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Roots in the Air

Shai Bar Yaakov

***In Between* by Sara von Schwarze, directed by Manfred Langner. A Cameri Theatre and Stuttgart Schauspielbühnen Coproduction**

Actress Sara von Schwarze's first play is a realistic, bilingual (Hebrew-German) drama based on her own unique biography: the daughter of German parents who converted to Judaism and decided to immigrate to Israel, and passed onto their children the burden of split identity resulting from this kind of choice.

The daughter's dilemma is presented in the play by means of a nighttime confrontation with her father who abandoned his family and decided to return to Germany, where he lives and works as a photographer specializing in taking pictures at traditional Jewish ceremonies, even though he himself no longer lives as a religious Jew, and cohabits with a non-Jewish German woman who does not know the whole truth about his strange past. In just ninety minutes of heated confrontation Von Schwarze manages to raise an array of weighty issues, such as Holocaust remembrance, Germany's guilt, fear of bringing children into the world, ritual circumcision, feminism, as well as Palestinians, Occupied Territories, and even a little gay-lesbian issues to top it all off.

There is something a little strained in this dense mixture that seems to be trying to force in virtually every political issue under the sun, but to the credit of the writing it should be said that Von Schwarze manages to build three interesting and complex characters, each of whom is given the opportunity to reveal their own difficult life choices. Above all, it is a play based on convincing performances by the three

excellent actors – Von Schwarze, Eli Gorenstein, and Cornelia Heyse – who under the guidance of director Manfred Langner shift effortlessly between the two languages and manage to create the sense of a joint search for solid ground on which to build a reality not poisoned by history, a reality that is not based on roots floating in the air.