

David Bezmozgis (Author) Born 1973 is a Canadian writer and documentary filmmaker. Born in Riga, Latvia, he came to Canada with his family when he was six. He graduated with a B.A. in English literature from McGill University. Bezmozgis received an M.F.A. from the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television. His first published book is *Natasha and Other Stories*. Stories from that collection first appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's* and *Zoetrope All-Story*. His story "Natasha," which originally appeared in *Harper's*, was included in the *2005 Best American Stories* collection; his story "New Gravestone for an Old Grave," which originally appeared in *Zoetrope*, will be included in the *2006 Best American Stories* collection.

Post Show Forum

Marat Grinberg (Facilitator and Scholar) Assistant Professor of Russian and Humanities, Marat has been teaching at Reed since 2006. He holds a BA in Modern Jewish Studies from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a BA in Comparative Literature from Columbia University in New York. He received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Chicago in 2006. Professor Grinberg specializes in Russian Jewish literature and culture, Russian and European Modernism, Soviet literature, poetics and cinema studies. Professor Grinberg is on leave in 2008/09. He is writing a book on the construction of Jewishness in Russian modernist and Soviet poetry.

Jewish Theatre Collaborative (JTC) Mission Statement

Stories have played an essential role throughout Jewish History transmitting and exploring values, traditions and history. Through community collaborations, JTC will bring people together to encounter the stories of Jewish playwrights and authors from the Diaspora and Israel in order to make meaning of our own experience and of others in this world.

*Jewish Theatre Collaborative &
The Institute for Judaic studies in the Northwest
present:*



Roman Berman, Massage Therapist By David Bezmozgis

Directed by
Sacha Reich
September 14, 2008
1970 SW Broadway, Room 222
Portland, Oregon

Roman Berman, *Massage Therapist*

By David Bezmozgis

Adapted word for word from the original short story

The Cast

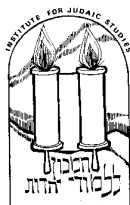
Mark	James Pace
Roman	Rick Sanders
Bella	Wendy Wilcox
Rabbi/Simon	Nathan Gale
Dr. Harvey	Todd Tolces
Rhonda	Sharron Fishman
Jerry/Genady	Phil Rudolph
Shirley/Freda	Linda Goertz

Roman Berman, Massage Therapist presented with permission of Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.

The Company

Director	Sacha Reich
Russian Coach	Nila Friedberg

Roman Berman, Massage Therapist originally published by *Harper's*. All rights reserved by Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.



This reading of *Roman Berman, Massage Therapist* is made possible with support from The Institute for Judaic Studies in the Northwest.

Director's Notes

In ten pages of text, Bezmozgis gives us the distilled and complex experience of this immigrant family, capturing the excruciating challenge of professional reintegration at middle age into the new country.

Through the lens of 9 year old Mark, we witness the efforts, fears, and humiliation of his parents as they interface with a community committed to their aid but limited by the very mythology created to mobilize itself to action.

Some questions for thought...

- How does exposure to this experience shape Mark, the second generation?
- What mythologies are at play in the story? How do they impact the interactions of the characters?
- How is Mark's family like the Apple Cake?
- What about this immigrant experience is shared by past and present waves of immigration?
- To what degree is this experience unique?

-- Sacha Reich

Special Thanks to

Marat Grinberg, Nila Friedberg, Miracle Theatre Group, The Schnitzer Family Foundation for Judaic Studies at Portland State University, Michael Weingrad, Mary MacDonald-Lewis, Margaret Chapman and finally Norma Reich and Sondra Pearlman for their delicious Apple Cake.