The Four of Us

press packet

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FIREFLY THEATER SET TO PREMIERE ITAMAR MOSES’ WORK IN LA
“THE FOUR OF US” BEGINS SEPT. 5 FOR LIMITED ENGAGEMENT

The Four of Us, a touching new comedy by one of America’s leading young playwrights, is set for its Los Angeles premiere by Firefly Theater in association with VS. Theatre Company. Performances at the Elephant Theatre Lab begin Friday, September 5 for a limited engagement through Sunday, October 19. Opening is Friday, September 12 at 8pm.

Firefly’s production of The Four of Us will introduce the work of award-winning playwright Itamar Moses to Los Angeles. Tom Stoppard has called Itamar Moses “a splash in the making,” and, at 31, Mr. Moses is now one of America’s leading playwrights of any age. This fall, he will have five simultaneous premieres across the US, including three in California (Berkeley Rep, The Old Globe in San Diego, and this Firefly/VS production in Los Angeles), one in Chicago (American Theatre Company), and Off-Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club.

What if all your dreams came true…for your best friend? The Four of Us follows Ben, whose first novel vaults him into literary stardom, and his friend David, a struggling playwright, who is thrilled by Ben’s success…and crushed by it. From the dreams of aspiring youth to the realities of adulthood, this poignant two-man comedy explores friendship and memory, the gap between our hopes and our lives, and the struggles between our egos and our capacity to love. Time Out New York called the recent MTC run of The Four of Us, “an extremely clever and enjoyable study of friendship…funny, touching, and wickedly smart,” and The New York Times’ Charles Isherwood called it “a clever comic drama with a nifty twist…a touching, appealing play.”

The LA production, directed by Michelle Tattenbaum, will feature Steven Klein and Ryan Johnston. Klein’s acting and producing in Los Angeles has garnered dozens of LA theatre awards and nominations, and his local stage credits include Charles in An Infinite Ache (Black Dahlia); the Foole opposite James Gammon’s King Lear (MET Theatre); Yellow Kid in Ragged Time and Sean in Orson’s Shadow (Black Dahlia); and his LA debut in Shopping & Fucking at Celebration Theatre. Johnston’s recent credits include playing Patrick McCreary in Grand Theft Auto IV; and in LA theatre, Johnston has won acclaim for his starring role in Jane Martin’s Flags at the Odyssey Theatre and has worked with Firefly Theater, The Ark Theatre, and the Black Dahlia. Last fall, Johnston and Klein produced and starred in the Off-Broadway premiere of Flags at 59E59, presented by Firefly Theater. The design team for The Four of Us includes Mark Guirguis (set and props), Leigh Allen (lights), Rachel Myers (costumes), and Joel Spence (sound). The production stage manager is Ilona Pacek.

Playwright Itamar Moses is the author of the full-length plays Outrage, Bach at Liepzig, Celebrity Row, The Four of Us, Yellowjackets, Back Back Back, and Completeness, and various short plays and one-acts. He is presently adapting Jonathan Lethem’s The Fortress of Solitude for the stage with composer Michael Friedman and director Daniel Aukin. His work has appeared Off-Broadway and at regional theatres across the country and in Canada, and has been published by Faber & Faber, Heinemann Press, Playscripts Inc., Samuel French, Inc., and Vintage. He has received new play commissions from The McCarter Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Wilma Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, and Lincoln Center Theater (Allison M. Blinken Fund Commission). Itamar holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU and has taught playwriting at Yale and NYU. He is a member of the Dramatists
Guild, MCC Playwrights Coalition, Naked Angels Mag 7, and is a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect. He was born in Berkeley, CA, and now lives in Brooklyn, NY.

This will mark director **Michelle Tattenbaum**’s first collaboration with Firefly Theater and her LA debut. Ms. Tattenbaum directs extensively in NY and in regional theatre. In the 2006-2007 season, she directed and co-produced *The Sublet Experiment*, a site-specific, touring production that played to sold-out crowds in New York City for over six months. Some recent NY highlights: *The Chromium Hook* (by Itamar Moses) for the NY Musical Theatre Festival, MTC, and Lincoln Center Directors’ Lab; *Untitled Short Play* and *Szhinaz* for Naked Angels; *Gallathea* (which she also adapted) at Here Arts Center; and *An Archipelago Of Clouds* and *Laughing All the Way From the Sperm Bank* at FringeNYC. Recent regional highlights: *Tales From the Bad Years* at Goodspeed Musicals; *Pinocchio, Anatol*, and *Gallathea* at the Hangar Theatre; *Educating Rita, The Tale of the Allergist's Wife, Cats, Little Shop of Horrors, The Secret Garden*, and *Baby* at the New London Barn Playhouse; and two summers at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Michelle was a two-time Drama League Directing Fellow and is a Yale Theatre Studies graduate.

**The Four of Us** will be presented at The Elephant Theatre Lab, at 1076 N. Lillian Way (at Santa Monica Boulevard) in Hollywood. Preview performances are Friday, September 5 at 8:00pm; Saturday, September 6 at 8:00pm; Sunday, September 7 at 3:00pm; and Thursday, September 11 at 8:00pm. Opening night is set for Friday, September 12 at 8:00pm. Performances run through October 19, Thursday through Saturday at 8:00pm with Sunday matinees at 3:00pm. There is no performance on Thursday, October 9. Preview tickets are $15 and regular seats are $25. Tickets are available via phone at (800) 838-3006 and online at [www.fireflyinc.com](http://www.fireflyinc.com).

The **Firefly Theater** was founded in 1996 at Yale and then moved to LA along with its founder, Steven Klein, where it has mounted productions from Mamet to Shephard to Shakespeare. Meanwhile, Klein worked closely with fellow Yale alum Matt Shakman on the founding of the Black Dahlia Theatre. Klein’s LA theatre work as an actor and producer has earned over 25 awards and nominations while helping the Black Dahlia get named “One of a dozen young American companies you need to know” by *American Theatre*. As a producer, his work includes the LA world-premiere of Geraldine Hughes’ acclaimed *Belfast Blues* and its subsequent international runs. In all, Klein’s work includes award-winning productions in Boston, Philadelphia, Belfast, Off-West End London, and Off-Broadway. For more information, visit [www.fireflyinc.com](http://www.fireflyinc.com).

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[08/15/08]
Firefly Theater presents
in association w/
VS. Theatre Company
the Los Angeles
premiere of

THE FOUR
OF US

What if all your dreams came true... for your best friend?

a play by
IIAMAR MOSES

directed by
MICHELLE TATTENBAUM
THE FOUR OF US

by Itamar Moses

directed by Michelle Tattenbaum

featuring

**BEN** Ryan Johnston*

**DAVID** Steven Klein*

**TIME** 1998 - 2008, though not in that order

*appears courtesy of Actors Equity Association

NOTES: THE PLAY RUNS 95 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION. HERBAL CIGARETTES WILL BE SMOKED ON STAGE.

PRODUCED BY Johnny Clark

Kimberly Rose-Wolter

Steven Klein

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS Beth Sirull & Jon Shuster

Ryan Johnston

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER Ilona Pacek

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Brenda Goldstein

NY STAGE MANAGER Kate J. Cudworth

SET DESIGN Mark Guirguis

LIGHTING DESIGN Leigh Allen

COSTUME DESIGN Rachel Myers

SOUND DESIGN Joel Spence

ASSISTANT SET & PROPS DESIGNER Amanda Wilczynski

PUBLICITY CONSULTANT Ken Werther

GRAPHIC DESIGN Maria De La Guardia

The Four of Us received its initial workshop at American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco, California. World Premiere at The Old Globe, San Diego, California under the aegis of Louis G. Spisto, Jack O'Brien, Jerry Patch. Originally produced in New York by the Manhattan Theatre Club, Lynn Meadow, Artistic Director, Barry Grove, Executive Producer, Daniel Sullivan, Acting Artistic Director 2007 - 2008 Season.

The Four of Us is produced by special arrangement with the Mark Christian Subias Agency, New York.

**BIOS**

**ITAMAR MOSES** (Playwright) is the author of the full-length plays Outrage, Bach at Leipzig, Celebrity Row, The Four of Us, Yellowjackets, Back Back Back, and Completeness, and various short plays and one-acts. He is presently adapting Jonathan Lethem’s The Fortress of Solitude for the stage with composer Michael Friedman and director Daniel Aukin. His work has appeared Off-Broadway and at regional theatres across the country and in Canada, and has been published by Faber & Faber, Heinemann Press, Playscripts Inc., Samuel French, Inc., and Vintage. He has received new play commissions from The McCarter Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Wilma Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, and Lincoln Center Theater (Allison M. Blinken Fund Commission). Itamar holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU and a BA from Yale and has taught playwriting at both schools. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, MCC Playwrights Coalition, Naked Angels Mag 7, and is a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect. He was born in Berkeley, CA, and now lives in Brooklyn, NY.

**MICHELLE TATTENBAUM** (Director) is making her Firefly Theater and Los Angeles debut with The Four of Us. Michelle collaborates extensively with Itamar Moses and has directed his musicals The Chromium Hook (NY Musical Theatre Festival, MTC, and Lincoln Center Directors’ Lab) and Reality! (Cape Cod Theatre Project) as well as his plays Untitled Short Play and Szinhaz (Naked Angels); Authorial Intent and Idea (Manhattan Theatre Source); and the upcoming But You Will Get Used to It (the Flea). In the 2006-2007 season, she directed and co-produced The Sublet Experiment, a site-specific touring production that played to sold-out crowds in New York City for over six months. Some recent NY highlights: Gallathea (which she also adapted) at Here Arts Center; and An Archipelago Of Clouds and Laughing All the Way From the Sperm Bank at FringeNYC. Recent regional highlights: Tales From the Bad Years at Goodspeed Musicals; Pinocchio, Anatol, and Gallathea at the Hangar Theatre; and two summers at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Michelle was a two-time Drama League Directing Fellow and is a Yale Theatre Studies graduate.

**STEVEN KLEIN** (David / Producer) founded Firefly Theater and worked closely with fellow-Yalie Matt Shakman on his founding of the Black Dahlia Theatre, where Steven remains Staff Producer. Klein’s theatre acting and producing in LA has garnered over 25 awards and nominations, and his local stage highlights include Charles in An Infinite Ache and Sean in Orson’s Shadow (Black Dahlia); the Foole opposite James Gammong’s King Lear (MET); and Gary in Shopping & Fucking (Celebration Theatre). His theater acting and producing outside of LA has included award-winning shows in his hometown of Boston, and in Philadelphia, Belfast, Off-West End London, and Off-Broadway. TV includes Star Trek Enterprise, Pizza Time (pilot), and Sons of Anarchy, and film includes The Grand Design, directed by Eric Stoltz. Wanting to make movies with the cross-disciplinary collaboration typical to theater, Steven and Bruce Cohen (Jinks/Cohen) co-founded a film collective, making 35 shorts from 2001–2005. With numerous projects growing from these, Steven founded Firefly Films, which has had projects in competition in 18 film festivals internationally.

**RYAN JOHNSTON** (Ben / Associate Producer) began his work in acting, directing, and producing while studying theatre and vocal music at the University of Nebraska and has been collaborating with Firefly since 1998. LA highlights include: directing and producing Sam Shepard’s rarely staged The Unseen Hand and a workshop production of Julius Caesar (Firefly Theater); playing Trinculo in The Tempest (The Ark) and David in the world-premiere of Farewell Miss Cotton, by Keith Josef Adkins (Black Dahlia); producing Measure for Measure (Waging Theatre) and starring in the west coast premiere of Jane Martin’s Flags (Odyssey Theatre). Along with Steven Klein, he produced and starred in Firefly’s 2007
The Firefly Theater was founded in 1979 to mount new and classic plays while occupying an offbeat production space. The theater is situated in a unique location and is dedicated to nurturing new American stories for the stage and screen. In addition, Firefly Theater today is a fully functioning theater and works with Firefly Films, which continues to investigate how best to structure a theater and its work to reduce costs and increase measurable impact in its community. The stage and screen. Currently, Firefly Theater is producing new American stories for the stage and screen.
SPECIAL THANKS
Special Thanks Sent Warmly To:
  Catlin Adams
  Ron Avni & Sarah Byrne
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  The Entire Staff of the Elephant Theatre
  David Fletcher and Washington’s Best (www.washbest.com)
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  John and Karla Johnston
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  Rob Kendt
  Jim Knable & Rosey Strub
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  Shakespeare & Company
  Dianna Mannheim
  Nick Micozzi
  Geno Monteiro
  Amelia Petersen
  The Residents of 425 and Their Significant Others
  Matt Shakman
  Ami Shukla & Dan Fields
  Jon Shuster & BethSirull
  Allison Sie
  Craig Siebels
  Mark Subias
  Ken Werther
  and
  The Timothy Dwight Dining Hall, Yale University

Pugilist Specialist, by Adriano Shaplin, was awarded the coveted Edinburgh Fringe First award, the Herald Angel award, and The Scotsman’s 2003 “First of the Firsts” award, and it completed an extended London run before opening Off-Broadway at 59E59 and moving to the Culture Project. Scotland on Sunday wrote: Pugilist Specialist is a “beautifully constructed, searingly intelligent play,” suggesting playwright Adriano Shaplin “is set to join the likes of Arthur Miller and David Mamet in the pantheon of great modern American dramatists.” Pugilist Specialist uses a metaphorical landscape and powerful, poetic writing to explore gender, violence, and the corrupting influence of power. In the breakdown of a fictional black-op mission to bring down a Middle East Leader, layers of personal and political intrigue peel away. In a time of war and in the midst of an election year, Pugilist Specialist asks important questions.

As an audience member for The Four of Us, you are entitled to 50% off tickets to Pugilist Specialist. Speak to house management to arrange for purchase.
Awards & Press for *The Four of Us*, by Itamar Moses
presented by Firefly Theater

Awards as of 12.26.08

2008 Ticketholder Awards, *Entertainment Weekly*
- Runner Up: Play of the Year
- Runner Up: Best Playwright
- Best Actor in a Play (Steven Klein)
- Runner Up: Best Actor in a Play (Ryan Johnston)

2008 Maddy Awards for Excellence in Theatre
- Itamar Moses, Playwright
- Steven Klein, Actor
- Ryan Johnston, Actor

Press

"GO!...clever, surprising...we travel down the road of their long-standing friendship, exploring their
psyches in depth as scenes shift seamlessly between the past and the present in the tightly woven and
complex structure...especially funny...deft direction..."

- *LA Weekly*

"...well observed. Humorous truth can make small moments ping...blur[s] the boundary between art and
life, leaving us always a little doubtful about what we're viewing. The effect is thematically ingenious..."

- *LA Times*

“Los Angeles is being treated to a fine production of *The Four of Us*...both these actors do a terrific job of
keeping the 90 minutes crackling. The direction by Michelle Tattenbaum is taut and fast paced. More
importantly she keeps the proceedings real...Go see this one...”

- *StageHappenings*

“...playwright Itamar Moses likes to play games with audience expectations...a funny and perceptive
exploration of the idiosyncrasies of male friendship...Under the assured guidance of director Michelle
Tattenbaum...Ryan Johnston and Steven Klein, who share a terrific chemistry...”

- *Backstage West*

“Then I went to see *The Four of Us*, and again I was astounded at the writing ....Not a beat skipped or
missed, enormously entertaining, and in the end really moving and thought-provoking... a play of some
depth about friendship and artistic ambition and envy, and a play about art, about what artists are creating
when they create, what the relationship between memory and art is. And the way in which the artist sort
of reinvents himself and his sense of reality by sort of fictionalizing memory...I was incredibly impressed
by it....a great thrill.”

- Tony Kushner, excerpted from his interview for the 9/7 LA Times feature on Itamar Moses
A rapid expansion

ITAMAR MOSES HIT THE NATIONAL RADAR WITH "BACH AT LEIPZIG": "YES, HE TOOK A DRIBBLING IN NEW YORK, BUT HE'S EVERYWHERE THIS FALL.

By Ken Winger / Robert Musser

WRITING plays is occasionally a profession, arguably an art form, unanswerably a craft (hence the odd spelling of "playwright")." It's all of the above, and what novelist Itamar Moses, 31, a Brooklyn-based playwright represented this fall by no fewer than six productions across the U.S., also moves to come in the winter.

"I like the process of these, authentic and synthesis, and then playing that over and over again. Maybe it's my way of approaching truth to state something I think is true, then figure out why it's wrong, then try to find something more nuanced and figure out why that's wrong, and then to hear borrowing deeper lapses, and so forth," says Moses, whose piece "Bach at Leipzig" is currently on its fourth production.

"What I've been doing and what I've been enjoying as a writer is trying to pull together the memory of coming up with something," he says. "I'm trying to think of the kind of thing I can possibly come up with that will work with the company that will go onto the producing companies.

"The

"I had this dream,

"If we have a show, it's better if you can think of the

"The

"The play has a certain kind of rhythm, a certain kind of..."
Arts & Culture

'Il Trittico,' the Los Angeles Opera
'Memphis' at La Jolla Playhouse
An oddball, but successful, pairing

Arts & Culture Photo Galleries

At home with 'Beautiful Losers' director Aaron Rose
Brooke Anderson's Gregory Ain home
Living Pictures in Laguna Beach
Moving the Richard Neutra Maxwell House
John Kobal photography collection

Playwrights on Writing

STAGE: An occasional series appearing in Sunday Calendar.

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Itamar Moses is just looking to make sense of it all

The inquisitive 31-year-old playwright has pieces headed to stages across the U.S. -- giving him plenty of places to work things out.

REFLECTIVE: “Writing,” says Moses, 31, “has been one of my major salvations from feeling that the bottom is falling out.” The Berkeley native now lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

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NEW YORK -- WRITING plays is occasionally a profession, arguably an art form, unmistakably a craft (hence the odd spelling of “playwright,” distant cousin of the wheelwright).

But might writing plays also be a mode of thinking -- a way to make sense of the world?

"I'm uncertain about a lot of things -- I disagree with myself a lot," says Itamar Moses, 31, a Brooklyn-based playwright represented this fall by no fewer than six productions across the U.S., with more to come in the winter.

"I like the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and then doing that over and over again. Maybe it is my way of approaching truth: to state something I think is true, then figure out why it's wrong, then try to find something more nuanced and figure out why that's wrong -- and then to keep burrowing deeper into that. Playwriting is a form in which that's just kind of how it works."

That's how it works, at least, in Moses' precocious -- and prolific -- hands. In "Bach at Leipzig," which recently closed at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, six 18th century German organists, vying strenuously for a vacant post, invoke and embody debates over Protestant theology and the fugue form. In "Back Back Back," which opens Sept. 25 at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre (where Moses is this season's playwright-in-residence), three pro baseball players square off over the use of...
steroids in their sport.

In the sprawling "Yellowjackets," which opened this weekend at Berkeley Rep, students at Berkeley High School wrangle over a backdrop of race, class and progressive politics in an interlaced structure Moses jokingly confesses he "stole from 'The Wire.'" And at the opposite end of the spectrum, the spare, two-character play "The Four of Us," which opens Friday at the Elephant Theatre Lab in Hollywood, takes a shred of autobiography -- Moses was a pal of Jonathan Safran Foer when the young novelist nabbed a jaw-dropping advance for his first book, "Everything Is Illuminated" -- and turns it into an alternately rueful and playful meditation on envy, aspiration and memory.

Add an upcoming Chicago production of his terrorism-themed play "Celebrity Row" and October's Manhattan Theatre Club production of "Back Back Back," and one might reasonably conclude that this is Itamar Moses' moment -- the time for this ambitious young playwright-as-thinker, already beloved of theater insiders, to break through to a wider audience. That may be true, though in fact Moses has already weathered at least one brief, Icarus-like moment as the Next Big Thing.

"He's a tough kid"

IT WAS in fall 2005 when Moses' whirling, Stoppardesque farce "Bach at Leipzig" bowed in a glittering off-Broadway production, bearing an admiring introductory note by no less than Tom Stoppard himself. The New York press, never fond of being scooped, smelled a rat. In notices that seemed to review the hype as much as the show, the New York Times declared it "hollow" and the Village Voice called it "time-wasting nonsense." Many critics acknowledged Moses' promise but dismissed the play as too clever for its own good.

"You can either discover a play or take its pants off," says Jerry Patch, director of artistic development at the Manhattan Theatre Club, who has championed Moses' work, both at MTC and in his previous post as co-artistic director at the Old Globe. "If Tom Stoppard has already discovered you -- well, that really worked to Itamar's disadvantage. The critical reception severely damaged him, but he's a tough kid, and he came back from it. I told him, 'Now they've had their dinner on you, you'll be all right.'"

Indeed, though he and his friends attest to the difficulty of that post-"Bach" period, the play has garnered raves in subsequent regional runs, and Moses never stopped getting commissioned and hired.

In person now, Moses is affable, upbeat, even sunny, and it's tempting to see this as a California thing -- Moses, a Berkeley native, now lives in Brooklyn's crunchy-preppy mecca, Park Slope, and seems preternaturally at home in a light surface beard, T-shirt, shorts and sandals.

But what seems to have saved him, above all, is not the chill factor but a certain rigor of mind, a habit of using the raw material of life as timber for intricately designed theatrical structures with a formal beauty and coherence of their own.

"Because you have control over your writing, because you are making all the choices about what to write, when to stop, what to put in, what to change -- writing has been one of my major salvations from feeling that the bottom is falling out," Moses says.

When Moses was a senior at Berkeley High, seeing the American Conservatory Theater's production of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America" inspired him to become a playwright. The relatively happy child of Israeli immigrants, he felt the dramatic calling but conspicuously lacked dramatic grit. He now laughingly describes his first playwriting effort as "'Dawson's Creek' via Stoppard.""He's a tough kid"

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"I think initially I was both more interested in and had a better understanding of structure than I did of inner life," Moses concedes. "'Bach' and 'Celebrity Row' aren't very historically accurate, but they gave me a place to start, a structure to work inside of -- real historical situations and real people. Either I wasn't sure that the things in my actual life could be that firm as structural boundaries, or I didn't trust my craft to take the messiness of what really happened and turn it into something that worked as a piece of storytelling."

It was this reluctance to do the obvious -- use his life as dramatic fodder -- that grabbed the attention of theatrical gatekeepers as much as his intellectual ambition, brilliant craftsmanship and tender age.

"He's your thinking man's writer," says Tony Taccone, artistic director of Berkeley Rep, who's directing "Yellowjackets." "That's not in fashion so much."

From the inside out

WITH "The Four of Us," Moses at last gave himself permission to tap his own life for material. Inspired by Moses' friendship with fellow Brooklynite Foer, the play tells the story of two close friends, one a wildly successful novelist named Benjamin and the other a struggling playwright named David, whose tight bond is tested by their varying fortunes.

It's as much a play about artistic rivalry and ambition as is "Bach at Leipzig," only this time it's personal.

"I don't think that 'Bach at Leipzig' is an unemotional play, but it was written from the outside in," Moses says. "The Four of Us' is the first play of mine that was written from the inside out."

Moses may now be more comfortable mining his own life for drama, but he's using similar tools.

"The sort of heightened language that he uses for the historical scenes in 'Outrage' or 'Bach at Leipzig' is no more highly crafted than the ultra-casual, conversational language he uses in 'The Four of Us,'" says Tattenbaum. "This is just as specifically written out."

Moses is at pains to stress that, real-life parallels aside, "The Four of Us" is not autobiography, nor is it meant as a kiss-off to a successful former friend (for the record, he and Foer are reportedly still friends). "I'm in both of those characters," Moses says. "I've been on both sides of that relationship many times."

Tattenbaum, who has directed several of Moses' short plays and headed workshops that later had full productions under other directors, can attest to that. "Itamar is my Benjamin," she says. "He probably has a number of Davids, but I'm certainly one of them."

Another Yale compatriot, Steven Klein, who is co-producing and starring in the L.A. production, doesn't say where he fits in this pecking order, but he does think the play embodies an "aspect of American life, that we are taught to compare ourselves to other people, to find metrics of our success. From my experience, it's a little harder or stranger for artists, because other than commercial success we're not given a metric, and that's difficult to deal with."

Perhaps toughened by the hype and backlash over "Bach at Leipzig," Moses remains agnostic on the ideal way to measure his own success.

"There doesn't seem to be a phase for playwrights in between emerging and either disappeared or being part of the establishment," Moses muses. "It's like, you're emerging until you're 39, and then you're part of the old guard: 'Get out of the way, old man!'"

Kushner, who's never met Moses but admires his writing, is heartened but not surprised that the younger writer bounced back from the "Bach" smackdown.

"I didn't know his work at all when I saw 'Bach at Leipzig,' and I was dazzled by it," says Kushner. "The way it was treated [by the critics] was depressing; that was a very ugly moment. But I don't think that any really interesting writer ever gets completely demolished by bad reviews, at least not the first time out. No one as good as he is is at risk of being homeless."


Hillary Rodham Clinton: Politics of fashion

Hillary's style evolution from the early '90s to 2008 spins some surprisingly edgy fashion.