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To learn more about these events and other Stahl Center news, visit www.uwm.edu/cjs, “like” us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter @UWMJewish.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Hankus Netsky,
Miryem-Khaye Seigel,
Eden Macadam-Somer



The Golden Peacock

Summer 2014

The Yiddish Theatre, in All Its Digital and Musical Glory

In late March, the Stahl Center hosted a landmark event in Yiddish Studies: a three-day workshop of the Digital Yiddish Theatre Project (DYTP), an international research consortium founded by Joel Berkowitz and Debra Caplan (Baruch College, CUNY). The group was created to explore the use of Digital Humanities tools and methods for the study and preservation of Yiddish theatre, drama, and performance.

Digital Humanities is one of the most important developments in humanities scholarship in recent years; indeed, it may be one of the most important changes ever to happen to the humanities. In practice, it means many things, including digitizing texts and other materials, coding and tagging those materials so they can be easily searched, conducting analyses of metadata, crowd-sourcing information, mapping, and any other ways that computer technology can help researchers preserve and analyze the raw materials of humanities disciplines.

Digital Humanities is particularly well-suited to the study and preservation of the Yiddish theatre, a centuries-old phenomenon that, particularly in modern times, generated thousands of plays and songs, and countless productions in every corner of the world, from Europe to the Americas to Palestine/Israel to South Africa and Australia. New technologies allow us to digitize plays, songs, and photos for the sake of both preservation and greater accessibility; to map the movement of troupes and actors and link those maps to other materials, such as photographs, music, and posters; and to carry out many other activities that foster our understanding of Yiddish theatre and drama.

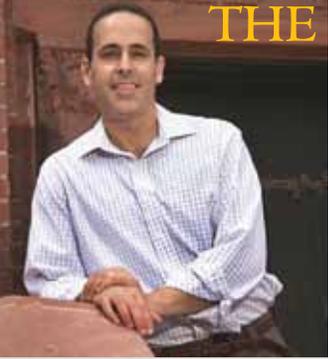
The Milwaukee workshop was the first full-scale meeting of the DYTP. Previously, the group “met” mostly in cyberspace, on a website designed to foster collaborative projects. While a great deal of preparation for the workshop was conducted online, the Milwaukee meetings were a reminder—not that one was needed—that regardless of the capabilities of online

(cont'd on page 2)

“It was a joy to work together, to learn from and be inspired by each other. It was honestly a miracle of creativity and passion. Years from now, Yiddish researchers will still be talking about the ‘Milwaukee workshop,’ where Yiddish theatre was given its digital foundation and structure.”

— Faith Jones (DYTP)

FROM THE DIRECTOR



The past year has been one involving transitions for the Stahl Center, and featuring forays into new types of endeavors. For the previous two academic years, most of our public programs were underwritten by a generous grant from the Association for Jewish Studies. In our first year after the end of that grant cycle, our programming is just as ambitious as before, if not more so. Once again this year,

our focus was on the arts; the themes of “Art & Conflict” seemed to select us rather than our selecting them. Our events explored a wide range of art forms: poetry, fiction, visual arts (painting, photography, mixed media), theatre, music, film, and television. Our audiences saw, heard, and learned about work created in Yiddish, Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, Russian, German, French, and English. And every event brought one or more leading figures in their fields to Milwaukee: poets, filmmakers, TV producers, historians, literary scholars, musicians.

Since its founding, the Stahl Center has taken pride in bringing Milwaukee the very best that the field of Jewish Studies has to offer. This year we began not only showcasing scholarly and artistic accomplishments, but also helping to create them. In late March, the three-day meeting of the Digital Yiddish Theatre Workshop brought together a research group that is undertaking pioneering work in Yiddish theatre scholarship (see cover story for more details). Next year, in May 2015, we will host another conference in a very different field, when my colleague Lisa Silverman, along with Ben Baader (University of Manitoba) and Beth Berkowitz (Barnard College), will convene “Grammars of Coherence and Difference,” described by the organizers as “a conversation about what Jewish Studies can learn from Gender Studies.” I have no doubt that this conference will make its mark on subsequent research conducted by scholars working in a number of areas of specialization within Jewish Studies.

At the same time, we will never miss the opportunity to connect such events to our mission of outreach, so members of the UWM and wider Milwaukee communities can learn from them as well.

Speaking of outreach, I am pleased to announce a new theme for the 2014-15 programming year: the Milwaukee Jewish Idea. Wisconsinites will recognize the echo of a famous Progressive Era policy, the Wisconsin Idea, linking the state’s university system to social legislation benefitting the entire citizenry, and summed up by the principle that “the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state.” In that spirit, the Milwaukee Jewish Idea will:

- highlight work in Jewish Studies by Wisconsin-based scholars: particularly UWM faculty, but including the work of our colleagues elsewhere in Milwaukee and around the state;
- feature events exploring the history of Jews in Milwaukee and elsewhere in Wisconsin; and
- include programs pairing UWM faculty with colleagues from other Wisconsin colleges and universities whose research intersects with ours.

Details of next year’s programs will be publicized in the coming months. To add your name to our mailing list, please contact us at cjsuwm@uwm.edu. And please follow us on social media for announcements, updates, and other information.

Have a wonderful summer. We look forward to seeing you again in September!

(cont'd from cover)

collaboration, there is no substitute for working together in real space and time. The group consists of a mixture of academics, independent scholars, archivists, and librarians from across the United States, as well as from Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands.

Over the course of the workshop, DYTP members fine-tuned the project’s rationale, discussed short- and medium-term plans, weighed possibilities and challenges, and interacted with others on campus who have a strong interest in Digital Humanities. By the time the workshop ended, the group had generated a list of specific follow-up tasks, some of which have since been



L to R: Lorin Sklamberg, Kurt Bjorling

taken care of, with others that are under way or yet to be tackled. The group now has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/digitalyiddish. More ambitious projects are under way or in planning stages, including a blog covering a wide variety of topics related to the Yiddish stage, and an interactive timeline following the international career of one of the great stars of the Yiddish theatre.

In conjunction with the workshop, the Stahl Center organized several public events. Four workshops were held in UWM’s Digital Humanities Lab, housed in the Golda Meir Library. UWM staff members Ann Hanlon, Nathan Humpal, and Marcy Bidney gave presentations on broad DH subjects, while world-renowned musician, teacher, and composer—and DYTP member—Hankus Netsky took listeners on a fast-paced tour of the development of Yiddish theatre music.

The wider community was also treated to two public events, made possible (as was the entire

workshop) by the generosity of the Baye Foundation. On March 27, the ten DYTP members in attendance each gave brief presentations on a variety of subjects that included music, mapping, textual analysis, genealogy, and theatre posters, and covered activity from Argentina to Zimbabwe, Warsaw to Winnipeg, and many points in between. Following the individual presentations, the group members participated in a lively question-and-answer session with the audience.

Two nights later, world-renowned bandleader, teacher, and composer Hankus Netsky led his ensemble, Hebrew National Salvage, in a concert tracing the evolution of Yiddish theatre music, from the earliest professional productions in the 1870s and 1880s to the post-WWII period, when performers like Mickey Katz and the Barry Sisters put their inimitable stamp on traditional materials. Netsky assembled an all-star gallery of talent for the event that included Klezmatics lead singer Lorin Sklamberg and the DYTP's own "singing librarian," Amanda (Miryam-Khaye) Seigel, whose diminutive size cleverly hid an outsized voice, and whose comic antics delighted the crowd.

The workshop, and the public events connected to it, were too successful not to repeat. Expect a reprise some time in the fall of 2015.

L to R:

Aaron Rubinstein, Francesco Spagnolo, Michael Steinlauf, Debra Caplan, David Mazower, Miryam-Khaye Seigel, Barbara Henry, Zachary Baker, Faith Jones, Joel Berkowitz



Francesco Spagnolo exploring surprising connections among Yiddish, Hebrew, and contemporary Italian popular culture

Workshop Participants

Zachary Baker (Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collections, Stanford University Libraries)

Joel Berkowitz (Director, Sam & Helen Stahl Center and Professor, Foreign Languages & Literature, UWM)

Debra Caplan (Assistant Professor of Theater, Baruch College, City University of New York)

Barbara Henry (Associate Professor of Russian Literature, University of Washington)

Faith Jones (Graduate Student, University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

David Mazower (Independent Scholar; Senior Staff Journalist, BBC World Service, London)

Aaron Rubinstein (University and Digital Archivist, University of Massachusetts, Amherst)

Amanda (Miryem-Khaye) Seigel (Librarian, Dorot Jewish Division, New York Public Library)

Francesco Spagnolo (Curator, The Magnes Museum of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley)

Michael Steinlauf (Director, Graduate Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Gratz College, Philadelphia)

“Not only did I leave the week inspired by the ideas that flowed from this well-chosen group; I realize more and more that I experienced something completely novel. To work so effectively across institutions and disciplines, with scholars both inside and outside academia is exceedingly rare. I have no doubt that the DYTP will make a very important mark not only on Yiddish theatre scholarship, but on the future of the humanities as a whole.” —Aaron Rubinstein (DYTP)



Historic Yiddish Theatre Posters Acquired by the UWM Libraries

BY MAX YELA, HEAD OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

With the assistance of the Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, the UWM Libraries has acquired a set of 78 Eastern European Yiddish posters, which document a variety of performances in Eastern Europe during the interwar period. The posters are preserved in the Libraries' Special Collections, and a project has been initiated to digitize the collection for remote and classroom use.

The posters are "show-print" style advertisements for performances and presentations (theatre, vaudeville, music, lectures, etc.) in Eastern Europe (mainly Latvia) in the 1920s and 1930s. Information in the posters includes venue names, performance dates, titles and descriptions of performances/presentations, performer/presenter names (some with titles, brief biographical information, and photographic image), and sponsor information. Personalities highlighted include Lithuanian actor and producer Rachel Berger, Russian film star Ossip Runitsch, and prominent Labor Zionist and Latvian parliamentarian Dr. Max Lazerson.

The posters range in size from 9"x13" (smallest) to 29"x 44" (largest), with the majority about 23"x 36". All are letterpress-printed in wood and metal types, with some cuts and photographic imagery printed mainly in black, but there are also red, blue, and rainbow-roll colors. Typography includes Hebrew (mainly Yiddish), Cyrillic (mainly Russian), and Roman (mainly Latvian).

As a partnership acquisition with the Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, the collection is intended mainly for teaching and research through the Center's programs, but it has additional usefulness for art and design, history, language programs, and the Milwaukee Jewish community—and when it becomes fully digitized, for the broader theatre history and Jewish/Yiddish communities worldwide.

As a public collection, the Yiddish Poster collection in the UWM Libraries is fully available for use by the public in Special Collections (4th floor, Golda Meir Library). Special Collections' hours are Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm, or by appointment (414.229.4345; libspecial@uwm.edu).



The Morals of Marc Chagall

BY CASSIE A. SACOTTE

The Morals of Marc Chagall, a thesis exhibition I curated as part of my MA in Art History at UWM, grew out of my undergraduate work here as a double major in Art History and Jewish Studies. As an undergraduate, I took on the challenge of studying Chagall's illustrated book suite *Dead Souls*, 107 black-and-white etchings depicting scenes from Nikolai Gogol's satirical novel of 1842, a classic of modern Russian literature. Chagall's etchings retain a linear quality, and depict the immoral stature of the many characters in the text. Although the negative experience of Chagall's exile from Russia prompted the illustration of *Dead Souls*, Chagall captured the humorous and satirical spirit of Gogol's novel.

As a master's student, I knew I wanted to continue working with the impressive collection of Chagall's art located within the UWM Art Collection and Golda Meir Libraries Special Collections, but wanted to considerably expand the project beyond the illustrations of *Dead Souls*. A gift in 2011 to the UWM Art Collection of Chagall prints illustrating *The Fables of La Fontaine* broadened the possibilities for my research, and after exploring the potential of the collection, I found that the three illustrative book suites featured in the exhibition—*Dead Souls* (1923-1927), *The Fables of La Fontaine* (1927-1930), and *The Story of the Exodus* (1966)—have much in common. The most noteworthy similarity was the theme of morality found in each text.

The Morals of Marc Chagall evaluates the artist's approach to the portrayal of morality presented in each text, which was affected by both personal and historical experiences. Chagall's intention in depicting each text was to show the moral stature of each character, not to dictate morality.

Chagall purposefully ignored the original moral lessons of the Fables, which were addressed to the writer's 17th-century audience. Instead, the artist used them to create a magical world of mischievous etchings, based on gouache paintings. The Fables exhibited in *The Morals of Marc Chagall* belong to the 85 special editions that here hand-colored by the artist.

The 24 beautifully colored lithographs that make up *The Story of the Exodus* provide a moral universalism that Chagall was interested in expressing through the use of an emotionally rich humanity. However, the heavy use of Jewish themes and symbols throughout the illustrations inhibited Chagall's universalist depiction. In fact, when interpreted through a Jewish lens, Chagall's illustrations for *The Story of the Exodus*

suite can be seen as a metaphor for Chagall's support of Zionism and the state of Israel.

The Morals of Marc Chagall ran from November 21–December 12, 2013 at the UWM Art History Gallery. Advisers Kenneth Bendiner, professor of art history, and Rachel Baum, adjunct professor of Foreign Language and Literature and faculty member of the Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, helped me develop the exhibition. My special thanks as well to Linda Brazeau, director of the UWM Art Collection and Art Galleries; Christa Story, curator of collections for the UWM Art Collection and Galleries; Kate Negri, department associate in Art History; Joel Berkowitz, director of the Stahl Center for Jewish Studies; Max Yela, head of the Golda Meir Libraries Special Collections Department; and Steven Brondino, partner of Blutstein Brondino Fine Art.



The Fox and the Bust, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927-1930, hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre, UWM Art Collection



Moses Before the Burning Bush, from *The Story of the Exodus*, 1966, color lithograph on Arches paper, Special Collections, UWM Libraries



A Brand-New Tool for Teaching an Ancient Language

BY Yael Gal, UWM Hebrew Instructor

When I received the news that the Stahl Center was purchasing a Smart Board (interactive whiteboard) for the purpose of teaching Hebrew, I could not have been more excited! The Smart Board, a relatively new teaching and learning tool, opens doors to new and improved ways of instruction and is especially useful in teaching a foreign language.

Like the traditional whiteboard, the Smart Board projects a computer's content onto a big screen. What makes it "smart" is that it enables the user to edit and write notes or comments (and move them around), to add drawings, to erase or highlight, and so much more. All this with just the touch of a finger or an electronic pen!

How can we use the Smart Board to enhance Hebrew studies? The list of possibilities is long and keeps growing every year. Here are a couple of examples:

The instructor can project a page from the textbook onto the big screen. The instructor or the students can then circle, underline, highlight, or overwrite different elements of the page on the board itself. In Hebrew, this can be used to show the roots of verbs, find the adjectives, or identify prefixes and suffixes.

The same can be done with any multimedia presentation. We can upload pictures from a digital camera, show movies or images, and use the Internet. Word documents and scanned documents also work well, and allow us to emphasize important points or add relevant comments on the board in real time. If we wish, we can save these documents, along with any changes or comments added, and display them again at any time. Any worksheet typed on the computer can easily be opened on the Smart Board, and answers can be filled in directly on the board itself.

As a foreign-language instructor, I find the Smart Board very helpful in developing oral skills, as it encourages conversation and communication. The students can speak in the target language as a group since they all concentrate on the same item simultaneously. With the help of colorful pictures and animations, I can speak only in Hebrew while presenting new vocabulary, grammatical concepts, and other topics.

The Smart Board brings true excitement to learning and it is a powerful supporting tool for language acquisition. It encourages the use of technology in class and stimulates high levels of interest and thinking among students. There is no doubt that alongside the more conventional teaching methods, it brings a new and creative dimension to the class and offers endless opportunities for both the teacher and the student.

I am grateful to the donors who made the purchase of the Smart Board possible. Most of the funding came from the Robert and Sylvia Grossman Fund, established by the Grossmans' children and their spouses, Linda and Eli Frank and Ellen and Larry Grossman. Additional funding came from Michael Bracha. Their generous support of UWM's Hebrew program has made it possible for me to teach a 3000-year-old language with state-of-the-art technology.

FACULTY UPDATES

In the fall 2013 semester, **Lisa Silverman** taught "Introduction to Jewish History" (History 379/Jewish 379) as a hybrid course for the first time. The course combined elements of online and traditional classroom teaching in order to facilitate and reinforce students' understanding of the history and culture of the Jewish people from antiquity to the present. In spring 2014, she taught the course "The Jews of Modern Europe: History and Culture" (History 358/Jewish 358) in the same format.

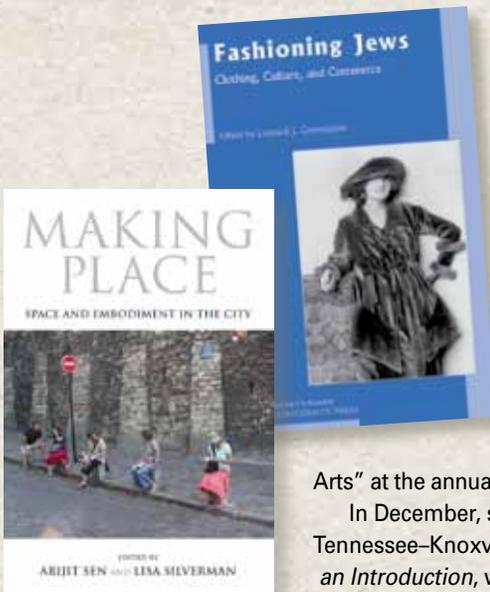
On December 4, 2013, Lisa presented a talk on her current research on Viennese photographer Madame d'Ora and the restitution of her house in Austria after the Holocaust at the Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA. She also presented this research at the annual conference of the German Studies Association, which was held in October, 2013 in Denver, Colorado. Her related essay on Madame d'Ora and other Jewish women in Vienna titled "Ella Zirner-Zwieback, Madame d'Ora and Vienna's New Woman" appeared this fall in the volume *Fashioning Jews: Clothing, Culture, and Commerce*, edited by Leonard Greenspoon (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2013).

Lisa was also invited to serve as the moderator for the panels "The Practice Of Jewish Cosmopolitanism" and "Siting Difference: Locations of Jewish Identity in the Graphic Arts" at the annual conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, which was held in Boston in December, 2013.

In December, she and co-author Daniel H. Magilow, Associate Professor of German at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, completed the manuscript for a volume titled *Holocaust Representation in History: an Introduction*, which will be published with Bloomsbury Academic Press in 2014.

Her volume *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*, which she co-edited with Arijit Sen, Associate Professor of Architecture at UWM, will appear with Indiana University Press in January, 2014. The volume includes her essay "Jewish Memory, Jewish Geography: Mapping Vienna before 1938."

This fall, she was also invited to submit an article on "Vienna" for the *Oxford Bibliographies in Jewish Studies*, edited by David Biale, which is published by Oxford University Press.



This past October, **Ellen Amster** presented "Corporeality and Politics: Theoretical Reflections on the Arab Spring," at the Middle East Studies Association Meeting in New Orleans, LA.

Ellen also gave four lectures in fall 2013: "The Muslim Womb: Midwives, Colonial Obstetrics, and the Postcolonial Legacies of Medicalized Childbirth in Morocco," at the Center for Global Citizenship, St. Louis University, in St. Louis, MO; "Healing the Body, Healing the Umma: Sufi Saints, God's Law, and Reflections on the Islamic Body Politic in Morocco and North Africa," Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, in Evanston, IL; "The Marabout (Murabit) as Public Healer: The Cosmology of Corporeality and the Islamic Body Politic in Morocco," African Studies Center Lecture Series, UW-Madison; and "The Mad Saint as Healer: The Islamic Majnun in al-Kattani's *Salwat al-Anfas* and in French Colonial Ethnography," Documentation and Research Centre for Religion, Culture, and Society (KADOC), University of Leuven, in Leuven, Belgium.

In September, the first chapter of Ellen's book, *Medicine and the Saints*, was the subject of Religion and Culture Web forum of the Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion at University of Chicago Divinity School.

Ellen was recently elected as a Governing Council Member at the Western Society for French History, a Board of Directors Member at the American Institute of Maghrib Studies, and appointed as Chair of the L. Carl Brown Book Prize Committee for the American Institute of Maghrib Studies.

Joel Berkowitz delivered a lecture, "The 'Mendel Beilis Epidemic': A Blood-libel Trial on the Yiddish Stage," to kick off the Stahl Center's "Art & Conflict" series of public programs for 2013-14. In December, he chaired a session at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference in Boston called "Staging Leivick," which explored the Holocaust-era dramas of the noted Yiddish playwright H. Leivick through new translations of scenes from his plays by Joel Berkowitz, Debra Caplan, and Motl Didner. In February he gave a lecture titled "With the Saving Remnant: A Yiddish Poet on 'Accursed German Soil'" at the University of Louisville.

Joel was recently awarded a Global Studies Fellowship for 2014-15 by UWM's Center for International Education for his current book project, *In the Days of Job: Yiddish Holocaust Drama*.



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The Golden Peacock

The bird that gives its name to this publication, and its image to our logo, figures prominently in Jewish folklore. In folk song, the golden peacock frequently arrives bearing some important message. We proudly adopt this figure as a symbol that connects us to the long tradition of Jewish learning and creativity.

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