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Sarah Zarrow—A Success Story

IAYC sent the Vilnius Yiddish Institute money toward the expenses of Sarah Zarrow to attend their summer program. Here is her report of her experience. The money was well spent considering what she is doing with her Yiddish now, and her plans for the future. Hopefully we will have a chance to meet her at the Baltimore conference.

Sarah's Report—Sarah Zarrow sazarow@vassar.edu

I would love to come to the conference in Baltimore. During August, I attended two Yiddish classes daily, Mon-Fri., and cultural events in the afternoons, evenings, and on weekends. I was enrolled in Yiddish III; both of my classes were primarily literature-based, with nightly homework and presentations. A student formed a klezmer band, and we rehearsed daily, performing in the "talent show" at the end of the program. Because of the level of dedication of students, and the fact that we came from so many places, we often spoke Yiddish outside the classroom.

Cultural life included lectures by professors, concerts, walking tours, and a film series. These events were in Yiddish and English. We mainly focused on Jewish life in Vilnius. Because I attended services regularly, I made the acquaintance of members of the Vilnius Jewish community.

I took a trip to Lipnishki, formerly Lipnishuk, Belarus, the town where my great-grandmother grew up. I am completing a photo-essay from my journal entries and photos about this trip. They will be exhibited in the Jewish studies office at Vassar, and in the Jewish student center). Also I am writing a series of articles on my experience more, and hope to have them published on campus.

My future plans with Yiddish include teaching a mini-course on campus. I am in contact with the director of the self-instructional language program, trying to make Yiddish an academic subject here. As the only Yiddish-speaking student on campus, I've started acting as a sort of clearing-house for Yiddish information.

Next year I shall apply for a Watson Fellowship for travel to Birobidjan and other parts of Siberia. I wish to document (what is left of) Jewish life and Yiddish culture there. There are a few organizations trying to restore Jewish life in Eastern Europe and the former U.S.S.R., and I would like to work with them to bring knowledge of East European culture and Yiddish both back to the original areas, and to the U.S.

8th IAYC Conference: in Baltimore: #3 Yiddish Teachers: Heroes Then & Now

**Entertainment & Screenings
From September 4-7, 2003**

All workshops and no play? Not at the 8th IAYC Conference in Baltimore. The Thursday night keynote evening also will feature a musical salute to Mikhl Gelbart teacher of Yiddish song, composer, arranger, choral director by teacher/klezmer **Lori Cahan Simon** who recently produced the highly-acclaimed CD, *Songs My Bubbe Should Have Taught Me, Vol. 1, Passover*. Topping things off will be the rousing traditional sounds of the huge **Baltimore Klezmer Orchestra**.

The Saturday night Gala concert will feature **Charm City Klezmer** with its innovative repertoire of Yiddish and a touch of Ladino. Charm City has thrilled local audiences with its fresh take on traditional klezmer sounds and virtuoso instrumentalists. Vocalist **Judith Geller** sings Yiddish with a real taam. Another musical treat, the delicious song styling of **Shira Shazeer** and fiddler **Ken Richmond**, two young musicians of Klezmaniaks fame, striking out on their own as the **Fish Street Klezmer Duo**. And as a rare treat, we shall be presenting Beth Tfiloh's own beloved world-class **Cantor Avi Albrecht**, 5th generation Israeli born, who claims Yiddish as his mame loshn. He will share his repertoire of great Yiddish songs, glorious voice and authentic khasidic flavor.

We'll also be screening the award-winning Australian film, *Uncle Chatzkel*. **Chatzkel Lemchen** lived through the Russian revolution, two world wars, the Holocaust (when the Nazis and their Lithuanian supporters killed most of his family and fellow Jewish citizens), a communist regime and the transition of Lithuania from a Soviet republic to an independent state. Lemchen survived using his skills as a linguist and lexicographer. Continuing to live in Vilnius, Lithuania, he provided a bridge between Lithuanian, Russian and Yiddish cultures.

Sunday morning closing ceremonies will include a musical treat, live performance of the acclaimed CD/Song Booklet *Mayn Oytzer* published by the Sholem Aleichem Club of Philadelphia. Singer **Sherm Labovitz** will enchant our lucky attendees with gems of Yiddish Art and Folk Songs, arranged and accompanied by **Sender Botwinik** and **Marvin Weinberger** on violin.

Bye Bye Braverman

A Request from Jane Civins Jane_Civins@hotmail.com

A favorite movie, Bye Bye Braverman portrays 4 NYC Jewish intellectuals trying to attend the funeral of a friend. The movie is based on the novel, *To An Early Grave*. Alas! Bhe author and composer have died recently.

We transcribed the lyrics, and ask readers of *Der Bay* if anyone would translate the lyrics into Yiddish, a translation that we did literally, and not idiomatically.

Jane H. Civins and Michael A. Malardo, Cranston, RI

The Braverman Waltz— by Peter Matz, 1968

Have you seen Braverman dancing?
Three-quarter Braverman time—
Whirling and twirling and prancing,
Making each moment sublime.

Have you seen Braverman dancing?
Notice him gracefully glide by,
Hoping the band never halts—
For when it does then it's bye, bye—
Bye bye to Braverman's waltz!

A Beautiful Experience in Scottsdale, AZ

The Yiddish Club of Har Zion Temple in Scottsdale, AZ presented my one-man show, "Yiddish, Yinglish & Borscht"—two 40-45 minute acts with an intermission of mingling and noshing. I flew in from Los Angeles that morning knowing that 150 seats had been pre-sold. More than 300 showed up, and after a desperate scramble for more portable seating the doors were finally closed.

The palpable heymishkayt, the audience lustily joining in the Yiddish songs, dos hartsike gelekhter, AND, the people signing up for more information and possible membership in the Yiddish Club, were most gratifying. A special bonus: Quite a few young people in the audience.

Yearning for the culture, the language, the heritage is out there...The old expressions are still very much valid: "Dos pintelet Yid"—and—"no matter what, no matter where or when, the sponge cake ligt nokh unteren hartsn..."

Archie Barkan, Woodland Hills, CA 818-999-0433

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A Yiddish Group in New Orleans

I am happy to let you all know about our wonderful Yiddish group in New Orleans. We meet Mondays at 1 pm and love every minute of it. We learn to read and write Yiddish and study about all the wonderful Yiddish writers of the past and everyone seems to be thrilled. Along with our exceptional teacher, Fanny Yokor we have acquired a feeling of camaraderie. We are true chavanim. Everyone makes the effort to be at class for all of the above reasons. We feel like mishpucha and treat and worry about each other. Cards are sent, phone calls are made when someone is ill along with pickups for those who haven't a ride to come to class. As you already know, we put on shows at our JCC for the community and it is very much appreciated. Our spirit is strong and love of Yiddish outstanding.

Spirituality and Performance on and off the Stage—The Bimah and The Bine

On Sun, May 4th, 2003 the Center for Jewish Studies at the Univ. of Maryland, College Park will be hosting a conference on the relationships between what transpires on the stage of the synagogue (the bimah) and the Jewish theatrical stage (in Yiddish, bine). In the late nineteenth century Jews began to write and perform plays in Eastern Europe that, by the early twentieth century, had become popular in England and America, attracting devoted audiences. During that period many synagogues not only became more formal but, with the growth of Reform and Conservative Judaism, challenged and transformed traditional models of worship.

The conference is organized into three sessions, one focusing on the synagogue, another on the stage and concluding with a round table debate of the issues.

For the morning panel we ask for papers that look to changes in the synagogue. Presentations might address some of the following questions:

- Whether the synagogue became more formal as a result of the emergence of Jewish theater and Jewish attendance at formal performances?
- What were the consequences for congregational intimacy of a synagogue modeled on theatrical norms?
- How did artistic expression inside and outside the synagogue reflect cultural preferences of the time?
- Did the roles of cantors change as some became stars and operatic style performers?

The afternoon session, will deal with the Jewish theater, the papers would address some of the following:

- How have synagogue rituals shaped the theater?
- In the early Yiddish theater many performers were former cantors, choirboys, or sons of cantors. Some of the plays and films dealt with a hero pulled between duties of the hazan and stardom. What does this show about the Jewish stage and its relationship to the synagogue?
- Were there shifts in Yiddish or Jewish theater with respect to depictions of Jewish religious life?

Since members of synagogues look for alternative venues for worship, the discussion will deal with the past and present. These questions might be appropriate in a panel and in the concluding discussions.

- How did Jewish ethnic and religious identity express itself through performance?
- To what extent did the preferences of congregants and audiences shape the action on stage?
- Did religiously estranged Jews find in the Yiddish theater a community and emotional outlet that might have formerly come from the synagogue?
- To what extent did performance meld tradition with modernity?
- How did considerations of high and low culture factor in the interrelationship between synagogue and theater?
- In the Soviet Union the Jewish theater was called Habimah when religious observance was curtailed. This theater moved to Israel but kept the name. What about the significance of Habimah in modern Israel?

New Federation Formed of Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors

by Lisa Reitman Dobi 631-537-7830 Ljdobi@aol.com

Seven sons and daughters of Holocaust survivors came up with a plan to unite descendants of Jewish Holocaust survivors under a loose-knit umbrella group. It was in Toronto at the International Child Survivors and 2nd Generation Conference—Sharing the Past, Celebrating Life, sponsored by the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust. The Federation will operate as a loose federation to provide resources on the issues of concern to descendants of Jewish Holocaust survivors, and will link people together via the Internet and other media.

The Toronto group said: "...We want as many descendants of Holocaust survivors as possible to have ownership of this process. We invite you to contact us."

Some of the resource committees are:

- Long Term Health Care for Aging Parents
- Political Action
- Restitution & Reparation
- Memoir Writing
- Preserving the Past

The website will be structured around links to regional & resource coordinators, individuals, groups & Holocaust institutions. The federation will cooperate with all legitimate Holocaust survivor groups and Jewish organizations. We look to establish contact with descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors worldwide.

Lisa Reitman Dobi, a Southampton, Long Island writer is active in Holocaust studies. She feels it is up to descendants of survivors to carry on their work. "If we don't become involved, we shall lose the effort made by survivors to preserve the past and learn for future."

Menachem Rosensaft, founding Chairman of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors founded in 1981, talked about the new broad-based structure. He said, "I am pleased to work with Serena, Isabel Alcock, of Pittsburgh, Jeanette Friedman of NJ, Eva Kraus of Detroit, Isaac Kot of Boston and Lisa Reitman Dobi of Long Island. I also look forward to the involvement of others such as Dr. Romana Strochlitz Primus of Connecticut, Dr. Eva Fogelman of NY."

Jeanette Friedman, founder of Second Generation North Jersey in 1979, who worked with Rosensaft on the 1981 World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem, stressed that each member or group that joins the umbrella remains autonomous, and will continue to speak for itself and its constituents.

"We descendants of Holocaust survivors come from every walk of life and every religious and political denomination. We all have different opinions, ideas and philosophies, and only one commonality binds us--what we can learn from our past and apply to the present."

The following can be contacted by email.

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Old Roots—New World

Lori Lippitz's Maxwelll Street Klezmer Band has a real winner in this new release. The CD has 13 pieces and the only fault I could find is that Lori doesn't sing in each one. The accompanying booklet is extremely well done and an explanation accompanies each one.

Molly Picon was the inspiration for several tracks on the CD. In the listing of *Yidl mitn fidl* there is a discussion of Molly's life on stage and in film. *Abi gezunt* was sung in the film Mamele which her husband Yonkel Kalixh wrote the script. Mamele was the last Jewish film made in Poland prior to Hitler's invasion.

Dave Tarras, was the inspiration for both *Undzere toyrele* and *Zol zayn gelebt*. The breadth of this album can be heard in the selections that range from the old classics through khasidik-inspired works, to the Warsaw Ghetto and to the final piece—Klezmer Rhapsody. Alex Koffman, the arranger and violinist in the Band wrote this marvelous, closing track (18 minutes in length).

Contact Lori at: **Maxwell Street Klezmer Band**
4025 Harvard Terrace, Skokie, IL 60076 847-675-4800
Maxwellst@aol.com <http://www.klezmerband.com>

A Gem—A Great Club Idea

Of all the new Yiddish organizations, institutes, conferences and collections to be founded in the last few years, the Stanford University based collection, of Gella Schweid Fishman's secular Yiddish school memorabilia, ranks up there. It is in the league of the wonderful Bob and Molly Freedman Yiddish music collection at the University of Pennsylvania.

Now for the gem—The wonderfully informative newsletter, SHULGRUSN, easily will become the centerpiece around a discussion of childhood Yiddish learning experiences at your club or class. Also this would be a great home for your memorabilia. For years to come this will be a central treasure for research on the Yiddish Secular Schools in America.

Gella will be the keynote speaker at the IAYC Conference in Baltimore next September 4-7 where the theme will be *Yiddish Teachers: Heroes Then & Now*.

To be put on the mailing list to get SHULGRUSN contact Gella at: **FofSYSA@aol.com** or write to **FSYSA at: P.O. Box 19295, Stanford, CA 94309-9295**

The New Orleans Yiddish Group

by Tsip Levitov

I am so happy to let you all know about our great Yiddish group. We meet Mondays at 1 PM. It was going to be for one hour, but we usually stay 2 hours and love every minute of it. We learn to read, write and study about the wonderful Yiddish writers of the past—everyone is thrilled. Along with our exceptional teacher, Fanny Yokor, we have acquired a feeling of complete camaraderie—true chavarem. We make every effort to be at class. We feel like mishpokhe and worry about each other. Cards are sent, phone calls are made when someone is ill and have pickups for those who haven't a ride. We put on shows at our JCC for the community and it is very much appreciated.

An Expert's Opinion on Transliteration

by Troim Katz-Handler Troim@webtv.net

To those who feel that Yiddish transliteration can somehow be "creative", I must express the following: In English, whether one lives in Mississippi or Maine, the spelling is standard. The only variation permitted is a minor British version, not proper in the U.S. Correct spelling indicates education and respect for the language.

YIVO transliteration was established 65 years ago and follows correct Yiddish spelling, regardless of accent. Unfortunately, many people are not educated in correct Yiddish spelling and thus do use proper transliteration. Universities and dictionaries, such as Uriel Weinreich's, use YIVO transliteration. Open one of the Mlotek songbooks, you will find perfect standard transliteration.

I worked with Prof. Kazuo Ueda of Fukuoka U., Japan, on 2 books in 1996 and 2000 (*Trilingual Guide to Japan and Dialogues for Students of Yiddish In Japan*) and was not surprised that his transliteration was impeccable YIVO, which is international and easily understood by one educated in proper Yiddish. When my book of love-letter poems, *Simkhe*, was ready for the printer in March, 2002, I asked poet Leye Robinson, editor of *Yugntruf*, to do the final reading before publication. Although I used YIVO transliteration, I wanted her to double-check.

Yiddish has enough problems without having our own people scoff at rules which every other accepted language demands. Such a who-cares attitude ridicules the very language we profess to love and respect. Troim Katz Handler, West Palm Beach, Florida

Are You Ready for Purim?

What? Your club hasn't put on a Purim Shpil? Tis a pity. You're missing so much fun. So why not plan a production of the *Megile* and invite "di gantse mishpokhe" and "klal yisroyl". There must be people who are itching to play the arch-villain Homen, or the "shiker" Akhashveyrish, or dem gutn yid Moredecai, or the sexpot Esther. And there must be frustrated director among you. Here's your chance to emote, improvise costumes and wow your audience.

And we have just the tried script that has been successfully performed several times at the JCC's in Long Beach and Orange County, California. No need to memorize lines. Just a few rehearsals and a fluent reading will do it justice. Besides, you can take as much liberty with it as you wish, ad-libbing and revising.

Sid Weinstein has been directing the Joys of Yiddish Players at the Long Beach JCC, and transliterating materials for the clubs (*Potpourri*, *Moyshe Nadir*) has a Purim packet available. This includes not one, but two *Megile scripts*, one in Yiddish transliteration, and one, bilingual, which allows those with little Yiddish ability to participate. Also included is a Purim quiz, a transliterated dramatization of Sholem Aleykhenm's *Shalekh Mones* and several Purim songs with music. Sid would have included a grager, but with today's heightened security, can you imagine what would have happened if it had sounded off in transit? "Di gantse megile kost \$11." To receive the entire package send your check to: SID WEINSTEIN, 5118 Carfax Ave. Lakewood, CA. 90713 e-mail sidweinstein@earthlink.net

I.L Peretz Shul in Winnipeg

By Chassie Margolis

The I.L. Peretz Folk Shul in Winnipeg Canada is celebrating its 90th Anniversary with a reunion on August 1-4, 2003. The I.L. Peretz Shul was the first all Yiddish Say School on the continent. I am proud to say that I am a graduate and former teacher in the school. Any former students who wish to get more information on this special event can contact the committee at 423 Inkster Blvd. Winnipeg MB, R2W 0K6, CANADA or e-mail: peretzschoolreunion@hotmail.com The web site is at: <http://www.peretzreunion.com>

Yiddish Folk Chorus of South Florida

This is our 5th season—Winter 2002-2003, and our motto continues to be:

A folk vus zingt vet kaynmol nit untergeyn.'

Jewish music has always been the very essence of our people's heartbeat. Indeed, from the time of David, our history and culture have been preserved in poetry and music; stories of struggle and sorrow, of love and of hope, of joy and of pain.

This is our heritage, our *yerusha*, and it must not be allowed to fade from memory. We, in the Yiddish Folk Chorus of South Florida, in our own small way, have dedicated ourselves to preserving this priceless gift.

We sing the music born of the European shtetl and the immigrant experience; music of a spirited young Israel, and the folk music of America; music drawn from a rich history of composers, poets and arrangers: Itzik Manger, Jacob Schaefer, and Maurice Rauch. The repertoire ranges from Goldfadden to Guthrie; from a Yiddish lullaby to a song of America's landscape.

It is the love of singing and the love for the sound and warmth of Yiddish that brings us together. We truly believe, "A folk vus zingt vet kaynmol nit untergain". A people who sing will never perish.

Today's Yiddish Folk Chorus evolved from the original Jewish Folk Chorus that was organized in 1993 by the beloved and talented conductor, Harvey Schreiberman and which flourished as the premier performer of Yiddish folk and choral music in the Palm Beach County area until Harvey's untimely passing in 1997. Unwilling to allow all that Harvey Schreiberman established to come to an end, a number of chorus members vowed to reorganize, to continue the tradition and to continue bringing this unique form of music to an even wider audience.

The Yiddish Folk Chorus is fortunate to have as its conductors, two very talented musicians with an impressive background in Yiddish folk and choral music: Shelley Tenzer and Dudl Bernstein. Each of them brings an individual freshness of style, skill and humor to the task, making participation in the chorus a truly pleasurable and uplifting experience. No doubt, the success and recognition achieved by the chorus is due, in no small measure, to their considerable skill and talent. The chorus has performed for various clubs and organizations in Palm Beach, Broward and Dade Counties, and is available for daytime or evening performances from mid January to mid March. To inquire or to arrange a booking for your group, contact Hy Perlstein at 561-451-0236 or Rose Schreiberman at 561-369-0057.