

Mosaic Theater Company Media Release

Ari Roth, *Founding Artistic Director* • Serge Seiden, *Managing Director & Producer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC ANNOUNCES WORLD PREMIERE OF MOTTI LERNER'S *AFTER THE WAR*, FOURTH INSTALLMENT IN "VOICES FROM A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST FESTIVAL" UNDER THE DIRECTION OF SINAI PETER

Explosive new drama about classically trained musicians from the writer and director of The Admission features Helen Hayes Award nominees Paul Morella, Barbara Rappaport, and Michael Tolaydo.

(Washington, DC) Mosaic Theater Company of DC's Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival continues this month with the world premiere of **Motti Lerner's** powerful new family drama, ***After the War***, under the direction of his longtime collaborator **Sinai Peter**. This fourth installment in the critically acclaimed Voices Festival is the latest play from Lerner, one of Israel's most lauded and internationally-produced living playwrights, and follows an Israeli family—raised on the beauty of classical music—now bitterly divided over politics.

Lerner, winner of the Prime Minister of Israel Award for Writers (1994) and the Landau Prize for the Performing Arts (2014), is particularly well-known to DC audiences. *After the War* is Lerner's seventh DC production, following *Exile in Jerusalem* (Theater J, 1998), *The Murder of Isaac* (2000, commissioned translation for the inaugural season of "Voices From a Changing Israel" festival, subsequently produced at Baltimore's Center Stage), *Passing the Love of Women* (2004, co-written with Israel Zamir, adapted from IB Singer), *Pangs of the Messiah* (2007, directed by Peter), and *Benedictus* (2009; an Iran-Israel-U.S. collaboration with Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, Roberta Levitow, Daniel Michaelson and Torange Yeghiazarian). Lerner's most successful and controversial piece, *The Admission*, received a workshop reading as part of the Voices Festival in 2011 before a full staging by Peter in 2014. Despite attempts at the DCJCC to dampen the play's impact—including a downgrade from its initial 34 performance run to a shorter 16 performance workshop presentation—*The Admission* was one of the most highly acclaimed new plays of the season, and transferred from its sold out run at Theater J to a 22 performance run at Studio Theatre, under the independent producing banner of "Busboys & Poets Presents." It received a 2015 Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding New Play.

Lerner's new *After the War*, his most personal play to date, tells the story of a left-leaning concert pianist who attempts to make amends after an 18-year exile from the land of his birth and the family he still loves. Instead he faces excoriating rebuke as protesters and family alike agitate to cancel the pianist's upcoming

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performance following his criticism of the recent war in Lebanon. The play speaks of the artist's responsibility in an embattled society and illustrates the entrenched divisions between elite cultural purveyors and working class pragmatists; between right-wing and left-wing Israelis; and by extension, between conservative and liberal forces in a divided American Jewish Community.

"I'm proud to be producing Motti Lerner once again in DC and feel like Mosaic Theater was created, in part, to make a home for artists like Lerner whose moral resolve to tell difficult truths only grows more passionate and committed over time," shares Founding Artistic Director **Ari Roth**. "*After the War* reveals the anguish of the artist losing his standing within an embattled society as it turns hardened in its defensiveness, repelling criticism in ways that harm the collective soul of the nation. The play has something of a meta-theatrical quality, as it tells several dramas at once—the drama of an Israeli family as depicted in the play; the more autobiographical story of Motti Lerner himself, both admired and castigated by an Israeli society he is both leaving and returning back to; and beyond that, the collective drama of an artistic entity that finds itself at odds with its own community because of the self-critical nature of the work it feels compelled to present. Working on several metaphorical levels at once, the play, at its heart, is a wrenching family drama set to the unbelievable sadness and beauty of Beethoven's 'Pathétique.'"

The play follows **Joel (Paul Morella)**, a world-renown concert pianist and Israeli expatriate who returns to Tel Aviv following an 18-year absence to perform with Zuben Mehta and the Israeli Philharmonic, taking the place of a British pianist who has decided to observe the international boycott against Israel. But a warm reunion between Joel, his hot-tempered brother **Freddie (James Whalen)**, and his aging, still adoring mother **Bella (Barbara Rappaport)** turns fractious when Joel learns of the passing of his father three weeks earlier—a death which has been kept from him because of the profound political differences between father and son prompted by Joel's criticism of the first war in Lebanon a generation ago. Joel's hopes for a more promising future in Israel are nevertheless renewed by his unfolding connection with Bella's beguiling Romanian nurse, **Trudy (Tonya Beckman)**, an aspiring pianist who seems to worship Joel. But the homecoming erodes into an all-out battle when Freddie learns of Joel's public pronouncements criticizing the most recent war in Lebanon, where Joel's own estranged son **Izzy (Guy Kapulnik)**, has been fighting as an IDF soldier. Meanwhile, Trudy's Romanian ex-husband **Bernard (Michael Tolaydo)**, a one-time doctor fallen on hard times, offers comic relief as witness to this Israeli family's travails.

"*After the War*, by my longtime partner Motti Lerner, portrays the profound dilemmas of an artist who opposes openly the politics of war and oppression," explains **Peter**. "In the midst of our current struggle in Israel over our right to free artistic expression—a right challenged by the right-wing government—there is a special need for Mosaic Theater's decisiveness to give a platform to our alternative voice."

Motti Lerner (Playwright) is one of Israel's most lauded playwrights and screenwriters, and most produced playwrights internationally, with recent productions in the US, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, South Africa, Australia, Canada and India. He is the author of *Kastner*, *Pangs of the Messiah*, *Paula*, and *Pollard*, all originally produced by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv; *Exile in Jerusalem* and *Passing the Love of Women* first produced at Habimah National Theatre; *Autumn* at Beit Lessin Theatre, Tel Aviv; *Hard Love* at the Municipal Theatre in Haifa; and *The Hastening of the End* at the Khan Theatre in Jerusalem. His play *The Murder of Isaac* was first produced at Heilbron Theatre in Germany, Center Stage in Baltimore, and at Tel Aviv University Theatre; *Benedictus* first produced by Golden Thread Theatre in San Francisco; *In the Dark* by Chingari Theatre in Delhi (2011); *Paulus* by Silk Road Rising Theater in Chicago; and *The*

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Admission at Theater J in Washington DC, which has produced five other works of his since 1998. Screenplays for produced Israeli films include *Loves in Betania*; *The Kastner Trial*; *Bus Number 300*; *Egoz*; 12 episodes of the TV drama series *The Institute*; *A Battle in Jerusalem*; *The Silence of the Sirens*; *Altalena*; *Spring 1941*; and *Kapo in Jerusalem*. He is a recipient of the Best Play Award (1985) and the Israeli Motion Picture Academy Award for Best TV Drama in 1995 and in 2004. He won the Prime Minister's of Israel Award for his creative work (1994) and the Landau Prize for the Performing Arts (2014). He is author of the books *According to Chekhov* (2011) and *The Playwright's Purpose* (2015), both available in English. He has taught playwriting at Duke University and Knox College, and was a fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. *After the War*, his latest work, was workshopped at Seminar Hakibbutzim and Habimah Theatre this past spring, in preparation for its world premiere staging at Mosaic Theater Company of DC.

Sinai Peter (*Director*) is an actor, director, and lecturer, originally from Tel Aviv. He has served as Artistic Director of the Haifa Municipal Theatre (2000-05). Acting credits include *Suru*, *Yona*, and *Beyond the Sea* (film), as well *Hatufim* and *Eliezer Ben Yeuda* (TV). Directing credits include *Return to Haifa* (Cameri Theatre); *Arturo Ui*, *Transfer*, and *Grounded* (Haifa Theatre); *Machinal*, *The New Jerusalem*, and *Man Equals Man* (Khan Theater); *The Peacock of Silwan* (Jaffa Theatre); *Pangs of the Messiah*, *The Accident*, *Return to Haifa*, and *The Admission* (Theater J). He teaches theater at Seminar Hakibutzim and at the college HaGalilee Hama`aravi. This spring he is teaching as a visiting professor at American University.

The creative team for *After the War* includes Israeli set and costumes designer **Frida Shoham**, lighting designer **Michael Lincoln**, composer and sound designer **Eric Shimelonis**, properties designer and costumes assistant **Michelle Elwyn**, Romanian dialect consultant **Cristina Bejan**, and stage manager **Allie Roy**.

For full company bios and additional production information visit mosaictheater.org/after-the-war. Full company information is included below.

This fourth installment in the 2016 Voices Festival follows *Wrestling Jerusalem*, *I Shall Not Hate*, and *The Promised Land (Eretz Chadasha)*, each playing to sold-out houses and critical praise. Up next in the Festival, on April 11, is the American premiere film screening of ***Return to Haifa – The Other's Story***, a documentary film by **David A. Goldenberg** chronicling the Cameri Theatre's adaptation of the **Ghassan Kanafani** novella, adapted by **Boaz Gaon** and also directed by **Peter**, which played as part of the Voices Festival in 2011. The Festival then concludes with **Leila Buck's** poignant solo show ***Hkeele (Talk to Me)***, a probing portrait of a woman reconciling with the memory of her grandmother and her own American-Lebanese identity. Directed by **Shana Gold**, this limited three-performance run takes place in the 200-seat Kogod Cradle at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater on April 30 and May 1, 2016. (Forthcoming press releases will offer casting, programming updates and key bios for later offerings in the Festival.)

The Voices Festival has been further enhanced this year by a robust schedule of free community programming supplementing nearly every performance, including discussions and talkbacks featuring a wide range of experts, faith leaders, community leaders, artists, activists, politicians, and audience members. Check out mosaictheater.org/voices-festival-events for frequent updates on events and panelists surrounding the Voices Festival.

***After the War* Opening Night:**

Monday, March 28 at 7:30 PM

Production Information

[*After the War*](#)

By Motti Lerner

Directed by Sinai Peter

March 24-April 17, 2016

ABOUT: This new play from the author of *The Admission* tells the story of Joel, a world-famous concert pianist and Israeli expatriate who returns to Tel Aviv following an 18-year absence to perform with the Israeli Philharmonic. Borrowing from events in the life of revered, controversial Israeli ex-pat Daniel Barenboim, the play examines the role of the artist as public citizen and prod to the conscience of a harshly critical community. Following the traumatic fallout from the 2006 war in Lebanon, Joel tries to make amends for the sharp political differences that have estranged him from his beloved mother, his aggressive brother, and his opera-studying son suffering from a fresh case of post-traumatic-stress-syndrome. *After The War* explores whether true healing can ever be achieved, be it through the performance of art, or the hopeful expressions of a fiercely committed activist. Staged by longtime *Voices Festival* resident director Sinai Peter in the Lang Theatre. Part of the Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival.

CAST:

Trudy: Tonya Beckman

Izzy: Guy Kapulnik

Joel: Paul Morella

Bella: Barbara Rappaport

Bernard: Michael Tolaydo

Freddie: James Whalen

CREATIVE TEAM:

Author: Motti Lerner

Director: Sinai Peter

Set and costume designer: Frida Shoham

Lighting designer: Michael Lincoln

Composer and sound designer: Eric Shimelonis

Properties designer and costumes assistant: Michelle Elwyn

Romanian dialect consultant: Cristina Bejan

Stage manager: Allie Roy

Plan Your Visit:

TICKETS: Tickets for *After the War* are \$40-\$60, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as student discounts, neighborhood nights, community nights, military and first responder discounts, and others, visit mosaictheater.org/tickets. Tickets may be purchased online at mosaictheater.org, or by phone at 202-399-7993 ext. 2, or at the Atlas Performing Arts Center Box Office at 1333 H Street NE, Washington DC 20002.

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Atlas Performing Arts Center Box Office: 202-399-7993 ext. 2

PRICING TIERS:

General: \$40-60 tickets

Senior: 10% discount

Military and first responder: 10% discount

Under 30 and student: \$20 tickets

Neighborhood Night: \$15 tickets on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sunday nights for Mosaic Theater neighbors in Northeast or Southeast.

Community Conversation: \$10 tickets once a month for Mosaic Theater neighbors in Northeast or Southeast.

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Preview performances at 8:00 PM Thursday 3/24 (Pay-What-You-Can), Friday 3/25, Saturday 3/26, and Sunday 3/27 (Pay-What-You-Can)

Opening night at 7:30 PM on Monday, 3/28

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8:00 PM

Student matinee at 11:00 AM on Thursday, 4/14

Saturdays at 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM

Sundays at 4:00 PM

Closing performance at 7:00 PM on Sunday, 4/17

Full calendar: mosaictheater.org/after-the-war

DC STREETCAR: Mosaic Theater Company is in residence at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. Patrons arriving at the Union Station Metro Station (Red Line) can catch the new DC Streetcar by exiting the station, and following the signs to the bus parking garage. Exit the back of the garage and turn right onto H Street, where the Eastbound Streetcar can be caught in the middle of the bridge.

Exit the Westbound Streetcar at H St & 13th St. The Eastbound Streetcar can be caught across the street at the same intersection. **The DC Streetcar is free until further notice.**

METRO AND METROBUS: If coming by the Metro Center or Chinatown Metro Stations, patrons can catch the X2 or X9 busses, getting off at H St & 14th St NE.

Additional directions: mosaictheater.org/plan-your-trip.

PARKING: Mosaic Theater Company has partnered with the Atlas and H Street Parking to provide valet parking throughout the season for nearly every performance. Patrons can pre-purchase valet parking for \$20, which can either be used at the nearby valet drop-off, or as a self-parking voucher at the lot at 1008 H Street NE.

For more information, or to purchase valet parking: mosaictheater.org/parking.

Mosaic 8 packages are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Atlas Performing Arts Center box office at 202-399-7993 ext 2, or by visiting mosaictheater.org.

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Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making powerful, transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones and providing audiences with a dynamic new venue for the dramatizing and debating of ideas including an annual intercultural festival, like our acclaimed Voices From a Changing Middle East series.

With an emphasis on the playwright's vibrant voice, muscular structures and a powerful collaborative fusion with directors of vision and story-telling integrity, Mosaic plays marry a love of ideas, character, conflict, immediacy, and personal and public resonance, working with the finest actors in our city to create thrilling performances that matter. Our plays speak truth to power and to the private parts of our soul prompting reflection, discussion and uplift, while creating lasting impression; in short, we make art with a purpose and strive for impact.

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Opening Nights for Mosaic Theater Company of DC's inaugural 2015-16 season:

Unexplored Interior: Monday, November 2nd at 7:30 PM

The Gospel of Lovingkindness: Sunday, December 13th at 7:30 PM

Wrestling Jerusalem: Thursday, January 7th at 8:00 PM

I Shall Not Hate: Monday, January 25th at 7:30 PM

The Promised Land: Thursday, February 18th at 8:00 PM (at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company)

After the War: Monday, March 28th at 7:30 PM

Hkeelee (Talk to Me): Saturday, April 30th at 8:00 PM (at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater)

When January Feels Like Summer: Sunday, May 22nd at 7:30 PM

Meet Mosaic:

MosaicTheater.org

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MosaicTheater): facebook.com/MosaicTheater

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[Blog](http://mosaictheater.org/blog): mosaictheater.org/blog