

The *Arts* at The Emanuel

*The Emanuel Players*

Emanuel  
Synagogue  
presents a  
staged reading  
of **Ben Engel's**  
new play

# HAV DA LAH



**SUNDAY NOV. 7, 2021 7 PM**



## Welcome!

"Havdalah," you may know, means "separation," and that is what the Jews faced when they encountered modern life in Berlin and elsewhere in Europe in the early 1800s. Due to the work of Moses Mendelssohn and others, the Jews suddenly had new choices. They could get a secular education, enter new occupations, do business with Gentiles and ascend to higher rungs on the ladder of citizenship. Inevitably, Jews found themselves separating from other Jews in making these choices in personal, family, religious and business life. I think you will see the dilemmas and challenges faced by the wealthy, prominent Mendelssohn family reflected in Jewish life today. I am grateful for the opportunity to share this story with you.

As fulfilling as writing the script is working with the fabulous people listed in this program to bring this staged reading to you. We are "The Emanuel Players" but we take great satisfaction in comprising members of many area synagogues and pride in our many donors and supporters. We express special gratitude to our lead sponsor, Mrs. Eleanor Caplan and son Richard, and community sponsors, Keystone Equipment Finance Corp.; Rogin Nassau LLC, where I spent my years as a lawyer; Fierston Financial Group; the Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Fund at the Jewish Community Foundation; the Konover Coppa Family Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; and the Zachs Family Foundation. So as much as this is a hearty welcome, it is also a sincere thank you to the community!

*Ben Engel*

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*NOTE: Key sources of information for this play were: R. Larry Todd, Mendelssohn: A Life in Music (2003), various editions of letters of the Mendelssohn family and associates, and relevant entries in the Jewish Encyclopedia and Wikipedia. Other important sources were Ben-Sasson, ed., A History of the Jewish People (1976); L. Botstein, Mendelssohn as Jew: Revisiting Controversy on the Occasion of the Composer's 200th Birthday, The Musical Quarterly (March 2009); J. Reder Carlson, Politics Without Words: Mendelssohn and His Music in Restoration-Era Prussia (1841-47) (UCLA Electronic Thesis 2015); S. Dubnov, History of the Jews (1925); N. Ferguson, The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets 1798-1848 (1998); T. Greive, Mendelssohn's Concerto Revisions, The Instrumentalist (Feb. 1992); S. Hensel, The Mendelssohn Family 1729-1847 (1882); M. Meyer, Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (1988); B. Muller, Introduction to the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor, Leipzig Edition of the Works of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Breitkopf and Hartel (2015); The Musical Times, Ferdinand David (1810-1873) (July 1, 1906); D. Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (1931); D. Philipson, The Beginnings of the Reform Movement in Judaism, Jewish Quarterly Review (Apr. 1903) and J. Sposato, Creative Writing: The [Self-] Identification of Mendelssohn as Jew, The Musical Quarterly (Spring 1998). I am grateful to Dr. Sebastian Panwitz, historian and deputy chairman of the Mendelssohn Society of Berlin, for his very helpful information, comments and guidance. While I hope that this play captures the essence of its characters and events, it necessarily treats them interpretively, not literally. It is a work of drama, not of history.*

ALAN PARKER    KEN SIMON  
THE EMANUEL SYNAGOGUE

present

# HAVDALAH

Music by  
FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Play by  
BEN ENGEL

*starring*

RABBI STEVEN CHATINOVER    PAT KAZAKOFF    ESTHER ARONSON  
FRED SPAETH    MEL SIMON    MIKE ISKO    ELIZABETH EHRLICH  
ERIC HOFFMAN    MARK WOLFBERG    LESLEY WEINER  
RABBI DAVID SMALL    CAROLYN TOPOL

Costume Design by  
ELIZABETH EHRLICH

Sound Design by  
JOHN LARSEN

Lighting Design by  
ADRIAN A. DURLESTER

Directed by  
ADRIAN A. DURLESTER

Emanuel Players Chief Administrator  
MARSHA WOLFBERG

THIS STAGED READING WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION

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After the performance, please join us for a dessert reception sponsored by Fierston Financial Group.

*Please turn off all cellphones.  
Enjoy the show!*



## CAST

Joseph Mendelssohn, *banker*  
Henriette (Hinni) Mendelssohn, *wife of Joseph*  
Abraham Mendelssohn, *banker and brother of Joseph*  
Alexander Mendelssohn, *banker and son of Joseph*  
Ferdinand David, *violinist*  
Felix Mendelssohn, *composer, son of Abraham and nephew of Joseph*  
Cecile Jeanrenaud, *wife of Felix*  
Joseph Lehman, *writer*  
Aaron Bernstein, *Reformer*  
Moritz Veit, *banker*  
Rabbi Michael Sachs, *rabbi of the Chief Jewish Congregation of Berlin*  
Konrad Schleinitz, *lawyer*  
Narrator

RABBI STEVEN CHATINOVER  
PAT KAZAKOFF  
ESTHER ARONSON  
FRED SPAETH  
MEL SIMON  
MIKE ISKO  
ELIZABETH EHRLICH  
ERIC HOFFMAN  
MARK WOLFBERG  
LESLEY WEINER  
RABBI DAVID SMALL  
ESTHER ARONSON  
CAROLYN TOPOL

Time: A prologue in 1821, then 1844-45

Place: The Prussian cities of Berlin and Frankfurt

## PROLOGUE

Scene 1 – Prussia

Scene 2 – The home of Joseph and Hinni in Berlin

*Lieder ohne Worte* (“Songs Without Words”) Op. 19b, No. 6 in G Minor – *Andante sostenuto* (1829-30)

Scene 3 – Joseph's office at J&A Mendelssohn Bank in Berlin

Scene 4 – The home of Joseph and Hinni

## ACT ONE

*Prelude #5 in F Minor, Op. 35 – Andante lento* (1836)

Scene 1 – Prussia

Scene 2 – A hotel in Leipzig

Scene 3 – The office of the Gesellschaft der Freunde in Berlin

## ACT TWO

*Lieder ohne Worte* Op. 38, No. 2 in C Minor – *Allegro non troppo* (1836-37)

Scene 1 – The home of Felix and Cecile in Frankfurt

Scene 2 – The home of Joseph and Hinni

## ACT THREE

*Kinderstucke, Op. 72 No. 5 in G Minor – Allegro assai* (1842)

Scene 1 – The home of Felix and Cecile

Scene 2 – Joseph's office

Scene 3 – The home of Joseph and Hinni

Scene 4 – Joseph's office

Scenes 5 and 6 – The home of Felix and Cecile

## ACT FOUR

*Prelude #1 in E Minor, Op. 35 – Allegro con fuoco* (1837)

Scene 1 – The Culture Verein in Berlin

Scene 2 – The home of Felix and Cecile

*Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64* (1844) (*opening measures of first movement*)

Scene 3 – The Culture Verein

## ACT FIVE

Scene 1 – The home of Joseph and Hinni

Scene 2 – The home of Joseph and Hinni, switching to the Leipzig Gewandhaus

*Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64* (1844) (*conclusion of final movement*)



## THE EMANUEL PLAYERS

**Esther Aronson (Abraham Mendelssohn, Konrad Schleinitz)** This is Esther's first time being part of the cast in a Ben Engel original play and she is enjoying the opportunity to expand her artistic range through these differing roles. She has been involved in many theatrical productions as a youth in her native Panama and as part of the Georgetown Gilbert & Sullivan Society while a law student at GULC. She last appeared on stage in the West Hartford Community Theatre production of "Mamma Mia!" pre-pandemic. In her spare time, Esther is a passionate tennis player, captaining several USTA teams and is an avid triathlete who has completed 6 full-distance Ironman races, among others.

**Rabbi Steven Chatinover (Joseph Mendelssohn)**, a graduate of Brandeis University, earned a Master of Hebrew Letters and rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He has been actively involved in the Jewish community since moving to Greater Hartford in 1982, including as Rabbi at Temple Beth Hillel in South Windsor, Middle School educator at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford, and as founding rabbi of Ohavei Shalom, a liberal, traditional, havurah-style synagogue. He was the recipient of a Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award for Excellence in Jewish Education (2005). He has been married to Leah Cohen Chatinover for 36 years, and is the proud father of Levi, Jacob and Nadav and grandfather of Caleb. Joining the Emanuel Players in 2016, Rabbi Chatinover made his first foray into acting since grade school, appearing as Rabbi Joshua in *Rabbi of the Stars*, and as King Solomon in *Philosopher King*.

**Adrian Durlenster (Director)** is a freelance Jewish educator and consultant, a freelance tutor, substitute school teacher for Simsbury Public Schools and a performing pianist and song leader. He serves as choir director, religious school teacher, and bar/bat mitzvah tutor for Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom in Simsbury, and has served in musical/liturgical leadership roles for the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford, Beth El Temple and Camp Shalom day camp of the Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford. He's a consultant to Jewish educators on implementing and using technology, editing Jewish textbooks, giving workshops and presentations, and other Jewish activities. Adrian has spent a significant number of years in theatrical production and management, covering the full spectrum - producer, director, designer (lighting, scenery, and audio), stage and production manager, technical director, musical director, et al. A native New Yorker, Adrian graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, and holds a BFA in theatrical production and management from the School of Design & Production of the North Carolina School of the Arts. He is also an accomplished musician and pianist, having studied 14 years pre-college first at The Juilliard School and then the Manhattan School of Music. He received his Master of Theological Studies degree from Vanderbilt University Divinity School in May 2000.

**Elizabeth Ehrlich (Cecile Jeanrenaud, Costumer)** is delighted to return to perform and costume another of Ben's spectacular plays. Elizabeth holds a BA in Theater from Wesleyan University and an MS in Organic Chemistry from Indiana University. Elizabeth is currently the owner and chief creator of Kids Kippot, an online shop for fun and creative kippot. Kids Kippot covers the heads of thousands across the world. Elizabeth would like to thank her family for supporting her in all her endeavors.



**Ben Engel (Playwright)** is delighted that his fourth play, like his earlier *Jacob and Esau*, *Rabbi of the Stars*, and *Philosopher King* will be a fundraiser for the Emanuel Synagogue, where he served as president from 1996-1998 and is a life member of the board of trustees. He is the president of Capital Classics Theatre Company, which produces the Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival, and a former member of the board of the Commission on Jewish Education of Greater Hartford. Ben is counsel to the Hartford law firm of Rogin Nassau LLC, and formerly a newspaper reporter and editor.

**Eric Hoffman (Joseph Lehmann)** was born and raised in Brooklyn. He studied theater and creative writing at the University of Rochester. At Dell' Arte International he studied ensemble based physical theater, clown and Comedia Dell' Arte. Eric received his Masters in Educational Theater from the City College of New York and taught theater in New York City public schools for a decade. He is thrilled to be making his West Hartford debut with the Emanuel Players. He would like to thank his two children, Zehava and Judah, and his wife Hazzan Daniella Risman.

**Mike Isko (Felix Mendelssohn)** is thrilled to perform in another of Ben Engel's plays after appearing as *Esau*, in Ben's *Jacob and Esau*, as Rabbi Tzadok in *Rabbi of the Stars*, and as Yaravam in *Philosopher King*. Since his mother took him to an audition at the age of six Mike has always enjoyed time onstage. In college he had feature or leading roles in plays by John Guare (*Cop Out*) Sam Sheppard (*Shooter*), Athol Fugard (*People Are Living There*) and Ben Jonson (*Volpone*). For his college senior thesis Mike wrote and performed a one man show, *A Nosh of Yiddish Theater*, talking about Jewish migration to America using family stories and a compilation of monologues from the Yiddish Theater. Thanks to his involvement in *Jacob and Esau*, Mike is back onstage telling stories for Matt and Elysha Dicks at *Speakup* performances and as part of the *Story City Troupe*. Mike also played the role of Lazar Wolf in the GHJCC production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and has taken improvisation and sketch classes with *Sea Tea Improv*.

**Pat Kazakoff (Henriette Mendelssohn):** Hartford Theatre experience has included the JCC's *Fiddler on the Roof*; Hartford Stage's *Orphan's Home Cycle*; Ivoryton's *Best Days of our Lives*, plus numerous Purim Schpiels as a director. She hosted a show on Channel 20, WTXN, where her partner was a puppet! She is host/producer of *Shalom Hartford*, on WHCTV. She is very much looking forward to being in a second production, written by Ben Engel, and directed by Adrian Durlister. L'chaim!

**Alan Parker (Producer)** has served the Emanuel Synagogue in many different capacities, as President, Life Member of its Board of Trustees, and on various committees at the Emanuel and in the greater Hartford Jewish community. In grade school, he played the Captain in Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore." He was the co-producer of *Jacob and Esau*, *Rabbi of the Stars* and *Philosopher King* and is enthused to assist with Ben's latest original staged reading in support of The Arts at The Emanuel.

**Ken Simon (Producer)** is a graduate of California State University at Northridge (BA in English) and Western New England College School of Law (JD). Most of his thirty five-plus years of law practice has been in Criminal Law with many Jury Trials in Murder and Death



Penalty Defense. Ken said, "Those trials require theatrical performance. One weeklong Advocacy Institute I attended brought in a Hollywood Director to help us relearn language to help us speak to non lawyer juries. From childhood I was enveloped by love of theater and have shared that with my family. Seeing quality theater locally, in New York and London has always been a priority for us. It is with great pride that I helped bring Ben Engel's vision of *Jacob & Esau* to the Emanuel Synagogue." Now serving as president of Emanuel Synagogue, Ken also produced *Rabbi of The Stars* in 2016 and *Philosopher King* in 2018.

**Mel Simon (Ferdinand David)** returns to the Emanuel stage on the heels of his 2018 performance as Ahiyah in *Philosopher King*. Mel also played the role of Gamliel in *Rabbi of the Stars* (2016) and the American Dream in Central Connecticut State College's production of Edward Albee's play, *The American Dream* (1979). Mel is a Past President of the Emanuel Synagogue and a committed volunteer who has served as President of the Mandell JCC and JT Connect. Reflecting on his upcoming role as Ferdinand, Mel said, that Ben Engel's remarkable script helps us to understand the ever-evolving world that the Jewish People have navigated through the ages and the need to be both open minded to change and rooted in tradition. When not appearing on the stage, Mel practices commercial litigation at the Hartford law firm of Cohn Birnbaum & Shea and enjoys seeing his three beautiful daughters take on the world.

**Rabbi David Small (Rabbi Michael Sachs)** is thrilled to join the cast and crew of *Havdalah*. David returns to the stage after a hiatus. In the Previously, David appeared in productions in Kansas City, Missouri, New Haven, Connecticut, Jerusalem, Israel and Los Angeles, California. Roles include: *Fiddler* (Constable); *Bells are Ringing* (Manager); *Calamity Jane*, (*Wild Bill*) I remember *Mama* (Uncle Chris); *Auntie Mame* (Ito), *ApoupkolyseNow!* (Poupko); *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Servant) and *Pajama Game* (Boy no. 1). Rabbi Small is a winner of the Greater Hartford My Rabbi's Got Talent Competition.

**Fred Spaeth (Alexander Mendelssohn)** is making his theatrical debut in West Hartford but by no means his first experience on stage. He started as a child actor when he joined his father in a production of Arnold Perl's *The World of Sholom Aleichem*. Later, he acted in numerous high school and college productions and has been seen appeared in Hartford area local community theater. Offstage, Fred is a practicing intellectual property attorney, a member of the Emanuel Board of Trustees, husband to Eliana Tsukroff and father to their two sons Benjamin and Emmet, who both became bar mitzvahs at the Emanuel and both carry on the family theater tradition, starring in JCC, community and school productions. They have been members of the Emanuel since 2012.

**Carolyn Topol (Narrator)** grew up just outside New York City. Being fortunate enough to grow up just a short train ride to Broadway, Carolyn spent her days at school or work and her evenings or weekends enjoying the theater or an occasional Mets game. In addition, Carolyn enjoyed many hours with her high school and college theater organizations – primarily backstage. Presently, Carolyn leads a busy life teaching at The Emanuel Religious School, writing, participating in multiple Sisterhood activities and, most importantly, caring for her wonderful and supportive family. In addition, Carolyn has hosted a show on WHCI - West Hartford Community Interactive TV. She is very excited about participating in her third

Emanuel production. Carolyn would like to send a big thank you to the production team and to David, Jenn, Rick, and Adam.

**Lesley Weiner (Moritz Veit)** is a lifelong resident of West Hartford, where she raised three daughters with her husband Bruce. Lesley recently retired from Enfield High School, where she taught literature, writing, and speech. These days, she helps care for her grandson Jaden. Lesley loves to sing and perform with Bruce, with whom she has appeared in several talent shows and cabaret nights at the Emanuel. As a member of the Emanuel Players, Lesley played Tirtzah in *Rabbi of the Stars* and the Messenger in *Philosopher King*.

**Mark Wolfberg (Aaron Bernstein)** is happily retired and currently residing in Bloomfield. A 35-year member of Emanuel Synagogue, Mark has sung in the Adult choir for many years. As a young man he performed in several plays including the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz and Daddy in Edward Albee's *The American Dream*.

**Marsha Wolfberg (Chief Administrator)** is thrilled to be helping with Ben's play! She is a Hartford native and has served The Emanuel since 1986 - from PTA to Secretary to a Life Member of the Board of Trustees.



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**The Brotherhood, Sisterhood and Minyanaires of The Emanuel Synagogue wish Ben and The Emanuel Players a hearty mazel tov on another fantastic creation. We are blessed to have such creative people among us. Thank you!!**

**Stephen C. Larson**

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Works by Felix Mendelssohn

Lieder ohne Worte. Artist: Daniel Barenboim, sound recording by Polydor International, GmbH., Op. 19b, No. 6 in G Minor and Op. 38, No. 2 in C Minor. (c) 1974, 2002 UMG Recordings, Inc. (PWH).

Mendelssohn Piano Works, Prelude #5 in F Minor, Op. 35; Kinderstucke, Op. 72 No. 5 in G Minor; and Prelude #1 in E Minor, Op. 35; Performed by Benjamin Frith. Courtesy of Naxos of America, Inc.

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64; Performed by Kyung Wha Chung and Orchestra symphonique de Montreal. (c) 1999 The Decca Record Company Limited, London.



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CityPlace I, 22nd Floor  
185 Asylum Street  
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