

# NORTHLIGHT THEATRE



## ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

Image Description: A poster for Northlight Theatre's production *Prayer for the French Republic*. Left, the title is displayed in black all-caps font on a khaki background. At the bottom is a grand piano with a small bench. On the right the Eiffel tower is poking up behind the piano. The piano and Eiffel tower are watercolor mixed with brown, green, beige, and black hues, with the same colors in splashes behind them.

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## GUIDE INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Northlight's production of *Prayer for the French Republic* by.

This production will run at Northlight Theatre 2025. The address is 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, IL, 60077.

This guide holds many different accessibility tools to make your experience at the show as comfortable as possible. Please be aware that not every element of this guide will be useful to each individual. Accordingly, please feel free to pick and choose which accessibility tools would be most beneficial to you.

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## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Prayer for the French Republic runs approximately 3 hours, including two 10-minute intermissions.

### Tuesday – Saturday Evenings (all times are estimates)

- 6:30pm The lobby opens for concessions & socializing.
- 7:00pm The auditorium opens for you to take your seat.
- 7:30pm The show will begin.
- 10:30pm The show will end.

### Saturday – Sunday Matinees (all times are estimates)

- 1:30pm The lobby opens for concessions & socializing.
- 2:00pm The auditorium opens for you to take your seat.
- 2:30pm The show will begin.
- 5:30pm The show will end.

### Weekday Matinees (all times are estimates)

- 12:00pm The lobby opens for concessions & socializing.
- 12:30pm The auditorium opens for you to take your seat.
- 1:00pm The show will begin.
- 4:00pm The show will end.

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## FULL SHOW SYNOPSIS (spoilers ahead)

*Please note that the following was created during a preview performance. It is possible that changes to the script and/or production may not be reflected below.*

Run time: 3 hours, with two 10-minute intermissions.

The play opens with a monologue from Patrick, who reflects on the family history of Pianos Salomon, the piano store his father still runs in Paris. Patrick explains that although the shop has been in the family for five generations—founded in 1855—it’s become more of a relic than a viable business in modern times. He notes that his father, now in his late 80s, continues to sit in the mostly empty store each day, unwilling to let it go. Despite pressure from friends to preserve the legacy, Patrick and his sister, Marcelle, have chosen different paths. He acknowledges the store’s deep history, marked by the name “Salomon” engraved on the piano. The play then shifts: it’s early fall in Paris, the present day, and Marcelle is about to host a distant American cousin, Molly, in her home. Marcelle explains the tangled branches of their family tree, tracing their shared lineage back to two sisters—Irma and Lucie—who were born in Strasbourg and separated when Alsace-Lorraine became German. Lucie emigrated to America while Irma remained in France, and generations later, Marcelle and Molly’s families are loosely connected through these women. Marcelle tries to help Molly understand how they’re cousins, even though the exact relationship is distant—perhaps third or fourth cousins. They bond over the family name “Salomon,” which is engraved on the fallboard of a piano in the home. Marcelle explains that her married name is Benhamou but she was born a Salomon. Molly, determined to improve her French, insists they speak only in that language, which impresses Marcelle. They talk about Molly’s study abroad year in Nantes and her American family’s concerns about terrorism in France. Marcelle pushes back, arguing that danger exists everywhere and you must choose to live in the world regardless.

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Molly shares that her host family in Nantes, while not overtly racist, has made her uncomfortable with subtle prejudices, but she feels compelled to tolerate it for the year. This prompts her to visit her extended family in Paris, about whom she had only vaguely heard from her grandmother's letters. Marcelle explains that the letters were sent to Philippe and Francine, her father's cousins who escaped France before World War II—Francine has since passed, and Philippe now lives mostly in Switzerland. When Molly mistakenly assumes Marcelle lived through the war, Marcelle firmly corrects her, noting that while she wasn't born yet, her family remained in France during the occupation.

As Molly and Marcelle continue their conversation, Elodie silently appears in the background, crossing from her bedroom to the bathroom. Her appearance is striking—she looks disheveled and deeply tired, as though she's been asleep for ages. Both Molly and Marcelle notice her, but Marcelle chooses not to acknowledge it. Marcelle invites Molly to make herself at home for the weekend, noting that she's only home early because her office is being painted due to a recent promotion—she's now chairing her medical department after years of poor leadership. Molly congratulates her, and the conversation shifts to dinner plans, with Marcelle explaining they observe traditional Shabbat rituals. Molly is initially confused, unfamiliar with the term, and awkwardly admits she wasn't raised with religion. Though she identifies as Jewish "technically," she expresses skepticism toward organized religion, even suggesting the world might be better off without it, though she adds that she respects Marcelle's beliefs.

Elodie appears again walking slowly. Marcelle introduces Molly to Elodie, her daughter, who offers a quiet "hello," and exits again. Marcelle glosses over Elodie's condition, calling her "quite tired," and excuses herself to check on dinner. Molly hesitantly asks about appropriate attire, and Marcelle reassures her—it's just a traditional Shabbat dinner at home. She explains her own secular upbringing, noting that many Jews after the war let go of religious practice. However, she met and married a Sephardic Jew from Algeria, and through him, tradition reentered her life. Marcelle shares that most Jews in France today have

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North African roots due to migration in the 1960s when it became unsafe to remain there. The conversation shifts back to logistics—Marcelle apologizes for the lack of a spare bedroom, but Molly warmly accepts the hospitality, expressing gratitude for the sofa and the welcome.

Molly is momentarily alone in the living room, quietly taking in the space and gently interacting with the piano. The front door opens and Charles enters. He calls out to Marcelle. Barely acknowledging Molly, Charles heads straight to the kitchen. Suddenly, Daniel enters—he's wearing a kippah and looks visibly injured, with dried blood on his shirt and face. His silent appearance shocks Molly. Marcelle and Charles rush in from the kitchen, alarmed at Daniel's state. Daniel insists he's fine, but Marcelle is panicked and wants to know what happened. He reveals he was attacked in Sarcelles, a suburb with a significant Jewish population, but didn't report it to the police. Marcelle is frantic to call them, but Daniel vehemently refuses. Elodie enters, confused, and learns her brother was beaten up. Tension escalates as Marcelle insists on taking Daniel to the hospital, while Charles downplays the severity and wants to assess Daniel's injuries himself. Marcelle is concerned about blood on the furniture, sparking a small domestic spat even amid the crisis. Charles agrees to examine Daniel in the bathroom instead.

The family moves offstage to tend to Daniel in the bathroom, while Molly remains in the living room, quietly observing and uncertain of how to engage. From offstage, Marcelle questions Daniel's insistence that he doesn't need a hospital, while Charles attempts to assess Daniel's injuries himself. The couple bickers about their qualifications—Marcelle is a psychiatrist, Charles is a medical doctor. As Charles examines Daniel, Daniel recounts the assault: he was leaving school when three men targeted him with antisemitic slurs and physically attacked him for wearing a kippah. He defends his refusal to hide his identity, but Marcelle is distraught, urging him to wear a baseball cap to avoid such attacks. Tensions flare as Marcelle's protective instincts clash with Daniel's defiant stance. Elodie intervenes, trying to calm things down and let Daniel explain. The full extent of

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Daniel's injuries becomes clearer, and Marcelle spirals into disbelief and outrage, horrified by how normalized such violence has become. Tension continues to rise offstage as Marcelle panics over Daniel's injuries, sarcastically insisting she's "calm" while expressing fear that her son is bleeding to death. Charles, trying to maintain control, urges her to take a step back and give him space to treat Daniel. Eventually, Marcelle and Elodie emerge into the hallway, slightly removed from the bathroom.

Marcelle insists on calling the police. Daniel begs her not to, saying he didn't see the attackers clearly. Frustrated, Marcelle blames his visible Jewish appearance for making him a target, causing further family tension. Daniel points out the sun is setting, subtly redirecting focus to the Shabbat ritual. The family returns to the living room, where Daniel pleads for peace and asks to light the candles before sundown. Marcelle, still shaken, complies, retrieving the silver candlesticks and matches as everyone gathers around. As Marcelle lights the Shabbat candles and recites the blessing, she embraces Daniel tenderly. Shaken by his injuries, Marcelle pleads again to call the police. Daniel resists, explaining he doesn't want to be defined by the attack or stir more fear in his students. He insists the assault isn't worth public attention. After some discussion, Daniel agrees to clean up before dinner, but firmly says he's done talking about the incident. Once he leaves, Marcelle insists they must confront him tonight and stop his outward displays of faith, blaming his attire for provoking violence. Charles tries to calm her, but Marcelle remains adamant. Elodie challenges her mother, arguing that it's wrong to expect someone to hide their identity out of fear. The conversation escalates into a moral argument about safety vs. pride, until Charles desperately calls for them to stop. He suggests they move on and have dinner. As the family tension lingers thick in the air, Molly timidly mentions that she's a vegetarian. The lights then shift away from the family, fading out on their unresolved conflict, and come up on Patrick, who speaks directly to the audience. Patrick introduces his great-grandparents, Irma and Adolphe, who survived the Nazi occupation in their Paris apartment thanks to the intervention of a building superintendent. While two of their sons were deported, Irma and Adolphe remained untouched.

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Patrick reflects on how little he knows about them personally, apart from small facts. He recalls his father's memory of Irma, scraping butter from Adolphe's bread for herself. He's struck by how small, personal habits become lasting memories, especially when set against the overwhelming backdrop of war and loss. He wonders what they might have talked about during those years in hiding, especially with no word from their children or grandchildren.

Irma and Adolphe talk quietly about their children, especially Lucien and his family, whom they haven't heard from since their arrests. Irma replays the decision not to flee to Cuba, blaming it on Lucien's commitment to the family piano business. Her grief peaks as she imagines Pierre's 14th birthday, which is today, being celebrated on a beach in Cuba. Adolphe tries to stop her spiraling, reminding her it's just a fantasy. But to comfort her, he fabricates a gentle lie—that Lucien and the family escaped to the mountains, that Lucien is tuning pianos at a music school and thinking of them, and that their legacy lives on in the Salomon name. Adolphe continues comforting Irma with a vivid, fictional account of their children's peaceful life in the mountains—Eva sewing, Lucien tuning pianos, and their children safe and studying. He describes Pierre's 14th birthday, complete with a rationed cake and a Swiss Army knife. Irma accepts the fantasy but asks about Robert, and Adolphe reassures her with another story, saying Robert is "making buttons for France." They then joke about the inevitable family arguments that would break out if everyone were reunited, imagining a chaotic but heartfelt scene. The humor lifts their spirits, and Irma softly says, "I can't wait."

The scene shifts to a quieter, more intimate moment. Marcelle and Charles prepare the sofa for a guest, while Elodie, visibly tense, drinks wine and stares out the window before leaving. Molly settles on the sofa with a book. Offstage, Marcelle and Charles are heard arguing, their words muffled until Marcelle hushes them. Daniel then enters in pajamas, cleaned up but still fragile, and is surprised to see Molly there. Daniel and Molly have a quiet late-night encounter. Daniel, getting water, is surprised to see Molly still awake reading *A Moveable*



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Feast, which she finds cliché for an American in Paris. They share a moment of connection, joking lightly, and Daniel admits he overheard his parents arguing. Molly relates, saying she eavesdrops on her parents too, and asks if Daniel's parents are fighting. He responds with a noncommittal hand gesture, indicating "sort of." Daniel tells Molly that his parents are mostly fighting about him. She gently asks if he's still in pain, and he admits it's only a little. Trying to lighten the mood, Molly jokes about putting a steak on his injury, like in movies, and Daniel plays along with the idea. Daniel moves the topic of conversation to Molly who shares that she came to France to get over a bad breakup, initially pretending it was with a woman before awkwardly admitting it was a man. Molly fumbles through her explanation, embarrassed by her motivations and how she's coming across. Daniel, a bit confused, asks if she's a lesbian, to which she clarifies she's not—though she tries to stay open-minded. The conversation becomes painfully awkward, and as Daniel heads to get water, Molly is left alone, cringing at how she handled it. Daniel returns with a glass of water for Molly. Molly thanks him for the water and tries to make small talk, complimenting his parents for hosting her and calling his sister "sweet." Daniel corrects her by proudly describing Elodie as "very brilliant." They talk about the apartment and living arrangements—Daniel has lived there most of his life, only moving out for school. He explains that he started teaching in Sarcelles, but couldn't afford his own place in Paris, and his parents didn't want him living in what they saw as a dangerous area.

Molly presses him about why Sarcelles is considered dangerous, and Daniel shares context about antisemitic incidents in France—most notably the 2015 terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices and the Hypercacher kosher supermarket where four Jews were killed. He explains how the French public reacted with mass demonstrations, but also how Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu urged French Jews to move to Israel. In response, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls defended the place of Jews in France, saying France wouldn't be France without them. Despite the support, around 8,000 Jews left France that year—the most in decades. Daniel tells her some of the people who moved were teachers, which is why he was needed at the school in Sarcelles. He says he enjoys the students.

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Molly guesses that he teaches “Jewish stuff,” but Daniel clarifies he teaches math. She teases him slightly, calling him geeky, then apologizes, worried she’s offended him. Their conversation turns more personal when she asks how he became so religious. Daniel laughs off the label, saying he’s not that religious. Molly seems intrigued but also a little judgmental, which Daniel picks up on. He accuses her of thinking he’s “ridiculous.” She denies it, but he pushes further, saying she doesn’t really know him. When she challenges him, he flips the conversation—asking her to explain how she feels about “people like him,” meaning religious Jews. Caught off guard, Molly defensively says she is “of Jewish extraction,” but Daniel finds the phrase dismissive and cold. He calls it a “disdainful way of referring to yourself,” which offends her.

Daniel, hurt by their earlier exchange, prepares to go to bed. But before leaving, he explains that in his experience, people who use terms like “of Jewish extraction” are often more rigid about religion than religious people themselves. He accuses Molly, indirectly, of having a kind of quiet disdain for people like him—religious Jews. Molly, caught off guard, says it sounds like he has disdain for her. They trade cool “okays” and attempt to say goodnight, but the tension lingers. Molly tries to clarify that she didn’t intend to offend him and sincerely apologizes. She reflects on her own discomfort with her Jewish identity, suggesting that “people like Daniel” might be part of why she struggles to feel proud of it. The conversation suddenly escalates into politics—Molly accuses “people like Daniel” of taking land and building settlements, a clear reference to Israel and its conflict with Palestine. Daniel cuts her off, saying he doesn’t want to talk about Israel. She challenges him, asking why he’s still standing there if he doesn’t want to engage. Both admit they were trying to genuinely get to know each other, but their attempts got clouded by assumptions. Molly clarifies she was only trying to understand how Daniel became religious. He softens and finally shares a personal story: a winter in Paris when it didn’t snow. When snow finally did fall in March, he felt deep gratitude and a need to express it—to someone, something. So he went to synagogue, prayed, and found comfort in it. Though

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unsure about God, he says he believes in the Earth, and that's close enough for now.

A silence falls between them. They're emotionally vulnerable, and there's a shared moment where both consider kissing the other, unsure if it's appropriate. Just as the connection deepens, Charles enters the room. Molly and Daniel quickly pull away, trying to act casual, but Charles instantly reads the romantic tension—though he says nothing, and plays it off as if he noticed nothing at all. Daniel awkwardly tells Charles he was just getting water. Charles casually checks in, asking how Daniel is feeling, likely referring to his earlier injury. Daniel says he's okay, and Charles offers to look at it in the morning. Their brief exchange is quiet and understated. Charles then exits into the kitchen, leaving Daniel and Molly alone again—but the moment has passed. Daniel gently suggests Molly must be tired. She agrees. He awkwardly says “have a good—water,” a slip likely meant to be “night,” signaling his lingering nervousness or self-consciousness. He exits. Molly, alone again, turns out the light.

In the dark, we hear a male voice in English say, “And now, we rise to recite the Prayer for the French Republic,” followed by the same phrase in French. This leads into a bilingual recitation of the prayer itself, with alternating French and English excerpts. Each “Amen” is spoken in unison by the entire cast. The prayer asks for blessings on the French Republic and people, invoking hopes for peace, justice, prosperity, tradition, freedom, and divine favor. It's a deeply patriotic and religious invocation that ties into the play's themes of identity, belonging, and national struggle.

After this ritualistic moment, the scene shifts to the next morning. The stage is empty, then Marcelle enters through the front door. She's just returned from a run, dressed casually in leggings with her hair pulled back. She carries bread and a pastry box—symbols of everyday French life—and places them on the table before heading offstage. She knocks on Elodie's door and opens it. Marcell tries to wake up Elodie, who is still in bed despite it being almost noon. Marcelle returns

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to the living room and notices a wine glass left out. She assumes it's Elodie's and calls out sarcastically, questioning if Elodie thinks she has a personal maid. Elodie, still in pajamas, storms out, grabs the glass, slams it into the dishwasher, and returns—angry and defensive. Marcelle accuses Elodie of being lazy and inconsiderate, dumping responsibility on others like their cleaner Farida. Elodie snaps back with biting sarcasm and calls Marcelle a “bitch,” prompting more tension. Marcelle points out how much she does daily (running, shopping, emails), while Elodie just lounges. Elodie, defiant and tired of being scolded, tries to leave the room, but Marcelle won't let her go without a final jab about not sleeping all day. Elodie, exasperated, demands to know why Marcelle even cares. Marcelle insists Elodie eat or at least sit with Molly while she eats. Elodie resists, saying she's not hungry. Marcelle reveals that Elodie's father walked in on Molly and Daniel sitting closely in the dark. Elodie, irritated by the dramatization, clarifies that “walking in on” someone implies something inappropriate, which Marcelle insists might have been the case. The conversation pivots again as Marcelle asks Elodie to talk to Daniel—to convince him to wear a hat to cover his kippah for safety. Elodie is skeptical but reluctantly agrees to think about it. Tensions flare again when Marcelle criticizes Elodie for drinking the previous night. Elodie explodes, clarifying she had only two glasses of wine with dinner, pushing back against what she sees as her mother's overreactions and stigmatizing language. When Marcelle brings up Elodie's mental health struggles, Elodie defends herself, saying that depressive episodes can last years. Suddenly, Molly enters from the bathroom. Marcelle, still simmering from her fight with Elodie, coldly offers Molly breakfast. Molly senses the tension but awkwardly accepts a croissant. When she tries it, she's overwhelmed with delight at how good it is, expressing how much she loves France. Elodie, annoyed but compelled, finally eats a piece herself. Marcelle exits, leaving Molly alone with Elodie. Molly nervously apologizes for fogging up the bathroom, feeling self-conscious. Elodie dryly confirms that yes, Marcelle is probably mad, which flusters Molly even more.

Just then, Charles and Daniel return from synagogue, and Marcelle reappears to ask about the service. Daniel responds politely, but Charles is silent and clearly

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distressed. When asked if he's hungry or okay, Charles shakes his head no, signaling that something is very wrong. Charles has a panic attack, overwhelmed by the hostility he and Daniel faced on the walk there. As Marcelle tries to calm him, Charles breaks down, declaring he can no longer live in France and wants to move to Israel. Marcelle reacts with sarcasm, questioning how practical or safe Israel would be, but Charles insists that at least in Israel, Jews are not a targeted minority—they are at home. He recounts the emotional weight of saying the Prayer for the French Republic during the service, realizing how futile it feels to keep pleading for protection in a country that doesn't seem to offer it. He references the historical and present-day dangers French Jews face, insisting the situation is worsening. Despite Marcelle's resistance and attempts to diminish his concerns, Charles firmly says he is done and wants to move to Israel.

Molly hesitantly interjects. She suggests that before any decisions are made, it might be helpful to read articles or hear stories about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—specifically concerning settlements, human rights violations, and even apartheid. She says these stories changed how she viewed things and hopes it may be helpful for them too. Elodie responds with biting sarcasm, thanking Molly for her “helpful” insight and pretending to be enlightened. She mocks Molly, questioning her source of knowledge and implying that Molly's views are shallow and privileged. When Molly explains that she educated herself through reading, Elodie continues to attack, ironically questioning whether Molly used her coltan-filled laptop—referring to the exploitation tied to technology—as a means of gathering that information. Marcelle, frustrated, tries to shut down the discussion about coltan, while Daniel defends Molly and points out that Elodie owns electronics, too. The argument intensifies as Elodie directly accuses Molly of hypocrisy: criticizing Israel while living comfortably in America, which she calls “occupied land.” Molly tries to clarify that she's aware of her country's flaws and history, but Elodie mocks her awareness and accuses her of ignoring the violence and bloodshed America was built on. The conversation hits a fever pitch when Elodie angrily accuses Molly of having “bloody hands” and living a life built on the suffering of others. Daniel defends Molly, but Elodie screams that Molly has no

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right to lecture them, especially about safety and justice, from her position of privilege. Marcelle, in an attempt to calm things down, apologizes for Elodie's behavior and attributes it to her mental health, which Elodie immediately confirms with dark humor. Molly, now clearly shaken, tries to leave politely, claiming she had planned to visit museums anyway. Though Daniel and Marcelle ask her to stay, Molly insists, expressing frustration that simply pointing out injustice led to being attacked and called a hypocrite. She ends by challenging the family: "What are you so afraid of?"

As Molly leaves and Daniel follows her out, Elodie continues her rant, declaring sarcastically that she's the "Queen of standing up against injustice." Marcelle pushes back, pointing out that Elodie's activism is largely performative—done from her bed, on her computer, and to a tiny, irrelevant audience. Elodie retorts bitterly, criticizing Marcelle's reputation as a compassionate professional, implying it doesn't match how she treats her daughter. Marcelle tries to shut the conversation down, telling Elodie she's "used up her word count," but Elodie refuses to be silenced. Charles steps in to back Marcelle, urging Elodie to stop. Daniel returns and confirms that Molly isn't okay, gently criticizing Elodie for going too far. Elodie mocks him, calling Molly's comments a "guest lecture on Israeli policy." As things spiral, Elodie throws out a barrage of chaotic, emotionally charged comments—including referencing a sexual rumor between Daniel and Molly and mocking her mother's suggestion he change his style. Daniel, frustrated, yells for people to stop telling him how to dress. Marcelle asks Charles to intervene and Charles, earnestly, insists he already has—by declaring his desire to move to Israel. But Marcelle dismisses this as impractical and emotionally reactive. She says she's finished talking about Israel, though Elodie isn't. She criticizes the family for silencing dissent, and when Charles tries to speak again, a loud, overlapping argument erupts with multiple people trying to talk over one another.

Marcelle finally lays out a calm but impassioned argument against leaving France. She stresses that their lives—careers, family, friends, and responsibilities—are

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rooted in France. Her aging father needs care, and she knows her brother won't help, which means she can't leave. Even if they wanted to move somewhere else in France, it would be unrealistic at this stage of life. Moving to Israel, she says, is not just impractical, it's impossible. After a beat, Charles responds with raw honesty: he's scared. Despite understanding and respecting Marcelle's logical points, he confesses a deeper fear. As a Jew, he says, his survival instinct is heightened. He feels a rising wave of antisemitism everywhere—in the media, in politics, in public. Referencing France's far-right movement led by Marine Le Pen, he fears a time when he might be forced to pray for protection from his own country. On the other side of the stage, Irma bursts in, no longer wearing the yellow star she had previously been marked with, and she's holding a piece of paper. She frantically calls out for Adolphe, overwhelmed with urgency and emotion. Meanwhile, Charles, still in the middle of his emotional confession, continues wrestling with his fear and instinct, questioning whether his desire to leave is rational or practical—but affirming that his gut tells him they need to go. As Adolphe finally enters, Irma shouts, “Lucien!” and “Pierre!” — revealing the news: their children are coming home. The revelation lands like a miracle. Blackout.

Act Two opens with Patrick at the piano, singing the melancholic jazz standard “I Thought About You.” After a few lines, he breaks the mood and pivots to a lecture-like monologue directly to the audience, launching into a biting, ironic retelling of the People's Crusade of 1096. He describes how Peter the Hermit led violent mobs that slaughtered a third of France's Jews—emphasizing the grotesque, almost absurd scale of the violence. Patrick notes that Jewish history is often only remembered because Jews “write it all down,” referencing the Mainz Anonymous, which details horrific accounts of martyrdom, including that of Isaac son of Daniel, who, after being tortured, signaled for his own death rather than convert. Returning to the piano, Patrick weaves his personal story into this historical reflection. He reveals his secular upbringing, emphasizing how his family just wanted to be “French”—nothing more. Yet, over time, as Marcelle married a Jewish man and their children embraced their Jewish identity more deeply,

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Patrick watched from the sidelines with some disapproval. He gestures mockingly at how "too Jewish" they've become in his eyes. He then recounts a moment in Strasbourg, where, during a business trip, he stumbled across a plaque commemorating the 1349 massacre of 2,000 Jews during the Black Plague hysteria—known as the Valentine's Day Massacre. He darkly jokes that they spared children and attractive women, and wonders if he descends from survivors. He imagines the horror experienced by a young Jewish mother watching her husband burn, holding their baby. In the end, Patrick turns philosophical: history is a cycle of tragedy people are told to "get over". Even when recorded, atrocities are eventually forgotten—by necessity, or by choice. As his monologue winds down, Lucien silently appears across the stage. Patrick fades into darkness as the song continues playing from a radio in Irma and Adolphe's living room. Lucien, recently returned, listens quietly. Irma enters and is struck by how thin Lucien has become, a stark reminder of his time away. Irma attempts to reconnect through small talk, concern, and updates, like news of relatives in Mexico meeting Hemingway. When she tries to get Lucien to talk about his time away, he evades and redirects. Her quiet pleading to know where he was and what happened is met with silence, then a sudden outburst of rage from Lucien about the mess on the table, shocking both of them. Young Pierre and Adolphe then enter. There's a tender moment as Pierre quietly gravitates toward Lucien. The family tries to return to normalcy—Adolphe reminisces about Strasbourg, his birthplace, and talks about taking Pierre there one day. As they plan practical things—buying shoes, calling the doctor, getting food—Irma asks Pierre what he'd like for breakfast. He shyly says "a croissant," prompting bittersweet reactions. Croissants haven't been available since before the war, a subtle reminder of loss and lingering deprivation. Still, Lucien reassures his son that bread and butter will be "great."

The lights shift from the past to the present, where Marcelle and her brother Patrick are sitting in Marcelle's home, having a heated discussion. Patrick is stunned to learn that Charles, Marcelle's husband, and their son Daniel have traveled to Israel, potentially to move there. Marcelle confirms it's not just a



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visit—they're looking at apartments. Patrick finds this unbelievable and repeatedly calls it "the craziest thing" he's ever heard. As they talk, it becomes clear that Charles is planning to leave France before the upcoming election, fearing the rise of the far-right candidate, Le Pen. Patrick dismisses Charles's fears, insisting France would never elect someone like her, while Marcelle expresses frustration, noting that she's been trying to convince Charles of the same thing for months. Still, Charles is serious—he's even talking about selling his medical practice to make the move. Patrick is bewildered by the idea of Marcelle leaving too and asks if she plans to follow them. Marcelle says she doesn't know. She loves her life in France, her job, her identity as a Frenchwoman—she even jokes that she doesn't like going to the beach, let alone living in a desert. Patrick insists that Daniel is just going through a phase and that people like them can live safely in France. Marcelle pushes back, explaining that Charles—who grew up in the shadow of Holocaust survivors—believes you have to leave before things get dangerous. She reminds Patrick that their family lost entire branches because they didn't get out in time.

The conversation then shifts to their elderly father. Patrick complains about having to take care of him if Marcelle moves away, but Marcelle points out she's been the one actually handling his hospital visits and caretaking. They argue over whether to shut down their father's beloved but increasingly dangerous piano shop. Marcelle fiercely defends his right to keep the shop, even if it poses risks—it's one of the last things that brings him joy. The tension lightens briefly as Patrick notices a suitcase and teases Marcelle about being secretly packed for Israel. She explains it's not hers—it's Molly's, Daniel's American friend who's been staying every weekend for months. They joke about Molly's prolonged visit and her emotional reaction to Hillary Clinton losing the U.S. election. Patrick urges optimism, quoting Anne Frank's belief in the goodness of people, but Marcelle counters grimly—Anne Frank was dead just months after writing those words. The light shifts and we find Elodie and Molly in a bar. Elodie delivers a passionate monologue, expressing her deep frustration and fear about antisemitism, history, and the complexities of Jewish identity. She argues that American Jews lack a

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visceral understanding of European antisemitism, which is embedded in centuries of persecution—including rape, murder, and systemic theft. Elodie sees American Jews as historically fortunate, disconnected from the generational trauma of European Jews, and therefore more comfortable criticizing Israel. She doesn't reject criticism of Israel outright but despises performative, self-loathing critiques. She admires critiques grounded in a desire for moral improvement. Elodie expands her point, questioning why Israel is disproportionately scrutinized by the global left compared to much larger countries with significant human rights abuses like India, Indonesia, and Egypt. She suggests that the world's obsession with Israel stems from antisemitism and historical ignorance. She rants about how modern discourse, especially online, is shallow, ahistorical, and dangerous—arguing that misinformed people now shape public opinion and policy. The conversation shifts when Elodie suddenly brings up Molly's relationship with her brother, Daniel. She warns Molly that Daniel is easily influenced, referencing his adoption of religious practice as something prompted by a former girlfriend, not personal conviction. Elodie implies that Molly's opinions on Israel could harm Daniel and urges her not to make things harder for their family. Molly pushes back, calling Elodie out for hypocrisy—criticizing ignorance while asking Molly to suppress her views. She insists that information and open conversation shouldn't be feared. Molly explains that although she's American, her experience isn't theoretical—she feels the instability and fear in her own country, especially post-election. The scene ends with a rare moment of softness between them as Elodie acknowledges the fear they both share, holding Molly's hand and agreeing: “The world is on fire.”

The scene shifts. Young Pierre is alone for the first time since returning home. He approaches a framed photograph on the piano and stares at it. Meanwhile, offstage, his father Lucien, grandmother Irma, and grandfather Adolphe argue about priorities. Lucien wants to check on the piano store, consumed by financial stress and confusion about who bought hundreds of pianos during wartime. Irma, however, is concerned about Pierre's physical and mental well-being and insists he needs to see a doctor immediately. Adolphe interjects with cryptic, almost

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philosophical remarks—repeating that “it’s all circles,” suggesting a cyclical view of fortune, suffering, and perhaps Jewish history. As the conversation continues, Pierre becomes more alert when Irma starts discussing him directly, his demeanor shifting from private reflection to concerned listener. Lucien’s frustration builds, sarcastically snapping at his father’s repetition of “circles,” while expressing his disappointment that the store no longer holds the promise he hoped for. Eventually, Lucien enters the room. Pierre silently watches his father sit at the table, then quietly exits—leaving Lucien alone.

The lights shift again. Marcelle is seated with her laptop, working intently and refusing to acknowledge Charles when he enters with his suitcase. Eventually, Charles sits beside her and tries to speak, but Marcelle insists she isn’t upset while clearly avoiding conversation. Charles gently confronts her about not responding to his texts all weekend. She brushes it off, repeating that she was working. Charles declares his desire to be with Marcelle, despite his own fear. When Marcelle questions whether he truly believes something bad could happen if they stay in France, Charles answers honestly: yes. If the worst happens—if he or Daniel dies—then that’s the risk they live with. This frankness deeply unsettles Marcelle, especially the idea of losing Daniel. She says she couldn’t go on if something happened to their son. Charles responds somberly but realistically, reminding her of the tragic legacy within Jewish history—parents burying children, and still finding ways to continue. The conversation softens slightly. Marcelle asks about his trip to Israel—if he liked it, if he could imagine living there. Charles replies yes, although he knows Marcelle would have hated the apartments he saw, despite them being “very nice.” Marcelle raises a note of caution: many people try to move to Israel and end up returning to France after a few years. Charles reassures her that she no longer needs to convince him of anything—he’s here, he wants to stay with her, and he accepts whatever fate they may face. When she questions what that means for Daniel, Charles explains he’s done what he could: he took Daniel to Israel, showed him the possibilities, and Daniel responded positively. He wants to stay for now, finish the school year,

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and is taking precautions like wearing his cap. Charles requests they can make donuts for Chanukah.

The lights shift again, moving us back to Lucien, who sits silently at the table, clearly burdened. Patrick enters and begins a poetic, almost elegiac monologue about how tragedies are remembered—plaques for victims, headlines for massacres—but rarely any tribute for those who survive and keep going, like widows who rise the next morning and find a way to feed their children. The real story, he suggests, lies not in death, but in endurance. Lucien, deep in thought, mutters aloud about the bleak business reality: 22 stores, no pianos, and months before the factories and production return to normal. Patrick tries to offer encouragement by calculating that new pianos will be ready just before Christmas, which could mean good timing for sales. But privately, both he and Lucien admit their fear and doubt—who would buy a piano right after a war? Young Pierre emerges as the memory continues. Irma and Adolphe join the scene, as the family replays a moment from their return to Paris. Patrick narrates the imagined scene—what did they talk about on that walk back to Pianos Salomon? Irma presses Lucien, demanding answers. Lucien avoids. Adolphe tries to lighten the mood with quips, but Irma's frustration boils over. Eventually, she turns to Young Pierre and asks about their arrest. He says it didn't happen—they were lucky, they stayed in Paris, and were not deported. Patrick closes the scene with a powerful image. As the family rounds the corner back to their store, they look up and see their name—Salomon—still painted on the building. That name had once been crossed off a Nazi's list. It would later be carved into memorials for the murdered. And it would live on through generations—etched in memory, loss, survival, and lineage. It's the name Patrick now carries, binding him to all of it. Light Shifts. Daniel reassures Molly not to take his sister Elodie's critical remarks to heart. Their playful banter reveals that Daniel is open-minded and eager to share perspectives, while Molly remains cautious. Molly teases Daniel about playing guitar shirtless—a habit revealed by Elodie. When they return to Daniel's apartment, they find Charles awake, preparing donuts for Chanukah while listening to Bob Dylan. Charles invites them to help, and Molly enthusiastically

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agrees. As they work, Charles explains the process of making the donuts and shares an amusing secret: the family recipe actually came from an ex-girlfriend, not his grandmother. This revelation shocks Daniel, but Charles brushes it off with humor, emphasizing the importance of tradition, even if the origin is unconventional. Molly asks about Charles's Algerian roots. Charles reminisces about his childhood in Algeria, describing a warm, communal life where different communities lived harmoniously. He reflects on the forced departure from Algeria, the cultural divide they encountered in France, and the challenges of resettling among French Jews still reeling from World War II. He recalls his grandmother's adaptability, noting that she loved each place she lived despite being uprooted multiple times. Charles concludes with a bittersweet sentiment: the Benhamou family has always wandered, moving across the Mediterranean throughout history. In his view, life for them is a choice between "the suitcase or the coffin."

Light shifts again. Irma, Adolphe, and Lucien are gathered at a table, where Lucien is dealing cards. Irma is overwhelmed with the need to understand what happened during the two years when she had no word from her children. She confronts Lucien and Adolphe, expressing her anguish over the uncertainty and fear that consumed her during that time, imagining the worst scenarios. Lucien, trying to avoid the painful topic, insists that he is now present and that's enough, but Irma demands the truth. Adolphe, distressed, pleads for her to stop asking, while Lucien finally breaks and reveals the harsh reality: the girls are dead. This revelation is raw and devastating, but before Lucien can continue, the young boy, Pierre, enters and begins to play a simple, lovely piece on the piano. Meanwhile, on the other side of the stage, Marcelle's family lights the candles for the first night of Chanukah, symbolizing tradition and the passing of time. Patrick enters and watches as Pierre plays. Pierre's music, surrounded by the people who raised him and the ancestors he cannot yet understand, stands as a poignant reminder of both the trauma endured and the hope for continuity. Black out.

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Act Three opens with the Benhamous family gathered around for a Passover Seder in 2017. Charles leads the traditional ceremony. Patrick, who was not raised with these traditions, tells the audience about how Marcelle has brought the Seder back into their lives, resurrecting a practice that had been lost in their family. He observes his nephew and niece guiding the ceremony, while he wishes his own daughters could have done the same. Patrick enters the present scene. The conversation turns to the upcoming French presidential election, where the family debates the political landscape. Elodie and Patrick discuss the rise of Marine Le Pen and the National Front party, with Elodie warning that it's possible for a democratic nation to elect a dangerous figure. Despite their concerns, Patrick remains convinced that Le Pen will not win. As the Seder progresses, Marcelle quietly clears the table while the others continue their discussion. Patrick turns his attention to Molly, asking if she has enjoyed her time in France, and the conversation turns to a lighthearted note about a Bob Dylan serenade. The family continues the Seder, but tension escalates when Elodie refuses to participate in the afikomen tradition, calling it antisemitic and full of harmful stereotypes about Jews and money. Charles defends the ritual as part of their heritage, while Patrick unexpectedly sides with Elodie. Daniel finds the afikomen in the usual spot, and despite Elodie's objections, he and Charles go through the motions of bargaining over it. When it's time to open the door for Elijah, Marcelle abruptly stops the ritual, insisting they skip it. Daniel protests, but Marcelle forcefully tells him to sit. Elodie then references the murder of Sarah Halimi, Jewish woman murdered in Paris. Marcelle, visibly distressed, explains that Sarah was thrown out of her apartment window and that the crime is not being treated as an act of anti-Semitism, despite the circumstances. Marcelle is horrified by the increase in hate crimes against Jews, citing statistics about how Jewish people represent a disproportionate percentage of hate crime victims in France. She expresses deep fear for her family's safety, noting how her own home no longer feels secure.

The conversation intensifies as Marcelle reveals her anxiety and inability to sleep, constantly fearing an intruder in her home. Patrick dismisses her concerns,

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suggesting she take medication, but Marcelle insists this is no joke. Marcelle grows increasingly emotional, saying she feels like a "holdover," someone stuck in the past and unable to move forward, as if her safety is compromised in the place she once considered home. Patrick, frustrated, dismisses the gravity of the situation, calling it "bullshit" and accusing Marcelle of being brainwashed by Charles. He argues that Marcelle's life was better before she met Charles, but Marcelle stands firm in her choice to convert to Judaism when they married. As the argument escalates, Charles and Patrick engage in a heated exchange. Patrick accuses Charles of instilling fear in Marcelle and pushing her to believe that they are unsafe in France. Marcelle asks Patrick where they could go to feel safe, but Patrick has no concrete answers. Marcelle presses him further, asking for a place where Jews can live without fear, but Patrick's responses—suggesting places like Berlin—only frustrate her more. As the family continues to clash over the situation, Daniel, her son, quietly declares that he doesn't want to go anywhere. Charles questions what changed his mind, while Marcelle, upset and fearful, demands Molly leave the house, accusing her of influencing Daniel. Tensions erupt among the family—accusations fly, secrets surface, and everyone argues over who's responsible for Daniel's decision. Elodie accuses Daniel of being blinded by his feelings for Molly, while Daniel insists it's his choice alone. Overwhelmed, he decides to leave the room, taking Molly with him. Before Molly exits, Marcelle confronts her emotionally, asking if she truly cares about Daniel and reminding her of the violence he's endured. Molly clarifies they never discussed his decision, then leaves. Charles confronts Patrick, accusing him of distancing himself from his Jewish identity while warning that hatred doesn't discriminate—when persecution comes, it won't spare him for being a skeptic. Patrick fires back with raw emotion, revealing that their father intentionally married a Catholic woman as an act of survival, not just love, and accuses Marcelle of clinging blindly to tradition. He argues that religion isn't worth dying for and urges her to be pragmatic, emphasizing that his family will endure by blending in. As he storms out, Marcelle defiantly tells him to leave the door open for Elijah, and for anyone seeking refuge.

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Lights shift. Lucien and Irma enter as they debate whether Young Pierre should return to school or start working at the family piano shop. Irma insists education is essential, especially after he's already missed two years. Lucien counters that he needs help with the store, especially after losing Robert, and believes now is the right time for Pierre to start learning the trade. When Pierre reveals he may not want to sell pianos, it surprises Lucien. Adolphe gently intervenes, affirming Pierre's potential and reminding everyone of the pride and meaning behind their family's work—how it brings music and joy to homes across France. Adolphe exits, and Young Pierre remains onstage with Lucien and Irma. Patrick then steps forward to narrate. He explains a few weeks have passed, and Emmanuel Macron has defeated Marine Le Pen in the French presidential election, just as he had predicted. Despite this, Patrick and his sister Marcelle are still not speaking. With dry sarcasm, he tells the audience “I know—you're shocked.” Patrick contemplates calling her but ultimately lets his pride win. His phone rings, presumably with Marcelle on the other end, and after a moment of hesitation, he sends it to voicemail, muttering, “Fuck her. I don't want to talk to her.” Young Pierre, Patrick's father, interjects, insisting that he speak to his sister. Patrick resists telling the audience that “talking to my sister” is an obsession inherited from their father. Young Pierre responds with quiet wisdom, asking what else is left “once your parents are gone.” A flashback of sorts begins, as Young Pierre and Patrick begin to argue about Marcelle. Young Pierre insists on the importance of their bond, expressing that it is rare for people in their family to still have their sibling. He explains that Irma lost her sister across an ocean, Lucien's brother was killed in another country, and Young Pierre's sisters were murdered only meters from him. When Patrick stubbornly insists Marcelle can call him if she wants to talk, Young Pierre points out she did—and he ignored the call. As if on cue, Patrick's phone rings again. Young Pierre watches him intently, silently pleading for him to take the chance. At last, Patrick gently gives in and answers the call. Patrick angrily picks up the phone and speaks to Marcelle, who informs him that she, Charles, and Elodie have decided to leave France. Daniel is still uncertain. Patrick responds bitterly, accusing her of not needing his permission and acting like it's no big deal. But Marcelle reveals there's more—she wants to talk about



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their father. She explains that although she plans to invite Papa to come with them, she knows he won't leave. Patrick calls this gesture "bullshit," saying it's cruel to offer something you know won't be accepted. Marcelle insists it's not about false hope—it's about making sure he knows he's wanted and has options. Marcelle asks Patrick to be the one who stays and takes care of Papa, stressing that she's not abandoning their father. Patrick accuses her of trying to unload her guilt onto him, but she pleads that her decision is excruciating. France is her home; her entire life has been in French, and she is deeply rooted there. She recounts a painful memory from her wedding day when Papa awkwardly put on a kippah, looking terrified and out of place, which made her silently vow to never make him feel that again. Now, faced with leaving, Marcelle is tormented by the thought of repeating history—of having to explain to her father that his daughter, like his own parents, is fleeing. She's desperate to know that he will be cared for in her absence and asks Patrick to be by her side when she tells him. He promises he will be there. He assures her that she can't abandon Papa because they are siblings. He will be there with Papa, and through him, so will she.

Lights shift, again. Charles sifts through old papers as Elodie enters. He complains that Marcelle wants to purge everything, treating it like they're moving into a nursing home. Elodie says she agrees with her mom—she wants to get rid of things too. Charles is skeptical and emotional, arguing that not everything should be thrown out. They debate the value of sentimental items. Elodie wants to leave behind painful memories, but Charles insists that the old records and books—brought from Algeria when their family had to flee—are their inheritance, the remnants of generations. Elodie counters that the records are broken, they have no record player, and the books are in unreadable languages. She jokes about not planning to have kids, so preserving anything for future generations feels pointless. Charles says he'll just shove it all back in his closet for her to deal with when he dies. Elodie relents slightly, grabbing one record and saying there's room in her suitcase. The lights shift again to reveal Daniel and Molly. Dressed up, they share a romantic moment in Paris, on a bridge over the Seine. Daniel lifts his shirt slightly and sweetly serenades Molly with Bob Dylan's "Forever Young." They kiss,

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and Molly, overwhelmed with joy, jokes that she should end her life now because nothing will top this moment. They joke about their "French boyfriend" dynamic—Molly finds it unbelievably romantic and imagines telling friends back home. When Daniel asks her not to leave, Molly insists she should finish college. He brushes it off and says he'll wait for her, wherever she is. Molly gets serious, reflecting on her great-great-grandmother Lucie, who left France—maybe for adventure, maybe out of fear. Either way, Molly feels deeply connected to that legacy. She tells Daniel to go wherever he needs to feel safe, because what matters is staying alive to keep fighting for what's right.

Another light shift. Lucien, Adolphe, and Young Pierre sit together—someone is clearly missing. Lucien reaches out to comfort his father. Then Irma enters, no longer part of the present but narrating from beyond. She reveals she has just died—on March 11th, 1946—a symbolic and defiant statement of survival after the Holocaust. Her tombstone, with that date in France, becomes her final “Fuck You” to history’s attempts to erase her and her people. Irma reflects on where she could have ended up—buried in America, in exile with her daughter, or in an anonymous mass grave in Poland—but instead, she will lie in France, where her ancestors rest. She recounts the final sensations of her life: everyday tasks, memories, the sounds of family, and the chaos of war. Irma shares her final moments, she describes a quiet, intimate death—her head resting gently on the pillow, her thoughts turning into prayer. That prayer is just one word that she pours the totality of her hope: for her family, for France, for the future, for peace, love, and understanding across generations. As she dies, she offers this word to the heavens and anyone who might be listening: “Pierre.”

At that moment, a spotlight reveals an elderly Pierre, now in his eighties. He is physically frail but mentally sharp. The family surrounds him: Marcelle, Charles, Elodie, Daniel, and Patrick. Marcelle tells him they're planning to move to Israel for safety and opportunity. Pierre remains calm but skeptical, reminding them that safety is an illusion—France, despite its dangers, allowed many Jews to survive, including his own family. Tensions rise as they discuss the move and what

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will happen to the family piano store, with Daniel unexpectedly expressing interest in taking it over. Pierre reveals that he never wanted to run the store—it was survival. He shares that the only reason he stayed was to be with his father, whose optimism kept them both alive through the Holocaust. The store, for Pierre, became a quiet tribute to his family and their resilience. He urges the younger generation to stay close to their parents, because that bond, he says, is what ultimately saved his life. Marcelle, emotional, wonders if leaving France makes her a coward, and if she's making the right choice. Pierre comforts her, telling her to trust her instincts, because that's all anyone really has. He then gently affirms that Daniel must go with his parents. Turning to his grandson, Pierre asks a haunting question: "Why do they hate us?"—referring to the persistent antisemitism Jews have faced across history. The family falls into a thoughtful silence before offering different answers. Daniel says it's because Jews are different and don't try to blend in. Elodie wonders if it's because others think Jews feel superior or possess some hidden knowledge. Charles attributes the hatred to the accusation of killing Christ, and explains how hatred morphed over time—from religious difference to economic scapegoating. Patrick expands on that, noting that Jews are hated both for having money and for being poor, for being capitalists and communists—there's no consistent logic, only blame. Elodie passionately adds that Jews are hated for simply surviving: despite persecution, expulsion, genocide, and endless suffering, they are still here. She marvels at Jewish resilience, listing iconic Jewish figures—Elie Wiesel, Freud, Kafka, Proust—who emerged even from unimaginable trauma. Her speech crescendos into a defiant assertion of continued existence in the face of relentless hate. Finally, Daniel breaks the tension, quietly stating that he won't hate in return. Marcelle embraces him.

As the lights change, Patrick steps forward to narrate. He wasn't present when Marcelle and her family left their home later that summer, but he recounts how they packed up everything—except the heavy piano, which will be moved to Pierre's store to be sold. Patrick describes the long-standing history of Pianos Salomon, now over 160 years old, and tells us where his father, Pierre, still works

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each week. Onstage, Marcelle surveys the nearly empty room. Charles enters with their children and luggage. He places a box on the piano and ceremoniously tears a croissant into four parts, sharing it like matzah during Passover. “This is the bread of affliction,” he says, connecting their departure to the long history of Jewish exile—only now, it’s France they are leaving behind. Patrick continues, naming recent antisemitic acts: the murder of 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll in France, the Tree of Life synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh, and the desecration of a tree planted in memory of Ilan Halimi. These events—tragic and symbolic—highlight the ongoing danger and hatred Jews face worldwide. Elodie shares a tender moment with her mother, and Marcelle remains alone on stage a moment longer before joining her family. On the other side of the stage, Patrick delivers a heartfelt monologue, confessing his deep love for his sister—words he won’t say aloud while she’s within earshot. He imagines looking up at her plane as it leaves France, part of a long line of Jewish exiles and wanderers. Though a nonbeliever, Patrick offers a prayer—a wish for Marcelle, for himself, for all displaced people across the world, now and in the future. One of the ancestors enter, singing a soft version of La Marseillaise on the piano. Pierre begins to sing, then joined by Patrick and eventually the remaining ancestors—Irma, Adolphe, Lucien, or Young Pierre—gather around the piano, singing together. Marcelle watches them one last time before exiting. The anthem finishes. A beat of silence. Black out.

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### SENSITIVITY GUIDE

#### CONTENT NOTES

- Historical and contemporary references to antisemitic violence, including: Holocaust atrocities (deportations, hiding, death camps, survival trauma), real-life murders of Jewish individuals (e.g., Ilan Halimi, Mireille Knoll), and Antisemitic attacks in France and the U.S., including the Pittsburgh Synagogue shooting.
- Graphic language describing acts of violence: beatings, rape, gassing, torture, burning alive.
- Discussion of suicide and violence, sometimes in a joking manner
- Frequent use of strong language, including: "fuck," "shit," "goddamn," "bitch," and similar expletives, used in moments of anger, frustration, and emotional intensity.
- Conversations and debates surrounding sensitive political and religious themes including Islamophobia, secularism, the veil in France, Zionism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Jewish identity politics, religious persecution, assimilation, and cultural erasure.
- Sexual references, in addition to onstage kissing
- Expression of deep anxiety, fear, and existential dread.
- Discussion surrounding loss, aging, emigration, survivor's guilt, and long-term psychological impacts of war and hate.
- Characters experience family trauma, generational grief, and feelings of displacement.
- Discussion of terrorism (including specific mentions of 9/11, Charlie Hebdo shooting, etc.)
- Discussion of alcoholism and depiction of alcohol consumption onstage

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### SENSORY NOTES

- Music is used in transitions throughout the play.
- Characters yell/raise their voices throughout the play, sometimes speaking over each other or at the same time.
- Food and drink is consumed onstage throughout the play.
- There are several moments of door slamming throughout the play.
- In Act One, a character enters with blood on his face and clothes. The blood remains on his face in subsequent scenes.
- In Act One, a prayer is recited over the loud speaker in a near-blackout.
- In Act One, a character experiences a panic attack onstage. In this moment, they hyperventilate, raise their voice, and their body is shaking.
- In Act One, a character bangs on the table while yelling.
- In Act Two, a character plays the piano while singing.
- In Act Two, music plays from a radio while characters are speaking.
- In Act Two, there is a blackout followed by flashing colorful lights upstage accompanied by techno music that underscores the following scene.
- At the end of Act Two, characters yell while discussing violence and death. One character becomes mildly physically aggressive. Another character plays piano on top of the shouting.
- In Act Three, a character plays guitar and sings with his chest exposed/shirt off.
- At the end of Act Three, characters enter from many directions and sing while the piano is played.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Does this production contain any technical elements that could be loud, bright, or shocking?**

Like many of Northlight's plays, this production will include technical elements that may trigger sensory sensitivities. Northlight has done its best to design elements so that they will be accessible to all, but each person is different, thereby making it impossible to plan for every individual. If you believe that you may have some sensory sensitivities to the show, please consult the guide above to make you are aware of them before they happen. Please also remember that Northlight has noise canceling headphones as well as sunglasses available to borrow for any of these moments.

### **What types of accessibility options does Northlight provide?**

Northlight provides a wealth of accessibility options for its audience members. These tools can be broken up into two specific categories: Specific Date Accessibility and General Accessibility. For specific date accessibility, Northlight will provide accommodations on predetermined dates throughout the run. We highly recommend reserving tickets for these dates ahead of time. These accommodations include: Audio Description, Open Captions, and Relaxed/Sensory Friendly Performances. For general accessibility, Northlight provides a wide range of tools that can be requested at any performance of the show free of charge. These include: assisted listening devices and accessible seating. For accessible seating, it is recommended you request the necessary seats when purchasing your tickets, as they may not be available the day of the performance. For assisted listening devices, please go to the House Manager or ask an usher.

For more information, visit <https://northlight.org/accessibility/> or email [access@northlight.org](mailto:access@northlight.org).

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## The Set of *Prayer for the French Republic*

*The set depicts a Paris apartment. The furniture to the left is used for scenes taking place around 1955 and the right is used for the scenes that take place around 2016.*



Image Description: The house left side set of Northlight Theatre's production of *Prayer for the French Republic*. An apartment featuring a wooden parquet floor and beige walls with white trim. A large white hutch features displayed pictures and trinkets. A brown square table with four chairs is covered in a white cloth and piles of books and papers. Three actors sit at the table and one stands.



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Image Description: The house right side set of Northlight Theatre's production of *Prayer for the French Republic*. An apartment featuring a wooden parquet floor and beige walls with white trim. The layout is an open dining and living space featuring a blue couch and coffee table on a red ornate rug. A grand piano sits in the corner and a dining table with chairs is in front of it. There are doors that lead to unseen rooms of the apartment. Glass doors are at the side with blue curtains. A large painting hangs on the wall and built in shelves display pictures and trinkets. Four actors appear, two sitting and two standing, who appear to be in conflict with pointed fingers.

# NORTHLIGHT THEATRE

## REFERENCE PHOTOS



**North Shore Center for the Performing Arts**  
Exterior

Id: The front of North Shore Center on a sunny day. The building has white columns and its sides are primarily made of windows.



**North Shore Center for the Performing Arts**  
Entrance

Id: The doors to North Shore’s building. The doors are paneled glass and there is a hand railing leading up. A man is entering the doors.



**North Shore Center for the Performing Arts**  
Parking Lot

Id: The parking lot at the theater. It is a sunny day with many clouds, there is a sign that says “Theatre Parking Only” and several cars parked.

# NORTHLIGHT THEATRE



## **Northlight's Auditorium**

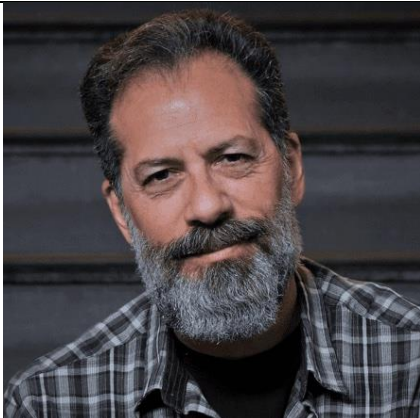
Id: The doors leading directly into the theater. There are three doors which are all light brown wood. Two doors are open. A sign above the doors reads North Theatre. A man is waving hello.



## **Janet Ulrich Brooks**

Marcelle Salomon

Id: The photo shows an openly smiling, caucasian woman with brown eyes and cropped brown hair with bangs. On her ear lobes are small crystal stud earrings. She is wearing a white sweater. The background of the picture is simply dark.



## **Rom Barkhordar**

Charles Benhamou

Id: Rom has thick dark hair forming a slight widow's peak. His beard is full, medium length, and salt and peppery. He has a slight smile. He wears a gray plaid shirt with a black t-shirt underneath.

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**Rae Gray**

Elodie Benhamou

Id: A young, pale woman with chin-length blonde hair and green eyes wears an emerald lace dress and stares intensely with a twinkle in her eye.



**Max Stewart**

Daniel Benhamou

Id: Max is fair skinned, with nearly buzzed reddish hair. His head is tilted to one side, and he has a slight closed-mouth smile. He wears a white collared shirt under a gray suit jacket, and stands in front of a muted pale blue background.



**Lawrence Grimm**

Patrick Salomon

Id: A Caucasian male in his mid 50s with salt and pepper hair has a slight grin on his face as he peers into the camera with his blue eyes that say “I have secrets and I will tell you a few if you listen closely.”

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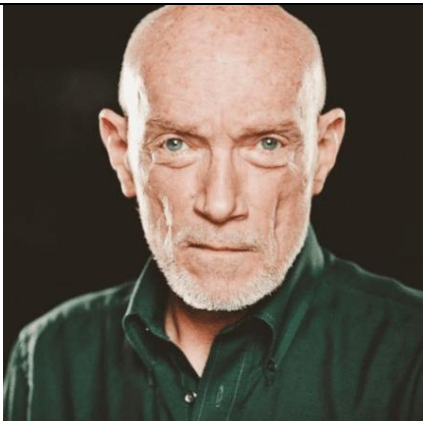
## THEATRE



**Maya Hlava**

Molly

Id: Maya has long dark brown hair with bangs. Her head is slightly tilted to one-side. She wears a burnt umber lipstick and stands in front of a warm, deep brown background.



**Henson Keys**

Pierre Salomon

Id: HENSON KEYS, bearded and balding, looks at the world with blue eyes, wearing a green shirt.



**Kathy Scambiaterra**

Irma Salomon

Id: Kathy has shoulder length salt-n-pepper hair and light skin. She is wearing a black cami with a rust color overlay shirt. Her arms are crossed and she has a slight smile.

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**Torrey Hanson**  
Adolphe Salomon

Id: Torrey is fair skinned, white-haired, in his late 60s. He wears round horn rimmed glasses in the show.



**Alex Weisman**  
Lucien Salomon

Id: Alex is fair-skinned with shiny red hair, parted to the right of his head. He also has a groomed red beard. He wears tortoise shell round glasses and an emerald green shirt. He stands in front of a navy background.



**Nathan Becker**  
Young Pierre Salomon

Id: Nathan is young and fair-skinned. He has rich chestnut hair, effortlessly resting out of his eyes. He is adorned with a pale pink shirt and stands in front of white background.