

WHOLE CLOTH



An MFA Thesis Project

Written and Conceived by **Danielle Levin**

April 15, 16 & 17 at 6:30 p.m.

UCDAVIS

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

UCDAVIS

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE
AND DANCE**

Presents

WHOLE CLOTH

An MFA Thesis Project

Written and Conceived by **Danielle Levin**

Direction and Development by
Molly Aaronson-Gelb

Featuring

Nancy Carlin, Lucas Hatton, Danielle Levin

Stage Directions Read by
Jennifer Grace

Embroidery
Tasá Gleason

Scenic and Projection Design Collaborator
Ian Wallace

Contains adult themes and language

Program Notes

A few years back I hosted my first Passover seder. I didn't grow up with seders ... or with religion of any kind. In fact, I was fairly suspicious of religion. But, somehow the idea of a seder appealed to me.

My friends piled into my too-small living room, and I pieced together an extremely reform online Haggadah from a woman who calls herself the "Velveteen Rabbi." I fed them matzoh lasagna ... with sausage. And also cake, as if to say, with some caution: I'm Jewish, but I'm not very Jewish.

That first seder taught me a whole lot and became an annual tradition with my friends. I absolutely loved the rituals that we practiced that April night and the stories behind them as described in our Haggadah. I loved the theatricality of my religion ... my religion — for the first time it felt like a part of me.

That same year, I was at a family gathering when a cousin began to tell me stories about Elke Schiff, my great-grandmother — these arresting, incredible stories of her life back in Minsk. Elke was someone whose name, at that point, I didn't even know. She died a month after I was born. I knew her only as "Bubbe" and a face on my grandparents' hallway wall.

Elke's was a story that wasn't mine, but it belonged to a woman who knew me, who once held me in her arms, even if I didn't know her. A woman of my blood. She ... felt like a part of me.

In the years since, I've had some s**t go down related to genetics. And that? Yeah, that's a part of me too.

As an only child, growing up relatively far from extended family, I hadn't felt a part of something bigger. But now, with these revelations — comforting, fascinating, horrible — a history and a sense of belonging began to take shape, to well up behind me. And I began to write a play.

What you'll see tonight is a piece that's in its first stages of development: a "Workshop Presentation." I hope to continue to shape it into a real-live stage-play one day when that's a thing we do again. This presentation is the beginning of a road, not the final product. I'm extraordinarily excited to have you here at the journey's beginning. Thank you very much for joining me!

– Danielle Levin

About Ansky:

The text of the questions from Ansky's Ethnography Questionnaire are taken directly from Nathaniel Deutsch's translation in his book *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement*.

(Deutsch, Nathaniel. and S. An-Ski. *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2011. Print.)

There's a lot out there about (the real) Ansky. I heartily encourage you to take a look at Gabriella Safran's very readable book: *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-Sky*, which provided inspiration for many ideas in this piece.

(Safran, Gabriella. *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-Sky*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2010. Print. ACLS Humanities E-Book.)

THE CAST

Elke
Ansky
Danielle

Nancy Carlin
Lucas Hatton
Danielle Levin

Stage Directions

Jennifer Grace

THE CAST

Nancy Carlin (Elke) has performed and directed extensively in regional theaters, including A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, and OSF. A lecturer with SJSU and UC Berkeley, she holds a BA in comparative literature from Brown University and an MFA in acting from A.C.T. Carlin co-authored the musical, *Max Understood* and can be seen in the soon to be released Eleanor Coppola film, *Love is Love is Love*.

Jennifer Grace (Stage Directions) received her BA from Kansas State University in 1997. She has been working as a professional actor since, most notably in a record-shattering run as Emily Webb in Tony award-winning director David Cromer's critically acclaimed production of *Our Town*, which she performed in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles, opposite actors such as Michael Shannon, Helen Hunt and Michael McKean, and for which she was recognized with a Theatre World Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway debut.

Lucas Hatton (Ansky) has performed on myriad regional stages in Chicago and the Bay Area. He also appears in several 2K video games. Currently, Lucas teaches performance studies and social justice at San Jose State University and is a co-founder of Davis Repertory Theatre.

Danielle Levin (Danielle) is an actor and dialect coach, who has been seen in the Bay Area at Marin Theatre Company, CentralWorks, Shotgun Players, and Crowded Fire, Aurora Theatre Company, Center REPeritory Company, Just Theater, SF Playhouse, TheatreWorks, and Word for Word. Danielle is an Associate Artist with TheatreFIRST, Symmetry Theatre Company, and Playground SF. Her interests lie in devised performance that communicates using surprising visual elements and unusual use of language. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago. *Whole Cloth* is her MFA thesis project.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Molly Aaronson-Gelb (Direction and Development) is the founder and Co-Artistic Director of Just Theater, for whom she directed many plays including *Cry it Out*, *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, *A Maze*, and *Far Away*. She directs in the Bay Area. She is a member of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab, and holds an MA in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. She is the Drama teacher at The College Preparatory School in Oakland and Mother of a theater-loving five-year-old.

Ian Wallace (Scenic and Projection Design Collaborator) is excited to get to help bring Danielle's beautiful text to life. Previous designs for UC Davis include *Flora the Red Menace*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *Peter and the Starcatcher*. In addition to lecturing at UC Davis, Wallace is also a Professor and Department Chair of Theatre and Cinema Arts at Folsom Lake College.

Tasá Gleason (Embroidery) has been designing and creating costumes for dance and theatre for many years. Her work has been seen in Seattle, the greater Bay Area, New York and has toured internationally. Gleason has a background in draping and construction and holds an M.F.A. in Dramatic Arts, Costume Design from UC Davis, and a BFA in Dance Performance from Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle WA.

SPECIAL THANKS

UC Davis: **Mindy Cooper, Margaret Laurena Kemp, Maggie Morgan, Sven-Erik Rose, Susie Owens, Myke Kunkel, Patrick M. O'Reilly, McKayla Butym, Megan Kimura, Michael G. French, Jennifer Grace, Verónica Díaz-Muñiz, Barnaby Tree O'Rorke.**

Care and Feeding: **Jessica Heidt, Carrie Paff, Hillary Casper, Colin MacNaughton, and all the Frenz, Jon Arkin, Lorna Gill, Katie Rubin, Oona Hatton, Jon Tracy, Michelle Howard, James G. Dashe + Oliver Day, Susannah Martin, Christopher Lee Douglas, Jonathan Spector, Maisie Spector-Gelb.**

And Family: **Carol and Martin Levin, Pieter Hartsook, Sonja Sutherland, Susan Hoffman, Michael Hoffman, Irene Alperstein, Daniel Schiff, Roberto Lewis,** and the **Levins** and **Schiffs**, their ancestors and descendants, including, of course, **Max** and **Elke.**

UC Davis Department of Theatre and Dance Staff

Production Manager	Susie Owens
Asst. Technical Director	Myke Kunkel
Facility Manager/Audio Specialist	Megan Kimura
Master Electrician	Patrick O'Reilly
Costume Shop Foreman	McKayla Butym
Marketing and Public Relations	Michael G. French

UC Davis Department of Theatre and Dance Faculty

Larry Bogad, Chair, Performance Studies

Mindy Cooper, Acting, Musical Theatre

David Grenke, Dance

Lynette Hunter, Performance Studies

Margaret Laurena Kemp, Acting

Maggie Morgan, Costume Design

Jon D. Rossini, Performance Studies

Lecturers

Stuart Carroll, Ballet

Mary Beth Cavanaugh, Movement

Paul Gordon, Granada Artist-in-Residence

Pamila Z. Gray, Lighting

Michele Aprña Leavy, Acting

Curtis Moore, Granada Artist-in-Residence

Steven Schmidt, Instructor, Production Management

Ian Wallace, Visual Design

Arts Administration

Karen Ostergard, Chief Administrative Officer

Barbara Olivier, Undergraduate Program Coordinator

Julie McGilvray, Undergraduate Advisor

Melany Miners, Graduate Program Coordinator

Michael G. French, Arts Marketing Specialist

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS

When It Works, where are you? Invitations and shared practices

An MFA Project by Barnaby O'Rorke

April 19, 21 & 23 at 5 p.m. PDT

Juliet and Romeo

A New Musical

Book by Paul Gordon

Music and lyrics by Paul Gordon and Curtis Moore

Directed by Mindy Cooper and Lisa Quoresimo

June 3-5