



**Remember the Women Institute & Marlene Meyerson JCC  
Manhattan**

in partnership with National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, Jewish Theatre Circle,  
& National Jewish Theater Foundation

*present*

**Women, Theater, and the Holocaust**  
**2026 Yom HaShoah Program**  
April 14, 2026, 7:00 PM

*Introduction*

Rabbi Yael Rapport, Director of Special Initiatives, Marlene Meyerson JCC  
Dr. Rochelle Saidel, Executive Director, Remember the Women Institute

*Excerpts from Hannah Senesh*

written & directed by David Schechter

*Pour Out Your Blessings*

written & directed by Jessica Feder-Birnbaum

*Chava & Zenia*

adapted & directed by Dr. Meghan Brodie

*Eye Witness*

written by Cynthia L. Cooper &  
directed by Jessica Bauman

*Panel Discussion & Reception*

**Remember** the **Women** Institute

**marlene  
meyerson jcc**  
manhattan



## Welcome to Our Women, Theater, and the Holocaust Yom HaShoah Program

This is the eleventh anniversary of Remember the Women Institute's annual **Women, Theater, and the Holocaust Yom HaShoah Program**. The sixth edition of our interactive on-line publication, *Women, Theater, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*, written and edited by Rochelle G. Saidel, Karen Shulman, and Bess Wadler, is available on our website, [rememberwomen.org](http://rememberwomen.org).

For 29 years, [Remember the Women Institute](http://Remember the Women Institute), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation based in New York City, has conducted and encouraged research and cultural activities to include women in history, with special emphasis on the Holocaust. Through research and related activities, the stories of women—from the point of view of women—are made available to be integrated into history and collective memory. *VIOLATED! Women in Holocaust and Genocide*, the Institute's international group art exhibition on sexual violence during the Holocaust and other genocides, was shown at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York City in spring 2018. The work of the Institute influences academic research and publications, as well as theater, fine arts, film, and popular culture, by encouraging the inclusion of all of humanity in historical and commemorative representations. Academic fields such as History, Humanities, Holocaust Studies, Theater Studies, Political Science, Sociology, Women's Studies, Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies benefit from our work. Remember the Women Institute has published books and organized groundbreaking panels and workshops on women and the Holocaust internationally, as well as cooperating with individuals and other organizations. Donations to further our work are welcome.

Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel is the founding executive director of [Remember the Women Institute](http://Remember the Women Institute), which for 29 years has conducted research and activities that include women in Holocaust history. She authored *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp* and three other Holocaust-related books, edited *Fiorello's Sister: Gemma La Guardia Gluck's Story*, and co-edited *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust, VIOLATED! Women in Holocaust and Genocide*, and the *Women, Theater, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*. She has written numerous book chapters and articles on the Holocaust, curated exhibitions, consulted on films, and lectured internationally for decades.

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The Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, together with their community, creates opportunities for people to connect, grow, and learn within an ever-changing Jewish landscape. The vision of the JCC imagines Jewish life that is diverse and engages meaningfully with its values, culture, and ideas in everyday lives.

See [www.mmjccm.org](http://www.mmjccm.org).

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### *Acknowledgements*

Remember the Women Institute thanks: our partner, Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, especially Rabbi Yael Rapport, for inviting us to share their space and providing support; and our other partners, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, National Jewish Theater Foundation, and Jewish Theatre Circle.

We thank Patti Askwith Kenner and Five Millers Family Foundation for generously providing funding for this event and publication of our resource handbook.

We thank Cynthia L. Cooper and Dr. Meghan Brodie, our invaluable project colleagues, for sharing their time, talent, and love of meaningful theater for eleven years. We thank our talented performers, directors, and playwrights. We thank Jeff Segall for taking wonderful photographs.

*This event is part of the National Jewish Theater Foundation's Remembrance Readings.*

## Program

### Introduction

Rabbi Yael Rapport, Director of Special Initiatives, Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan  
Dr. Rochelle Saidel, Executive Director, Remember the Women Institute

## Readings

### Excerpts from *Hannah Senesh*

Performed by Jennifer Apple

Written and Directed by David Schechter

Developed in collaboration with and originally performed by Lori Wilner

Based on the diary and poems of Hannah Senesh

**\*Jennifer Apple (Hannah Senesh)** is a multi-hyphenated artist who is in playful pursuit of truth, vulnerability, & empathy in the arts. She originated the role of Anna in *The Band's Visit* First National Tour & won the Elliott Norton Award for her role as Dina at The Huntington/SpeakEasy Stage production. With an MFA in Acting from ACT, Jennifer has performed in NYC and all around the country, originated new works and recurred on *Law & Order: SVU* and *New Amsterdam*. As an acting coach, she specializes in helping actors find monologues and the BFA/MFA circuit. Jennifer is also the host of the Empowered Artist Collective Podcast, building community and sharing valuable insights for artists at all stages of their journeys.

**David Schechter (Playwright & Director)** A high point in David's life was performing *Hannah Senesh* for her mother and brother. David co-wrote Steve Buscemi's Independent Spirit Award-winning film *Interview* and Stanley Tucci's film *Blind Date*. He has co-written and/or directed over 150 productions, including: *Soul Doctor* (Broadway, co-writers: Shomo Carlebach, Danny Wise), *The Jungle Book* (Broadway, co-writer: Barry Keating), *Almost September* (7 LA Drama-Logue Awards, and 8 Bay Area Critics Circle Awards, co-writer: Steven Lutvak), and *A Talmud Tale* (co-writer: Ned Ginsburg). He adapted Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Gimpel the Fool*, garnering Singer's personal endorsement. He shared an Obie Award for Elizabeth Swados's *Nightclub Cantata*. [www.DavidSchechter.com](http://www.DavidSchechter.com)

### *Pour Out Your Blessings* by Jessica Feder-Birnbaum

Directed by Jessica Feder-Birnbaum

**Amy Erlanger (Dita)** is a 27-year-old performer. Her credits include *54 Below*, *Joe's Pub*, and *Don't Tell Mama*. Currently, she performs with EPIC Players. Being able to perform in this show is such an honor, and she hopes you enjoy it. Never let history be erased.

**Jessica Feder-Birnbaum (Playwright & Director)** is a New York City-based playwright who writes plays about ordinary people with big dreams. Her plays have been produced locally, regionally, and online. She wishes to thank Rochelle Saidel, Cindy Cooper, Remember the Women Institute, and the JCC for allowing her to bring Dita Kurschner's story to life.

**\*Eve Sorel (Klari)** has appeared in four countries and all media.

### *Chava & Zenia* adapted by Meghan Brodie from *Letters from the Afterlife*, edited by Goldie Morgentaler

Directed by Dr. Meghan Brodie

**Calista Baechtold (Narrator)** is a senior double majoring in Theater & Media and Communication Studies. Calista has been in many Ursinus productions including *Afternoon at the Seaside*, *Execution of Justice*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the world premiere of *Captain Darling*. Calista has also performed in a shadow cast of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* as well as a performance of *The Pragmatists*.

**Meghan Brodie (Adapter & Director)** is Professor of Theater at Ursinus College. She is also a director, dramaturg, and playwright. Meghan directed the English-language world premiere of *In the Underworld*, a darkly comic operetta

written by Germaine Tillion while Tillion was in Ravensbrück concentration camp during World War II. Her other directing credits include plays by dramatists such as Kate Foley, Charlotte Jones, Emily Mann, Sarah Ruhl, Diana Son, Paula Vogel, Bess Wohl, and Laura Wade. Meghan holds a Ph.D. from Cornell University. [meghanbrodie.com](http://meghanbrodie.com)

**Anna Cisler (Dramaturg)** is a junior at Ursinus College pursuing degrees in English and Theater. Currently, she is the dramaturg and assistant stage manager for Ursinus's production of *The Moors*. Previous credits include working as a stagehand on *Matilda The Musical*, assistant stage-managing *Fun Home*, and acting as the dramaturg for an *Agatha Christie Double Bill*. Anna is honored to work with the cast and Meghan Brodie on such a beautiful story.

**Mel Petro (Chava)** is a junior at Ursinus College, majoring in both Theater and Performing and Visual Arts Design & Technology (PVDT). Mel has acted in Ursinus Theater's *Captain Darling*, *Afternoon at the Seaside*, *The Patient*, and *Fun Home* as well as Breakaway Student Productions' *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Mel also appeared in the student-directed *The Pragmatists*.

**Laisha Torres (Zenia)** is a senior triple major in Theater, Music, and Spanish. She has performed in many productions at Ursinus College, including *The Moors*, *Fun Home*, *Into the Breaches!*, *Everybody*, and *Working*.

***Eye Witness* by Cynthia L. Cooper**  
Directed by Jessica Bauman

**Jessica Bauman (Director)** is a director and community engaged theater maker. Together with Mexican director Ramón Verdugo, she co-created and co-directed *The Frontera Project*, an interactive, bilingual theater experience that uses theater, music, movement, and play to actively engage the audience in a compassionate, often joyous conversation about life at the US/Mexico Border. *The Frontera Project* has been seen at theaters and universities across the US, and at Teatro Las Tablas in Tijuana, Mexico. Jessica is currently an Artist in Residence at University Settlement, where she is developing "Anyone There?," a new piece exploring the fundamental human experience of Connection in the context of the Loneliness Epidemic.

**Cynthia L. Cooper (Playwright)** is an award-winning playwright whose works have been produced in the U.S, Canada, Europe, and Israel. In New York, her work has been at Primary Stages, Women's Project (*How She Played the Game*), Wings (*Strange Light*), Vaclav Havel Library Foundation, Town Hall, Anne Frank Center USA (*Silence Not, A Love Story*), elsewhere, and in Chicago, DC, Boston, LA, Maryland, Montreal, Budapest, more. *I Was A Stranger Too* was a finalist in the Jewish Plays Project and the Trish Vrandenberg Prize. A two-time Jerome Fellow, her plays are in 17 volumes This is her 11<sup>th</sup> year of participating in *Women, Theatre and the Holocaust* with Remember the Women Institute. Special thanks to Charles Flickinger. [www.cyncooperwriter.net](http://www.cyncooperwriter.net)

**\*Lynda Sturner (Buba)** is an actor whose credits include: Broadway 1964: *Oliver*, Off Broadway 1970: *The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds*. In Provincetown: *Anna Christie*, *The Food Chain*, *A Perfect Ganesb*, *The Allergist's Wife*, *The Gulls*; and *Gamma Rays*. AWARDS: *Cape Cod Times* Best Actress: 2009 *Gamma Rays*; Best Actress the Dublin International Gay Theater Festival for *Super-Lubricated*, co-written with Jim Dalglish. She was Artistic Director of the Provincetown Rep and Playwright's Forum NYC. She is past president of The League of Professional Theater Women, and a Trustee of Helltown Players. A member of BMI workshop, the Woman's Project and Playwrights Unit, the Actor's Studio.

**\*Julie Voshell (Yana)** is a graduate of North Carolina School of the Arts. Theatre: Barrow Group: *The Pavilion* ('NY Times': Voshell is "Dryly Funny"), *Fast and Fab*, *According to the Chorus* and *Letters to Sala* by Arlene Hutton; BAM: *The Beast*; New Circle Theatre Company: *Entrepreneur* by Cynthia L. Cooper; B Street Theatre: *My Name is Asher Lev*; *Bubbles* Comedy Show at Nuyorican, The Laurie Beechman Theatre, and Palm Beach Country Club; Broadway 1st National Tours – *Movin' Out* and *Swing!* Film: *Alberto and the Concrete Jungle* - Amazon (lead role/Marina), *Scary Movie 5*, *Diva*. TV: *Diabolical*, *Shadow of Doubt*. [Julievoshell.com](http://Julievoshell.com). Luedtke Agency.

\*denotes member of Actors' Equity