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Contact: Steven Padla / steven.padla@yale.edu / 203 432 1574

**THE LIVING THEATRE
RETURNS TO NEW HAVEN
FOR TWO-DAY RESIDENCY AT YALE SCHOOL OF DRAMA**

SEPTEMBER 14-15

Forty-one years after The Living Theatre's now legendary performance of *Paradise Now* at Yale Repertory Theatre in September 1968, which ended in the arrest of ten performers and audience members for public indecency, co-founder and Artistic Director Judith Malina returns to New Haven for a two-day residency at Yale School of Drama, September 14-15.

Judith Malina will be joined by Living Theatre General Manager and Archivist Thomas S. Walker and Administrative Director Brad Burgess for a series of classes and workshops with Yale School of Drama students.

In addition, free public screenings of *Signals Through the Flames* and *Resist!*, documentaries about the work of The Living Theatre, will be held at Yale Repertory Theatre (1120 Chapel Street, at York Street) on September 14 and 15 respectively at 7:30PM. The screenings will be followed by discussions and book signings with Judith Malina, Tom Walker, and Brad Burgess.

Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library has acquired the archives of The Living Theatre. This collection documents the administration of the theatre, its stage productions, and its relationship to other avant-garde and radical cultural and political movements in the United States and Europe from the 1960s to the present. Also included are extensive diaries and journals of Judith Malina and the late Julian Beck, as well as their personal papers and writings.

ABOUT THE LIVING THEATRE

Founded in 1947 as an imaginative alternative to the commercial theatre by Judith Malina, the German-born student of Erwin Piscator, and Julian Beck, an abstract expressionist painter of the New York School, The Living Theatre has staged nearly a hundred productions performed in eight languages in twenty-eight countries on five continents—a unique body of work that has influenced theatre the world over.

During the 1950s and early 1960s in New York, The Living Theatre pioneered the unconventional staging of poetic drama—the plays of American writers like Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Paul

Goodman, Kenneth Rexroth and John Ashbery, as well as European writers rarely produced in America, including Cocteau, Lorca, Brecht and Pirandello. Best remembered among these productions, which marked the start of the Off-Broadway movement, were *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights*, *Tonight We Improvise*, *Many Loves*, *The Connection*, and *The Brig*. In the mid-60s, the company began a new life as a nomadic touring ensemble in Europe, creating of a new form of nonfictional acting based on the actor's political and physical commitment to using the theatre as a medium for furthering social change. The landmark achievements of this period include *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, *Antigone*, *Frankenstein*, and *Paradise Now*.

After four years of self-imposed exile, The Living Theatre returned to the US in 1968 to embark on a national tour. The first stop was Yale Repertory Theatre. Robert Brustein, then Dean/Artistic Director of Yale School of Drama/Yale Repertory Theatre, recounts the happening in his book *Making Scenes*:

“The actors proclaimed their inability to travel without a passport, to smoke marijuana, or to take their clothes off—all to a mass of Yale undergraduates who, seeing the actors peel down to loincloths, thereupon stripped down to their underwear, and lit up joints. Mass love zaps and petting parties materialized onstage among couples of various sexes and sexual inclinations; and after the endless, loveless, sexless public groping was finally over, everyone was exhorted to leave the theatre and convert the police to anarchism, to storm the jails and free the prisoners, to stop the war and ban the bomb, and to take over the New Haven streets in the name of the People.”

As the cast and audience members exited the University Theatre onto York Street in various states of undress, ten people—including Beck and Malina—were arrested by the New Haven Police Department for public indecency.

The next night, with firemen posted at every door and under heavy police surveillance, the audience at the University Theatre, which at the time sat 670 people, swelled to more than three times the capacity for the second performance. No arrests were made.

In the 1970s, The Living Theatre began to create *The Legacy of Cain*, a cycle of plays for non-traditional venues. From the prisons of Brazil to the gates of the Pittsburgh steel mills, and from the slums of Palermo to the schools of New York City, the company offered these plays free of charge to the broadest of all possible audiences. The group returned to the theatre in the 80s, developing new participatory techniques that enable the audience to first rehearse with the company and then join them on stage as fellow performers.

Following Julian Beck's death in 1985, Malina became a co-artistic director of the theatre along with Hanon Reznikov, a company veteran who had first encountered The Living Theatre while a student at Yale College in 1968. Reznikov and Malina were married in 1988.

After assuming leadership, Reznikov and Malina opened a new performing space in Manhattan's Lower East Side. After its closing in 1993, the company went on to create *Anarchia*, *Utopia*, and *Capital Changes* in other New York City venues and to perform extensively abroad. In 1999, with funds from the European Union, they renovated a 1650 Palazzo Spinola in Rocchetta Ligure, Italy and reopened it as the Centro Living Europa, a residence and working space for the company's European programs. There they created *Resistenza*, a dramatization of the local inhabitants' historical resistance to the German occupation of 1943-45.

In recent years, the company has also been performing *Resist Now!*, a play for anti-globalization demonstrations both in Europe and the US. A month-long collaboration with local theatre artists in Lebanon in 2001 resulted in the creation of a site-specific play about the abuse of political detainees in the notorious former prison at Khiam.

In 2007, the company garnered two Obie Awards for their re-staging of *The Brig*. In 2008, after co-leading the theatre for 23 years, Hanon Reznikov died of pneumonia he developed after suffering from a stroke. He was 57. Malina, now 83, continues to serve as Artistic Director. The group continues to operate its own theatre space, located at 21 Clinton Street in New York City.

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