



RUTH RUBIN'S LEGACY OF YIDDISH SONG

*A concert in celebration of
the work of Ruth Rubin
and the Ruth Rubin Legacy
online exhibition*

December 23, 2018 · 7:00pm



**YIVO Institute
for Jewish Research**

Located in the Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street, NYC

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**The Center for Traditional Music
and Dance AND Yiddish New York**

Ruth Rubin's Legacy of Yiddish Song

*A concert in celebration of the work of Ruth Rubin
and the Ruth Rubin Legacy online exhibition*

with the voice faculty of Yiddish New York and special guests

*Michael Alpert • Eléonore Biezunski • Nicole Berger • Joanne Borts • Efim Chorny
Susan Ghergus • Sarah Mina Gordon • Itzik Gottesman • Daniel Kahn • Janet Leuchter
Jeanette Lewicki • Sasha Lurje • Cindy Rivka Marshall • Ethel Raim • Polina Shepherd
Jake Shulman-Ment • Lorin Sklamberg • Mark Slobin • Simon Spivack
Deborah Strauss • Josh Waletzky • Cantor Jeff Warschauer*

“Ruth Rubin dedicated her life to the Yiddish folksong as a collector, scholar, and performer. She has left a treasure of sound recordings that will inspire future generations to cherish this glorious tradition.”

– BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

“The Ruth Rubin archive opens up the vast treasure house of Yiddish folk song not in the language of revivalists, but in the plain and powerful singing of people brought up to sing for themselves, with groups of friends, at social and political events in the days when Yiddish was a natural tongue of expression, sentiment, memory, and belonging. For the first time, you can both feel the atmosphere and learn the nuances of a tradition that went brutally out of circulation. It's coming back. Take this golden chance to walk into the wide world of the Yiddish folk song, as gathered at the last possible moment by the tireless, talented, and priceless Ruth Rubin, collector, singer, and popularizer par excellence.”

– MARK SLOBIN

THIS PROGRAM IS CO-SPONSORED BY



PROGRAM

Welcome

JONATHAN BRENT,
*Executive Director, YIVO Institute
for Jewish Research*

LORIN SKLAMBERG AND
ELÉONORE BIEZUNSKI,
*Ruth Rubin Legacy online exhibition/Max and
Frieda Weinstein Archive of YIVO Sound Recordings*

Afn yam veyet a vintele
SASHA LURJE AND GROUP

Papir iz zikh vays
MICHAEL ALPERT

Uter Tuter, Talmen Tuter
MICHAEL ALPERT

Funem sheynem vortsl aroys
ELÉONORE BIEZUNSKI

Mayn harts, mayn harts veynt in mir
LORIN SKLAMBERG AND GROUP

SIMON SPIVACK REMINISCES
ABOUT HIS AUNT RUTHY

Fun groys dasad leyg ikh zikh shlofn
DANIEL KAHN

Ikh hob nisht keyn shande
SARAH MINA GORDON AND GROUP

Hob ikh mir a shpan
CANTOR JEFF WARSCHAUER

Eyder ikh leyg mikh shlofn
JOANNE BORTS AND WOMEN

Shtey ikh mir ba mayn tatn oyf der tir
ETHEL RAIM

CINDY RIVKA MARSHALL SPEAKS ABOUT
A Life of Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin

Oy di meydelekh, di fonferonkes
JEANETTE LEWICKI

Fun vanen kumt ir, gute brider?
JEANETTE LEWICKI

Shlof in freydn/Dorme filhino
NICOLE BORGER

Kum ikh tsu mayn gelibter froy
NICOLE BORGER

Oy vey mame, ikh shpil a libe
SASHA LURJE

Kol mekadesh shevii/Menuko vesimkho
JANET LEUCHTER

Un az der heyliker moshiakh vet kumen
JOSH WALETZKY, JAKE SHULMAN-
MENT AND DEBORAH STRAUSS

MARK SLOBIN ON
Philip Ney's O'Brien

ITZIK GOTTESMAN ON
Hostu Bayle gitn meyd? AND
Geyt a yold in kapelush

*Medley: Oyf der royter brik in Yas/
Zits ikh mir in shtibele/Besarabianka*
EFIM CHORNY AND SUSAN GHERGUS

Meydelekh un vaybelekh, tantst a dreydl
ELÉONORE BIEZUNSKI AND GROUP

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern
LORIN SKLAMBERG AND GROUP

RUTH RUBIN: A LIFE IN SONG

HANKUS NETSKY

SHE STOOD BARELY FIVE FEET TALL, but Ruth Rubin was a giant who led the way for all of us committed to rescuing and understanding modern Jewish culture. A solitary figure, she worked alone, at her own pace, drawing unique conclusions from [more than] 2,000 Yiddish folksongs she collected over the course of her 40-year career. As she explained to Cindy Rivka Marshall, director of the documentary film *A Life in Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin*, “My focus from the beginning was examining the songs as they reflect the life of the people. I found that, in the Yiddish folksong, the people had poured out their feelings, which had no other place to go at that time. And this is what attracts me, what always amazes me the more I examine the material: the natural will to live, the natural wit, the wisdom...”

Ruth Rubin chronicled that wit and wisdom and her own response to it in four books, 70 articles, and nine extraordinary recordings. She was a pioneer, the organizer of countless collecting sessions that brought together people from all walks of life, from all social classes, religious and secular, with the common desire to share their Jewish folksongs. They knew that singing their songs for Ruth was the best way to ensure that these treasures would be transmitted to future generations. Rubin presented fascinating “lecture-recitals” through which she brought Yiddish folksong not just to academic institutions, but to everyday social gatherings. She was the first to issue an annotated set of Jewish ethnographic field recordings and, perhaps most important, the first to give Yiddish folksong its place at the table in the American folk music revival. In the words of ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin, “She was the bridge, she was the missing link. There was a long period, because of the Holocaust, because of assimilation, because of the rise of the state of Israel as a substitute [for American Jews’ Eastern European culture], when people really didn’t care if the Yiddish folksong survived. That was in the 1940s and 1950s, when Ruth was going around doing her work, recording and popularizing songs and putting out publications. We’re enormously grateful to her for what she did.”

Always ready to make herself and her knowledge available to admirers of my generation or, as she would say, “the young people” in the field of Yiddish music, she taught a simple lesson: Evolve, adapt, and, if no one listens, evolve and adapt again. Above all, if you know that what you have to say needs to be heard, get your message out, whatever it takes.

Born Rivke Roisenblatt in Khotin, Bessarabia, in 1906 to parents who moved to Montréal soon after, Ruth lived 93 years and saw almost the entire twentieth century. It’s remarkable to consider the sweep of history she experienced in her lifetime. As she described it, her father, who died when she was five, came from a traditional background while her mother was strictly secular. She attended Protestant school and, in the afternoons, the Jewish secular Peretz Shule, where she became immersed in Yiddish culture. At age seven she appeared on stage for the first time at the Monument National Theatre singing a Yiddish folksong as a soloist in her school’s annual concert.

“I remember seeing Sholem Aleichem in 1915,” she recalled in 1991. “He died in 1916—he was a frail person. He suffered from pneumonia and I don’t know what else. He came to Montréal, and I was a little girl already going to the *shule* (Yiddish school)... He read a story to us and, when he was finished, there was a question-and-answer period... A woman raised her hand and said, ‘You write as if you’re speaking, just like that. *S’kumt aykh on zeyer gring, mistame* (It comes so easy to you).’ His answer was, ‘*Oy, mayn tayere, ven ir volt gevist vifil blut un trern ikh fargis bay yedn kapitl, volt ir nisht gefregt di frage!* (Oh, my dear, if you only knew how much sweat and tears I pour out [to get this result], you wouldn’t ask this question).’ Then, two by two, we marched in rows with him – he led us all. He wore a Panama hat and he wore spats.... And we marched through the streets, and we were singing Yiddish songs.”

At 18, Rubin moved to New York City. "When I came to New York, I was already a poet.... I knew many of the literati from my childhood in Montréal, so I went to Dovid Pinski to ask his advice, should I continue or should I give it up?" Pinski gave her the right advice, and in 1927 she produced a book of "modern" Yiddish poetry called *Lider*.

Ruth married Sam Rubin in 1932 and had one son, Michael. His birth triggered in Rubin the desire to pass on to future generations the rich legacy of Yiddish song (Michael died tragically in his early twenties). In 1935, encouraged by preeminent Yiddishists Chaim Zhitlowsky and Max Weinreich, she began to seriously collect folksongs using similar methods to early twentieth-century British collecting pioneer Cecil Sharp, who paid great attention to the sources and meanings of song lyrics. She also credited her mother, whose vast knowledge of Yiddish song she tapped extensively, as a major inspiration: "After I made my first recording, I played it for my mother and she said, 'Oh, you learned them all from me, dear, you learned them all from me!' Of course, that wasn't really the case; it was just that she knew all of the songs I sang."

While she was skeptical of the work of many Yiddish performers who she felt "hammed up the songs," Rubin loved the recordings of Isa Kremer, whom she also met as a child. She was a close friend of Vilna partisan fighter, poet, and song collector Shmerke Kaczerginski, who often stayed at her apartment on visits to New York: "He had an extraordinary memory.... My childhood and adolescence were all tied up with an intimate relationship with this whole generation of young people who were helping to preserve the Yiddish language and Yiddish culture. They hardly got paid for anything they did."

And neither did she. For all her eloquence and groundbreaking scholarship, Ruth was never fully welcomed into the Jewish academic world, earning the bulk of her living as a stenographer. She attributed the lukewarm reaction to her work to the ignorance of Jewish scholars, who, in her opinion, had no idea about how much the Yiddish folksong could teach them.

DR. RUTH ON JEWISH LOVE

A tough and feisty critic, Rubin would publicly berate the pedants during her lectures. She particularly enjoyed exposing how Yiddish literary scholars approached Jewish love songs. She would begin with an observation: "In a society of arranged marriages, the first contact between boys and girls occurred as they were working together as apprentices, in small clothing factories, for example." She explained how the Yiddish love song was a product of social dance, when feelings of love and attraction would filter through the steps. Then she made her point: "Now, here's a quote from M. Pinnis, who wrote *Di geshikhte fun der yidisher literatur* (*The History of Yiddish Literature*). He says 'not until the middle of the nineteenth century, when early marriages were abandoned and secular literature began to penetrate even to the most backward sections of the people, acquainting them for the first time with such terms as "love" and "beloved," the first Yiddish love songs were born.' I don't know where he gets his theory," Rubin would remark. "Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? He wrote this in the 1920s, when he should have known better."

She went on: "And now here's a quote from Professor Leo Wiener, author of another such volume, from Harvard, no less, and he writes 'The word "love" does not exist in the Judeo-German Yiddish dictionary. And, whenever that feeling, with which they have

been acquainted only since the middle of the [nineteenth] century, is to be named, the Jews have to use the German word, "liebe.'" Her parting shot: "Did you ever hear anything so klutzish?" But behind her blunt opinions lay indisputable insight: "Instead of seeking the facts among the lower strata of the people, [scholars] looked among the higher and middle groups, the economically secure religious patriarchal environment, which, up to the period mentioned, contributed very little to our secular folksong."

Rubin could also be kind. She lavished praise on those who set the stage for her work, scholars such as Y.L. Cahan, who collected large numbers of songs in the first four decades of the twentieth century (even though, in contrast to Ruth, he lacked basic music notation skills). Cahan wrote, "Secular Yiddish love songs were current among the people in the Pale of Settlement during the first half of the nineteenth century, and the passion of true love was known to the Jewish community." Ruth backed up this view by referring to Mendele, often called the "grandfather of Yiddish literature," who was born in 1836 and grew up during the period Cahan described, and wrote about the love songs he heard as a child.

Meticulous scholarship and a no-nonsense approach was a way of life for Ruth, who not only knew virtually all of the literature on Jewish music, folklore, history, and sociology, but could reference vast quantities of cross-cultural material as well. One of her favorite pastimes was finding parallels between Yiddish cultural expression and the folklore and literature of other peoples. One bit of research she loved to quote was her discovery of the roots of the popular Yiddish workers' anthem "*Un du akerst*" (So you plow) in a poem written by Percy Bysshe Shelley in England, in 1819.

SWANBOATS AND SONGS

I was in high school when I first became aware of Ruth's work, having borrowed her *Treasury of Jewish Folksong* (1950) from the Free Library in Philadelphia. I remember looking at the photograph of the author on the cover and thinking how little she resembled the flamboyant older men and women whom I had come to associate with Yiddish music. In contrast to vaudeville-style Yiddish singers like Molly Picon, or Aaron Lebedeff, or Menasha Skulnik, whose faces I remembered from my grandfather's sheet music, she looked far more sophisticated and intellectual. I finally met her in Boston in 1982, and shortly afterward I heard her speak at the Yiddish Book Center. Her lecture, an extraordinary blend of scholarship and entertainment, was inspiring. Totally revved up to redouble my own efforts to rescue lost Jewish music, I jumped right in during the question-and-answer period and asked her what I considered to be an innocent question: "Where can someone looking to do the kind of work you do find grants, stipends, and other financial support?" She stared right at me and said sternly, "Young man, don't ever expect any support for work like this. No one in the Jewish community cares about it. Everything I have done, I have done while supporting myself with other work. You will do it because you believe in it."

Later we were invited to the home of one of the Center's supporters, and after lunch I volunteered to do the dishes. To my great surprise Ruth joined me, and within a few minutes we were singing Yiddish songs together as the suds flew. At that moment I realized there was, in fact, help and support on its way – from none other than Ruth Rubin.

Every time I visited New York in the years following, I would stop in at Ruth's apartment by Gramercy Park. We would often sit out in the elegant private park and talk, after she proudly opened the wrought-iron gate with her personal key. We collaborated on several concerts and taught together at Klezkamp. I invited her to Boston, where she offered weeklong seminars on Yiddish folksong as part of the New England Conservatory Summer School, and during those visits she really became part of my family. I will always relish the memory of the summer afternoon when she took my then three-year-old daughter Leah for a ride on the swanboats in Boston's Public Garden, and I was delighted to be the presenter when she received her honorary doctorate from the New England Conservatory in 1993. In 1997, while pursuing my own PhD at Wesleyan University, I organized a concert so that my students could meet her and, at the same time, entertain the residents at the Mamaroneck Jewish Home, where she resided in her last years. Even then, after Alzheimer's had robbed her of much of her memory, she waxed eloquent on Yiddish folksong and, at age 90, led the dancing.

A LASTING RECORD

The posthumously published Yiddish Folksongs from the *Ruth Rubin Archive* (Wayne State University Press, 2007) is a musical expansion of Ruth's previous milestone volume, *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong* (1963). Ruth worked on the Archive manuscript for 20 years, until her mental acuity began to deteriorate. The pages lay dormant until scholars Mark Slobin of Wesleyan University and YIVO's Chana Mlotek secured permission to complete it and bring it out. In the new book, Rubin traces the Jewish life-cycle structure she often used in her lectures, dividing songs into categories such as lullabies, children's songs, courting songs, love songs, wedding songs, and work songs. She also includes chapters on Hasidic nigunim, anti-Hasidic satires, and drinking songs.

The new volume is the first to have a full chapter on songs about "Soldiers, Sweethearts, and Wars," a subject Ruth took very seriously. "The *recruitin* relates to a time in Russia in 1827, when the czarist government issued a decree of 25 years of mandatory service for all ethnic groups. Very few of these conscripts survived. If the community failed to produce grown men, it was permitted to send children; otherwise, the czarist government would destroy the communities. Going into the army was nothing that anybody wanted to do; they would do anything to avoid it. So this decree was death. And some of these characters who survived the 25 years were called, 'Nicolaevsky Soldatn' [i.e., Russian soldiers, no longer Jews]. And when they came back they were thoroughly assimilated; they were like peasants, because they were taken as children, and they forgot their Yiddish and everything else. It was a tragedy among the people."

The Archive also includes eloquent tributes from performers, scholars, and activists who continue her work, as well as a CD of "The Old Country," the extraordinary collection of field recordings Ruth prepared for Folkways Records in 1964 under the direction of Moe Asch, Sholem Asch's son. The recording, featuring a mere fraction of the material she collected, provides a tantalizing glimpse into the priceless resources captured just in the nick of time by a scholar and troubadour who grasped her mission and true calling in life.

Hankus Netsky is an ethnomusicologist, composer, teacher and musician.

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SONG TEXTS

AFN YAM VEYET A VINTELE **THE WIND BLOWS ON THE SEA**

As sung by Ruth Rubin, New York, 1957

Afn yam veyet a vintele, veyet a vintele,
Un di khvalyes shlogn, un di khvalyes shlogn
Ikh hob zikh farlibt in a sheyn yingele
Un hob nit far vemen tsu zogn.

Ikh hob zikh gebovet a shtibele in vald
Arum un arum mit fentster
Fun ale kartinkes vos ikh hob gezen
Bistu bay mir der shenster

Tsi libstu mikh fun tifn hartsn
Tsi libstu nor mayn sheyn ponim
Du host mikh gor avekgekoylet
Azoy vi di rekhte gazlonim

Az a gazlen koylet a mentshn
Koylet er mit a meser
Du host mikh gekoylet ober nisht derkoylet
Bist fun a gazlen nokh greser

The wind blows on the sea
And the waves beat against the shore
I've fallen in love with a handsome young man
And can't tell anybody

I built myself a house in the forest
Surrounded by windows
Of all the pictures that I have seen
Yours is the most handsome.

Do you love me deep in your heart
Or do you only love my pretty face
You have injured me
Just like a true bandit.

When a bandit murders a person,
He kills them with a knife.
You have murdered me, but not finished me off,
You are worse than a murderer!

PAPIR IZ ZIKH VAYS **AS PAPER IS WHITE**

Transcribed and translated from Bronya Sakina by Michael Alpert, 1982, Brooklyn

Ou, papir iz zikh vays, en tinet iz zikh shvarts,
Nukh dir mayn zis-leybn, s'brent in mir mayn 'arts,
Ikh volt nish geshlufn dray nekht derekh-ayn-ont,
A kish tun dayn sheyn peynim en
dekh oltn ba dayn hont.

Oy, nekhtn of der nakht bin ikh oyf a khusmul geveyn,
En fil sheyne meydelaikh hob ikh dortn gezeyn,
Fil sheyne meydelaikh, en mayn Sonye kimt mir for,
Mit ire shvartsinke eygelaikh, mit ir sheynem razgovor.

Dayn talye, dayn figure, dayn sheyn eyd'ler fason
In maynem 'artsn brent a fayer, keyner
zeyt nisht un deym flom,
In maynem 'artsn brent a fayer, keyner
zeyt nisht deym royekh,
Oy, dray yur tsi vartn oyf dir, ikh hob
shoyn nisht kayn koyekh.

As paper is white and ink is black.
My heart is burning for you, my dearest
I'd go sleepless for three nights on end
Just to kiss your lovely face and
hold your hand.

Last night I was at the groom's dinner,
And many beautiful girls did I see there,
But all those lovely girls don't come close to my Sonye
With her dark eyes and
charming conversation.

Your waist, your figure, your refined manner —
In my heart there burns a fire, but no one sees the flame
In my heart there burns a fire, but
no one sees the smoke.
I haven't the strength to wait
three years for you.

Oy, eyner beyt of kleyder, en der tsveyter beyt of gelt,
En der driter beyt oyf kinder, en
der ferder af a giter velt,
En ikh beyt af a shtshibale of deym graz deym grinem,
Az ikh mit mayn tayer-leybn zoln voynen in derinen.

Oy, adentsmult en adentsmult volt
ikh gevist fin ayn velt,
Ikh volt shtendik geyakert en gezeyen dus feld
Mit fil fargenign volt ikh di tsayt farbrakht,
Tsi zitsn en tsi shmishn mit mayn Sonyen of der nakht.

Oy, gotenyu, gotenyu, di varf mekh nisht arup,
Di glaykh mekh nisht tsi tsi kayn boym en tsi kayn slup,
Dus tsveygele finem beyemele se
tseblit zekh zeyer sheyn,
Vi gliklekh volt ikh zikh geshetst,
tsi der khipe mit dir geyn.

Nor shifale, shifale, shif zikh nor glaykh,
En shif mikh ariber fin yener zayt taykh,
En dernukh dem zolsti unoybn tsi loyfn en ts'i shvimen,
Nit derleybn zol der mentsh, vos er't
ge'ot a kheylik in derinen.

One person prays for clothes,
another for money,
A third for children, and the fourth for a better world
But I pray for a small house on the green meadow,
That my beloved and I might dwell in it.

For it's then I'd truly know
what life can be.
I'd constantly plow and sow the field,
With great pleasure I'd spend my time
Sitting and talking with my beloved at night.

Dear God, don't let me down.
Don't liken me to a tree and a stump
The branch grows and blooms,
lovely, from the tree.
How happy I would feel if I could
go to the khupe with you.

Sail on, little boat, sail on true,
And carry me over from the
river's far shore,
Then may you start to dart and float,
Cursed be the one who had a part in preventing all this.

UTER TUTER, TALMEN TUTER **THE WIND BLOWS ON THE SEA**

As chanted by Israel Plattner, Toronto, 1956. Third stanza collected from Bronya Sakina by Michael Alpert.

Uter Tuter, Talmen Tuter
Tuter Talmen, Hersh Zalmen
Zalmen Hersh, boym kersh
Kersh boym, gvire shloym
Shloym gvire, gelt ashire
Ashire gelt, oylem feld
Feld oylem, leymener goylem!

Belfer, gehelfer, tseknakte kneydkekh,
Zay a kapore far ale meydlekh!

Limene, marants, kim tsim tants
Vi bisti geveyn? Of yener velt.
Vus hosti gefinen? A baytele mit gelt.
Farvus host es nisht gebrakht?
Kh'ob es nisht...gekent...fartrugn!

Oy, dem rebns spodik brent
Zol er brenen vi a fayer
Zol er visn gelt iz tayer
Zol er visn gelt tsu shoynen
Zol er visn mitn/der vayb tsu voynen!

Otter, Tatar, Talmen Tatar
Tatar Talmen, Hersh Zalmen
Zalmen Hersh, tree, cherry
Cherry, tree, strength, total
Total, strength, money, wealth
Wealth, money, people, field
Field, people — clay fool!

Teacher's helper, cracked kneydlekh
Get played for a fool by all the girls!

Lemon, orange, come to the dance.
Where were you? In the next world.
What did you find? A purse full of money.
Why didn't you bring it?
Because...I couldn't...carry it!

Oy! the teacher's hat is burning!
May it (he) burn like a fire
May he learn that money's dear
May he learn to save up for life
May he learn to live with his wife!

FUNEM SHEYNEM VORTSL AROYS

OUT OF THE BEAUTIFUL ROOT

As sung by Ruth Rubin, New York, 1962

Funem sheynem vortsl aroys,
Iz a sheyner boym aroys.
Boym funem vortsl, vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem boym aroys,
Iz a sheyner tsvayg aroys.
Tsvayg funem boym, boym funem vortsl,
Vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem tsvayg aroys,
Is a sheyner nest aroys.
Nest funem tsvayg, tsvayg funem boym,
Boym funem vortsl, vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem nest aroys,
Iz a sheyner foygl aroys.
Foygl funem nest, nest funem tsvayg,
Tsvayg funem boym, boym funem vortsl,
Vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem foygl aroys,
Iz a sheyner feder aroys.
Feder funem foygl, foygl funem nest,
Nest funem tsvayg, tsvayg funem boym,
Boym funem vortsl, vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem feder aroys,
Iz a sheyner kishn aroys.
Kishn funem feder, feder funem foygl,
Foygl funem nest, nest funem tsvayg,
Tsvayg funem boym, boym funem vorstl,
Vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Funem sheynem kishn aroys,
Iz a sheyner kholem aroys.
Kholem funem kishn, kishn funem feder,
Feder funem foygl, foygl funem nest,
Nest funem tsvayg, tsvayg funem boym,
Boym funem vortsl, vortsl fun der erd,
Zint s'iz bashafn himl un erd.

Out of the beautiful root,
A beautiful tree grew.
Tree from the root and root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

From the beautiful tree,
A lovely branch grew.
Branch from the tree, tree from the root,
Root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

From the lovely branch,
There came a pretty nest.
Nest from the branch, branch from the tree,
Tree from the root, root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

From the pretty nest,
A beautiful bird was born.
Bird from the nest, nest from the branch,
Branch from the tree, tree from the root,
Root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

From the beautiful bird,
A fine feather came.
Feather came from the bird, bird from the nest,
Nest from the branch, branch from the tree,
Tree from the root, root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

From the fine feather,
A lovely pillow was made.
Pillow from the feather, feather from the bird,
Bird from the nest, nest from the branch,
Branch from the tree, tree from the root,
Root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

Out of the lovely pillow,
A sweet dream was born.
Dream from the pillow, pillow from the feather,
Feather from the bird, bird from the nest,
Nest from the branch, branch from the tree,
Tree from the root, root from the earth,
Since heaven and earth were created.

MAYN HARTS, MAYN HARTS VEYNT IN MIR

MY HEART WEEPS WITHIN ME

As sung by Israel Freed, New York, 1967. Last verse collected by Y.L. Cahan.

Mayn harts, mayn harts veynt in mir,
Az ikh darf zikh sheydn itst mit dir;
Mayne gedanken – ahin-aher,
Mit dir tsu sheydn iz mir shver.

Vu zhe forstu, mayn zis-lebn,
Vu forstu fun mir avek?
Vu vel ikh dikh darfn zukhn?
Zog zhe mir, oyf velkhn veg?

Fun ershtn derfele, fun ershtn shtetele,
Dos ershte brivele shrayb tsu mir;
Betn bet ikh dikh, mayn zis-lebn;
Nit fargesn zolst' in mir!

Vest kumen tsu a vaserl,
Zolstu zikh nisht dertrenken;
Vest kumen an ander meydele,
Zolstu mikh gedenken!

My heart weeps within me
Since I must now part with you.
My thoughts - this way, that way,
To part from you is terrible.

Where are you going, my sweetheart,
Where are you going away from me?
Where shall I look for you?
Tell me, which way will you take?

From the first village, from the first town,
Write your first letter to me.
I beg you, my sweetheart,
You must not forget me!

Should you come to a stream,
You must not drown.
Should another maiden come,
You must think of me!

FUN GROYS DASAD LEYG IKH ZIKH SHLOFN

IN GREAT SORROW I LAY ME DOWN

As sung by Anna Berkowitz, Montréal, 1955 and 1961

Fun groys dasad leyg ikh zikh shlofn,
Un mayne hent leyg ikh tsukopns.
Un af ales hob ikh kharote,
Ober tsurik kon ikh nit khapn.

Khapn, khapn tsurik kon ikh nit,
Vayl mayne hent zaynen farbunden.
Un efenen mayn biter harts,
Aroyszen voltn zikh di vundn.

Di vundn fun mayn hartsn,
Ikh kon zeyn keynem nit antdekn,
Un fun mayn lebn oystsushraybn,
Kayn tint un feder volt nit klekn.

Oyb tint un feder volt shoyn yo klekn,
Dan voltn mayne hent nit stayenen.
Un far dir, mayn zis lebn.
Volt ikh di gantse velt stradayenen.

Foter shtey oyf fun dayn keyver
Un her zikh oys tsu mayne neytn.
Durkh a libe gey ikh arumet,
Azoy vi an arestant in keytn.

An arestant er geyt in keytn.
Mistame iz er dokh take vert.
Un az ikh gey arum in keytn,
Mistame iz dokh mir fun got bashert

In great sorrow I lay me down,
My head in my hands.
I regret everything,
But I can take nothing back.

I cannot go back,
For my hands are tied.
Were I to open my heart,
You would see the wounds.

The wounds of my heart,
I cannot reveal them to anyone
And to write of my life?
There would not be enough ink or pens.

Even if there were enough,
My hands would fail me.
And for you, my sweet love,
I would suffer all over the world.

Father, get up from your grave
And hear of my troubles.
Because of a love,
I go around like a prisoner in chains.

A prisoner is put in chains,
Probably he deserves it.
And as I am in chains,
Probably God has willed it this way.

IKH HOB NISHT KEYN SHANDE

I'M NOT ASHAMED

As sung by Fanye Halpern, New York, 1955

Ikh hob nisht keyn shande, ikh hob nisht keyn bushe,
Di profesye'z mir gekumen biyerushe
Ikh zol nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen,
Ikh zol nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen.

Ver hot nisht gekent mayn mame Zlatke
Vos ayedn tog flegt zi in an ander yatke
Kholile nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen,
Kholile nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen.

Un fun mayn tatn hot ayederer gehert
Itsikl pabidnik vos hot lib bloyz fremde ferd
Er meynt nisht tsu ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen,
Er meynt nisht tsu ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen.

Un mayn shvester hobn ale gekent
Khanele di kuritse mit di lange hent
Zi flegt nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen,
Zi flegt nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen.

Iber hundred yor vel ikh ale mayne kinder
Iberlozn a tsavoe yedern bazinder,
Zey zoln nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen,
Zey zoln nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen.

I'm not ashamed, I'm not embarrassed,
I inherited my profession.
Not to steal, but to take,
Not to steal, but to take.

Who didn't know my mother, Zlatke?
Every day in another meat market,
She wouldn't steal, God forbid, only take,
She wouldn't steal, God forbid, only take.

Everybody has heard about my father,
Little Itzik, who fancied only other people's horses.
He never meant to steal, he just took,
He never meant to steal, he just took.

Now, everyone knew my sister,
"Khanele the Shorty" with the long arms.
She didn't used to steal, she just took,
She didn't used to steal, she just took.

In a hundred years, to all of my children,
I shall leave my will with special instructions:
They should never steal, only take,
They should never steal, only take.

HOB IKH MIR A SHPAN

I HAVE A COACH

As sung by Feygl Sultan, New York, 1948

Hob ikh mir a shpan,
Gedekt mit shvartsn leder.
Tsvey leybn ferd,
Un fir reder.

Un di reder dreyen nit
Un di ferd geyen nit
Un di vayb zi shilt zikh
Un a glezl bronfn vilt zikh.
Ze ikh mir a shteyn
Zits ikh mir un veyn...

Volt ikh geven a soykher,
Hob ikh nit keyn skhoyre.
Volt ikh geven a melamed,
Ken ikh nit keyn toyre.

Un di reder...

Volt ikh geven a shuster,
Hob ikh nit keyn ol.
Volt ikh geven a khazn,
Hob ikh nit keyn kol.

Un di reder...

I have a coach
Covered with black leather,
I have two horses like lions,
And four wheels.

But the wheels don't roll
And the horses won't go
And the wife is cursing
And need a glass of whiskey.
I see a stone
And I sit on it and cry.

I would have been a merchant,
But I have no merchandise.
I would have been a teacher,
But I do not know any Torah.

But the wheels don't roll...

I could have been a cobbler,
But I do not have an awl.
I could have been a cantor,
But I haven't got a voice.

But the wheels don't roll...

EYDER IKH LEYG MIR SHLOFN

NO SOONER DO I LIE DOWN TO SLEEP

As sung by Ruth Rubin, New York, 1948

Eyder ikh leyg mir shlofn,
Darf ikh shoy'n oyfshteyn,
Mit mayne kranke beyner
Tsu der arbet geyn.

Tsu got vel ikh veynen
Mit a groyse geveyn:
Tsu vos ikh bin geboyrn
A neytorin tsu zayn!

Kh'kum shpet tsu der arbet,
S'iz vayt der veg,
Shlogt men mir op
Far halbe teg.

Tsu got vel ikh veynen...

Nodlen vern tsebrokhn
Fuftsn a minut,
Di finger vern tseshtokn,
S'rint fun zey dos blut.

Tsu got vel ikh veynen...

Ikh layd shtendik hunger,
Kh'hob nisht vos tsu esn,
Vel ikh gelt betn,
Heyst men mir fargesn.

Tsu got vel ikh veynen...

No sooner do I lie down to sleep
I already must get up.
And with my aching bones,
Must go off to work.

To God I will weep
With a great cry:
Why was I born
To be a seamstress?

I come late to work,
As my journey is long.
And they dock me
For half a day's pay.

To God I will weep...

Needles get broken,
Fifteen every minute.
Fingers get stuck
And blood runs from them.

To God I will weep...

I'm always hungry,
I have nothing to eat.
If I ask for my pay,
They tell me to forget it.

To God I will weep...

SHTEY IKH MIR BA MAYN TATN OYF DER TIR **I'M STANDING AT THE THRESHOLD OF MY FATHER'S DOOR**

As sung by Basye Axelbank, Shrub Oak, NY, 1958

Shtey ikh mir ba man tatn oyf der tir
Vus hob ikh du tsu zorgn
Du geyt derekh mayn sheyn gold in zilber
In zugt mir a git morgn.

T'vuser a git morgn
Aza git yur
Zay gezint mome leybn
Mit dayne blondene hor.

Nit azoy di blonde hor
Vi di shvartse oygn
S'iz nor do aza sheyn gold in zilber
Vos zol tsu maynem hartsn toygn.

In maynem hartsn brent a fayerl
Keyner ken es nit farleshn
Az ikh dermon zikh in dir mayn tayer leybn
Kon ikh in dir nit fargesn.

Oyfn pripetshik ligt a fayerl
Finem koymen geyt a royekh
Az ikh dermon zikh in dir mayn zis leybn
Geyt mir oys mayn koyekh.

Tsi veynen vel ikh mome leybn
Nokh dertsi tsi klugn
Aza sheyn gold in zilber vi kh'hob ungevoyern
In got nor veyst tsi kh'vel shoyhn hubn.

I'm standing at the threshold of my father's door,
What do I have to worry about?
When my beautiful "gold and silver" passes by
And bids me a "good morning."

Well that kind of a "good morning"
Deserves a "good year" in reply
Be well my dearest love,
With your lovely blond hair.

Not only the blond hair,
But the black eyes –
Where else is there such a lovely treasure,
Which is so pleasing to my heart.

In my heart a little flame is burning
Which no one can put out.
When I think of you my dearest
I can never put you out of my mind.

On the hearth a little fire is smoldering
From the chimney, smoke drifts.
When I think of you my sweet life,
I feel weak and helpless.

I shall weep, oh mother dear,
And I shall also wail
For I have lost such a lovely creature
Only God knows if I will ever find it again.

OY DI MEYDELEKH, DI FONFERONKES **OH, THOSE LOUD HONKING GIRLS**

Collected by Ruth Rubin and Y.L. Cahan

Oy di meydelekh di fonferonkes,
Zey geyen af khasenes un tantsn polkes.
Polke-mazur iz zeyer lebn,
Zey hobn dem klezmerl keyn groshn tsugebn.

Pinsker meydelekh un varshavyankes,
Tantsn tantsn zey vi galagankes.
Un dos rufn zey oykh a lebn,
Kadokhes hobn zey dem klezmer tsugebn!

– Oy klezmer, klezmer, shpil mir sheyn,
Ikh vel dir gebn a groshn meyn.
– A groshn meyn iz nisht keyn sakh,
Ikh zol dir shpiln a gantse nakht.

A gantse nakht iz kayn sakone,
Me tor nisht khasene hobn far an almone.
An almone hot kalte fis –
A sheyn meydele iz tsuker-zis!

Oh, those loud honking girls,
They go to weddings just to dance the polka.
Polka-mazurka is what they live for,
And they never tip the band!

Girls from Pinsk, girls from Warsaw,
They dance just like turkeys.
And you call this a living?
All they give the musicians is a fever!

– Oy, klezmer, klezmer, play nice for me
And I'll tip you a penny.
– A penny's not much,
I'm supposed to play for you a whole night long?

A whole night long is not so bad,
If you don't marry a widow.
A widow has cold feet –
A pretty girl is sugar-sweet!

FUN VANEN KUMT IR, GUTE BRIDER? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM, GOOD BROTHERS?

Collected by Ruth Rubin and Y.L. Cahan

– Fun vanen kumt ir, gute brider?
– Fun der kolomeyke, fun der kolomeyke!
Hot ir nish' gezen a sheyne meyd!
Mitn nomen Leyke?

Yo gezen, nish' gezen,
Viln mir aykh nit zogn, viln mir aykh nit zogn,
Tut a khap a ferd un vogn un tut ir nokhyogn!
Tut a khap a ferd un vogn un tut ir nokhyogn!

Kumen mir arayn, in kretshme arayn,
Heyst men undz zetsn, heyst men undz zetsn.
Umgesheylte barabulyes heyst men undz esn.
Umgesheylte barabulyes heyst men undz esn.

Umgesheylte barabulyes
Zenen zeyer mies, zenen zeyer mies!
Afn oyvn zitst a meyd, zi iz tsiker-zis!
Afn oyvn zitst a meyd, zi iz tsiker-zis!

– Hey, du, du, ruk zikh tsu,
Zets zikh lebn mir, zets zikh lebn mir.
Un az du vilst a libe firn, fir-zhe nor mit mir.
Un az du vilst a libe firn, fir-zhe nor mit mir!

– Where do you come from, good brothers?
– From little Kolomeyke!
Have you seen a pretty girl
By the name of Leyke?

Maybe we've seen her, maybe we haven't,
We're not telling.
Grab a horse and wagon and chase after her!
Grab a horse and wagon and chase after her!

They brought us in, into the inn
And told us to take a seat.
Unpeeled potatoes is what they told us to eat.
Unpeeled potatoes is what they told us to eat.

Unpeeled potatoes
Are really nasty!
On the oven sits a girl who's sugar-sweet.
On the oven sits a girl who's sugar-sweet.

– Hey, you, yes you, relax,
Sit down by me.
And if you'd like to fall in love, just fall in love with me!
And if you'd like to fall in love, just fall in love with me!

SHLOF IN FREYDN/DORME FILHINHO SLEEP IN DELIGHT

Collected by Ruth Rubin, Patterson, NJ, 1961.

Based on a poem by Abraham Goldfaden, Portuguese translation and music by Nicole Borger.

Dorme filhinho,
Meu passarinho
Fecha o teu olhinho
Dorme filhinho, meu bebezinho
Como um passarinho

Que o anjo da guarda
Proteja o teu sono
Que vc durma em paz
Que ele estenda suas asas
E cubra o teu berço
Durma meu rapaz

Shlof in freydn
Veys fun keyn leydn
Shlof mayn tayer kind
Shlof in freydn
Veys fun keyn leydn
Schlof zikh oys gezint

Sleep my little son
My little bird
Close your eyes
Sleep my little son, my little baby
Like a little bird

May the guardian angel
Protect your sleep
And may you sleep in peace
May he open his wings
And cover your crib
Sleep my boy

Sleep in delight
May you never know sorrow
Sleep my dear child
Sleep in delight
May you never know sorrow
Sleep in good health.

KUM IKH TSU MAYN GELIBTER FROY

I COME TO MY BELOVED WIFE

As sung by Shmerke Kaczerginski, New York, 1948

Kum ikh tsu mayn gelibter froy, gefin ikh eyms un tsvey:
In kikh shteyen shtivl: eyms-tsvay-dray!
Freg ikh bay mayn gelibter froy:
"Vos far a shtivl zenen zey?"
Entfert zi mir: "Shtekshikhlekh,
Di mame shikt mir zey."
Shtekshikhlekh, mit hoykhe kholevkes,
Oy vey, dos harts tut mir vey.
Az ikh bin dayn man, tsu vos badarfstu zey?

Kum ikh tsu mayn gelibter froy, gefin ikh eyms un tsvey:
Afn vant hengen shverdn: eyms-tsvay-dray!
Freg ikh bay mayn gelibter froy:
"Vos far a shverdn zenen zey?"
Entfert zi mir:
"Hakmesers, di mame shikt mir zey."
Hakmesers, mit lange frendzelekh,
Oy vey, dos harts tut mir vey.
Az ikh bin dayn man, tsu vos badarfstu zey?

Kum ikh tsu mayn gelibter froy, gefin ikh eyms un tsvey:
In bet lign kepelekh: eyms-tsvay-dray!
Freg ikh bay mayn gelibter froy:
"Vos far a kepelekh zenen zey?"
Entfert zi mir: "Kinderlekh, di mame shikt mir zey."
Kinderlekh, mit shvartse vontselekh,
Oy vey, dos harts tut mir vey.
Az ikh bin dayn man, tsu vos badarfstu zey?

I come to my beloved wife and find out right away:
Boots standing in the kitchen: one-two-three!
I ask my beloved wife:
"What's with the boots?"
She answers, "They are slippers,
Which Mother sent to me."
Slippers with high tops,
Oh woe, my heart is in pain,
If I am your husband, what do you need them for?

I come to my beloved wife and find out right away:
Swords hanging on the wall: one-two-three!
I ask my beloved wife:
"What's with the swords?"
She answers, "They are chopping knives,
Which Mother sent to me."
Chopping knives, with long tassels,
Oh woe, my heart is in pain,
If I am your husband, what do you need them for?

I come to my beloved wife and find out right away:
Heads lying in the bed: one-two-three!
I ask my beloved wife:
"What's with the heads?"
She answers, "They are children, which Mother sent to me."
Children, with black moustaches,
Oh woe, my heart is in pain,
If I am your husband, what do you need them for?

OY VEY MAME, IKH SHPIL A LIBE

OH WOE IS ME, MOTHER, I HAVE A LOVE

As sung by Ita Taub, New York, 1962

Oy vey mame, ikh shpil a libe,
In fin der libe tit mir vey mayn harts.
Oy, efnt mentshn, ayere oygn,
Vet ir zeyn 'zoy vi koyl iz shvarts.

Shpatsirn bin ikh mit mayn gelibtn gegangen,
Di pagode iz geveyn shreklekh kolt.
Oy, oysgetun hob ikh mayn zaydn tikhale
In tsgibindn hob ikh im zayn holdz.

Shpatsirn bin ikh mit mayn gelibtn gegongen,
Fargongen zenen mir in a tifyn vold.
Oy, hot men im gevolt koylen,
Intergeshtelt hob ikh man holdz.

Oy, er iz avek, a khusn vern,
Shteln vel ikh zikh intern fentster ba ir.
Oy, vi nor men vet dortn teler brekhn,
A manse mome, vel ikh zikh untin.

Oh woe is me, mother, I have a love,
And from love, my heart is in pain.
Oh, people open up your eyes,
Then you will see how black coal can be.

I went walking with my beloved,
The weather was terribly cold.
I took off my little silken kerchief
And tied it around his neck.

I went walking with my beloved,
We went deep into the forest.
Oh, there, robbers tried to kill him,
And I offered them my throat instead.

Now he is gone off to be engaged to another,
I shall stand beneath her window,
And then they will break plates,
Mother, I will kill myself!

KOL MEKADESH SHVII/MENUKHO VESIMKHO

ALL WHO MAKE HOLY THE SABBATH/COMFORT AND JOY

Collected by Ruth Rubin

Kol mekadesh shvii karui loy,
Kol shoymershabos kados mekhaleloy,
Sekhoroy harbey meyoyd al pi fooloy,
"Ish al makhaneyhu, veish al digloy."

Oyhavay Adoyschem hamekhakim levinyon arieyl,
Beyoym hashabos sisu vesimkhu.
Ki mekabley matan nakhaliyeyl,
Gam seu yedeykhem koydesh veimru lokEyl,
"Borukh Adoyschem asher nosan
Menukho, oy, leamoy yisroeyl."

Doyrshey Adoyschem zera Avrohom oyhavoy,
Hamakharim lotseys min hashabos umemaharim lovoy,
Usemeykhem leshomroy uloreyv eyruvov,
"Zeh hayoym oso Adoyschem
Nogilo venismekho voy."

Zikhru toyras moyshe bemitsvas shabos gersu,
Kharuso layoym hashevii kekhalo
beyn reyoyseho meshubotso,
Tehorim yiroshuho vikadeshuho
Bemaamar kol asher oso,
"Vayekhal Eloykim bayoym hashevii
Melakhtoy asher oso."

Bam bim bam bim bam...

Oy, oy menukhu, oy, oy vesimkhu, oyr layehudim.
A matune sheyn hot indz Got gegey'n,
Tsi farzisin indzer lebn
Dem shabes koydesh gegeb
Oy, zingt shoy n yidelekh, nishtike lidelekh
Fargest in ayere tsures ale, l'kuved shabes di kale

Zingt shoy n ale menukhu, zingt shoy n ale vesimkhu
Zingt shoy n ale menukhu, oy vesimkhu, oyr layehudim.

Whoever fittingly hallows the Sabbath
And guards it properly from desecration –
Their reward is very great, corresponding to their deed:
[As it is written] "Every one at their own camp,
At their own banner."

Lovers of God who await the building of the Temple
Rejoice and be glad on the Sabbath day.
As if receiving the gift of God's inheritance [the Torah]
Raise your hands in holiness and say to God,
"Blessed be God who gave
Rest to His people Israel."

Seekers of God, seed of Abraham God's beloved,
Who delay leaving the Sabbath and rush to enter,
Glad to safeguard it and set its boundary--
"This is the day God has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Remember Moses' Torah as its
Sabbath commandment is explained,
Engraved with teachings for the Seventh Day
Like a veiled bride among friends.
Pure ones bequeath and hallow it,
Saying, "All that God has made..."
"On the Seventh Day, God completed
The work that God had done."

Rest and joy, light for the Jews.
God has given us a beautiful gift
To sweeten our lives –
The holy Sabbath.
So Jews, sing happy songs,
Forget all your troubles, in honor of the Sabbath bride.

So everyone sing "rest," everyone sing "and joy,"
Everyone sing "rest and joy, light for the Jews."

UN AZ DER HEYLIKER MOSHIAKH VET KUMEN AND WHEN THE HOLY MESSIAH COMES

As sung by Josh Waletzky, Rhinebeck, NY, late 1960s

Un az der heyliker moshiekh vet kumen
Vel ikh zayn der ershter af der shlakht.
Af di daytshn vet men zikh nemen
Un zey shlogn tog vi nakht.
Gor on pulver un on blay,
Koyln veln flien iber aln.
Un az der rebe vet nokh tsugebn
A posek derbay,
Vi shtroy veln di daytshn faln.

Un es vet nokh tsuhelfn
Yankev, Danil,
Zindl, Grindl, Khayem, Smil,
Berl, Shmerl, Getsl, Azril,
Veln firn dos gantse krentsl.
Keyle, Beyle, Yente, Sose,
Khane, Brayne, Yakhne, Dvose,
Sime, Blume, Pesi un Rose
Veln tantsn dos mitsve-tentsl.

Tshiri-biri-bom...

Der rebe vet zayn der komendant.
Er vet kiomedirn ahin un aher.
Un ikh vel zayn zayn atyudant,
Di khsidim dos militer.
Un az der rebe vet onfangen fun
Toyre tsu shmaysn,
Tsu bavayzn zayne havayes,
Azoy veln di khsidim onhoybn tsu shisn
Af di drabes, af di hultayes.

Un es vet nokh tsuhelfn...

Di daytshn, zey vern dokh poshet dil –
Zey veysn nit vos zey zoln tin.
Zey hobn a tants vos heyst 'shmadril':
Eyner loyft aher, un der anderer ahin.
Un di daytshke vos tsimblt af dem shlambil
Vet fayerdike kneydlekh esn;
Un az der rebe vet aroyfleygn zayn lape af ir,
Vet zi in tsimbl fargesn.

Un es vet nokh tsuhelfn...

And when the holy Messiah comes,
I will be the first into battle.
We will start in on the assimilating Jews
And rain blows on them day and night.
Totally without powder and lead,
Bullets will fly everywhere.
And when the Rebbe throws a passage from
Scripture into the fray,
The assimilationists will fall like straw.

And helping out will be
Jacob, Daniel,
Zindl, Grindl, Chaim, Samuel,
Berl, Shmerl, Getsl, Azriel,
Will be the ringleaders.
Keyle, Beyle, Yente, Sose,
Hannah, Brayne, Yakhne, Dvose,
Sime, Flower, Pesi and Rosie
Will dance the Mitzvah Dance.

Chiri-bim-bom...

The Rebbe will be the commander-in-chief,
He'll command this way and that way.
And I will be his adjutant,
The Hasidim – the troops.
And when the Rebbe goes into a
Torah-thumping sermon,
Gesticulating wildly,
Then the Hasidim will open fire
On the slobs, the apostates.

And helping out will be...

The assimilationists will simply get confused,
They won't know what to do.
They have a dance called 'Shmadrille':
One runs this way, the other one runs that way.
And the assimilated woman tsimbling the 'shlambil'
Will eat flaming dumplings,
And when the Rebbe lays his paw on her,
She'll forget all about her tsimbling.

And helping out will be...

O'BRIEN

After Philip Ney

Several variants collected by Ruth Rubin

O'Brien, gib mir a glezele yayin, right now,
O'Brien, gib mir a glezele yayin, right now.
Yayin yesamakh levav eynesh,
There's nothing without a blemish,
There's nothing without a blemish,
Which nobody can deny.

Oy, tsores, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
Khotsh leyg zikh un die!
Yeshues venekhomes omeyn-selo,
Adoshem is a jolly good fellow,
Adoshem is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, vos hert zikh
Nit keyn a gmiles-khesed layen right now
O'Brien, vos hert zikh
Nit keyn a gmiles-khesed layen right now
Al tastir khasdekho mimeni,
I'm broke without a penny,
I'm broke without a penny,
Which nobody can deny.

Oy, tsores, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
Yeshues venekhomes omeyn-selo,
Adoshem is a jolly good fellow,
Adoshem is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, ikh muz
Khasene makhn mayn Khayen, right now.
O'Brien, ikh muz
Khasene makhn mayn Khayen, right now.
Es biti hatsnua shomorti,
She's somewhat around forty,
She's somewhat around forty,
Which nobody can deny.

Oy, tsores, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
Ober nisht gedayget,
Mir hobn a groysn got!
For He's a jolly good fellow,
For He's a jolly good fellow,
For He's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, ikh muz mir fun mayn
Alter tsore bafrayen right now.
O'Brien, ikh muz mir fun mayn
Alter tsore bafrayen right now.
"Hevl havolim" umar koheles,
The poor thing is very jealous
The poor thing is very jealous,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, give me a little glass of wine right now.
O'Brien, give me a little glass of wine right now.
"Wine cheers the sad heart,"
There's nothing without a blemish,
There's nothing without a blemish,
Which nobody can deny.

Oh troubles, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
I could lie down and die!
Oh, blessings and mercies, amen,
God is a jolly good fellow,
God is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, whaddya know?
There's no loan for me right now.
O'Brien, whaddya know?
There's no loan for me right now.
"Conceal not thy kindness from me"
I'm broke without a penny,
I'm broke without a penny,
Which nobody can deny.

Oy, tsores, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
Oh, blessings and mercies, amen,
God is a jolly good fellow,
God is a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, I must
Arrange a marriage for my Khaye, right now.
O'Brien, I must
Arrange a marriage for my Khaye, right now.
"My modest daughter I guarded,"
She's somewhat around forty,
She's somewhat around forty,
Which nobody can deny.

Oy, troubles, ay-yay-yay,
Which nobody can deny,
But don't fret,
We have a great God!
For He's a jolly good fellow,
For He's a jolly good fellow,
For He's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny.

O'Brien, I must from my
Old troubles be freed right now.
O'Brien, I must from my
Old troubles be freed right now.
"Vanity of vanities" says Koheles,
The poor thing is very jealous,
The poor thing is very jealous,
Which nobody can deny.

HOSTU BAYLE GITN MEYD?

BAYLE, DO YOU HAVE GOOD MEAD?

Sung by Israel Platner, Toronto, 1956

Hostu Bayle gitn meyd?
Vaz aher dem hayber.
Vilsti visn tsi s'iz shoy'n shpeyt?
Tsvelevn iz der zayger.

Opge'esn, opgetrinkn
Hot men nisht tsi batsuln.
Khapt dus pekl, mitn zekl
Un iz avekgefurn.

Volt ikh gevist vi di bist
Volt ikh tsi dir gefloygn
Mit d'hent un mit d'fis
In mit di grue oygn.

Bayle, do you have good mead?
Show me the spout.
Do you want to know if it's late?
It's twelve o'clock.

Finished eating and drinking,
But no money to pay.
Grab the bundle and sack
And let's get out of here.

If I knew where you are
I would fly to you.
With my hands and legs
And with my grey eyes.

GEYT A YOLD IN KAPELUSH

THERE GOES A FOOL IN A BRIMMED HAT

Sung by Harry Ary, Montréal, 1955

Geyt a yold in kapelush
Makht er di fantazye
Me nemt im arop dem kapelush
Me shmirt im oys in saze.

Ot azoyne yoldiklekh
Yoldevate yatn
Traybt dem yold in Kapelush
Un in zayn tatns tatn.

Geyt a yold in kapelush
Trogt er a manishke
M'firt im arayn in shvere vikhukhim
Filt im on di kishke.

Ot azoyne yoldiklekh
Yoldevate yatn
Traybt dem yold in kapelush
Un in zayn tatns tatn.

Geyt a yold in kapelush
Mit a por botfortn
Er geyt aruf af Novigrod
Farshpilt er es in kortn.

Ot azoyne yoldeklekh
Yoldevate yatn
Traybt dem yold in kapelush
Un in zayn tatns tatn.

There goes a fool in a brimmed hat,
Pretending that he's a somebody.
Take off his brimmed hat
And smear it with tar.

Such suckers,
Foolish kids.
Drive away that fool in the hat
And to hell with him.

There goes a fool in a brimmed hat
Wearing a shirt front.
Get him involved in serious debates
So his intestines get full.

Such suckers,
Foolish kids.
Drive away that fool in the hat
And to hell with him.

There goes a fool in a brimmed hat,
With a pair of sturdy boots.
He goes up to the Novigrod neighborhood
And gambles them away in cards.

Such suckers,
Foolish kids.
Drive away that fool in the hat
and to hell with him.

OYF DER ROYTER BRIK IN YAS ON THE RED BRIDGE IN YAS

Collected by Ruth Rubin, Tel Aviv, 1965

Oyf der royter brik in Yas
Me redt nokh fin mamzeln,
Oyf di meyd lakh iz an oyskhapenish,
Zey geyn mit kavalirn.

A gantsn tug, a gantse nakht
Farkem ikh mir di lokns,
In az mayn libster kimt tsigeyn,
Farsher ikh mir di polkes.

Di mame kikt mir nukh,
Un heybt mikh un tshesheln:
Zolst geyn fin gikh in d'rerd arayn,
Vus di first azoyne veltn.

Sha-sha, mame,
Hob nit keyn yesirn,
Ikh vel dikh shikn shalkhemunes –
An eynikl oyf Pirim.

On the red bridge in Yas,
The talk is all about the young ladies
The maidens are up for grabs,
They go around with cavaliers.

All day, all night,
I comb my long hair,
And when my sweetheart comes around
I go and dance polkas.

My mother takes a look at me
And starts to curse me:
"You should go quickly to hell
For living your life this way."

"Be quiet, Mother,
Find no faults with me
I'll send you a basket of treats
From your grandson on Purim!"

ZITS IKH MIR IN SHTIBELE I SIT IN MY LITTLE HOUSE

As sung by Ruth Rubin, New York, 1958

Folklorized version of a poem by Joseph Rolnick (1879-1955), music by Bertha Kling (1886-1979)

Zits ikh mir in shtibele,
In kuk aroys in fentster,
Un vart az kumen zol shoy n bald
Der, vos iz mayn shenster.

Banen loyfn tsvey a tog,
Eyne kumt in ovnt,
Klingt a glekele "kling-klang,"
Oy, er iz shoy n novnt.

Emets klapt un tapt di tir,
Ruft mikh oys bay nomen,
Ikh loyf arop a borvese,
Oy, er iz gekumen.

I sit in my little house
And look out the window
And wait, as soon will come
He, that is my beloved.

The trains run twice a day,
One comes in the evening.
A bell rings, "kling-klang,"
Oh, he's already near.

Someone knocks and taps on the door
Calls me by my name
Barefooted I get up and run
Oh, he has arrived.

BESARABIANKA

Words by Pyotr Leshchenko
Yiddish translation by M. Lemster

Besarabie, mayn alte heym,
Nokh dir dos harts mayns oft mol veynt.
Kh'ze in kholem dir bay nakht,
Freylekh dort di tsayt farbrakht.
Dort geblibn mayne fraynd,
In zey dermon ikh zikh biz haynt.
Benken vel ikh nokh yorlang,
Nokh yenem bliendikn kant.

Foaye verde, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
A tsigaynerin, a flam.
Oygn, lipn, alts mikh brit,
In Margioln bin ikh farlibt.

Ikh gedenk di levone-shayn
Un dem breg baym shtiln taykh,
Vi Margiole tsvishn groz
Iz gevorn mayne dort.
Undz geshikert dort di nakht,
Nor vegn eyns hob ikh getrakht –
Eybik, eybik zayn mit ir,
Tsu ir redn on a shir.

Foaye verde, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
A tsigaynerin, a flam.
Oygn, lipn, alts mikh brit,
In Margioln bin ikh farlibt.

Di yorn loyfn zikh avek,
Fil tsores gelitn inem veg,
Nor mayn lebn hot fun 'snay
Vider a libe hel bashaynt.
Akh, mayn lebn, gikh zikh bayt –
Nekhtn – ferd, an oto – haynt.
Nit keyn groz – es shmekt parfum
Ven mayn libe ikh nem arum.

Foaye verde, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
Nit fargesn vel ikh ir layb.
Lipn tsu lipn – dos is sheyn,
Besarabia, mayn heym.

Besarabia, my old home,
For you my heart often weeps.
At night I see you in my dreams
Joyful was the time I spent there.
There my friends stayed
I'm reminded of them to this day
I yearn for them all year long
For that blooming place.

Green leaf, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
A Rom girl, a flame.
Eyes, lips, they all burn me
I am in love with Margiole.

I remember the shining moon,
And the shore by the still river,
How Margiole in the grass
Was mine there.
There we were drunk with the night
I've only thought of one
Always, always to be with her
To speak with her without end.

Green leaf, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
A Rom girl, a flame,
Eyes, lips, they all burn me
I am in love with Margiole.

The years have flown by
Many troubles have appeared on the way
And again my life
Was brightly lit by another love
Oh, my life, how quickly it all changes
Yesterday – a horse, a car – today,
No more the scent of grass but perfume
When I embrace my love.

Green leaf, tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
I'll not forget her body
Lips to lips - this is lovely,
Bessarabia - my home.

MEYDELEKH UN VAYBELEKH

GIRLS AND WIVES

As sung by Mr. Meyerhoff, New York, 1948

Meydelekh un vaybelekh tantst a dreydl
Leyzer Yoshke krigt a meyd!
Nadn krigt er a kadokhes
Kales sonim aftselokhes

Shpilt zhe klezmerlekh, shpilt tsum takt
Tupet mit di fiselekh, knak, knak, knak!
Lomir ale freylekh zayn
Trinken bronfn, trinken vayn!

Men firt dem khosn tsu der kale tsu badekns
Lekekh, bronfn vet nit klekn
Un der khosn bet dem tales,
Der mekhutn vert bedales

Shpilt zhe klezmerlekh, shpilt tsum takt

Klingt in tatsn mit lefl, gopl, meser
Makht di simkhe nokh fil greser
Oys beroyges mit mekhutonim
Gute, freylekhe kabtsonim!

Shpilt zhe klezmerlekh, shpilt tsum takt...

Fun der khupe tsu der sude, makht a vare
Ot geyt tantsn di bobbe Sore
Un der alter feter Yoshe
Varft mit di fiselekh gor nishkoshe

Shpilt zhe klezmerlekh, shpilt tsum takt...

Shikt der kale tsinene laykhter, trahubes
Un far dem samovartshik a blekhene trube
A zeglnem meser mit dray klinger
An alte neymashin a Zinger!

Shpilt zhe klezmerlekh, shpilt tsum takt...

Ladies, married and unmarried, circle up for dancing!
Leyzer Yoshke got himself a girl.
He's getting a big, fat zero for a dowery,
But the bride's enemies can't do a thing about it!

Play, musicians! Play in time!
Tap your feet: click, clack, click.
Let's all get happy—
A slug of whiskey, a swig of wine.

They're bringing the groom to unveil the bride,
And we're running out of honey-cake and whiskey.
The groom is ready to receive his new prayer-shawl,
And his new father-in-law is going broke.

Play musicians...

Clink the silverware on the trays,
Make the party bigger and better.
The in-laws have suspended their feuding—
Good-hearted, penniless merry-makers!

Play musicians...

From wedding canopy to wedding feast! Make way!
Look! Grandma Sore is getting up to dance.
And old Uncle Yoshe
Can still cut a rug.

Play musicians...

Send the bride tin candlesticks,
And a tin-plated steam vent for the samovar,
A serrated knife with three teeth,
And an old sewing machine – a Singer!

Play musicians...

IKH VEL AYKH GEBN TSU DERKLERN

I WILL EXPLAIN TO YOU

As sung by Sam Tropower, New York, 1955

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun eyns ken alts vern:
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun tsvey ken alts vern:
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun dray ken alts vern:
Dray zenen di mekhutonim,
Vos zey tseyln di mezumonim.
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun fir ken alts vern:
Fir zenen di khupe-shtangen,
Khosn-kale afirgeganen.
Dray zenen di mekhutonim,
Vos zey tseyln di mezumonim.
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun finef ken alts vern:
Finef zenen di klezmorim,
Vos zey shpiln far raykh un orem.
Fir zenen di khupe-shtangen,
Khosn-kale afirgeganen.
Dray zenen di mekhutonim,
Vos zey tseyln di mezumonim.
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh gebn tsu derklern,
Vos fun zeks ken alts vern:
Zeks zenen di zeks teg,
Vos men tor nit un vos men meg.

I will explain to you,
What can happen to one:
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to two:
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to three:
Three are the in-laws,
Who count out the cash.
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to four:
Four are the canopy poles,
Under which the groom and bride stand.
Three are the in-laws,
Who count out the cash.
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to five:
Five are the musicians,
Who play for rich and poor.
Four are the canopy poles,
Under which the groom and bride stand.
Three are the in-laws,
Who count out the cash.
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to six:
Six are the days of the week,
For the things you may or may not do.

Finef zenen di klezmorim,
Vos zey shpiln far raykh un orem.
Fir zenen di khupe-shtangen,
Khosn-kale afirgeganen.
Dray zenen di mekhutonim,
Vos zey tseyln di mezumonim.
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Ikh vel aykh geben tsu derklern,
Vos fun zibn ken alts vern:
Zibn zenen di sheve brokhes,
Me' zogt tsu nadn, me' git kadokhes!
Zeks zenen di zeks teg,
Vos men tor nit un vos men meg.
Finef zenen di klezmorim,
Vos zey shpiln far raykh un orem.
Fir zenen di khupe-shtange,
Khosn-kale afirgeganen.
Dray zenen di mekhutonim,
Vos zey tseyln di mezumonim
Tzvey zenen di khosn-kale,
Vos zey shteyen iber ale.
Eyns iz baym khosns tish,
Vu men est un vu men trinkt,
Vu men hulyet un men zingt! Yu-la-la...

Five are the musicians,
Who play for rich and poor.
Four are the canopy poles,
Under which the groom and bride stand.
Three are the in-laws,
Who count out the cash.
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

I will explain to you,
What can happen to seven:
Seven are the seven blessings,
They promise a dowry but give you the plague!
Six are the days of the week,
For the things you may or may not do.
Five are the musicians,
Who play for rich and poor.
Four are the canopy poles,
Under which the groom and bride stand.
Three are the in-laws,
Who count out the cash.
Two are the groom and bride,
Who stand above us all.
One is the groom's table,
Where you eat and where you drink,
Where you celebrate and sing!

S'IZ NITO KEYN NEKHTN

YESTERDAY IS GONE

S'iz nito keyn nekhtn,
S'nokh nito keyn morgn.
S'iz nor do a pitsele haynt,
Shtert im nit mit zorgn.

Khapt arayn a shnepsl,
Kol-zman ir zent baym lebn.
Im-yirtse-HaShem af yener velt,
Vet men aykh nit gebn!

Ay yay...

Nye zhurytse, khloptsi,
Shtoy s'nami budyet.
My payedyem na kartshomku,
Tam i vodka budyet.

Ay yay...

Heybt di fis tsum tantsn,
Nemt an and'rer di poles,
Ot azoy un ot azoy,
Tantst a yid in goles!

Yesterday is gone,
Tomorrow isn't here yet.
All we have is today,
So why ruin it by worrying?

Grab a drink
While you're still among the living.
Because in the afterlife,
If God so wills, they may not give you any!

Ay yay...

Don't worry, guys,
About what will become of us.
We'll go to the inn.
There will be vodka there to drink.

Ay yay...

Your feet start to dance,
Another takes up their coattails,
That's the way, that's the way
A Jew dances in the diaspora.

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL ALPERT is a Yiddish singer, multi-instrumentalist, dancer and scholar. Born into a Yiddish-speaking family in Los Angeles, he is a co-founder of the bands Kapelye and Brave Old World and has collaborated with Theodore Bikel, Daniel Kahn and singer/bandurist Julian Kytasty. His fieldwork has brought attention to traditional East European Jewish musicians such as Bronya Sakina, Leon Schwartz and German Goldenshteyn. He performs and teaches Yiddish music and culture worldwide; as musical director of PBS' *Itzhak Perlman: In the Fiddler's House*, he helped bring global attention to klezmer music. The NEA has named him a National Heritage Fellow.

ELÉONORE BIEZUNSKI is a Parisian singer/violinist now living in NYC. An avid collector of Yiddish music, she co-founded and is a member of Ephemeral Birds, Yerushe, Lyubtshe, Shpilkes, Shtetl Stompers and Klezmographers and has collaborated with a large number of well-known Jewish performers here and abroad. Her recordings include *Yerushe* (IEMJ, 2016) and *Zol zayn* (2014). As YIVO's Associate Sound Archivist, Eléonore is the Project Coordinator for the Ruth Rubin Legacy online exhibition. She is a PhD candidate at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and is a recipient of a NYSCA Folk Arts Apprenticeship. WWW.ELEONOREBIEZUNSKI.COM

NICOLE BORGER, who was born and lives in São Paulo, Brazil, is a singer, songwriter and cultural activist. She has produced seven recordings: *Amar* (2001), *Singrar* (2005), *Marias* (2007), *Klezmer4* (2009), *Klezmeriando* (2011), *Raizes* (2014) and *Yetsirah Project* (2015) and is currently preparing a new album. Parallel to her work as the cultural director of the Hebraica SP, Nicole created the Jewish Music Institute of Brazil and the International Jewish Music Festival/KlezTival, which presented its ninth annual event in October 2018. In addition to performing regularly in Brazil and abroad, Nicole and her husband Edy are members of the organizing team of Yiddish New York.

JOANNE BORTS is a NY-based actor/singer whose Broadway credits include the Tony Award-winning *Once, Cinderella* (with Eartha Kitt) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (with Topol). She also writes and directs *Kids and Yiddish* for NY's Folksbiene, where she is currently appearing in the *Fidler afn dakh* directed by Joel Gray. Joanne has performed with Neil Sedaka, Robert Klein, the Klezmer Conservatory Band, the Grammy-Award winning Klezmatics and Three Yiddish Divas.

She has appeared in concerts and Yiddish music festivals across North America and Europe, including Vienna Kulturherbst, Warsaw Singera Festival, the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, the Montréal Jazz Festival and Carnegie Hall.

EFIM CHORNY was born into a Jewish family of singers in Chisinau, Moldova. Since 1992, Efim and Suzanna Ghergus' prize-winning Jewish Song Theatre has toured Moldova and Europe. Other collaborations: Klezmer Alliance, Pro-Yiddish Project, Besarabish and Yiddish Vocalists. Efim is also a teacher (both in-person and online) and composer - his Yiddish songs have been performed and/or recorded by Adrienne Cooper, Shura Lipovsky, Daniel Kahn, Andrea Pancur, Lorin Sklamberg and Lucette van den Berg. Efim's archival research has resulted in: a collection of Yiddish songs from Lviv's Gimpel Theatre (1889 -1939), Hasidic bilingual songs of the late 19th-early 20th centuries and Yiddish song translations of poems by 20th century Russian poets.

SUSAN GHERGUS studied piano at the Music Academy in Chisinau. Since 1992, she has been the musical director of the Jewish Song Theatre and has co-authored and performed numerous musical projects with her duo partner, Efim Chorny. Susan is also a composer of Yiddish songs which have been performed and recorded by Svetlana Kundish, Christian Dawid and Lucette van den Berg and which form the basis of the new project, *Efim Chorny/Susan Ghergus: Yiddish Art Songs*. Susan's musical training and expertise in Jewish dance music styles allow her to blend klezmer rhythms with Yiddish song in a pianistic style imbued with a unique Bessarabian-Jewish flair.

SARAH MINA GORDON is a fourth generation Yiddish singer. She fronted the rock band Yiddish Princess and has recorded and performed with Frank London, the Klezmatics, Daniel Kahn, Sharabi and others. Daughter of legendary Yiddish singer Adrienne Cooper (z'l), Sarah grew up immersed in innovative Yiddish culture and has collaborated with London, the Klezmatics, Michael Winograd and Alicia Svigals to pen original Yiddish songs. Sarah is also an educator - teaching third grade and designing and leading Yiddish programs for children and adults. She is one of the founding organizers of Yiddish New York and teaches song at KlezKanada.

ITZIK GOTTESMAN is Senior Lecturer at the University of Texas in Austin, where he teaches Yiddish language and Jewish folklore. He created the YIVO on-line course *The*

Folklore of Ashkenaz and directs the blog *Yiddish Song of the Week*, sponsored by the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, which presents rare field recordings of Yiddish folksingers. His book *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland* was published by Wayne State University Press in 2003. From 2000 to 2013 he was the managing editor of the Yiddish *Forverts* newspaper.

Detroit native **DANIEL KAHN** (Berlin resident since 2005) fronts the klezmer-punk-folk The Painted Bird and is a singer-songwriter/translator/multi-instrumentalist in The Brothers Nazaroff, Unternationale, Semer Ensemble and the Disorientalists. Composer/director/playwright/actor/music curator at Berlin's Gorki Theater and a founder of the annual Shtetl Neukölln festival. Original Pertshik in Folksbiene's hit *Fidler afn dakh* and Biff in New Yiddish Rep's Drama Desk-nominated *Death of a Salesman*. Ashkenaz Foundation inaugural Bikel Artist-in-Residence. His Yiddish version of Cohen's "Hallelujah" has had over one million views on YouTube. Recipient, 2018 Mlotek Prize for Yiddish Continuity.

JANET LEUCHTER is the cantor of Greenburgh Hebrew Center, Dobbs Ferry, NY. Her 1999 masters thesis explored Yiddish religious folksong in the larger context of East Ashkenazi vocal music. She lectured on this subject at Yiddish New York 2016. During her research, she was fortunate to be given access to the Ruth Rubin field recordings collection at YIVO. During the last twenty years, she has performed zmires she found there, and is excited to present one – a rarity – in this evening's concert. Janet has a performance and teaching background in Yiddish song and klezmer music going back to the late 1970s.

JEANETTE LEWICKI, without dowry or family background, did what she had to do to learn Yiddish. In 2012, with the help of CTMD's An-Sky Institute, Jeanette began cataloging and digitizing YIVO's Ruth Rubin collection, listening to some 2300 songs in real time. She's the singer/accordionist of the San Francisco Klezmer Experience, leads the gonifs klezmer band and Accordionists Against the Death Penalty, is assistant-assistant-editor of the zine *Yiddish Tango Illustrated*, has taught at Yiddish Summer Weimar and produced recordings for Arkady Gendler, Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman and the gonifs. Jeanette appreciates support from the Northern California Arbeter Ring Branch 1054 and from Yiddish singer Sarah Ferholt.

SASHA LURJE was born in Riga, Latvia. She has been singing since she was three years old, and is now at home in styles ranging from classical and folk to jazz and rock. Sasha's research into traditional Yiddish song informs her

collaborations with the likes of Forshpil, the Semer Ensemble, You Shouldn't Know From It, and her Strangelovesongs duo (with Daniel Kahn). She also an avid student/instructor of traditional vocal techniques and production. She has performed and taught Yiddish singing in Russia, Europe, and North America and has been a longtime artist, faculty member and vocal workshop coordinator of Yiddish Summer Weimar.

CINDY RIVKA MARSHALL is the director, producer and editor of *A Life of Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin*, which won the 1986 Chris Bronze Award at the Columbus International Film Festival. Cindy made video documentaries for fifteen years before turning to oral storytelling. Her business in the Boston area, Story Arc, aims to "reach, teach and change with stories." She is an award-winning performer of both folktales and personal stories, a story coach, educator and facilitator of story modalities to addressing the needs of congregations, schools, organizations and individuals. WWW.CINDYMARSHALL.COM

ETHEL RAIM is a master singer of unaccompanied Yiddish ballads and lyrical love songs. She first gained recognition as the founder/director of the influential all-women's a cappella group, the Pennywhistlers. She has had a distinguished career as a performer, workshop leader, master singing teacher and recording artist for the Elektra and Nonesuch labels. Ethel has taught unaccompanied Yiddish singing at Yiddish Summer Weimar, KlezKamp, KlezKanada, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and at Yiddish New York. She is a recipient of the Benjamin Botkin Award from the American Folklore Society and the NEA Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellowship, and is the Artistic Director Emeritus of NYC's Center for Traditional Music and Dance.

POLINA SHEPHERD grew up singing at family gatherings, where she began to accompany her grandfather (a veteran of WWII) and her entire Cossack/Jewish family from the age of eight. While living in Tatarstan and studying at the State Academy in the 1990s she toured the USSR with Simkha, Russia's first klezmer band after Perestroika. Since moving to the UK in 2003 Polina has been teaching, composing and travelling with various projects internationally. She also plays live accompaniment to silent black and white Jewish films (1920-1926) with the Sound & Light Cinematic Duo and has, to date, written over one hundred Yiddish and Russian songs. WWW.POLINASHEPHERD.CO.UK

NYC native violinist **JAKE SHULMAN-MENT** has performed/recorded internationally with Daniel Kahn and the Painted Bird, Frank London, Di Naye Kapelye, The Brothers

Nazaroff, The Other Europeans and others, and has taught at KlezKamp, KlezKanada, the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, Yiddish Summer Weimar and Fiddle Tunes. Jake studied and documented traditional music in Romania as a Fulbright scholar, and learned local violin styles in Hungary and Greece. He is a recipient of a NYSCA/NYFA Fellowship in Folk/Traditional Arts. Jake's recordings include *A redele* (Oriente Musik, 2012 – German Record Critics' Award nominee) and *Out of the Narrows* (Chant Records, 2018) with his new group, Midwood.

LORIN SKLAMBERG is a founding member of the Grammy Award-winning Klezmatics. He has also appeared on recordings and in live shows with Itzhak Perlman, Chava Alberstein and Emmylou Harris, among many others, and teaches Yiddish song from São Paulo to St. Petersburg. Ongoing: *Saints and Tzadiks* (Irish and Yiddish songs with Susan McKewon), the Semer Ensemble (Jewish music from 1930s Berlin), *Alpen Klezmer* (Bavarian and Yiddish songs), *Drawing Life* (multi-media song cycle, JMI, London), Sklamberg and the Shepherds, *In the Fiddler's House* and the Nigunim Trio. Lorin serves as YIVO's Sound Archivist. "One of the premier American singers in any genre." – Robert Christgau, NPR.

MARK SLOBIN is the Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music Emeritus at Wesleyan University and the author or editor of books on Afghanistan and Central Asia, eastern European Jewish music, film music and ethnomusicology theory, two of which have received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award - *Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* and *Tenement Songs: Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants*. His most recent book is *Motor City Music: A Detroit Looks Back* (2018). He is the co-editor, with Chana Mlotek, of *Yiddish Folksongs from the Ruth Rubin Archive*.

SIMON SPIVACK is Ruthy's young nephew. She was seminal in his life, as her playfulness, connectedness, encouragement and passionate musings on the human condition and its Jewish cultural reflections were like lightning to this young impressionable boy. Sundays were often spent in Ruthy's one-bedroom apartment on Gramercy Park, which served as a veritable cultural library and a respite from the tensions of daily life. The recent re-discovery of her young reflections on her uniquely Jewish childhood in Montréal will bring pangs of self-recognition to many here today. Dr. Spivack is Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology, and Genetics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and lives in Sleepy Hollow, NY.

DEBORAH STRAUSS is a klezmer violinist, educator and dancer who has been active in the Yiddish music scene for

over 30 years. Half of the Strauss/Warschauer Duo, Deborah was a long-time member of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, has performed with the Grammy Award-winning Klezmatics and has appeared across North America, Western/Eastern Europe, Australia and Israel. She teaches annually at the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, Yiddish Summer Weimar, Yiddish New York and KlezKanada and at KlezFest, London and the 92nd Street Y. Deborah is the co-author (with klezmer luminary Alan Bern) of *Klezmer Duets for Violin and Accordion* (Universal Edition, Vienna, 2017).

JOSH WALETZKY is a lifelong singer/teacher/composer of Yiddish song – from his family and Yiddish secular schools and summer camp, performing groups (beginning with the Yugntruf Ensemble and Kapelye) and continuing through many festivals/workshops, (recently as Master Teacher with the NYS Council on the Arts). This year he founded the Yiddish Singing Society, a weekly gathering for learning and sharing Yiddish songs. As a director and editor of documentary films, he often incorporates Yiddish music - his 1986 *Partisans of Vilna* inspired a Grammy-nominated recording of the same name. His two 21st-century albums, *Crossing the Shadows* and *Passengers*, place him at the forefront of contemporary Yiddish songwriting.

JEFF WARSCHAUER serves as cantor at the Jewish Center of Princeton, NJ. He has also worked in that capacity at congregations in New York, Pennsylvania, Maine, Connecticut, Vermont and Ohio. In the Yiddish and klezmer scene, Jeff is internationally renowned as one of the foremost klezmer mandolinists, as an innovator in the development of a klezmer guitar style, as an expressive Yiddish singer and as a skillful and inspirational educator. He is on the faculty of Columbia University, and is a Founding Artistic Director of KlezKanada. One half of the Strauss/Warschauer Duo, Jeff was a long-time member of the Klezmer Conservatory band.



YIVO Online Exhibitions

The Ruth Rubin Legacy

Archive of Yiddish Folksongs

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The Ruth Rubin Legacy highlights the renowned vocalist and scholar's collection of over 1,500 Yiddish *lider* (songs) performed by some of the most extraordinary traditional singers of the 20th century, including Rubin herself. The 78rpm acetate discs, reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes recorded by Rubin between 1946 and the 1970s are in the process of being painstakingly re-assembled and are made truly accessible here for the first time. Ruth Rubin's entire life's work can be found on this site: field recordings, lectures, concerts, radio interviews, videos, manuscripts and published materials.

[Read more about Ruth Rubin and her legacy »](#)

Explore Ruth Rubin's field recordings

THE RUTH RUBIN LEGACY

AN ONLINE SOUND ARCHIVE OF YIDDISH FOLKSONGS

The Ruth Rubin Legacy, an online exhibition focusing on the field recordings of Yiddish songs made by the renowned vocalist/scholar between 1946 and the 1970s, was officially launched on April 4, 2018. Performed by some of the most extraordinary traditional singers of the 20th century, the site currently offers over 1,900 sample songs with more being added regularly by Sound Archivists Lorin Sklamberg and Eléonore Biezunski. In addition to a state-of-the-art search portal in which songs can be browsed by title, genre, and performer, the exhibition includes a variety of other digitized documents from Rubin's papers, including lectures, concerts, radio interviews, videos, and rare and unpublished manuscripts and photographs, as well as a comprehensive discography and bibliography. The site enables users to submit transcriptions, translations, or additional information on songs or performers.

Visit YIVO's Ruth Rubin Legacy online exhibition:

exhibitions.yivo.org/RuthRubin



The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is dedicated to the preservation and study of the history and culture of East European Jewry worldwide. For nearly a century, YIVO has pioneered new forms of Jewish scholarship, research, education, and cultural expression. Our public programs and exhibitions, as well as online and on-site courses, extend our global outreach and enable us to share our vast resources. The YIVO Archives contains more than 23 million original items and YIVO's Library has over 400,000 volumes—the single largest resource for such study in the world.