



New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway

By Edna Nahshon, Museum of the City of New York

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In the early decades of the twentieth century, a vibrant theatrical culture took shape on New York City's Lower East Side. Original dramas, comedies, musicals, and vaudeville, along with sophisticated productions of Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Chekhov, were innovatively staged for crowds that rivaled the scene on Broadway. While these productions were in Yiddish and catered to Eastern European Jewish audiences (the largest immigrant group in the city at the time), their artistic and aesthetic creations and their play with politics and history came to influence all facets of the American stage. Vividly illustrated and with contributions from leading historians and critics, this history recounts in absorbing detail the heyday of "Yiddish Broadway" and its vital contribution to American Jewish life and its crossover to American culture. Performances grappled with Jewish nationalism, labor relations, women's rights, religious observance, acculturation, and assimilation. They reflected a range of genres, from tear-jerkers to experimental theater, and introduced American audiences to avant-garde dramatic technique. The artists who came of age in this environment include Stella Adler, Eddie Cantor, Jerry Lewis, Sophie Tucker, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers. The story of the Yiddish theater is therefore a tale of creativity and legacy, immigrants who in the process of becoming Americans had an enormous impact on the country's cultural and artistic landscape. From the Bowery to Broadway is a companion to an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York scheduled for February 2016.

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Editorial Review

Review

A witty and absorbing demonstration of the interplay of minority and mainstream?with the minority culture here being of outsize influence over the larger culture of Broadway, Hollywood, and America. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

The many photos of famous actors and comics, old posters, packed theaters, and stage scenes balance out the richly sourced text, making this a visually lively, comprehensive, and accessible addition to any collection on theater or Jewish American history and heritage. (*Booklist*)

A comprehensive... readable and lavishly illustrated history of the Yiddish Theater.... This essential book is an important addition to library collections focusing on theater, pop culture, and Jewish studies. (*Library Journal (starred review)*)

A tribute in scholarly scrapbook form to a dramatic phenomenon that acculturated immigrant Jews and left a legacy often defined as New York humor. (Sam Roberts *The New York Times*)

[A] scholarly scrapbook full of vivid illustrations that buttress essays from leading critics and historians. (*Haaretz*)

A richly-illustrated approachable work about the Lower East Side's entertainment legacy. (*Southern Jewish Life*)

[A] marvelous book. (Norman J. Fedder *Jewish Book Council*)

A comprehensive guide.... the book is as entertaining as New York's once-thriving Yiddish theater. (Robert A. Cohn *St. Louis Jewish Light*)

Anyone interested in Yiddish New York will want to read *New York's Yiddish Theater*. Theater buffs will be delighted to learn the connections between Yiddish theater and the American stage. The book is also highly recommended for anyone interested in American Jewish history. (Rabbi Rachel Esserman *The Reporter*)

New York's Yiddish Theater serves as an excellent history through images, together with illuminating essays. . . . This welcome publication also fills a long-felt need for an illustrated history of an important chapter in the city's musical life. (Michael Ochs *Notes: the Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association*)

Prodigiously illustrated. . . . This indispensable book is a fun read, easy to browse through, get lost in. It is no dry academic treatise, but a generous yet scholarly account of a now-vanished era of popular Yiddish culture. Highly recommended. (Richard C. Norton *Operetta Research Center*)

About the Author

Edna Nahshon is professor of theater and drama at the Jewish Theological Seminary and senior associate at Oxford University's Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. She is the author of *Jews and Theater in an Intercultural Context* and *Jewish Theatre: A Global View*, and the editor of *From the Ghetto to the Melting*

Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays.

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Amy Cason:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray an individual, why because this New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway guide written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book which might be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written within good manner for you, leaking every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still uncertainty New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway as good book not only by the cover but also through the content. This is one publication that can break don't determine book by its protect, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick this!? Oh come on your looking at sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to one more sixth sense.

Robert Landers:

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Christopher Arredondo:

Beside that New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway in your phone, it can give you a way to get closer to the new knowledge or facts. The information and the knowledge you will got here is fresh in the oven so don't be worry if you feel like an previous people live in narrow village. It is good thing to have New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway because this book offers to you personally readable information. Do you sometimes have book but you rarely get what it's about. Oh come on, that will not end up to happen if you have this in the hand. The Enjoyable agreement here cannot be questionable, including treasuring beautiful island. Techniques you still want to miss the item? Find this book along with read it from now!

Chris Moore:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got learners? We believe that that concern was given by teacher to their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. And you know that little person including reading or as reading become their hobby. You should know that reading is very important along with book as to be the point. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your own teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update with regards to something by book. A substantial number of sorts of books that can you take to be your object. One of them is actually New York's Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway.

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