

Selma's Pound Cake
presents

God of Our Fathers

Featuring Jon Adam Ross

Directed by Chantal Pavageaux

Written by Michael Feldman and Jon Adam Ross

WALKING IN MEMPHIS

The Life of a Southern Jew



"Ross places himself in the league of talented storytellers like Billy Crystal & Whoopi Goldberg!"
- Offoffbroadway.com

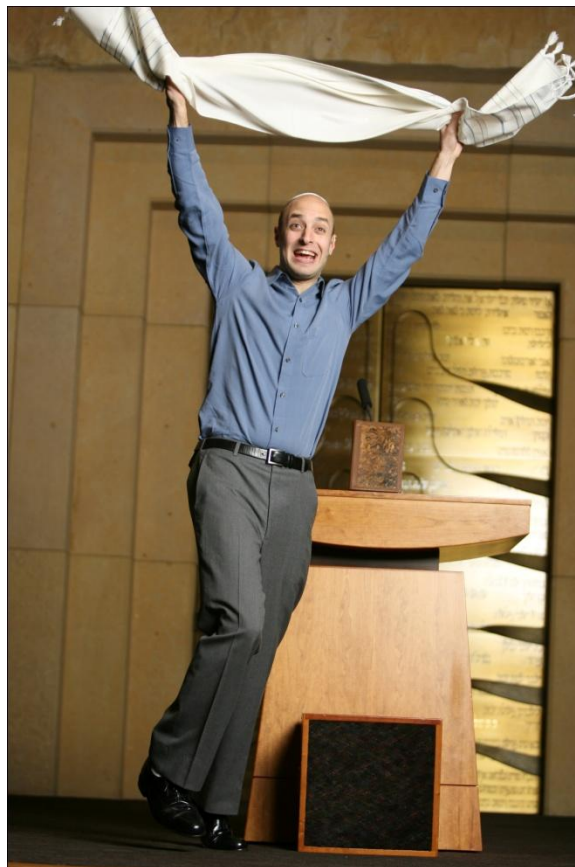
"If he wasn't such an engaging performer Ross could easily have been a perceptive painter.

His characters are neatly drawn, cleverly tinted and expertly displayed on white canvas. Having taken him and his homespun philosophers to our hearts we are continually startled by the wistful brightness and fascinating ability to deliver naturalistic fragments of real life."
- UK Jewish Telegraph

GOD OF OUR FATHERS

In a time when religion plays such a large role in the way our world is run, *God of Our Fathers* provides a look into the role religion plays in our homes. Under the direction of Chantal Pavageaux, *God of Our Fathers* follows all the members of a fictional, American, Jewish family as they live through a generation of assimilation. Michael and Jon have co-written this tale of love and family, and the role that religion plays in defining who we are as people. At times hilarious and touching, you will meet many characters throughout the show from Elaine Zipper, the goofy president of the Beth Shalom Sisterhood, to Jacob Greenbaum, the Poland-born patriarch who drives the play. It's a life cycle piece, but also a close-up examination of modern, religious life in America.

Directed by Chantal Pavageaux
Written by Michael Feldman and Jon Adam Ross
Original Music by Matt Kalin



Praise for *God of Our Fathers*

"God of Our Fathers is an excellent program for the college audience. At our Hillel, Jews and other curious students — among them Muslims, Christians and unaffiliated — watched and laughed. Many people made connections. It was at times a deep, personal look into the Jewish people; but it was also the discovery that in our families and in our cultures we may not be that different after all."

- Rabbi Andrea Steinberger, Hillel at the University of Wisconsin

"You would be foolish not to book it. God of Our Fathers is a powerful emotional experience. Everyone from high school students to senior adults, whether Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or Secular, Jew and Gentile, can immerse themselves in this 'life story' Jonathan weaves on the stage. God of Our Fathers will touch and ignite the spark in you."

- Barrie M. Weiser, Executive Director, Memphis Jewish Community Center

"God of Our Fathers was a beautiful evening of knowing nods of the head, laughter out loud, and an occasional lump in the throat. It spoke to me of the differences between generations who seek to make the ways of religious tradition relative to the lives they really lead."

- Pastor John Michael Krech, First Presbyterian Church, Somerville, TN



JON ADAM ROSS

Jon Adam Ross is a widely acclaimed Jewish theatre artist. He has created original works in both the commercial and educational spheres. Holder of a BFA in Acting from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Jon is currently on tour with his new solo show, *God of Our Fathers*, in which he plays all the members of a fictional Jewish family living through a generation of assimilation. And he has performed his first solo show, *Walking in Memphis: The Life of a Southern Jew*, Off-Broadway and around the globe. Other credits include Grandpa/German in *Fourplay* (Ripple Theater Company); Thomas Denny in *Pirates!* (Theater for the New City); Schwartz in *The Jewbird* (Northwoods Ramah Theater); and Atticus Finch in the Experimental Theatre Wing's *Looking for Boo Radley: An Adaptation of To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Jon is also a founding company member of Storahtelling and the Northwoods Ramah Theater Company. Jon's acting roots stem from his long-term association with Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, where he serves as Director of the Performing Arts. Aside from acting, Jon has served as faculty for the Cornerstone Fellowship and the Spielberg Fellowship in Jewish Theater Education (Foundation for Jewish Camp). Artist in Residency credits include: Anshe Emet Synagogue (Chicago), Congregation Beth Jacob (Mendota Heights, MN), Union Theological Seminary (NY), and the Jewish Theological Seminary (NY). Directing credits include *First Supper* and *Wrestlingod* (Storahtelling), *Hardball*, a play about a Jewish baseball player (Playwright's Forum, Memphis), the benefit reading of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite* for Opening Act NYC, and *Elvis Does Chanukah* for which he was interviewed on MSNBC. For more information, visit www.jonadamross.com

Walking in Memphis: The Life of a Southern Jew

Every civilization spanning human history has the tradition of the storyteller: the yarn spinner, a merchant of tales, the keeper of unwritten history. I love a good story. And Jon tells a good story. They make up his life, they course through his veins. Jon conjures up stories from before he was born as if he was just on the other side of the room, laughing at the joke with everyone else. To someone like myself, who has the memory of a goldfish, it's a superhuman feat to recreate the past, enliven the dead, recall the tiniest nuances of someone's voice, their face, the idiosyncrasies that made them unique. In a world where not much can be taken for granted, I take comfort in the fact that Jon will be telling stories about me long after I'm gone. Gone, but not forgotten.
-Chantal Pavageaux, Director, *Walking in Memphis...*



Walking in Memphis: The Life of a Southern Jew traces the life of Jon Adam Ross, an actor and playwright now living in New York City. Jon begins the play by giving his background, his origin, and the show weaves itself through his childhood as a Jew in the Southern city of Memphis, Tennessee. It is a unique journey of passage, and it is made all the more so by the characters Jon inhabits. He begins with his family of course, a logical place to start. But soon branches out into Elizabeth, his family's housekeeper, Clarence, his barber, Jim Grigg, their Southern Baptist next-door neighbor, and many others. He even spends some time during the show at Jewish summer camp. And by the end of the show, the audience feels like its been sitting in a living room having a conversation with a dozen or so people even though they were in a theater, listening to just one person, and not speaking themselves at all. Jon touches on the lives and deaths of many people during the course of the show, and ends the show with a touching, and quite humorous, remembrance of his mother; ending the show in a fitting way, as all Jewish services do – with Adon Olam.

Use of the song "Walking in Memphis" is courtesy of Marc Cohn and Famous Music Corp.

Praise for *Walking in Memphis: The Life of a Southern Jew*

"*Walking in Memphis...* is an extremely well-crafted memoir of a fascinating life"
- The Justice (Brandeis University)

"Like Sholom Alaichem, Ross teaches us: 'What's truer than the truth? The story'."
- The Forward

"Ross.....is an engaging young man who....exudes youth and warmth."
- Backstage

Artist in Residence Work

Jon has worked as an artist in residence for groups both young and old. He has served as artist in residence for teen and college leadership training workshops all over the world. He has taught for Jewish youth conventions (USY, BBYO, NFTY, etc.) in every region of the United States and Canada, at the Koach Kallah at the University of Toronto, as faculty for the Spielberg Fellowship in Jewish Theater (Foundation for Jewish Camping), and at the prestigious Limmud Conference in Nottingham, UK. He has also served as an artist in residency at both Union (Christian) Theological Seminary and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

He has also directed and composed new pieces of ensemble theatre with groups of all sizes and ages. Jon has done this work both in the summer camp setting (at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin where he serves as Director of Performing Arts) and around the country. He has directed at Jane Addams High School in the South Bronx, Solomon Schechter Day School of Memphis, Chicago Jewish Day School, and Talmud Torah in St. Paul, MN to name a few. Jon has also served as artist in residence for the past six years at Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago where he has created and directed several pieces of theater including *inthebeginning* and *I Am Jonah*.

He can do these projects over a couple of hours, days, or weeks working with students or members of the community to create theatre that enhances their connection to Judaism, ritual, tradition, their communities, or any other goal you have in mind.

Praise for Artist in Residence Work

"Jon Adam Ross is a remarkably creative young man. Whether dramatizing some aspect of Torah, or helping young people write an original script on a Jewish story, Jon both challenges and captivates those around him. Our congregation has greatly benefited from his remarkable work and we would highly recommend him to others."

- Rabbi Michael Siegel, Anshe Emet Synagogue, Chicago

"Jon's charisma and energy drew people in. Our kids and staff are still talking about him!"

- Ariel Greenbaum-Shinder, Regional Director, Eastern Canadian Region USY

MENU PAGE

- ***God of Our Fathers*** is a one man show appropriate for ages 13 and over. It is around 75 minutes in length and requires a microphone and a sound system that can play music. There are no other technical needs. You also get a talkback with the actor/playwright following the performance allowing the audience to ask questions about the issues the show brings up and the process.
- ***Walking in Memphis: The Life of a Southern Jew*** is a one man show appropriate for ages 13 and over. It is around 60 minutes in length and requires a microphone and a piano. There are no other technical needs. You also get a talkback with the actor/playwright following the performance allowing the audience to ask questions about the issues the show brings up and the process.
- **Directing/Composing** new pieces of theatre with groups small and large. He can do these projects over a couple of hours, days, or weeks working with students and adults to create theatre that enhances their connection to religion, ritual, tradition, your communities, or any other goal you have in mind.
- **Workshops** – Jon has taught many classes and workshops with large and small groups on acting, group relationships, and miscellaneous theatre skills.
- **Leadership training** through theatre exercises is something Jon has been asked to do on many occasions – serving as artist in residence for teen and college leadership training workshops all over the world.
- **Prayer** - Consulting for finding ways to teach prayer in creative ways. Jon has a curriculum that takes students on a journey of finding their own personal connections to prayer using the traditional liturgy and beyond – with music, singing, theatre, nature, storytelling, etc.

To inquire about bringing Jon to your community, please email
jonadamross@gmail.com.

You can also visit the website www.jonadamross.com to learn more!