



15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011-6301
yivo.org · 212.246.6080

Newsletter

SPRING 2018





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Letter from the Director

The Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Collections Project, launched in 2014, recently announced the discovery of 170,000 pages of materials—diaries, memoirs, rabbinical writings, literary manuscripts, communal registers, artworks, plays, and many other kinds of works. This discovery and the larger Project is the work of many friends: those of the Paper Brigade dedicated to saving the remnant of Jewish culture in the Vilna Ghetto during the Holocaust; those now working together on what

was saved in Vilnius and New York; those who support this work both financially and in innumerable other ways; and those who are in the growing community of YIVO worldwide. Usually overlooked, friendship is often at the heart of why from hour to hour and day to day we carry on with the ordinary tasks that can become extraordinary, such as the incredible heroism of the Paper Brigade. In another act of supreme friendship Antanas Ulpis, Head of the Lithuanian Book Chamber, who was not a Jew and probably knew very few, if any, of the people whose lives he affected, saved YIVO's Vilna Collection from the Soviets in 1948. We honor our friends across generations, across continents, and across the divisions that often separate us.

Jonathan Brent
Executive Director & CEO

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.

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LIBRARYINQUIRIES@YIVO.CJH.ORG

Travel Directions

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is located in the Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, New York, NY 10011.

by subway

14 St / Union Sq. **L N Q R 4 5 6**
14 St + 6 Ave **F L M PATH** 18 St + 7 Ave **1**
14 St + 7 Ave **1 2 3** 14 St + 8 Ave **A C E L**

by bus

M2 M3 M5 M7 M14

Hours [CLOSED ON MAJOR FEDERAL AND JEWISH HOLIDAYS]

Gallery Hours
Sun 11:00am-5:00pm
Mon+Wed 9:30am-8:00pm
Tue+Thu 9:30am-5:00pm
Fri 9:30am-3:00pm
Sat CLOSED

Administrative Hours
Mon-Thu 9:00am-5:00pm
Fri 9:00am-4:00pm

Library Hours
Mon-Thu 9:30am-5:00pm

MONDAY
FEB. 26
7:00pm
EXHIBITION
OPENING

Jews in Space: Members of the Tribe in Orbit

The countdown begins! Explore the Jewish quest to understand the heavens. Enjoy curator tours, space-themed fun, and a first look at this stellar exhibition. *Co-presented with Center for Jewish History.*

SUNDAY
MAR. 4
11:00am-1:00pm

A MORNING
OF ACTIVITY
AND CULTURAL
IMMERSION FOR
CHILDREN OF
ALL AGES

March Mash-Up: A Family Festival

A Purim-themed March Mash-Up of family fun: holiday treats with Liz Alpern and Jeffrey Yoskowitz of The Gefilteria, sing-alongs with Eléonore Biezunski, storytelling with Shane Baker, a puppet show by Great Small Works, and more. *Co-presented with Center for Jewish History, American Jewish Historical Society, Leo Baeck Institute, Yeshiva University Museum.*

TUESDAY
APR. 3
7:00pm
SYMPOSIUM

Holocaust and Genocide: From the Past to the Present

For the 70th Anniversary of the UN Genocide Convention, this symposium addresses the contentious history of the U.S.'s adoption of the Convention, the Holocaust's shifting role in public and political discourse, and what lessons about preventing and intervening in acts of genocide have yet to be learned.

MONDAY
APR. 16
7:00pm
BOOK TALK

Wrestling with Shylock: Jewish Responses to The Merchant of Venice

A dynamic discussion led by Edna Nahshon about her recent book, co-edited with Michael Shapiro, which examines the ever-expanding body of Jewish responses to Shakespeare's most Jewishly relevant play.

TUESDAY
MAY 1
7:00pm
ONLINE CLASS
LAUNCH EVENT

Oh Mama, I'm in Love! The Story of the Yiddish Stage

Join us for the launch of *Oh Mama, I'm in Love! The Story of the Yiddish Stage*, the third course in YIVO's Shine Online Educational Series. Featuring special guests, we'll delve into the exciting world of Yiddish Theater, as we discover the lasting impact it continues to have on popular entertainment today.

MONDAY
MAY 7
6:30pm
MEET AN
ASTRONAUT

Jews in Orbit

What's it like to spin a dreidel in zero gravity? Find out from astronaut Jeffrey Hoffman. The event will also feature an overview of the history of Jewish astronauts with Dr. Valerie Neal, curator of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. *Co-presented with Center for Jewish History.*

MONDAY
MAY 14
7:00pm
THEATRICAL
PERFORMANCE

Yiddish Play in Translation

A play from the heyday of Yiddish theater in a newly-commissioned English translation from Allen Lewis Rickman. The play, which will be announced in the coming weeks, has not been seen onstage in living memory and has never before been translated into English.

TUESDAY
MAY 22
7:00pm
SIDNEY KRUM
YOUNG ARTISTS
CONCERT SERIES

Joachim Stutschewsky and the Music of His World

Performances by Julian Schwartz and Marika Bournaki, featuring a variety chamber music by Joachim Stutschewsky and composers of his coterie in Russia and Israel, and a new composition by Ofer Ben-Amots commissioned by YIVO for this concert. Neil W. Levin delivers a 6:00pm pre-concert lecture on Stutschewsky's life and work, and on his artistic milieu.

WEDNESDAY
MAY 23
7:00pm
BOOK RELEASE

Hasidism: A New History

The book launch of *Hasidism: A New History*, the first comprehensive history of the pietistic movement that shaped modern Judaism, with a presentation from authors David Biale and Samuel Heilman.

THURSDAY
JUN. 7
7:00pm
JACOB KRONHILL
VISITING
PROFESSOR
LECTURE

The Unknown and Heroic Anarchist Struggle Against Communism

Join us for our annual Kronhill lecture given by Paul Berman, YIVO's 2018 Jacob Kronhill Visiting Scholar in East European Jewish History. *Reception to follow.*

THURSDAY
JUL. 19
7:00pm
SING-ALONG

Jewish Theater Sing-along

From "*Bay mir bistu sheyn*" to "If I Were a Rich Man," the Jewish theater has produced a wealth of popular songs we still know and love. Join us for a sing-along of favorite Jewish theater songs as we celebrate the launch of our online Yiddish theater course, *Oh Mama, I'm In Love! The Story of the Yiddish Stage.*

FOR EVENT TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION:

VISIT: yivo.org/Events

CALL: 917.606.8290

EMAIL: boxoffice@yivo.cjh.org

[Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays · 9:00am-5:00pm]

Not in the New York area?
Watch past YIVO events at yivo.org/Video.

News

Karen Underhill Joins YIVO Board

Karen Underhill is Assistant Professor of Polish Literature and Polish Jewish Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Slavic and Baltic Languages and Literatures, and a member of the board of Chicago YIVO Society. Her research at the intersection of Polish and Jewish cultures and literatures focuses on Polish and Yiddish modernisms; Bruno Schulz and Galician Jewish culture in the interwar period; and changing narratives of Poland as a multilingual and pluralist space of encounter. She received her PhD in Polish and Jewish Studies at the University of Chicago in 2011, was YIVO's 2012-2013 Joseph Kremen Memorial Fellow; and is co-founder of Massolit Books & Cafe in Kraków. She has designed Jewish heritage educational programs and teacher training workshops for the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, and continues to lecture in Poland during the summers on Jewish culture and history of Poland.



YIVO Hosts Press Conference on New Discoveries of the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Collections Project

In May 2017, YIVO discovered in Vilnius, Lithuania, more than 170,000 new documents lost to history for over 70 years and thought to have been destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. These rare and unpublished works represent the collective memory and cultural history of East European Jews. The Vilna Collections now encompass over two million book pages and more than a million pages of literary manuscripts, memoirs, diaries, communal records, religious sermons, letters and other materials. In just three years, YIVO has raised \$5.4 of the \$5.6 million towards this landmark preservation and digitization project.

On **October 24th, 2017**, YIVO held a press conference announcing this discovery. YIVO Executive Director Jonathan Brent, Dani Dayan, Consul General of Israel in New York, David Fishman, Professor of Jewish History at The Jewish Theological Seminary, Jack Jacobs, professor of political science at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Ambassador of Lithuania to the United States and Mexico, Linas Linkevičius, Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dainius Ulpis spoke at the press conference. The conference and discoveries were picked up by AP, *The New York Times*, JTA, and other local and international broadcast, print, and online media.

An "Evening of Music" at the Home of Navah Perlman and Robert Frost

Last November, Navah Perlman and Robert Frost hosted an intimate "Evening of Music" fundraiser targeted to new and younger audiences. Jonathan Brent gave a presentation about YIVO's history, mission, and current initiatives. The musical program offered performances by pianist Navah Perlman, vocal duets in English and Yiddish by Leora Perlman and cantor Meredith Greenberg, and a unique musical program of classical music numbers performed by the students of The Julliard School. Many Abraham Joshua Heschel School parents attended and we made some new friends for YIVO.

Study Tours of Eastern Europe

MAY 17 – 25, 2018

NEW! 2018 YIVO Literary Tour of Jewish Galicia
Experience the landscapes, environment, and culture that influenced such writers as Shai Agnon, I.L. Peretz, Isaac Babel, and Bruno Schulz. Noted historian Dr. Samuel Kassow and Dr. Eddy Portnoy, Senior Researcher and Director of Exhibitions at YIVO, will guide you on a unique journey of literary and cultural discovery.

JUNE 19 – JULY 1, 2018

2018 YIVO Lithuania and Poland Study Tour
Together with Dr. Samuel Kassow, examine the life that was lived and lost as you reconnect with your own heritage. Discover the fascinating treasures of old Warsaw, Krakow, Vilnius, the magical Białowieża Forest, and much, much more.

The tours are chaired by Irene Pletka, Vice-Chair of the YIVO Board of Directors.
To make a reservation, or for more information, please contact Elina Bloch at EBLOCH@YIVO.CJH.ORG.



This exhibit tells the story of Jews' relationship to the universe, through rare 18th and 19th century astronomy books, religious objects taken into space, works of science fiction, pop culture, and other ephemera.

**OPENING: STARDATE
02.26.2018**

presented by the
**CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY
& YIVO INSTITUTE FOR
JEWISH RESEARCH**

JEWIS IN SPACE

MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE IN ORBIT



Molly Picon in *Circus Girl* at the Second Avenue Theater, 1928.

Picon plays a circus performer who dresses like a child to save on train fare. In this getup she falls in love with a man. They marry after she reveals her true identity.

Take a step behind the curtain and enter the world of the Yiddish theater in ***Oh Mama, I'm in Love! The Story of the Yiddish Stage***, the third course in YIVO's Shine Online Educational Series, presented by Edward Blank and Family. Join leading scholars of Yiddish theater as they trace the history of Jewish performance in 25 lecture videos and discussions. Explore Yiddish theater as a global phenomenon through images and playbills from more than 20 countries. Get to know the greatest Yiddish actors, producers, designers, and playwrights, many of whom would go on to have successful careers on the American stage and screen, including Molly Picon, Paul Muni, and Stella Adler. Discover the impact that Yiddish theater continues to have on popular entertainment today.

Immerse yourself in nearly 1,000 archival objects and documents, including never-before-seen photographs, newly digitized audio clips, original posters and advertisements, and vibrant set and costume designs that bring the Yiddish theater to life.

Course launches May 1, 2018 ▶

Education at YIVO

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Uriel Weinreich Summer Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture

June 25 – August 3, 2018

NEW! Tuition is now \$2,000*

Spend six weeks this summer immersed in Yiddish and discover 1,000 years of Jewish history, while celebrating the 50th anniversary of the longest-running intensive Yiddish program in the world.

Through language classes, seminars, theater workshops, sing-alongs, and excursions throughout New York City, you'll explore the riches of the Yiddish language and East European Jewish culture in its many contexts.

Discover the exciting world of Yiddish New York, as you walk the historic streets of the Lower East Side and learn about the great Yiddish writers who made New York home. Delve into the legacy of the Yiddish theater, the Yiddish press, and more, as you explore Yiddish culture past and present at YIVO.

We hope to see you this summer!
Apply now at: summerprogram.yivo.org

* Undergraduate and Graduate students may be eligible for Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) summer fellowships. For more information, please contact your university or college department regarding the FLAS application and deadline.

■ **Spring Classes**

Register for spring classes at yivo.org/Classes.

The Eternal Kurt Weill: His Road from Jewish to American Music and Back · INSTRUCTOR: Neil Levin

BEGINS February 21 · 6 Sessions (WEDNESDAYS) 6:00pm-8:00pm

Jewish Anarchism · INSTRUCTOR: Paul Berman

BEGINS March 1 · 6 Sessions (THURSDAYS) 6:00pm-8:00pm

Advanced Beginning Yiddish · INSTRUCTOR: Eve Jochnowitz

BEGINS February 28 · 10 Sessions (WEDNESDAYS) 5:00pm-7:00pm

Intermediate Yiddish · INSTRUCTOR: Paula Teitelbaum

BEGINS February 26 · 10 Sessions (MONDAYS) 6:30pm-8:30pm

■ **YIVO's Shine Online Educational Series**

Explore Jewish history and culture and access our unique collection of archival materials from the comfort of your home: yivo.org/Online-Classes

■ **YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization**

This January, over 100 students attended YIVO's Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization, which featured eight courses spanning a broad range of topics, from Jewish literature, music, and theater to Jewish politics and history. The Winter Program offers an integrated curriculum in the culture, history, languages, and literatures of East European Jews and the Jewish Diaspora. This year's theme was "Madness & Tyranny," with courses taught by leading academics and artists, including Jonathan Brent, Anthony Coleman, David Fishman, Stefanie Halpern, Jack Jacobs, Annie Polland, Jan Schwarz, Michael Walzer, and John Zorn.

Need some
more **drama**
in your life?

Join the crowd.

OH MAMA, I'M IN LOVE! THE STORY OF THE YIDDISH STAGE

YIVO.ORG/OHMAMA

YIVO'S SHINE ONLINE
EDUCATIONAL SERIES
presented by
EDWARD BLANK & FAMILY

Recent Acquisitions



BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT PRESENTING YIVO STAFF WITH HER FATHER'S LITHOGRAPH.

The YIVO Archives Art Collection has recently been enriched by a fascinating donation. Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett of NYU and the POLIN Museum in Poland donated a beautiful Purim lithograph by her father, Mayer Kirshenblatt. The lithograph is a black and white rendition of Mayer Kirshenblatt's colorful Purim painting, featured on the cover of his well-known book, *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust* that he co-authored with his daughter Barbara (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007). Kirshenblatt, who possessed a remarkable visual memory, recreated the Purim scene and story around it exactly as he remembered it from his childhood in Opatów: a well-to-do aged couple from his community and their foster child visited by a group of *purimshpilers* and klezmer musicians looking forward to a generous reward for their performance. The lithograph represents the same scene slightly differently, changing the family's positioning for a more dramatic contrast between the joyful *purimshpilers* and slightly gloomy, though warm atmosphere of the house.



LES GOLDSCHMIDT

Program Highlights

The Book Smugglers

(OCTOBER 10, 2017) David Fishman's newest book, *The Book Smugglers*, chronicles a little-known chapter from the darkest days of Jewish history: the story of the courageous Jews of the "Paper Brigade," who risked their lives to rescue thousands of rare books and manuscripts—from the Nazis and the Soviets—by hiding them on their bodies, burying them in bunkers in the Vilna Ghetto, and smuggling them across borders.

120th Anniversary of the Founding of the Jewish Labor Bund

(OCTOBER 22, 2017) YIVO commemorated the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Jewish Labor Bund, the socialist movement which has figured so prominently in the history of East European and world Jewry. Participants included Hinde Ena Burstin, Jack Jacobs, Clare Kinberg, Irena Klepfisz, Zalmen Mlotek, Avram Patt, Moishe Rosenfield, Daniel Soyer, David Slucki, Ann Toback, Alex Weiser, and Marvin Zukerman.

Jews In and After the 1917 Russian Revolution

(NOVEMBER 5-6, 2017) YIVO's sold out two-day conference explored the context of and immediate reaction to the Revolution, Jewish life in the Soviet Union, and the Revolution's lasting impact today. Participating scholars: Elissa Bemporad, Jonathan Brent, Mitchell Cohen, Evgeny Dobrenko, Gennady Estraiikh, David Fishman, Zvi Gitelman, Samuel Kassow, Catriona Kelly, Harvey Klehr, Cecile Kuznitz, Eli Lederhendler, James Loeffler, Sean McMeekin, Joshua Meyers, Tony Michels, Kenneth Moss, Gary Saul Morson, Harriet Murav, Joshua Rubenstein, Gabriella Safran, Michael Scammel, and Steven Zipperstein. *The Forward* described the conference as "so informative and fascinating that it actually changes the perspective of the participant."

A Yiddish Liederabend — An Evening of Yiddish Song

(DECEMBER 13, 2017) An elegant, nostalgic program devoted to treasures of Yiddish song, presented in the intimate chamber music setting of a traditional Liederabend (song evening). The concert featured four of the genre's leading interpreters: Ida Rae Cahana, Elizabeth Shammash, Raphael Frieder, Simon Spiro, and a cameo appearance by Robert Paul Abelson, together with world-renowned virtuoso pianist Yehudi Wyner. Neil Levin, YIVO's Anne E. Leibowitz Visiting Professor-in-Residence in Music, delivered a pre-concert lecture. The range of music, poetry, and expression was a testament to the versatility of this genre, and the sold-out event is evidence of the appeal of Yiddish song and poetry today.



YIVO's 2017 Study Tour participants pose in front of the Lithuanian Central State Archives in Vilnius.

Our Supporters

YIVO gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies for their support in 2017.

In addition, we extend our gratitude to all YIVO members, each of whom is critical to our success.

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Ruth and David Levine

\$100,000-\$499,999

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JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

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