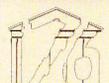


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Programme

Refreshments

Greetings: Stephen Pollard, Editor, *The Jewish Chronicle*

Introduction: *Tel Aviv 100 and the Arts:* Prof. Hannah Naveh, Dean of the Katz Faculty of the Arts, and Prof. Ruth Kanner, Tel Aviv University, director of the Ruth Kanner Theatre Group

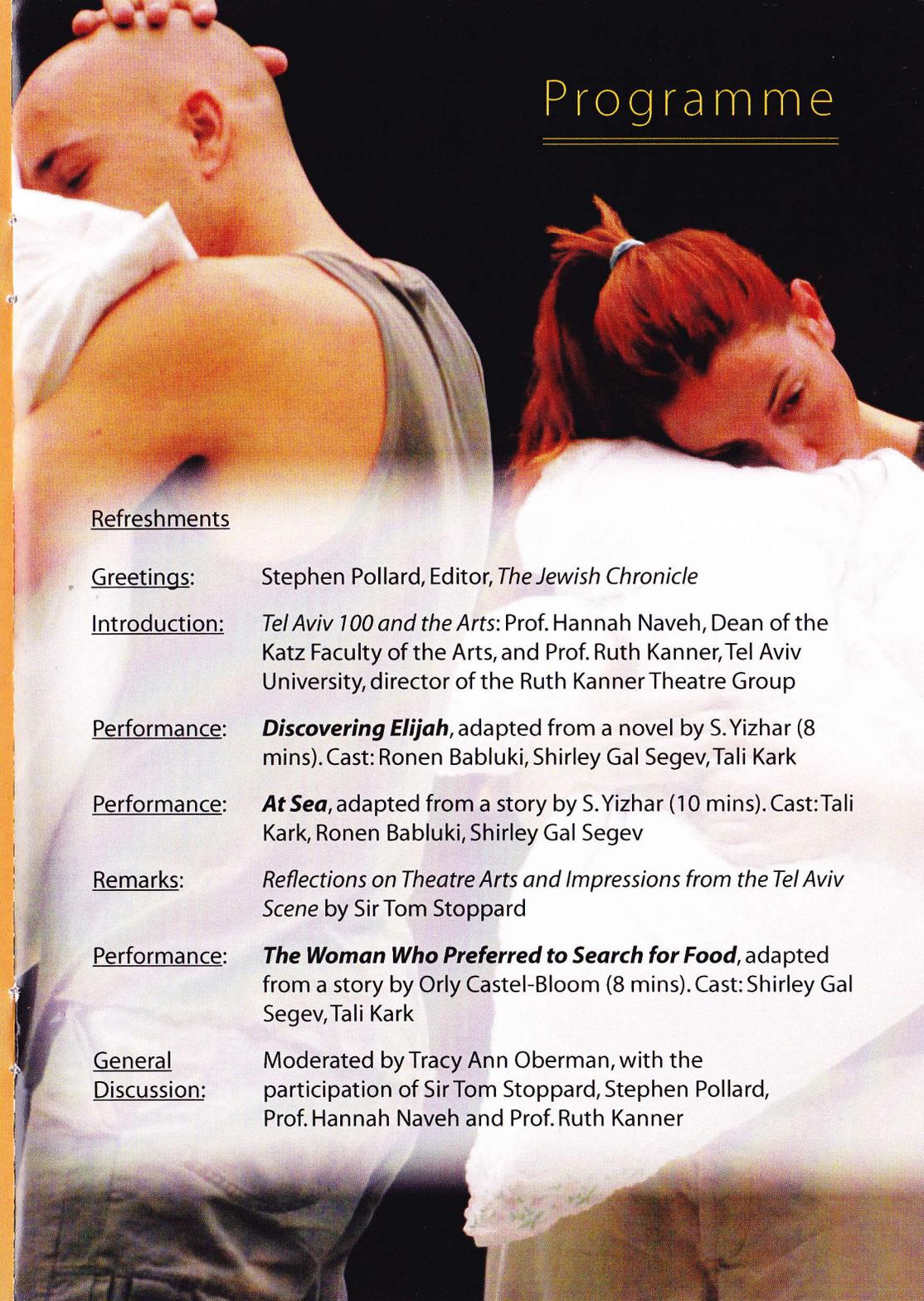
Performance: ***Discovering Elijah***, adapted from a novel by S. Yizhar (8 mins). Cast: Ronen Babluki, Shirley Gal Segev, Tali Kark

Performance: ***At Sea***, adapted from a story by S. Yizhar (10 mins). Cast: Tali Kark, Ronen Babluki, Shirley Gal Segev

Remarks: *Reflections on Theatre Arts and Impressions from the Tel Aviv Scene* by Sir Tom Stoppard

Performance: ***The Woman Who Preferred to Search for Food***, adapted from a story by Orly Castel-Bloom (8 mins). Cast: Shirley Gal Segev, Tali Kark

General Discussion: Moderated by Tracy Ann Oberman, with the participation of Sir Tom Stoppard, Stephen Pollard, Prof. Hannah Naveh and Prof. Ruth Kanner



The Ruth Kanner Theatre Group

Tonight's event is being performed by the Ruth Kanner Group. Operating since 1998, the Group explores the world we live in by seeking out a local theatrical language while interweaving storytelling, physical theatre and visual imagery. Storytelling has deep roots in culture, and is an ancient art that touches upon contemporary questions concerning the relativity of truth and its dependence on the eyes of the observer. Ruth Kanner is a professor of theatre studies at Tel Aviv University, and all the group's actors are students and/or graduates of the Department of Theatre Arts.

This Evening's Works

Discovering Elijah

Adapted from a novel by S. Yizhar, this excerpt evokes the earth-shattering event of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Drawing on searing language, the production penetrates the surface down to the individual tremor, raising the moral issues that seep through the story of this war. In the central scene to be presented this evening, entitled "Divine Intervention," a young kibbutz fighter is struggling to verbalize the vague sensation of a divine presence that he has never had before and that became apparent to him on the battlefield.

At Sea

Another adaptation of an S. Yizhar text, *At Sea* uses the Mediterranean Sea to expose the sceneries of the soul – covert desires, fears and conflicts. Through a story that examines the extreme situation of a person struggling with the waves of a stormy sea, we are compelled to struggle with fundamental existential dilemmas, namely the value of man's existence and the human desire for meaning and direction in the face of the caprices of nature.

The Woman who Preferred to Search for Food

Adapted from a story by Orly Castel-Bloom, the *Woman who Preferred to Search for Food* is a grotesque account of a woman's journey in search of food in a hunger-stricken country. The heroine wanders in a disintegrating apocalyptic reality of a post-modern society where human values are meaningless, struggling to find unity, identity and meaning.

Special Guest: Sir Tom Stoppard

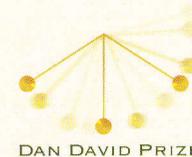


Sir Tom Stoppard established himself as one of the few undisputed masters of the modern stage in 1966 with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. He is a laureate of the 2008 Dan David Prize, headquartered at Tel Aviv University, in the field of Creative Rendering of the Past: Literature, Theatre and Film. He received the honour for his standing as a master playwright whose plays return repeatedly to the past as part of his ceaseless search for meaning in a bewildering universe, while demonstrating farcical cleverness alongside profound humanity.

Stoppard is a showman and intellectual, an entertainer and philosopher, a joker and seeker of truth. He became a CBE in 1978, was knighted in 1997, and became a Member of the Order of Merit in 2000.

- Stoppard's first overtly historical work was *Travesties*, a play that emerged from the bizarre coincidence that James Joyce, the Dadaist poet Tristan Tzara and Lenin all lived in Zurich during the first World War. Stoppard's passionate engagement with his subject matter has always been married to a dazzling theatricality and a genius for laughter. In *Travesties*, a complex examination of the purpose of art and the nature of political progress is conveyed through a farcical parody of Oscar Wilde. But his cleverness is always tempered by a profound humanity, and in what is perhaps his masterpiece – *Arcadia* – he explores the conflict between intellect and emotion, delivering one of 20th century theatre's most heartfelt meditations on love. In the process, he explicitly interweaves past and present as the worlds of the early 19th and late 20th centuries dissolve into each other in the same country house.

Stoppard has translated Schnitzler, Chekhov and Nestroy into English; has written screenplays including the Oscar-winning *Shakespeare in Love*; and has been an energetic human rights campaigner.



Dan David Prize

One of the most prestigious international prizes, the Dan David Prize is headquartered at Tel Aviv University. Three prizes of US\$1 million each are annually awarded for achievements having an outstanding scientific, technological, cultural or social impact on our world. Each year fields are chosen within the three Time Dimensions -- Past, Present and Future. Dan David Prize laureates include Peter Brook, Yo-Yo Ma and former US Vice President Al Gore.

Biographies



Ronen Babluki

An alumnus of Tel Aviv University's Department of Theatre Arts (1996-2000), Ronen has acted in (four) Ruth Kanner productions since 2001, both in Israel and abroad, including the award-winning *Discovering Elijah*.



Shirley Gal Segev

Shirley studied theatre at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before taking a degree in acting at Tel Aviv University's Department of Theatre Arts from 1994-1998. She has been associated with the Ruth Kanner Group since 1996, acting in numerous productions staged both in Israel and abroad.



Professor Ruth Kanner

Ruth Kanner has been the creator and director of theatre productions for over 25 years. She currently leads her own theatre group, associated with the Bat Sheva Dance Company, Tel Aviv. The Ruth Kanner Group is an experimental theatre team, specializing in adapting literary and documentary texts to the stage, using a variety of innovative storytelling theatre and movement techniques. Her productions have garnered critical acclaim and prominent Israeli awards. She also presents workshops on storytelling theatre, both in Israel and overseas. Kanner is an alumnus of and associate professor at the Department of Theatre Arts, Katz Faculty of the Arts, Tel Aviv University.



Tali Kark

Tali studied acting at Tel Aviv University's Department of Theatre Arts from 1994-1998. She has acted in numerous productions since 1996, eight under the direction of Ruth Kanner, among them the award-winning *Discovering Elijah* and *Amos*.

Professor Hannah Naveh



Dean of the Katz Faculty of the Arts since 2006, Hannah Naveh is a professor of Hebrew literature and women & gender studies. She is a former Chair of the NCJW Women and Gender Studies Program and of the Interdisciplinary Programme in the Humanities at Tel Aviv University. Naveh has authored several books and articles on the fields of literature, Israeli culture and gender, and won the 2004 National Jewish Book Award, in the Women's Studies category. She is chief editor of the academic series *MIGDARIM* (genders), and is active on many public committees.



Tracy Ann Oberman

An actress of English television, theatre and radio, Tracy-Ann Oberman is best known for her popular role as Chrissie Watts in the BBC programme *Eastenders*, for which she was nominated for a National Television Award for "Most Popular Newcomer," and her high-profile role in *Dr. Who* (BBC1). In addition to numerous TV credits, Oberman has acted extensively in radio drama and comedy, as well as on stage at venues including the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Comedy and Vaudeville Theatres in London's West End. She recently served as a regular columnist for *The Guardian*, co-authored a play, *Three Sister's on Hope Street*, which premiered at the Hampstead Theatre in 2008, and won the BBC Greenlight Entertainment Award (2002) for the co-authored comedy *The Harringham Harker*. Oberman is an alumnus of Manchester University and the Central School of Speech and Drama, UK.



Stephen Pollard

Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* since November 2008, Stephen Pollard was formerly a columnist with *The Times* (UK) and *Il Foglio* (Italy). He is a regular writer for the *Daily Mail*, *Wall Street Journal Europe* and others, and was the blogger for *The Spectator*. Pollard was president of the Centre for the New Europe, the Brussels-based free market think tank, and the founding chairman of the European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, among other roles. He made the switch to journalism in 1997 as a leader writer at the *Evening Standard* and *Independent*, before joining the *Daily Express* in 1999 as a columnist, and later Chief Leader Writer and Associate Editor. Pollard's best-selling biography of former British Home Secretary David Blunkett was published in 2004, and his latest book, *Ten Days that Changed Britain*, will be published in July 2009.