

NAOMI RAGEN (Playwright) Over the past fifteen years, author and playwright Naomi Ragen has quietly become one of the Jewish world's most controversial and most read novelists and political commentators. An American born in New York, Naomi Ragen has lived and worked in Jerusalem for the past 38 years and is the author of seven international bestsellers, the award winning play *Women's Minyan* and an influential and widely-read internet website. An iconoclast, an Orthodox woman and a fiercely outspoken advocate for gender equality, her novels hold a unique place in the Jewish library. Her first book, *Jephthe's Daughter*, was listed among the one-hundred most important Jewish books of all time. Israelis voted her the third most popular author in Israel and her books have become a cultural bridge between Israelis and their Diaspora counterparts.

POST SHOW FORUM Guest

Rebecca Nickels is the Executive Director for the Portland Women's Crisis Line and is responsible for the overall programmatic and fiscal health of the organization. Having graduated from Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work in 2002, Rebecca has made it a goal to provide sound, ethical management for organizations working to end domestic and sexual violence. She has been part of the movement to end violence against women and children since the mid 1990's and has worked within shelters, staffed various crisis and mental health hotlines, and provided community education on issues from self defense to affirmative action.

Israel Onstage 2 made possible with support from

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
2510 SE 51st Avenue, Portland, 97206

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

Israel Onstage: Israeli Society through Drama

Women's Minyan

By Naomi Ragen



**Directed by
Sacha Reich
June 30, 2009
Morrison Stage, Artists Repertory Theatre
Portland, Oregon**



Women's Minyan

By Naomi Ragen

*The interior of the Sheinhoff home in Meah Shearim,
Jerusalem, early 2000*

Chana Sheinhoff	Wendy Wilcox
Shaina-Ruth	Sara Simon
Bluma	Ana Reisman
Goldie Sheinhoff	Wendy Westerwelle
Adina Sheinhoff	Hannah Treuhaff
Frume Kashman	Patricia Hunter*
Gitte-Leah	Alyson Ayn Osborn
Eta Leibowitz	Elizabeth Garrett
Tovah Klein	Alana Byington
Zehava Toledano	Skeeter Greene*

Male Voices	Mark Loring
	Sam A. Mowry

* Appears with the permission of Actor's Equity

Women's Minyan presented with permission of the playwright.

The Company

Director	Sacha Reich
Sound Design	Sam A. Mowry
Stage Manager	Jamie M. Rea
Music Design	Jack Falk

WOMEN'S MINYAN was commissioned by Habimah Theatre, Israel's National Theatre in Tel Aviv. It opened July 4, 2002 and ran for 6 years with over 450 performances. WOMEN'S MINYAN received its American Premiere production at Theatre Or at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Director's Notes

Domestic Violence is present in every society, every day, in every part of the world. By design the abuse often occurs behind closed doors, shrouding the events in secrecy and silencing its victims in shame. Because of the nature of this violence, it is always difficult to talk about. **How can we come together as a community to make it easier?**

Who are Haredi/Ultra Orthodox Jews? These are terms often used to describe Jews who subscribe to the most theologically conservative form of Judaism, although Jews described by either term object to them. They simply refer to themselves as Jews, or Torah Observant Jews. These Jews believe God wrote the Torah, strictly observe Jewish Law (*halacha*), and refuse to modify Judaism to meet contemporary needs. Some live in tightly insular communities. In Israel around 50 percent of this population lives below the poverty line. It is important to note that within this denomination of Judaism – there is extraordinary diversity of traditions, beliefs and interpretations.

Naomi Ragen is a Modern Orthodox Religious Zionist who has championed the rights of “haredi/ultra-orthodox” women in her fiction, blogs & journalism. **Can outsiders be a legitimate voice for the women in this community?**

This play ran for 6 years and over 450 performances in Israel to mainstream secular and modern orthodox audiences. **What might it reflect about interreligious and religious/ secular tensions in Israel?**

Sacha Reich

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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.