



The Congress for Jewish Culture was founded in 1948 to promote Yiddish language and culture. Among its activities are publications of the Yiddish journal "Di Tsukunft" as well as monographs in Yiddish and English on the history of Eastern European Jewry. The Congress also conducts regular programming in Yiddish, and runs the CYCO, New York's oldest active Yiddish press and bookstore.

דער יידישער קולטור־קאָנגרעס איז געגרינדעט אין 1948 מיט אַ ציל ממשיך צו זיין די יידישע שפראך און קולטור. ער גיט ארויס דעם זשורנאל "די צוקונפט", ווי אויך וויסנשאפטלעכע ביכער אויפן געביט פון יידיש און אַשקענאזישע ייִדנטום, און פירט אַדורך ייִדישע פראַגראַמען. ער פירט אויך אַן מיט דער ציקא, דער עלטסטער אַקטיווער פאַרלאַג און פאַרקויף פון ייִדישע ביכער אין ניו יאָרק.



The Kavehoz series is supported by grants from the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.



Thanks to Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman and Efim Chernyi for permission to perform their songs and to Ruth Levin for permission to perform Leibu Levin's songs recently published in "Leibu Levin, Word and Melody", Magnes Press, 2005. Thanks to Pete Rushefsky for help with arrangements.

Art works by Alexander Vaisman (www.vaisman.org)



CONGRESS
FOR JEWISH CULTURE

ייִדישער
קולטור־קאָנגרעס

presents

Asya Vaisman, vocals

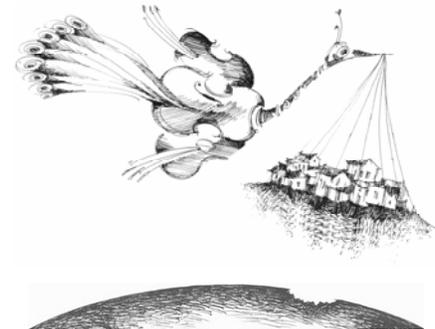
with

Art Bailey, accordion

&

Jake Shulman-Ment, violin

**דער סוד פֿון מיין האַרצן
לידער פֿון טשערנאָוויצער פּאָעטן און קאָמפּאָזיטאָרן**



**THE SECRET OF MY HEART:
SONGS OF POETS AND COMPOSERS FROM CZERNOWITZ**

קאָועהויז, דאָנערשטיק, 17 מיי, 7:00 יא אָוונט

"Kavehoz", Atran Center, 25 East 21st Street, Ground Floor
Thursday, May 17th, 7 PM

dersod.googlepages.com

Meyer Haratz (1912-1993), Yiddish poet, essayist and editor. He grew up in Bessarabia, lived much of his life in Czernowitz and moved to Israel in 1972. The first part of the concert consists of songs written to his poems.

Leibu Levin (1914-1983), composer and performer from Czernowitz, moved to Israel in 1972. He set many Yiddish poems to music. He translated the poems of Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger into Yiddish.

Asya Vaisman (1983), Yiddish singer and songwriter, was born in Czernowitz and lived in Moscow before moving to America. She is currently working on her PhD dissertation at Harvard on the Yiddish songs and singing practices of Hasidic women.

Efim Chernyi (1959) Yiddish singer and songwriter from Kishinev. He is the musical director and soloist of the Yiddish Song Theater in Kishinev and an active participant in the European klezmer scene.

geyt a meydל גייט אַ מיידל

Words: *Meyer Haratz*
Music: *Leibu Levin*

A girl tries to draw some water from the well and from the river, but the water escapes her until she meets a shepherd. Their love brings the waters back, and in the girl's pretty eyes the world turns upside down.

rozeve papir ראָזעווע פּאַפּיר (3-poem medley)

Words: *Meyer Haratz*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

Because I cannot rely on anyone else, I built my own four walls and covered myself with a roof. Only my love do I entrust to destiny, and my love is the only thing I have not lost. When I received your letter, I was filled with light, even though the day was dark and rainy. And when I went to sleep, I put your letter by my pillow, and I dreamed of bright eternities and a rocking mail ship. I sing you a song on pink paper and dream of your steps approaching my door. You interrupt me by opening the door; I run to you and leave my song on pink paper unfinished.

s'iz fintster in gas ס'איז פּינצטער אין גאַס

Words: *Meyer Haratz*
Music: *Efim Chernyi*

It's dark and wet in the street, and I still have a long way to go. As I walk, I hear a song about sunny times. The sky is silent, and not a single star can be seen; though the song is still far, I can already hear it. I hear the song, and I recognize the Jew who sings it blue and gray on the roads, like an hour after the rain. Song after song, Jew after Jew, the world is flooded with singing. And here is the land of stars and sand, sprouting with flowers.

dos bisele shpayz דאָס ביסעלע שפּייז

Words: *Meyer Haratz*
Music: *Efim Chernyi*

A bowl of borsht with cabbage, a plate of radish with salt, a little bit of tsimmes... G-d, please provide us with this short menu. Provide us with sugar for tea and with a guest to join us at our table.

viglid fun a zeydn וויגליד פֿון אַ זיידן

Words: *Meyer Haratz*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

A grandfather rocks his grandson to sleep with a Yiddish song. He says, "I came from a strange, far-off place into your world; if you don't understand my words, then be lulled by the melody, or at least by the rocking. These days, it's not fashionable to be rocked to sleep; your mother and I nearly had a fight over this. If rocking is really such a big sin, then fall asleep simply by lying there. Don't cry, sleep, my child." The song is preceded by a traditional sher from the collection of *Moyshe Beregovski*.

vos hot lib a yidele וואָס האָט ליב אַ יידעלע

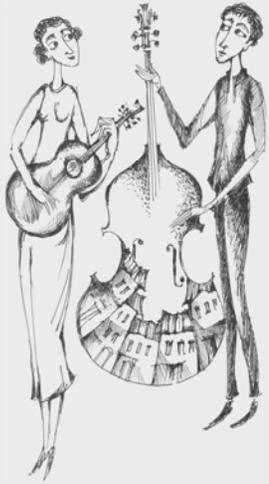
Words and music by
Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman

What do Jews love? Jews love a tune, a tsimbl, and a fiddle. Jews love songs from long ago. Almost lost unborn sounds whisper, wanting to resound until the smoke rises! We stand in a row, waiting for the nightingale, to capture a warble of his voice, a peep of a melody, a morsel of a song from long ago. So let's get into a circle, everyone who has a voice, and we'll hear it once and yet again. With melody, with violin, with tsimbl and with song, the song from long ago tugs and burns.



Moyshe Beregovski (1892-1961) prominent ethnomusicologist and folklorist. He collected and described several thousand pieces of Eastern European Jewish folk music. In 1944 he organized a research expedition to Czernowitz to collect songs from ghettos and concentration camps.

Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman (1920), Yiddish poet, songwriter and singer who grew up in Czernowitz and came to the US after the war. Her poetry and songs are collected in many books, songbooks and recordings.



zumerteg

זומערטעג

Words and music by
Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman

The young summer day has gone; yellowing leaves lie on the street corner. And the thoughts, my old dreams come back to the summer day. Where was it that you remained standing, looking around, almost too late? Almost losing, almost missing the summer days. Where is the running? What is the hurry? We walk one by one in the quiet dawns with the warm light of the summer days. The beloved summer day has gone, buried in a sunset. And a willow, rocked by the winds, still whispers the song of the summer days.

shpet harbst

שפעט האַרבסט

Words: *Rokhl Korn*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

The fog above me is like a gray dream, and all of the stars became homeless today. Frozen in the first, hard, blue frost, their quiet tears hang from the trees. The narrow river wrinkles up in foreboding fear and goes under the ice with all the green grasses, while the shadow of the lonely, abandoned birch swims over to the other shore. The frost shapes the tracks of a bare-foot child in the ground, as though chiseled in stone. They will remain there immobile for the rest of the winter, a nest for falling stars, a nest for white snow.

Rokhl Korn (1898-1982), Polish and Yiddish poet from Galicia. Shortly after World War II, she emigrated to Montreal. Her poetry is known for its nature imagery.



der zinger

דער זינגער

Words: *Kadya Molodowsky*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

I dream of a floating house, road, and train, which tell me that you are here, but I wake up and realize that a singer in my courtyard is singing an old sonnet. And I see, the sun is out, and the skies are blue, but the road is not here. The singer sings of a boy and girl who are in love. I nod to him: your song is like gold, and I say: Take me with you! The singer says to me: you are a child and a fool, see the flying bird? I need only its flight and your sorrow for my song.

shtile trit

שטילע טריט

Words: *Dovid Einhorn*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

Quiet steps in soft moss, Sabbath rest an entire week. Every evening you light candles, a rose-colored shine on your face. Through the green pine branches, G-d's blue roof shows through. There, someone is also lighting Sabbath candles, blue shadows on your face. We sit and keep guard, waiting for a magic night. A rustle goes through the forest, the skies split and shine.

etele

עטעלע

Words: *Shike Driz*
Music: *Asya Vaisman*

I will dream up a wonderful shtetl, and my dream, my Etele, will settle there. With braided hair, she will play on the steps until I come knocking on her door, bearing a freckle, a kheympintl, which is worth the steppes of Bessarabia and all of Bukovina, the nests in the forests, the coolness of the grass, the secret of my heart, and more...

Kadya Molodowsky (1894-1975), Yiddish writer born in Byelorussia, lived in Warsaw and New York. She wrote poems, novels, short stories and plays, many of them for her pupils in Yiddish secular schools.

Dovid Einhorn (1886-1973), Yiddish and Hebrew poet, playwright, publicist, and literary critic. Known for his poetic innovations, Einhorn was one of the first poets who introduced free verse into Yiddish poetry.

Shike Driz (1908-1971), Yiddish poet, born in Ukraine, lived in Moscow. He was most famous in the former Soviet Union for his children's poetry, which was translated extensively into Russian and became an integral part of the Russian children's canon.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924-1942), German Jewish poet from Czernowitz who died in the labor camp Mikhailovka during the Holocaust at the age of 18.

in di nekht

אין די נעכט

Words: *Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger*
Music and translation: *Leibu Levin*

At night, my dreams are interwoven, sweet, like young wine. I dream that an abyss of blossoms was scattered, covering and enveloping me. Why do I say blossoms? Kisses, hot like red wine, and forlorn like butterflies that know that they must pass away with the sunshine. At night, my dreams are interwoven, heavy, like tired sand. It seems that wilted leaves fall from dying trees right into my hand. Why do I say leaves? Hands, that caress like sands, rolling, barely discerned, tired, like butterflies that know it's the end even before feeling the first ray. At night, my dreams are interwoven, blue ones, like the woe of longing. It seems that from all of the trees snowflakes are scattered, frosty span-gles of snow. Why do I say snowflakes? They are tears that I have shed in delirious sorrow. Take in my tears, beloved, you must hear - I cried them all out in longing for you.

moldavian freylekhs מאַלדאַוואַנער פֿריילעכס

Words: *Asya Vaisman*
Music: *Traditional, from the repertoire of German Goldenshteyn*

Let us all dance the freylekhs! The in-laws are spinning with each other; what was only a dream yesterday has come true today. Fiddler, don't just stand there, let your playing flow like wine! In other cities, people dance the polonaise and the foxtrot, but in Belz, Kishinev, and Soroke, we dance the freylekhs in a circle. See the bride, the groom, the children, oh, what a party! The clarinets are playing, their song is like that of merry crickets. The drummers are tapping their feet, what a nice sound. Oh, see how we dance, it is a freylekhs! Come into the circle and dance until dawn!

German Goldenshteyn (1934-2006), clarinetist and musicologist from Bessarabia, who immigrated to the US in 1994, bringing with him a vast repertoire of authentic klezmer tunes. In his later years, he enthusiastically taught young klezmer musicians from all over the world.

About the program

This program includes songs of different genres: love songs, philosophical ruminations, lullabies, and dancing songs, which all share one common trait – at least one of the song's authors has or had some strong connection to Czernowitz, now known as Chernivtsi, a beautiful town in the modern-day Ukraine. Czernowitz is well known for its many diverse and important contributions to Yiddish culture, but few people realize that Czernowitz was also a birthplace of modern Yiddish song. It was in the cafes of Czernowitz that the song-writing and singing career of Velvl Zbarzher took off, and in the very same cafes young Avrum Goldfaden met Velvl Zbarzher and was inspired to start writing his own songs. One of the very first Yiddish song collections was published in Czernowitz in 1881 by Dovid Apoteker. In the last century, an endless inspiration for song was found in the poetry of Itzik Manger, whose rhymes have been set to music by dozens of composers. The program tonight includes some lesser known and more recently written works by poets and composers from the cradle of Yiddish song.

Asya Vaisman

Art Bailey, pianist and accordionist, is active in the improvised and world music scenes. In addition to his activities as a pianist and arranger in jazz and latin music, Art has performed with many major klezmer musicians.

Jake Shulman-Ment, violinist, is among the leaders of the new generation of Klezmer and Eastern European folk music performers. He has performed and recorded extensively with various klezmer groups.

