



**Theodore Bikel to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award
At 2009 Northeastern Pennsylvania Jewish Film Festival**

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“I have always striven to raise the voice of hope for a world where hate gives way to respect and oppression to liberation...To conquer hate seems a nigh-impossible task. But I prefer to make common cause with those whose weapons are guitar, banjo, fiddles and words.”

--- Theodore Bikel

Carol Nelson Dembert
Chair

Laney Ufberg
Vice Chair

On Sunday evening, October 25th, actor-singer-musician-humanitarian Theodore Bikel will walk the red carpet in the Scranton Cultural Center to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award for the 2009 Northeastern Pennsylvania Jewish Film Festival as the guest of honor at the Festival's gala closing night dinner.

It is another highlight in his life's journey that began in Vienna in 1924. Mr. Bikel was thirteen when he and his parents left Austria for Palestine. He was already fluent in Hebrew, Yiddish and German, and had a respectable command of English and French. He intended to study and eventually teach comparative linguistics. He went on to become an accomplished linguist and dialectician.

He also accomplished something else along the way. He became one of the most versatile actors in the world, enjoying enviable success on stage, in films and on television, and as a noted author and musician. If that were not enough, Mr. Bikel became active in the civil rights movement, serving in the American Jewish Congress, the Actor's Equity Association, the International Federation of Actors, Amnesty International and, by presidential appointment, as a member of the National Council on the Arts. He presently serves as President of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America.

The story of Mr. Bikel's professional life begins in 1946 when he entered London's Royal Academy of dramatic Arts and graduated with honors two years later. The highlights of his stage career include the roles of Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* for which he received a Tony nomination in 1960 and of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Other credits include *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, *Zorba*, *The Rothschilds*, *The Good Doctor*, *The Inspector General*, *She loves Me* and *The Rope Dancer*, for which he was nominated for a Tony Award in 1958.

His film roles also have an international flavor. Beginning with his turn as a German battleship captain in *The African Queen* (1951), he played a French General in *The Pride and the Passion* (1957), a Russian colonel in *Fraulein* (1958), a psychiatrist in *I Want to Live* (1958) and a

southern sheriff in *The Defiant Ones* (1958), for which he was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor. Other notable film credits include *The Blue Angel* (1959), *My Fair Lady* (1964) and *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming* (1965).

Versatility also describes Mr. Bikel's television work in a career that spans thirty-five years. It includes performances as a Scottish policeman in *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, a South African Boer in *Equalizer*, Henry Kissinger in *The Final Days* and the eighty-two year old Harris Newmark on public television, for which he won an L.A. Emmy Award in 1988. He also had recurring roles on *Murder, She Wrote*, *Dynasty*, *Falcon Crest*, *The Paper Chase*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *L.A. Law* and as the butcher infatuated with Edith Bunker on *All in the Family*.

Mr. Bikel's concert debut was at the Carnegie Recital Hall in 1956. He has appeared in concerts throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, New Zealand and Australia. He has recorded twenty albums and, with George Wein and Pete Seeger, co-founded the Newport Folk Festival.

Certainly, a linguist and dialectician would be expected to excel in both the written and the spoken word; Mr. Bikel succeeds on both counts. His autobiography, Theo, was re-released in 2002 by the University of Wisconsin Press, and his book Folksongs and Footnotes has enjoyed three reprints. His ninety minute television special, *One Night Stand*, and his weekly radio program, *At Home With Theodore Bikel*, has received national syndication. He has received invitations to lecture on such diverse topics as *The Art of Acting, Method or Madness: Government and the Arts*, *Was the Brouhaha Worth It*, *Show Business-How Much Is Business and How Much Is Show*, and *A Jewish Culture and Music*.

Mr. Bikel, who is a renaissance man in every sense of the term, resides in California with his wife Tamara Brooks, who will be accompanying him to Scranton. They have two sons, Robert and Daniel, and one grandson, Wolfram.