

HANNAH ARENDT (October 14, 1906 – December 4, 1975)

was an influential German-Jewish political theorist. She has often been described as a philosopher, although she refused that label on the grounds that philosophy is concerned with "man in the singular." She described herself instead as a political theorist because her work centers on the fact that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world." Arendt's work deals with the nature of power, and the subjects of politics, authority, and totalitarianism. Much of her work focuses on affirming a conception of freedom which is synonymous with collective political action among equals.

SAVYON LIEBRECHT (Playwright) was born in Munich, Germany, in 1948, to Holocaust survivor parents. She studied philosophy and literature at Tel Aviv University and started publishing in 1986. Liebrecht has published six collections of short stories and novellas and two novels. She has also written three plays, all of which have been staged, and a number of TV scripts. She has received awards for two of her TV scripts, the Alterman Prize for her first book of short stories (1987), the Amelia Rosselli Prize for *Mail Order Women* (Italy, 2002) and the Maior-Amalfi Award for *A Good Place for the Night* (Italy, 2005). She was awarded Playwright of the Year for her successful plays, *It's All Greek to Me* (2005), and *Apples in the Desert* (2006).

FRIDERIKE HEUER (Post Show Forum Guest And Artist)

Born in Germany in 1952, Friderike's art in general, and her thinking about Hannah Arendt in particular, are shaped by diverse elements. She grew up in Germany after the War, and worked there for many years as a politically active defense attorney. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology at the New School for Social Research, where Arendt taught for the last eight years of her life. She taught cognitive and social psychology at Lewis & Clark. She is currently working at the Oregon Jewish Museum, and also works as a professional translator, and has recently translated (into English) a lengthy philosophical essay, published in *Social Research*, discussing the evolution of Arendt's thinking.

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*Jewish Theatre Collaborative & The Harold Schnitzer
Family Program in Judaic Studies present:*

Israel Onstage: Israeli Society through Drama

The Banality of Love

By Savyon Liebrecht

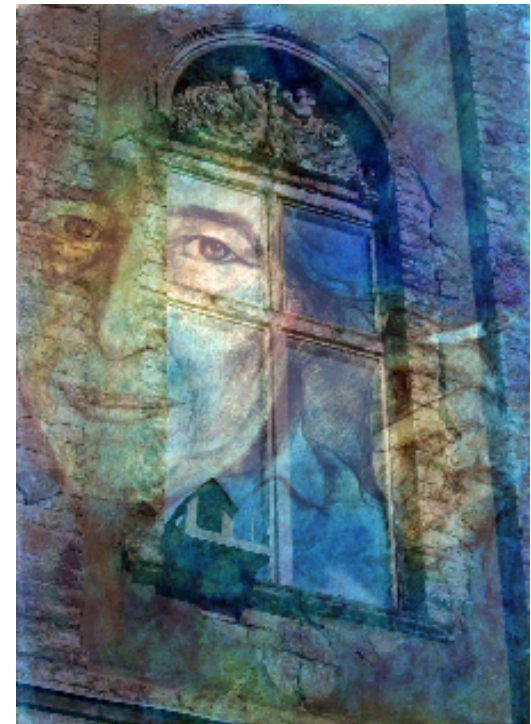


Image: Friderike Heuer

Directed by Karin Magaldi

June 30, 2009

**Morrison Stage, Artists Repertory Theatre
Portland, Oregon**

 **Portland State**
UNIVERSITY

The Banality of Love by Savyon Liebrecht

Hannah Arendt's apartment in New York City, 1975

Hannah Arendt	Patricia Hunter*
Young Hannah Arendt	Jamie M. Rea
Rafael Mendelson	Andy Lee-Hillstrom
Martin Heidegger	Doren Elias
Michael Ben Shaked	Matt Dieckman

* Appears with the permission of Actor's Equity

The Company

Director	Karin Magaldi
Stage Manager	Shannon Goffe

The Banality of Love presented with permission of the playwright. *The Banality of Love* was premiered by Beit Lessin Theatre, January 2009. It has had a production in Germany.

KARIN MAGALDI (Director) is an Associate Professor in Theater Arts at Portland State University and is director of the new play development program for the department. Professionally, Karin works as a dramaturg and director and serves on the Artists Repertory Theatre and Miracle Theatre Group artistic advisory boards.

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The Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies at PSU, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Oregon Israel Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, the Consulate General of Israel in San Francisco and the Institute of Israeli Drama.

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Jewish Theatre Collaborative
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Jewish Theatre Collaborative engages people in Jewish stories from the past and present exploring values, traditions, and history, in order to better comprehend the diversity of contemporary human experience.

JTC Notes

Following the publication of her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the banality of Evil*, Arendt was vilified in the Jewish Community – in Israel and in the United States. As Arendt suggests in the play, *Mein Kampf* will be translated to Hebrew before her writing. As the aging Arendt of the play looks to reconciliation with Israel, she takes stock of her own conflicted relationship with her former mentor and lover Martin Heidegger – a vilified figure in his own right. What are the parallels the playwright is drawing between the two? Produced in 2009, how might this play reflect Israel's changing attitudes towards Arendt and social criticism of Israel by Jews? What does this young Israeli represent in the play? Does he achieve clarity? How does Arendt react to his expressions of nationalist pride? Why?

Can we reconcile ourselves to such grave contradictions as love and loathing? How can something profound, be banal?

Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason that it is not only apolitical but anti-political, perhaps the most powerful of all anti-political human forces."

-Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Our last meeting took place in 1975. She arrived in Marbach to examine and systematize the papers of Karl Jaspers in the German Literary Archive. We visited her and listened to her on the last evening as if a Prophet of the Hebrew Bible were speaking to us. Only afterward did we understand that her intensive summary of the most diverse experiences and perceptions had been a drawing up of accounts. On the morning of July 5 we brought her to the train station. She was leaving for a meeting with Heidegger. As we took our leave from her on the platform, I whispered a question to her: "Do you have to?" The answer rings in my ear to this day: "Fröschlein, somethings are stronger than a human being."

-Edna Brocke, from "Big Hannah" - My Aunt"