



# 2020

## YIDDISH CIVILIZATION LECTURE SERIES

THURSDAY  
JUL 23

### THE ACCIDENTAL RISE OF THE MODERN YIDDISH THEATER

ALYSSA QUINT | *Delivered in English.*

The Accidental Rise of the Modern Yiddish Theater explores the particular social, commercial, cultural, linguistic, and historical circumstances that gave rise to the first public performances of Yiddish operetta in Romania and Russia from 1876 to 1883, a period considered the first chapter of the modern Yiddish theater. These performances kickstarted the global cultural phenomenon that became the modern Yiddish theater. Under what circumstances was this complex institution allowed to grow? And what accident of history—without which there may have been no Yiddish theater—lies at the intersection of all of these circumstances?

**ALYSSA QUINT** is the Tablet Magazine-Senior Scholar at YIVO, a Senior Research Scholar at Yeshiva University's Center for Israel Studies and a contributing editor of The Digital Yiddish Theater Project. Her book *The Rise of the Modern Yiddish Theater* (2019) documents the first days of the modern Yiddish theater in late Imperial Russia and is the basis of today's talk. It was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award's Scholarship category. She is the co-author with Michael Steinlauf of "Jewish Theater in Poland" in *The Cambridge History of Polish Theater* (forthcoming 2021); co-editor of a scholarly edition of Avrom Goldfaden's operetta *Shulamis* with Nahma Sandrow and Ron Robboy (forthcoming with Dusseldorf UP); co-editor with Miryem-Khaye Seigel *Women on the Yiddish Stage*, forthcoming with Syracuse UP (2021); and a co-editor of *Arguing the Modern Jewish Canon* (Harvard 2013). She is currently at work on a translation of Leyb Malakh's *Mississippi* and a project entitled "The Jewish Book of Questions" based on an array of questionnaires that were in circulation from 1925-1955.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

This reading list includes many of the scholarly underpinnings of my talk and I will refer to each of them in this order. My talk is based, in part, on my recent book, *The Rise of the Modern Yiddish Theater* (Indiana UP: 2019). I have not included Goldfaden's many autobiographical pieces (some of which are included in the Shatzky source) as they constitute a very complicated body of work that I will touch on in my talk.

*The Yiddish Theatre and Jacob P. Adler*. Translated and edited by Lulla Adler Rosenfeld. (1988) This is redacted from Adler's longest memoir serialized in 1915.

Stella Adler, *The Art of Acting*. Compiled and Edited by Howard Kissel. Preface by Marlon Brando (2000).

Steven Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (1950).

Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (1998).

Sam Kassow, Edith Clowes, and West, eds. *Between Tsar and People: Educated People and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (1991).

Yisroel Berkovitch, *Hundert yor yidish teater in rumenye, 1876-1976* (1976);

Oyslender and Finkel, A. *Goldfaden: materialn far a biografye* (Minsk: 1926).

Yankev Shatzky, ed. *Goldfaden-Bukh* (New York: 1926).

Eugene Binevich, *История еврейского театра в России, 1875-1918* (2000).

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