A Blood-Libel Trial on the Yiddish Stage

Exactly 100 years ago, the trial of a Russian Jewish brickyard foreman named Mendel Beilis for ritual murder made headlines around the world. Long before the trial ended, Yiddish theatres began experimenting with dramatizations of it in a number of North American cities as well as London. These plays, and the heated response to them, illustrate the serious—and sometimes hilarious—fallout when Yiddish theatres dramatized current events.

Sunday, November 10, 5 PM
Grala Miller Library, 4th Floor Conference Center

David Shneer: Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust

In January 1942, in the city of Kerch in southern Russia, three Jewish photographers working for the Soviet press became the first libertators to photograph the Holocaust. Who were these photographers? What photographs did they take as journalists for the “other ally” liberating sites of Nazi atrocities three years before Western allies? And why do we know so little about them and the story of how the Soviet Union confronted the earliest evidence of Nazi atrocities on the eastern front? David Shneer (University of Colorado) answers these questions, and will force you to rethink cherished truths about the Holocaust and World War II.

Book Talk Thursday, November 21, 7 PM
Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer Avenue, Milwaukee

Alisa Solomon: Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddlers on the Roof

In the half-century since its premiere, Fiddler on the Roof has had an astonishing global impact. In this book, drama critic Alisa Solomon (Columbia University) traces how and why the story of Tevye the dairyman, created by the great Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem, was reborn as blockbuster entertainment and a cultural touchstone, not only for Jews and not only in America. The show spoke to the deepest conflicts and desires of its time; the freeing of tradition, generational tensions, the loss of roots. Wonder of Wonders reveals the surprising legacy of a show about tradition that itself became a tradition.

Monday, December 9, 7 PM
UWM Union Theatre

My Prestolectic, film and talkback with director Robin Hessman

My Prestolectic follows five ordinary Russians living in extraordinary times—from their sheltered Soviet childhood, to the collapse of the Soviet Union during their teenage years, to the constantly shifting political landscape of post-Soviet Russia. Together, these childhood classmates paint a complex picture of the dreams and disillusionment of those raised behind the Iron Curtain.

December 8-22, 10:30 AM - 1:30 PM
UWM Student Union

Fiddler on the Roof Workshop: Three Parts to the Musical

Helene Fischman: Art From the Ashes: Finding Light in the Shadow of the Shoah

In 2003 and 2004, visual artist Helene Fischman set up studios in former Nazi concentration camps—one in Auschwitz, one in Krakow—to capture the haunting presence of the Holocaust. In conjunction with a three-day workshop hosted by the Stahl Center, each member of the group will present a five-minute lecture; the TED-style talks will be followed by a lively round-table discussion and Q&A session with the audience.

February 2014 Art & Conflict: Ashkenaz and Beyond

Wednesday, October 2, 7 PM
Congregation Erina Elihu Mosheh, 2020 W. Brown Deer Rd., River Hills

Joel Berkowitz (UWM) & The "Mendel Bella Epidemic": A Blood-Libel Trial on the Yiddish Stage

Thursday, October 23
The Jew and the Book: Latin American Jewish Writing

2:30-3:30pm: La Mano y el Judith: A Bilingual Reading of Jewish Latin American Writing
Wisconsin Room Lounge, UWM Student Union
3:40-6:30pm: Open Master Class with Marjorie Aragon, José Kauer, and Stephan Sadow
Roon TBA, UWM Student Union
7:00-8:30pm: Jewish Thought, Latin Flavor. Latin-Jewish Literatures in Latin America, a roundtable panel discussion
4th Floor Conference Center, Grala Miller Library
Organized by UWM Libraries and Special Collections

UWM Music Recital Hall, located behind Mitchell Hall

Hankus Netsky & Hebrew National Salvage Orchestra

A Musical Journey Through the Yiddish Theatre

The scion of a klezmer dynasty from the Old World by way of Philadelphia, Hankus Netsky is one of the original klezmer revivalists. As the founder of the Klezmer Conservatory Band and a long-time instructor at the New England Conservatory, Netsky has taught, studied, and sent out into the world several generations of contemporary klezmer musicians. Netsky and his band will perform and discuss the rich musical legacy of the Yiddish stage.

Wednesday, April 9, 7:30 PM
UWM Music Hall, 4th Floor Conference Center

Sayed Kashua: Arab Labor

A screening of two episodes of Kashua’s acclaimed television series, followed by a talkback moderated by UWM’s Tasha Dann. Arab Labor was created by one of the most notable writers working in Hebrew today, focuses on a Palestinian journalist and Israeli citizen in search of his identity. Poking fun at the cultural divide, Kashua and his characters play on religious, cultural, and political differences to dramatize the mixed society that is Israel. Kashua, the author of three novels and a satirical column for the Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz, was awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize in Literature in 2004.

Friday, February 7, 7 PM
Milwaukee Jewish Federation

Finding Light in the Shadow of the Shoah

Artistic direction: Helene Fischman

A TED-style event honoring the artists who survived the Holocaust and preserved their memories through art. This event marks the faint appearance of the Digital Yiddish Theatre Project, an international group of scholars devoted to the study and preservation of Yiddish theatre, drama, and performance around the world. In conjunction with a three-day workshop hosted by the Stahl Center, each member of the group will present a five-minute lecture; the TED-style talks will be followed by a lively round-table discussion and Q&A session with the audience.

Thursday, March 6, 7:30 PM
Congregation Sinai, 8223 N. Port Washington Road, Fox Point

Jonathan Freedman: Transformations of a Jewish Princess: Salome and the Remaking of the Jewish Female Body

Oscar Wilde’s play Salome was written about a Jewish woman, and for the Jewish actress Sarah Bernhardt, though the play was banned, she could appear in it. A number of Jewish women later took on the role in theatre or dance, including silent film star Alla Nazimova, Yiddish actress Bessie Thomasson, and cabaret singer Fanny Brice. Jonathan Freedman (University of Michigan) uses these representations in order to examine the emergence of a new type of Jewish female beauty, in the context of the modern world these Jews were entering by means of their spectacular public performances.

Sarah Berenbiim (1844-1923)

Thursday, May 2, 7:30 PM
Grala Miller Library, 4th Floor Conference Center

Faye Signam: "Woman of Valor" Lecture

Darcy Buerkle: Nothing Happened: Charlotte Salomon and the Archive of Suicide

Charlotte Salomon’s fantastical autobiography, Life? Or Theatre?, consists of 786 sequenced gouache paintings, through which the artist imagined the circumstances of the eight suicides of her family, all but one of them women. But Salomon’s focus on suicide was not merely a familial obsession. In conjunction with a three-day workshop hosted by the Stahl Center, each member of the group will present a five-minute lecture; the TED-style talks will be followed by a lively round-table discussion and Q&A session with the audience.
The series “Art & Conflict: Ashkenaz and Beyond,” running throughout the 2013-14 academic year, explores how art has grappled with the turbulent history of modern European Jewry, with important forays into Israel and North America. Renowned scholars, writers, visual artists, and performers explore how this theme emerges in various art forms: painting, photography, music, theatre and drama, film, television, and new media.

All events are free and open to the public.

“Art & Conflict” is co-sponsored by:
- UWM’s Center for 21st Century Studies, Center for International Education, College of Letters & Science, History Department, Peck School of the Arts, and the UWM Libraries, as well as the Coalition for Jewish Learning, the Harry and Rose Samson Jewish Community Center, Hillel Milwaukee, Jewish Museum Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee Jewish Federation.