



5/23/10

Dear Ron and Larry,

Many thanks on your presentation here at Sonoma State University on May 3, 2010.

As you noticed our capacity audience was a fairly mixed bag of SSU students including some from our Black Scholars United, many of whom were there for extra credit, some faculty and staff and community members including congregants from Shomrei Torah a local reform synagogue. The ages varied from 12 to 78 with most in the 18-23 range. I say all this to make the point that the play worked for everyone in the audience despite very different reasons for attending. This is no mean feat. It is not uncommon for some of those students who are there for extra credit or for course requirements to leave part way through a show. Nobody walked out of this show. They were engaged and connected from start to finish as well they should be. You guys kept the show moving and the humor quickly cut through any defensiveness that can easily occur around these kinds of issues.

The jokes and skits were funny but made their points clearly. We all struggle to connect with others and college may be one of the last opportunities many people will have to take some risks and reach out to people they are not familiar with and are understandably fearful of insulting someone or embarrassing themselves. You can study the problems of race, gender, religious, sexual orientation issues all you want but it's only when people push through their fears that real growth occurs. Your show provides that opportunity. There are no quick fixes for these problems but I believe strongly that we as educators must provide these opportunities in order to help develop the skills necessary for a person to be a true citizen in a civil society.

You guys were a real pleasure to work with and made our jobs easy. I can honestly say that any schools or religious organizations that are committed to the values of human understanding and interpersonal connection would be well served by bringing The Black Jew Dialogues to their audience. You will not regret it and have a lot of fun in the process. What more can you ask?

Sincerely,
Bruce Berkowitz
Associated Students Program Coordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bruce Berkowitz'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.