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# Letters to Sala

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*/SPECIAL FOR THE AJT/*



**S**tage Door Players and the MJCCA are pleased to announce two programs revealing the extraordinary survival story of Sala Garnarcz Kirschner.

Stage Door Players and MJCCA Presents the Co-Production of “Letters to Sala”

From April 24 – 27, Stage Door Players and the MJCCA proudly present the Atlanta premier of the similarly titled play, “Letters to Sala,” by Arlene Hutton.

Currently celebrating the Ruby Anniversary Season of his award-winning theater company, Stage Door Players Producing Artistic Director Robert Egizio finds this true life drama the perfect project to co-produce with MJCCA’s Arts & Culture Department.

## **The Play – “LETTERS TO SALA”**

Sala Garnarcz was 16-years-old in 1940 when she was sent from her home to Geppersdorf, a German forced labor camp. After liberation in 1945, she came to America as a war bride and never spoke of her wartime experience.

In 1991, on the eve of major surgery, the 67-year-old grandmother revealed more than 300 letters and photos, collected and hidden as she survived five years and seven Nazi labor camps.

With dialogue taken directly from actual letters, the production features a stellar cast of Atlanta talent with Susan

Shalhoub Larkin as Sala; Rachel Garner as Sala's daughter, Ann; and Rachel Frawley as young Sala.

The Aurora Theatre's Jaclyn Hofmann directs the Atlanta premiere. The production will feature a set design by Chuck Welcome, lights by J.D. Williams, and costume design by Anna Jenny.

### **The Exhibition – “LETTERS TO SALA: A YOUNG WOMAN’S LIFE IN NAZI LABOR CAMPS”**

In conjunction with the production, the MJCCA's Katz Family Mainstreet Gallery will host the traveling exhibition of Sala Garnarcz Kirschner's letters and photographs, “Letters to Sala: A Young Woman's Life in Nazi Labor Camps,” from April 10 – May 28.

“Letters to Sala” the exhibition, is curated by Dr. Jill Vexler, and on loan from the New York Public Library and the French Children of the Holocaust Foundation.

The exhibition is a graphic representation of Sala's story from her years in the Nazi work camps, documents which she carefully hid in her barracks or sewed into her clothing. Scholars have declared this collection to be one of the great treasure troves of its kind.

### **About Nazi Labor Camps**

Sala's story takes place against the backdrop of the Nazi occupation of Poland. In contrast to concentration or death camps, labor camps, which numbered in the thousands, were established to support and supply the Nazi regime.

### **Sala's Daughter, Ann Kirschner**

Both the play and exhibition are inspired by “Sala's Gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story” (Simon and Schuster) by Ann Kirschner, daughter of Sala Garnarcz Kirschner.

“My family and I are delighted that the public has the opportunity to experience my mother's incredible story of survival and courage,” said Ann Kirschner. “When the world seemed entirely hostile, a young girl found refuge and hope in these remarkable letters written by her family and friends. Their words have now been preserved and made available in ways that will help future generations understand the lessons of the past.”