

SURVIVORS

A touring play teaching the Holocaust and tolerance

SURVIVORS, an hour-long, educational, and inspiring drama enacts the history of the Holocaust through the eyewitness testimony of ten survivors. A young and diverse cast is our guide on this perilous journey.

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
~Nelson Mandela*



WHY THIS PLAY?

The indomitable individuals depicted in SURVIVORS teach history and provide hope, life lessons, and encouragement to speak up and act against today's hatred and bullying.

In an era of great divide with increased incidents of antisemitism, racism, religious hate, hate based on sexual orientation, and hate-fueled violence, we cannot silently stand by and allow selected groups to be singled out and marginalized.

We cannot let hatred become normalized!

We must begin by teaching our children the lessons we have learned from the Holocaust.

Suitable for grades eight through twelve, college and adult audiences, this play about the past is both a warning and a wake-up call for the present and the future.



NEVER FORGET! NEVER AGAIN! NEVER IS NOW!

WHY IS HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

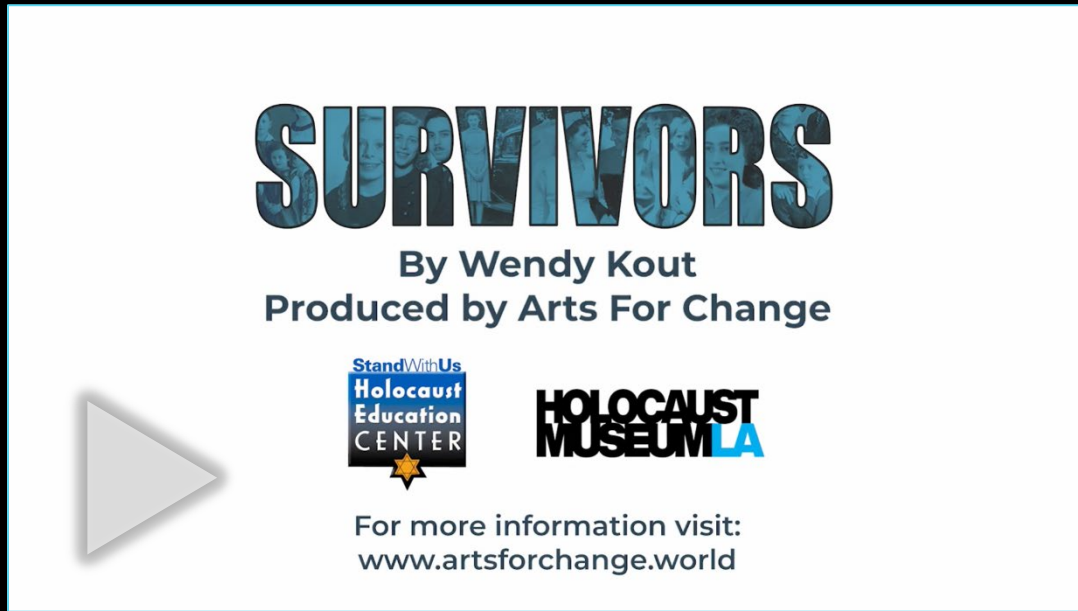
To combat prejudice, we teach our children tolerance. Holocaust history and survivor stories help students identify and understand the dangers and repercussions of prejudice and how to act against it.

We must never forget that between 1939 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across German-occupied Europe; around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population. Five million of Hitler's other "undesirables" were also brutally murdered, including people of color, gay people, the mentally and physically challenged, priests, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Roma and Sinti people.

These eleven million were killed because of antisemitism and hatred for those who were not deemed to be superior Aryans. These atrocities are considered by some to be the worst genocide in history. Others deny that it ever happened.



WATCH THE SURVIVORS TRAILER



PRODUCTION HISTORY

2017 – Playwright Wendy Kout was commissioned by CenterStage Theatre in Rochester, NY to write a Holocaust play, based on the lives of ten survivors who immigrated to Rochester. A month later, while watching Neo-Nazis march with tiki torches in Charlottesville, Wendy realized she wasn't just writing a history play. She was writing a warning play.

2018-2019 – Approximately 10,000 students experienced SURVIVORS throughout Rochester and surrounding areas at 25 private and public schools and at CenterStage Theatre.

2019 – Playwright Wendy Kout was asked by Skylight Theatre Company in Los Angeles to pen a full-length adaptation of SURVIVORS weaving in contemporary conflicts. The resulting iteration of the project, NEVER IS NOW, played to a multi-generational, diverse audience of over 2000 during a limited run.

2022 – Coming out of our Covid hiatus, this past spring SURVIVORS had new productions which toured schools and stages in Philadelphia and Victoria, B.C. Canada.

2023 – SURVIVORS school and stage tours continued in NY, Philadelphia, and Victoria and Vancouver, B.C. Canada. Keshet Chaim/Arts for Change launched the Los Angeles and West Coast school and stage tour of SURVIVORS at Calabasas High School, followed by performances at Adat Ariel Temple and Camp Alonim. The public premiere was at, and presented by, the Museum of Tolerance on September 10, and was followed by another public performance at Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on October 15.

2024 – SURVIVORS school and stage tours continue in Los Angeles, the West Coast, NY, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Victoria, B.C. Canada and a new production will launch in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

PRESS

Jewish Journal

JEWISH JOURNAL

7-13 Taheret 5784, September 22-28, 2023 Open Your Community

'Survivors' Premiere

Inspired by the lives and words of ten Holocaust survivors.



The cast of 'Survivors'. From left: Sheri Aviram, Seth Keller, Yahn Stenberg, Almanna Nurida, Michael Boose, Njami Totty, Casey Adler and Andrew Abria. Photo by Katherine Kout.

We are in America

באתיקה

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

שורדים

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

The Jerusalem Post

THE JERUSALEM POST

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'SURVIVORS' fuses with on-stage diversity

By UREL PEZER OCTOBER 2, 2023



A play that is currently being staged in schools and theaters throughout the US provides an innovative and inclusive approach to teaching the Holocaust.

SURVIVORS teaches about the Shoah through the various testimonies of 10 survivors. According to playwright and co-producer Wendy Kout, what differentiates this play from others on the subject is the diverse cast that consists of and reaches out to non-Jewish ethnic groups.

Auditions were open to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. However, one of the main goals was to cast young actors who could accurately portray the survivors at the ages they were when the Holocaust was taking place.

It's not an original idea to cast minority groups in plays where normally the setting would be an all-white cast. Other plays, such as those staged by Shakespeare in the Park's producer Joseph Papp in New York City, have been performed by diverse actors. Another great example is *Hamilton: An American Musical*, with a diverse cast in which minorities take center stage and embody the main roles.

According to Kout, young audiences who watch these diverse young actors on stage are able to identify with them on a deeper level that further connects them to the subject matter.

the Montecito JOURNAL

The Voice of 'Survivors'

Finding Inspiration, Tolerance, and Hope From Our Past



A scene from the play 'Survivors' showing actors on stage.

Midnight of the Mind
While the play is a historical account, it is also a story of hope and resilience. The diverse cast of young actors brings a fresh perspective to the story, making it more relatable and impactful for today's audiences.

The play is currently being staged in schools and theaters throughout the US, providing an innovative and inclusive approach to teaching the Holocaust. The diverse cast of young actors is a key feature of the production, making it more relatable and impactful for today's audiences.

According to Kout, young audiences who watch these diverse young actors on stage are able to identify with them on a deeper level that further connects them to the subject matter.

eJewish Philanthropy

NEVER FORGET

Needed now more than ever: 'Survivors,' with its diverse cast, teaches the Holocaust to teens

Play's co-producer says Oct. 7 attacks gave the show, which has been running for six years, a renewed sense of purpose



Almanna Nurida, Njami Totty and Sheri Aviram appear in the Holocaust play 'Survivors' in an outdoor production.

By Esther B. Rosenbaum • October 27, 2023

Actor Almanna Nurida is Sikh and identifies as culturally Indian. She was raised in Bangkok and Mumbai, a product of displacement and in a family of refugees seeking sanctuary during the partition between Pakistan and India. In Mumbai, a millennia-old symbol for protection and peace was a big part of her childhood—only as a teenager did she discover that the interlocking lines of the swastika were not to be benign, she told the audience after a September performance of the play 'Survivors' at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

We are in America

באתיקה

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

שורדים

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

Jlife

Jlife

'Survivors'

By Eyal Mazarri August 2, 2023



The women behind the play from left to right: Gerie Benson, Wendy Kout, Eivie Abat.

Their Story is Our Hope

'SURVIVORS' is an acclaimed play enacting the eyewitness accounts of 10 Holocaust survivors. A young and diverse cast gives an impressive and emotional performance that won't leave a dry eye in the house. Now, Jewish community leaders want this important play to become part of educational curricula throughout the state.

Growing up in Israel, I saw a lot of plays about the Holocaust. I also attended lectures and meetings with Holocaust survivors, memorial evenings, and regularly visited Yad Vashem.

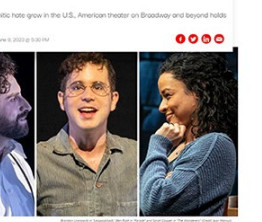
Outside Israel, one is less likely to encounter this topic. In fact, it's rare to do so outside the Jewish community. In addition, fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors remain alive today. With violence, antisemitism, and hate crimes on the rise all over the globe, the story of the Holocaust and its lessons needs to be told more urgently, especially to the younger generations.

The Wrap

THE WRAP

How 2023 Became One of the Biggest Years for Jewish Theater: 'That Lifeworld Has Risen'

As acts of antisemitism have grown in the U.S., American theater on Broadway and beyond holds strong



In Minneapolis, the Children's Theater Company is staging an adaptation of the animated movie 'An American Tail' through June 18. The story centers on the Mousekewitz family's immigration to the U.S. in a movie, a legacy for turn-of-the-century immigration and the American Dream. And first launched in 2018 by Rochester Jewish Community Center, and based on actual interviews with Holocaust survivors, Wendy Kout's play 'Survivors' is being done in schools, museums and theaters around the U.S. — plus a film version was recently shot.

Next Tribe

NEXTTRIBE AGE BOLDLY



Amid War and Grief, Theater Offers Hope and Solace

Theater critic Michele Willens looks at a slate of new plays and finds that they offer not just escapism at a difficult time, but also inspiration.

This morning, I switched from a 24-hour news channel to the network airing an ice-scaling championship. I do not generally follow the sport, but somehow, moving from escalating death statistics to watching young men and women gliding, heaving, and flipping like a necessary salve.

I do not hide from bad news, believe me. Though I currently cover the theater world and have spent the summer in Los Angeles attending more than a dozen shows and events. Rather than necessarily taking me to a summer place, these works find creative ways of helping me feel less alone, that we cannot feel alone, and that, yes, women have been very much a part of the stories.

These works show that women have been very much a part of the stories.

The Times of Israel

Inspired by 'Hamilton,' diverse docudrama based on survivor testimony is touring US

In under an hour, 'Survivors' touches on Nazi racial laws, Kristallnacht, and the Kindertransport rescue. The survivors in the play are warning us, says playwright Wendy Kout



A few days after playwright Wendy Kout was asked to create a play about Holocaust survivors, white supremacists took to the streets of Charlottesville with chants against Jews and immigrants.

"Those who torches lit a fire under me," Kout told The Times of Israel. "That's when the urgency of this play was fully understood."

Wanting audiences to connect with the Holocaust through eyewitness testimony, Kout wrote 'Survivors,' a docudrama commissioned by CenterStage of Rochester, New York. Since 2017, the play has toured North America with a cast for each region.

"The survivors in the play are warning us," said Kout, a veteran TV writer who co-produced the 'Survivors' West Coast tour.

In early May, the company performed at Adat Ahi El, a Progressive Conservative congregation in Los Angeles. The audience of 250 included community leaders and students who'd recently participated in March of the Living.

The West Coast 'Survivors' cast, said Kout, is unlike previous casts.



"This is a diverse cast of various backgrounds and various races," said Kout, who was inspired by the Broadway phenomenon 'Hamilton.'

In just one hour of stage time, Kout's survivors touch on many turning points in the timeline of the Holocaust, including the Nazi racial laws, Kristallnacht, and the Kindertransport rescue. Photographs of those events are projected behind the actors, adding to the play's authenticity.

"We chart history through these personal accounts," said Kout. "This helps people experience history in the most human way, and that is through the heart"

Hebrew News

שורדים

הסיפור שלהם

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו

האנשים שחיו את המלחמה והשרדו



THE TEAM

WEST COAST

Wendy Kout (Playwright/Producer)



Wendy Kout is an award-winning writer/producer of stage, film, virtual screen, and television. SURVIVORS was commissioned by CenterStage Theatre of Rochester, New York, and has been touring schools and stages there since 2018.

Recent productions of SURVIVORS toured schools in Philadelphia and Victoria, BC, Canada, and a West Coast tour launched in spring 2023. NEVER IS NOW, an iteration of SURVIVORS, had an acclaimed world premiere at Skylight Theatre Company in Los Angeles, in September 2019 and was also performed at the USC Fisher Museum, and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

Wendy's film credits include Co-Writer and Co-Producer of *Jacob the Baker*, which will be released fall of 2023, and writing award-winning *Dorfman in Love*, starring Elliott Gould, Sara Rue, and Haaz Sleiman. Television credits include Creator and Co-Executive Producer of the Golden Globe and ASCAP award-winning ABC series *Anything but Love*, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Richard Lewis.

Wendy considers the writing and launching of SURVIVORS to be her greatest responsibility and her greatest honor.

Genie Benson/TEEV (Producer)



Genie Benson is the Executive Producer at TEEV. Founded in 1994, this full-service company produces concerts, conferences, festivals, galas, and live-stream events for organizations, universities, and cultural festivals throughout North America.

Genie has worked on the productions of *Israel 60* at the Kodak Theatre, Save a Child's Heart galas at CSUN and UCLA, all local Los Angeles shows with TEEV artists, and built national tours for TEEV's Israeli artists.

Genie is also the Executive Director of Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble, an Israeli contemporary dance company that tours the world breaking down barriers of difference through dance.

The child of Holocaust survivors, Sidonia and Lewis Lax, Genie is an unassailable advocate for Holocaust Education and is determined to bring the play SURVIVORS to students everywhere.

THE TEAM

WEST COAST (Continued)

Evie Abat (Director)

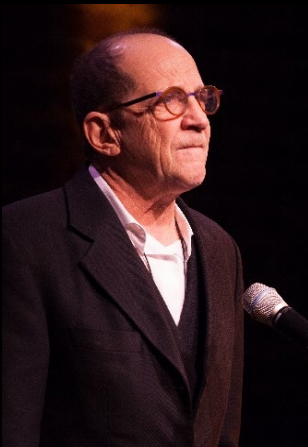


Evie Abat is a former doctoral-level psychotherapist turned actor turned writer/director/producer. As an actor, she has been seen on stages around LA in such productions as *Bloodletting* (Playwrights Arena), *Othello* (Griot Theatre), *America Adjacent* (Skylight Theatre), *The Late Wedding* (Son of Semele), *Titus Andronicus* (BoomStick Theater), and the world premiere of *NEVER IS NOW* (Skylight Theatre), which was developed from the personal accounts, included in this production of *SURVIVORS*.

She has also appeared on hit shows, including *The Morning Show* and *Loot*, and in numerous award-winning shorts and features. She made her directorial debut in film last fall with a short she wrote and produced, called *Dad's Gone Wild*, which is currently in post-production, and whose script has made official selection in several diversity script festivals. Her feature-length romcom script has also won and been named an official selection in writing festivals and is currently in pre-production for the Fall.

Evie is proud to be directing the West Coast tour of *SURVIVORS* and thanks Wendy, Genie, Gary, and her actors for their trust and support!

Gary Grossman/Skylight Theatre Company (Consultant)



Gary Grossman is the Producing Artistic Director of Skylight Theatre Company, which is recognized as a “powerhouse of new play development” by the national *Dramatist Magazine*, and as “a leader in play development” by the *Los Angeles Times*.

In just the last five years, two plays originating at Skylight have been performed off-Broadway: *The Wrong Man* (14 New York Award nominations), and *Church & State* (65+ productions nationally).

Gary is proud that Skylight Theatre Company was instrumental in the development of *SURVIVORS* by producing the play’s first staged reading, and in 2019, also producing an iteration of the play titled *NEVER IS NOW*.

THE TEAM

EAST COAST

Ralph Meranto/JCC CenterStage (Consultant)



CenterStage is the professional theatre program of the Rochester, NY Jewish Community Center. Producing Artistic Director Ralph Meranto commissioned SURVIVORS from Wendy Kout and has been at the forefront of new play development including Jason Odell Williams' *Church & State* (off-Broadway 2017, OBA Nomination Best New Play), Deb Margolin's *Imaging Madoff*, Wendy Kout's *Naked in Encino*, David Hein/Irene Sankoff's *My Mother's Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding*, and Joshua Hershfield's musical RISE about Jewish resistance fighters.

Ralph considers bringing SURVIVORS to school and community groups to be one of the most satisfying experiences of his life.

Presented by



For more information about SURVIVORS contact genie@artsforchange.world

In partnership with:



Credits:

SURVIVORS West

Photographs: Kathrine Kohl

Video Trailer: Tal Yaari, YZ Content

SURVIVORS East

Photographs: Lou Schneider courtesy of CenterStage Theatre