

AN IMMERSIVE LOOK AT A WORLD GONE MAD

The Obligation

Written and performed by Roger Grunwald

Directed by Nancy Carlin

October 11 – November 4, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (15 August 2018) – Internationally acclaimed actor **Roger Grunwald** explores a world gone mad in *The Obligation*, his riveting, immersive one person stage drama. Directed by Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle award winner **Nancy Carlin**, this celebrated work interweaves the stories of a Polish Jew coming of age during World War II, a half-Jewish lieutenant in Hitler’s army, a high-ranking SS officer, and a Jewish-American comedian (the play’s Chorus)—all brought to life onstage in Grunwald’s tour-de-force performance. *The Obligation* offers a provocative and timely look into the corrosive moral dilemmas of World War II and the Holocaust: a time when the unimaginable was the norm and survival depended on the right choice, guile, and sheer luck. Presented in partnership with **PlayGround** and the **Holocaust Center of San Francisco’s Jewish Family and Children’s Services (JFCS)**, *The Obligation* will perform October 11 – November 4, 2018 (*press opening: October 13*) at Potrero Stage, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco. For tickets (\$26-\$56) and more information, the public may visit theobligation.org or call (415) 992 – 7990.

Seen on stages around the world, Grunwald has been described as “riveting” by *The New York Times*, and as having a “Meryl Streep-like ability to shift from one character to another without a trace” by *The Washington Informer*. A child of an Auschwitz survivor and a refugee, Grunwald’s artistic and personal mission is to use the power of the theater to keep in focus the critical lessons of the Holocaust at a time of growing intolerance and ignorance, with a reported 41% of Americans (and 66% of millennials) not being able to say what Auschwitz was. *The Obligation*, has been praised as “astonishingly relevant” by *The Huffington Post* and lauded by *The San Francisco Examiner* as “flawlessly performed and elegantly directed. An unsparing Holocaust remembrance, *The Obligation* should surely exist in perpetuity.” *The Obligation* includes text and original characters from the short play, *The Mitzvah*, co-authored and developed by Roger Grunwald and Annie McGreevey, and directed by Ms. McGreevey.

Roger Grunwald (Actor/ Playwright) is a veteran theatre, film, television, and voice actor. His television credits include HBO's "Vinyl" under the direction of Martin Scorsese and ABC's "One Life to Live." He has been a voice actor in several documentaries including *Normandy: The Great Crusade*, *The Nuremberg Trial: War Crimes on Trial*, and HBO's *Erwin Rommel: The Strange Death of the Desert Fox*. He starred in the short film, "One Good Pitch," that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and recently appeared in American Conservatory Theater's *Heisenberg*. Over the years, Grunwald has played leading roles in more than 70 stage productions in the United States and Europe, including a 2018 Amsterdam production of *Anne & Emmett*, a play that imagines a conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till. He is also a co-founder of the Castillo Theatre in New York City, where he starred in more than 45 productions. In addition to authoring *The Obligation* and co-authoring "The Mitzvah Project," Grunwald also penned *The Therapy Session*, a tragic-comic short play about a strange and frightening therapy session conducted by Dr. Sigmund Freud. Grunwald is a longtime member of Actors' Equity Association, SAG-AFTRA and the Dramatists Guild. He is an acting student of Wynn Handman, and a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Nancy Carlin (Director) is a director, actor, writer, dialect coach, and acting teacher. A former company member of American Conservatory Theater and associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, Nancy is a member of PlayGround. She has performed and directed extensively in regional theaters, including American Conservatory Theater., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, Center Repertory Company, The Jewel Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. A theater arts lecturer for U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Santa Cruz, and San Jose State, she holds a BA in comparative literature from Brown University and an MFA in acting from A.C.T. Ms. Carlin is a member of SDC, AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and the Dramatists Guild. Other recent directing projects include the premiere of *#GetGandhi* by Anne Galjour at Z Below and *The Wolves* for Capital Stage Company.

PlayGround's mission is to support the development of new local voices for the theatre. PlayGround is the Bay Area's leading playwright incubator, providing unique opportunities for the cultivation and development of early-career local playwrights and partnerships with leading professional directors, actors and theatres. Through the development of original short and full-length plays, PlayGround

creates a microcosm of the greater theatre scene, supporting emerging playwrights' experimentation and risk-taking, while helping them to hone their style and technique.

The Holocaust Center of the JFCS is dedicated to the remembrance, research, documentation and education about the Holocaust. As Northern California's primary resource for education about the Holocaust and other genocides, the work of the Holocaust Center increases awareness about Jewish history and the causes and consequences of antisemitism, racism, and bigotry. Through a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and patterns of genocide, their goal is to inspire moral courage and social responsibility in future generations.

For Calendar Editors:

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WHEN: Previews: Thursday, October 11 – Friday, October 12, 2018
Press Opening: Saturday, October 13, 2018
Closes: Sunday, November 4, 2018

SHOWS: 8pm Wed - Sat
2pm Sun

WHERE: **Potrero Stage**, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

TICKETS: \$26 to \$56

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit **theobligation.org** or call **(415) 992-7990**.

PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/theobligation/>