

Theodore Bikel
1131 Alta Loma Road #431
West Hollywood CA 90069

9 December 2007

Dear Friend and Theater Lover,

I am proud to lend my name and endorsement in support of a wonderful new initiative, the National Jewish Theater and the American Theater Festival.

The newly founded not-for-profit National Jewish Theater (NJT) will celebrate and preserve the genius and cultural significance of important Jewish theatrical artists and productions highlighting Jewish American composers, lyricists and playwrights of musical theater, drama and comedy.

The National Jewish Theater's activities will include a series of produced or presented performances of musicals created in a concert style format performed across America. These productions will especially highlight legendary Jewish composers, lyricists and book writers of Broadway fame. There will also be fully produced musicals and presentations of dramatic or comedic productions celebrating the creative genius of Jewish playwrights. The NJT will endeavor to record and disseminate these performances, in video and audio formats, to seniors, students, the disadvantaged and non-attendees. All of the NJT's work will be supplemented by an educational enrichment and outreach program that further enhances the significance and values that the production illustrates.

The role of the NJT (surprisingly, until now such an organization did not exist) has been made more critical by everything that is going on in the world. Not only is the Jewish State under attack from the outside but there is also an internal struggle for Israelis to define their cultural identity. Similarly, the Jewish people in the diaspora, notably in America, face heightened anti-Semitism and American Jews too are at times facing problems of self-definition. This has clearly affected our younger generations who are at risk of losing contact with their rich and historic

traditions; the best path to recapturing what is being lost is surely through the arts, through music, drama and humor. Whether faith-based, historic, cultural or thematic, the theater, through both plays and musicals, can function as a bonding force and must be used to unite and enlighten for the benefit of both Jews and non-Jews.

Many of the productions of NJT will be presented in conjunction with its sister organization the American Theater Festival (ATF), which identifies and supports a group of significant not-for-profit theaters and unique productions that deserve to be seen by a wider and more diverse audience. This collaboration will broaden the identity of the NJT as well as ensuring its outreach while creating essential and related educational programming.

The National Jewish Theater will be advised by a prominent group of citizens (I hope to be included) and led by its President and Producing Artistic Director Arnold Mittelman. Mr. Mittelman's distinguished career spans over forty years during which he has created over two hundred theatrical productions of both plays and musicals including numerous Broadway shows and world premieres.

I urge you to provide the much needed support and attendance this new company deserves. On a personal note, my experience in live theater has made me realize the importance of maintaining and preserving an art form that has such a remarkable history and impact. I believe the NJT plays a vital role in enriching our society and trust it will have a long and illustrious future.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore Bikel', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

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