



Fall/Winter 2002-3

Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture

Volume 2, Issue 4

Fall/Winter Events

Lomir Redn Yiddish
Weds, 1:00 PM

Hebrew vs. Yiddish
December 12 - 1:30

Yiddish Folklore
December 19 - 7:30

Chagall Art Exhibit
Month of Jan 2003

Film: Homage to Chagall
Jan 12
5:00 PM

Der Yiddische Mikado
Jan 16 - 8:00 PM
Jan 19 - 3:00 PM
Jan 20 - 2:00 PM

Jewish World of Marc Chagall
Jan 23 - 7:30 PM

Artistic Influences of Marc Chagall
Jan 25 - 7:30 PM

Winter Evening of the Yiddish Arts
March 6 - 7:30 PM

Jewish Life Art Show
March 13 - 7:30 PM

Yiddish Progressive Activism
April 3 - 7:30 PM

Common Threads: Stories from Many Cultures
April 10 - 7:30 PM

Der Yiddisher Mikado To Thrill Miami in January

Oy vey! Gilbert and Sullivan never would believe what has become of their precious *Mikado*! Translated and produced by the internationally-acclaimed Gilbert and Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company, *Der Yiddisher Mikado* springs anew as the Yiddish-English production that electrified audiences from Toronto to London. Victorian wit and satire of the original blends magically with a unique performance that promises a memorable experience for South Florida audiences.



Der Yiddisher Mikado

with laughter," comments Elaine Lerner, business manager for the opera group. Interestingly enough, according to Lerner, a long history of Yiddish translations of Gilbert and Sullivan exists. Over fifty years ago, a Haddassah group translated *HMS Pinafore* into Yiddish, transforming it into *Der Yiddisher Pinafore*. The production even was even recorded on a "78" album.

The well-established New York repertory company, composed of people, who

both love Yiddish and the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, weaves the Jewish experience into every plot twist and contagious song. The result

(Continued on page 4)

Oy vey! Gilbert and Sullivan never would believe what has become of their precious *Mikado*!

"Hearing Briticisms transformed to Yiddishisms is guaranteed to make audiences roar

Encouraging the Next Generation of I. B. Singers

By Elizabeth Weintraub

There is a writer in us all. With the right kind of persuasion, or shall we say, *incentive*, one sits at the computer, typewriter, or yellow pad and puts ideas into quality prose. And what better incentive is there than the opportunity to address the many issues unfolding across the globe - and **winning one thousand dollars** to boot? If you have ever dreamed of yourself as a published writer, now is the time to make that

dream a reality.

Over the past five years, numerous writers-to-be have entered and won the Center's writing contest and have gone on to publish novels, collections of poetry and more, inspired by the power of their pen. The Center for Yiddish Culture currently is accepting entries for its Sixth Annual Jewish Cultural Writing Contest designed to encourage new writers to create quality literature on issues about modern Jewish life and the chal-

(Continued on page 3)

Happy Hanukkah!

Yiddish Folklore — Theater and Film

By Elizabeth Weintraub



No one would be shocked at the notion that the Yiddish language has struggled for survival for the greater part of the past century. However, thanks to the work of some very dedicated and talented people and organizations across the

United States, Canada, and Europe, the *mame loshen* has endured and thrived, still holding its own against incredible odds. Conceivably, the area of Yiddish culture that connects younger generations to their past most powerfully, is Yiddish folklore, theater, and film.

Professor Miriam Hoffman of Columbia University has been an architect of Yiddish continuance programming and education for many years. Her Yiddish language courses at Columbia began with five students and now brags a waiting list each semester. Ms. Hoffman also authored several Yiddish and English screenplays including adaptations of the works of Itzik Manger and Sholem Aleichem, as well as a biography of Nobel-laureate Isaac Bashevis-Singer's declining years. Her plays have been performed by the Jewish Repertory Theater and the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater of New York and at theaters in Canada and Israel.

Hoffman comes to South Florida as part of the Center for Yiddish Culture's annual lecture series, to lead a lively discussion on the history of Yiddish theatre and film, delving into its origins through the writings of such Yiddish giants as Isaac Bashevis-Singer and Sholem Ansky. "I plan to include highlights from diaries and memoirs in my lecture, with excerpts from plays by Gordin, Ansky, Shakespeare and Bashevis-Singer," says Hoffman.

Beginning back in the *shtetl* days of Eastern Europe, "wedding jesters" or "rhymesters" would perform comical musical sketches, mostly plays celebrating the Purim holiday. Using the wonderfully descriptive Yiddish language images, they depicted folktales, traditional Torah stories, and the day-to-day life in the *shtetl* in an amusing and light-hearted way. The popularity of these traditional performances became the forerunner of Yiddish theatre dating from the 1800s. As Jewish people fled pogroms and the Holocaust to the sanctuary of the United States, Canada

and beyond, Yiddish theatre moved with them, gaining adherents across the world.

The first forays into modern Yiddish theatre and film chronicled the stories of a people in transition, retelling old folktales of the *shtetl*, weaving together biblical and religious tales. As early as the turn of the 19th century, playwrights such as Avrom Goldfajn (the father of Yiddish Theatre in Rumania) created adaptations of popular American and European plays for their Jewish audiences. These Yiddish plays explored modern themes of urban life, inter-faith romances, assimilation, and the like. "From the early period of the Yiddish Purimshpil in the Middle Ages, to Avrom Goldfajn, through the first Yiddish theatre on the Lower East Side at the turn of the century, Yiddish theatre survived to see a glorious beginning in America," says Professor Miriam Hoffman.

Yiddish theater and film profoundly influenced the "outside" world of entertainment as well. After World War II, with a shrinking market for Yiddish films, many stars and directors of Yiddish films became champions of Broadway and Hollywood. "It's amazing how the early writings of Eastern European Jews be-

came the impetus for the American movie industry," says Liz Weintraub, Program Director at the Center for Yiddish Culture and a fan of the Big Screen. "Yet, Yiddish film still provides us with an important perspective. Reflected in Yiddish film were the trials and tribulations of *shtetl* life — star-crossed romance, fighting discrimination, and looking at the world with a sense of humor — all of which provides us with a visual record of who we are."



Miriam Hoffman's lively and insightful lecture should not be missed. The Hoffman lecture is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 2002 at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Miami Hillel Jewish Student Center on Stanford Drive and Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables. Hoffman also will present a special talk on the provocative subject: "Hebrew vs. Yiddish: Shprakhnkampf/Riv l'shonot, Jewish Languages Vying for their Rightful Place Among the Jewish People" as part of Florida Atlantic University's Kultur Series co-sponsored by the Center for Yiddish Culture. That lecture will take place on December 12 at 1:30 at their Boca Raton campus. For more information and reservations, call the Center at 305-774-9244.

The Center Seeks New Writers in Yiddish and English

(Continued from page 1)

lenges of nurturing our culture in an ever-changing world. This year's theme, ***Crossing the Cultural Divide: How Jewish Culture Can Promote Cross Cultural Understanding*** is directed particularly to elucidate the many conflicts that threaten to divide rather than unify us across cultural lines. "There are numerous factors in today's world that seemingly threaten the continuation of Jewish existence within and without the U.S. On the other hand, what is becoming more evident is that no solution exists that will provide Jewish security in a world that is rupturing in pain. Rather than encouraging false notions that Jews are smarter, more moral, or have more to offer the world than other ethnic groups, we need to promote a universal connectiveness; understanding each other's pain, our struggles for liberation, and spiritual redemption. There is no better way of doing this than through our stories," says David Weintraub, Executive Director of the Center for Yiddish Culture. "Through our stories, we can help promote a healing process -- a *tikkun olam* -- across cultures to promote tolerance and understanding, thereby building alliances between Jews and non-Jews."

Over the past five years, entries have been submitted from across the globe, although most originate from the United States. Leading Jewish professional

writers, translators, and secular and literary publications judge the entries. The publications reprint the top entries. The Center provides the monetary awards. According to Amy Friedman, the Center's Marketing Director, "It has been very rewarding to receive feedback from fledgling writers of contests past, who have been encouraged to seriously focus on their writing after winning a prize in our contest." Many of the publications currently publishing winning entries have received high praise as well. "They have reported receiving numerous letters of appreciation from their readership, encouraging editors to continue their participation as judges and to continue to highlight contemporary writing in their periodicals," according to Friedman. The Center expects Wisconsin Press to publish the first anthology of leading entries from the first three years of contest submissions in Fall 2003.

To receive a copy of the contest rules and an application form, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to The Center for Yiddish Culture Writing Contest, P.O. Box 14-0820, Coral Gables, Florida 33114 or download them from the Center's website at www.yiddishculture.org. Entries and application forms to the Sixth Annual contest must be postmarked by March 31, 2003.

Yiddish Films are My Passion

by Elaine Rudner

Not just a language and folk culture, Yiddish was an entire Jewish world. The Golden Age of Yiddish Films flourished during the 1930's and 1940's in Poland and America. Jews produced Yiddish cinema for a predominately Jewish audience. All are black and white with English subtitles. With a growing thirst in South Florida for all things Yiddish, I have presented Yiddish Films throughout the area for several years in order to share my wonderful collection of memories with the community.

My children learned a long time ago that a Yiddish book, film, cassette, or CD is the only gift I ever want! I grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household and probably saw all of the films and stage productions in New York in those years. Currently a Judaic Studies instructor in the Lifelong Learning Series at Florida Atlantic University, I have been a Hebrew teacher and social worker for over thirty years in Florida. I taught and lectured at schools, Temples, Jewish community centers, organizations, and

Elder hostels. I currently teach an FAU course "Remarkable Jewish Women" and will teach the course "Remembering Second Avenue" during the winter semester.

In cooperation with the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture, we just concluded our third and very successful Yiddish Film Series at Michael Ann Russell JCC in North Miami Beach. The response has been great; and we plan to make the Film Festival an annual event. Collecting my films has taken many years; and I do not have all of them! Some of the films are in poor condition and cannot be shown to a group. You cannot rent a Yiddish film at a video store or at the library. Available through Workman's Circle in New York (www.circle.org) for an average \$50 each, if you want to laugh, sing along, or cry, you can do it by watching a sixty year-old black and white Yiddish film. Not only do you take a nostalgic trip, you learn about our heritage. For more information, contact the Dora Teitelboim Center at 305-774-9244 or log on to www.yiddishculture.org.

The Jewish World of Mark Chagall

By Dana Craft

The Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture is very proud to present a thorough examination of the life and work of Marc Chagall, a true champion of the Yiddish cause. Aside from his wonderful fantasy world filled with joy, lovers, and musicians, in his chest beat a heart longing for the simplicity of the past. He held a great reverence for the *shtetl*. The Center's look into this painter, poet, and promoter of peace begins on January 12th with the showing of Oscar-nominated documentary film: *Homage to Chagall-The Colors of Love*. Over the following two weeks, a series of lectures with slide show will explore the range of his genius, influence, and writings. The lecturers include a Yiddish poet and educator, two art historians and a curator. Accompanying each lecture will be a display of several original, signed Chagall lithographs and posters. Also displayed at a special month-long exhibition of Chagall's more pow-

erful works will be an informative timeline on the history of Jewish art, Chagall and his art, and an in-depth look at Chagall's specific Yiddish works. In addition to the Chagall's works, the Center acquired some rare signed lithographs by artist, Salvador Dali, that represent his extraordinary exploration of various elements of Jewish culture and history.



These lectures and programs should please any true art lover, anyone with *Yiddish* flowing in their veins, or anyone who simply can appreciate a quiet genius. Clear your calendar to attend these "must see" events. All Chagall programs will be at F.I.U. Biscayne Bay Campus Theater, 3000 NE 151st Street.

Chagall/Dali Art Exhibit at Wolfe Theater and Theater Gallery - January 2003

Film: *Homage to Chagall* Sunday, January 12 at 5:00 PM

Lecture: *The Jewish World of Marc Chagall* Thu, Jan 23 at 7:30 PM

Lecture/Slide Show: *Artistic Influences of Marc Chagall* Sat, Jan 25 at 7:30 PM (a reception follows) re-

Der Yiddisher Mikado

(Continued from page 1)

is a thoroughly unforgettable theatrical experience that requires no Yiddish fluency to understand and enjoy the show. The elaborate silk-sequined costumes and colorful scenery are still Japanese. The music is still vintage Gilbert and Sullivan. Although the lyrics are Yiddish translations of the original British, the dialogue is English, although 'Yinglish' might be more accurate. Enjoy the high melodrama, low humor, twists, and coincidences, plus a solid core of genuine sentiment and nostalgia. Yiddish knowledge makes the performance a little more exciting, but little or no knowledge of Yiddish is necessary to thoroughly enjoy the show. In this version of the Mikado, the keynote song, "Tit-Willow" becomes "Oy Vey'z Mir" ("Boy, are things bad for me"). The character names undergo a Yiddish metamorphosis. For exam-

ple, the Lord High Executioner becomes Der Kophaker (head-chopper).

The vitality of Yiddish culture continues in these premiere South Florida appearances sponsored by the Center. According to Executive Director, David Weintraub, the goal of the Gilbert and Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company is to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Yiddish in our culture across all genres and modalities.

The Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture is proud to present these exclusive performances in three venues. For ticket and concert information in Miami-Dade, contact the Center for Yiddish Culture at 305-774-9244. In Broward, call the Posnack JCC at 954-434-0499 or order tickets on-line at www.yiddishculture.org.

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|----------------------|---|--|---|
| South Broward | Thursday, Jan. 16 - 8:00 PM | Posnack JCC | 5850 Pine Island Rd - Davie |
| North Dade | Sunday Jan. 19 - 3:00 PM | Temple Sinai of North Dade | 18801 N.E. 22 nd Avenue, NMB |
| Coral Gables | Monday, Jan. 20 - 2:00 PM Martin Luther King Day | Gusman Theater, University of Miami | 1314 Miller Drive, Coral Gables. |

Yiddish Vinkl News

Mir Reden Yiddish by Helen Kurzban

For three years now, fifteen women, aged fifty to ninety, gather in my living room as part of a Brandeis University study group in "Conversational Yiddish." Most are from the New York/New Jersey area, but we also have Tootsy from Michigan whose accent is different than Thelma's from Connecticut and Rae who speaks Yiddish with a Bostonian accent. (Imagine Jackie Kennedy speaking the *mame loshn!*)

Yiddish was my first language, before the days of bilingualism and ESL. Imagine my surprise when my Irish kindergarten teacher, looking at my record, sneered, "You were born in the United States. We speak English here. Do you understand?" I went home and told my mother that I would not speak Yiddish to her anymore. She shrugged her shoulders. That was that until I was enrolled at age ten in a folk shule in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and an IWO school a few years later. Somehow, I convinced the school to put me in the senior class and graduated the following year as class valedictorian. (There were three of us; the other two were not too bright.) At graduation, I

delivered a poem completely in Yiddish. My parents and *zayde kvelled*.

Somehow, in the far recesses of my brain, my Yiddish was still alive and well; now it has all come back. My mother, now 96, is the resource person for our group and arbiter of all disputes. Our group began slowly, talking mostly Yinglish. Then, we began talking in Yiddish about local news and politics. As our vocabulary increased, we got into semantic and linguistic arguments. This past year, we discussed September 11, the situation in Israel, *mayses* about our youth, and what is happening to us now. Today, we discussed whether "God" should be in the Pledge of Allegiance and on our money. We read a transliterated Yiddish version of "God Bless America" and disagreed with the Forward's translation of it. We have come a long way. We all *shep nokhes* at the progress we have made and the *mishpokhe* we have become by sharing our love for this sensitive and beautiful language. We are proud of our *yiddishkayt* and the part we are playing keeping Yiddish alive.

The "Undying Flame" Rekindles the Spirit of Holocaust Ballads

By Amy Friedman

To kick off the Center for Yiddish Culture's 2002-2003 Cultural Season, nationally recognized folksinger, author, and musicologist, Jerry Silverman, performed rare Holocaust music and lectured about its origin to a mesmerized audience. Performing to a packed crowd of over 150 at Miami Beach's Temple Beth Shmuel on November 7, 2002, Silverman wove the story of creative and spiritual defiance to the Holocaust through songs and ballads written in sixteen languages by its survivors and victims. This worldwide premiere highlighted an untold chapter in Holocaust studies — the undying spiritual resistance of people from Spain to Russia and Norway to Greece that music provided to those suffering unimaginable horrors at the hands of the Nazis. The concert, *The Undying Flame: Ballads & Songs of the Holocaust*, included music originally written in Yid-



dish, German, Hebrew, Spanish, French, Dutch, Italian, Ladino, Serbo-Croatian, Greek, Norwegian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Hungarian and English. Silverman performed the songs in their native language as well as his English translation.

For several decades, Silverman painstakingly collected Holocaust-era songs that demonstrate resistance, despair, rage, hope, and even humor in the face of evil. His labor resulted in the recently released Syracuse Press book, *The Undying Flame: Ballads & Songs of the Holocaust*, which includes 110 rare songs and a CD of his performance. Included is work of concentration camp prisoners and those confined in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, as well as rebellious European cabaret music inspired by the Spanish Civil War, Red Army songs, and songs of Resistance fighters.

Silverman says he often is asked how so much creativity and inspiration grew out of such horror and tragedy. He responds that the music became the solace of victims as well as the "battle cry" of those who would never let such a tragedy happen again. "On first glance, there would seem to be no satisfying answers to these questions, just as there is no answer to the ultimate question of the WHY of the Holocaust itself. But the songs do exist. People did

(Continued on page 8)

Sacco and Vanzetti and Yiddish Poetry

Pivotal times in American history reveal the universality of Yiddish literature most strikingly when calls for social justice ring out. Such a time occurred during the "Red Scare" in America following the Russian Revolution of 1917. Fearful that communist revolt was imminent here, the U.S. government raided leftist organizations across the country, arresting thousands on dubious charges. Sacco and Vanzetti, both rank and file anarchists, were executed purportedly on murder charges. Their arrest and subsequent execution rallied the downtrodden, spotlighting the helplessness of the workingman to overcome pitiful circumstances. Many Yiddish poets, especially the most radical The Proletpen, picked up the cudgel. The two poems below are part of the Center for Yiddish Culture's forthcoming book, *The Proletpen, The Rebel Poets of the 20, 30s, and 40s* edited by Amelia Glaser and published by Wisconsin Press. The poems exhibit the Yiddish literary community's response to all forms of injustice, whether directed towards Jews or not.

Sacco and Vanzetti by Ber Grin

*Potted tulips
and black-red roses
bloom in a death-row cell,
And death waits at the threshold
for two wilted bodies
His red flowers were fresh greetings from a bosom
friend,
from here on out, they'll be the sun:
the last sunset, the last today's last end.*

*Electric machines wage battle in his head,
The watchman walks, locks rattle, full of ambushed
dead,
Hard hands lay parchment on faces for death prints.
Eyes hanging far away deepen with the silence.
Childhood and his barefoot days,
grapevine and olive-tree, where he was raised,
and Italian nights hang a dream on each long
branch. Morning rings with sickle and song.
Scent of green meadows, of apricots and dew,
America is smoky days on blackened, rope-soled
shoes,
and hot nights with flaming words on tired working
heads.
This barred window sadness drinks the blood from
hand and face,
As the hangman kills each day, for seven years, in
the deadened space.
Locks rattle. Black watchman. Heavens, brothers,
Rosetta!
Ashes, ashes. Flaming pillars: Sacco and Vanzetti!*



סאקא און וואַנזעטי, בער גרין

בער גרין

סאקא און וואַנזעטי

עס בליען וואואַנע טולפן
און שוואַרץ־רויטע רוין
אין טויט־צעל,
און אויף צוויי וויאלענדיקע גופים
וואַרט דער טויט ביים שוועל.
זיינע רויע בלומען - פרישע גרוסן פון בלוטנדיקע פריינט
און דערמאָנען אין דאָטען דעם זון,
אין לעצטן פאָרגיין און לעצטן היינט.

ווייט פון עלעקטרישע מאַשינען אין די אויערן.
שליכטער ציטער, טרייט פֿון היטער, פֿולער מיט טהעאָרן לויפֿן.
ליגט אַ שווערע האַנט אויף פֿינגער־אַרמעס אַ טויט־שריפט,
בלייבן אייגן הענגען ערגעץ ווייט, ווייט שטיל־פֿאַרטיפט :
קינד־הייט - באַרוועסע טעג, צעוואַקסן מיטן ווייט־שטאַק און אוילבירט־בוים,
און איסאָיענישע נעכט הענגען־אויס אויף יעדן צווייג אַ סרוים.
פֿרימאָרגנס צעקלינגען זיך מיט מעואַנג און מיט קאַסע,
און שמעקן מיט גרינער לאַנקע, מיט אפֿיקאַסן און מיט ראַסע.
אַסעריקע - דויכיקע טעג אויף שיק געשוואַרצט, אין שטריק געווענט,
און הייטע נעכט מיט פֿלאַמיקן וואַרט צו מידע אַרבעט־רויע קעפֿ.
און אַט : שטומער אומעט פֿון גראַטעס טרינקט בלוט פֿון פֿינג, פֿון הענט,
און זיבן יאָר, טאַג־ביי־טאַג, אַז הענקער מאַרדעט לעבנס צווישן טויטע ווענט.
שליכטער־ציטער. שוואַרצע מיטער. אַ, הימלען, ברידער, ראָזעטאָ !
אַט, אַט. פֿינעריקע זיילן : סאקא און וואַנזעטי !

Sacco and Vanzetti



From *Morgen Freiheit* April 1930

Vanzetti's Ghost

by Yosl Grinspan

Judge Thayer lies
in his palace
on his golden bed,
speaking the ghastly
words of a madman.

He thinks that
Vanzetti's incinerated skeleton
is standing by his bed
shrouded in a flaming cloth.
His hand
puts out the light;
the walls disappear
and
the night goes out in fear...

And later,
rising up in red,
is the now enormous
Vanzetti.
A crash resounds

it's Vanzetti, pacing
and pacing
the red cloth flutters
and
the ground beneath him glows.

And behind the red Satan,
the Yankee clan
sways to and fro,
and
the anthem swarms with slaves.

The old man writhes in pain

Until he falls back in a faint
and his house-doctor
revives him,
with an injection
of blood.

וואַנזעטיס געשפענסט, יוסף גרינשפאַן

יוסף גרינשפאַן

וואַנזעטיס געשפענסט

אין זיי פאלאץ
אויף זיין גאלדענעם בעט
ליגט טהעייער, דער ריכטער,
און רעדט
פון וואַנזיין געשפענסטפולע רייד.

איס דאכט :
עס שטייט פאר זיין בעט
וואַנזעטיס פארברענטער סקעלעט,
פארהילט אין אַ פלאַמיקן קלייד.
זיין האַנט
לעשט דאָס לעמפעלע אויס ;
סע שווינדן די ווענט פונעם הויז
און,
ס'פאַרגייט זיך אין אַנגסטן די נאכט . . .

און ווידער :
אין רויטן וואַקסט אויס —
נאַר איצט אין גיגאַנטישער גרויס —
וואַנזעטי.
עס הערט זיך אַ קראַך — — — — —

ער שפאַנט, וואַנזעטי,
און שפאַנט
און ס'פלאַטערט דער רויטער געוואַנט
און.
ס'צינדט זיך די ערד אונטער אים.

און הינטער דעם רויטן סאַטאַן,
באַוועגט זיך
דער יענקישער קלאַן
און,
צעכוואַליעט פון שקלאַפן דעם הימן.

עס יאַמערט דער אלטער פאר טרעק,
ביז
ער פאַלט אין חלשות אַוועק
און ס'זוועקט אים
זיין הויזדאַקטאָר אויף,
מיט

אַן איינשפּריץ
פון בלוט
אין זיין גוף.

Interview with Yiddish Educator Ray Berman

Ray Berman has lived in Miami for over 30 years. She is a Holocaust survivor and teaches Yiddish at the Center for Yiddish Culture, 269 Giralda Ave, Suite 201, Coral Gables, on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.

Q: How long have you been teaching Yiddish at the Center for Yiddish Culture?

R: I have been teaching Yiddish for three years at the Center and for the IRP (Institute of Retired Persons) at the University of Miami. I also have been teaching Hebrew for many years, and prepare children for bar mitzvah by training them to read and chant from the Torah. I was the Education Director at Temple Judea in Coral Gables for twenty-six years.

Q: Was Yiddish your first language?

R: Yes, it was my mame loshen – my first language.

Q: When did you first learn English?

R: My first formal encounter with English came from attending English classes in Toronto, Canada. I listened to the radio – at that time the 'Hit Parade' was popular. I bought the lyrics to the songs and sang along with the radio.

Q: Do you ever encourage your Yiddish students to use music to learn Yiddish?

R: Most definitely. I believe that sound together with sight, is the most successful way to learn a new language. In our Yiddish class, we sing many traditional Yiddish songs. It helps the vocabulary to stick in their minds. In fact, I am currently teaching the students the words to the song "Oy Vey'z Mir" from "Der Yiddisher Mikado" which is being performed in South Florida in January.

Q: How did the students react?

R: They loved the song and they loved to sing along with it. They left the class so inspired, very excited. They all want to go to the show and they say they are going to sing along! I hope the performers don't mind a little competition.

Q: It sounds like you are good at inspiring people.

R: I do feel that I am good at that. I feel like I can get a group going – but I can only do it in person. I like to see the people I am talking to. I like to teach because I like to share with others my expertise and I like to see the joy that people derive from it.

Q: Did you teach Yiddish to your children?

R: Well, yes and no. We did speak Yiddish in the house. However, both me and my husband had a real determination to know the English language, to blend in with Americanism. It became almost an obsession with me, to know the language. Once we began learning English, we practiced it at home with our children. My children understand Yiddish but they do

not speak it. Even my parents switched to English – to fit in. I feel sorry now that I did not teach them more and didn't encourage them to practice their Yiddish.

Q: Why do you feel it is important for people to learn Yiddish?

R: It helps with Jewish identity. When I teach a class of Yiddish students, the language brings them back to their memories – for those who heard Yiddish at home – and links them to their Jewish past. It is also a common denominator to communicate with people from other lands – because there is something, even if they don't know the language, there is something there – some kind of common thread. A spark begins to glow. Students will say to me, "Oh yes, my mother used to say that." Even for those students who did not grow up with Yiddish, it is clear that Yiddish has infiltrated modern English. They still know Yiddish words and expressions that have become common in everyday language.

Q: Did you speak Yiddish when you first met your husband?

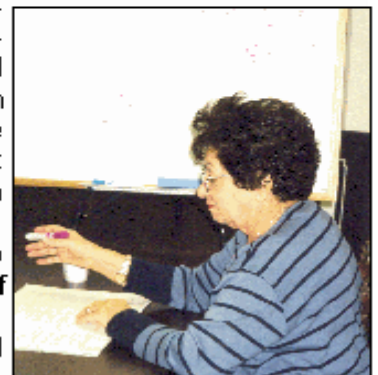
R: Yes, when we first met we spoke mainly in Yiddish. Hersh was from Central Poland; and I was from the Ukraine, so the dialect was a bit different, but Hersh picked up the Ukrainian dialect. That is also a wonderful characteristic of the Yiddish language -- the different dialects do not hold you back. You can speak with anyone from any country and still be able to understand each other.

Q: Tell me about your Yiddish students.

R: The classes are made up mostly of beginners with some memories of the language. I help them to dig into their memories and keep Yiddish alive. I particularly enjoy the class when we have visitors. Today we had a young student from Argentina. He was amazing – very refreshing. His Yiddish was very good and he read from one of the books to us in Yiddish. It is a benefit to the other students to have someone new in the class, who knows Yiddish from a different vantage point. Sometimes, I have to adjust my lesson plan to accommodate the new people coming in, but the students always learn something from it.

Q: What other things do you do in the world of Yiddish?

R: Well, I am on the board



(Continued on page 9)

Remember! January is Filled with Art



**Chagall/Dali Art Exhibit
at Wolfe Theater
and Theater Gallery
January 2003**



Interview with Yiddish Educator Ray Berman

(Continued from page 8)

at the Center here. I help with translations and perform the songs on their website. I also speak at different organizations and Temples about the Center and about the events that are coming up. I also meet with a small group that enjoys reading the Yiddish classics.

Q: They read them in Yiddish – with Hebraic letters?

R: Yes. Most of my students are people born here, not in Eastern Europe, but they have learned Yiddish by attending Yiddish schools here in the United States.

Q: Do you find that there is a growing interest in learning Yiddish during the 3+ years that you have been teaching it?

R: Most definitely. These days, people are looking for their Jewish connection – and Yiddish can be that connection for many of them.

Q: Are there many materials out there for people to learn Yiddish?

R: There are many new and older books out there for people to learn Yiddish – including now the "Idiot's Guide" to Yiddish. I hate the name, but the author is very good. We use that book along with various texts and songbooks in the class.

Q: Ray, thank you for your time and I look forward to joining your next class.

R: A shaynem dank. It was my pleasure.

Ray Berman can be heard on the Center's on-line practice lessons that accompany their Yiddish on-line program. He teaches conversational Yiddish at the Center's offices weekly. For more information about either course, contact the Center at 305-774-9244.

The Undying Flame Rekindles

(Continued from page 5)

compose them, sing them, and listen to them. Perhaps the songs themselves will supply the answers to the questions," writes Silverman in the introduction to his book. "This rare collection of work demonstrates the tremendous defiant response that emanated from many cultures against the Nazis," says David Weintraub, Executive Director of the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture. "It is truly an incredible collection of music that can be found nowhere else."

Silverman, a long-time folk musician, has performed all over the nation. He authored over two hundred books of music and performed folk music across the country in the spirit of

Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. The quality of his performance already has led to calls for a return appearance soon. *The Undying Flame: Ballads & Songs of the Holocaust* was part of the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial's week-long Holocaust Education program, "Artistic Expression of the Holocaust through Art, Architecture, Music, Literature and Film" co-sponsored by the Holocaust Memorial, Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at U.M., Institute for Judaic, Near-Eastern Studies at F.I.U., the Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Council and the Miami Beach Arts Council.

Artist Wanted:
Please send us your tear-sheets, slides and color proofs or simply email JPEG's of your work.
www.yiddishculture.org

The Yahrzeit Candle

*The yahrzeit candle stands on the tray,
The quick flash of fire and the flame
Reaching for the wick reflects my hands
In the window and I remember.
Other days, other hands.*

*Lighting Shabbat and Yomtov candles.
The colourful lights of Chanukah
Dancing with excitement in the window.
Workworn grandma's hands,
Mother's soft caring hands,
Loving hands, through generations.
I think of my daughters' hands,
My granddaughter's hands,
One day, will they think of mine?
Pictures rise within me
And I feel a comforting warmth.*

Maureen Colt
October 12th, 2001

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Happy Hanukah from Ellen's Ladle and the Center for Yiddish Culture Staff!

We're not about to tell you how to make your latkes, but how about the accompaniment? Nothing beats fresh applesauce with those hot and crispy potato latkes! Nothing is easier than this one. We call ours ..

"Andrew Loves This Cinnamon Applesauce"

SERVES 6. SERVE: hot or room temperature

MAKE AHEAD: Up to 1 week or frozen for up to six months.

2½ lb. sweet apples (Rome, Baldwin, or Macintosh) peeled, quartered and cored

1½ cups apple cider

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

¾ cup white or brownulated sugar

freshly squeezed lemon juice to taste

Combine apples and cider in pan over low heat. The liquid should barely cover the apples. Bring to a boil, then turn heat down to simmer. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until tender — about 15 to 25 minutes.

Drain, reserving liquid. Puree in food processor, adding cinnamon, sugar and juice and from 1/3 to ½ cup of cooking liquid. Return to pan. Simmer about 3 minutes or until slightly thickened for a good "spooning" consistency. Yummy! (My Romanian grandmother always made hot golden and fluffy matzoh meal latkes to serve with cinnamon applesauce at Hannukah, never potato. How about yours?)



The Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture presents...

DER YIDDISHER MIKADO

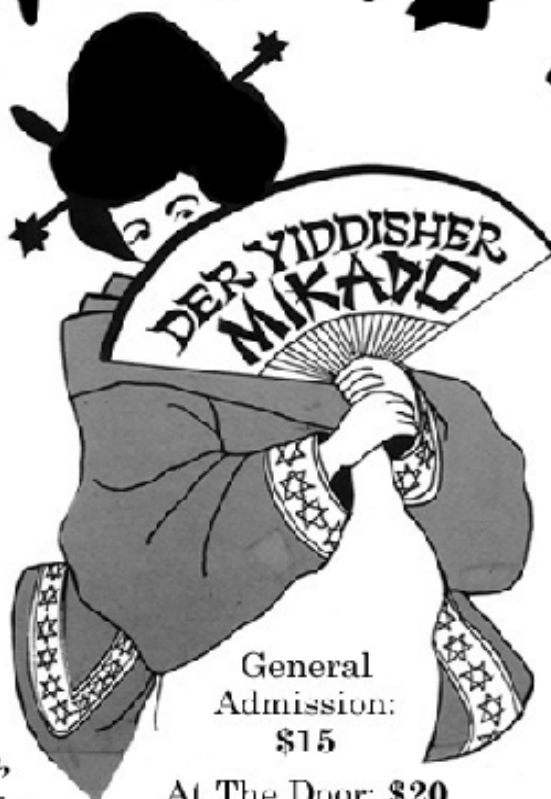
South Broward

January 16th, 8pm at the
David Posnack J.C.C.
5850 S. Pine Island Rd.
Davie

*A comic operetta in Yiddish
and English based on the
Mikado by Gilbert & Sullivan,
performed by the Yiddish Light
Opera Company of Long Island*

You don't need to know Yiddish to
love this unique production!

Sold out in Toronto & London.



General
Admission:
\$15

At The Door: \$20
Group Rates Available

Coral Gables

January 20th, 2pm
*University of Miami
Gusman Theatre*
Coral Gables

North Dade

January 19th, 8pm
Temple Sinai of North Dade
18801 NE 22 Avenue
North Miami Beach

For tickets and more information:

The Center for Yiddish Culture
(305) 774-9244

www.yiddishculture.org



This program is sponsored by: Publix Super Markets Charities, the Sue & Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies, the Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs & the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami Dade County Mayor & Board of County Commissioners, the David Posnack Jewish Community Center, & Temple Sinai of North Dade.

