JTE’S NIGHT OF NEW WORK
WINTER WEEK 9

Night of New Work features staged readings of two full-length plays by student playwrights! We are a secondary process.

THE ATTENDANT
By Ilana Abusch

SYNOPSIS: In traditional Judaism, the laws of niddah stipulate that when a woman is on her period, she cannot touch her husband until her period is over and she has visited the mikvah, a ritual bath, in order to ritually cleanse herself. For ultra-orthodox women, who dress in modest clothing, the mikvah attendant is the only person other than their husbands who see more than just their faces and hands – the only person who would be able to see signs of domestic abuse on their bodies. When a young, female rabbinical student interviews a seasoned mikvah attendant, their conflicting views of the traditions surrounding the mikvah sparks a spiritual reckoning within both women. Through the spirited debate between them, and a window into the ritual that prompts it, The Attendant explores the question of whether mikvah attendants should be required– or even allowed– to report concerns of domestic abuse, weighing the importance of ritual, tradition, and sacred spaces against an obligation to domestic abuse survivors and modern conceptions of feminism.

CHARACTERS:
DEVORAH – The Mikvah Attendant. Female. 50s. Spiritual, jovial, loving.
BINAH – A rabbinical student. Female. Early 20s. Spirited, sharp, thoughtful.
YAEL – A wife, a mother. Female. Mid to Late 20s. Kind, quiet, sturdy.
HANASHIM (the women) – Female. Open age. Plays all the other women who use the mikvah.

ALL-IN
By Andy Hartman

SYNOPSIS: Josh has never been behind the wheel before. Carol has been a “legendary” driving instructor in New York City her entire life. While the two come from very different worlds socioeconomically, in the car, none of that matters – what matters more is learning how to parallel park, deciding what radio station to listen to, and, of course, gossiping about Josh’s classmates who Carol also teaches. With humor and heart, Andy Hartman's new play All-In follows the unlikely friendship that forms between Josh and Carol over the course of their lessons together, and what ultimately happens when Josh offers Carol to move in with his family after he thinks she might be in a potentially dangerous situation with her alcoholic and gambling-addicted husband Marshall.

CHARACTERS:
CAROL – The driving instructor. Mid-50s.
JOSH BECKER – The student. 16.
DAVID BECKER – Josh's Dad. Late 50s.
LAURIE BECKER – Josh's Mom. Mid-50s.
MARSHALL – Carol’s husband. Mid-50s.

Feel free to reach out to our producers at phoebegolfinos2024@u.northwestern.edu or harrisonlewis2023@u.northwestern.edu with any questions.