



# From The Heart

Aaron Alpern and Diane Hill take the leads in Two Muses' production of *Same Time, Next Year*.

## Two Muses theater company presents two plays that celebrate love.

**Suzanne Chessler**  
Contributing Writer

**A**aron Alpern of Ann Arbor is helping to launch the premiere season of a new, non-profit theater company — Two Muses.

Alpern, appearing Feb. 3-19 in Bernard Slade's Tony-nominated *Same Time, Next Year* at the Barnes and Noble Booksellers Theatre Space in West Bloomfield, is in one of two productions that celebrate enduring love.

Three performances of the second production, *Love Letters*, with three different couples, take place Feb. 7, 12 and 14.

The theater company, started by Diane Hill and Barbie Amann Weisserman, both of Farmington Hills, reflects the diverse theater interests and projects shared by the two women. While Hill directs and acts, Weisserman designs and acts.

In *Same Time, Next Year*, "I play a happily married man who happens to fall in love with a young woman when he's on a business trip," says Alpern, 50, who has worked at Meadow Brook Theatre, Performance Network and the Jewish Ensemble Theatre as well as regional theaters around the country.

"Things transpire in such a way that they manage to meet once a year every year for the next 24 years of their lives, and the play chronicles the changes in their own lives and also in society."

Directed by Nancy Kammer, the two-person theater piece also spotlights Hill.

"I had the pleasure of working with both Diane and Nancy at Meadow

Brook," says Alpern, who earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and his master's in acting from the California Institute of the Arts.

"This play presents a unique challenge in that we're portraying a relationship that is changing over many years along with the arc of each character's life. We don't get that sort of an opportunity in most plays."

Alpern, who spent many years working in theater in Chicago, was active with Ann Arbor's Beth Israel Congregation when he was growing up. He and his wife, Rebecca Covey, appeared in *Denial* at JET.

Three real-life couples from different generations appear in separate shows of A.R. Gurney's Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Love Letters*, directed by Yolanda Fleischer. They are Robyn Lipnicki Mewha and Rusty Mewha of Plymouth (third-generation cast) on Feb. 7, Karen Sheridan and Sam Pollak of Oak Park (second-generation cast) on Feb. 12 and Mary Bremer Beer and Arthur Beer of Warren (first-generation cast) on Feb. 14. The play is about two childhood friends who stay connected for more than 50 years by corresponding, continuing the theme of relationships over time.

"I think the beauty of *Love Letters* lies in the love that moves through a lifetime no matter what paths are taken," says Fleischer, retired associate professor of theater at the University of Detroit Mercy and longtime director in local theater companies. "Love endures; love changes, but love remains." □

*Same Time, Next Year* runs Feb. 3-19 at the Barnes and Noble Booksellers Theatre Space, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Performances are at 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Wednesdays and Sundays. \$15-\$20. *Love Letters* will be staged 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7; 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 12; and 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14. \$10-\$15. (248) 850-9919; [www.twomusetheatre.org](http://www.twomusetheatre.org).

## Unmasking Judeophobia

### Film tackles today's anti-Semitism.

**Masha Rifkin**  
JointMedia News Service

**A**nti-Semitism — from its roots in antiquity to the campuses and European countries where it once again rears its ugly head — is tackled in the new film *Unmasked: Judeophobia — The Threat to Civilization*.

The film, made by Doc Emet Productions, the same production company behind *The Case for Israel*, will be shown at the Berman Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, followed by a discussion with film producer-director Gloria Z. Greenfield.

"I made this movie because I felt it really needed to be made," said Greenfield in an interview with JointMedia News Service. "In the U.S., we don't have our thumb on the pulse of what's happening in Europe or Muslim and Arab countries."

In the film, an impressive roster of political analysts, professors and legal experts, among them Alan Dershowitz, Natan Sharansky, Bret Stephens and U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman, follow the birth and development of anti-Semitism, including its modern manifestations.

"I selected the commentators for their scholarship and expertise in the issues that relate to the resurgence of lethal anti-Semitism," Greenfield said. "That's one of the things that is so important about the film, its level of expertise and integrity."

One startling fact experts recount is the depth of the connection between early Islamism and Nazi Germany.

It is common knowledge, perhaps, that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, supported and corroborated Hitler's ideals. According to University of Maryland Professor Jeffrey Herf, the relationship was also forged in the other direction. Part of the German strategy from 1938-1945 was to extend Nazi propaganda to the Arab world and North Africa through regular radio broadcasts in Arabic.

While Germany faced years of re-education and condemnation following its loss in the war, the Arab world did not, said political scientist and author Matthias Kuntzel.

This racism, the film argues, was therefore nurtured over the years and has recently seeped into Europe through the Muslim immigration, spelling dire consequences for its Jewish populations.

France, with the largest Jewish community in Europe, has been hit with the brunt of the violence. During the second intifada in early 2000, more

than 500 violent attacks against Jews were recorded in the country.

The government has had a disappointing response.

"A very strange phenomenon occurred," said Professor Shmuel Trigano of Paris University.

"There was a total blackout on these attacks by government offices, by Jewish institutions, by media and so on. When we tried to alert French public opinion, we were called anti-Arab racists; the government did not want to define these attacks as anti-Semitic. Here you have an ideological problem because Arabs and Muslims are seen as innocent colonized people, so they can't be racist."

According to the film, the problem is apparent in other EU countries as well.

British Jews, feeling vulnerable to attack due to the unresponsiveness of the British government, created an independent security organization known as the Community Security Trust.

While the frequency of violence is considerably less in the U.S., the film continues to discuss the prevalence of different forms of anti-Semitism, including intimidation and censorship, on university campuses and in the United Nations.

"When we have situations when a young woman is standing at a train station in Paris with her babies and is attacked by Muslim gangs who think she's Jewish and rip her clothes off to carve a swastika in her body," it is time to wake up, Greenfield said. □



Susan Wilson/Doc Emet Productions

**Judeophobia**  
producer-  
director  
Gloria Z.  
Greenfield

*Unmasked: Judeophobia, the Threat to Civilization* screens at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, at the Berman Center for the Performing Arts, Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield, followed by a discussion with producer-director Gloria Greenfield. \$7/free for students. (248) 661-1900; <http://bermancenter.jccdet.org/ticketing>.