

# Graduate Spotlight

Every year, the International School for Holocaust Studies holds hundreds of seminars and conferences, in dozens of languages, for over 300,000 educators, students and soldiers in Israel and around the world. Featured here is one of the School's graduates, and what he has achieved since:



## Nicolás Paz Alcalde Spain

### Leora Brothman

■ An original and imaginative new Holocaust-related production is receiving great acclaim in Spain. The play, *Los Dilemas del Profesor Heyman*, composed by Nicolás Paz Alcalde, is a fictional story – inspired by actual events and testimonies – which explores the ethical dilemmas faced by a professor in the Warsaw ghetto.

Alcalde was motivated to write the script after studying at a teacher-training seminar for Spanish educators at the International School for Holocaust Studies. During the seminar, Alcalde learned about the School's range of interdisciplinary and age-appropriate learning aids. He was also exposed to its unique

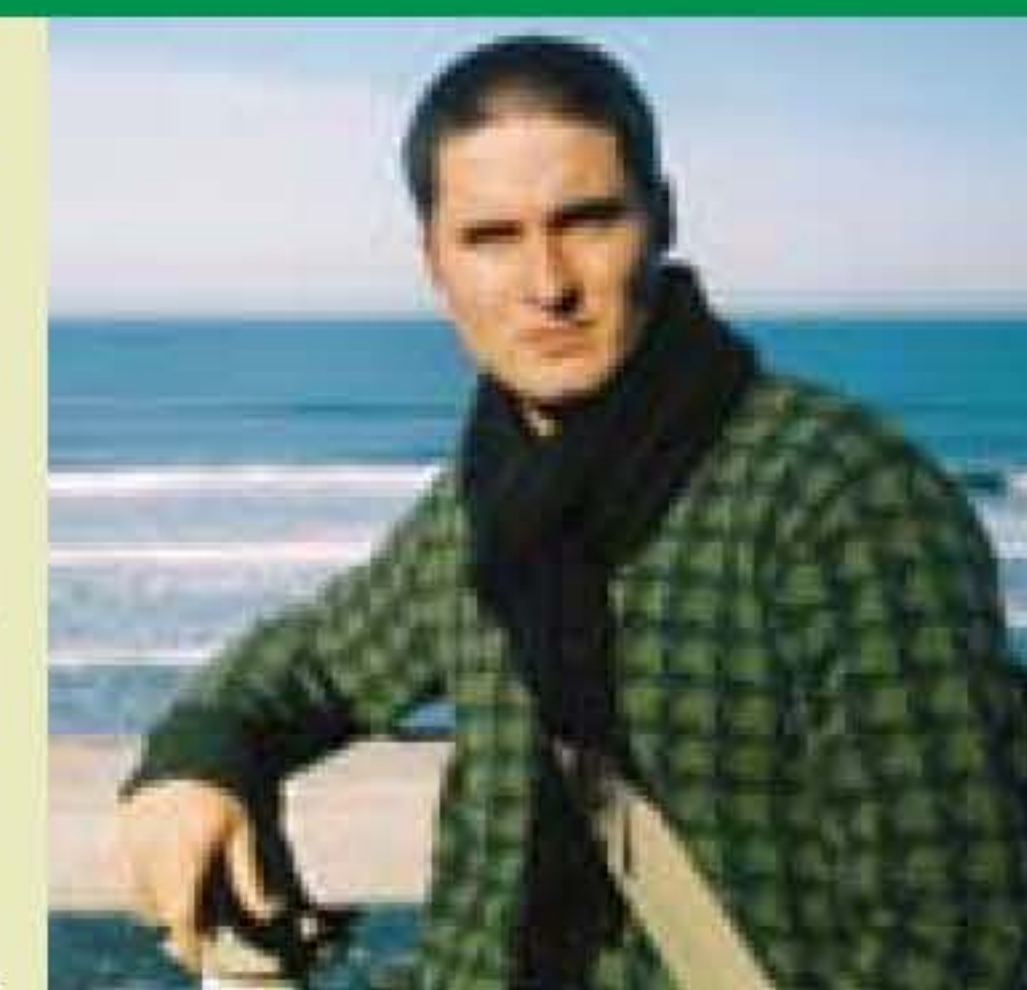
pedagogical approach, which focuses on the personal stories of those who witnessed the *Shoah* first hand. "When I was at Yad Vashem, I met with survivors, which left me with a lasting impression that the *Shoah* was not only an historical event, but one that involved real people with real lives. The only way of transmitting this 'living experience' without actual survivors was through theater. On stage you see real people that feel, that can make mistakes, and that you can even touch if you get close enough."

At the course's conclusion, Alcalde returned to his home village of Jerte in southwestern Spain and began formulating the play. Local

students expressed interest in partaking in the production. Alcalde understood that the young people needed to learn about Holocaust history for the characters to become more tangible. Working with extraordinary

dedication, the students – as well as their families and schools – soon became very enthused with the project, as well as the subject matter.

Together with the student actors, Alcalde and his wife Maria Jesús Barrantes, who run a small private school teaching Spanish to foreign students, have turned the production into a successful educational experience for their peers and local communities. So far, it has been performed for over 1,000 people in Spanish high schools, town halls and theaters, and has been featured on numerous news stations and websites. "I would never have believed that so many people in my neighborhood would be talking about the *Shoah* and life in the ghetto, people who didn't know anything about it before. It's unbelievable!" Alcalde remarked. "My next goals are to broaden the audience of *Los Dilemas del Profesor Heyman* across Spain and Europe, and to translate the play into English."



■ Nicolás Paz Alcalde



■ Scene and poster from the play, "Los Dilemas del Profesor Heyman"

