

The Museum of the Yiddish Theatre

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The Museum of the Yiddish Theatre (<https://www.moyt.org>) is a virtual, i.e. internet-only, museum devoted to honoring and preserving the history of the Yiddish theatre and Jewish culture. The museum is a branch of the larger virtual museum, The Museum of Family History (<https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com>), which is dedicated to the history of the Jewish family and Jewish history in general.

The multimedia, interactive Museum of the Yiddish Theatre, unlike “brick-and-mortar” museums, is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Recently the museum has instituted a “once-a-month” policy; it strives to publish a new exhibition on the first of every month. It should be noted that since the museum is virtual, there is no real restriction as to space, so all exhibits and exhibitions remain on the museum website, with rare exceptions.



Anna Appel, Miriam Kressyn and Leo Fuchs, in “If I Were A Rothschild,” 1939. Photograph by the Ivan Busatt Studio. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

The January 2022 exhibition, “New York City’s Yiddish Theatre and the Forward: How They Reviewed the Plays That Entertained the Mostly Jewish Public During the Great Depression, 1929 - 1941,” includes translations from Yiddish to English of theatre reviews of sixty Yiddish theatre plays written in the Depression Era by the Forverts (Jewish Forward) critics. These reviews give a great perspective as to the types of plays that were put on during this time, whether dramas, melodramas, comedies, or operettas. The reviews summarize each play,



Joseph Rumshinsky, year unknown. Photograph by the Ivan Busatt Studio. Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.



Maurice Schwartz and His Yiddish Art Theatre group, circa 1950s. Courtesy of the Yiddish Theatrical Alliance.

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REVIEWS OF TITLES FOR ADULTS

party Polish language newspaper production — their organization, content, staff, interplay with their readers and the sponsoring party. She concludes her study in 1970, a time when the earlier Polish *olim* had successfully acclimated to the larger Israeli culture, and the Polish language press, both supported by political parties or otherwise funded, was not seen as of social or political significance.

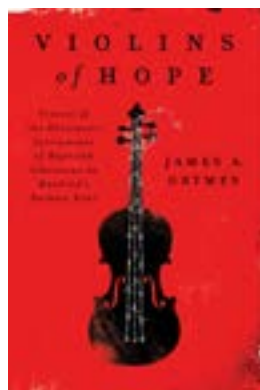
This is a volume whose natural home would be a research library. With its extensive bibliography and detailed footnotes, *Polish Jews in Israel* is an invaluable reference source. At times its format, with occasional pages a block of type unrelieved by paragraph indentation and footnotes sometimes taking up more than half a page, makes *Polish Jews in Israel*, a formidable reading endeavor. But for the student of the role of media in furthering emigre integration, and the singular history of Israel in this regard, this volume will be well worth the reading effort.

Mindy C. Reiser,

Ph.D., Vice President, Jewish Study Center, Washington, D.C.

Levin, Daniel and Franz Weiser-Moest. *Violins and Hope: From the Holocaust to Symphony Hall*. Staunton, VA: George F. Thompson, 2021. 163 pp. \$36.80. (9781938086861).

This lavishly photographed book details the process used by master luthier Amnon Weinstein in his “Violins of Hope” project, repairing and resurrecting violins which were damaged, lost, confiscated, or otherwise ruined in the Holocaust and the ghettos. The photographer, Daniel Levin, shows the many steps Amnon takes to identify and catalog each violin and how he diagnoses which repairs are needed on any given violin. The journeys these instruments have taken from the hands of their Jewish owners who were forced to part with them varies with each violin. Some of the instruments have detailed histories that come with them, others are unknown and Amnon labels these with whatever information he has, such as the date they arrived at his workshop, who gave/sent it to him, special markings, etc. As of the time of writing the book, Amnon has repaired eighty-six of these violins, many of which have been used in symphonies and orchestras around the world.



As detailed as well in the book, Amnon also collects portraits, photographs, and artwork related to famous violinists, and every week he attends a flea market in Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv, looking for such photographs. He also collects any information regarding the Bielski family of Jewish partisans that fought the Nazis, as his wife is the daughter of Asael and Haya Bielski. An interview with his wife about her family history and how it ties into Amnon's work is of interest and serves to illustrate the importance

of Amnon's project to both Jewish and world history.

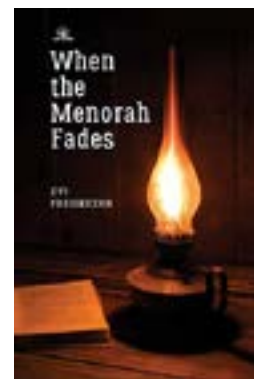
This book is recommended for academic and school libraries that are trying to increase their holdings on Holocaust related material, Jewish history, Jewish music, and other related topics.

Eli Lieberman,

Assistant Librarian, HUC-JIR, NY

Preigerzon, Zvi. *When The Menorah Fades*. Edited by Alex Lahav. Translated by Binyamin Shalom. Boston: Cherry Orchard Books, 2020. 448pp. (9781644692486).

Zvi Preigerzon was born in Shepetovka, Ukraine in 1900. He trained as a mining engineer in Moscow, but his true passion was Hebrew and Yiddish writing and culture. *When the Menorah Fades* is a fictionalized account of daily life in the town of Hadiach, Ukraine. The Nazis destroyed this small Jewish community, but Preigerzon interviewed some of the survivors. His tales depict devout women visiting the grave of Schneur Zalman, the Alter Rebbe, who founded Chabad. They leave slips of paper with prayers and wishes, hoping for miracles. His text is peppered with Hebrew and Yiddish expressions and songs, Kabbalistic elements, and biblical references. He wrote the book secretly while imprisoned in Stalin's gulag. It was later published in Israel under the pen name A. Tz'foni. The title refers to a *menorah* that burns perpetually at the Alter Rebbe's grave. Readers interested in shtetl life and the history of Jews in Ukraine will find this book interesting.



Barbara Bibel,

Congregation Netivot Shalom, Berkeley, CA

Ram, Haggai. *Intoxicating Zion: A Social History of Hashish in Mandatory Palestine and Israel*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020. 255 pp., \$28.00. (9781503613911).

The subject of opium in the Holy Land might be uncomfortable, but this well-researched book documents the Levant as a major historical link for the smuggling of hashish, particularly between Lebanon and Egypt. Before 1948, lack of borders allowed for freedom of trade among Bedouin traders, who often stored hashish inside camels. After 1948, the Negev and Israeli towns became theaters of operation. Also discussed is the drug culture, which became somewhat romanticized. Hashish, ubiquitous in the Middle East since the medieval era, is the root

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