

IWITNESS

The UK premiere of a new play by Joshua Sobol.

Directed by Michael Ronen. Designed by Nicky Bunch. Music by Yaniv Fridel.

Presented by Conflict Zone and the **finboroughtheatre**.

Cast: Richard Atwill. John Bryan. Leah Muller. Lucinda Millward. Lucja Nowicka. James Henry Parker. Natalie Radmall-Quirke. Mel Raido. Natalia Tatarka.

The multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre's [**new year, new plays season**] opens with the **UK premiere** of a new play by Israel's greatest living playwright Joshua Sobol, the award-winning author of *Ghetto*, on January 2 (Press Night – January 4) for a four week run.

In 1943, an Austrian farmer named Franz Jägerstätter was beheaded for refusing to wear a Nazi uniform and serve in the army of the Third Reich. *IWitness*, based on that true story, is set during Jägerstätter's final day in prison, where his friends and loved ones come to plead with him to abandon his principles to save his life. Jägerstätter remains one of the leading Christian martyrs of the 20th century. The Priest who was with him when he was executed wrote "I can say with certainty that this simple man is the only saint I have ever met in my lifetime."

IWitness was written in a period of awakening for the conscientious objectors movement in Israel, following years of Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories. Joshua Sobol says: "IWitness played for six months at the Cameri in Israel with full houses; nobody was fooled that it was just about conscientious objection during the Second World War."

Playwright **Joshua Sobol** was born in Tel Aviv in 1939. His first play was performed in 1971 by the Municipal Theatre in Haifa, where Sobol was also Artistic Director until he resigned over the widespread protests across Israel at the performance of his play *The Jerusalem Syndrome*. His plays have been seen throughout the Middle East, Europe and North America. He is best known to British audiences for his play *Ghetto*, seen at the National Theatre, and winner of the 1989 *Evening Standard* Award and the Critics' Circle Award for Best Play of the Year, and was also nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Play.

Exciting young Israeli Director **Michael Ronen** has directed film and theatre in Israel including working with Kathryn Hunter on a workshop of *King Lear* at the Jerusalem Stage Centre.

Mel Raido's credits includes *Fireface* (Royal Court), *Cape High* (National Theatre Studio) and Jesus in *Corpus Christi* (Theatre 28). **Leah Muller** was nominated for an Oliver Award for Most Promising Newcomer for her performance as the Stepdaughter in the Young Vic's *Six Characters in Search of An Author*. **Lucinda Millward** has just graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she played Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. **Natalie Radmall-Quirke's** credits include *Jane Eyre* (Gate, Dublin). **Richard Atwill** and **Jonathan Bryan** have both just graduated from LAMDA.

The Press on Previous Productions of *IWitness*

"When the play was first performed in Tel Aviv in 2002, it was met by near riots" *Jewish Journal*

"An impressive evening about the power of saying no." Austria.org on the Vienna production

PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, 4 JANUARY 2007 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, 2 JANUARY 2007 AT 1PM-1.30PM

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0870 4000 838 www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Tuesday, 2 January – Saturday, 27 January, 2007

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Saturday and Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm.

Tickets £12, £9 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £12 all seats.

Previews (2 and 3 January) £8 all seats.

Please note that Joshua Sobol is available for telephone interviews and will be visiting the UK in January

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

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e-mail: admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson

The Finborough Theatre is managed by The Steam Industry. Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 3448268. Registered Charity no. 1071304. Registered address: 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED. A member of the Independent Theatre Council.

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