

A GEM ON BROADWAY

TONY AWARD WINNING "THE BAND'S VISIT" SHOWCASES ISRAEL ON BROADWAY

BY ALEXANDRA COHEN

NEW YORK: There is a whole lot of Israel on Broadway these days thanks to the the 10-time Tony Award winning Best Musical, The Band's Visit. (www.thebandsvisitmusical.com). Playing at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre (243 West 47th Street), the production recently welcomed award-winning Israeli actor Sasson Gabay to the company in his Broadway debut. He is reprising the character he created in the 2007 film on which the musical is based.

Following the Tony Awards on June 10, The Band's Visit is now tied as the third most Tony Award-winning show in history. Popular demand has resulted in the show being extended through June 2019, with

the potential to run even longer.

As the musical begins, a series of well-intentioned mistakes land an Egyptian Police Band in a sleepy and remote village in the middle of the Israeli desert, which its inhabitants label as "boring" and "bland". One of the central characters, Dina (played with great magnetism by Tony Award-winner Katrina Lenk), describes the mood of her town best in the opening number, as "looking out into the distance even though you know the view is never going to change"

With no bus until morning and no hotel in sight, the band are taken in by the locals for one night (Please turn to page 14)

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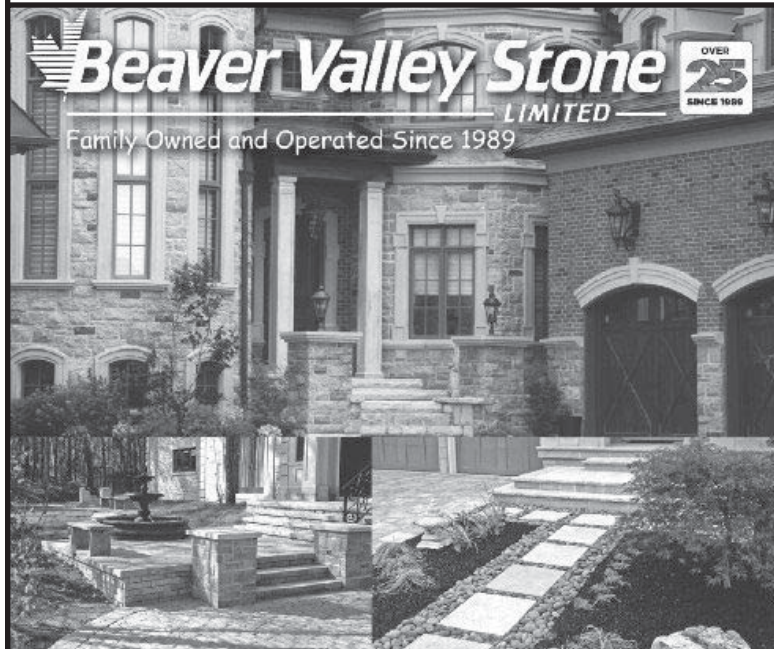
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that will, in one way or another, change all of their lives. The Band's Visit celebrates the deeply human

ways in which music, longing and laughter can connect us all.

I must say that I ex-

pected this show to be quite serious in nature. I was, however, pleasantly surprised by the comic undertones. The Alexandria Ceremonial Police Orchestra are meant to perform at the Arabic cultural center in Petah Tikvah but a member of the band with poor English skills accidentally sends them to the similarly pronounced destination of Bet Hatikvah "with a B," eliciting many laughs from the audience.

Yes, quite often it is the creative and witty lyrics that allow for laughter, including a particular line of a song in which the words "awful" and "falafel" were used in a rhyme. However, as the connection between the Israeli locals and Egyptian visitors is forged the story becomes unexpectedly moving. They are

different, as shown in certain moments by the characters speaking their respective languages rather than English. And yet they are also in many ways alike, and if that is not a universal message that this world needs, then I do not know what is.

WHERE TO STAY AND DINE: It is always very convenient to find nice places to stay and dine close to the hustle and bustle of Times Square. Fortunately, we were able to find a great hotel and a fine dining establishment.

Let us start off with the Algonquin Hotel (www.algonquinhotel.com), a locale with some significant Jewish history which commands 44th Street near 6th Avenue. The Algonquin first opened its doors in 1902. Today, it is part of the

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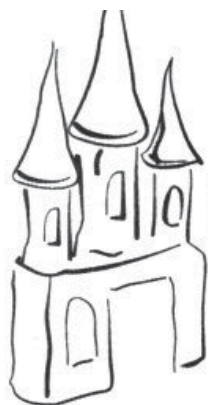
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Marriott chain's Autograph Collection, an evolving ensemble of strikingly independent hotels. Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. In the book *The Algonquin Kid: Adventures Growing Up In New York's Legendary Hotel*, author Michael Colby tells the story about his grandparents Mary and Ben Bodne, who built this legendary landmark. Southern Jews, they owned the hotel from 1946 to 1987. As a kid, Colby and siblings visited their grandparents every weekend.

Over the past year, I have been fortunate to experience the extraordinary cuisine of master chef Geoffrey Zakarian at two of his restaurants: Georgie at the Montage Beverly Hills, and Point Royal at the Diplomat Resort in Hollywood, Florida. When looking for a place to dine near Times Square, I was pleasantly surprised to find another one of his restaurants, The Lambs Club,

only a block away from our hotel. Located at 132 West 44th Street, The Lambs Club offers Zakarian's modern approach to American cuisine with distinct ingredients, highly seasonal menus, and a signature approach to hospitality. Zakarian and his talented culinary team marry their passion for food with their classical training to deliver exceptional dining experiences, whether it is a casual burger in The Bar or the sought-after Delmonico steak in the main dining room. A team of skilled chefs put forth daily breakfast, lunch, and dinner, offering guests dishes composed with the most seasonal and highest quality ingredients. We very much enjoyed our meal at the 90-seat restaurant. Zakarian opened The Lambs Club in 2010 with his wife Margaret and partner David Rabin, a noted Jewish businessman. For reservations call 212.997.5262 or email reservations@thelambsclub.com

JEWISH CHILDREN WERE SEPARATED TOO

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university presidents, actors such as Henry Fonda and Helen Hayes, and political figures such as 1936 Republican presidential nominee Alf Landon and his running mate, Frank Knox. Former First Lady Grace Coolidge announced that she and her neighbors from Northampton, Massachusetts, would personally care for twenty-five of the children.

Unexpected support came from former president Herbert Hoover. Back in 1930, before the rise of Hitler, Hoover's administration had tightened the restrictions on immigration. Now Hoover not only endorsed Wagner-Rogers, but also pressured wavering members of the House Immigration Committee to

the measure.

Patriotic and anti-foreigner groups, such as the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, mobilized against Wagner-Rogers. Laura Delano Houghteling, a cousin of President Franklin Roosevelt and wife of the U.S. Commissioner of Immigration, summarized the sentiment of the opposition when she complained that "20,000 charming children would all too soon grow up into 20,000 ugly adults."

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt privately supported the legislation, but declined to publicly endorse it. The president, for his part, took no position on

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