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HA'ARETZ

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

# The Guide

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## Bad boys at sea

Johannes Mannov (center) in Benjamin Britton's "Billy Budd" page 12

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# Theater

## Michael Handelzalts

### As You Like It

Cameri production

Dan Almagor found a brilliant Hebrew idiom in translating this romantic-erotic comedy; Omri Nitzan's direction and Ruth Dar's design are no less inventive. The Duke's court is a metallic, totalitarian regime; Arden Forest is composed of white cotton-wool – stuff from which dreams are made. But in Nitzan's version the ending is not only bitter, it is frightening – as befits a truly good comedy. A very good performance from the whole company, with special mention due to Itshak Hizkia as Jacques, and Anat Waxsman as a charming Rosalind (one of the best and most beautiful epilogues I've ever heard in this play).

### Good

Beit Lessin production

A play written in the early eighties by C. P. Taylor and set in 1930s Germany, recounts how a good-intentioned but emotionally confused intellectual can become a Nazi. But director Rony Pinkowitz "overplays" the Nazi card. The audience sees from the start where the production is headed: Nathan Dattner, as the main character, loses the audience's sympathy, on which the play's effect largely depends, and comes over as anything but "good." A sad misinterpretation with some good acting (Ilan Dar, Anat Zamsteigman).

### Herod

Cameri production

An ambitious undertaking: Edna Mazya strives to rehabilitate the reputation of the Jewish king, and has chosen a modern theatrical idiom: modern day dress, contemporary language, etc. The result is less than satisfying, the play's action unfolds in a rather stilted manner and the actors (Gil Frank as the king, Limor Goldstein as the femme fatale Cleopatra) are left with speeches to recite, but no parts to act.

### Kiss of the Spiderwoman

Habima production

Manuel Puig's play (which was also a successful film) features a political activist (played by Yoram Hattab) and a homosexual (the charismatic Juliano Mer) who share a prison cell. The actors do their best, but the staging (by Itzik Weingarten) stresses the obvious, highlights their male nudity and misses the nuances of the power games featured. Between scenes, there is music and a woman dancing.

### The Memory of Water

Beit Lessin production

This play by Sheila Stephenson brings three sisters together on the eve of their mother's funeral. Family feuds, former husbands and lovers and bitter-sweet memories are aired, while the character of the deceased mother hovers over the proceedings. The play has poetic qualities, missed completely by director Hillel Mittelpunkt. Tiki Dayan over-acts wildly as the eldest sister and turns the event into stand-up comedy, but Daphna Rechter saves the evening with a fine, touching performance as the middle sister, the emotional center of the play.

### News Flash

Beit Lessin production

Goren Agmon's play sounds like a magazine story or a soap-opera: A successful but over-worked woman surgeon, who is also a single mother (Limor Goldstein) with a teenager, has an affair with her boss (Ami Weinberg) at the hospital. She is also confronted with a visitor from abroad (Avi Oria), who harassed her in the past and now tries again. There is also a comic, loyal nurse (Levana Finkelstein).

### Blue/Orange

Habima production

A play written by Joe Penhall,

which questions our definitions of sanity and madness. A young black boy (Shai Zabi) who behaved strangely in public is detained in an asylum for observation. One of the psychiatrists (Igal Naor) wants to keep him in, the other (Alex Peleg) thinks he should be set free, as the bed is needed for others. A struggle and rank-pulling between mental health professionals in which "the other" is left out. Director Gadi Rol pushed the actors to energetic performances, but all three somehow seem miscast.

### The Return to the Desert

The Khan

The play by Koltes, a French playwright, tells a story of a Frenchwoman (Liora Rivlin, in a fine comic performance) who comes back from Algiers to the mansion of her brother (Doron Tavori in a tour de force of acting) in France. The problems of relatives who want to claim back their share of land is strangely familiar, and the show is well directed by Ophira Henig the character of the deceased mother hovers over the proceedings. The play has poetic qualities, missed completely by director Hillel Mittelpunkt. Tiki Dayan over-acts wildly as the eldest sister and turns the event into stand-up comedy, but Daphna Rechter saves the evening with a fine, touching performance as the middle sister, the emotional center of the play.

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### River

Gesher production

Yevgeni Arye's version of Ostrovski's classic play about a girl without a dowry who is being married off. Efrat Ben Zur is disappointing as the girl and Alexander Demidov is impressive, as usual, as one of the suitors. But the real star of the show is set designer Alexander Lisiansky, whose set moves up, down and sideways, and does almost everything except sing and dance.

### Sephardi Orchard

Habima production

An entertaining performance about the simple and charming life of the Sephardic community in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 20th century. Devised by Itzhak Navon in the '70s, the play was revived as a money-maker with star performances by Galit Giat and Yaakov Cohen. The music makes you hum, but

the blatant commercial quality of the evening makes you wonder if this is a repertory fit for the National Theater.

### Servant To Two Masters

Young Vic Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company

An import from Great Britain, courtesy of the British Council, this version of Carlo Goldoni's famous comedy, directed by Tim Supple, focuses on the genuine plights (hunger and love) of its heroes, but leaves the audience laughing. It also highlights the differences in the English social strata to convey some larger meanings. This makes for a rather slow and long evening, with one huge asset: Jason Watkins in the title role is funny and sad, entertaining and heartwarming. In this role and outside of it, he is a comedian worth watching.

### Slihot

Beit Lessin production

A play by Hanna Azoulai Hasfari about four daughters who convene in their mother's flat after she mysteriously disappears. This work seems to be a study of the Israeli Sephardi woman – in which each of the daughters represents a different type: Levana Finkelstein is the submissive mother; Azoulai Hasfari is the Shas wife and mother of eight; Orna Fitoussi is the liberated businesswoman; and Dorit Bar-Or is the mixed-up film student. Some good lines, and enough melodrama to supply seven soap operas.

### Strangers

Habima production

Yehoshua Sobol, one of Israel's best writers, brings together two themes: getting old and living with foreign workers. Moni Moshonov creates the unforgettable character of Getzel, an Alzheimer's patient, who wanders on stage, sometimes "out" or sometimes faking it. Sandra Sade (his wife in real life) is the foreign worker who takes care of him, but also tries to have a life of her own. The play loses track with another plot strand – Russian immigrants –

but on the whole it is a touching, sad and funny evening at the theater. Nola Chilton, always a marvelous acting coach, directed.

### Twosomes

Habima production

Another show by the young troupe from Habima, which performs under the guidance of Ilan Ronen in eight short stories about relationships. A group of young and talented people, who sometimes get carried away with over-direction, the overuse of film projection, etc. (by Gerard Alon). The actors chose the playlets, all by different writers, most of whom are thirty-something. But there are too few human moments for the audience to relate to, and the outlook on the life of couples, either heterosexual or homosexual, is pretty depressing.

### Village

Gesher production

A story of a village in 1940s Israel through the eyes of an innocent child (played beautifully by Israel Demidov, the company's star): Jews, Arabs, Holocaust survivors, love, suffering and death. Yehoshua Sobol's play, based on his childhood memories, closely follows the structure of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town." The company is enthusiastic and fully committed, and Yevgeni Arye directs with his trademark revolving stages and continuous movement and noise.

### The Witch

Habima production

Abraham Goldfaden's classic musical of Yiddish theater hovers in this production, directed by Micky Gourevitz, between two clashing styles. The first is a nostalgic bow toward the Yiddish theater and actors, as a play-within-a-play performed by camp survivors and old-style Yiddish comedians. The second has the manic energies of Shlomo Bar Abba in the title role, an actor who takes over whatever production he is in, and carries it away with him. Lot of laughs in rather dubious taste and a missed opportunity.

## Theater listings

### Tel Aviva

HABIMA THEATER

**The House of Bernarda Alba** (by Federico Garcia Lorca) Saturday at 21.00; Monday, Wednesday, Thursday at 20.30

**Little Devil** *Shed Katan*

Saturday at 21.00

**Stones In His Pocket** (by Marie Jones, directed by Dan Ronen) Saturday, Monday at 21.00; Thursday at 20.30

**Blue/Orange** (by Joe Penhall) Monday, Tuesday at 21.00

**Strangers** *Zarim* (by Yehoshua Sobol) Tuesday, Wednesday at 20.30

**Johnny Returns from the Battlefield** Wed at 21.00

**Naomi** Thursday at 21.00

CAMERI THEATER

**As You Like It** (by Shakespeare, directed by Omri Nitzan) Saturday, Monday at 21.00; Tuesday, Wednesday at 20.30

BEIT LESSIN

**Slihot** *Repentance* (by Hanna Azulai-Hasfari) Friday at 21.30; Sunday at 21.30; Monday at 21.00; Tuesday at 20.30

**Enigmatic Variations** (by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt) Thursday at 20.30

GESHER THEATER Jaffa

**Miss Julie** (by August Strindberg) Monday, Tuesday at 20.30

ERETZ ISRAEL MUSEUM

**Defending the Caveman** (Beit Lessin production, by Rob Becker) Sunday at 21.30

**Good** (Beit Lessin production, by C.P. Taylor) Tuesday-Thursday at 20.30

Z.O.A. HOUSE

**Rabbi Kameah** (Cameri production, by Shmuel Hasfari) Saturday, Monday at 21.00; Tuesday-Thursday at 20.30

TZAVTA

**Look at Me** (Fringe production) Saturday at 21.00

**Man, Woman, Words** (Fringe production) Monday at 21.00

**Jungol** (Fringe production)

The Janice and Philip Levin

Municipal Music Center 10

Sheerit Yisrael St.,

(03) 681-2046

**Kibbutz Shafayim**

(09) 959-6529

**Kossit** 5 Rabin Square,

(03) 522-3244

**Latino Bar** 16 Ibn Gvirol St.,

(03) 609-5081

**Mann Auditorium** Tarsat Blvd.,

(03) 528-9163

**Mayumana House** 15 Louis

Pasteur St., Jaffa,

(03) 560-0783

**Mercatz Hashahmat Library** 26

Tagur St., (03) 643-7921/6948,



The Haifa Theater presents "Masked Ball."

Wednesday at 20.30

**The Toads** (Fringe production,

by Ilan Ganani and Eran

Shadar) Wednesday at 21.00

**Mother's Muluhia** (by and with

Nissim Zohar) Thursday at

20.30

OHEL SHEM THEATER

**Twosomes** *Zugiut* (based on a collection of stories by Israeli authors, edited and directed by Ilan Ronen) Saturday, Monday at 21.00; Tuesday-Thursday at 20.30

TMUNA THEATER

**The Road to the River of Silence** (by Galit Mayor, directed by Sarit Larry) Friday at 13.00

**Judy Darling** (by Nava Zukerman and Yael Dar) Friday at 21.30; Sunday at 13.00

**Lice** (by Ido Bornstein & Shlomo Plessner) Friday at 21.00

**The Boys of Summer** (by Roy Smiles, directed by Lee Gilat) Saturday at 20.00

**No Fear** (by Amnon Abutbul, Martin Mugliner, directed by Martin Mugliner) Tuesday, Wednesday at 20.30

HOLON THEATER

**Omelet and Salad** (Tmuna production, by Michael Moris, directed by Hanoach Re'im) Tuesday at 20.30

HASIMTA THEATER

**Meta-Rabin** (created and

performed by The Orto-Da Group) Wednesday at 20.00

DUHL AUDITORIUM

**Masked Ball** (by Yehoshua Sobol, directed by Avi Malka) Wednesday at 20.30

BEIT HACHAYAL

**The Rise and Fall of Little Voice** (Beit Lessin production, by Jim Cartwright) Saturday at 21.00

**Defending the Caveman** (Beit Lessin production, by Rob Becker) Monday at 21.00; Tuesday at 20.30

HERZLIYA MUNICIPAL THEATER

**Copenhagen** (Cameri production, by Michael Frayn) Thursday at 20.30

Jerusalem

KHAN THEATER

**Transient Shadow** *Tzel Holef* (written and directed by Michael Gurevitch) Saturday at 21.00

**Simon** (by Yitzhak Bar-Yosef) Saturday at 21.00

**The Return to the Desert** (by Bernard-Marie Koltes) Monday at 21.00; Tuesday, Wednesday at 20.30

**Glengarry Glen Ross** (by David Mamet) Thursday at 20.30

THE HIRSCH THEATER Beit

Shmuel, (02) 620-3427

**Guys & Dolls** (The Capital

Musical Theatre, by Abe

(03) 561-0785

**Ramat Gan Theater** 16 Hibat

Zion, (03) 578-1788/1688

**Russell Cultural Center** Mat-

tiyahu Mendel St., Ramat Gan,

(03) 674-1277

**Sharett** Petach Tikva,

(03) 905-2274

**Stricker Auditorium** 19 Stricker

St., (03) 546-6228

**The Studio** 24 Cremieux St.,

(03) 685-6787

**Suzanne Dellal Center** 5

Yehieli, Neve Zedek,

(03) 510-5656

**Tel Aviv Museum of Art** 27

Shaul Hamelech, (03) 695-7361

Burrows, music & lyrics by Frank Loesser) Friday at 14.00

### Haifa and the North

HAIFA MUNICIPAL THEATER

**Masked Ball** (by Yehoshua Sobol, directed by Avi Malka) Saturday at 20.30

**Kiss of the Spiderwoman** (Habima production, by Manuel Puig) Tuesday-Thursday at 20.30

HATZAFON THEATER

**News Flash** *Mivzak Hadashot* (Beit Lessin production) Saturday at 21.00

MATNAS Tivon

**Collected Stories** (by Donald Margulies) Tuesday at 20.30

KIBBUTZ YAGUR

**Herod** *Hordus* (Cameri production, by Edna Mazya) Tuesday at 21.00; Wednesday at 20.30

BEIT YIGAL ALLON Safed

**Slihot** *Repentance* (Beit Lessin production, by Hanna Azulai-Hasfari) Wednesday at 21.00

### Other Locales

HEICHAL HATARBUT Netanya

**The Memory of Water** (Beit Lessin production, by Sheila Stephanson) Thursday at 20.30

**KIBBUTZ GAN SHMUEL** (04) 632-0316

**Village** (by Yehoshua Sobol) Saturday at 20.30

HEICHAL HATARBUT

Rishon Letzion

**Defending the Caveman** (Beit Lessin production, by Rob Becker) Saturday at 21.00

MOFET

Rishon Letzion, (03) 964-5711

**Defending the Caveman** (Beit Lessin production, by Rob Becker) Thursday at 21.00

HEICHAL HATARBUT

Nes Ziona, (08) 940-1881, 940-4470

**River** (by Alexander Ostrovsky) Wednesday, Thursday at 21.00

BE'ER SHEVA MUNICIPAL

**THEATER** Box Office: (08) 620-6222

**Proof** (by David Auburn, directed by Eyal Goldberg) Monday at 20.30

HEICHAL HATARBUT

Be'er Sheva

**White Heart** (written and directed by Ilan Hatzor) Wednesday, Thursday at 20.30

HEICHAL HATARBUT

Ashkelon

**The Witch** (Habima production,

by Avraham Goldfaden) Tuesday-Thursday at 20.30

YAD LEBANIM Ashdod

**Sephardi Orchard** (Habima production) Wednesday at 21.00

## Israel Festival Jerusalem

JERUSALEM THEATER

**Cabin Pressure 2** (by Anne Bogart and performed by Stii Company, New York) Friday at 15.00; Saturday at 21.00

**A Servant To Two Masters** (by Carlo Goldoni) Tuesday-Thursday at 20.00

Tickets at 1-700-500-567

## Where to Find it

TEL AVIV & AREA

**Barbi Club** 40 Salame St,

(03) 681-6757

**Bat-Dor Theater** 30 Ibn Gvirol

St., (03) 696-3175

**Barklay's Coffee** 1 Jabotinsky

St., Ramat Gan, (03) 575-9008

**Beit Daniel** 62 Bnei Dan St.,

(03) 544-2740