Mosaic Theater Company of DC Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mosaic Theater Company Announces DC Premiere of Divine Comedy OH, GOD

Witty and touching work by Anat Gov, the “Wendy Wasserstein of Israel,” featuring Mitchell Hébert and Kimberly Schraf that asks: what happens when God walks into a therapist’s office?

WASHINGTON, D.C — Mosaic Theater Company of DC is proud to announce its winter holiday production of Oh, God by Anat Gov. This hilarious, thoughtful, comedy imagines a God running out of options, on his first and only psychotherapy session with Ella, an equally overwhelmed single mother of an autistic child.

Mosaic is producing Oh, God at The Atlas Performing Arts Center from December 12, 2018 through January 13, 2019 as part of its annual Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival. Staged by nationally acclaimed director Michael Bloom (Off-Broadway’s Sight Unseen) as God, multiple Helen Hayes Award nominee Kimberly Schraf (Mosaic’s Vicuna and The American Epilogue) as Ella, and newcomer Sean McCoy, as Lior, her 16 year old son.

Desperate and depressed at the state of affairs, God walks into a therapist’s office. He’s lost his powers and perhaps it’s time to hit reset on humanity. Ella has just one session to talk God off the ledge and save us all. A comedic clash of biblical quotes and modern-day wit, Oh, God forces us to confront our own faith, hubris, and the power of humility.

Director Michael Bloom, who staged a sold-out, two-night workshop version of the play as a two-character chamber piece for Mosaic in 2017, notes “Oh, God is a literate comedy and a clever feminist commentary on the Bible, the patriarchy, and the state of the environment. It’s sly and witty and a wonderful piece for actors and audiences. And it’s even richer now in bringing Ella’s son, Lior, into the room for several disruptions that set the stage for a truly moving conclusion. I’m really glad this three-character version will be the first time the play is being staged as originally intended in the US.”
Oh, God launches Mosaic’s latest Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival. Now in its 18th year, the Voices Festival has been the popular, critically-hailed, yet controversial program that ultimately triggered the dramatic inception of Mosaic in late December of 2014. Throughout its history, The Voices Festival has served as a hub for civic and cultural drama, offering 29 full productions and over 50 readings and workshop presentations to tens of thousands of people. A full history of the Voices Festival and an account of its first national tour earlier this year can be found at mosaictheater.org

Following select performances of Oh, God, Mosaic will host a series of post-show discussions exploring resonant themes in the work with experts in religion, psychotherapy, comedy, along with a special session on mending divisions within communities. These free post-show discussions, beginning immediately after the 90-minute performance, will cover topics such as:

- “Creativity From Creation: Biblical Imagery in the Arts” with Norman Allen (playwright and Unitarian minister), Deryl Davis (PhD in arts and theology) and Rabbi Benjamin Shalva (yogic and spiritual guide) on Sunday, November 23 at 4:30 pm
- “ASD Onstage: How We Talk About Autism” with Monica Adler Werner (Co-Founder, Take2 Summer Camp) and Salman Shamsi (health care professional and parent) on Sunday, January 6 at 4:30 pm
- “Reading Genesis: The Human and the Divine from Creation to the Flood” with biblical scholar Naomi Rosenblatt (author of “After the Apple: Women in the Bible: Timeless Stories of Love, Lust, and Longing”) on Thursday, November 27 at 9:30 pm
- “In The Analyst’s Chair” featuring guest panelists from the Contemporary Freudian Society on Thursday, January 10 at 9:30 pm

On Sunday, December 16 at 4:30 pm following the matinee preview and before the Opening Night performance of Oh, God, acclaimed DC poet and WPFW’s “On The Margin” host, E. Ethelbert Miller, will facilitate a special conversation between Mosaic Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth and Edlavitch DC Jewish Community CEO, Carole Zawatsky, for their first public discussion since Roth’s abrupt departure from the JCC exactly 4 years ago. “Sitting Together/Standing in Solidarity/Becoming Whole” will allow Roth and Zawatsky to reflect on the play’s themes of shedding anger and rethinking authority while placing the work within the context of rising levels of hatred, anti-Semitism, and injustice both nationally and globally.

Notes Roth, “The play really is a master work of the Israeli stage by the late Israeli playwright, Anat Gov, whom we met on a Theater J delegation to the IsraDrama Festival in 2011. She was Israel’s most commercially successful playwright and wrote what turned out to be an international hit. For Mosaic, it’s the Voices Festival’s first-ever comedy, and with this particular comedy comes some of the healing properties of the form, with its power to unite disparate audience members in exhilarating laughter
and bittersweet communion. It’s a thrill to be working with A-List talent on this project, and exciting to think of this as our holiday show; what we’re calling ‘a divinely touched comedy.’ In that spirit, it’s moving for me to be reconnecting with my former boss, Carole Zawatsky, who reached out to me several weeks ago, after the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh that resulted in the worst attack on Jews in American history. We’ve met once to discuss the importance of putting the past in its place as we stand together to face new challenges.”

Oh, God will be followed by the American premiere of SHAME (with Comments from the Populace), a blistering documentary portrait by Einat Weizman and Morad Hassan and adapted by Roth that examines the precariousness of cross-cultural collaboration when Israeli and Palestinian artists work against formidable opposition and a government committed to new passing a new Loyalty and Culture Law. The Voices Festival also includes a workshop reading of The Scream And The Silence from long-standing Voices contributor, Motti Lerner. It is a literary, political drama taking place in the weeks after the tantalizing possibilities and ultimate failure of the 2000 Camp David summit.

Additional Information about Oh, God:
Pay What You Can Preview: Wednesday, December 12 at 8 PM
Opening/Press Night: Sunday, December 16 at 7:30 PM
Closes: Sunday, January 13 at 3:00 PM
Ticket Prices: $20–$65
Performance Times: 8 PM Wednesday–Saturday; 3 PM Saturday & Sunday

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: https://www.mosaictheater.org/oh-god

VALET PARKING AVAILABLE AT 1360 H ST NE on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, as well as Saturday and Sunday matinees.

About Mosaic Theater Company of DC
Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, and building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making our theater a model of diversity and inclusion at every strata, on stage and off, Mosaic invests in the new as we keep abreast of our changing and challenging times to ensure that our theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order. Visit us at mosaictheater.org