



The New YIDDISH TIMES

די נייע יידישע צייט



Summer 2003

Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture

Volume 3, Issue 1

Next Seasons Anticipated Events

Klezfest Miami

(in conjunction with
Festival Mizmi)

▮ Performances by the
world famous **Klez-
mer Conservatory
Ensemble**

▮ Lectures
on Klezmer

▮ Work-
shops

▮ Perform-
ances by
local Klez-
mer bands
featuring a "Battle of
the Bands"

Mid-October, 2003

Lectures Based on
our Recently Pub-
lished Books:

◆ *The Jewish Book of
Fables*

◆ *A Rose Blooms
Again*

(Dates TBA)

**Yiddish On-Line:
College Level Yid-
dish Classes**

(Registration has
already begun. For
further information
log on at
www.yiddishculture.org)

A Season To Remember, More to Come?...

By Kara Schwartz

The Center for Yiddish Culture's most ambitious season ever began in November with two events that showcased the incredible power of the arts to speak in even the most unspeakable of times. On November 7th, we kicked off the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial's weeklong Holocaust Education Program with a concert and lecture by famed folksinger, author, and musicologist Jerry Silverman. The concert, *The Undying Flame: Ballads & Songs of the Holocaust*, featured the worldwide premiere of Silverman's collection of Holo-



caust-era songs. Originally written in 16 different languages and later translated into English, these songs are unified as a testament to the survival of creativity and inspiration in our darkest moments, and to the central place of musical expression in our culture.

Just as these songs brought us closer to the voices and emotions of their composers, artwork produced today brings us closer to our own voices and emotions. From November 1st-25th, the Dora Teitelboim Center presented an exhibition of the

works of Argentinean painter Adrian Levy Memum and Venezuelan artist Cecilia

(Continued on page 3)

Yiddish Programs Warm a Chilly New York Winter

Since the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture's inception, the Center has sponsored programs around the country, including programs in the New York metropolitan area. Run by New York Yiddish folk performers extraordinaire, Leonora Weintraub and Ron Kuriloff, they celebrate Yiddish poetry, literature and music through creatively interactive events held at libraries, Jewish cultural institutions, bookstores and private homes.

The rich repertoires performed by the dynamic yiddishe duo include "Creative Defiance" featuring poetry and songs highlighting the art of resis-

tance produced during the Holocaust and "The New Country and Life in America" using music, short stories and vignettes to tell the story about how new Jewish immigrants fared upon their arrival on these shores.

An exciting addition to the Center's New York programming comes from a recently published work, *The Song That Never Died*, a collection of Mordecai Gebirtig's poetry translated into English. According to Lee Weintraub, "I was moved by the humanity and broad range of his poetry. As I researched through many editions of his poetry and

(Continued on page 6)

Director's Shraybtish



In America, keeping a typical arts and cultural organization going for ten years is a difficult feat. Funding sources are few and far between, demands of donors and boards can be daunting, and competing against the myriad of escapist entertainment vying for the public's consumption can be a losing battle. Now, add to this equation a non-traditional cultural organization whose mission is unique among Jewish institutions and you can glimpse at some of the struggles the Center for Yiddish Culture has had to battle through. The irony is that we have reached the height of our vitality in many ways, producing some of the most thoughtful, provocative and educational books in the marketplace from the rebel poets Proletpen, to a collection of Yiddish poems for children, to anthologies of American contemporary fiction. Programmatically, our cultural events this season have highlighted the hidden Yiddish world of Marc Chagall, Yiddish education for children, Klezmer revival, genre-breaking art and more.

Of course, there were plenty of naysayers and kvetchs who in our early days told us it couldn't be done. That there was no interest in Yiddish culture, that we were fifty years too late, and if we were stubborn about Yiddish, we should focus on scholarly lectures that appeal to academic types, or on the other hand, 2nd Avenue yentertainment for those who still appreciate a good shtick now and then.

We chose another path. The Center's inspiration was of course its founder, Dora Teitelboim, who believed that Yiddish culture was too important to lose, and saving it meant more than collecting old books that few living today can read, or creating vast archival registries that few can access. She believed that it was about celebrating not just the vibrant culture of our Eastern European ancestors, but celebrating American Jewish culture as a legitimate diasporic entity.



years of Yiddish literature, poetry, music, radio, theater, film, etc. that have been produced on *these* shores. Not to mention the vibrant Yiddish heritage in other great places where Yiddish culture continues to thrive including (but by no means limited to) Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Mexico.

However, when we challenge traditional Jewish cultural donors that supporting Yiddish is not about the past, but about connecting our heritage with our future in a way that no other aspect of Judaism can do, the truth of this reality shines through. Given the severe economic downturn that has shuttered many a cultural center, it is absolutely essential for those who value what we stand for to talk it up and to act with their heart and their gelt to support Yiddish cultural institutions everywhere.

What can you do? First, help us further our mission by becoming a sponsor for one or more of our programs. Sponsors are needed in all five areas of program development:

- 1) Cultural lecture series**
- 2) Yiddish literary book publishing**
- 3) Children's programming**
- 4) Musical and arts events**
- 5) Yiddish education**

Second, contact large philanthropic institutions and individuals you have connections with and ask them to help support American Jewish culture by supporting our programming.

Third, contact your temple, JCC, day school and afternoon program about establishing Yiddish cultural components. We are developing some templates for this, and institutions that we've begun to work with such as Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring have created some great programs for children to help them understand their heritage through appreciating the Ashkenazi tradition, both in *di alte heym* and in the *goldene medina*.

The Center is currently considering some major

American Jewish culture as a legitimate diasporic entity.

In today's Jewish cultural world, almost without exception, supporting "Jewishness" has meant supporting, traveling to, and studying Israel. I do not question the importance of appreciating, supporting, nor defending Israel and Israeli culture. However, it is just not a substitute for appreciating the many

The Center is currently considering some major restructuring so that we can remain a vital part of America's Yiddish cultural renaissance. We hope we can count on you to do your part.

Mit harsitikn dank,

David Weintraub

A Season to Remember, Hopefully More to Come

(Continued from page 1)

Hecht at the gallery at Temple Beth Shalom. Both artists see their works as expressions of remembrance and hope. Inspired by the concentration camp, Majdanej, Memum uses his pieces to look at the camps through the eyes of his grandfather. Hecht's work is inspired by a desire to understand the human condition and focuses on the healing of the human spirit and the hope for a better world.



Common Threads performance at Alper JCC

A busy November continued with two lectures at the Miami Book Fair International. Author, filmmaker, and journalist Miriam Weinstein discussed and read from her first book, *Yiddish: A Nation of Words*. This non-fiction popular history of Yiddish is as intriguing, passionate, and engaging as the language itself! The tale is a miraculous survival story and a fascinating biography of a language. Joining Ms. Weinstein at the fair was Troim Handler, an author who is doing her part to add another chapter to Yiddish culture's future. Handler's book of poems, *Simkhe*, is published bilingually in Yiddish and English. It also features a unique third translation that opens the door for a whole new group of readers: transliterated Yiddish. Now many people who speak Yiddish, but do not read or write it, can enjoy the romance and sounds of her Yiddish love poetry.

Reading and writing Yiddish were not required to

history and culture of Yiddish theater to the University of Miami Hillel House. In addition to teaching Yiddish, Yiddish literature, and Yiddish Theater Arts at Columbia University, Hoffman is herself a journalist and a prolific Yiddish playwright, producing performances from Munich to Montreal, New York to Warsaw, Amsterdam to Israel.

Audiences were able to experience that spirit firsthand and to make their own memories of Yiddish theater by attending one of three performances of "Der Yiddisher Mikado," a Yiddish-English production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* staged by the famed Gilbert and Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company. The sold out shows kept audiences roaring with laughter as they watched Yiddish language and culture seamlessly woven into Victorian wit and satire, all with the traditional elaborate silk-sequined costumes and colorful Japanese backdrops of the original production. "Tit-Willow" became "Oy Vey'z Mir (Boy are things bad for me)" and The Lord High Executioner became Der Kophaker (head-chopper). This production follows a long history of Yiddish translations of Gilbert and Sullivan's works, and the Dora Teitelboim Center was proud to keep the tradition alive with their presentation of these exclusive performances.

"Der Yiddisher Mikado" was not the only place to find a magical world of joy, love, and musicians in South Florida this past January. Throughout the month, the Center featured exhibits, lectures, and films on "Chagall, the Man and his Yiddish connection." This month-long celebration of Marc Chagall and Yiddish culture allowed people to gain a deeper understanding of the connections Chagall felt to his heritage and how these connections were reflected in his works. In addition to screening the Oscar nominated film documentary: *Homage to Chagall – The Colors of Love*, the Center hosted lectures and slide shows on The Jewish World of Marc Chagall (Troim Handler) and The Artistic Influences of Marc Chagall

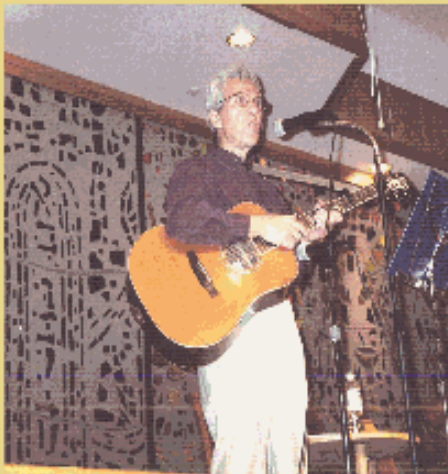
mance and sounds of her Yiddish love poetry.

Reading and writing Yiddish were not required to enjoy two lively lectures presented by Miriam Hoffman in December. The first, held at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, marked a landmark discussion of the history of the Yiddish and Hebrew languages, their development and competition. This provocative discussion demonstrated the importance of keeping both languages alive and how knowledge of each strengthens both while fostering Jewish cultural continuity. "Memories of the Yiddish Theater" was Hoffman's second featured program held on December 19th. Ms. Hoffman brought the fascinating

shows on The Jewish World of Marc Chagall (Troim Handler) and The Artistic Influences of Marc Chagall (Dorit Arad and Samantha Baskind). At an art reception following the final lecture, audiences enjoyed refreshments, viewed a number of original, signed lithographs and prints of Chagall's on display, while listening to the animated performance by the Klezmi-amians playing the best of Klezmer.

February's programming featured Jerry Gray, founder of the internationally acclaimed Canadian folk group, The Travellers recently celebrated their fiftieth year as a vital folk group. Gray lit up Temple
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Our Season in Pictures



Jerry Silverman lecturing and singing rare Holocaust music from 16 languages.



Klezmi-amians perform at Florida International University during the Center's Chagall program



Der Yiddisher Makkado at the University of Miami



Center New York performers Ron Kuriloff and Lee Weinstaub

*(Continued from page 1)***Yiddish Thaws NY Winter**

listened to old recordings of his songs by Theodore Bikel and Martha Schlamme and others, I realized the importance of presenting this preeminent poet to New York audiences."

The Gebirtig program includes such poems as "The March of the Unemployed" and "In The Factory", radical protests depicting the terrible conditions of the working poor and a rallying call for action. On the other hand, touching lullabies like "Yankele", love songs including "Hershele", and a hilarious mother's complaint, "Potato Soup and Mushrooms" demonstrate the sentimental, nostalgic and poignant aspect of his muse. Performances of

Gebirtig have received rave reviews and efforts have begun to find new venues for it this Fall.

Recently, the Center was hosted by four public libraries in Queens, New York, where Ron and Lee performed Creative Defiance and New Country programs to appreciative audiences. From a small group at the first library to a packed audience at the last one in Glen Oaks, people marveled at the touching nature of the performances and thanked us for bringing the *mame loshn* to them by joining the performers to sing the touching song, "*Shayn vie die levonah*". According to Weintraub, "It was gratifying to see the smiles and tears on so many faces in the audience."

For those living in the New York area wishing to have their group, library or temple host a unique and moving Yiddish program, contact the Center at info@yiddishculture.org or call our main office at 305-774-9244 for more information.

Yiddish Resources and Events**Yiddish Classes and Vinkls in South Florida****Yiddish Luncheon Group**

Institute of Retired Persons

Mondays 12 noon

Contact: Norma Salz at nsalz@mindspring.com**Yiddish On-Line**

College Level Yiddish Course

Center for Yiddish Culture

Rolling Access

Contact: info@yiddishculture.org
or 305-774-9244**Joys of Yiddish**

Michael-Ann Russell JCC

Tuesdays 11 am

Contact: Iris Mizrachi at irism1998@yahoo.com or 305-932-4200 x 142**Yiddish Leyenkrays**

Hollywood Beach Culture Center

Upcoming Yiddish Events Around the Globe

June 23– August 1, 2003

YIVO/Columbia Summer Yiddish Program Info: Yankl Salant 212-246-6080

July 4 – September 1, 2003

Workmen's Circle Summer Program

Circle Lodge, Upstate New York

Info: 800-922-2558 x272 or www.circle.org

July 6-10, 2003

Jewish Stories on the Silver ScreenNational Yiddish Book Ctr,
Amherst Info: 413-256-4900 x116

July 28-August 26

Vilnius Summer Yiddish Program, Vilnius University

Yiddish Lekenkrays

Hollywood Beach Culture Center

Tuesdays 1:30

Contact: Paul Azaroff 954-921-3600

Conversational Yiddish Class

B'nai Aviv Temple, Weston

Mondays, 7 PM

Contact: Ben Wernikoff werknufl@aol.com or 954-384-7745

Yiddish Havurah of Temple Sinai

Contact: 305-932-9010

Brandeis University Women Yiddish Club

Thursday AM

Contact: Helen Kurzban helenowl@aol.com

For non-Florida programs, e-mail us at info@yiddishculture.org

Vilnius Summer Yiddish Program, Vilnius University

Info: yiddishvilnius.com or +370 5 2687 187

August 14-17

Charlotte Yiddish Institute

Little Switzerland, NC Info: 704-366-5564

August 20-26, 2003

Yugntruf Yiddish Vokh

Info: Benyomen Schecter 212-989-0212 or yvokh@yugntruf.org

August 21-25

KlezKanada Info: 514-345-2610

September 4,5,6,7, 2003

2003 World Conference of International Association of Yiddish Clubs,

Baltimore, "Yiddish Teachers: Heroes Then and Now" Info: creativa@charm.net or 410-298-4765

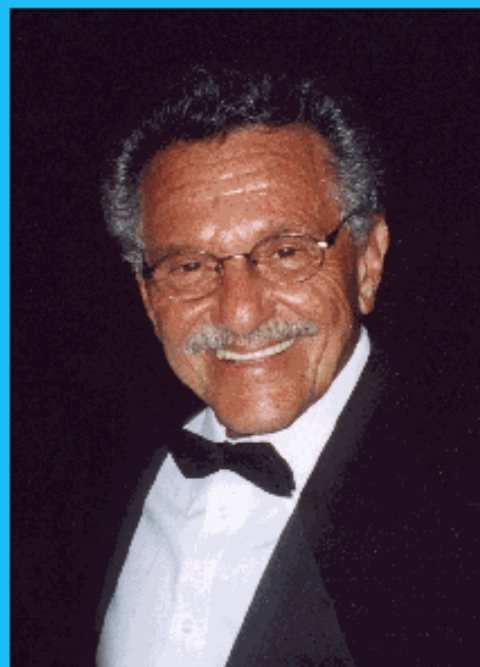
Memorial to A Vital Yiddish Macher

David "Dudl" Bernstein

(February 11, 1928- March 12, 2003)

David Bernstein was born in Brownsville, Brooklyn, where he started performing at an early age. Whether it was recitations or songs in Yiddish, or playing the clarinet in the IWO band, there was Dovidl making people smile. Dovidl, spelled in Hebrew but read phonetically in Yiddish became Dudl, and that's how he was known by his friends, many of whom remained friends with him throughout his life.

Through the Depression and the War and college and career and raising fami



advocate for social justice throughout his

Through the Depression and the War and college and careers and raising families and moving here and there, they remained together and will celebrate 60 years of their special club -Yackadayou Brataslayou - this fall. In addition to Yackadayou Brataslayou, he was an active participant in many groups and organizations: **The Yiddish Theater Ensemble, Camp Kinderland, The Jewish Young Folksingers, the Marble Hill Players, The Community Singers of Rochdale Village, The NY Choral Society, Die Goldene Keyt, the Jewish Peoples Philharmonic Chorus, the Yiddish Culture Club of Century Village, the Yiddish Chorale of Century Village, the Yiddish Folk Chorus of South Florida, The ILGWU, Local 23-25, UNITE, the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture** and the list goes on and on.

Making the world a better place was at the core of who Dudl was. He was an

advocate for social justice throughout his life. Whether it was helping his father do community work in Brownsville during the Depression, or working to free the Rosenbergs, or traveling hours by bus to the March on Washington in August 1963, or participating in demonstrations against the War in Vietnam, or his union activities, or simply marching in the Labor Day parade, he taught us by his example that we had a responsibility to make the world a better place.

Dudl Bernstein, beloved husband, father, Zayde, brother, uncle, comrade, friend, actor, musician, singer, conductor, trade unionist, mentsch extraordinaire, he filled our lives with music and laughter. And love. He will be missed, but his spirit will be with us always.

Contributed by Jeff Bernstein