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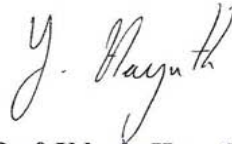
**The Humanitarian Award of Merit**

to

**Orna Porat**

for her contribution to theater as an actress and director and as founder of theater for children and youth,  
for her commitment to cultural life in Israel, and for her devotion to the young generation.

12 Sivan 5758 / June 6, 1998



**Prof. Yehuda Hayuth**

President

## Orna Porat

Born Irena Klein in Germany (1924). She studied drama in Cologne (1940-1942) and immediately embarked on her life's career, starting with the Schleswig Theater.

At the end of World War II, she met her husband-to-be, a British soldier by the name of Joseph Porat (then Fruter), stationed in Schleswig, who had interrogated her as a suspected Nazi. (Actually she was a socialist who wanted to settle in the Soviet Union.) In 1947, she immigrated to Israel, following her husband, who was to devote his life to Israel's security as a member of the intelligence services and who died in 1996.

By 1948, Ms. Porat was already acting in Hebrew, and the following year she joined the Cameri Theater as a regular member of the ensemble. She appeared in scores of key roles, among them several that were considered at the apex of Israeli theater: Joan of Arc, Maria Stuart, Electra, and Hecuba (in *The Trojan Women*). Other plays in which she portrayed a main character included *Blood Wedding*, *Coriolanus*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Lost in Yonkers*, *Miss Daisy*, *Sheindele*, and *Mirele Efros* (in Yiddish).

Orna Porat also performed abroad, playing Viola in *Twelfth Night* in Zurich's Schauspielhaus; and appearing in Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* in Paris. In Israel, she has also starred with the Habima Theater and on other stages. She has left her imprint on the Israeli theater not only as an actress but also as a stage director.

Orna Porat, in addition, has made a special contribution to children's theater. In 1970, she established, and until 1989 managed, the Orna Porat Theater for Children and Youth, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. She also founded, in 1971, a children's theater in Haifa.

Her talent, personality, and public standing have earned her wide acclaim as well as prizes and awards of distinction. Among them are the Israel Prize (1979), Israeli Theater Critics Award (1983), Kinor David (David's Harp) (three times), Bnai Brith Award, and a Knesset citation for her work on behalf of theater for children and youth (in 1995). Other awards: Israel Television Award for Best Acting, Worthy of the City of Ramat Gan (where she resides), and honorary degrees from the Weizmann Institute and Bar-Ilan University for her life's work.

