



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEST COAST PREMIERE

**MARIN THEATRE COMPANY OPENS ITS 2009–10 SEASON WITH
AARON POSNER’S ADAPTATION OF *MY NAME IS ASHER LEV***

Adapted from the novel by Chaim Potok | Directed by Hal Brooks

September 10 through October 4, 2009 | Opening Night September 15

MILL VALLEY, CA—Marin Theatre Company launches its 43rd season with Aaron Posner’s exquisite adaptation of the classic novel by Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*. MTC’s West Coast premiere is one of only two U.S. productions during the 2009–10 season, after the critically acclaimed world premiere at Arden Theatre Company in January 2009.

My Name is Asher Lev follows the journey of a young Jewish painter torn between his Hassidic upbringing and a desperate need to fulfill his artistic promise. When his artistic genius threatens to destroy his relationship with his parents and community, young Asher realizes he must make a difficult choice between art and faith. This stirring adaptation of a modern classic presents a heartbreaking and triumphant vision of what it means to be an artist.

“I am delighted to welcome two artists of immense talent to MTC, Aaron Posner and Hal Brooks,” says Artistic Director Jasson Minadakis. “The choice of Chaim Potok’s beautiful story is a testament to Aaron’s vision as a playwright and adaptor, and offers Hal a rich tapestry upon which to work. *My Name is Asher Lev* will have an evocative and passionate new life at MTC under their expert guidance.”

Chaim Potok is best known for his eight novels, in particular *The Chosen* (1969), and *My Name is Asher Lev* (1972), both about the conflict between secular and religious life in Hassidic families. He also wrote two children’s books, many essays, short stories, and non-fiction works. Born in New York City in 1929, the son of Polish immigrants, Potok created an influential and important literary legacy.

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Aaron Posner, currently the Artistic Director of the Two River Theater Company in New Jersey, was co-founder and former Artistic Director of the Arden Theatre Company. The work of Chaim Potok is familiar territory for playwright and director Posner. He collaborated with Potok before his death in 2002 on the award-winning adaptation of *The Chosen* for the Arden Theatre in 1999. (Posner's adaptation of *The Chosen* opens at Theatreworks on October 7, 2009.) His other adaptations include Mark Twain's *A Murder, A Mystery and A Marriage* and Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*. Posner will direct *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Cal Shakes, opening September 16.

Director **Hal Brooks** has worked at major theaters around the U.S. including the national tour of Nilaja Sun's Obie Award-winning *No Child...* which performed at Berkeley Rep, Woolly Mammoth, ART, Lookingglass Theatre Company, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre, after a year-long critically-lauded run at both the Barrow Street Theatre and Epic Theatre in New York. He also directed the acclaimed off Broadway hit and Pulitzer finalist *Thom Pain (based on nothing)* by Will Eno at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Soho Theatre in London, and the DR2 in New York.

The cast features Daneille Levin, seen in MTC's production 2007 of *said Saïd*; Patrick McNulty, a New York-based actor known to Bay Area audiences for past work with A.C.T. including the *Misanthrope* and *Threepenny Opera*; and Peter Stadlen, also based in New York, as Asher Lev.

FACTS

For more information visit www.marintheatre.org or call 415.388.5208. Marin Theatre Company is located at 397 Miller Ave, Mill Valley CA 94941.

Previews—Thursday, Sept 10 through Sunday, Sept 13, 2009

Opening Night Gala—Tuesday, Sept 15 at 8:00 pm

Performance Schedule

September 10 through October 4, 2009

- Tues, Thu, Fri and Sat 8:00 pm
- Wed 7:30 pm
- Sun 7:00 pm
- Matinees: Thu 1:00 pm | Sat and Sun 2:00 pm
- Please check www.marintheatre.org or call box office at 415.388.5208 for exact performance dates and times.

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Ticket Prices \$20–51

- Previews: Thu through Sun: \$31
- Tues: \$31
- Wed, Thu, & Sun Evenings: \$34 & \$41
- Fri: \$39 & \$46
- Sat Evenings: \$44 & \$51
- Thu, Sat & Sun Matinees: \$34 & \$41
- Opening Night (Tues) with Cast Reception: \$44 & \$51

Discounts

- Pay What You Can Tuesdays (exc. Opening)
- Students \$20, all performances
- Rush tickets \$10 (based on availability, 1/2 hour prior to curtain)

ABOUT MTC. In its 43rd year, Marin Theatre Company is one of only five LORT theaters in the Bay Area, and is the largest professional regional theater company located in San Francisco's North Bay. It produces an annual season of more than 200 performances on its two stages. MTC provides a forum for contemporary, classic and emerging playwrights and, through the new Expanded Programs forum, an environment that introduces people of all ages to the transformative power of theater. Through its public performances, school tours, and various educational programs, MTC serves more than 40,000 people annually.

ARTIST BIOS

Chaim Potok (Author) is best known for his eight novels, beginning with the first, *The Chosen*, followed by *The Promise*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *In the Beginning*, *The Book of Lights*, *Davita's Harp*, *The Gift of Asher Lev* and his last, *Old Men at Midnight*, a trilogy of novellas. He also wrote two children's books and stories for young readers, including "Moon" in the collection *Zebra and Other Stories*, which won an O. Henry prize in 2000. Many of his essays and opinion pieces were published in scholarly journals as well as in the popular press. His non-fiction books—*Wanderings: Chaim Potok's History of the Jews*, *Gates of November: The Slepak Chronicles*, and *My First 79 Years: A Biography with Isaac Stern*—attest to the breadth of his literary oeuvre. An accomplished artist, editor, teacher, and lecturer, Potok fully entered the world of drama when he was asked by Carol Rocamora, producer/director of the Philadelphia Festival of New Plays, to adapt some of his work for the stage. His first play, *The Sins of the Father*, was comprised of two one-act works based on scenes from *The Promise* and *My Name is Asher Lev*. His next, *The Play of Lights*, was a more ambitious two-act play based on *The Book of Lights*. An earlier musical stage version of *The Chosen* had a short run in New York in 1988.

Aaron Posner (Playwright/Adaptor) a co-founder and former Artistic Director of the Arden Theatre Company, is current the Artistic Director of Two River Theater Company in Red Bank, New Jersey. He has worked as a director and playwright at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Seattle Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, The Alliance Theatre, and many others. Aaron's most recent adaptations include Mark Twain's *A Murder*, *A Mystery*, *A Marriage*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, and *Sometimes a Great Notion* based on the novel by Ken Kesey. His other adaptations of literature include *Who Am I This Time?* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *What Ho*,

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Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse, *Echoes of the Jazz Age* by authors from the 20's, *Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons, and *Third & Indiana* by Steve Lopez. *The Chosen*, and his musical (with composer James Sugg) *A Murder, A Mystery and A Marriage* are published by Dramatists Play Service. He received a Barrymore Award for his direction of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, which opened the F. Otto Haas Theatre in 1998, and another with Chaim Potok for their adaptation of *The Chosen* in 1999. He has won two Helen Hayes Awards, and is an Eisenhower Fellow.

Hal Brooks (Director) directed the national tour of Nilaja Sun's Obie Award-winning *No Child...* which performed at Berkeley Rep, Woolly Mammoth, ART, Lookingglass Theatre Company, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre, after a year-long critically-lauded run at both the Barrow Street Theatre and Epic Theatre in New York. He also directed the acclaimed off-Broadway hit and Pulitzer finalist *Thom Pain (based on nothing)* by Will Eno at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Soho Theatre in London, and the DR2 in NYC. He was the Artistic Director of Rude Mechanicals Theater Company of New York where he directed the off Broadway premieres of Don DeLillo's *Valparaiso* and Will Eno's *The Flu Season* (Oppy winner). He has directed and developed work at NYTW, Primary Stages, The Public, Juilliard, Playwrights Horizons, New Dramatists, Naked Angels, INTAR, McCarter Theatre, Cape Cod Theater Project, Ojai Playwrights Conference and the Sundance Institute. Hal is a proud member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and SSDC. He was a Drama League Fall Directing Fellow in 2003 and is a recipient of the 2007-2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Directors.

Danielle Levin (Riv) performed in MTC's 2008 School Tour production of *A Short History of Nearly Everything* and appeared in the 2007 MTC production of *said Saïd*. Other recent credits include the 13th Annual Best of PlayGround Festival (company member), *Skin* at Encore Theatre/Climate Theater, *Current Nobody* at Just Theater, *Vera Wilde* at Shotgun Players, *Emma* at TheatreWorks, and *Anna Bella Eema* at Crowded Fire. She received the Dean Goodman award for *Playboy of the Western World* at Cinnabar Theatre. Danielle has also worked with Aurora Theatre, Center Rep, Golden Thread Productions, and Word for Word. She has a BA in English, French, and theater from University of Chicago.

Patrick McNulty (Ari, Kahn, Rebbe) appeared in *The Misanthrope* (2000) and *The Threepenny Opera* (1999) at A.C.T. He has appeared recently in *Bee Luther Hatchee* at Stamford Theatre Works, *Opus* at Arden Theatre/City Theatre, *Blueprint* and *TempOdyssey* at SPF Festival/Theatre Row, *God's Ear* at Vineyard Theatre Workshop, *Peter Pan* at Connecticut Repertory Theatre, *Demon Baby* at Clubbed Thumb, *Amadeus* at Syracuse Stage and Virginia Stage, *Wave* at Ma-Yi Theatre Company, and *Pericles* at Red Bull/Culture Project. Before moving to New York, he toured nationally with the off-Broadway one-man show *Fully Committed*. Other credits include *The Miser* at Geva; *Tartuffe* and *The Philadelphia Story* at The Court Theatre; *The Picture of Dorian Gray* at Wisdom Bridge Theatre, and *The Homage That Follows* at The American Theatre. Patrick is a founding member of Roadworks Productions in Chicago with whom he has appeared in many productions including *Suburbia*, *The Lights, Was*, and his own one-man show *E.E. Cummings As Is*. Film and television credits include *The Sopranos*, *Law and Order*, *As the World Turns*, *Naked Bros. Band*, *'Til Death Do Us Part*, and the recent pilot for FX *Lights Out*. He has a BS from Northwestern University and an MFA from A.C.T. and is now based in New York.

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Peter Stadlen (Asher Lev) has appeared off Broadway in *Birdy* at The Women's Project and *The Mystery Plays* at Second Stage. Regional credits include *After Ashley* at Philadelphia Theatre Company, *The Chosen* at Actors Theatre of Louisville, *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Round House, *The Mystery Plays* at Yale Repertory Theatre, *Don't Talk to the Actors* at Studio Arena, *Good Boys and True* at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, and *Donna Morelli* at The Powerhouse. Peter appeared in the film *The Baxter*. Peter is a third-generation actor and is based in New York.

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