



Eden – the Jerusalem Center Development Company Ltd.

Jerusalem Municipality – Cultural Division



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Masie House Theater Center

Revival of the Center of Jerusalem

Following the 1967 war the Government of Israel and the City of Jerusalem invested in developing the outer boundaries of Jerusalem in order to create a united city with a Jewish majority.

This policy quickly brought about the demise of the center of the city causing residences, businesses and cultural/entertainment institutions to relocate.

Thirty years later The Jerusalem Development authority and its subsidiary "Eden"-The Jerusalem Center Development Company in cooperation with the Municipality began a major effort to revive the city center as realization grew that this is the key for the future of Jerusalem.

Hundreds of millions of NIS were invested in infrastructure, roads, "face lifting" etc. A light train system is being built and Jaffa Street will become a pedestrian road once the train becomes operational.

In addition Eden initiated several strategic plans one of them was an urban cultural strategy plan.

Several projects resulted from this plan which are now in different stages of execution-one of which is the theater center at the Masie House at the center of Jerusalem which will be a home to three local theater groups which will for the first time enjoy their own highly qualified facility.

The establishment of the center will contribute to the revival of the center as well as re-establish the reputation of Jerusalem as the national center for fringe theater.

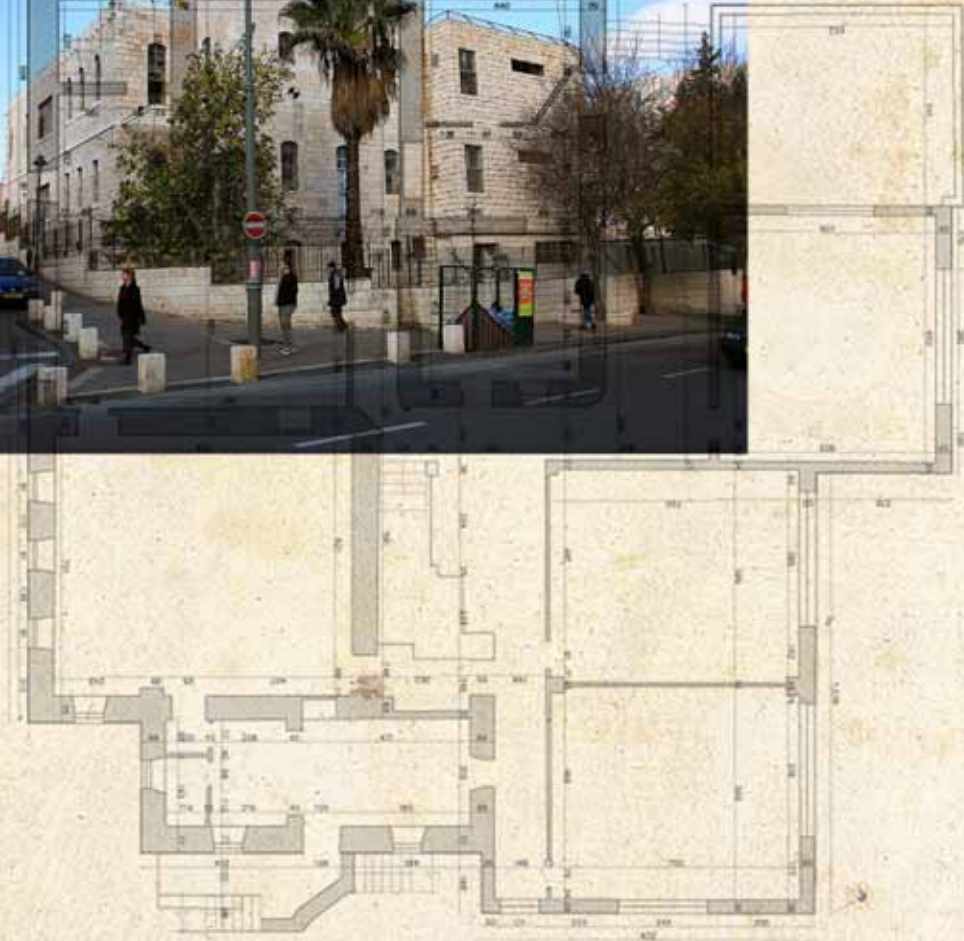
History of a Landmark

The Masie House was originally built in the mid-19th century in the urban Arab style. It was a one-storey residential building, built above a partial basement floor that served for storage and service. No record or documentation has been found as to the designer or builder of the building.

The urban Arab construction style was mainly based on a square or rectangular building laid out in a formal symmetric manner on either side of a main entrance, leading to a central space known as a “Liwan.” This space served as a sitting room and reception room for guests, and the rest of the rooms of the house were built around it. They consisted of bedrooms rooms, women’s rooms and the kitchen.

The architectural wealth of the building was largely determined by the design of the lintels and sills of the entrances, stylized cornices, prominent cornerstones and foundation stones that emphasize the strength and stability of the building. A prominent stone strip marked the transition between stories and metal ornamentation featured in the grillwork and railings.

Dr. Aharon Masie purchased the house in 1902, And Extensively renovated it in 1913.



In The main entrance door was relocated to the southwestern corner, and led to a stylized stairwell and to the new second floor. It should be noted that as part of the renovations, Dr. Masie took care to emphasize the now Jewish nature of the house and affixed a portal above the new entrance door with two Stars of David engraved in stone.

The second floor was added to the building, adored with cantilever balconies. Dr. Masie's clinic was placed on the ground floor, in the wing facing Mesillat Yesharim Street.

Dr.Masie's spacious apartment was located in the second floor. From there steps led to another space under a tiled roof, which served as guest rooms and a storeroom.

Among the regular visitors of this house were the his close friend the poet Haim Nahman Bialik,; the poet Dr. Shaul Tchernichovsky, who edited Dr. Masie's glossary of medical and scientific terms; the sceintists brothers Aharon and Ephraim Katchalski (later Katzir); Eliezer Ben-Yehuda revivalist of the Hebrew language and the chief rabbis of the Yishuv, Rabbi Kook (Ashkenazi) and Rabbi Yaakov Meir (Sephardi). Another visitor to the house was Prof. Albert Einstein, who came during his visit to Israel to participate in the inauguration of the Hebrew University.

In the early 1960s, the building was expropriated by the Jerusalem Municipality. It was extensively renovated, a two-storey wing was added, and the complex served as a school.

In-depth renovation work in progress now is aimed at turning the building into a home for theater workshops, with the emphasis on restoring its character and heritage as a cultural and architectural asset in the heart of Jerusalem

Dr. Aharon Meir Masie

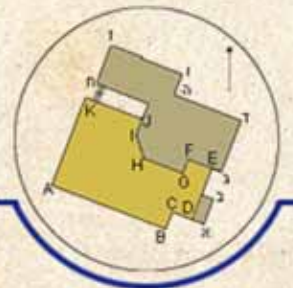
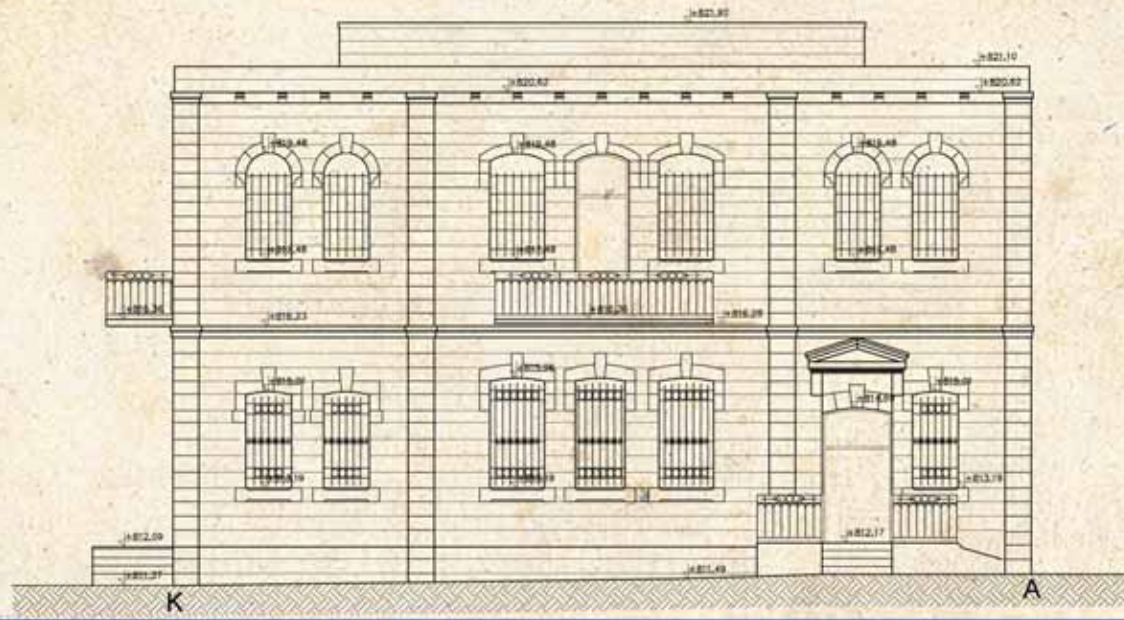
Physician, public activist and researcher of the Hebrew language. Came from a family of rabbis. Born in Russia he was ordained as a Rabbi, but also read Russian literature and was influenced by it.. Masie was imprisoned due to his participation in the Russian revolutionary movement, and upon his release enrolled in the Polytechnic in Zurich, where he joined the revolutionary society founded by A. S. Lieberman. The indifference of the Russian revolutionaries to the pogroms of 1881/2 disillusioned him and he founded the Nir society, which was of a national-Jewish character.

In 1887 he completed his medical studies at the University of Zurich, and in 1889 immigrated to Eretz Israel and was appointed by Baron Edmond de Rothschild as the physician of his colonies in the Judea area.

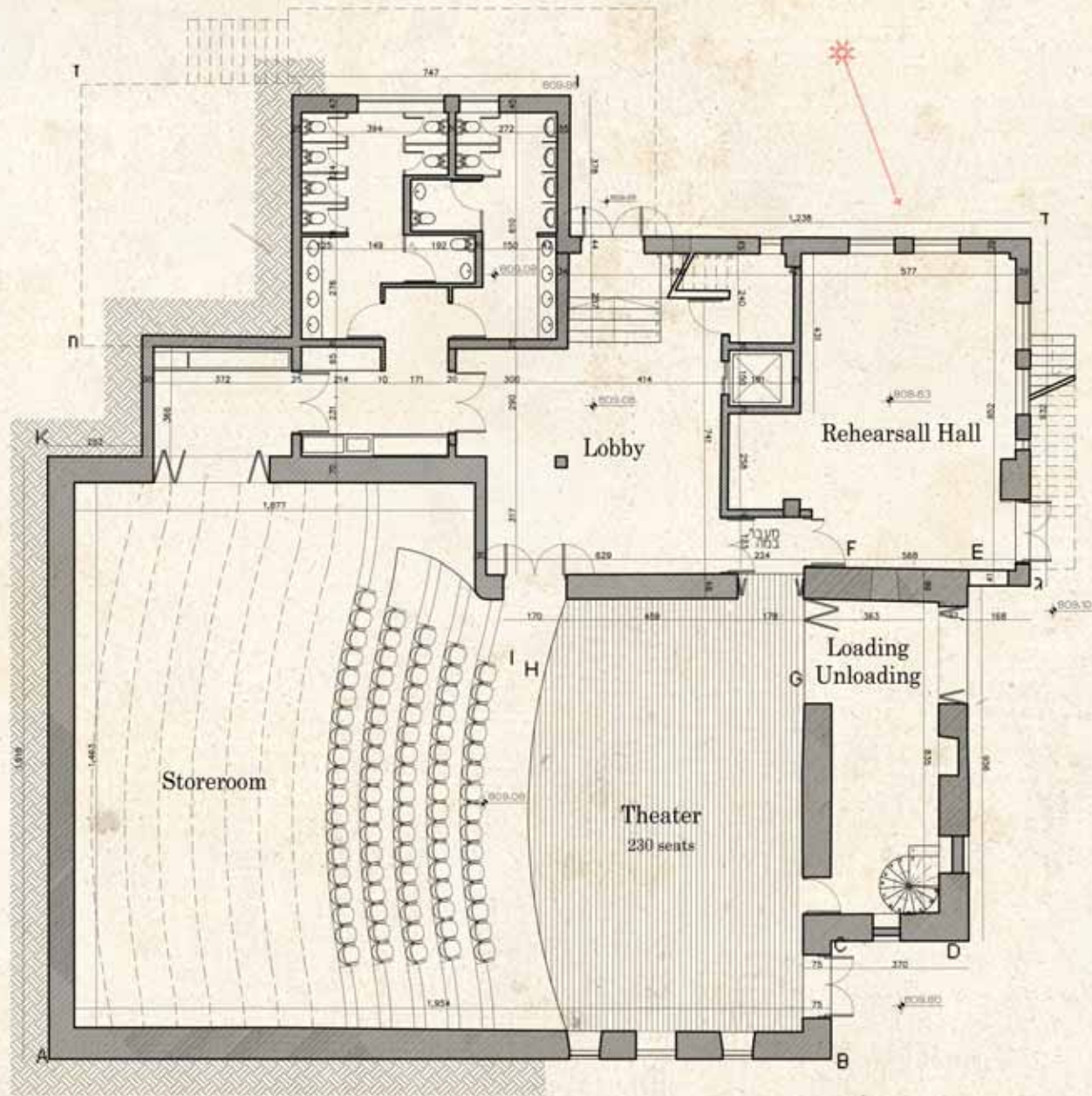
Masie can be credited with an improvement in the general state of health in the Yishuv. He worked to improve the condition of the Jewish worker, and in 1898 was elected treasurer of the workers union. In 1902, Masie was appointed director of Bikur Cholim Hospital in Jerusalem.

At this point, Masie began spending much of his time researching the Hebrew language. He compiled the *Glossary of Medical and Scientific Terms*, which was edited by the poet Dr. Shaul Tchernichovsky and published after his death (Jerusalem, 1934). His many studies and articles on matters of language and terminology in the field of medicine were published in various German and Hebrew journals. He was also one of the editors of the *Harefuah* quarterly, and one of the founders and directors of the Hebrew Language Council and the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. The importance of Masie's scientific work lay in promoting professional terminology in Hebrew, and he should be viewed as one of its creators.

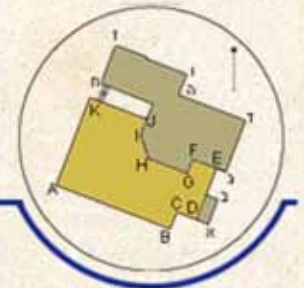




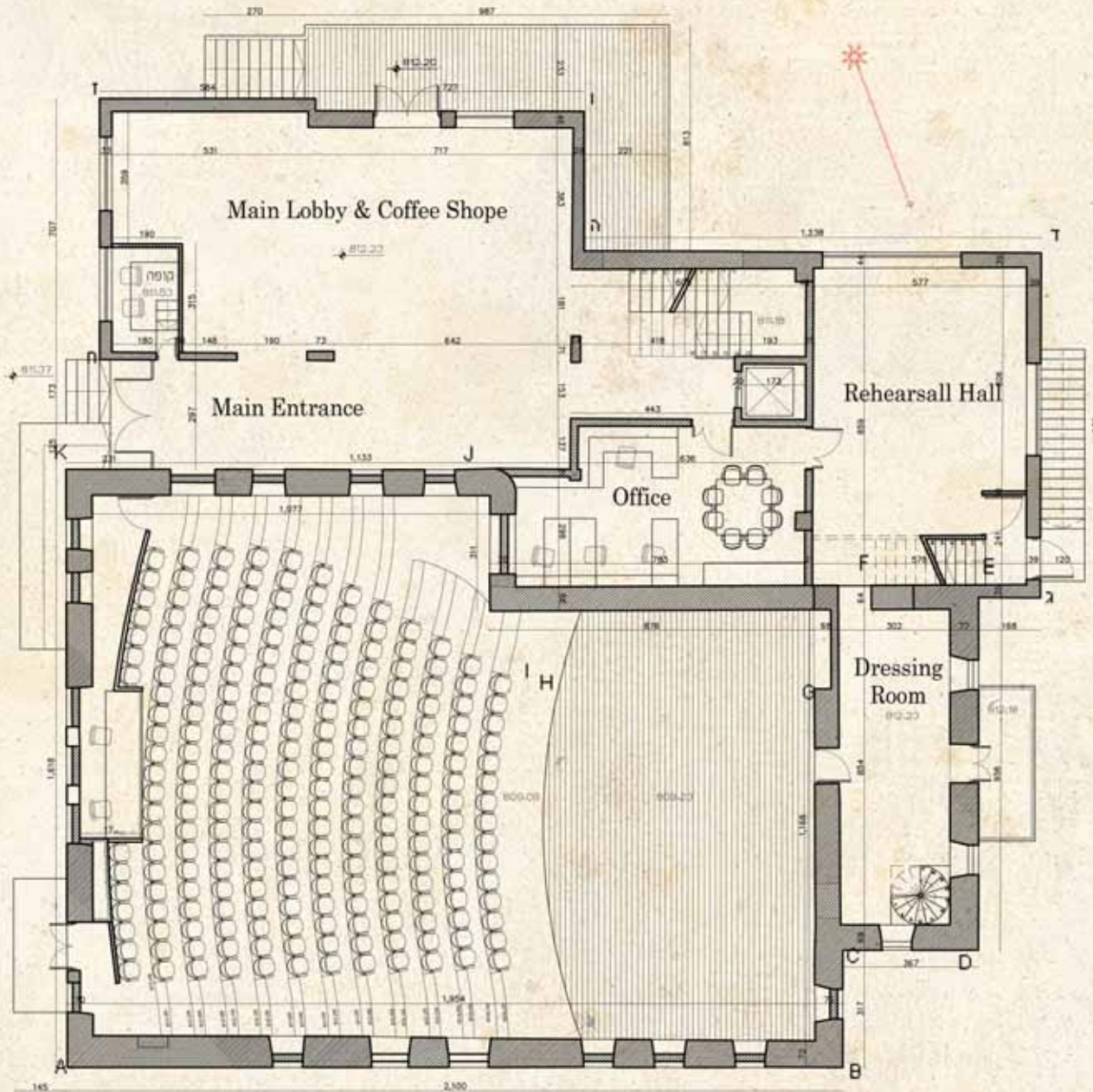
FRONT ELEVATION



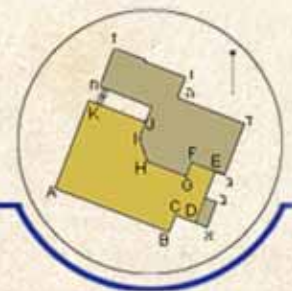
BASEMENT FLOOR



רח' מסילה ישראל



רח' עליאש



GROUND FLOOR

Selecting The Groups

The three groups that will occupy the center were chosen by a committee set up by the cultural division of the city of Jerusalem.

First a public call for all interested theater groups that considered themselves eligible was published. Then the committee made its decision according to the following criteria with view of addressing the needs of optimal number of groups:


The group had to be a local theater production group

The quality of the group

The potential audience


All the three groups that were chosen are local production theater groups each contributing in its unique way to the cultural life of the city.

The following is a short description of the three groups:

Psik Theater, 

The Jerusalem Theater Group



The Incubator. 



PSIK THEATER COMPANY, JERUSALEM

The Psik Theater was founded in 1997 by Assi Shimony, Shmuel Hadjes and Uzi Biton.

The theater's vision is to create theater arts worthy of becoming a milestone in shaping Israeli culture. The theater's repertoire is based on new and original plays, which are chosen by searching for materials that can potentially become Israeli classics.

The company of actors consists of a permanent core of actors who have worked together over the years and have developed a theatrical language that is unique to Psik. Research methods and rehearsals are long and intensive, and with each play there is an attempt to define new artistic boundaries.

Psik's repertoire includes plays that are based on professional and artistic criteria, and are performed by a skilled acting company. The plays are performed in Jerusalem, throughout Israel and abroad, and can be seen in culture auditoriums, theaters, schools, community institutions and festivals. Among others, the ensemble has performed at the Israel Festival, the Andria Festival in Italy, the Lecce Festival in Italy, the Acco Fringe Festival, the Haifa International Festival for Children's Plays, the Bat-Yam Street Theatre Festival and more.

AMONG THE PSIK THEATER'S RECENT PERFORMANCES:

The Days of Adel – written by Uri Nitzan and directed by Prof. Isaac Ben Abu, tells of a schizophrenic Arab mental patient who believes he is a Jew.

The Court Jesters – based on the novel by Avigdor Dagan and adapted by Uri Nitzan. This play is about four Jewish inmates in Auschwitz who perform as court jesters before the camp's German officers, and survive thanks to their theatrical prowess.

The Mutants – a tragic-comedy by Simon Zlotnikov that tells of story of a former Prisoner of Zion who comes to Israel.

The Twins – a joint work by Uzi Biton and the members of the theater company, the play is written in the *Commedia dell'arte* style and manages to combine this with contemporary content of Israel's reality.

In the social arena the Psik Theater runs a community theater school, social projects and festivals. The "Psik Community Theater School" has eight theater groups, including amateur groups, a youth group, a Jewish-Arabic group, groups for the underprivileged, and a unique theater workshop for students from Hebrew University's Faculty of Law.

The Jerusalem Psik Theater is a registered non-profit association and is supported by the Culture Administration of the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, the Culture Department of the Jerusalem Municipality, the Jerusalem Foundation, the Bracha Fund, the Legacy Heritage Fund Ltd., and the Levi Lessen Foundation.

For further information: Psik Theater Jerusalem (R.A.) P.O. Box 26274 Jerusalem 91262 | Tel. 02-6513663 / 02-6511558 | Fax 02-6513736

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THEATER COMPANY JERUSALEM (R.A.)

The theater Company Jerusalem was founded in 1985 by Gavriela Lev, together with Aliza Elion Israeli, Ruth Weider Magan and Joyce Miller. It is Israel's oldest alternative theatrical company, and it deals in creating theatrical and musical performances based on Jewish sources with a strong women's voice. The Company's original plays are considered to be outstanding and are unique in Israel and around the world, and for this they have won national and international acclaim and numerous prizes. The Company has created a distinctive theatrical language that combines modern performance technique with the study of ancient texts, thereby bringing Judaism and Israeliness closer together while creating a special dialogue that opens the way for discussion, using these texts as a basis, about the current and relevant topics that occupy Israeli society in particular, and the Jewish and non-Jewish world in general. The artistic language infuses new energy, generates innovative thinking, and creates renewed enthusiasm here and now. "During the past decade the Theater Company Jerusalem has instilled Jerusalem with a special status in the theatrical sphere by performing some of the most fascinating and daring productions" – Mr. Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister and former mayor of Jerusalem. "This is a unique and important phenomenon in theatrical culture in Israel, the world and the entire universe" – Prof. Alice Shalvi, Israeli Prize laureate.

The actors: The company of actors is based on a staff of skilled professionals who have been together for many years. Their unique work derives from a combination of two artistic languages: modern western theater, and the Jewish midrash – the *havruta*. Through the formative dialogue between these two languages the Company has created a new form of Jewish theater – as material for Israeli works, at a time when these subjects are considered almost taboo in the world of Israeli art and theater, and this is what makes the group so rare and powerful.

Repertoire: The plays are performed by the Company in Jerusalem in particular, in Israel in general, and frequently abroad as well, in Hebrew and in English. The audience undergoes a unique theatrical experience that is colorful, sensual, musical, innovative and up-to-the-minute.



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The Company's works include:

1. Powerful theater and musical performances: Rondo, Women and Wonders, Longings, Shulem, Are you Happy Yet?, Zohar Shabbat, Sotah, Esther, Bruria's Story, Even the Birds, Sara Take 2, and more.
2. Educational and in-service courses: "The Jewish story as a theatrical experience" – funded by the New York Jewish Federation; "Empowering women through the theater" – funded by the Hadassah Women's Organization.

Community:

Over the years we have developed hands-on community educational programs that were both enlightening and thought-provoking, adapted to suit the needs of any organization. During the program the audience learns texts from Jewish sources together in *havruta*, texts that deal with topics whose timelessness helps to integrate past, present and future, and this textual study is then integrated with special theater workshops. "The combination of Jewish content and the dramatic / theatrical experience has been extraordinarily successful and has received excellent feedback from all participants in this unique project – Dr. Oded Avishar, Director of Beit Yatziv, Beersheva.

The Company is supported by: The Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, the Jerusalem Municipality, the Jerusalem Foundation, New York Federation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mifal Hapayis National Lottery, private foundations and anonymous donations.

Visit our website: www.tcj.org.il.

For English, log on to: www.tci.org.il/shulem



The Incubator Project

The Incubator- a nurturing environment for production and creation in the theatrical and entertainment sectors in the city of Jerusalem.

Description

1. An Open Stage

- 1) Actors, playwrights, and directors will be invited to ply their wares in front of an audience. These will include monologues, skits, snapshots from original plays, improvisation, singing, ballads, movement, performance, and more.
- 2) From performance to performance artists will add new material and consolidate it.
- 3) As the material of one, or several, of the performers ripens, the artistic staff of **The Incubator** will help them create a separate and independent production.

2. Original Productions

- 1) Productions consolidated from material performed in the open stage.
- 2) Proposals or original plays submitted to **The Incubator** which will be found suitable and practical for production
- 3) Two productions produced in the framework of the Nissan Nativ Studio third year program. These productions will be based on original material created by the students or on an original play written especially for them.

3. Workshops and Conferences

- 1) Artist classes- Concentrated meetings with experienced artists, which will facilitate the inspiration of **The Incubator's** striving artists.
- 2) Meetings- Creative workshops in which the budding artists can meet each other while working together.



Aims

1. To allow the graduates of the Nissan Nativ Studio, who normally study in Jerusalem and are then, for lack of meaningful productive possibilities, compelled to move to Tel Aviv, to continue living and producing in Jerusalem.
2. To help artists showcase their skills and abilities. Many talented people go to waste because mainstream society does not know how, or is not able, to identify and nurture creative ability.
3. To fortify creative production in Jerusalem.
4. To attract a young crowd to shows.

Goals

1. Consolidating a large and stable nucleus of artists, actors, writers, and directors who will continue both to create together as well as utilize the infrastructure supplied by **The**

Incubator.

2. An advertising and marketing mechanism that will allow productions created in The Incubator to continue showing and break into the commercial market.
3. Videotaping and documenting the project in order to interest various television channels in it.
4. Broadening the target audience of the project by utilizing the various commercial television channels as well as the local community channel.

