

Lincoln Center Festival

July 10–30, 2017

Lincoln Center Festival lead support is provided by American Express

July 19 Alice Tully Hall

Yitzhak Rabin: Chronicle of an Assassination

North American premiere

Director **Amos Gitai**

Writers **Amos Gitai** and **Marie-José Sanselme**

Lighting Design **Jean Kalman**

Cast

Leah Rabin **Sarah Adler**, **Einat Weizman**

Piano **Edna Stern**

Soprano **Keren Motseri**

Violin **Alexey Kochetkov**

Music **J.S. Bach**, **Jürg Frey**, **Louis Lewandowski**, **Luigi Nono**

Approximate performance time: 1 hour and 30 minutes, with no intermission

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A Note from the Director

If you'd asked him, that Saturday morning, if he'd ever thought it might happen, he would have said, "No, never!" He left with confidence and peace of mind. He never agreed to wear a bulletproof vest. He wasn't at all concerned about his personal safety. I must admit, I wasn't either. I trusted his bodyguards. The idea that something might happen never crossed my mind. There had been some warnings, but we didn't think about them. We refused to think about them. We never imagined that something so savage, cruel and senseless could ever happen.

Those I really blame—and I think about this constantly despite the pain it causes me—are the teachers who cultivated the weed of hate and the politicians who referred to Yitzhak as an assassin and a traitor. They accused him of leading the people astray; they spread certain ideas and views that led to the emergence of a faction that believed it was a religious duty to kill Yitzhak, a man they claimed was selling out Israel, Israel which is more sacred than the life of a man. I can't even get angry. I feel no anger. I'm not able to. I'm not able to feel anger. Just pain.

**—Leah Rabin, November 1995
Excerpt from Amos Gitai's film
Rabin—The Last Day (2015)**

Performed by two actresses, two musicians, and a soprano in a dialogue with archival images and excerpts from world literature (Oscar Wilde, Shakespeare, Ecclesiastes), this fable explores the political circumstances that led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the tearing apart of Israeli society.

Five voices intertwined in a recitative mode, "between lament and lullaby," retrace the course of history and the incredible violence with which the nationalist forces opposed the project of peace by tearing the country apart. They are heard as if "in an echo chamber" between images of documentation and excerpts from classical literature—the living memory that has always accompanied my understanding of the world.

For me, the best tribute an artist can give to his own culture is to be critical. The assassination of Rabin 22 years ago marks a turning point in the contemporary history of Israel. And we still live with the consequences of this brutal act. The Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, which is crucial for the Middle East, has been gradually stopped and decapitated. In this context, the problem of the artist: What to do when living next to a volcano? What artistic form can one propose?

A few years ago we decided to do this project on the assassination of Rabin as a gesture of memory and even hope. Sometimes resurrecting a memory can make things happen. But we must remain modest: Art is not the most effective way to change reality. Politics or machine guns have a much more direct effect. However, art sometimes preserves the memory when the powers in place want to erase it: They want obedience, they do not want to be disturbed or challenged. So I felt the necessity of dealing with this particular event, the assassination of Rabin, through different forms, with all the resonance that creates. After a narrative feature film and parallel exhibitions, it is time for the stage. The idea of this three-faceted presentation is political. It is a community gesture.

In my projects, I like to confront space, whether a film, an exhibition, or a live performance. The piece is told from the point of view of Leah, Rabin's widow, a role embodied

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 YITZHAK RABIN: CHRONICLE OF AN ASSASSINATION

by Israeli actresses Sarah Adler and Einat Weizman, sharing their memories of the assassination as if they were telling a tale.

The onstage musicians bring a lyrical presence or counterpoint. Pianist Edna Stern plays the preludes of Johann Sebastian Bach. Soprano Keren Motseri performs Luigi Nono's *Djamila* and a Jewish prayer, accompanied by violinist Alexey Kochetkov. Music by Jürg Frey and Louis Lewandowski is also performed.

For us, who allow the events of this historical narrative to circulate in our minds, reality is a juxtaposition of the fragments engraved in the collective memory.

—Amos Gitai, April 2017

A Timeline of Events

1992

Head of the Israeli Labor Party Yitzhak Rabin wins the elections and forms his second government as Prime Minister. He changes the priorities of the Israeli government, investing more in education and infrastructure, and reducing financing for the colonies.

September 1993

Signing of the Oslo Accords in Washington. Rabin, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, and U.S. President Bill Clinton establish the foundations of Palestinian autonomy to bring peace to the region.

July 1994

Demonstration by right and far-right parties in Zion Square in Jerusalem. Standing above a banner that reads "Death to Arafat," Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu tells the crowd to go everywhere and demonstrate against the government.

October 14, 1994

Rabin, Arafat, and Shimon Peres are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Autumn 1994

Beginning of a series of attacks by Palestinian terrorist organizations in Israeli urban centers. Rabin's political position is weakened. Settlers, radical rabbis, and far-right movements launch a campaign to undermine Rabin, now called a "traitor."

April–October 1995

Attacks against Rabin intensify by settler newspapers and the far right. In a weekly newspaper, a psychologist diagnoses Rabin as a schizophrenic who should be committed. Op-ed writers compare him to Pétain and his "satanic" government to Vichy.

Summer 1995

The Zo Artzeinu ("this is our land") movement organizes actions around the country. Led by Netanyahu, demonstrators display a coffin with the inscription "Rabin is killing Zionism." Chief Rabbi Goren asks soldiers evacuating settlements as per the Oslo Accords to disobey their orders. Rabin receives death threats.

September 28, 1995

Signing in Washington of an Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (or Oslo II), which calls for the creation of areas in the territories in which Israeli and Palestinian control would apply differently, as a temporary measure while waiting for the completion of the peace negotiations.

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 YITZHAK RABIN: CHRONICLE OF AN ASSASSINATION

October 5, 1995

Huge gathering of the far right and settlers in Zion Square in Jerusalem. In front of TV cameras, posters showing Rabin dressed up as an SS officer are torn apart. The crowd shouts "Death to Rabin" and "Rabin Traitor." Netanyahu encourages demonstrators to oppose the Oslo Accords. A frenzied crowd marches on the Knesset where the Oslo II vote is taking place. Official cars are attacked. The events are shown on TV, which Netanyahu denies any responsibility for.

October 6, 1995

Itamar Ben-Gvir, a young far-right radical, brandishes Rabin's Cadillac's emblem in front of a journalist, declaring that it is possible to get to Rabin himself.

October 10, 1995

Rabin is attacked by rabbi Natan Ofir during an official ceremony. The question of the security of the Prime Minister is raised by experts and in the press.

October 25, 1995

In front of the official residence of the Prime Minister, rabbi Avigdor Eskin organizes a Pulsa diNura, a medieval ceremony supposed to call death on Rabin.

November 3, 1995

Student Yigal Amir takes part in a demonstration in front of Rabin's house. The demonstrators threaten to "hang Leah Rabin by her feet with her husband, like Mussolini and his mistress."

November 4, 1995

A rally "for peace and against violence" is organized at the Kings of Israel Square in Tel-Aviv, attended by Rabin, Peres, and ambassadors from Arab countries. With 200,000 participants, it is a huge success. As he is leaving the rally, Rabin is killed by Yigal Amir, a student with ties to far-right movements.

November 19, 1995

Judge Meir Shamgar, former President of the Supreme Court, is tasked with leading a State investigation into the circumstances of the Prime Minister's assassination.

November 1995—March 1996

The commission studies 4,072 testimonies and hears 72 people. A few officers from the secret service and the police quit, or are fired or demoted. The report given to the head of the government contains a classified section, which isn't made public.

May 1996

Netanyahu wins the election.

About the Creative Team

Amos Gitai (Director and Writer) was an architecture student in 1973 when the Yom Kippur War broke out. The helicopter that carried him and his unit of emergency medics was shot down by a missile, an episode he alludes to in his 2000 film *Kippur*. After the war, he began directing short films for Israeli public television, which has now gone out of business. In 1980 his first documentary, *Bayit (The House)*, a portrait of Israelis and Palestinians living or having lived in the same Jerusalem house, was censored. Two years later, the controversy created by *Field Diary*, shot before and during the invasion of Lebanon, drove him to exile, a situation that inspired his first fiction features, *Esther Forever* (1985), *Berlin-Jerusalem* (1989), and *Golem: The Spirit of Exile* (1991). He returned to Israel in 1993, the year of the signing in Washington of the Oslo I Accord, promoted by Yitzhak Rabin. This marked the beginning of a period of intense activity during which he directed documentaries and fiction films—creating an aesthetic dialogue between the two genres—as well as plays, and supervised exhibitions. For the past 40 years, he has been building a body of work that is at once universal, politically conscious, and optimistic, intrinsically marrying the intimate, the political, and the poetic to pursue a deep quest for hope without losing his critical edge.

Marie-José Sanselme (Writer) has co-written screenplays with director Amos Gitai since their first collaboration on *Kippur* in 2000. Subsequently, the pair co-wrote Gitai's films *Eden*, *September 11* (segment), *Kedma*, *Alila*, *Promised Land*, *Free Zone*, *Disengagement*, *One Day You'll Understand*, *Roses à Credit*, *Ana Arabia*, and *Rabin—The Last Day*.

Jean Kalman (Lighting Design) has worked extensively as designer, lighting designer, and visual artist for dance, theater, and opera since 1979. He has collaborated on stage productions with directors such as Peter Brook, Lev Dodin, Deborah Warner, Richard Eyre, Robert Carsen, Adrian Noble, and Pierre Audi; dancers and choreographers such as Kazuo Ohno, Min Tanaka, and Kim Brandstrup; visual artists such as Karel Appel, Richard Serra, Georg Baselitz, Iannis Kounellis, Anish Kapoor, and Amos Gitai; and composers such as Mauricio Kagel, Heiner Goebbels, and Misato Mochizuki. In 1991 he received the Lawrence Olivier Award for Best Lighting Design, and won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lighting Design in 1997 and 2011. Since 2012 he has been an associated artist with the Royal Shakespeare Company. In 2008 he was designer and lighting designer for Amos Gitai's *La Guerre des Fils des Ténèbres* at Festival d'Avignon.

Laurent Truchot (Producer) has worked on Amos Gitai's films since 1988. Among his producing credits are Gitai's *Berlin-Jerusalem*, *Wadi 1981-1991*, *Birth of a Golem*, *Golem: The Spirit of Exile*, *Zihron Devarim*, *Metamorphosis of a Melody*, *War and Peace in Vesoul*, *Yom Yom*, *Kadosh*, *Kippur*, *Eden*, *Kedma*, *September 11* (segment), *Alila*, *Promised Land*, *Free Zone*, *Disengagement*, *One Day You'll Understand*, *Carmel*, *Roses à Credit*, *Lullaby to My Father*, *Ana Arabia*, *Words with Gods* (segment), *Tsili*, and *Rabin—The Last Day*.

 LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 **YITZHAK RABIN: CHRONICLE OF AN ASSASSINATION**

About the Artists

Sarah Adler (Leah Rabin) is a French and Israeli actress who has acted in the films *Jellyfish*, directed by Etgar Keret and Shira Geffen; *Stones*, directed by Raphael Najdari; *Notre Musique*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard; and *Marie Antoinette*, directed by Sofia Coppola. She was nominated for the European Film Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Notre Musique*, and the Ophir Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Jellyfish*, which also won the Cannes Film Festival's Caméra d'Or prize. She has collaborated twice with Amos Gitai on his films *Ana Arabia* and *Tsili*. In 2015 she played the title role in *Aya*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Short Film.

Einat Weizman (Leah Rabin) is an Israeli actress who has worked in films, on television, and onstage in her native country for more than two decades. Her film work includes director Amos Gitai's *Rabin—The Last Day*, along with *Shoshana*, *Center Forward*, *Bethlehem Prisoners*, *Columbian Love*, and *Fictions*. On TV, she starred in the series *When Will We Kiss?*, *Epidural*, and *Operation Grandmother*. Her stage work includes *Shame*, *Palestine Year Zero*, and *The 112 House: A Lesson in Political Construction*, all of which she acted in, wrote, and directed.

Edna Stern (Piano) began her studies in Israel with Viktor Derevianko, a student of Heinrich Neuhaus. She continued studying with Krystian Zimerman at the Basel Hochschule and with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Institute and the Lake Como International Piano Foundation. Her repertoire ranges from Bach to Berio. Her recordings are highly praised by critics, receiving such awards as Diapason d'Or, Diapason Découverte, Arte Best CD, and

Gramophone's Best Upcoming Artist. She has performed at prestigious halls and festivals such as the Olympia and Châtelet Theater in Paris, La Roque d'Anthéron Festival, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Munich's Hekulesaal, Moscow's Music-House, Petronas in Kuala Lumpur, and Musashino Hall in Tokyo; performing in solo recitals and with orchestras led by such conductors as Claus Peter Flor and Andris Nelsons. She gives master classes in such places as the CNSM of Paris, Rutgers University, and Tel-Aviv's Buchmann-Mehta School of Music. She has taught at the Royal College of London since 2009. She has also worked with artists in other fields like film director Amos Gitai and Agnès Letestu, first ballerina from the Paris Opera.

Keren Motseri (Soprano) has established herself as a versatile singer in repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the 21st century in both concert and opera. Her opera performances include works by Handel, Mozart, Offenbach, and Smetana, and extend into the contemporary repertoire of Pascal Dusapin, George Benjamin, Klaas de Vries, and Oscar Bianchi. Her appearances include her debut at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as Lei in Pascal Dusapin's opera *Passion* (with Ensemble Modern and conductor Franck Ollu); Vita in the world premiere of Klaas de Vries's *Wake*, with a libretto by David Mitchell; A Young Woman in the Night in the world premiere of Oscar Bianchi's *Thanks to My Eyes* (libretto and direction by Joël Pommerat); and George Benjamin's *Into the Little Hill*. Some of these roles were specifically composed for her voice. Notable concert performances have been with the Nederlandse Bach Vereniging (with conductors Richard Egarr and Jos van Veldhoven), the Residentie Orkest (Jaap van Zweden), the Askó/Schönberg (Reinbert de Leeuw and Etienne Siebens), Dutch Radio Philharmonic (Peter Eötvös), and

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 YITZHAK RABIN: CHRONICLE OF AN ASSASSINATION

MusikFabrik (Daniel Reuss). She is regularly invited to international festivals such as Holland Festival in Amsterdam, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Sacrum Profanum Festival in Krakow, Utrecht Early Music Festival, and Festival de Musica Antiga in Barcelona. As an interpreter of contemporary music, she has worked all over Europe with such composers as Kaija Saariaho, Steve Reich, and Louis Andriessen.

Alexey Kochetkov (Violin) was born in Russia and now lives in Berlin, performing Oriental-Arabic music and collaborating with world music artists, including newcomers from Syria and the Middle East. He is soloist and spiritual leader of the bands Aletchko, Berlin Oriental Group, and the Wedding Orchestra for Middle Eastern Music. He started studying music at the age of four and started playing violin at age six. By age eight

he was already performing onstage and by seventeen he traveled abroad for the first time with a Russian country music band called the Country Bandits, which came in second in the European World of Bluegrass Festival in Holland in 2001. At age 19 he completed his studies at Smolensk Music College and decided to move to the Middle East, living and playing for a decade in Israel where he studied at the prestigious Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, crafting Klezmer and Arabic melodies into his own modern style. It was here he was given the nickname Aletchko that later became the name of his solo project and, as he says, reflects his musical personality as a mixture of East and West.

Amos Gitai AcknowledgmentsProducers **EH Arts International****Laurent Truchot, Elisabeth Hayes**

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 2017 YITZHAK RABIN: CHRONICLE OF AN ASSASSINATION

Lincoln Center Festival, now in its 22nd season, has received worldwide attention for presenting some of the broadest and most original performing arts programs in Lincoln Center's history. The festival has presented 1,465 performances of opera, music, dance, theater, and interdisciplinary forms by internationally acclaimed artists from more than 50 countries. To date, the festival has commissioned 44 new works and offered 145 world, U.S., and New York premieres. It places particular emphasis on showcasing contemporary artistic viewpoints and multidisciplinary works that challenge the boundaries of traditional performance. For more information, visit LincolnCenterFestival.org.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community engagement, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 16 series, festivals, and programs, including American Songbook, Avery Fisher Career Grants and Artist program, David Rubenstein Atrium programming, Great Performers, Lincoln Center at the Movies, Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Awards, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Lincoln Center Vera

List Art Project, Midsummer Night Swing, Mostly Mozart Festival, White Light Festival, the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS, and Lincoln Center Education, which is celebrating 40 years enriching the lives of students, educators, and lifelong learners. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Lincoln Center Theater, The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, New York Philharmonic, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, School of American Ballet, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Lincoln Center has become a leading force in using new media and technology to reach and inspire a wider and global audience. Reaching audiences where they are—physically and digitally—has become a cornerstone of making the performing arts more accessible to New Yorkers and beyond. The re-imagining of David Geffen Hall will play an important part in these efforts. For more information, visit LincolnCenter.org.

Acknowledgments

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Scenery Build

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