

Ted Clement holds an M.F.A. in Acting from the New School for Drama in New York City. He is an associate professor of theatre at the Community College of Rhode Island, and Artistic Director of Rhode Island based Counter-Productions Theatre Company. Favorite roles include Shelly Levene in *Glengarry Glen Ross* (IRNE Nomination for Best Ensemble), Marc in *ART*, Herr Shultz in *Cabaret* with Counter-Productions Theatre Company, Detective Sergeant Porterhouse in *Run For Your Wife*, Karl Lindner in *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hysterium in *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* with Summer Theatre at Salem, Duke Senior in *As You Like It*, Harry in *BLEED*, and Albert in *Girl Bully* at The New School for Drama. Ted dedicates this performance to his mother's journey of faith.

Libby Skala has written and performed internationally two critically-acclaimed solo plays: *Lilia!*, about her Oscar-nominated actress grandmother Lilia Skala, and *A Time to Dance*, about her great aunt, an award-winning dance therapy pioneer. Libby performed *Lilia!* in a successful Off-Broadway run at The Arclight Theatre, and won "Best Solo Performer Award" at The London Fringe Festival for *A Time to Dance*. Both have toured North America and Europe. Her third show *Felicitas*, about her great aunt, a tough-love Austrian baby nurse was recently performed at Emerging Artists Theatre One Woman Standing Festival in NYC. Libby is a graduate of Oberlin College and is an award recipient of the Pandella Cultural Fund in Switzerland. www.LibbySkala.com

Kevin Olson holds an M.F.A. in Theater Directing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and a B.S. in Speech and Theatre from SUNY Oneonta. For his production of *Translations* by Brian Friel at the University of Minnesota, he received a Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle KUDOs award in Directing. He has directed many plays including *Our Town*, *Betrayal*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *The Shadow Box* and *The Fantasticks*. His play, *Interrupting the Sermon* theatricalizes stories his father, Dr. Wayne C. Olson wrote about his years as a Protestant Minister. Kevin serves as Adjunct Faculty at the University of Rhode Island, Community College of Rhode Island and New England Institute of Technology teaching courses in Theater, Film and Communication.

"This is My Story: Mayses – 1938-1948"

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Created and Directed by Kevin Olson
with assistance from Amy Olson

May 21 and 22, 2013
at Artists' Exchange, Cranston, R.I.

Featuring

Ted Clement
Libby Skala

"Characters" in order of appearance

Miriam Ron	Laura Margolis
Shlomo Hillel	Jacob Beser
Ester Golan	Elaine Black Yoneda
Leonid Shekhtman	Ed Goldberg
Dina Pronicheva	Malka Goodman
Rabbi H. Cerf Straus	Harold Silverberg

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Ellen Eisenberg	Zeev Harel
Johanna Goldberg	Sandy Kahn
Michael Goldberg	Terry Kelleher
Paula Goldberg	Elina Nanikova
Sarah Goldberg	Peabo
Dr. Malka Goodman	Ann Silverberg
Viktor Grinberg	Bert Silverberg
Dalia Harel	Robert Silverberg

Tonight's reading will last approximately 90 minutes.
Following the reading, the audience is invited to schmooze
and to enjoy refreshments prepared by Paula Goldberg.

Welcome to the first reading of a new play!

Mayses is Yiddish for stories. Based on first-hand accounts, “This is My Story: *Mayses*, 1938-1948” presents glimpses into the lives of 12 Jews who were shaped significantly by their different yet somehow interconnected experiences during those years.

None of these *mayses* are set in concentration camps. They speak about and reflect on other events and realities that continue to impact the lives of both Jews and non-Jews today. Not everything you will hear is unique to Jewish experience nor do all these *mayses* focus on specifically Jewish issues or events.

The creation of this play began one Sunday afternoon at the Jewish Community Center in St. Paul, Minnesota where I worked. We sponsored a festival showcasing the culture of the many Jews from the former Soviet Union who had come to St. Paul.

What moved me so that day was the pride on the faces of the elderly men and women as they displayed the medals and ribbons they earned while serving in the Soviet Red Army fighting for Stalin against the Nazis in World War II. Jews who fought for Stalin -- wow. They would probably say they were fighting against the Nazis, not for Stalin.

I wondered if these Jewish-Soviet World War II Vets ever talked to the Jewish-American World War II Vets who also walked the hallways of the JCC every day. Language was an issue of course but they had stories to swap with each other.

Another question occurred to me – did any of these Soviet and American vets liberate Concentration Camps? If so, did they sit down with the Survivors of those camps who were also in the JCC?

And then another thought -- there was one person in the JCC most days who had lived in British Mandate Palestine fighting for a Jewish homeland during these same years.

How might these and countless other wartime experiences connect to each other? And taken together could they teach us anything new about Jewish history, identity and community? After all, these years forever changed Jewish life as they changed the lives and societies of so many people around the world.

I began a search for first-hand accounts that were less familiar than the more generally well known accounts from concentration camp survivors. Perhaps with that focus, new connections among Jews who experienced these years in different ways might emerge.

Through oral histories, trips to libraries, email inquiries, testimony and family archives, I uncovered stories and reflections that seemed to reverberate in the pairing and sharing. And new connections did emerge in ways that surprised and hit close to home.

For example, in the play, you will hear a story that my late father-in-law, Harold Silverberg wrote in his journal about his friend and fox-hole mate Johnny Chrabaszc.

With such an uncommon last name, I thought maybe I could locate an address. I knew from my father-in-law’s story that Johnny came from Easthampton, Massachusetts. I found a Chrabaszc with an address near there. So I sent off a letter out of the blue.

I had no idea why I felt compelled to reach out; perhaps to use a photograph of Johnny in this play somehow.

Then several weeks later I got a call from Johnny’s sister Jane who was stunned to the core to have received my letter. She wanted to know who I was and how I was connected to Johnny.

Our families met in October 2012 and have become friends. We now share a bond that we never knew existed but was out there in the ether waiting to be discovered.

And maybe that is why we keep telling stories; always hoping to learn something about ourselves and to uncover new connections. From these years are billions of stories, told and untold, from millions of people. You will hear from 12 of them.

Kevin Olson