

Checking In Not Out!

◉ Madeleine Mordecai & Amnon Avidor

FOLLOWING their great success with *Cinderella* last Chanukah, Tel Aviv Community Theater (TACT) is presenting the world premiere of an original musical comedy "Checking In", written and composed for the stage by Daniel Schwartzman (musical director).

Daniel tells us a little about the plot and idea behind the touching story:

"The initial idea behind "Checking In" came about during a visit to NYC a few weeks before my mother checked into a retirement home. For over half a century she lived in the same Bronx apartment which my fond childhood memories were linked to, so the time had come to say goodbye to it. Back in the 1970s, my parents went through a painful divorce and bad blood has remained to this day. So a strange thought flitted across my brain: What if there was a woman residing in a retirement home and suddenly her despised ex-husband was to 'check in' as a resident as well? I felt there was great potential for theatrical conflict here.

"It was in a coffee shop on Times Square with a balcony ticket to "A Chorus Line" burning a hole in my pocket that I wrote down a short synopsis that evolved into a musical over the next six months.

"It was only after I scribbled down the synopsis that I was amazed to learn that my father had telephoned my mother to make inquiries about her retirement home. How life does imitate art!"



Daniel Schwartzman was born in New York City and went to Music and Art High School (Fame), and attended New York State University for a B.A. in music followed by an M.A. in composition and conducting at Tel Aviv University.

Daniel freelances as composer and musical director for the theater. In 1985 he was musical director of "My Fair Lady" (with Rita as Eliza) at the Beit Zvi School of Performing Arts of which he is a faculty member. He has worked on over 100 fully-staged musicals and he also teaches.

In 1988 Daniel wrote his first musical, "Spy Stuff", about a new immigrant from Russia who was in fact a Soviet spy. TACT

successfully staged it, thus beginning a fruitful relationship resulting in eight staged musicals. In the 1994 English Theater Festival, his musical "Mr. X" won first prize for TACT. Daniel has also given many singing workshops under TACT's auspices.

The director, Shimon Mandel, has appeared in and directed a number of TACT productions, the latest being the American comedy "Social Security". He says directing a play is very much like cooking a wonderful meal. You must have the right ingredients, and the rest just follows.

Besides the plot, character development, relationships and conflicts – we have the most important element: music. The actors must get into the songs like fish slip into water, because the musical numbers are an extension of the whole action.

Checking In their dresses for pants are Amnon Avidor and Yisrael Levitt, who played the Ugly Stepsisters (Asphyxia and Euthanasia) in *Cinderella*. This time they're playing Ben Wise (ex-Broadway producer), and Danny O'Connell (ex-detective) – residents of Fairfield Gardens, an upscale New York retirement home.

The cast includes veteran and new faces: Ahinoam Slotki, Dalia Librus, Fannie Weiss, Hymie Michaelson, Jane Davidson, Jerry Stevenson, Jo Levitt, Michah Himmelman, Mikey Ariel, Philip Sive, Rita Tasini, Stella Rubin and Sue Field.

Post note: By the way, Daniel's father has decided NOT to go about "Checking In". Yet.

Dates: October 28/29/30,
November 1/2
Time: 20:30
Place: Yad Labanim, 63 Pinkas Str.
Tel Aviv
Tickets: 03 546 7404, 03 604 1707
Sunday to Thursday
09:00-15:00
Prices: TACT Members NIS 50
Non-Members NIS 60
Groups of 20+ NIS 50

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