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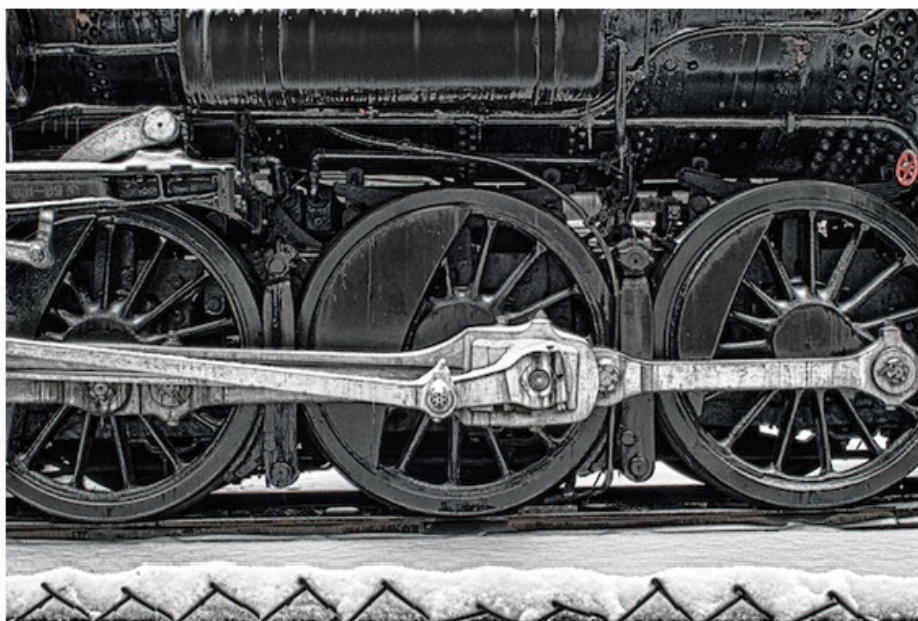
Theater

# Leah's Train Marks Co-production Between 20% Theatre and Sabes JCC

By Sheila Regan Tue., Mar. 3 2016 at 9:14 AM Write Comment

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Paul Costanza

Starting this weekend, 20% Theatre Company is joining up with Sabes JCC for a production of *Leah's Train*, a play by Karen Hartman. The story follows a young woman, Ruth, who must confront her relationship with her mother in the wake of the death of her grandmother.

Claire Avitabile, the executive artistic director of 20% and director of performing arts at Sabes JCC, says she was pointed toward the script by a friend of hers as a possibility for 20%'s season. When Avitabile discovered the show also had Jewish content, she realized that it was the perfect script to satisfy a longtime goal of hers to facilitate a collaboration between the two organizations.

Avitabile believes that collaborations are the wave of the future. It's a way not only to combine resources, but to "reach a much broader community," she says. The collaboration includes resource sharing but also requires them to be thoughtful about the audiences from each organization.



Meagan Sogge

"It's nice to have these audiences overlap and get to know the other organization," she says.

Jessica Smith and Kevin Fanshaw

The story is told through numerous train rides, which often end up being life-changing events. The setting is about a decade or so ago. Ruth, a young doctor living in San Francisco, is dealing with the fact that her grandmother, Jewish matriarch Leah, has just passed away. Due to her imperfect relationship with her mother, Ruth doesn't go to the funeral. While the script explores the relationships presented in the play, "it's deeper than that," Avitabile says. "Each character is in search of identity."

IF YOU GO:

**Leah's Train**  
March 7 through 22  
Sabes JCC  
4330 Cedar Lake Rd. S., Minneapolis.  
There will be a preview performance on Friday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m.

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