



CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

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**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY AND ISRAELI STAGE
BRING “GOD” TO CHESTER**

Two companies partner in presenting OH GOD, July 14-24

Chester, MA—Chester Theatre Company (CTC) and Israeli Stage are proud to partner in presenting the Regional Premiere of *Oh God* by Anat Gov at the historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA, from July 14 through July 24, 2016.

Oh God centers around a therapy session between a very depressed God and Ella, a therapist and single mother with doubts about her own faith. God gives Ella a challenge: Cure him of his terrible depression in one session or he will put an end to his greatest and most disappointing creation—humankind. The play, which has been performed throughout the world to great acclaim, recently completed a sold-out run in Boston where the *Boston Globe* called it a “wryly incisive comedy” in a “first-rate production,” adding “For a play so concerned about divinity, it is utterly human.”

“This hilarious and poignant play has brought so much joy to the hearts and minds of audiences across the world,” said Guy Ben-Aharon, Producing Artistic Director of Israeli Stage. “It has been translated to English, German, Spanish, French, and countless other languages. We are thrilled to be bringing it to the beautiful Berkshire hills.”

Ben-Aharon continued, “Sharing the diversity of Israeli culture is our honor and a privilege. We are grateful to be partnering with the Chester Theatre Company to spark dialogue between audiences and artists and strengthen this growing cultural bridge between the United States and the Middle East.”

For his part, CTC Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer said, “We are thrilled to partner with Israeli Stage to bring this remarkable play to our audience. *Oh God* is both a delight and a deeply thoughtful exploration of what it means to be human.”

The artistic team behind *Oh God* includes:

Guy Ben-Aharon (Director/Israeli Stage Producing Artistic Director) Born in Israel, Guy is the Founder of Israeli Stage, for which he directed the North American Premiere Production of *Ulysses on Bottles* (April 2015). After the success of Israeli Stage, Guy was asked by the Goethe-Institut Boston to develop German Stage, as well as Swiss

Stage for swissnex-Boston, Austrian Stage for the Austrian Cultural Forum New York, and French Stage for the French Cultural Center/Consulate General of France. His dedication to international theatre has resulted in tours up and down the East Coast. A proud Emerson College alum, Guy is a member of the ROI Global Entrepreneurs Community, a 2013 Theaterreffen International Forum Fellow in Berlin, Germany, and a 2015 AdR Fellow at the University of Cambridge, UK. His numerous awards include being named one of the 18 Influential Leaders under 45 in the Boston Jewish Community and winner of the inaugural Chai in the Hub award by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

Anat Gov (Playwright) was born in Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, in 1953. Her popular *Oh God* has been produced around the globe, including Italy, Germany, Poland, Russia, and Argentina, where it ran for two years. Other plays include *Best Friends*, *Lysistrata*, *Househusband*, *A Warm Family*, and *Happy Ending*, an unlikely comedy about a woman with cancer who chooses not to have chemotherapy. Sadly, the play was autobiographical; Anat Gov died in 2012 after a long battle with cancer, leaving a significant imprint on Israeli theatre.

Maureen Keiller* (Ella) has performed readings of *Oh God* with Will Lyman in six states and countless venues and is proud to be in Israeli Stage's full production. A well-known performer in Boston, Maureen appeared in *The Snow Queen* at New Repertory Theatre; the David Cromer production of *Come Back, Little Sheba* at Huntington Theatre Company; *Into the Woods*, *33 Variations*, *Big River*, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Speech & Debate*, all at the Lyric Stage of Boston; *The Whale*, *Nine*, *Reckless*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Almost Maine*, *The Women*, and *The Wild Party* at SpeakEasy Stage; and *The Little Dog Laughed* at Hartford Theatre Works. Film credits include roles in the Academy Award winning *Spotlight*, as well as *My Best Friend's Girl*, *Fever Pitch*, and *We Pedal Uphill*. On television, Maureen appeared in *Olive Kitteridge* (HBO), *The Makeover* (ABC Family), and *Brotherhood* (Showtime). Her web series credits include *Unsure/Positive*, *DECo*, and *Entrepreneur*. Maureen is a two-time IRNE recipient for her work in *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* at Lyric West, and *The Women* at SpeakEasy Stage. In addition to *Oh God*, she performed in the readings of *Sinners* and *Dina* for Israeli Stage.

Will Lyman* (G) is well known to Boston audiences for his work with Commonwealth Shakespeare, The Huntington Theatre, New Rep, SpeakEasy, Wheelock, Boston Playwright's, and The Nora—work that has won him both Norton and IRNE awards. He has performed with the Denver Center Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, Pennsylvania Stage, New York's American Place Theatre, George Street Playhouse, the NJ Shakespeare Festival, and the Edinburg Fringe. A sought-after narrator, Will has worked with the National Symphony, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Symphony, and the Handel and Haydn Society. He is the announcer for *Frontline* on PBS, and his distinctive voice could be heard in the "Most Interesting Man in the World" TV commercials for Dos Equis beer. His film work includes *A Perfect Murder*, *The Siege*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Mystic River*, *What Doesn't Kill You*, and *Little Children*, for which he did the narration. Will has appeared on numerous television

series, including *Crossbow*, *Hull High*, *Threat Matrix*, and *Commander-in-Chief*. For Israeli Stage, he appeared in the readings of *Dear Sigmund and Carl*, *Price Tag*, and both readings and the full production of *Ulysses on Bottles*.

Show times are 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and 2:00 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Ticket prices are \$37.50 for general audiences and \$10.00 for students and residents of Chester. Tickets may be purchased online at www.chesterttheatre.org, or by phone at 1.800.595.4TIX (4849).

CTC will be presenting **Talkbacks** with theatre artists following the 2:00 p.m. matinees on Thursday, July 14 and 21, and the Saturday evening shows on July 16 and 23; a **Panel Discussion** featuring Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire and the Reverend Nancy Webb Stroud, rector of the Episcopal Church of the Atonement in Westfield, MA, and moderated by Daniel Elihu Kramer after the Saturday, July 17 matinee; and **Cast Conversations** following the Friday matinees on July 15 and 22.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company (CTC), a professional theatre company located in the foothills of the Berkshires, has been presenting high-quality productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Now in its 27th season—the first under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer—CTC produces 4 thought-provoking plays each summer in an intimate setting at Chester's Historic Town Hall on 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA. Numerous CTC productions have gone on to Off-Broadway, regional, national and international engagements, among them Kramer's own *Pride@Prejudice*. For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chesterttheatre.org.

About Israeli Stage

Israeli Stage was founded by Producing Artistic Director Guy Ben-Aharon in 2010 with the goal of sharing the diversity and vitality of Israeli culture through theatre. Since the 2010-2011 inaugural season they have produced over twenty plays, both as staged readings and in full productions, touring universities and venues up and down the East Coast and bringing together people of all faiths in a cross-cultural dialog. They continue to build partnerships with national and international theatres, building cultural bridges and opening borders through the voices of Israeli theatre. For more information, please visit <http://www.israelistage.com>.

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