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CASTING NOTICE

PLAY: LILAC MINYAN by Debora Seidman. One act, 45-50 minutes

An elderly gentleman, Holocaust survivor, meets a young Jewish woman in the hospital.

His wife has just died; her companion has just died. Through monologues, dialogue, and

simple actions, their histories are revealed. Together, they learn to accept their grief,

their Jewish heritage, and their belief in G-d.

CHARACTERS: (playwright descriptions)

SAMUEL: 70s, Jewish, born in Poland, has lived in Brooklyn almost 40 years and his

voice should bear witness to that fact, although it still carries traces of his Eastern

European origins. His clothes are simple, but well kept. He is tired, a bit haggard around

the edges, but carries himself with dignity.

ALLISON: late 20s, early 30s. Jewish, but she's never paid it much attention. Her arms

are wrapped in bandages. Tall & lean (not necessary), her clothes are shapeless, intended

to cover and hide, never to beautify.

LOCATION: Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Park Slope Brooklyn.

FEE: \$100.00

DATE: Performances Friday June 9 and Saturday June 10. Tech/Dress June 6,7,9

REHEARSALS: In Park Slope Brooklyn, maximum 40 hours. Dates to be arranged to fit in

with actor/director/playwright schedules.

This play is part of the New Works Festival

AUDITIONS: April 29, 11:30 - 1:30 at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange.

Please call MARCY ARLIN at (718) 237-4545 to schedule an audition or for more information.

Can also email at: mzitp@aol.com

CONTRACT

April 18, 2000

This contract constitutes an agreement between:

The Director: Marcy Arlin

and Playwright Debora Seidman.

Marcy Arlin agrees to direct the play LILAC MINYAN by the playwright at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Brooklyn NY, on

Friday, June 9 and Saturday, June 10, 2000

as well as attend all Rehearsals, Tech and Dress Rehearsals on Days to be announced.

The Director will be paid a fee of \$250.00 for the direction of the play, to be paid on Opening Night of the show.

Marcy Arlin is not responsible for any expenses incurred during the production. If any monies are spent for props, costumes, etc., she will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts to either the playwright or the Brooklyn Arts Exchange, whichever is appropriate.

The Director will

- with the approval of the Playwright, will supervise casting of the play. If the Playwright

is not available, the Director will make all final casting decisions.

- be present at all rehearsals
- not make any changes in the script without the approval of the playwright
- supervise all design elements for the production
- be present for Opening Night

The Director's name will appear in all publicity and promotional materials.

If there is substantial, unresolvable disagreement with the Playwright, Brooklyn Arts Exchange or any other participant during the rehearsal period, the Director reserves the right to withdraw from this project. However, the Director will make every effort to resolve any difficulties that may arise during the rehearsal process.

Signed _____

Marcy Arlin, Director

Date

Debora Seidman, Playwright

Date

TO ACTORS

Please take a copy of the sides to review before the audition. Take your time.

We will ask you to read a portion of the monologues:

For Samuel: Choose about two pages to read from

For Allison: String together the various speeches into one monologue.

Then I (Marcy, the director) will give you a few adjustments or directions. The playwright (Debra) and/or I will ask you a couple of questions about your thoughts about the play.

This is an Equity Workshop. There is a fee of \$100.00, more if funding comes through.

REHEARSALS

Most will be at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange (here) or at their Annex on 3rd St. & 3rd Ave.

We can always meet here and then I can drive you over to the space. It's only a few blocks away.

Some of the rehearsals at the end of May will be at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, 97 Orchard St., in Manhattan.

We would like to rehearse on Saturdays and Sundays, and perhaps two weekdays, depending on people's schedules.

PLEASE: WRITE DOWN THE DAYS AND TIMES YOU ARE

ABSOLUTELY NOT AVAILABLE.

NAME _____

DAY

EVENING

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

LILAC MINYAN

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Tuesday, May 9

6 - 9

Charas

Wednesday, May 10	6-9	BAX, Theatre
Sunday, May 14	12-3	BAX, Theatre
Tuesday, May 16	6 - 9	Tenement Theatre
Wednesday, May 17	6 - 9	BAX, Annex
Sunday, May 21	2:30 - 5:30	BAX, Annex
Tuesday, May 23	6 - 9	BAX, Annex
Wednesday, May 24	6 - 9	Tenement Theatre
Sunday, May 28	2:30 - 5:30	Tenement Theatre
Tuesday, May 30	6 - 9	BAX, Annex
Wednesday, May 31	No rehearsal	
Thursday, June 1	7:30 Call	Reading, Tenement Theatre

Sunday, June 4	2:30 - 5:30	BAX, Annex
Tuesday, June 6	6 - 9	BAX, Theatre
Wednesday, June 7	6 - ?	Tech Run-Through, BAX, Theatre
Thursday, June 8	TBA	Dress Rehearsal, BAX, Theatre
Friday, June 9	7:00 Call	Performance, BAX, Theatre
Saturday, June 10	7:00 Call	Performance, BAX, Theatre

Locations:

BAX (Brooklyn Arts Exchange) Theatre	421 Fifth Ave., Bklyn, (718) 832-0018
BAX, Annex	230 Third St. (& Third Ave.) Bklyn.
Tenement Theatre, in basement of Lower East Side Tenement Museum	97 Orchard St. (So. of Delancey) Theatre #: (212) 334-2278 Museum #: (212) 431-0233
Charas Studios	605 E. 9th St. (& Ave. B) (212) 982-0627
LILAC MINYAN	

CONTACT SHEET

Debora Seidman, Playwright

(413) 367-0127

dseidman@aol.com

Marcy Arlin, Director

(718) 237-4545 (h)

(718) 482-5690 (w) only T,Th AM

mzitp@aol.com

Jerry Koenig, SAMUEL

(212) 749-3156 (h)

(212) 889-8200 x1426 (w)

Yelena Shmulenson, ALLISON

(917)

[SAMUEL reaches a bench where he can sit down to rest for a few minutes. It is winter, and cold out, and he wraps a scarf more tightly around his neck. Lights up on ALLISON, who is at the table in her room. She places a white candle in a simple holder and lights it. She then begins going through boxes of clothes and photos.]

ALLISON

I didn't want her to die in the hospital. [pause] Shit, I didn't want her to die at all, but if she had

to die, at least let it be at home. I could deal with it there. I could rub her back and hold her, without all those steel bars from the hospital bed between us. I could be there all night. If the pain got too bad and she started to scream, I could sit with her, take her hand.

We worked so hard to keep her home. She ended up in the hospital anyway. I couldn't be with her there. These nurses there, all the time, it wasn't just us. [pause]

It was just another hospital room. Like the room where my mother died. Leah looked just like....I hate those rooms. The only good thing that ever happened in a hospital was meeting Samuel.

He said he'd come help me pack her clothes. [picks up miniskirt] She used to wear this hot pink mini-skirt with tights that glittered and a pair of white cowboy boots. When we went dancing.

It all happened so quickly. One day we're fighting over whether to go out dancing or to the

movies and then...I'm fighting with the nurses, begging her to give Leah more morphine...

SAMUEL

And another thing, that Joseph, with his coat of many colors..How do You think he knew you

were going to bring his brothers to him in Egypt one day? Dreams! Ah hah! You gave him

dreams. My dreams you have taken away.

ALLISON

It was after one of those fights that I met Samuel [THEY look at each other] for the first time.

We'd seen each other a lot in the coffee shop. I liked seeing him around the hospital. He always

smiled when we passed each other; his eyes were so kind and so say. The one day.....

When I got to the room, I didn't just see Leah. She was so thin...almost no hair left. My mother,

before she died, looked just like Leah. No hair, face all drawn and thin, clothes falling off and eyes

that wouldn't look at you, couldn't take you in..when I saw Leah--a restless, hovering cocoon,

bone upon bone, trying to be simply bone--I saw all those hospital beds of intensive care, beds of

psych wards, beds of shock treatments, beds of...

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SAMUEL (cont'd)

[HE bends down, picking up things among the graves]

A branch has fallen here. A tree without its leaves. Some pebbles somebody left. Come closer, my

friend. Do you see what I see? Grass that could grow. Leaves that could fall.

[walking furiously now, through the cemetery, from grave to grave]

Here. She could have a grave and a plot. We could bring them all here, carry the bones that are

left, fly the ashes over the ocean and spread them across all the cemeteries in America. Until they

cover every stone we see.

ALLISON

[dim, diffuse light comes up. She puts glass down]

We used to go to the beach at dusk, after the crowds were gone--just a few stars, the water, and

all that sand, still hot from the day. Leah burned really easy. She'd lie in the sun covered in long

sleeves and a towel--so we'd go later, if we could--summer nights when it stayed light so long--

we'd like still, listen to the waves rolling in--

Leah was the one who was always supposed to be there...The one who got me through my

mother's death. The one who could always pull me back from the edge.

I wanted us to have years together. I wanted..to be able to say good-bye. But when she

started to look like my mom, and she ended up in the hospital...

[She picks up the glass again and plays with it nervously]

All those months sitting with my mother in intensive care, watching her become

someone I couldn't recognize, while the machines monitored her life....

--it wasn't that she was dying, it was that she'd been dying my whole life. Maybe it was all those

years of attempted suicide that finally gave her cancer. How the hell am I supposed to know.

She sure tried like hell to kill herself.

She has taken too many pills...taken too many pills....

[She takes the glass and makes motions to play with it in a rhythm that matches

the next lines, touching each finger, but she doesn't actually cut herself]

This little piggy went to market and this little piggy went home.

This little piggy took a knife to its wrist, slit it until it hit bone.

This little piggy ate sleeping pills, this little piggy ate none.

This little piggy turned on the gas in the car

when nobody else was home.

[She throws the glass to the floor]

LEAH, WHERE ARE YOU?

SAMUEL

Can we do this? Can You help me do this thing? I want You to make another

miracle. Part the earth like you once parted the sea and let her come up

TO: ALIZA PHILLIPS, THE FORWARD (212) 447-6406

FROM: Marcy Arlin, Artistic Director

SUBJECT: Performances of LILAC MINYAN

PAGES: 1

LILAC MINYAN is written by Debora Seidman, directed by Marcy Arlin,

starring

Jerry Koenig, as SAMUEL, a Holocaust survivor

and

Yelena Shmulenson, as ALLISON, a young American woman

Samuel's wife is dying in the same hospital as Allison's companion. They have abandoned

Judaism and hope because of their pasts. Together they find a reason for living in the healing power of the Mourner's Kaddish.

This new play is being presented at two venues:

1) June 1, 2000 at 8:00 PM. Admission is \$5.00

As a Staged Reading at the Tenement Theatre,

97 Orchard Street, between Delancey & Broome

in the basement of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

Call (212) 431-0233 x 440 for reservations and (718) 237-4545 for information

2) June 9 & 10 at 8:00 PM A Full Production Admission is \$12.00/\$6.00 Low-income.
TDF

Vouchers accepted

Brooklyn Arts Exchange

421 5th Avenue (corner of 8th St.)

Brooklyn, NY

Call (718) 832-0018 for information and reservations

Bunting Fellowship

Fellowship recommendation Form 2001-02: Debora Seidman

I met Deborah Seidman in the Spring of 1998 when she asked me to direct her play *Lilac Minyan* at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange. We met through a colleague, John Belluso, whose plays about people with disabilities have been produced at Trinity Rep, Mark Taper Forum and the Arena Stage in DC. Because Debora lives in Massachusetts and has Environmental Illness that precludes extensive travel, our collaboration was conducted over the phone and electronic mail; we met once for the actor casting and for one weekend of rehearsal in Brooklyn.

Debora's play is an exquisitely personal story about the encounter between a Holocaust survivor, Samuel, and a young gay woman, Allison. Both have recently lost their partners as well as their belief in a just God. They regain a sort of faith through their growing friendship, which is based on the ritual recitation of the Jewish Mourner's Prayer. Stylistically, the story of Samuel and Allison unfolds in a series of parallel scenes that, through the connected poetry of the monologues, bring the characters together emotionally in time and space. In inspired fragments of painful memory, we learn the reasons for the characters' anger and grief--at God, at society, at family, at the helplessness we all feel in the face of evil and illness.

I had not known Debora before 1998, though she has an extensive performance history doing one-woman shows and teaching creative writing. She has Environment Illness, and I was awed by the courage it took for her to travel to Brooklyn for rehearsals and performances. Yet even with these problems, Debora was remarkable, approaching textual problems with a clarity and professionalism that bespoke an experienced writer. Her desire to make the play work was all that mattered. Within the time constraints of the rehearsal period, Debora made small re-writes to the play that improved the production enormously. The actors found the play a joy to perform; the audience was always left deeply moved, often in tears.

Since that show, Debora and I have been in negotiation for a production of *Lilac Minyan*

at a university in Massachusetts. She is refining Lilac Minyan to strengthen the character of Allison, who is loosely based on her own experience of losing a dear friend to cancer. The foundation of Debra's strength and talent as a playwright is her intense, painful self-examination of her life and its transformation into a poetic, beautiful work of art. In this sense she follows in the tradition of playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill, who put their own painful lives under the artistic microscope. Debra also has social agendas: she has a deep religious sense, identifies strongly with her cultural heritage, and is involved with women's issues. Yet her play was never preachy or didactic--it told a simple story about grief and love, while the themes of discrimination and racism sound deeper tones underneath.

The play Debra hopes to write through this fellowship follows the journey of people afflicted with Environmental Illness, only now being recognized as a real disease. The challenge for the playwright will be to speak of this issue through the medium of story, character and dialogue. Her ability to combine accuracy of detail, dialogue and strong characterization, makes the play an ideal medium for her creativity.

Based on Debra's Lilac Minyan, I have no doubt in my mind that she will write this play with sensitivity, wit, brilliantly drawn characters, subtle plot turns, and craft. Debra will find the universal resonance in the life of one afflicted woman, a sign of true genius.

the causes and ramifications of EI, and write a professional, personal, moving and produceable, viable play. The Bunting Fellowship would provide Debra with the unparalleled opportunity to research a new and frightening disease and the people it changes.

Marcy Arlin, Artistic Director

Immigrants Theatre Project

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