

Winning with witty theatre about family ties

Israeli actor and director, Roy Horovitz, had just arrived in South Africa to perform *Do I win, or do I lose?* when the *SA Jewish Report* caught up with him.

What drew you to working in theatre?

I was born in Haifa, Israel, and studied at Tel Aviv University, and got a PhD in theatre and comparative literature from Bar-Ilan University.

I started acting as early as 10 years old. A friend of mine dragged me along to an acting class. He landed up staying only a week, and I loved it, never leaving. My parents have never forgiven my friend for introducing me to acting!

What inspired *Do I win, or do I lose?*

I don't want to give away too much, but it's based on a true story. I met a guy in Edinburgh, Scotland, and he told me a story about his grandfather. It was moving, as well as funny, and included themes of victory and living life to the fullest, which really inspired me.



Roy Horovitz

Photo: Simcha Barabiro

What can we expect in this show?

A combination of humour and heavy subject matter – it really has it all. The show is moving and funny, as well as witty and clever. We did a post-show discussion with the audience after one show where people were saying how much the show reminded them of their own families.

Why will watching the show leave us rushing to embrace our loved ones?

It highlights the importance of family ties – why it's so important to spend as much time as possible with loved ones and not take things for granted. If you can't embrace your loved ones, you're more than welcome to hug me after the show!

Why bring this show to South Africa?

This is my fourth or fifth time in South Africa, and I have even been to the Grahamstown Festival, so South Africa is like my second home. I met Daphne Kuhn a few years ago at the International Exposure

that promotes Israeli plays and theatre.

Do I win, or do I lose? has universal appeal. We've done shows in Canada and the United States, and have plans to go to Turkey and Malta. It's a play for everyone, not only Jews or Israelis.

What is it about South Africa that brings you back here?

The warm welcome and the passion people have for theatre. I also love the nature – the Kruger National Park especially – and the food is great.

What's your message for the South African Jewish community?

I know many ex-South Africans in Ra'anana (Ra'ananafontein). Fingers crossed, everyone keeps safe and healthy here. This is a wonderful community where I have had great past experiences.

How do you feel about the anti-Israel sentiment you find in South Africa?

It's a global thing, but I hope for better days soon. The Israeli government is problematic at the moment, which doesn't help, but I'm hopeful things will get better.

What's your response to this sentiment?

We're all humans at the end of the day, and I hope the show helps to change people's minds about Israel.

Is it true that Israel has the highest rate of theatre goers in the world?

If so, why do you believe this is?

It's true. For the past 12 to 13 years, Israel has had the highest rate of theatre goers per capita. It's something we're very proud of. In cities like New York

and London, many tourists go and see theatre, but Israel is different because it's the locals who go. Israel is in love with theatre!

You've played to audiences all over the world. How does the South African audience compare?

It's the best! It's warm, smart, not afraid to laugh, and not reserved.

What would you like the take-home message to be?

Take advantage of any given moment. Be good to one another. (I know that sounds cliché.)

What's next for you?

I'm off to Belgrade, Serbia. We start rehearsals for a play called *The Irish Curse*, which is a book by Martin Casella. It's about a support group for five men with small packages. It's funny and witty.

• *Do I win or Do I Lose?* is at *Theatre on the Square*