

## REVIEWS

*Yiddish Theatre, New Approaches*, ed. Joel Berkowitz, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Oxford – Portland, Oregon 2003

The volume of essays, as we read on the cover leaflet is supposed to be 'the first collection of scholarly studies on the Yiddish theatre to appear in English.' The chapters of the book had been delivered as papers during the International Workshop on Yiddish Theatre, Drama and Performance in Oxford in 1999.

Joel Berkowitz, the editor has completed three important tasks – being not only the commander in chief, but including all the papers by his essay *Writing the History of Yiddish Theatre* and completing the thorough, detailed bibliography, as well.

The whole book is divided into various topics. The broadest scope we find in the repertoire. Nahma Sandrow has written on Romanticism in the Yiddish theatre, Barbara Henry on the pre-Revolution Russian stage in St. Petersburg, which hosted Jewish plays. Paola Bertolone compares Goldfaden's *Di Kishefmakherin* with tradition of the operetta. The paper by Seth L. Wolitz brings another comparison of Goldfaden, this time with Halkin, in the context of renewed Jewish role models in their plays – *Shulamis* and *Bar kokhba*.

Another bigger section in the book is the chapter devoted to regional centers in which one can find the paper by Brigitte Dallinger on the Yiddish theatre in Vienna (1880–1938), David Mozower's paper on London Yiddish theatre and its phenomenon of Joseph Markovitch with his *melo-deklamatsyes*. The last, not least paper in the section has been written by our Krakow's colleague Mirosława Bulat. The topic of history of Goldfaden's output in Krakow's Jewish theatres.

There are also papers on *Purimshpil* by Ahuvas Belkin, censorship in tsarist Russia by John Klier and in post-war London by Leonard Prager.

The final paper, by Nina Warnke is devoted to criticism.

Aside of the high level of papers there many extra advantages of the book; selection of interesting plates and tables, many interesting texts (written in transcription for the sake of readers not knowing Hebrew letters) and above all detailed bibliography (34 pages) and thorough index.

The contributors are listed in the book – except for the 'big' names are some not so famous. Here we have one of the few disadvantages of the book – lack of detailed addresses for further contacts. Another problem is the time between the seminar and the date of edition. Four years in the era of the Internet, Desk Top Publishing and easy contacts is a very long. The phenomenon of Yiddish theatre is slowly disappearing and whatever can be saved by seminars, papers and documentation must be done immediately.

Many thank to the editors, contributions and sponsors! We need the sequel. Zol zayn!