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Rank and File

English-language performing arts community to perform play based on century of war diaries; New York Yankees president hosts future IDF soldiers; Story of Kovno resistance published in English for first time in over 50 years.

By Steven Klein | Aug. 15, 2014 | 2:34 AM

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THE ABSURDITY OF WAR: The Stage, an English-language performing arts community in Tel Aviv, is exploring the world of tragicomedy with a reading of “Traktorfabrik,” a play based on a century of war diaries dating back to World War I. The Belgian-born writer-director Noemi Schlosser told Haaretz on Wednesday that she spent five years reading nothing but war diaries while researching the play. While her work explores the “absurdity of fighting” and “the choice about how to die,” she says she found that in “every war diary, they talk about life.” Sunday’s free reading at Tel Aviv’s Yad Labanim features immigrants Nitzan Sitzer, who began acting professionally at the age of 8, in Houston, when he was eight years old, and Leor Doron, a Cornell alumna, as well as UCLA alum Tomer Shechori. The evening includes a “talkback” with Schlosser. The international production, funded by the EU, Flemish government and the City of Antwerp will open in Antwerp in October, before moving on for appearances in Chicago and New York. For more info on Sunday’s event, visit www.thestagetlv.com.

TAKE ME OUT: Randy Levine, president of the New York Yankees baseball club, and his wife Mindy hosted some 40 young men and women on Sunday before their planned move to Israel to serve in the army. While eating kosher versions of stadium standards, they watched the Yankees lose to Cleveland. They also received swag bags containing Yankees camouflage shirts and caps. Some of those guests arrived in Israel Tuesday, on a charter flight carrying 338 new immigrants from the United States and Canada, including 108 who are planning to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. Nefesh B’Nefesh organized the flight in cooperation with the Immigrant Absorption Ministry and the Jewish National Fund. “I want to thank Randy and Mindy Levine for their exceptional hospitality and the unforgettable experience they gave to the young olim, just before they departed for Israel,” said NBN cofounder and executive director Rabbi Yehoshua Fass.

FROM KOVNO TO JERUSALEM: Over 50 years after it was first published in Hebrew, Dov Levin’s “The Story of an Underground: The Resistance of the Jews of Kovno in the Second World War” is now available in English. Reuven Geffen, Levin’s cousin, translated the book, which was cowritten with Zvie A. Brown. Gefen Publishing House is holding a launch event featuring Levin and his wife Bilha Deutsch at Beit Avi Chai in Jerusalem on Sunday. Levin, a noted scholar, fought with the partisans in the Lithuanian forest during World War II and walked 4,500 kilometers from Vilna to Italy in 1945 before being smuggled to Palestine. “Over 100 of us have immigrated during the last 45 years with his warm encouragement,” David Geffen, a Jewish educator and cousin told Haaretz on Monday. “Growing up in Atlanta Georgia after World War II, Dov was my Jewish hero,” added Geffen, who moved to Israel in 1977.

Rank and File was compiled by Steven Klein.

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