



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
THE SUE AND LEONARD MILLER
CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY
JUDAIC STUDIES



HOLOCAUST THEATER INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE BECOMES PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI'S SUE AND LEONARD MILLER CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY JUDAIC STUDIES.

Through research and educational programs, the Holocaust Theater International Initiative fills a void and is the only comprehensive university-based initiative focused on the importance and relevance of holocaust-related theater.

CORAL GABLES, FL (January 19, 2017)

The National Jewish Theater Foundation (NJTF) and the University of Miami's Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies (<http://www.miami.edu/miller-center>) have announced that the pioneering NJTF Holocaust Theater International Initiative (HTII) has become a part of the UM Miller Center, creating the first comprehensive university-based initiative of its kind.

The aim of the HTII is to advance research and educational programs - as well as to encourage theatrical productions - in support of its focus on the importance and relevance of Holocaust-related theater in educating about, and commemorating the Holocaust.

Since 2007, the NJTF has presented theatrical works that celebrate the richness of Jewish heritage and culture. Under the leadership of Arnold Mittelman, its founder and president, the NJTF promotes the appreciation and preservation of Jewish musical and dramatic theatrical art. As one of the foremost performing arts organizations to focus exclusively on Jewish theater, NJTF is committed to educating the public on Jewish content and themes. NJTF productions are presented to diverse audiences across America and throughout the world. Please see www.njtfoundation.org.

It was their commitment to celebrating Jewish history, culture and artistry that inspired the leaders of NJTF to launch in 2010 a Holocaust Theater International Initiative (HTII) to fill a major void and examine how one of the greatest catastrophes in Jewish and world history has been made more understandable through the insights, creativity and courage of Jewish and non-Jewish theatrical works during, and since the Holocaust. HTII has now become part of the

University of Miami's Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies. Mittelman was named the HTII's founding director. It is the first comprehensive university-based initiative focused on Holocaust related theater research and educational programs, as well as encouraging related theatrical productions.

"Several years ago, over a lunch meeting, I proposed to Arnold Mittelman that he create a project dealing with Holocaust related theater – an important aspect of the Holocaust and its lessons that had not been systematically covered, said Dr. Haim Shaked, founding director of the UM Miller Center.

"Arnold, vigorously took on the challenge and, remarkably, developed the HTII to where it is today", Shaked added. "I more than welcome the formal joinder of the HTII with the UM Miller Center, where –we hope – the HTII initiative will develop into its full capacity and make a significant contribution to educating about, and commemorating the Holocaust."

The HTII grew out of a series of planning conferences and a major program grant funded to NJTF by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and NJTF private donors. Developed by more than 50 nationally recognized Holocaust scholars, archivists and theater artists, the HTII is guided by an Advisory Board whose members are listed below has developed into three major inter-related components:

(1) Holocaust Theater Catalog (HTII/HTC): An expanding digital catalog in the form of a website containing Holocaust related plays from 1933 to the present. The HTC includes informative, annotated entries and is intended for students, scholars, theater artists, teachers and the general public. This growing catalog of over 700 titles (presently listing plays in English and Hebrew) is publicly accessible free of charge. In 2014, it was gifted by NJTF to the UM Miller Center. HTC can be accessed at <http://www.htc.miami.edu>.

(2) Holocaust Theater Education (HTII/HTE): The development of syllabi, curricula, materials, techniques and workshops for the primary, secondary and higher education levels. HTII/HTE has created a classroom exercise "What I've Scene" with the USC Shoah Foundation IWitness program (please see <https://iwitness.usc.edu>). This internationally disseminated exercise uses students reading verbatim excerpts of survivor interviews supported by student created physical tableaux followed by teacher led discussions that reinforce the relevance of the testimony. HTII/HTE also works with the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO), the Alliance for Jewish Theatre (AJT), Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and other strategic and university-based partners to provide national and international educational outreach. Arnold Mittelman teaches a pioneering 300-level course in Holocaust related theater that is offered through UM's College of Arts and Sciences Department of Theater Arts and George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies to all students at UM.

(3) Holocaust Theater Production (NJTF/HTII/HTP): The promotion of live domestic and international productions, including theater works to be recorded for digital access. NJTF/HTII/HTP acclaimed 2012 NYC play production "The Soap Myth" by Jeff Cohen was filmed

and is being distributed internationally with a related documentary “I Will Refuse to Bubble” by the London-based Digital Theatre company (please see <http://www.digitaltheater.com>). During 2014, it was aired throughout the U.S. on PBS.

NJTF/HTII Annual Remembrance Theatrical Readings Program was started in 2015. This widely reported, expanding annual program is held on the eve of the Jewish Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day (*Yom HaShoah ve-HaGvurah*). The program features simultaneous play readings across the U.S. and other parts of the world, of plays chosen by participants from the HTII/HTC.

The NJTF/HTII at UM Miller Center, by virtue of its inter-related three components, renowned Advisory Board, partners, staff and supporters, endeavors to fill an existing void and provides a critically needed entryway to the intersection of Holocaust related scholarship, education and theater arts. Through the integrated use of technology, teaching and live performance, it will bring together diverse communities to engage in education pertaining to the Holocaust at a time when our first and immediate exposure to the Holocaust, through the ultimate witnesses - the survivors - are quickly disappearing. It has become quite clear that – together with recorded Holocaust survivor testimonies; feature films, docudramas and documentaries – theater is a highly effective and impressionable educational tool with unique powers that can preserve the identities of the victims and survivors and teach the lessons of the Holocaust and its continued relevance in today's world.

“NJTF/HTII at UM Miller Center is greater than any one individual or institution and invites collaboration by artists, authors and playwrights, educators, students, Holocaust memorial organizations, audiences and those people who wish to use all aspects of theater research and analysis, performance, production and related training techniques as an artistic and moral compass that will educate and inspire current and future generations”, Mittelman said.

Future Goals of the HTII include:

1. Updating and expanding the HTC to include both new entries and entries in all relevant languages.
2. Ensuring worldwide exposure and use of the HTC.
3. Commissioning English translations of select HTC plays that exist in other languages and translation of select plays currently in English into other languages.
4. Developing study guides, syllabi, curricula, educational exercises, workshops and theatrical training techniques based on plays and entries contained in HTC.
5. Creating a methodology to integrate HTC educational materials into Holocaust related education.

6. Encouraging production (via NJTF) of Holocaust related plays in theaters throughout the world.
7. Creating access to productions of Holocaust related plays by recording them for the internet, screenings and broadcast dissemination.
8. Expanding the annual program of play readings drawn from material in HTC, on Holocaust Remembrance Day and as component of other commemorative events.
9. Conducting outreach activities, including workshops, to inform theater artists, scholars, educators and professionals who deal with teaching about, and commemorating the Holocaust about the HTII at UM Miller Center: the HTC, HTE and HTP purpose, content and potential applications.
10. Convening inter-disciplinary conferences dealing with the integration of Holocaust related theatrical work in teaching about, and commemorating the Holocaust.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Mr. Mittelman, at arnold@njtfoundation.org

**NJTF Holocaust Theater International Initiative at UM Miller Center Advisory Board Members
(Alpha listing)**

Dr. Michael Berenbaum

Michael Berenbaum is director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at the American Jewish University (formerly the University of Judaism) where he is also a Professor of Jewish Studies. He was the Executive Editor of the Second Edition of the Encyclopaedia Judaica.

For the three years, he was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. He was the Director of the United States Holocaust Research Institute at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. From 1988–93 he served as Project Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, overseeing its creation.

Theodore Bikel (deceased)

Theodore Bikel (Playwright and Performer) was born in Vienna in 1924 and left for Israel (then Palestine) at the age of 13. In 1946, he entered the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and graduated with honors. He appeared in several West End plays including *A Streetcar Named Desire* under the direction of Sir Laurence Olivier. In the U.S., his roster of memorable stage performances includes *Fiddler on the Roof*, in which he has played the role of Tevye more than 2,000 times over the past 37 years. Theodore Bikel has made more than 35 films, amongst which are *The African Queen* and *The Defiant Ones*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination.

Mr. Bikel has also starred in virtually every top dramatic show on TV and received an Emmy Award in 1988. He is also an accomplished concert artist and recorded 20 albums. Theodore Bikel has been active for many years in Actors' Equity Association, serving from 1973 to 1982 as Vice President and as President. He also held the post of Vice President of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) from 1981 until 1991. He is currently President of the Associated Actors and was appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 to serve a five-year term on the National Council for the Arts. He holds honorary degrees from the Universities of Hartford, Seton Hall and the Hebrew Union College. His updated autobiography "Theo", was published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

Throughout his career, Theo Bikel has felt a particular responsibility to Jewish life and to the Jewish community. His

numerous albums of Jewish folk music, his concerts and theater performances; his co-founding of Israel's Cameri Theatre; his leadership in the Soviet Jewry movement and in the American Jewish Congress have distinguished him as a Jewish activist. He is passionate about the survival of the Yiddish language and devotes much energy to insure its continued existence on the Jewish cultural scene. Mr. Bikel's latest accomplishment is as author and star of Sholom Aleichem: Laughter through Tears which was produced by the National Jewish Theater Foundation and has been performed in Washington, D.C., South Florida, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. The production has now been adapted and transformed into a film starring Mr. Bikel.

Teresa Eyring

Teresa Eyring is Executive Director of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for theatre in the U.S. In addition to its roles in federal advocacy, professional development and networking within the theatre community, TCG is the largest independent trade publisher of dramatic literature in North America

Dr. Alvin Goldfarb

Dr. Alvin (Al) Goldfarb is the child of Holocaust survivors and a nationally known theatre educator and administrator. Al served as chair of the department of Theatre, Dean of Fine Arts, and Provost and Academic Vice President at Illinois State University. Al served as President of Western Illinois University from 2002 to 2011, when he retired.

Janet E. Rubin, Ph.D.

Janet E. Rubin, Ph.D. is a respected scholar, theatrical director, teacher, consultant, and arts educator. She currently teaches for the Visual and Performing Arts, Humanities, and Speech Departments at Eastern Florida State College. Rubin has authored numerous books and articles on how theater related techniques can be used to teach the Holocaust in classrooms to students of all ages.

Dr. Rochelle Saidel

Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel is the founder and executive director of the Remember the Women Institute, a not-for-profit organization based in New York City since 1997 that carries out and encourages research and cultural projects that integrate women into history. Her own focus is on Jewish women, especially women during the Holocaust.

Dr. Haim Shaked

Dr. Haim Shaked has been a tenured Professor of International Studies at the University of Miami (UM) since 1988. He has been the incumbent of the Dr. M. Lee Pearce Chair in Middle East Peace Studies (since 1993). In September 1998, UM announced the creation of the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies and appointed Dr. Shaked as its Founding Director. In 2005 he was also appointed Director of the George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies, at the UM's College of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. William Shulman

Professor Emeritus of History, City University of New York
President, Association of Holocaust Organizations 1988-present
Member, United States Delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)
(Chairman, Education Working Group 2002)
(Co- Chairman, Education Working Group 2008)
(Chairman, EWG Sub-Committee on "Special Challenges in Holocaust Education" 2009-present)
Chairman, ITF Web Directory Editorial Board
Editor, ITF Web Directory
Education Consultant, Jewish Foundation for the Righteous

Kim Simon

Kim Simon is Managing Director of the Shoah Foundation Institute at the University of Southern California. She is responsible for overseeing the Institute's day-to-day work, including its educational programs, research, documentation activity, public outreach, and administration. Simon was hired in 1994 to coordinate the Shoah Foundation's efforts to collect interviews around the world with Holocaust survivors and other witnesses. After the

testimony collection phase, Simon established the Institute's office of global partnerships, creating and developing its international program agenda, overseeing its work in 17 countries.

Robert Skloot

Robert (Bob) Skloot retired in 2008 after 40 years of teaching, directing and administrating at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His career has included serving as Fulbright Professor in Israel (1980-81), Austria (F 1988), Chile (F 1995) and The Netherlands (S 2005), and as Fulbright Specialist in England (2013). He is the author and editor of many books and essays about the theatre of the Holocaust and genocide, including *The Darkness We Carry: The Drama of the Holocaust* (1988) and the two-volume anthology *The Theatre of the Holocaust* (1981; 1999)

Dr. Jeffrey R. Solomon

Dr. Jeffrey R. Solomon is the President of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, a group of foundations operating in Canada, Israel and the United States. Among the foundations' innovative launches are Birthright Israel and Reboot, two initiatives aimed at connecting young, assimilated Jews to their tradition, The Gift of New York, a powerful response to September 11, helping to heal families of victims through the power of culture, and Project Involvement, an educational reform program serving some 265,000 Israeli elementary school students. He previously served as the Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of UJA-Federation of New York.

Arnold Mittelman NJTF President

Founding Director National Jewish Theater Foundation Holocaust Theater International Initiative at UM Miller Center

Director, producer and educator with a distinguished career of artistic and educational achievement that has created almost 300 diverse productions of plays, musicals and special events. He has helped found and/or lead four major not-for-profit theaters as well as producing numerous commercial theatrical productions. He was a founder and director of The New York Free Theatre (1968-1973), The Whole Theater Company (1974- 1984) and Producing Artistic Director – Coconut Grove Playhouse (1985- 2006). In 2007, he was named President and Producing Artistic Director of the not-for-profit National Jewish Theater/Foundation. He is the founding director of its National Jewish Theater Foundation -Holocaust Theater International Initiative at the University of Miami, Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies.