

# A modern 'Merchant of Venice'

Reimagined classic headlines theatre dybbuk's residency

By ROCKNE ROLL

A modern – and thoroughly Jewish – twist on one of Shakespeare's most controversial works is coming to Portland this fall.

Theatre dybbuk, the Los Angeles-based performance art group, is coming to Portland for an October residency centered on the company's latest work, "The Merchant of Venice (Annotated), or In Sooth, I Know Not Why I Am So Sad." The residency, which includes a number of other performances and participatory events, is sponsored by the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, the Eastside Jewish Commons, Portland State University, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

The show, like all of theatre dybbuk's productions, was developed by Creative Director Aaron Henne and the play's cast, who were assembled before a word of the script was written. Henne also brings in



From left, Julie A. Lockhart, Joe Jordan and Inger Tудо of theatre dybbuk perform in "The Merchant of Venice (Annotated), or In Sooth I Know Not Why I Am So Sad" in Los Angeles. The play comes to Portland as part of theatre dybbuk's residency in October. (Taso Papadakis/theatre dybbuk)

a production designer, a script consultant and scholars on the areas the work will be centered around.

"We meet once a month and I'm bringing in research, but I'm also bringing in script pages and they're serving as a kind of dramaturgical brain trust, a

script consultancy," Henne said of the development process. "So people are responding to the pages I'm bringing in and asking questions of it or providing their own research and I'm writing the script in dialogue with those discussions."

"The Merchant of Venice (An-

notated), or In Sooth, I Know Not Why I Am So Sad," theatre dybbuk's latest work, premiered in May of this year and will be performed in San Diego and San Francisco before coming to Portland and then on to

See MERCHANT, page 8



From left, Jewish Family and Child Service Executive Director Susan Greenberg accepts the matching grant check for \$500,000 from Renée Holzman, joined by her son and JFCS Immediate Past President Larry Holzman. Renée Holzman announced her challenge grant for Holocaust Survivor Services last June. (Robyn Taylor/JFCS)

## JFCS completes Holzman match for Holocaust Survivor Services

By JENN DIRECTOR KNUDSEN

One year ago, Renée Holzman presented to Jewish Family and Child Service a huge challenge and opportunity: If the social-service agency raised \$500,000 by June 30, 2023, she would match that amount dollar-for-dollar for JFCS' Holocaust Survivor Services program. As the last days of June arrived, so did the final amount of the challenge grant, allowing JFCS to cross a historic finish line. Recently, Holzman presented her \$500,000 gift to JFCS executive director Susan Greenberg.

"Renée is a big believer in community and caring for one another," Greenberg said. "Her vision and incredible generosity provide so much for Holocaust Survivor clients' ongoing care," such as for mental-health services, small medical devices, case management and the opportunity to continue aging at home and with dignity, she said.

Holzman's vision inspired the community; nearly 200 unique donors and foundations shared in the philanthropist's passion to provide for Holocaust Survivors. "I am thankful that I could do what needed to be done," Holzman said.