

Leah – from within and without 23/7/18

And He is the Light. Photo: Noit Zakai

A great play, which is held by four brilliant performers, and sheds light on this special novel by Leah Goldberg and the manners in which her character was shaped. Don't miss it."

Tel Aviv Museum and Passport Ensemble offer an original stage version of Leah Goldberg's first novel

Following the states of the soul

"And He is the Light", which was published in 1946, did not get the positive echoes that have arrived about 40 years later, and reveal the light hidden in **Leah Goldberg's** first novel. The writing of this novel began in 1941, and it was published in Sifriyat Poalim publishing house in 1946, disappeared from the shelves, and returned to them after almost 60 years, when "Hasifriya Hachadasha" published it again in 2005. Shortly after, **Margalit Stander** and **Ze'ev Dar** adapted the novel into a monodrama performed by **Irit Shilo**.

Now, this novel comes to the stage in the adaptation and the direction of **Yael Cramsky**, in a production of Passport Ensemble and Tel Aviv Museum. Cramsky's unique and original version includes materials from the diaries of Goldberg herself, whose character and world were fairly exposed over the past few years, mainly thanks to the documentary films operation of **Yair Kedar**.



Cramsky's fascinating adaptation steps faithfully and devotedly in the footsteps of the mental states of the autobiographic novel, which is surprising in the way it prophesizes the development of women's consciousness in recent years, and mainly the continuation and struggles of Leah Goldberg's life as a poet, author, critic, translator, and writer, and whose philosophy, children's books, and vast cultural theories are known to many of us since we were children.

Leah Goldberg passed away in 1970 after being ill with cancer, shortly after she was announced as the laureate of the Israel Prize for Literature. Her mother, who received the award on her behalf, passed away 11 years later, and instructed that four words will be written on her tombstone: "Mother of Leah Goldberg", in acknowledgement and appreciation of the daughter who made wonders with the Hebrew language, and was devoted to her mother until the day she died.



Flutters of light and sound

The plot of the novel takes place in 1931, and tells of the conflicted world of Nora Krieger, in the image of Goldberg, who returns from Berlin to a summer vacation at her parents' house. The father suffers from mental illness, and the mother, who divorced him, tries to affect the daughter's world, and keep her from falling in love with the father's close friend, who also returns to their town after 25 years of absence, which he spent in the United States.

Cramsky created a play that sheds light on the unique texture of the novel, and followed the path of the light mentioned in the novel's name, which is taken from a poem written by **Moshe Ben Ezra** "I was awoken from the slumber of my thought", and also constitutes a motto for the novel:

"And this is the light that will continue to shine / in days of youth and to the days of my old age

And should the base of this light falter and fall / then will come the end of my power and years"



The light and the space of the hall in which the play takes place, with audience sitting in three of its sides, was created by **Iris Mualem** in an original manner, using a projector that sheds light on the stage like a flashlight from within a projection on a round screen designed by her, along with the video artist **Nimrod Zin**.

The flutters of light respond to the voice of **Fay Shapiro**, who wrote the original music that accompanies the play from its beginning as an oratorio, and imbues a mental and spiritual dimension to the physical presence of the lighting. **Shay Levi**, who, together with **Einat Kafka** served as an assistant director, is the operator of the light-sound texture, and he himself also takes part in the play for a short and surprising moment.

Four brilliant performers

The people holding the play on their shoulders, wearing the special costumes designed for them by **Dina Konson** – with all the allusions that are revealed throughout the play – are its four brilliant performers. **Eyal Zusman** cries the profound pain of the mentally

ill, **Ronen Yifrach** is both gentle and irresistibly powerful in his role as the friend who returns from California, first among the disappointing loves of the future to come. **Dina Blei Shor** brings her delicate butterfly soul to the role of the mother, and knows, like a chameleon, to suddenly switch to a burning bright, even cruel color, in her dialogs with her daughter. The role of the daughter is bravely played by **Yarden Gilboa**, one of **Sophie Moskowitz's** favorite students in her last years. Gilboa is wonderfully living her relationship with the mother, the fear of the hereditary madness transferred by the father, the falling in love with Erin who is the age of her father, and her longing to be acknowledged as herself, by herself and her surroundings.



In conclusion, "Leah" is a very moving play, which sheds light on this special novel by Leah Goldberg and the manners in which her character was shaped. Don't miss it.