



## Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays

*By Ellen Schiff, Michael Posnick*

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### **Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays** By Ellen Schiff, Michael Posnick

Jewish theatre—plays about and usually by Jews—enters the twenty-first century with a long and distinguished history. To keep this vibrant tradition alive, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture established the New Play Commissions in Jewish Theatre in 1994. The commissions are awarded in an annual competition. Their goal is to help emerging and established dramatists develop new works in collaboration with a wide variety of theatres. Since its inception, the New Play Commissions has contributed support to more than seventy-five professional productions, staged readings, and workshops.

This anthology brings together nine commissioned plays that have gone on to full production. Ellen Schiff and Michael Posnick have selected works that reflect many of the historical and social forces that have shaped contemporary Jewish experience and defined Jewish identity—among them, surviving the Holocaust, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the lives of newcomers in America, Israel, and Argentina. Following a foreword by Theodore Bikel, the editors provide introductory explanations of the New Play Commissions and an overview of Jewish theatre. The playwrights comment on the genesis of their work and its production history.

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## **Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays By Ellen Schiff, Michael Posnick Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"Mainstream readers are encouraged to visit the drama bookshelf to locate this intelligent, probing collection filled with vivid examples of how dramatic literature can humanize moral and social dilemmas by embodying them in the personal irritations and intimacies of daily life." (*Forward* 2006-04-14)

"Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays is a refreshing collection. It refreshes our understanding of contemporary Jewish theatre. The plays are authentic, challenging, and inspiring." (Leonard Nimoy, film and television actor)

"This collection of plays is remarkable for its truthful, open-minded, and nonstereotypical depictions of Jewish life." (Daryl Roth, producer of five Pulitzer Prize-winning plays, including *Proof* and *Wit*, as well as Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change*, and member of the board of directors of the Lincoln Center Theater, the Sundance Institute, and the LAByrnth Theater Company)

"Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays offers abundant proof that Jewish theatre is not limited to revivals, but is a field being tilled by many varied and diversely talented playwrights." (Isaiah Sheffer, Artistic Director of Symphony Space and producer of National Public Radio's Selected Shorts)

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### About the Author

ELLEN SCHIFF has written extensively on the depiction of Jews on stage. She is most recently the editor of *Awake and Singing: Six Great American Jewish Plays*. She serves as a juror in the New Play Commissions competition and as advisor to the Global Theatre Initiative in Israel and the Jewish Theatre of Austria. A veteran member of the Association for Jewish Theatre, she lives in New York City.

MICHAEL POSNICK is Professor and Director of the Department of Dance and Theatre at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. A longtime juror for the New Play Commissions and theatre consultant to the NFJC, he founded and directed the Mosaic Theatre at the 92nd Street Y. His productions have been seen at Yale Repertory Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, and Lincoln Center. He is a resident of New York City.

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