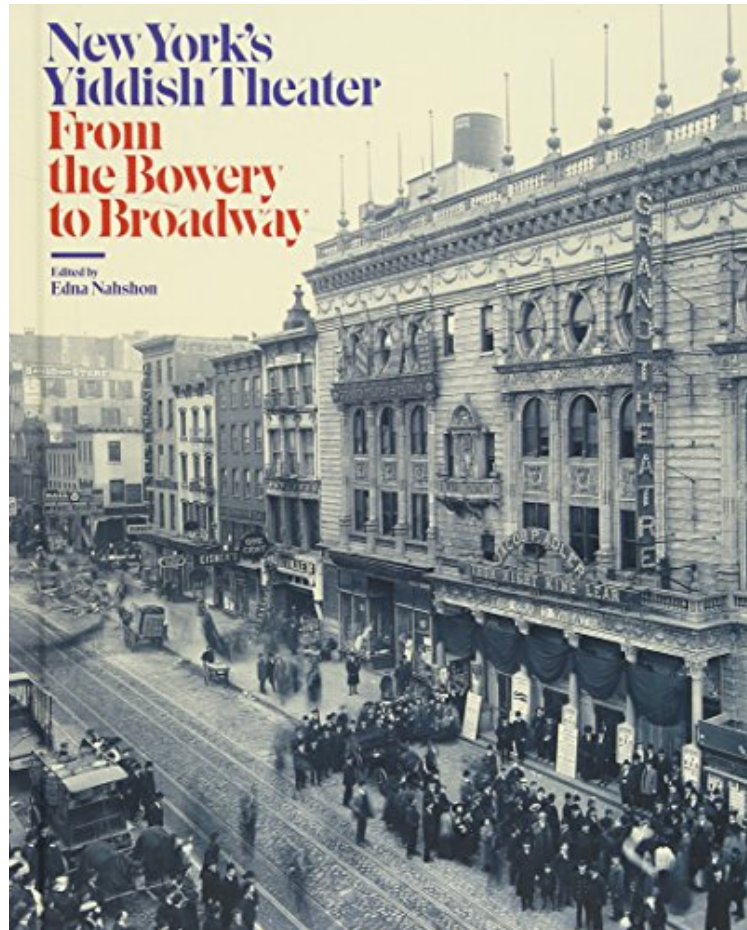


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New Yorks Yiddish Theater: From the Bowery to Broadway

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In the early decades of the twentieth century, a vibrant theatrical culture took shape on New York City's Lower East
Side. Original dramas, comedies, musicals, and vaudeville, along with sophisticated productions of Shakespeare,
Ibsen, and Chekhov, were innovatively staged for crowds that rivaled the audiences on Broadway. Though these
productions were in Yiddish and catered to Eastern European, Jewish audiences (the largest immigrant group in the

city at the time), their artistic innovations, energetic style, and engagement with politics and the world around them came to influence all facets of the American stage. Vividly illustrated and with essays from leading historians and critics, this book recounts the heyday of "Yiddish Broadway" and its vital contribution to American Jewish life and crossover to the broader American culture. These performances grappled with Jewish nationalism, labor relations, women's rights, religious observance, acculturation, and assimilation. They reflected a range of genres, from tear-jerkers to experimental theater. The artists who came of age in this world include Stella Adler, Eddie Cantor, Jerry Lewis, Sophie Tucker, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers. The story of New York's Yiddish theater is a tale of creativity and legacy and of immigrants who, in the process of becoming Americans, had an enormous impact on the country's cultural and artistic development.

A witty and absorbing demonstration of the interplay of minority and mainstream with the minority culture here being of outsize influence over the larger culture of Broadway, Hollywood, and America. (Kirkus s)The many photos of famous actors and comics, old posters, packed theaters, and stage scenes balance out the richly sourced text, making this a visually lively, comprehensive, and accessible addition to any collection on theater or Jewish American history and heritage. (Booklist)A comprehensive... readable and lavishly illustrated history of the Yiddish Theater.... This essential book is an important addition to library collections focusing on theater, pop culture, and Jewish studies. (Library Journal (starred review))A tribute in scholarly scrapbook form to a dramatic phenomenon that acculturated immigrant Jews and left a legacy often defined as New York humor. (Sam Roberts The New York Times)[A] scholarly scrapbook full of vivid illustrations that buttress essays from leading critics and historians. (Haaretz)A richly-illustrated approachable work about the Lower East Side's entertainment legacy. (Southern Jewish Life)[A] marvelous book. (Norman J. Fedder Jewish Book Council)A comprehensive guide.... the book is as entertaining as New York's once-thriving Yiddish theater. (Robert A. Cohn St. Louis Jewish Light)Anyone interested in Yiddish New York will want to read New York's Yiddish Theater. Theater buffs will be delighted to learn the connections between Yiddish theater and the American stage. The book is also highly recommended for anyone interested in American Jewish history. (Rabbi Rachel Esserman The Reporter)New York's Yiddish Theater serves as an excellent history through images, together with illuminating essays. . . . This welcome publication also fills a long-felt need for an illustrated history of an important chapter in the city's musical life. (Michael Ochs Notes: the Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association)Prodigiously illustrated. . . . This indispensable book is a fun read, easy to browse through, get lost in. It is no dry academic treatise, but a generous yet scholarly account of a now-vanished era of popular Yiddish culture. Highly recommended. (Richard C. Norton Operetta Research Center)About the AuthorEdna Nahshon is professor of theater and drama at the Jewish Theological Seminary and senior associate at Oxford University's Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. She is the author of *Jews and Theater in an Intercultural Context* and *Jewish Theatre: A Global View*, and the editor of *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays*.