

THE APPLE

DOES NOT FALL

JOURNEYS OF A RUSSIAN-JEWISH FAMILY



AUGUST 16-26, 2018

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***Apple Does Not Fall:
Journeys of a Russian-Jewish Family***

TWO PLAYS BY BENA SHKLYANDY AND KEVIN OLSON.

HOW MANY BUSHEL AM I WORTH?

Thursday, August 16, 7:30 pm

Sunday August 19, 4 pm

Wednesday August 22, 4 pm

Saturday, August 25, 8:30 pm

Sunday August 26, 2 pm

AND THEN WHAT?

Saturday, August 18, 8:30 pm

Sunday August 19, 1:30 pm

Tuesday, August 21, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, August 22, 1:30 pm

Thursday August 23, 7:30 pm

NEW, ORIGINAL SHORT FILM CREATED BY ABIGAIL MATZ.

**CULTURAL INHERITANCE: STORIES OF
GRANDCHILDREN OF SOVIET-JEWISH IMMIGRANTS**

Screenings after all performances.

THE PLAYS

FirstHand Theatrical, Producer

Kevin Olson, Director and Co-Playwright

Bena Shklyanoy, Co-Playwright

Marissa Geocaris, Lighting Designer

Jeremiah Hutchinson, House Manager

Tess Naval, Assistant Director and Stage Manager

Francine Schulman, Costume Coordinator

Clara Tomaz, Visuals and Motion Graphics Designer ('How Many Bushels Am I Worth?'), Videographer

HOW MANY BUSHELS AM I WORTH?

Cast

Bena Hannah Antman

Alex Alex Ireys

AND THEN WHAT?

Cast

Bena Hannah Antman

Khanah Kelly Levander

Avrum Howard Raik

Kutsya Matthew Schufreider

Dinah Heidi Katz

Leib Alex Ireys

Esther Rachel Silvert

Polina Maggie Cain

THE FILM

CULTURAL INHERITANCE: STORIES OF GRANDCHILDREN OF SOVIET-JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

Abigail Matz, Producer, Creator and Director

Orel Chollette, Producer

Julian Nisenboim, Cinematographer

Appearing in the Film

Granddaughters

Abigail Matz

Rebecca Pasman

Grandmothers

Anna Kazinsky

Alla Pasman

Bena Shklyanoy

Narrators

Bob Manewith

Bena Shklyanoy

PROGRAM NOTES

These plays, together, cover over 100 years in the lives of Bena Shklyanoy and her family. One is not a sequel to the other. Bena's family were average folks living their lives, often under difficult circumstances – typhus, Stalin's purges, World War II, the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and shortages of life's basic necessities – everything from milk to toilet paper. As Jews they also suffered from pogroms and endured severe and too-often violent anti-Semitism.

This family's story serves as a master narrative of sorts for the millions and millions of Jews and others living throughout the decades of the pre-Bolshevik Russian Empire as well as the Soviet Union. Along the way, we hope you will admire their pluck, smile and laugh at their antics and are moved by their stories and accomplishments.

To learn more about the history of Bena's family, please visit her website at appledoesnotfall.com.

Thanks for attending.



Kevin Olson

For me, this film connects the dots from my grandma, Bena Shklyanoy's, life in the USSR and the tough decision to emigrate in the 1970's, to my career as a Chicago based IT Consultant on assignment in New York City. They were so brave. They didn't know where they were going or what to expect. They made the sacrifice for us, who weren't even born yet.

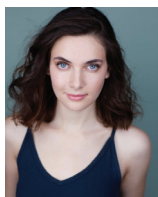
In the movie, my friend Becky and I talk to our grandmas about keeping the traditions from "the old country" and how that heritage manifests in their and our lives today. We easily slip between Russian and English as we talk of food, family and sacrifice.

Creating and directing this movie was an incredibly emotional and meaningful experience. Thank you for coming to see it.



Abbie Matz

CAST AND CREW



HANNAH ANTMAN (Bena) is originally from Wilmette and is so excited to be performing with First Hand Theatrical. This May, she graduated from Boston University's School of Theatre with a BFA in Acting. Around Boston, she has performed with Open Theatre Project and at the Boston Children's Museum with City Stage Co. She is an alumnus of the Young People's Company at Piven Theatre Workshop. Hannah is also an improviser and stand-up comedian. Having recently moved back to Chicago, she plans to pursue theatre, comedy, and deep-dish pizza. hannahantman.com



MAGGIE CAIN (Polina) appeared as Amanda in Mary-Arrchie's *The Glass Menagerie* and in three seasons as Mrs. Claus in *Barney the Elf*. Other credits include *Men Should Weep* (Jeff Award for Best Play), *Kin* and *Stage Door* with Griffin Theatre, *Pornography* and *Moment* with Steep Theatre, *Good Boys and True*, *Stop Kiss* and *Book of Days* at Raven and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook* at Theatre Mir. She has appeared on *Chicago Fire* and in *Watching Game of Thrones with Your Mom*, and is represented by Big Mouth Talent.



OREL CHOLLETTE (Producer, *Cultural Inheritance*) is a Chicago based producer, director, and cinematographer consistently knocking out exciting visuals for brands and artists of all kinds. Understanding the power of visuals, Orel gives ideas and stories the spotlight they deserve. Graduating in Film Production from Columbia College Chicago, Orel and his experienced team operates the Chollette production company, working with companies such as Red Bull, BET, Vans, and more.



MARISSA GEOCARIS (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be working with such a talented group of people on *The Apple Does Not Fall*. She also works around Chicago and the surrounding suburbs as a freelance lighting designer. Previous shows include: *The Wild Party* for Music for Theatre Chicago, *The Wizard of Oz* for Big Noise Theatre and *Mary Poppins Jr.* for Thin Ice Ensemble Theatre.



ALEX IREYS (Leib, Alex) is thrilled to be a part of such a moving piece of theater. He graduated with a BFA in theater performance from Virginia Commonwealth University and completed The Second City Conservatory. Alex is currently a resident artist with Filament Theater Company. He was last seen in Ghostlight Ensemble's *An Ideal Husband* as Lord Goring. Alex is repped by the wonderful Big Mouth Talent Agency. He would like to thank everyone who made him coffee before rehearsals.



HEIDI KATZ (Dinah) has appeared in Piven Theatre Workshop's *Ivanov* and *The Good Doctor*, and as part of the Martin family in Interrobang Theatre Project's 2017 production of Deanna Jents' play *Falling*. She has also worked Oil Lamp Theater (*The Girl in the Freudian Slip*), Halcyon Theatre (*The Wild Duck*), and with Northlight Theatre, Polarity Ensemble Theatre, and Silk Road Rising. Off stage, she practices law representing public schools and colleges, libraries, and park districts. Gratitude to Kevin and Bena for the chance to be part of this project, and to honor the courage and contributions of the many who came from other countries to contribute so much to this one.



KELLY LEVANDER (Khanah) has been acting in theater and film for over fifteen years. The diverse theater and film community brought Kelly and her husband to Chicago in 2010 where she has since had the opportunity to work with many different theaters including Emergent Theatre, Metropolis Performing Arts Center, Provision Theater, Spartan Theatre and Muse of Fire. Prior to relocating to Chicago, Kelly worked around the country with Virginia Stage Company (LORT), Theater of the American South, and A. D. Players to name a few. Kelly received her MFA in Acting from Regent University in 2009.



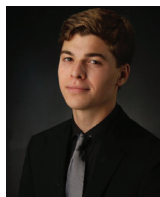
ESTHER MANEWITH (Public Relations) is a free-lance public relations writer/consultant who has been in the business since 1971. She has written and placed stories for clients in print and on radio and cable TV across Chicagoland. Her articles have appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others. She taught "Public Relations for Small Business and Industry" at Chicago's Columbia College for 14 years and at Oakton Community College for three years. Ms. Manewith has a Bachelor's Degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.



ABIGAIL MATZ (Producer, Creator, and Director, *Cultural Inheritance*) is a first-generation American, born and raised in Highland Park, IL. Her parents immigrated to the United States from the Ukraine – it was the Soviet Union at that time. She graduated from Indiana University, Bloomington in December 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Informatics as well as 3 minors: Entrepreneurship, Marketing, and General Business. She joined Ernst & Young's Financial Services Office as a Technical Advisory Consultant in September 2017. She travels back and forth between New York and Chicago for her current assignment.



TESS NAVAL (Assistant Director and Stage Manager) is a Stage Manager recently relocated to Chicago. Recent Stage Management work: *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Peter Pan* with Music Theater Works, *Cendrillon* with North Park University, *As You Like It* with Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, *Story + Sketch* with Piven Theatre Workshop, *The Trojan Women* with Three Crows Theatre, *The Jason Bishop Show*, SeaWorld San Antonio, *Mary Poppins* and *Thoreau* with Berkshire Theatre Group. She has a BFA in Stage Management from Boston University. Visit tesscnaval.com for more!



JULIAN NISENBOIM (Cinematographer, *Cultural Inheritance*) is a recent graduate from Deerfield High School. He plans to study film at Syracuse University this upcoming fall. He recently screened his documentary, *The Choice*, at the San Francisco International Film Festival as well as the JCC Chicago Jewish Film Festival. He is currently interning for an upcoming documentary, *Art of Playboy*. He plans on pursuing film as a full-time job.



KEVIN OLSON & FIRST HAND THEATRICAL (Co-Playwright and Director) established First Hand Theatrical in 2013 and has created five original scripts for the company – *How Many Bushels Am I Worth?* created with Bena Shklyanoy and premiering here at the Piven; *And Then What?* created with Bena Shklyanoy (presented here at the Piven as well as at AS220 Black Box in Providence, RI in July 2017); *Lifepoems in Motion* (presented at the Providence Fringe Festival in July 2016); *Interrupting The Sermon* (presented at the Indianapolis Fringe Festival in 2015); and *This Is My Story: Mayeses, 1938-1948* (presented at URI Feinstein Campus Arts and Culture in 2016). First Hand Theatrical creates original theater productions using primary source material drawn mainly from diverse personal, cultural and social histories.

Kevin holds a M.F.A. in Theatre Directing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and a B.S. in Speech and Theatre from SUNY Oneonta. He received a Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle KUDOS Award for his production of Brian Friel's *Translations* at University of Minnesota Theatre.



HOWARD A. RAIK (Avrum) is honored to portray Avrum Averbukh in *And Then What?*, a story with many parallels in the lives of Howard's own family's past in Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Earlier this year Howard was seen in *Heartbleed* (Rhino Fest) and *Ivanov* (One Year Chekhov). He has played the title role in *Tuesdays With Morrie* in two productions (MadKap and Gallery); Nunzio in *Over the River and Through the Woods*, also two productions (Gallery and James Downing); Skelly Mannor in *The Rimers of Eldritch* (GreenMan); and Martin in *Ashes and Acceptance* (Gorilla Tango). Center Stage – NEIU). Howard has also appeared in productions at StageLeft – Leapfest, Polarity Ensemble, Center Stage – NEIU, Tabula Rasa, Forget Me Not, Strangeloop, Wackadoo, Goat Song Theatre, St. Sebastian Players, Revolution Theatre, and Unity Players, as well as in several student short films and independent short films.



MATTHEW W. SCHUFREIDER (Kutsya) is honored to be part of this wonderful production. Having been from Grayslake, he took a chance on theatre and has been performing all around Illinois for the last five years. Credits include Ben Banks in *Father of the Bride* (Brightside Theatre), Buck in *The Creator* (Three Brothers Theatre) and George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* (Woodstock Musical Theatre Company). He has also been in several musicals including *A Christmas Story*, *Legally Blonde*, and *The Addams Family*. Matthew goes to school at Columbia College Chicago where he studies Acting and Education. Much thanks to Kevin and Bena for coming together and making this beautiful show. Enjoy the show.

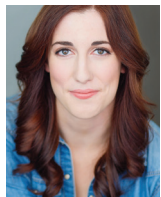


BENA SHKLYANDOY (Co-Playwright and Creator of the website that inspires these plays -- appledoesnotfall.com) was born in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, when it was part of the Soviet Union. After finishing the Kiev State University with a graduate degree in Russian Language she worked as a technical translator and editor.

In 1976, she immigrated to the United States with her husband and two young daughters. Her family was featured on the cover of the *Chicago Tribune* when her parents arrived one year later, as the 1,000th Soviet Jews to arrive to Chicago, their new home. A career change landed her in Information Technology in the US. In 2004, her family story project began. It spanned over 150 years and took eleven years to complete -- and is now documented along with ongoing insights into Soviet culture and culture clash on appledoesnotfall.com. She is a wise and witty story teller, with deep insights into the impact of government and history and how they shape, influence and drive personal decisions that last for generations.



DEANNA SHOSS (CEO Intercultural Talk, Inc., Marketing) is a marketer, writer, interculturalist in Chicago. As CEO of Intercultural Talk, Inc. she provides digital, intercultural and real life marketing for entrepreneurs and people following their passions post age 50, who need strategy and know-how to adapt to new communication technologies. Previously Deanna enjoyed 11 years in City Government, being past President of the League of Chicago Theatres, leading Public Relations for McDonald's Owner/Operators of Eastern New England and running marketing for Jewish Child & Family Services and JVS Chicago. She speaks Portuguese, Spanish and French and is a certified Body Pump and group fitness instructor. interculturaltalk.com



RACHEL SILVERT (Esther) is a Chicagoland native and an avid story-lover (be them onstage, in a book, or that crazy thing that happened last week). Rachel has been fortunate to work with such companies as Oil Lamp Theater, Silk Road Rising, Towle Theater and Skokie Theater, with favorite credits including *Par for the Corpse* (Andy), *Perfect Wedding* (Judy), *Beau Jest* (Sarah Goldman) and *Steel Magnolias* (Annelle). Rachel is a proud founding company member of Bring Your Own Theatre Productions, a nomadic theater company in Chicago specializing in 24-hour theater festivals and with which she has directed, acted, stage managed and produced for over three years. She received her BA in musical theater performance from American University. Many thanks to Kevin and Bena, as well as her ever-supportive friends and family. Enjoy the show! rachelsilvert.com



CLARA TOMAZ (Visuals and Motion Graphic Designer; Videographer) is an Italian-American film/video artist and director, author of several short documentaries, among which *The Sun Inside* (2017), an autobiographical story of cancer and disability, funded with a 2016 'Upside Down Grant' from OneRevolution Foundation. Beyond her documentary production, Clara Tomaz specializes in stop-motion animation, an ancient and traditional technique that employs the use of still photos to create the basic cinematic motion. She works with paper cutouts, prints, as well as drawing, painting and physical objects. She has been teaching stop-motion animation in Wilmette District 39 for the last five years, inspiring hundreds of elementary-age children to the magic of cinema. Clara Tomaz is the author of a show, *Linear and Aerial Perspective* (2011), video performance for improvising ensemble, that was presented at the Cell Theatre in New York, the EMPAC Theatre in Troy, NY, 'Sonorities Festival' in Belfast, Ireland, and 'Music, Mind and Invention' at the College of New Jersey. Clara Tomaz is the founder of Media 4 Community NFP, video contributor to the webzine 'Chicago4Community', and owner of her video production studio Make Your Movie, Inc. located in Wilmette, north of Chicago. make-your-movie.com

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