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Designing for Yiddish Drama

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Naomi Marin
Professor Shannon Zura
Summer Fellows

Reflection Paper on Designing for Yiddish Drama

My journey with summer fellows actually started because my best friend was looking into it and suggested I should too. The more I read, the more interested I became. Creating my own project where I get to choose what I research? Yes, please! I remember writing an argumentative paper in Dr. Brodie's theater class on *The Dybbuk* last year and feeling frustrated that it was all I could do. I wanted to do more, I wanted to put music and lights to the words I was reading, I wanted to combine my passion for theatrical design with my love of my Jewish culture. So, after asking Professor Shannon Zura to be my mentor, I was thrilled to be finally starting this process.

When I thought of Yiddish drama, the first thing that came to my mind is probably one of the most famous musicals- *Fiddler on the Roof*. However, in order to truly understand Yiddish drama, I needed to understand its history. Where did it start? What were some of the hardships that it faced? How did it deal with two world wars and a genocide? The answers to these questions along with the answers for my design questions would be answered as I did my research and learned more about my culture than I ever thought I could possibly know. My design questions were: What influences a design or designer? What is the relationship between culture and design? How do designers work? What steps does a designer take from reading a script to finishing a complete design?

During this project, I learned several things. One of the first things I learned was how Yiddish as a language was viewed by the traditionalists and how that belief continued into the 20th century. They saw it as "jargon", not a language, something of the lower classes and less than German or Hebrew. Also, if a Jewish child joined a Yiddish theater troupe, their parents would basically mourn them as if they had died. An example of this was David Kessler

whose parents mourned their son's death when he joined a troupe even though he would later become one of the most famous Yiddish actors. I found this to be quite interesting since not only was it brand new information, but because of my experiences with Yiddish. As a child, I would ask my maternal grandparents about their parents who came from Eastern Europe before and during World War I and spoke Yiddish. To them, Yiddish was their first language and one that was spoken in the home so to learn the opposite was almost shocking. The second thing was about how Yiddish drama got started. At first, it wasn't performed in front of people, it was read out loud. It wasn't until Abraham Goldfaden (who was considered to be the father of modern Yiddish theater) came around that it was performed. Next, I learned about the different famous Yiddish actors such as David Kessler, Jacob Adler, and Boris Thomashefsky and the challenges they faced as performers, but also with their theaters with appealing to the population, dealing with immigration officers, getting money for their shows, and getting other actors together. Then, it was time to move on to sound design. I learned about how to get a job as a designer and the troubles with getting one; you need work to gain experience, but you need experience to get work. Next, it was how a designer should begin once they have a job and how to break down the script you are working on. Then, I learned about the different sound equipment and their advantages and disadvantages along with different kinds of rehearsals, what part you play in them, and the importance of working in a team. The last thing was communication and how to not only communicate politely, but also firmly. For example, in *Sound Design for the Stage* by Gareth Fry, he talks about the different strategies you can use when you are asking for higher pay. Reading about this was fascinating especially since here in the U.S., conversations about money and how much we are paid are sometimes considered quite taboo and we don't talk about it so hearing someone be not only honest, but quite helpful was refreshing. Going back to the Yiddish theater, I learned about how the Jews of America dealt with the war and possible genocide. The answer

is they didn't. When things started to get worse for the Jews in Europe, the Jews in the United States were ignoring the problem because they simply couldn't come to terms with that possible reality. People and governments have always hated the Jews and put restrictions on us, what was one more? Surely this wasn't going to be that big of a deal. Obviously, they couldn't be more wrong and when news came out about what was truly happening, the American Jews had to do a lot of soul-searching for the guilt they felt. The last thing I learned was about modern day Yiddish theater and all of the hardships they face: not great theaters, not enough people, trouble finding financial backers, and not enough people in their audiences.

Some of the challenges I encountered were personal and some were project related. The personal challenges were dealing with a family crisis in late June which affected me in getting my work done. I tried to deal with this by pushing my emotions aside because I simply did not have time to deal with them and just focusing on my work. Another challenge was dealing with my self-doubt and anxiety. My self-doubt and feeling like I don't know what I'm doing kicked in majorly as I was doing my sound plot since it was my first time doing one. I remember looking at my friend and saying, "I think I'm doing this right?". I knew the very bare basics of a sound plot, but I was very confused on the details. Another challenge I had was finding music to start and end my show, basically what opens and closes the show. It had to be perfect since those two things are the first and last things the audience will hear that are part of the show. I had the idea to use a recording of me playing a melody found in the script from S. Ansky (the playwright of *The Dybbuk*) on the piano that was from his hometown of Vitebsk, Belarus. I presented it to my mentor, Professor Shannon Zura who suggested that I effect it somehow. However, even though I was taking Shannon's notes, I wasn't happy with my work. Something was missing, something was wrong. It wasn't until I read an email from Shannon where she encouraged me to really listen to the music and think

about the emotion I want the audience to feel. After reading that and doing some thinking, I decided to completely change the music that I was going to use to open and close the show. While they aren't effected, I am much prouder of them and they evoke the right kind of emotion that I wanted.

As a people pleaser, I want to do everything in my power to make others happy, but sometimes that is simply not realistic and I have to accept that. To deal with this, I leaned on my mom and my friends for support and gave my support to friends. The third challenge I dealt with was overestimating how much I could realistically get done in eight weeks. Now, in the last week of the program I still have doubts about whether or not I can finish everything even though I know (from Dean Sorensen) that 98% of students don't finish everything in their proposals. It doesn't help that that little anxious voice in my head is telling me that my project will be considered incomplete and I won't get the credit despite all of the hard work I've put in. Now realistically, I know that won't happen because of all of the work, time, and effort that I've put in, but it's not always so easy ignoring that little anxious voice in my head. I try dealing with this by remembering that I've worked hard and leaning on my friends.

As I move forward, my only next step that I am certain of is that I will be the stage manager for Dr. Brodie's show in the fall. I am quite excited for this because while this will be my first time being stage manager, I think it will give me the opportunity to realize if I want to continue that kind of work when I graduate. Honestly, it will also be nice to change things up from designing. I don't really know anything beyond that, but I am excited for whatever new opportunities come up.

Naomi Marin

Designing for Yiddish Drama

Theater

Mentor: Shannon Zura

My project was created to answer the following questions: How did designers and production team members put on production of Yiddish drama with limited or no technology/resources? What influences a design or designer? What is the relationship between culture and design? How do designers work? What steps does a designer take from reading a script to finishing a complete design? To answer these, I am reading Yiddish texts, Yiddish plays, and books on lighting and sound design. These works will enable me to design the lights and sound for a Yiddish play (*The Dybbuk* by S. Ansky). The Yiddish texts I am reading cover a wide variety of topics including various playwrights, cultural expectations and views toward Yiddish theater, the different kinds of Yiddish theater, where Yiddish theater was, where it succeeded, and the everlasting struggle of the Jewish people. The final product for this project will include an annotated bibliography, a reflection paper, a light and sound plot, as well as a light rendering. My annotated bibliography will help me to better understand my own culture as well as help me to answer the biggest question, what is the relationship between culture and design?

Naomi Marin

Summer Fellows

7 June 2022

Annotated Bibliographies

WEEK ONE

Chapter 4 in The Art of Theatrical Sound Design

Deiorio, Victoria. "History Exercises Using Tools." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 101-47.

In this chapter (History Exercises Using Tools), Victoria Deiorio talks about several things. She talks about the different kinds of music from about the 1600s all the way to the 2010s. Each century is broken up into different kinds of music from that particular century. For example, the first kind of music Deiorio introduces is baroque (about 1600-1750) and she talks about the different styles of baroque music such as opera, sonata, and fugue. Deiorio also talks about the different composers/ artists that were popular during these time periods and what specific genre of music they performed. For example, from about 1900 to 1920 some of the popular musicians were Ernest Hogan, Scott Joplin, and Vess Ossman and this was all in the early jazz and ragtime period. Deiorio then discusses the technology that was invented during different time periods. For example, the 1980s saw the invention of the Walkman II which quickly became extremely popular and in the 90s, the DVD was introduced. Finally, Deiorio talked a little bit about how society influenced music. For example, in the 2000s, older bands were becoming successful again due to the end of the stigma that older bands shouldn't perform.

I think this will be helpful and important because I will need to consider the time the play I choose takes place when I'm looking for music and sound effects. The time period will determine not only the kind of music I choose, but the instruments that we will hear in the music. Additionally, where the play will also be a key piece of information. I will also need to keep in mind the themes of the play I choose. Finally, I also think that learning about the different kinds of technology that were invented in various years will be beyond helpful as I seek to answer one of my questions of how a designer/ production team puts on a performance with variable resources.

Chapter 6 in Art of Theatrical Sound Design

Deiorio, Victoria. "Collaborative Process of a Sound Designer." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 177-185.

In this chapter (Collaborative Process of a Sound Designer), Deiorio talks about a few things. She discusses the fine lines that designers must deal with such as the line between designer and coordinator, making sure that while you can suggest ideas and feedback to other designers, you don't want to take over their design. The other fine line is being open to criticism and suggestions, but not so much so that it looks like you don't know what you are doing. The next thing Deiorio talked about was the different kinds of rehearsals, which was you should go to versus have to go to, and what you should try to accomplish in them. For example, a regular rehearsal is one of the suggested ones, but it's very helpful for seeing the parts of the production that should be supported with sound even if there isn't anything in the script for that scene (I found this to be true and also really helpful when I worked on *And Baby Makes Seven* and *The Oldest Profession* since I had to ask less questions of the

director). I found the section on quiet time and level set especially interesting. Deiorio makes the point that this is your time to listen to your design without any else's judgment and this will give you the opportunity to set levels in the performance space.

This chapter was a little less relevant than chapter four to my project simply because I'm not working with a production team or director. However, what was helpful was the first section where Deiorio talked about communication skills since it can be very tricky to effectively communicate sound design since it's not something you see. I will be keeping this in mind as I prepare my final project and for the future.

Introduction in Landmark Yiddish Plays

Berkowitz, Joel, and Jeremy Dauber. "Introduction." Introduction. *Landmark Yiddish Plays A Critical Anthology*, Albany, SUNY Press, 2006, pp. 1-71.

In the introduction of the Landmark Yiddish Plays, the authors, Joel Berkowitz and Jeremy Dauber talk about several things. Their first point was how “the five plays in this anthology represent highlights in the development of modern Yiddish drama...” (Berkowitz and Dauber 1). They then talk about the Jewish Enlightenment (also known as the Haskala) and how they basically affected enough social change that it was now considered appropriate for Jews to be creating and reading secular material. It was these circumstances that allowed for professional Yiddish theater to be born. The next thing Berkowitz and Dauber speak about was how during the medieval period, Jewish authorities disapproved of theater because it was seen as a connection with pagan religious festivals. They then go on to talk about how the languages of Hebrew and Yiddish were seen in society, specifically by these playwrights. Hebrew was seen as a way for Jews and Christians to work towards reconciliation since it

was considered a shared language while Yiddish was seen as a bastardized version of German. Berkowitz and Dauber then discussed how *Silliness and Sanctimony* by Aaron Halle Wolfssohn could be considered to basically be the first play in modern Yiddish theater. It was interesting to learn that as opposed to how we see and enjoy theater today, most of these plays were simply passed around and sometimes read out loud instead of being performed. They then talked about different playwrights and their lives and successors. For example, Shloyme Ettinger (author of *Serkele*) faced several disappointments in his life and never saw true real success. It wasn't until after his death in 1856 that his play *Serkele* became truly successful. Berkowitz and Dauber then talked about how Avrom Goldfaden (author of *The Two Kuni-Lemls*) established the first professional Yiddish theater troupe.

I think this introduction will be very helpful in helping me understand more about my own culture and Yiddish drama specifically. It will also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design and will be something I keep in mind when creating my own design. It was fascinating to see the comparisons between writers and how current events made an impact on their work. I think being able to learn more about my culture will enable me to create a better design and will help me effectively communicate that when I present.

God of Vengeance

Ash, Sholom. *God of Vengeance*. E-book ed.

In act one of *God of Vengeance*, there are a few things that happen. We learn that Sarah and Yekel are expecting guests and Rifkele seems like a sweet, naive child in love with another girl. Guests arrive and Yekel and Sarah give them food and the guests in return give

them several blessings. Then, two other people arrive, Shloyme and Hindel. We learn that these are the “less than virtuous” people who Yekel and Sarah know because of the brothel Yekel runs below his home. Yekel doesn’t want to discuss business in his house, stating that his daughter is home and she is a pure soul. However, a fight breaks out between Yekel and Shloyme and then Rabbi Ali and the Scribe arrive. The Rabbi enters and is disapproving since he and the Scribe are at Yekel’s house to discuss a possible gift of a Holy Scroll. The Scribe comes in and the three men (Rabbi Ali, Yekel, and the Scribe) sit down to talk. Yekel confesses that he and his wife are sinners, that the Holy Scroll is for his daughter who is innocent and that the Holy Scroll will be part of her dowry when she marries. The men talk for a bit more, then leave for the synagogue to gather a minyan for the ceremony. Then, Sarah asks Rifkele to help her with the cleaning and to get changed. Rifkele wants her lover Manke to help her with her hair, but Sarah forbids her from doing so since Manke isn’t considered a “respectable young lady”. However, we then see Manke enter out of view from Sarah and Rifkele goes over to her. The two girls kiss and Rifkele keeps talking to Sarah.

In act two, we start in the brothel with Shloyme and Hindel comes in. They talk for a bit and Hindel asks Shloyme if he truly is going to marry her. He says he used to be interested, but now he’s not. Hindel gets upset, and they get into an argument. Shloyme then hits Hindel across the face. Rifkele comes by looking for Manke, but Manke isn’t there. Yekel comes by to tell everyone to go to bed since they won’t be getting any customers with the rain. He catches Rifkele there, gets angry, and drags her upstairs by her hair. Hindel and Shloyme then talk about finding girls themselves to go into their own business and we get the sense that they’re talking about taking Rifkele. Then, two of the other girls, Reizel and Basha, enter and talk for a bit before Manke comes in. She is looking for Rifkele who isn’t there and the other girls decide to go dance in the rain. Manke then taps on the ceiling, calling for Rifkele. She comes downstairs and the two girls sit inside to talk. Rifkele confesses that she’s

scared of her father and Manke suggests running away with Hindel and Shloyme. They do just as Reizel and Basha are coming back in. Suddenly, Yekel is up and realizes Rifkele is gone and runs downstairs to look for her, but she's gone.

In act 3, Sarah is trying to convince Yekel to go look for their daughters Yekel is distraught and is convinced that this is his punishment and it's useless to even try to marry Rifkele. He thinks that the Holy Scroll has been desecrated and that they should give it back to the rabbi. Meanwhile, Sarah finds Shloyme and is subtly flirting with him and bribing him for information on the whereabouts of her daughter. Hindel comes in and insists that Shloyme not tell Sarah anything. She is trying to convince Shloyme to not say anything, to marry her and to basically start their own brothel with Rifkele and Manke. Sarah however, keeps flirting and bribing and Shloyme does give in and takes her to get Rifkele. Yekel is still distraught and when Sarah returns with Rifkele, he wants to know whether or not she's still an innocent, pious Jewish girl. They go back and forth for a bit and we can tell Rifkele has been changed since the last time we saw her. No longer as naive, she is basically talking back to her father. While it is never explicitly said, it is implied that Rifkele slept with other people (though we don't know if it was men or Manke). The rabbi comes and talks with Yekel who still believes that all hope is lost. Rabbi Ali tries to get him to cheer up and to just put this event behind him, that no one needs to know. He leaves and brings back the groom's father while Sarah gets Rifkele ready. The act ends with Yekel meeting the groom's father, and starts by saying that Rifkele is a pious Jewish woman and that she will give birth to pure Jewish children. However, he then changes his mind and drags Rifkele downstairs to the brothel and as the rabbi is leaving, Yekel tells him to take the Holy Scroll, that he no longer needs it.

This play will be helpful in helping me understand more about Yiddish culture and how society saw women, daughters, fathers, and families and what were the rules. It will allow me to keep those social rules and expectations in mind and satisfy my own curiosity

about what Jewish life was like in the 19th and 20th centuries in Russia. *God of Vengeance* will also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design as I start to think of my own lighting and sound design for a Yiddish play.

The Dybbuk

Ansky, S. *The Dybbuk*. New York City, Liveright, 1926.

Act one of *The Dybbuk*, opens with a very detailed description of the set and setting and with batlonim (professional prayer men) praying together in an old synagogue. After they are done praying they have a long conversation about the Torah and the stories in the Torah. They talk with the Messenger character and Channon when an older woman comes rushing into the synagogue with her children. She throws herself on the Torah and starts frantically praying before one of the men asks if she wants a minyan to pray for her. She leaves and the men continue talking. Channon and Channoch have a conversation about how Channon is scaring Channoch because Channon always has his head buried in the Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) and Channoch thinks that's dangerous. Later on, Leah and Frade enter the synagogue, notice Channon who's in the corner, and go speak to him. Then, they go up to the bima and Leah begins kissing the scrolls while Frade disapproves. After they leave, the men continue to talk and then Sender, Leah's father, comes in with news that he has just secured a husband for his daughter. The men all congratulate him, and go to drink, but first notice Channon laying in the corner. When they go to wake him up, they realize he is dead.

Act two takes place at Sender's house where there is a party happening. Sender is providing tons of food for the poor since he is giving away his only daughter to be married. The poor people all want to dance with Leah (the bride) and keep insisting that they do, but it

becomes too much for Leah and she has to sit down and rest. Leah then talks about the holy bride and bridegroom and how she knows them just as well as the living people around her. Her and Fraude (her companion/ grandmother - it's never really clear) decide to go to the cemetery to Leah's mom's grave and pray that her mother will also be with her under the wedding canopy and as they dance. Sender comes over to them and wishes them his blessings. Meanwhile, the bridegroom Menashe, is talking with the rabbi and states similar things that Leah did, that he felt afraid on his way over here, like something bad was going to happen. The rabbi reassures him and Sender comes back looking for Leah so the ceremony can start. Leah and Fraude enter, but something has clearly happened at the cemetery. The bride and groom go up to begin the ceremony, but then Leah pushes Menashe away from her, stating that he is not her husband. We then find out that a dybbuk has possessed the bride.

In act three, we are at the Rabbi Azrael's house where Chassidim are gathered for the Shabbos. A messenger comes in and tells the rabbi that Sender has arrived with Leah and is begging for help. The rabbi has a moment of doubt, but is quickly reminded of who he is and who his father and grandfather were. He gathers himself, and allows Sender, Leah, and Fraude in. Sender tells the rabbi what has happened, that a dybbuk has possessed his daughter, and the rabbi begins to speak with the dybbuk. The dybbuk refuses to identify himself and to leave Leah's body. Rabbi Azrael is then forced to give an ultimatum of an anathema but needs the permission of the city rabbi (Rabbi Samson). They summon him and discuss that another spirit, one named Nissin ben Rifke has been in Rabbi Samson's dreams for the past three nights demanding that Sender be brought before the Rabbinical court and put on trial. They tell the dybbuk that he has until noon the next day to leave, otherwise they will excommunicate him.

In act four, we see the trial of Nissin ben Rifke and Sender ben Henie. Nissin's complaint was that he and Sender were good friends and made a pact that if they married and

one had a girl and the other a boy, the two children would be married. Nissin believed that when his son Channon came to Sender's house, Sender knew that Channon was Nissin's son and Leah predestined groom, but didn't say anything because Channon was poor. The verdict is delivered by the rabbis (Sender must give half of his fortune to the poor and pray for Channon's and Nissin's souls as if they were family), but the dead do not agree with the verdict. Leah is then brought in to remove the dybbuk, but the dybbuk still refuses. The rabbis are then forced to forcibly remove the dybbuk who reluctantly goes. In the last few pages of act four, we hear Channon's voice talking to Leah and her responding just as the bridegroom and his party are arriving.

This play will be helpful because I can see all of the design opportunities that are here and that there is a lot of potential to do amazing things. For example, I can see having some foreshadowing with lights and sound when both Leah and Menashe are talking about spirits and have those same effects come back later. I can also see how someone could play with haze when the spirits come. Like *God of Vengeance*, *The Dybbuk* helps me better understand the culture and this play will really answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design.

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. "Purim Plays." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish*

Theater, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 1-20.

In chapter one the author, Nahma Sandrow, talks about a few things. She begins by talking about Purim, the Jewish holiday that comes in the spring and celebrates the ingenuity of Esther who marries the king of Persia and reveals the evil Haman's plot to kill all of the

Jews. Sandrow then goes on to talk about the different versions of the people in the Purim story. For example, Mordechai, who is the wise uncle, was once portrayed as a court fool or a beggar. Another version described him as a matchmaker between Esther and King Ahashuerus. Like Berkowitz and Dauber, Sandrow talks about how Jewish authorities disapproved of theater because of its connections to pagan festivals. There were Jewish actors such as Elitiros, who was in Nero's court, but most Jews respected and followed the rabbis' wishes and commands. Sandrow also connects Purim with other holidays that also came in the spring such as Mardi Gras.

This chapter is a little less relevant to my project since it was mostly talking about a Jewish holiday, however there were a few things I learned. Firstly, the different versions of the Purim story and how the characters might have been changed. Secondly, despite the danger, Jews continued to celebrate Purim in 408, which was against the emperor's wishes. Lastly, I learned more about how rabbis viewed theater and drama. I knew a little bit from the introduction in *Landmark Yiddish Plays*, but this went a bit more into detail which I thought was fascinating.

Sandrow, Nahma. "Dramas of the Enlightenment." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 21-39.

In chapter two, Sandrow talks about many different things. She discussed how it was popular for middle class Jews to gather together and read plays out loud instead of watching them on stage. It was seen as the new "it" thing to do. Sandrow also talked about the differences between the writers and the masses who weren't able to really understand plays, especially those written in other languages while the writers could. She talked about how most Jews, specifically Ashkenazi, Yiddish-speaking Jews weren't accepted as full citizens in

any country in Europe, but that didn't stop them from participating in the Age of Enlightenment. As the enlightenment was happening, enlightened Jews were encouraging other Jews across Europe to learn more about the outside world, other religions, other people. In Germany, the ultimate goal was complete assimilation and as a result, government policy allowed more freedoms for Jews than in other countries. Like Berkowitz and Dauber, Sandrow also mentioned how Yiddish was seen, jargon. She discussed the hasidim who, like the *haskala*, strongly believed in individual thought. Sandrow then pointed out when Yiddish finally became recognized as a language and not as jargon and this was in the 1860s. She wraps up the chapter by talking a little bit about Ettinger and other notable writers.

This chapter was certainly fascinating, but like chapter one, not as relevant to my project. It was interesting to see the familiar points, names, and movements after reading Berkowitz's and Dauber's introduction, but I did still learn a couple of things. Firstly, the Jewish masses were less likely to read plays especially if they were written in other languages; that was something that mostly the writers and other middle class Jews did. Secondly, it wasn't until the 1860s that Yiddish was finally recognized as a language. Growing up, I always asked my grandparents questions about their parents who spoke Yiddish as their first language. I was eager to know if they knew any Yiddish or if they spoke it with their parents and to learn that it wasn't considered an actual language until the 1860s was very intriguing.

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "The Four Ingredients." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 3-14.

In chapter one, author Stefan Kanfer starts with making a very interesting point that Jews don't need the theater to show us our history, we saw it ourselves. We saw destruction and miracles, we saw plagues and mass murder. He then goes on to briefly talk about how the Jews became the chosen people with Abraham, when he was willing to sacrifice his son because God told him to. Kanfer then goes on to talk about the various challenges Jews have for over 2,000 years. For example, one of those challenges was the end of the Jewish State with the destruction of the second temple. Another example was how some Christians saw Jews- evil because they didn't believe that Jesus was the messiah. The third thing Kanfer discusses were the various stereotypes Jews have had to face over the years. For example, one of them was that Jews worship the devil, or Jews are the devil's allies. Martin Luther was particularly fond of this one when they refused to accept his doctrines. Next, Kanfer talks about the pogroms in Russia and how Jews were forced to live in shtetls and weren't allowed to leave those shetels. He mentions how Jews were treated in Russia, "with slow-motion malice" (Kanfer 7). However, Kanfer wraps up this chapter with the ways that the Jewish people have survived for thousands of years, despite many people trying to kill us. There are four things which Kanfer calls "the four ingredients". The first one is literacy. Because of all of the people who were trying to kill us, it soon became very important to write things down and be able to read them so that it would be remembered. This is still just as important today- reading, writing, and education in general have high importance in Jewish families. The

second ingredient is adaptability. No matter where Jews have lived, there have always been some limitations or government rules that restrict us. Jews take that and use it for themselves. For example, Christians can't loan money? Fine, we'll become the bankers ourselves. The third ingredient is humor. This is essential for a Jew to be able to adapt and survive. Our humor can make outsiders uncomfortable, but that's kind of the point. We use humor to get through the tough times and to celebrate life and our holidays. There's a famous joke we always make at some holidays: they tried to kill us, it didn't work, let's eat! The last ingredient is the Yiddish language. Yiddish was the common language that people spoke in their homes, with their families, basically, slang.

I found that this chapter is a little less relevant, but I could still really connect with this chapter. Everything Kanfer talked about was something I had learned about so it was just reinforcing my knowledge. For example, when he talked about the four ingredients, especially the first and third ones, literacy and humor. Growing up, I learned to read at an early age and there was high importance placed on my academic performance. Going to Hebrew school wasn't really an option, it was an expectation. Same thing with college. Literacy and education in general weren't questions, they were expectations and the norm. With humor, we always used humor to get through the hardest moments in our lives. We used it to get through school bureaucracy and red tape. This chapter will also help me understand and answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design. I think I can use design to support the culture, especially humor in a play.

Kanfer, Stefan. "The Father." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and*

Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America, by Stefan Kanfer, New York

City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 15-23.

In chapter two, Kander talked about Abraham Goldfaden and his various struggles. One of these struggles was deciding where to live. Should he stay in Russia? Things weren't great, but were loosening up. He didn't go to America, thought it was too wild and he had been reading about the Civil War for five years as well as the assassination of Lincoln. His other struggle was struggling to find a permanent job. He tried acting (found that to be boring and dry), teaching didn't pay enough, not enough people came to his retail store, and the newspapers he wrote for didn't work out. Finally, he tried writing. This was his success. He created a partnership with Israel Gradner who was a popular Jewish singer and their first success together was a comedy performance. This was the birth of Yiddish Theater. As Goldfaden was working, the Russian-Turkish war had begun and there was a draft for all young men. While Goldfaden was too old to be drafted, there were several young men in his theater troupe that were eligible, but didn't want to go and Goldfaden had to hide them in an inn. Kanfer then talks about Gradner's disagreement with Goldfaden over a new lead and how this caused Gradner to leave to form his own troupe. Finally, Kanfer wraps up the chapter by talking about the end of the Russian-Turkish war on March 4th, 1878 and how there were less and less people coming to the theater. As a result, the troupe broke up and Goldfaden was still wondering where he should go next.

I learned a number of things while reading this chapter. The first thing was the struggles Yiddish playwrights face and it was interesting to have that information cemented in my brain. For example, playwrights often faced discrimination, drafts (where they would either die if they refused to join the army or die in war), and dangerous living circumstances. Additionally, I learned about the birth of Yiddish theater. I knew Abraham Goldfaden was considered the father, but I didn't know that it came out of desperation on his end. I think this chapter is helping me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and

design. I think the answer is that both reflect tons of hard work, struggles, and tough circumstances.

Kanfer, Stefan. "The First Son." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 24-40.

In chapter three, Kanfer talked about a Jewish soldier named Jacob Adler who desperately wanted to have a Yiddish theater and to be a part of it. Like Berkowitz, Dauber, and Sandrow, Kanfer also mentioned the idea that rabbis disapproved of the theater and I saw that idea trickle down into the minds of some parents. Kanfer specifies that the parents of a peddler, David Kessler, agreed with the old rabbis and when David joined the theater, his parents mourned since to them, he was dead. Kanfer discusses how when Tzar Alexander II was assassinated, even though it was mostly Christians at fault, the Jews were the scapegoats. This triggered waves of emigration from Eastern Europe to America because things were about to get much worse for the Jews so they had to leave. Next, Kanfer mentions how Yiddish theater was banned in Russia on August 7th, 1883 and as a result, Adler and some of his company went to England to set up another Yiddish theater. Unfortunately, they were not successful there. They had hoped that Adler's cousin who was an influential rabbi would help them when they arrived, but he was one of the Jews who thought Yiddish was not a true language and was jargon. Adler and his troupe later went to the U.S. Finally, Kanfer wraps up the chapter by talking about how the immigrants didn't receive any help from Jews who had already settled in America, they were too loud and spoke Yiddish and they were from the old country.

I found this chapter very interesting. I learned more about how certain people saw theater and saw Yiddish; as a bastard language that basically shouldn't be spoken in theater. Additionally, how easy it was for the Russians to pin Tzar Alexander II's murder on the Jews and that was only because the perpetrators stayed at a Jew's house. I knew from my own family history of some of the struggles that Jews faced in Russia (my great grandparents fled Russia because of pogroms), so learning about the struggles other Jews faced with the banning of Yiddish theater in Russia was quite fascinating. I think I will need to keep in mind the struggles these people went through and think about how the culture was highly important to them. Obviously, design is always there to support the story, but I think in this case it is especially important that the design should support the culture, not overpower.

Kanfer, Stefan. "The Second Son." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 41-53.

In chapter four, Kanfer talked about the conditions in London for Yiddish theater and how they were getting worse and worse. He then went over to New York, and discussed how the immigrants there rarely went to theater. They didn't understand a lot of English and they felt out of place with the men and women in their fancy clothes. Kanfer then discussed how the idea came about that in order to get a Yiddish theater, it should be in Yiddish. Next, he mentioned how the Golubok troupe in New York City was threatened with deportation if they performed *Koldunye*, but how their backer told them not to worry and they pushed on through. However, they did have immigration officials outside of the theater on performance nights trying to persuade audience members to not go in. Finally, Kanfer wraps up the chapter by talking about the rivalry between The Jewish Operetta Company of Romania and

The Russian Yiddish Opera Company and how two names (Lateiner and Hurwitz) became linked despite the rivalry.

I thought this was a fascinating chapter since I got to learn a lot about the struggles people face just to even have a performance. They went through troubles with people, getting a building, facing threats of deportation, and competition. After reading the first four chapters of Kanfer's book, I believe I'm starting to be able to answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design. I think it can be love, love for your culture and love for design. One can really support the other and both can influence each other. Like Lateiner and Hurwitz (the two Yiddish playwrights), culture and design are two terms forever linked together.

The Two Kuni-Lemls

Goldfaden, Avrom. "The Two Kuni-Lemls." *Landmark Yiddish Plays A Critical Anthology*, edited by Joel Berkowitz and Jeremy Dauber, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 201-45.

At the beginning of act one, a bunch of Hasidic are at Reb Pinkhesl's house wishing him many blessings. Reb Pinkhesl wants to have his daughter married soon and like in a lot of these plays (as was the norm), the father picked the husband. Rifke (his wife) then enters and they have a bit of a fight about their daughter since Pinkhesl thinks she's becoming a "hussy". They continue and Pinkhesl blurts out that he didn't love Rifke when they got married and that he doesn't love her now which was a common thing at the time. Both Rifke and Pinkhesl think that the honor of choosing a groom for their daughter belongs to only one of them; Pinkhesl thinks it's him, but Rifke thinks it's her. Rifke leaves and Kalmen the

Matchmaker enters and tells Pinkhesl he might have a groom for Pinkhesl's daughter: a boy named Kuni-Leml who has a few flaws, but his father is an important man (the assistant to the rabbi)! Kalmen and Pinkhesl discuss his few flaws and ultimately decide they're not important so they come up with a plan before Kalmen leaves. Then, Carolina and Rifke enter and as they do, Rifke and Pinkhesl leave still arguing and Carolina begins to sing. Next, Max is talking with his students about how he and Carolina love each other and the mother supports them but the father doesn't. Carolina begins to sing for him, calling Max and they embrace and Carolina tells Max who she's going to be married to. They come up with a plan to disguise Max as Kuni-Lemls so that they can marry and Max's students promise to help him with this disguise.

Act two begins with Libele (Kalmen the Matchmaker's daughter), singing when Kalmen enters and tells her that today is the day Kuni-Leml is coming. Libele is jealous of other women who are getting married and asks why her father hasn't married her off yet like he has done for so many other women. Kalmen promises to find her a husband after the matchmaking of Kuni-Leml and Carolina since he should get a nice paycheck from that match. Then, Max, disguised as Kuni-Leml, enters and talks with Kalmen for a bit and Kalmen warns Max to watch how he speaks in his future father-in-law's house before leaving. Once he has left, Max says he's in love with Libele and gets on his knees before standing and removing his disguise. He tells her that he only used the disguise to get close to her and gives her the same song that Carolina sang earlier with the fake name Shmerl. Finally, they both leave.

Reb Shloymenyu (the step-father of Kuni-Leml) gets a letter from Kalmen saying that Reb Pinkhesl would like to make a match with Kuni-Leml and his daughter, Carolina. The real Kuni-Lemls enters and Reb Shloymenyu tells him the news, but Kuni-Lemls thinks it's a joke. Reb Shloymenyu convinces him and they practice for when Kuni-Lemls is going to

meet Reb Pinkhesl. They wrap up as the congregation exits to tell Reb Shloymenyu that he will stay the groundskeeper and there is a celebration.

Act three begins with Rifke and Pinkhesl still fighting because Rifke doesn't want Carolina to marry Kuni-Leml (he is "deformed"). To help prove his point, Pinkhesl calls Carolina, who basically tells Pinkhesl she trusts whoever he has picked for her (Rifke does NOT like this). Then, Kuni-Leml comes by (the real one) and Carolina thinks it's Max, but Kuni-Leml is very confused why she doesn't know which part of the Torah will be read this week and calls her a heretic. Pinkhesl and Rifke leave them alone (much to Kuni-Leml's confusion- they are unmarried) and Carolina still thinks it's Max and tries to convince him to take off his disguise. She tries to kiss him but he freaks out and runs out of the house. Next, Pinkhesl and Rifke return and Carolina tells them she's happy with "Kuni-Leml" and thinks he's a great match. Rifke and Pinkhesl are a bit concerned, but Pinkhesl thinks Carolina wants to marry Kuni-Leml because he must be one of the thirty-six righteous men who can perform miracles and is happy. Max then comes in disguised as Kuni-Leml and asks Rifke and Pinkhesl to leave the room. However, Carolina gets mad at him because she thought it was Max early when it was actually the real Kuni-Leml. Max helps her figure out it was the real Kuni-Leml and forgives her and Carolina tells him why her father consented to the match. He writes a letter to his students and they embrace. As they embrace, the real Kuni-Leml walks in, Carolina runs off and Max then switches back to Kuni-Leml. Max convinces the real Kuni-Leml that he is a fake and threatens to take him to the police, but Kuni-Leml believes him and walks off. Then, Pinkhesl is observing "Kuni-Leml" writing and still believes that he is one of the righteous men. They talk for a bit and Pinkhesl tries to seal the deal about the marriage with a handshake, but Max says he does things differently. He summons his "dead" relatives who witness the agreement and seal it.

Act four starts off with Max still disguised as Kuni-Leml with Carolina by him and the cantor who is writing the marriage contract and their relatives who sing around them. Kuni-Leml (the real one) enters and strikes Pinkhesl on the head. He says he has proof that he is Kuni-Leml, but Pinkhesl doesn't believe him and thinks he is only trying to ruin the wedding. Pinkhesl storms off and Kuni-Leml thinks he is Max (spelled Mocks). Then, Kalmen enters, spots Kuni-Leml and greets him by name. Kuni-Leml is very confused, but thanks Kalmen for returning his name to him. Pinkhesl then goes up to Kalmen and Kuni-Leml and accuses him of being a liar. Kuni-Leml tries again with Carolina by asking for a kiss, but she denies him angrily. Libele then enters and also calls Kuni-Leml a liar and asks if he remembers what happened at her father's house and the promise he made her. Then, Reb Shloymenyu enters and Kuni-Leml asks him to verify his identity. Reb Shloymenyu also tells everyone that it was Max as the fake Kuni-Leml. He then urges Pinkhesl to take Max as his son-in-law instead of Kuni-Leml. The last scene is the actual wedding. Pinkhesl and Libele realize Max tricked them and Max basically arranges for Libele and Kuni-Leml to marry. A bunch of people are singing when the Hasidim enter but the students drive them away. Pinkhesl realizes that his new son-in-law and his group are the wise ones and wishes the Hasidim to leave in good health. They threaten to tell the rabbi but the students kick them out and the play ends with more singing.

This play had so many twists and turns I honestly did not expect this. I think there are some amazing possibilities in terms of design. For example, I think having lighting and thunder when the dead first appear and maybe a little bit of haze to add to the creepy effect. I think another possibility could maybe be having special lights for when an actor does a longer aside.

Miriam

Hirschbein, Peretz. "Miriam." *Landmark Yiddish Plays A Critical Anthology*, edited by Joel Berkowitz and Jeremy Dauber, State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 259-90.

At the beginning of act one, Miriam, Dvoyre, and Jonah are in the shoemaker's shop talking about food and what Miriam would do if she had tons of money. Jonah, despite the fact that he is engaged to Leah, tries to convince Miriam to let him kiss her, but she threatens him with a needle. Then, Moyshe and Leah come in complaining about the cold and they all move the table to the oven to be warm and eat dinner together. The family begins to talk about visiting graves of dead relatives and Dvoyre thinks they shouldn't. Next, Miriam, Leah, and Jonah leave when Zilberman enters. We get a sense he is a higher social class due to his speaking German. This is again another sign of those who believed Yiddish was jargon and not a language. The act wraps up with Leah and Miriam dancing, but Miriam is half heartedly doing so.

In act two, Jonah and Miriam are working in the basement while Zilberman watches. He protests Jonah's claims that he's jealous of the workers and tries to copy their work but can't. Subtly, he kisses Miriam and leaves. Jonah tries to warn Miriam about Zilberman, but Miriam insists that there is nothing between them. Zilberman returns and asks Jonah to leave for beer. Alone, he and Miriam talk about their relationship and the difference in their social statuses. Zilberman insists that he will always love Miriam and will marry her even if they don't have any money. Dvoyre and Jonah enter with the beer and ask Miriam to go get glasses for everyone. After Zilberman leaves, Jonah is teasing Miriam relentlessly while Dvoyre tells him to stop.

At the beginning of act three, Jonah, Dyovre, Leah, and Shimen are talking together when Dyovre tells them she ran into Miriam who is now pregnant. Shimen thinks she got what she deserved, but the others have sympathy seeing as Zilberman left Miriam when he found out she was pregnant. There is shouting outside; it is Miriam who tells them that Zilberman's family tried to throw her down the stairs when she came to their door. The family brings her inside as Miriam is going into labor and a midwife is called.

In act four, Miriam is now in a brothel with two other women, Natalke and Grunye. They are trying to make her drink, but she wants to go back to her madam. They tell each other stories of how they ended up in this place and Miriam explains what happened to Zilberman. She tells the women that she needed to leave the basement and be independent. The play wraps up with Grunye burying her face in Miriam's chest as Miriam sings the song of the orphan.

This play was helpful in showing me what I don't want to do. It was boring, dry, and I honestly can't think of anything I could do to make it interesting with design. However, there were two things I learned after reading. The first was that there seemed to be a double standard between men and women. Jonah was engaged and later married to Leah and yet he flirts with Miriam in the first act. The second was more about the culture; that having a baby out of wedlock is shameful and the blame will be placed on the woman.

Silliness and Sanctimony

Wolfssohn, Aaron Halle. "*Silliness and Sanctimony*." *Landmark Yiddish Plays A Critical Anthology*, edited by Joel Berkowitz and Jeremy Dauber, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 83-111.

Act one begins in Reb Henokh's house with Reb Henokh and Teltse. Reb Henokh calls for Shmuelke, but Teltse tells him they're not home and they begin to argue about Shmuelke; Reb Henokh thinks Teltse is being too lax with Shmuelke since he wants him to become like him. Reb Henokh is clearly the more traditional and religious of the two and the argument moves to their daughter who Reb Henokh is complaining that she is always singing in public (which is not acceptable). Markus then enters, making a comment on Reb Henokh and Teltse's argument and Teltse tells Markus that Henokh wants to marry off their daughter, Yetkhen, to Reb Yoysefkhe that day. We see here that Reb Henokh is one of those people who agrees with the old rabbis, that Jews shouldn't go to the theater or participate in it and he leaves. Teltse then complains to Markus that Henokh has changed, ever since the Hasid came to stay with them. She is worried about Yetkhen, claiming that once Henokh has an idea, no one can change his mind. Teltse and Markus talk about Yetkhen and the men that seem to always be around her when Sheyndl comes in to ask for more money. Sheyndl gives her opinion on the Hasid and Teltse and Markus leave. Reb Yoysefke then enters and Sheyndl comes up to him, but he pushes her away. He then apologizes profusely and strokes her cheek. Then Reb Henokh enters, Sheyndl leaves, and Reb Yoysefkhe greets Reb Henokh. Yoysefkhe then thanks Henokh for coming in when he did and starts beating his chest for his sins. They talk for a bit before Henokh asks Yoysefkhe why he never married and suggests his daughter as Yoysefkhe's husband. They talk some more before leaving for shul.

Act two starts with Yetkhen at the hairdresser's and they are talking about the count who Yetkhen believes is rude since he didn't tip his hat to her while walking past. The Hairdresser urges Yetkhen to give the count another chance and she accepts. Yetkhen tells the hairdresser to tell the count that she will be at the theater tonight if he wants to join her. The hairdresser leaves, and Yetkhen has a moment of regret while complaining about her haircut.

She sees Herr von Schnapps riding by and thinks he is better than the count and then, Sheyndl enters with gifts from Herr von Schnapps for Yetkhen. Sheyndl then tells her that Reb Yoysefkhe is coming by to talk to her, but Yetkhen doesn't believe her. Sheyndl insists before leaving. Yoysefkhe comes in and talks with Yetkhen claiming to also love music as much as she does. He then asks her if she would like to be married and she asks if he has a match for her. Yoysefkhe tells her it's him, but Yetkhen doesn't believe him, thinking that he is joking. He tries again, but she still rejects him, claiming that he must be drunk. This makes Yoysefkhe angry and he says that Yetkhen will have to accept him even if she doesn't want to, but Yetkhen says that no one will force her to marry. As a result, Yoysefkhe breaks her piano as Teltse, Markus, and Sheyndl run in. Yoysefkhe tries to leave, but Markus stops and grabs him. Teltse tells Markus to let him go and Yoysefkhe to leave immediately. Teltse and Markus try to comfort Yetkhen and then Henokh storms in. He shouts at Yetkhen before destroying her music and moves toward her but Markus stops him and makes him leave. Teltse and Yetkhen talk for a bit before Teltse leaves and Yetkhen makes the decision to run away to Herr Von Schnapps.

Act three begins with Reb Henokh and Teltse, the latter crying about their daughter who no one can find. Sheyndl tries to get Teltse to eat, but Teltse refuses. She tells Teltse and Henokh of the goyim that Yetkhen was around and Henokh thinks this is a great shame. Markus enters and tells Teltse he is still looking for Yetkhen, but nothing yet. Henokh is still mad at Yetkhen, but is willing to forgive her if she comes back. A letter arrives for Markus telling him where Yetkhen is and he leaves immediately. Meanwhile, Yetkhen is at Lemgin's house, a brothel. Lemgin is trying to get her to drink and tells Yetkhen that she has nothing to worry about if she behaves since only the best men come to her brothel. Yetkhen wants to go home, but Lemgin is letting her so Yetkhen thinks this must be her punishment. Markus enters and asks Lemgin if there are any new women and if he can see them. Lemgin says yes,

and goes to get him a drink while Yetkhen prepares herself. He goes to Yetkhen's room and she runs to him. Yetkhen tells Markus how she came to be here (Snapps). Markus tells her he must leave to give the parents the good news and that he can't take Yetkhen with him right away. When asked why, Markus says it is to teach Yetkhen a lesson and to give him time to try to change Henokh's mind about marrying Yetkhen to Yoysefkhe. He leaves a gold watch with Lemgin, claiming he forgot his purse and leaves the brothel, promising to be back.

Lemgin and Yetkhen then talk for a bit before Yetkhen goes back to her room to wait for Markus. There is a knock on the door and it is Reb Yoysefkhe who we learn is apparently a regular customer at the brothel. He and Lemgin argue about money before there is another knock on the door. It is Reb Henokh and Markus. Reb Yoysefkhe tries to hide himself before they see him, but he is unsuccessful. Markus and Henokh are shocked that a Hasid would be in a brothel and they call Yetkhen to them. They tell Yetkhen that they have realized what a hypocrite Yoysefkhe is and ask Lemgin to keep him here. Henokh calls Yoysefkhe a heretic and an enemy of Israel before promising Yetkhen that if she behaves, he will forget all about this. They all leave and Lemgin tells Yoysefkhe that he will have to sleep in the woodshed tonight.

This play was a little bit more interesting than *Miriam*, but like *Miriam*, I can't think of anything with design to make this play more interesting. However, it did reinforce my knowledge on two things. One, it wasn't just in the medieval ages did rabbis think that Jews shouldn't go or be in theater. This belief continued into the 1800s. Secondly, the women will always get the blame for a problem even if they were acting with good intentions or acting as a result of a man's actions. Even though it was Henokh who was pushing Yetkhen to marry Yoysefkhe even though Yetkhen got the blame. She ran away to someone who she thought was a good person as a result of her father's actions.

WEEK TWO

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "Father and Sons." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 54-68.

In 1887, Abraham Goldfaden came to America. He was welcomed and respected and immediately talked his way into having total control over the first performance in the States, *Bar Kochba*. It was about the last Jewish revolt in 137 against the Roman Empire and it was code for the pogroms in Russia. The Jewish community knew this, but the Russian government knew as well, which was why it was prohibited in Russia. This made Goldfaden a hero all across Eastern Europe. However, Goldfaden still had to deal with the growing socialist movement that caused experienced actors to revolt and strike against Goldfaden who could be quite strict. This caused the theater to lose money and eventually Goldfaden left the States. Kanfer then talks about how New York City became a world capital with Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi who had the idea for the Statue of Liberty. Unfortunately, \$100,000 was needed to finish the statue, but Congress was refusing to pay it. So, a newspaper got people to donate money to finish the building of the Statue of Liberty and got the \$100,000 that was needed. Kanfer then goes on to talk about the new things that were happening in New York City such as a subway, Ellis Island becoming the new place for entering immigrants, and the new theater. He then moves on to talk about various actors in New York. For example, David Kessler was one of the most popular actors and quickly became a celebrity. Boris Thomashefsky was originally in Philadelphia and went on tour starting in Baltimore where his future wife, Bessie Kaufman saw a performance and was immediately hooked. However,

Bessie's parents forbade her from joining the troupe even though she got a job offer from Thomashefsky. Two years later when the troupe passed through Baltimore again, Bessie ran away and joined them. She would eventually marry Thomashefsky. Jacob Adler still had a need for success and recognition and found that he was old news in New York. He went to London then Warsaw where he had some successes then went back to New York. Later on, he would work with Boris Thomeshefsky.

This chapter was interesting in a few different ways. The first way was that it showed all of the various struggles these writers and actors went through to put on a performance. It also reinforced my knowledge about the belief that Jews shouldn't go or act in theater with Bessie Kaufman's parents. Finally, it was showing the reality of how all of these actors and writers felt about each other. In public, they all acted like they respected and liked the others, but in private would often complain about each other.

Kanfer, Stefan. "I Will Write You a Better Play than This Hamlet." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 69-86.

Chapter six begins with Jacob Gordin who was an activist from Russia and fled just in time before he would have been arrested by the Tsarist police. He came to New York and went to a Yiddish production, but was highly disappointed. However, there was still a need for culture so what did that mean? It was Gordin who believed that it should be the Jews who should push change in this ever changing city. Gordin later met Jacob Adler and David Kessler and wrote a play for them but it was not a success. He saw success with the play *Lear* and Yiddish theater wouldn't be the same after that. Kanfer then goes on to talk about how

the fear of anti-Semitism slowly ebbed with Teddy Roosevelt and Thomashefsky and Gordin's differences and how they mostly worked them out. Next, he discusses Boris meeting a fellow actress who couldn't memorize lines, so he came up with the words to a song, Eli Eli and the chorus master put music to it. This quickly became a hit all over Jewish communities in America. Kanfer talks about the friendly rivalry between Adler and Thomashefsky and how Thomashefsky put on *Othello* which was a massive success which prompted Adler to propose a union between himself, Thomashefsky, and Kessler. Kessler would set the example for fellow actors, Adler was revered for his morals (except for the womanizing), and Thomashefsky was a little self centric. The three men all had huge egos they constantly had the need to upstage each other during a performance. As a result, Kessler left. Finally, Kanfer talked about Leon Kobrin and how Gordin took him under his wing and proposed his work to Adler which was a success.

This chapter taught me two things. Firstly, despite the belief that Jews shouldn't go or participate in theater, there was still a strong want for their own culture, a taste of home. From this want came plays that changed Yiddish theater in the U.S. I also learned that the thought that Yiddish was jargon and not a language was starting to die off and Yiddish was becoming more and more accepted. This chapter also made me wonder if the words Thomashefsky wrote for the song Eli, Eli were any inspiration to Hannah Senesh who wrote a poem with that same title during World War II. Her version was also put to music and like Thomasefsky's, is insanely popular.

Kanfer, Stefan. "The Jew of the Ages." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 87-103.

Chapter seven is about Bertha Kalisch; she became famous without a husband by setting her sights on playing Hamlet. Kanfer uses news headlines of the first two years of the 20th century referencing the McKinley assassination, the death of Queen Victoria, and the reality that people were slowly losing faith in monarchies and other governments. As a result, the Jews of the Lower East Side were warned that they should keep their heads down. However, this warning was ignored. Bertha Kalisch didn't believe in hiding in the shadows and she proved her point by playing a Yiddish Hamlet. This was a huge success. Kanfer also discusses Jacob Adler's performance in *Shylock* and how it attracted the attention of famous producer Arthur Hopkins who wanted Adler to perform on Broadway. Even though Adler was the only cast member performing in Yiddish, the reviews of the performance were excellent. The idea that you can do anything despite your childhood was starting to take root. At first, it was word of mouth and then some newspapers were founded. He talks about how it was a struggle to keep a newspaper going so they hired Abraham Cahan who knew how to write and how to get Jews who were once immigrants to assimilate a little bit better into American society. However, there were less and less readers since there were less immigrants coming to America. This was soon changed by the intense and horrific pogroms in Russia in the early 1900s. Thousands of Jews fled Russia for what they hoped was a new, safe home in the United States. Kanfer wraps up the chapter by talking about Abraham Goldfaden's last hurrah. He wanted in on the action one last time so he presented his play *Ben-Ami* to Boris Thomasefsky who agreed to put it on. It was a huge success and Abraham Goldfaden died a happy man.

This chapter was fascinating in that it talked about a famous female actress who didn't let anyone get in her way and didn't let herself be ruled by fear. The second way was that I could make a connection between what Kanfer was talking about with the pogroms and my

own personal history. My great-grandparents fled Russia in the early 1900s because of the pogroms and came to this country to create new lives. I think this chapter can also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design and it's very similar to the idea of the American Dream. No matter where you're from or what you grew up with, you can do anything or be anyone in the U.S.

Kanfer, Stefan. "Moishe the Insatiable." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp.104-117.

Kanfer starts chapter eight with all the new changes that were happening in New York City and the various little pockets with immigrants from different countries. He then goes on to discuss the beginnings of feminism with women getting the right to vote in Washington state and a much higher number of women enrolling in university. Meanwhile in Russia, the pogroms continued which led to even more Jews fleeing for the States. It was here that we see an example of a Jew changing their name for something more American, less Jewish. Irving Berlin's original name was Israel Baline. Kanfer then goes on to talk about David Pinski's play about the various Yiddish playwrights. He starts with Abraham Goldfaden and then moves on to Boris Thomashefsky and Jacob Adler. In 1911, another event in Russia happened that would affect the Jews. The body of a twelve year old boy was found and despite evidence pointing to a gentile, a local Jew was framed and brought to trial. The Jews in New York followed the trial, but it was the playwrights such as Boris Thomashefsky who decided to make a play out of it. Some of these productions were well received, others were not. Meanwhile, the jury in Russia gave a verdict of not guilty and the news quickly spread. Kanfer then discusses how Yiddish theaters in Europe were remarkably different than those

in the U.S. Yiddish theater continued, but it was like it was stuck in the 1880s. Kanfer then wraps up the chapter by talking about Ida Kaminska who preferred to perform out of New York City in places like Philadelphia. When she was there, she met an actor by the name of Maurice Schwartz and vowed to change his life. In doing this, she would change Yiddish theater.

I found this chapter to be engaging in a couple of different ways. Firstly, it was interesting to see how they approached the topic of Jews changing their names. It was mentioned, but only briefly, which I thought was kind of curious. The second way was that it demonstrated this cause and effect between Russia and the U.S. As Russia increased its pogroms and anti-Semitic actions, more and more Jews fled to the United States which in turn impacted Yiddish theater.

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. "Avrom Goldfaden." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 40-69.

Chapter three is about Avrom Goldfaden (also known as Abraham Goldfaden or Goldenfudim); he was considered the father of Yiddish theater and was the first one to write professional plays. He was what Nahma Sandrow describes as “a trouper, an artist, a dreamer, an intellectual, a hustler, a scrapper, a con man, a romantic, a dandy, an optimist, and a one-man band...” (Sandrow 40). Goldfaden couldn't seem to make his previous jobs work; teaching didn't pay enough, his hat store went bankrupt, and he was writing at a newspaper that collapsed. Sandrow goes on to tell the story of how Avrom Goldfaden met Israel Grodner and the two went into business together and basically created Yiddish theater. She then goes

back to Avrom's childhood and his experiences at Zhitomir Rabbinical Academy and how both of these things impacted his career. For example, Avrom grew up in a *haskole* home and strongly believed in some assimilation and during his time at the rabbinical academy he acted and was stage manager for the first time. Next, Sandrow tells us about the intellectual opportunities Jews were allowed. For example, Goldfaden was allowed to go to medical school and the rabbinical academy he went to was part of a group schools Jews were now allowed to go to. All of this was a result of Tzar Alexander II's policies in Russia and the other countries under rule (today this is Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, etc). Yiddish theater with Goldfaden was quite different as we know it today. He would write the plots and songs and then explain the characters to the actors. They were then to improvise their lines and actions. Goldfaden and his crew went to Botosani, Rumania, but ran into a problem: the Russo-Turkish war had just started and many of the men in Goldfaden's troupe would have been drafted. Instead, they hide in the attic of a cafe. It was there where Goldfaden wrote his next success: a play about Jews who had been drafted and were struggling to adjust to army life. Sandrow then mentions how a lot of the actors who became famous in Yiddish theater were recruited by Goldfaden (Jacob Adler, Sigmund Mogulesko, David Kessler, and Keni Liptzin). She then talks a bit more about these people's backgrounds. For example, Jacob Adler was a businessman who was always around the Russian theater because there wasn't any Yiddish theater. Sigmund Mogulesko was a choir singer in a synagogue when Goldfaden recruited him. However, Goldfaden was known to rule over the stage and the actor's lives and would often have two servants at his office door. This made the actors resent him and his authority. Next, Sandrow discusses how even though Goldfaden was the father, more and more Yiddish theater companies were popping up. Grodner left Goldfaden and Mogulesko went with him. Some theater companies only had one performance or one tour while others had a single season (this was thought of as the time from Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in the fall to

after Passover in the spring). There were also family companies since it was thought that they would have enough people for each acting part or voice part.

Goldfaden also had troubles with plagiarism since an actor who worked with him could remember his lines and set up a rival company or sell it to another competitor. Then, in 1881, the most dramatic change happened: Tzar Alexander II was assassinated and Tzar Alexander III created tons of new policies against the Jews. Pogroms were happening more and more frequently in Russia and Ukraine. This was also happening as the entire Eastern European Jewish community was starting to become less and less spiritual. People were leaving their homes for the “Columbus’s Nation” (Sandrow 57) and traditions were deteriorating. As a result, Goldfaden’s company and other companies were struggling.

Later on, during the most restrictive periods in Russia, Poland, and Rumania, Jews were slowly realizing that their priorities about what the plays were about had to change. The pogroms and legislation made them realize that if someone is born Jewish, they will always be Jewish, no matter what.

I thought this chapter was intriguing in a couple different ways. Firstly, it really delved deep into Avrom Goldfaden’s life and gave us more insight rather than just a couple pages. The other way was that Nahma Sandrow really tells the story of the Jewish people through Avrom Goldfaden. In fact, this chapter connects back to chapter one in *Stardust Lost* which was about the four ingredients of how Jews have survived despite everything that’s happened to us. Abraham Goldfaden is a perfect example of those four ingredients, despite everything that happened to him, he still persevered and succeeded.

Sandrow, Nahma. "Vagabond Stars." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 70-90.

Chapter four was broken up into four different sections. The first section was about Yiddish theater in London at its peak. There were several Yiddish theaters there that had some of the best actors such as Israel Grodner, Jacob Adler, and Aba Shengold. They set up private clubs where members only had to pay a shilling a week and one company even performed six nights a week. Unfortunately, the audiences started to go to more English theaters instead of Yiddish ones and in 1887, Israel Grodner died and no one could replace him. Also, people were leaving London for New York and this process was sped up and encouraged by the Chief Rabbi, Nathan Adler. He was one of the people who thought that theater and Jews shouldn't mix.

The second section is about Yiddish theater in the United States. Boris Thomashefsky was a 13 year old boy working in the sweatshops of the Lower East Side where he met another man whose brothers were professional actors. They came over and set up shop, but the German Jewish Committee was determined to stop them. They were offended by the play and the fact that it was going to be in Yiddish, which they considered to be jargon, not a proper language. Thomashefsky and his actors were determined to succeed and went ahead and put on the play. However, on opening night, the lead actress wasn't in her dressing room and when they found her, she claimed to have a headache. By the time they bribed her, the orchestra and most of the audience were gone. It was clear to Thomashefsky that the German Jewish Committee had bribed her to ruin the show. He tried again, but by this time, there was competition since professional actors and troupes were coming over from Europe. More and more people were coming to the U.S. because Yiddish theater was illegal, they could speak Yiddish, go to the theater and still have money for food, and could be open.

The third section is titled “Landsmanshaftn” which were groups of people who had come from the same town or region in the Old Country and were now in America. They had an order that would basically take of its members by providing health care and paying for other expenses like a plot at a cemetery. They would also give out rewards which would benefit the Yiddish theaters. This was also the way an immigrant might find their lost family if they left their homes at different times. They would stand outside the theater and look or ask for relatives. In one way, the Yiddish theater in America had become a business.

The last section in this chapter is titled “Vagabond Stars” and talks about the various locations of Yiddish theater. For example, there were theaters in Canada, Australia, South Africa, pretty much anywhere where Jews were living. For Yiddish theater outside of America, there were several things in their way. For example, in parts of Europe, these difficulties were the oppressive laws that were in place against the Jews. There were very specific conditions that allowed for some Yiddish plays. In the late 1890s, these oppressive conditions in Russia eased a bit and Yiddish theater boomed. However, pogroms were still happening and conditions just got worse. In South Africa, there was a company that only had one actor in it, Yankel Rosenfeld. He gathered a bunch of people to put on many performances. In Argentina, most of the theaters were in Buenos Aires, but interestingly enough, some of these theaters were run by pimps! Other competitors found this shameful and stayed away.

I found this chapter easier to read and comprehend simply because it was broken up into different sections, instead of having 30 pages talking about the same thing. I also found it quite interesting that in Argentina pimps were running some of these theaters and would use theaters for business. It is a far cry from how a lot of people see theater today; a place where you might dress up a little, a nice place, not a place for pimps to run their businesses. This chapter also reinforced my belief that Jews are everywhere and where there’s Jews, there’s

theater. Also, I found myself making another connection to chapter one in *Stardust Lost* where Stefen Kanfer talks about the four ingredients that have allowed Jews to survive for thousands of years. Despite the pogroms, oppressive legislation, competition, and just general anti-Semitism, Yiddish theater has survived.

The Art of Theatrical Sound Design

Deiorio, Victoria. "Applying Tools and Artistic Collaboration" *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 151-176.

Chapter five was broken up into several different sections. The first one was called “Working with Text” and author Victoria Deiorio demonstrates how she marks up a script when reading it. She talks about the different symbols she uses (dashes, question marks, circles) and what each of them mean. Deiorio then goes on to talk about the various things all sound designers should think about when reading through the script and designing. She discusses the different parts in a script that sound can support and why. Deiorio wraps up this section with the point that you should always have multiple options instead of one since it’s easier to subtract rather than add.

The next section is called “Marks in the Script” and Deiorio talks about timing for cues. She gives a couple of helpful tips such as using arrows to show the length of a cue and a stopwatch for timing. The third section is called “Cue Number” and this is where she talks about the various ways to number your cues. She suggests giving yourself plenty of space in between the number of cues just in case a cue is added, but that it’s also a good idea to check in with the lighting designer to see how they are numbering their cues. It’s helpful to make things as organized as possible so that it is easier for the stage manager to call things. The

fourth section is called “Cue Sheets” and in this section, Deiorio talks about the purpose of a cue sheet as well as what should be on it and where. She makes a really interesting point which is that she prefers to not give her cue sheets to a director because she wants an objective response to her design and by having the cue sheet, she thinks that a director could have a subjective response. The next three sections are about transitions, sound effects, and silence. Deiorio talks about the value of having sound in transitions whether they are when actors are moving scenery, the play is moving to a new place, or intermission or a new act. In the sound effects section, she makes the important point that it is the sound designer’s job to create that aural world even if something isn’t in the script. She also emphasizes that the sound effects should be realistic from the time period the play takes place in. In the silence section, Deiorio says that these are the moments where you have a couple of choices. You can either underline that scene with some music to heighten it or you can choose to leave it alone which can also really emphasize that particular moment or scene. Deiorio then goes on to talk about emotional support, themes, storytelling structure, and the why behind music and their importance. For example, in the section emotional support, she makes the point that this might not always be obvious in a script, but music can really give a scene an extra punch or heighten the actors words and movements.

This chapter was a little hard to read simply because it was so dense, but I did find a couple of things interesting. The first thing was how Victoria Deiorio marked up her cue sheets. I know that every designer will have their own style of doing things that makes sense to them, but the way she did it was kind of curious to me. The second thing was actually a question. I noticed that in her cue sheet she said that a live cue should be under source. This kind of confused me because as someone who has designed and been a board operator, I would think that would be very confusing to the stage manager since if it’s live, it’s not

necessarily something they have to call. I understand if they had to mute and unmute a microphone, but otherwise, this was quite puzzling to me.

Deiorio, Victoria. "Cohesion, Convention, and Implementation in Tech." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 187-191.

Chapter seven was also broken down into sections: "Cohesion, convention, cohesion in the tech process, cohesion with voice and movement, and cohesion with your collaborators." In the first section, Deiorio makes the point that sound designers once they have figured out their design, must stick to it in order to give the audience a realistic aural world in which they can listen to as they are watching the play. She says that it should be representative of the time period of the play so that the audience doesn't ask questions if you don't want them to. In the next section, Deiorio talks about convention and makes the point that things should one, run the same way and two, should run smoothly to pull off a performance. She also makes the point that since you set your own pace outside of rehearsals, it is extremely important to go to tech and designer runs and get the information you need so that you can adjust your pacing if need be. In the third section, "Cohesion in the Tech Process", Deiorio makes the point to try to have a solution ready in case of a problem and if you need others' help, to include as many people as possible so that everyone is informed. In the final two sections, "Cohesion with Voice and Movement" and "Cohesion with Your Collaborators", she talks about the importance of making sure the transitions in the play are smooth and sometimes even barely noticeable. Deiorio also stresses the importance of paying attention to the director during rehearsals since what they are changing could change your design. She also makes the point that the stage manager is like an all-knowing person and you should go to them if you have missed anything from the director.

I found this chapter kind of dry, but I did learn a couple of things. The first thing I learned was how important it is to stick to your design so that the audience doesn't ask questions where you don't want them to. This is also important for the sake of the play running smoothly. The second thing I learned was how important it is to learn the pacing of the play. By doing this, you ensure that when it comes to tech, your pacing matches everyone else's pacing and more things can get done.

On Stage, Off Stage

Kadison, Luba, et al. "Introduction." *On Stage, Off Stage Memories*

of a Lifetime in the Yiddish Theater, by Luba Kadison, Cambridge, Harvard University Library, 1992, p. 1.

Kadison, Luba, et al. "Formation of the Vilna Troupe." *On Stage, Off Stage Memories*

of a Lifetime in the Yiddish Theater, by Luba Kadison, Cambridge, Harvard University Library, 1992, p. 6-10.

The introduction was written by Luba Kadison who is the last surviving member of the Vilna troupe. She wrote this introduction to tell the story of the Vilna troupe and everything they went through. Kadison uses her own memory and letters from her husband, Joseph Buloff to show what a labor of love the troupe was. She wraps up the intro with the acknowledgements to the people who have helped her write this story.

On pages six through ten, Kadison talks about her experience in Vilna before World War I and how there was a food shortage. She then discusses the formation of the Vilna troupe. It was two actors, Alexander Azro and Jacob Sherman who came to convince

Kadison's father to help them set up a Yiddish theater. The two men had friends in the German army and were successful in creating the Federation of Yiddish Dramatic Actors (FADO). It would later become known as the Vilna troupe. Kadison then talks about the various discussions the actors would have and who was there. Apparently, they all agreed that some of the best Yiddish writers were I.L Peretz, S. Ansky, Peretz Hirschbein, and Sholem Asch. The Vilna troupe had their first performance of *Der Landsmann* on February 18th, 1916. The newspaper gave good reviews and the troupe moved forward. Next, Kadison talks about because of their success and their growth in popularity, the German authorities gave the Vilna State Theater to the troupe. Kadison then moves on to discuss the new managing director, Mordechi Mazo who took the troupe on tour to various cities around them. He also realized that the troupe should permanently move and they went to Warsaw. Kadison mentions how her mother, siblings, and herself stayed in Vilna for a year before going to Warsaw, just in time before Vilna was under control of opposite armies in the Russian Civil War.

The introduction and pages six through ten were quite interesting. It was amazing to hear about the formation of the famous Vilna troupe from someone who was there, a primary source! I also found the part where Kadison talked about how the troupe got control over the state theater almost mind blowing. For thousands of years, no matter where Jews have lived, it was always difficult and quite rare for Jews to be in charge of a place without negative stereotypes forced on them, limitations, or oppressive oversight. I definitely look forward to reading more and learning more about the Vilna troupe and their experiences.

Sound Design for the Stage

Fry, Gareth. "How to Become a Sound Designer." *Sound Design for the Stage*, Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 9-19.

In the first chapter, Gareth Fry begins with defining what a sound designer is; someone who is in charge of everything that the audience will hear. He also talks about the various things a sound designer might do. For example, part of it could be recording sound effects or creating music. The next section is titled, "The Sound Designer's Path to Employment" (Fry 9). In this section, Fry talks about how sound designers became a necessary part in theater and the differences between a freelance designer versus an in-house one. For example, for the majority of the 1900s, other members of the theater like the stage manager, created the sound design. This continued until the 1990s. Some of the pros of being an in house designer is a guaranteed regular wage rather than an unpredictable wage. Fry also talks about a few other different resources that could be beneficial. In the next section, Fry talks about how the director and producer might gather their creative team. He then discusses how a production might start with the producer who will look for a director, who will then come up with the idea. Next, Fry talks quite a bit about availability checks and what they entail with a designer's actual availability, payment, and when they might be contacted. Fry then goes on to talk about the various backgrounds and what employers look for. For example, directors, producers, and production managers will be looking for different things. A director will be looking for someone who can give their creative opinion on what's happening on stage while also creating a design, while the producer and production manager want to know you can deliver your design within the limitations of the production (budget, supplies, etc). Finally, Fry talked about potential candidacy, contact, and attitude. He talks

about creating a personal website and what should be on there. Fry makes an important point that people judge your online persona before they even meet you in person and suggests asking someone to proofread your website. In the “Making Contact” (Fry 15) section, Fry suggests how you might get your first job. This will be the scariest part, but he recommends emailing and asking for 15-20 minutes of their time over coffee. He also says that going to networking events are crucial as this will give you the opportunity to meet other designers that might be more experienced. In the next section, Fry makes the point to avoid using slang, but use people’s proper titles. He wraps up the chapter with an important lesson, that risk is necessary. You will have to take a leap and be prepared with your research with help pad the landing.

I thought this chapter was quite informative and interesting especially since I am considering pursuing a career in this direction. I really enjoyed how he was encouraging and realistic at the same time and looked at all sides of the creative team. I thought it was quite interesting how he said to not use slang because we used the word ‘techie’ all throughout high school and I feel like using people’s proper titles is something very important to know. I also found it fascinating how he gave different suggestions for young, emerging designers to get jobs through different ways and how to ask for meetings as well as advertising yourself.

Fry, Gareth. "First Contact." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 21-30.

In this chapter, Fry explains how to reply to a job offer and how an availability check doesn’t mean a job offer. He then goes on to describe payment and how it directly correlates to house size and ticket sales. Fry moves on to talk about some of the organizations people in the UK work for and whether or not they get funding for their shows. Some places constantly

have to apply for funding for each show while others get regular funding. Apparently, in 2018, the Arts Council in the UK spent 622 million pounds (about \$732,615,200), but the National Endowment for the Arts here in the U.S. only has \$150 million for the entire country. Fry then discusses what fringe theater is: smaller venues that will pay less, but are a great way to meet other designers, directors, and producers, as well as a way to get into the industry which can be quite hard otherwise. One of the downsides is that because they pay less, people often have to work more than one job to pay for bills and rent. This is something that Fry says is extremely important to consider when looking at job offers and then goes on to talk about what you should expect to pay for after accepting a job versus what the production should pay for. For example, if you need to travel across the country, Fry thinks the production should pay for it. Also, he talks about the polite way of asking for a raise since this is something that can be quite nerve wracking. He then moves on to royalties and advance royalties, how they work, and how they can be beneficial or not. Fry wraps up the chapter with talking about contracts and what should be on them.

I found this chapter to be a little less interesting than the first, but interesting nonetheless. The first fascinating thing was how transparent Fry was when he was talking about money. In the U.S., how much money we make, how much a job offers, or just money in general is somewhat of a taboo subject so it was quite refreshing to read about this from someone else. The second was I really enjoyed how Fry approached how to ask for more money because I feel like it's always a delicate dance and you never want to seem pushy. The thing I learned was that it might be a good idea to move to the UK.

Fry, Gareth. "Script Analysis and Meeting the Director." *Sound Design for the Stage*, Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 31-37.

In this chapter, Fry begins by talking about the script and how some older plays might have a lot of scenes cut out so that they can be more appealing to modern audiences. The next thing he talks about is the script analysis and what you should do. The first time you read the script, just focus on the story, don't start thinking about the design. The second is when you should reflect, ask questions, maybe answer them, and identify the moments of sound in the script. Fry then moves on to the first meeting with the director and some key things to remember. For example, don't dress like a theater technician, especially if this is your first time working with this director. You will be judged based on how you look and dress and first impressions are the most important. Fry then wraps the chapter by connecting back to the section about attitude in the first chapter by talking about being a creative person. Don't be afraid to suggest ideas, even if they are the obvious ones. Also, Fry makes an interesting point that there aren't a lot of original ideas so don't be afraid to use those ideas for your own design.

I found this chapter to be mostly reinforcing my knowledge. I remember learning about the script analysis in sound design as well as the design process with these in both sound and lighting design classes. The lesson about attitude was a nice reinforcement and I think is crucial. However, I did learn some things. The first thing was how older plays, like Shakespeare, used to be a lot longer (apparently *Hamlet* used to be at least four hours) and that scenes were cut to make it more appealing to modern audiences. The second thing I learned was the importance of not dressing like a theater technician when meeting with the director because they will be less likely to completely trust you with your design.

The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater

Quint, Alyssa. "The Social Life of Jewish Theater in the Russian Empire: An Introduction." Introduction. *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 1-21.

Quint talked about the diary of Franz Kafka where he wrote about an actor, Isaac Loewy and his experiences in the Yiddish theater. Like a lot of people, Loewy's parents disapproved of the theater calling it "treyf" or unkosher. However, this did not deter Loewy from going to the theater and he was soon hooked. He would later perform in Abraham Goldfaden's plays and Quint looks to see how Goldfaden influenced not just Isaac Loewy, but several other actors and actresses too. She goes on to talk about how Goldfaden's work was never quite grounded in the record of Yiddish culture. Quint brings in S.N. Rabinovitch (also known as Sholem Aleichem) who was a strong critic of other Yiddish writers and never truly acknowledged Goldfaden's work or popularity. At this time, Goldfaden was putting on performances at large opera houses and his name was known throughout the Russian empire while Sholem Aleichem had nowhere near that kind of popularity. Another critic of Goldfaden was Y.L. Peretz who couldn't give Goldfaden a true, genuine compliment. Quint then moves on to what Goldfaden believed and a bit of his background. For example, while the Zionist movement was gaining traction, Goldfaden held firm in his belief that the Jews of Russia would eventually be freed. Goldfaden was considered one of the most prominent Jewish thinkers in his time and would have been educated in Jewish texts. Finally, Quint wraps up the introduction with a chapter outline of each chapter.

I found the introduction to be confusing and a bit dry. Alyssa Quint seemed to jump around from subject to subject but it was kind of hard to understand. She talks about Isaac

Loewy and his journey into Yiddish theater, but then moves on to Abraham Goldfaden and the people who were constantly judging him. I think I would have liked to read more about Loewy rather than Goldfaden after reading a number of chapters about him and his work.

Quint, Alyssa. "Goldfaden, Elite." *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*,

Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 22-46.

Quint begins the chapter by talking about an experience David Yeshayahu Zilberbusch who was a Hebrew poet had with Abraham Goldfaden. She talks about how Goldfaden was open to the meeting with Zilberbusch, but wanted to make the social class difference clear. Apparently, Goldfaden wanted to put on polished works of art, but felt that he couldn't due to the kinds of people who were coming to his shows; the kind who wouldn't understand that kind of performance. Quint then moves on to talk a bit about Goldfaden background. He was born on July 12th, 1840 and his father was a clockmaker. He quickly realized his son's mental capacity and Abraham was tutored in German, Russian, and the Tanakh. Goldfaden was always attached to performing which his father did not approve of. However, his father did warm up to the idea and even encouraged Abraham to recite a poem he had written when he was eleven years old. Abraham was educated in a Russian-Jewish school which was created to make Jews assimilate better into Russian society and made sure their students would be proper Russian citizens. He then went to a teachers seminary where he was exposed to other students from higher social classes and learned about how to live like them. While he was there, Goldfaden was encouraged to create Yiddish songs and plays. A classmate even recalls Goldfaden working with the wife of the seminary director to put on a production of *Serkele* by Solomon Ettinger. Quint then wraps up the chapter by talking about

Goldfaden's bad luck with various jobs (teacher, store owner, newspaper editor) before he opened the theater. Unfortunately, with the ban of Yiddish theater in Russia, Goldfaden started to decline and his memoirs were never completed. He died in 1908 after getting one last hurrah of a show with Boris Thomashefsky.

I found this chapter to be just repeating things I had already learned in other Yiddish texts. I already knew that Goldfaden went to a Russian-Jewish school and then a teaching seminary. I learned about his failures with jobs before he opened a theater as well as his experiences in the United States and his death. The one thing I did learn from this chapter was that it was while he was at school that he learned the manners of higher class individuals and learned how to dress as everyone remembered him.

Quint, Alyssa. "The Rise of the Yiddish Actor." *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 47-86.

Quint begins chapter two with talking about Goldfaden's attempts to create a Yiddish theater in Romania. The first one failed and he was forced to continue performing at a cafe. However, Goldfaden and his actors had to quickly pack up and go into hiding because of the beginning of the Russo-Turkish War and the draft. Quint goes on to talk about one of Goldfaden's operettas called *The Sorceress* which was about the perils of living in a city. It was considered the most culturally relevant work and Goldfaden would later put it on in Moscow fourteen times. Quint then analyzes the play, what it could mean, and what each character could represent. For example, the character Bobe Yakhne is seen to represent someone who is worldly, who despite her Jewish upbringing, knows a lot about other religions and people. She then moves on to talk a bit about Goldfaden and Israel Grodner's

relationship. The two went into business together, but Goldfaden could never truly acknowledge just how smart and talented Grodner was. According to Goldfaden, Grodner was "... an illiterate ... a cigarette maker and describes him along the lines of other artless folk singers for whom he made compromises on the stage: ... he was in need of regimented training" (Goldfaden qtd. Quint 62). Quint then discusses how Yiddish was a reflection of the change seen in the theater. People used to say the words for choristers, cantors, male and female leads, minor roles, singers, etc. in Hebrew, but now they were slowly transitioning into saying them in Yiddish. Next, Quint talks about how certain actors were recruited. For example, Sigmund Mogulesco was recruited by a prestigious cantor, Nisn Belzer who was quite famous. Mogulesco then met Leyzer Zuckerman who had a similar experience and the two, along with Simkhe Dinman, were trying to perform as a quartet when they were recruited by Goldfaden. Quint then wraps up the chapter by talking about various actors and why they came to the stage. For example, Jacob Adler loved the stage, but he craved recognition for his work. Actor David Kessler fell in love with the idea of becoming a celebrity through Yiddish theater.

I found this chapter to be a bit like the previous one where it was stating things I already knew from other texts. However, there were a couple things I learned and found interesting. Firstly, I didn't know how Goldfaden saw Grodner and it was quite interesting to see how Goldfaden saw the man that basically helped him become the father of Yiddish theater. Secondly, I thought that it was interesting that Goldfaden wrote the character of Hotsmakh specifically for an actor with not a lot of talent. Lastly, I learned why actors Jacob Adler and David Kessler were attracted to the theater.

WEEK THREE

Yiddish Theater: A Love Story

Spaisman, Zypora, performer. *Yiddish Theater: A Love Story*. 2002. Directed by Dan Katzir, New Love Films, 2002. DVD.

The Documentary *Yiddish Theater: A Love Story* follows the actress Zypora Spaisman as well as other actors and producers as they fight to save their production of *Green Fields* by Peretz Hiirschbein. Zypora was a Yiddish actress who did everything for her theater, selling tickets, acting, and sweeping. She founded a new theater, the Mazer Theater and put on a production of *Green Fields* by Peretz Hirschbein. As the production went on their audiences were shrinking to smaller and smaller houses resulting in large financial losses. Zypora discussed the difficulties of performing in Yiddish, a language not really spoken anymore. Spaisman wanted to continue performing in Yiddish because it was in danger of disappearing and she wanted to help preserve it.

Roni Neuman, Joad Kohn, Norman Kruger, Felix Fibich, and Shifra Lerer were also included in the documentary. Most of them talked about either how they got into Yiddish theater or how they met Zypora. For Roni, she had just finished school and was working as a hostess when she saw an ad for Yiddish theater, while Joad Kohn had rebelled against his Orthodox childhood and found the theater. When the war broke out, Zypora was living in Russia and she had to leave for the United States. Zypora then talked about her first performance in New York City, at the Forward Building and how excited she was that she was going back to her roots in her new country.

Professor Dovid Katz and author Nahma Sandrow attempt to explain why Yiddish and Yiddish theater was a dying language and art form. Katz discussed how immigrants only

wanted their children to succeed in America and therefore, English was what they needed, not Yiddish. He also talked about how in Israel, the younger generation was taught that Yiddish isn't a real, serious language, despite the fact that thousands of people used to speak it.

Nahma Sandrow thought that Yiddish was seen as the "language of the dead", something that should stay in the past with all of our ancestors. Zypora and David discussed the obstacles they were facing, financial stability, visibility in the community, and weekly religious observances. Money was their largest challenge, but their theater was in a remote part of the city; not a lot of people knew where it was, resulting in low attendance. Performing on Friday and Saturday would require missing Shabbat which is typically observed through Saturday until sundown and Zypora refused to perform during Shabbat, but this was in conflict with how other theaters operated at the time. Lastly, there were only three young actors in their cast and the younger actors of other theaters were quickly replacing the older ones. Zypora said it was quite difficult, almost like losing your life.

Unfortunately, Zypora and the others failed to raise enough money and they weren't able to move to a theater in a better location. Despite all of the positive reviews from newspapers, their audience numbers were dwindling, and on the last night of Hanukkah in 2000, they had to close the show. With the theater failing, Zypora's health was going downhill and she slipped into a coma. While she was there, the state of New York gave \$200,000 to the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater to try to keep it alive, but it was too little, too late and Zypora died a few days later on May 18th, 2002.

I thought this documentary was quite interesting. Firstly, it was absolutely incredible that they were able to find the original sheet music and voice parts for Yiddish plays! Secondly, I got to see the actual people they were talking about as opposed to just reading about them. Thirdly, the documentary really showed just how much Yiddish theater meant to all of the actors and producers. Lastly, I found myself connecting with what Professor Dovid

Katz said about the immigrants and how they wanted their kids to succeed in America because that is the story of my great-grandparents who fled from the Russian Empire. While they did speak Yiddish at home in the States, they only spoke English to my grandparents. My great-grandparents wanted nothing more for their kids to be able to assimilate into American culture and that meant that English was the prioritized language. This documentary will help me understand why Yiddish was so important to the Jews of Eastern Europe as well as my own culture and help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. "Shund and Popular Theater." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 91-131.

Sandrow begins chapter five with talking about the people's love for theater and how they always wanted more, even if they weren't making a lot of money from their own jobs. She then moves on to how the actors of Yiddish theater saw their audiences, unsophisticated and in need of education. While the actors depend on them to support their performances, they clearly wanted to elevate their performances by putting on more sophisticated material. Next, Sandrow talks a bit about some of the most famous actors who made significant contributions and impact on Yiddish theater, such as Boris Thomashefsky, David Kessler, and Jacob Adler. Thomashefsky was known as the ladies man, and seemed quite happy in that position. He went on to Broadway and tried some other roles, but eventually returned to Yiddish theater. Unfortunately, by the time he returned, the theater wasn't what it used to be and he died in 1939. Kessler was almost the opposite of Thomashefsky, arrogant and yet, a

phenomenal actor. He gained fame with his singing and emoting and would always be known for that. Adler was seen as someone who commanded respect and had an aura about him. Even though he couldn't really sing, Adler became quite popular; so much so that when he fell sick and sent word in the newspaper that he was dying and wanted to say goodbye to his fans, people came from all over New York. The area in front of his hospital window was insanely crowded. Apparently, the actors of the Yiddish theater liked to walk around the city just to be noticed. While people loved the drama on stage, they also enjoyed it off stage as well. When marriages or divorces happened, the public almost always knew. Sometimes weddings were also on stage and the public got to watch them. They also loved when two divorced actors had a love scene on stage or when the child of two actors had a love scene with her parents, despite the parents not liking each other. The audiences also had a hard time separating the actors from their characters. During one of Jacob Adler's performances, his character's daughter was bringing him a bowl of soup, an audience member got up and shouted, "Leave those rotten children of yours and come home with me. My wife is a good cook; she'll fix you up!" (Sandrow 102). Sandrow then goes on to define *shund*. It is the art of the people, the music of a jukebox, similar to how Yiddish could be thought of as the language of the people. In America, it was quite popular seeing how the audiences could see themselves in the characters on stage.

I thought this chapter was intriguing in that it focused more about the broader picture of Yiddish theater. Sandrow did still go into details with a few people, but I thought it was interesting to see her talk about other playwrights other than Goldfaden since everyone talks about him. All of the Yiddish texts I've read have always talked about Abraham Goldfaden and it gets boring very quickly. I understand he was considered the father of Yiddish theater, but I would like to learn more about other playwrights and women in the Yiddish theater.

Who were the mothers of the theater? Who were the women who were the powerhouses behind the men?

Sandrow, Nahma. "Jacob Gordin." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 132-163.

Chapter six begins with Jacob Gordin's (another playwright) reaction to seeing a Yiddish play in America for the first time; he thought it was terrible and immediately wrote his first play, *Siberia*. Gordin had a number of nom-de-plumes (aliases) many of which people still know today. He was more comfortable speaking and writing in Russian than Yiddish, but he would still become quite famous and made the 1890s later known as the "Golden Age" or "Gordin Era" of Yiddish theater. Gordin was a firm believer that the pogroms of 1881 were the fault of the Jews because they hadn't assimilated into Russian culture. He was socialist activist and wrote articles for newspapers in St. Petersburg. At the age of 38, he came to the U.S. with Am Olam (Eternal People) to set up a socialist farm. He left Russia just in time because a few hours after he fled, the Tzarist police came to search his house. In America, he found work writing for Yiddish and Jewish readers, not taking a moment to complain since he had a wife and eight children to support. Sandrow then goes on to talk about the Russian-Jewish intellectuals of the Lower East Side. They were the middle class, elitist, and spoke mostly in Russian with a little bit of English. They looked down on the lower class Jews who spoke Yiddish (which the upper class saw as jargon) and saw them as uncultured. These intellectuals would only go to Russian or American theater, not Yiddish. However, Gordin was slowly coaxed into Yiddish theater. He met Jacob Adler, David Kessler, Sigmund Mogulesko, and Sigmund Feinman and they encouraged him to go see a Yiddish play. After what Gordin thought was a disastrous play, he wrote what would become

a masterpiece: *Siberia*. He brought it back to the actors, but it wasn't what they were used to so they kept changing scenes and Gordin was furious. He left the theater and the actors rehearsed and performed without him. However, after the show, they all realized just how good the original play was without their changes. Gordin then went to Boris Thomashefsky's theater with another play, *The Pogrom in Russia* and agreed to sell it to the director on the condition that every word in his play be kept, no more improvisations.

I found this chapter to be quite interesting in a number of ways. Firstly, I didn't know about the Russian-Jewish intellectuals of the Lower East Side. I didn't know that they preferred Russian and would have gone to Russian theaters. Secondly, I was taken aback by the fact that Jacob Gordin thought that the pogroms of 1881 were the Jews fault simply because they couldn't assimilate into Russian culture and had their own culture. Lastly, like the previous chapter, I would have liked to have read more about the female actresses, but I did enjoy reading about another playwright.

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "With God's Help, I Starved to Death." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 118-130.

Kanfer begins chapter nine by talking about the reactions to the Triangle Fire in 1912; labor unions kept raising money and protesting against the court's decision to only charge the factory owners \$75 per casualty. Woodrow Wilson was elected president and began creating new reforms. Kanfer then moves on to talk about Maurice Schwartz who was born in 1890 in Ukraine and wanted to elevate the Yiddish theater. He was determined to join Thomashefsky,

Adler, or Kessler, but needed to work his way up the food chain. Finally, a break happened when a Czech actress, Esther Rokhl-Kaminska, came to a performance he directed and mentioned his name to Kessler who offered Schwartz a job. He needed to be approved by the Hebrew Actors Union before he could be safe in his position. After two failed auditions, he managed to meet with Abraham Cohen who was considered to be the *Forward* (which had tons of influence). Cohen helped Schwartz secure his job and he was set. Next, Kanfer discusses Sholem Aleichem (which means “peace be with you” in Yiddish) who was born in 1859 in Ukraine and was originally a finance man. He wrote plays on the side and then left finance to pursue playwriting full time. Sholem Aleichem is the author of the short stories of Tevye the milkman and his four daughters. This story eventually became *Fiddler on the Roof*. Aleichem reached out to Jacob Adler with one of his plays, but Adler declined. Later on, he would change his mind when he learned that Aleichem was invited to a fancy dinner and introduced as the “Jewish Mark Twain” (Kanfer 124). Adler accepted his play, but Thomashefsky learned of this and quickly offered to buy another one of Aleichem’s plays. Adler and Thomashefsky were trying to outdo one another until Aleichem’s friends intervened. Unfortunately, some of the press wasn’t so kind to Aleichem and the shows closed. Kanfer then wraps up the chapter by speaking about an act of anti-Semitism in America that people were calling a “New World pogrom” (Kanfer 127). A Jew in Atlanta was suspected of killing a young Christian girl and even though someone else confessed in court, the Jewish man, Leo Frank was sentenced to death. However, a KKK group broke into the prison and lynched him. A group responded, the Anti-Defamation League, but a group of well educated German Jews protested not wanting to cause trouble. They believed that the problem would be solved by education and assimilation, but were wrong when anti-Semitism continued.

I learned a few things reading this chapter. Firstly, it was about Maurice Schwartz who I had never heard of before and his determination and stubbornness to be part of Yiddish theater. Secondly, it was the trial of Leo Frank, learning that even though someone else confessed to the murder, he was still sentenced and lynched. I also enjoyed reading about Sholem Aleichem and his original story of Tevye. *Fiddler on the Roof* was the first Yiddish play I ever saw so it was quite nice to hear about its origin.

Kanfer, Stefan. "Luftmenschn and Schnorrers." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 131-144.

Kanfer begins chapter ten with discussing a satirical journal that showed Jacob Adler, Bessie and Boris Thomashefsky, and David Kessler all rejecting Shakespeare's plays. He then moves on to talk about the new changes that were happening in New York City with Kessler, Thomashefsky, and Adler. Kessler went into business with his stepson, but they argued so much over anything and everything that Kessler got fed up, left, and went on tour in Montreal and Toronto. Thomashefsky announced more shund plays along with traditional repertoire and Adler, was starting to cut back on work but was still performing. Next, Kanfer talks about young actor Jacob Ben-Ami who was born in Russia and got an offer to go to a Moscow acting academy, but only if he converted to Christianity. Ben-Ami refused and left Russia for England. He met Maurice Schwartz and the two men went into business together. Unfortunately, that would not last as the two men had several disagreements. Ben-Ami would

open the Garden Theater and got a major financial backer. Unfortunately, these two men wouldn't agree and Ben-Ami would be forced to leave the Garden Theater. Kanfer then wraps up the chapter by talking about an eclectic play called *The Dybbuk*. It was written by Shloyme-Zanvl Rappoport who went by the pen name of S. Ansky. He was an activist and poet and on his deathbed, asked a Vilna troupe to perform his play which was a huge success. Some critics adored it, others did not, but the constant back and forth finally reached the Yiddish theater in New York City who made an announcement that the play would be put on. Ansky wrote *The Dybbuk* because he felt that Jewish tradition was starting to have less and less meaning and would soon be completely destroyed by current events.

I thought this chapter was interesting in a few different ways. Firstly, Kanfer explored other actors and playwrights and their journey in Yiddish theater, both in Europe and the U.S. Second, he gave us a very clear picture of all of the struggles these men went through to put on their plays with each other and to the outside world. No doubt it was extremely difficult to battle other Yiddish playwrights, actors, and investors as well as outside forces. Lastly, I really enjoyed reading more about *The Dybbuk* since that's the play I'm going to be designing for. I had no idea why Ansky wrote such an odd play, but now that I know, I can keep that in mind when designing.

The Art of Theatrical Sound Design

Deiorio, Victoria. "Sound and Human Perception." *The Art of Theatrical Sound*

Design, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 11-42.

Deiorio begins chapter one with talking about what draws people to theater. She says that people enjoy telling a story and seeing the conflict as well as the solution.

Deiorio then moves on to talk about perception and how we describe sound. Apparently, sound is the first of the five senses that we process. It only takes .146 seconds for us to hear something and it's not just the auditory parts of the brain that sound affects; it's also the limbic system. This system controls heart rate, memory formation, attentional span, emotional response, and blood pressure. This is why sound can be attached to a memory or feeling and why one of the goals of a sound designer is to elicit the correct emotional response of an audience member during a piece of music or sound. Next, Deiorio discusses imaginative sound. She makes the point that our brains can hear a particular sound when we read a description of it. For example, if an author writes something about the sound of walking in the woods, immediately, our brains can hear what that might sound like; the rustle of the wind through the trees, the crunch of leaves under our feet, etc. Deiorio then moves on to talk about silence. When we don't hear anything, we might start to focus more on the quieter sounds like our breathing or heartbeat. Silence can also be used to intensify a moment on stage. For example, if two characters are having an argument, everything is loud and messy, and then all of a sudden, one confesses their love for the other and it's silent.

I thought this chapter was a bit dry, but I did learn a couple things. Firstly, I didn't know that sound is the first sense we perceive. I thought it was quite interesting to learn about how sound and music can affect us. Secondly, it was reading a description of sound and how I could then hear that sound in my brain. Lastly, I thought it was interesting when she talked about walking in the woods at night and all of the sounds we will suddenly hear and how it can activate our flight or fight.

Deiorio, Victoria. Exercises to Develop Artistic Sound Design Skills." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 63-100.

Deiorio starts chapter three with making her argument about what sound designers should focus on: detail. It's the tiny details that will really sell your design and make your audience believe in what you are telling them. For example, if you are trying to convince them that they are in a tiny shetl in 1890 in Russia, having every single detail there and correct, will persuade them. Deiorio then makes the point that the instruments you have in your design play a large role since it will guide human emotion better than the entire soundscape. For example, a piano playing in a minor key, will tend to make the audience more melancholy than happy. She then goes on to talk about plotting themes and gives some examples with characters, objects, ideas, locations, and time period. For example, for location, a theme could be something as simple as where does the play take place and because of that, what are some things we will need to keep in mind? Next, Deiorio talks about punctuation and its different effects. With subtle punctuation, this could be something where a character has just found out her dog died. Everything seems to stop around them and the audience is just focusing on that character and her shock. It might end when someone else comes in or when they say the character's name.

Like chapter one, I thought this chapter was quite dry, but I did find a couple things interesting. Firstly, I enjoyed how she talked about detail because this is something I remember learning about in sound design class and I know this is something that is crucial to keep in mind when designing for *The Dybbuk*. Secondly, the instruments. I didn't realize just how important they could be to a design until Deiorio pointed it out and why. This will also be something I keep in mind when choosing music for my design.

Deiorio, Victoria. "Communication for the Artistic Process." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 193-210.

Chapter eight starts with the importance of communication and body language, especially for those who it's our first job. Deiorio makes the point that you can learn a lot about someone else simply by the way that they are holding themselves. For example, crossed arms could mean that they aren't open to new ideas or criticism. Also, what we say and what others say can be interpreted differently based on how we say it. Deiorio then moves on to how we can change our language from being more positive rather than negative. For example, saying that you can't change this one behavior signals to your brain that it's absolutely impossible. However, if you say, I can change this behavior, you are more likely to actually be able to do it. Next, she talks about the importance of taking responsibility for communicating with others and how you can effectively do that. Deiorio then wraps up the chapter by talking about how to communicate. In our new, digital world, a lot of our communications are over email so it can be quite challenging to make a good first impression without a face-to-face meeting. For example, using the proper greeting to a director will give them the impression of your respect rather than you starting with "Hey!" Additionally, it is important to check for spelling and grammar errors and to be polite, saying "please" and "thank you" can go a long way.

I thought this chapter was much more interesting than chapter one and three. It reinforced my knowledge about communicating over emailing since I remember one of the first lessons my freshman advisor gave us about how to address our professors in an email. Additionally, I enjoyed Deiorio's section about reading minds because this is something I try to do and will often take things the wrong way based on someone's facial expression. The point about giving yourself the benefit of the doubt will be quite helpful to me now and in the future when I am presenting my ideas and someone makes a face. Deiorio's lesson on tone is something I try to constantly keep in mind, especially when I am offended by someone's

email or simply by what they said. I know that writing an email with an angry tone won't help solve the situation so I always try to let myself calm down before responding.

Sound Design for the Stage

Fry, Gareth. "Conceive and Execute." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 39-44.

Fry begins this chapter with talking about concepts and where to find them. For example, they might come from the director or the set designer, or it might be something you come up with. Fry makes the important point that while reality is important, you shouldn't let it burden your design. He then goes on to talk about the various questions that can (and should) come up while doing research post-script analysis like where is the play set? Next, Fry discusses sound effects and how to make them sound like part of the world the play is in and not isolated sounds. He suggests asking yourself a number of questions to determine how much of the outside world we should hear, like what kind of world is beyond our set? Is it urban or rural? Fry then wraps up the chapter by comparing two different performances of *Othello* where both directors chose to bring the show into the 21st century and how the soundscapes outside of the set were different.

I learned a couple different things in this chapter. Firstly, it was that the outside world in your play might not be heard. Sound effects that would come from the outside world might not be heard since they might sound like they are awkward or don't belong in the play. I thought this was really interesting since it was something I never really thought about until reading this chapter. Secondly, it was that a play that was written in 1603 could be brought

into the 21st century and have an outside world, but depending on the directors or designers, those outside worlds could sound very different from one another.

Fry, Gareth. "Music and the Blurry World of Sound." *Sound Design for the Stage*, Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp.45-52.

In chapter five, Fry starts off with talking about music and the effects it has on people. For example, music can be used to calm someone down from a panic attack, put someone to sleep, or help them concentrate while writing a boring annotation. Music can also be used as an introduction to a play, to let the audience know what time period we might be in. For example, with *The Oldest Profession* by Paula Vogel, the pre-show music were all songs from the 1980s, letting the audience know the play takes place in the 1980s. Fry then moves on to discuss the differences and similarities between sound and music. For example, some sounds elicit an emotional response from someone while others are just plain noise, like a cat meowing. Fry then wraps up the chapter by talking about the ways music can be used to provoke a certain emotional response from the audience, from happiness to depression.

This chapter was just reinforcing things I already knew. I knew that music can affect people in various ways and some examples of those ways. Secondly, I knew the purpose of having music before a performance begins, to introduce the audience to the play and give pieces of critical information. However, I think all of this information is always important to keep in mind when designing, now and in the future.

Fry, Gareth. "Pulling the Ideas Together." *Sound Design for the Stage*, Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 53-56.

Fry begins chapter six with talking about pulling your design altogether and making sure that you are taking risks. A well-thought out and excellent design has some unique sound effects or music choices. Fry then moves on to discuss how sound designers create the rules for themselves and that it's okay to break those rules and think and do outside of the box. He makes the crucial point that you cannot allow yourself to limit yourself and your design. Fry then wraps up the chapter by talking about influences from movies and how each of them had great sound choices with sound effects and music.

This chapter was also reinforcing things I already knew, but in a better way. I know that it's crucial to not limit yourself and to take risks. I am constantly getting pushed to think outside the box, to do more, to improve. I thought it was interesting how Fry said that while doing a show with magic, he didn't want to have any wind chimes or whoosh sounds which to me, sounds a bit like he was limiting his design. All of the things that he talked about in this chapter will be helpful to keep in mind as I begin designing for my play.

WEEK FOUR

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "An Amalgam of Frankenstein and Marx." *Stardust Lost The Triumph,*

Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 145-160.

Kanfer begins chapter eleven by talking about two of the Yiddish theater's greatest actors: Jacob Adler and David Kessler and their declines in health. Adler was in Pine Hill with his family when he suffered a stroke while Kessler died on the operating table from an

intestinal blockage. Fortunately, Adler recovered, but was still frail. A final performance was arranged to raise money for Adler and all the profits (\$15,000) went to him. However, in true Adler fashion, he was still doing okay, but he needed time to write his memoir and say all of his dramatic goodbyes. One of these dramatic goodbyes was to famous Russian director Konstantin Stanislavsky who was in town and came to meet Adler in his car when the actor felt too ill go upstairs to the hotel room. Then, on March 31st, 1926, Adler died from a seizure and the entire theater community mourned. People feared this would be the end of Yiddish theater especially since in Russia, more and more pogroms were happening along with World War I. Someone had to take the blame for everything, so even though World War I was meant to be the last war, it was just making the foundation for a bigger and even more barbaric war. Antisemitism was on the rise in the United States and the Jews were beginning to be pictured as these conniving, unethical people who start a war to make a profit. Interestingly enough, another stereotype of the Jews was that they were stealing people's money to fund communism even though Karl Marx was firmly against the Jews and warned the world of the Jew.

I thought this chapter was quite interesting in a couple different ways. Firstly, I liked how Kanfer talked about Adler's decline and made it sound like it was a reflection of the actor, very dramatic. Secondly, it was interesting to see how antisemitism was becoming more and more prevalent in the United States. I also really enjoyed seeing the photos of the original tevye for the film *Tevye der Milkhiker* (Tevye the Milkman) which later became *Fiddler on the Roof*. This chapter definitely gave me some insight into how the Yiddish theater was continuing without one of its stars and under the pressure of anti-semitism.

Kanfer, Stefan. "This Bastard is Underplaying Me to Death!" *Stardust Lost The Triumph,*

Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America, by Stefan Kanfer, New York

City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 3-14.

Kanfer starts off chapter twelve by talking about the big filmmakers who were mostly Jews and were familiar with the ideas and messages of the Yiddish theater. For example, one of the founders of MGM was Louis B. Mayer, who was quite annoyed after seeing a movie that was quite rude and aggressive towards the mother character. Yiddish theater had always stressed the importance of respecting one's parents and the importance of a good education. Kanfer then moves on to discuss Paul Muni who would become another great actor of the Yiddish theater. As a young child, Muni would be in his parents touring theater company where he had a talent for fooling others with his makeup. However, his father didn't want him to become an actor and have to struggle for the rest of his life. He forced Muni into playing the violin until one day, Muni confessed that he didn't want to play, he wanted to act. He went to New York City to audition and met and married Boris Thomashefsky's niece, Bella. When she was out doing her shopping, Muni would put on his makeup and costumes, and walk past her in the street. If she didn't recognize him, he knew that he could audition and be accepted into a role. This actually worked. No matter what role Muni played, large or small, he was always a success. Unfortunately, this gathered quite a bit of jealousy from actor-manager Maurice Schwartz and the final blow came during a production where Muni had his back to the audience the entire time, but was still raved about. He was disinvited and in order to put food on the table, he performed in a series of operettas, but he would move on to larger stages.

I found this chapter to be quite fascinating in a couple different ways. Firstly, it showed a real life example of a Jew starting in his home turf of Yiddish theater, but then moving to the American stages and being known as an American actor, not a Yiddish one. Secondly, it was that Muni's father was in theater and had his own theater company, but

didn't want his son to follow in his footsteps. This gave me a unique insight into the cultural expectations of Jews in the 20th century and will help me to answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

The Art of Theatrical Sound Design

Deiorio, Victoria. "The Art of Spatial Design." *The Art of Theatrical Sound Design*, London, Methuen Drama, 2019, pp. 43-60.

Deiorio begins chapter two with talking about space and sound and makes the important point that it is our job as sound designers to fill that space correctly and direct the audience's attention in the right place. For example, if there is a telephone on stage right and a telephone ringing sound effect, we need to make sure that the sound comes from stage right, not stage left. Deiorio also talks about when to have a sound accompany an action and when not to since this is also our responsibility. She then moves on to discuss the four different topics of auditory spatial awareness. The first one is social settings and the different kinds of social settings. With close friends or family, we will be more relaxed as opposed to in a business meeting where everyone is expected to be professional and composed. The second is navigational and we use this to paint a picture of where we are and where we are going in our minds. What we might hear while we are in these places will affect our senses. Third, is

aesthetic and this is the appreciation of space relative to sound. For example, a concert hall with perfect acoustics will be much more aesthetically pleasing. Fourth, is musical and this is how we are going to react to sound or music in a space. This is especially important for theater sound designers as we will need to think of how the audience will react to our designs in the theater. Deiorio then makes an interesting point about aural texture. A design that has several details and specifics will be much more interesting to your audience and will help to keep their attention. She then wraps up the chapter by talking about splitting the theater you are working in into different sections and focus on how you want the audience to hear your design.

I learned a couple of different things from this chapter. First, it was about the four topics of auditory spatial awareness and how they will affect people and their behaviors. Second, it was about soundscapes and how to make them sound aurally pleasing, memorable, and distinctive. This will all be helpful to keep in mind as I am now collecting different pieces of music for my sound design and I want my audience to remember and enjoy my design.

Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater

Quint, Alyssa. "The Rise of the Yiddish Theater Audience." *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp.87-109.

Quint begins chapter three by talking about how even though Goldfaden was in Romania, putting on his plays, he still relied heavily on his Russian-Jewish audiences. Goldfaden was in Romania because it didn't have the same restrictive laws around theater that Russia did. However, it took the Russo-Turkish war to bring more Russian customers to

Romania and that allowed for the launch of a Yiddish theater. Quint then moves on to discuss Goldfaden's play, *The Two Kuni-Lemls* and how it was seen and received by audiences.

Goldfaden was attracting gentiles to his productions as well as Jews so it was a bit curious that this play was seen as anti-Hasidic propaganda. One of the characters, Kuni-Leml, is a traditional Hasidic Jew and yet he is portrayed as an inferior person due to his stutter, limp, and less than stellar intellectual capacities. Several people complained and critiqued

Goldfaden's works, although interestingly enough, most of his critics were not Hasidic Jews, just those who attended his shows. They were worried about how the non-Jewish population would see them and believed that Goldfaden was only going to make things worse for them.

Next, Quint discusses and analyzes the relationship between two of the characters in the same play, Max and his soon to father-in-law, Pinkhes. Quint believes that the dialogue between them is a sign of a male-male love and relationship and uses the line where Pinkhes realizes just how attractive "Kuni-Leml" is and believes that supports her argument.

I found this chapter to be interesting in a couple different ways. First, it was that it took a war to bring Jews to Odessa and as a result, Goldfaden could start a Yiddish theater. Second, it was learning about how Jews reacted to Goldfaden's play and how there was an anti-Hasidic movement amongst the Jewish people. They saw the Hasidim as being too rigid in their beliefs and wanted to change that.

Quint, Alyssa. "The Rise of the Yiddish Playwright" *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*,
Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 110-137.

Quint starts off chapter four by discussing Nahum Shaikevitch, a colleague of Abraham Goldfaden who was mostly a novelist. He was born to a well off family in Lithuania and wrote mostly for the Hebrew newspaper Ha-Melits. During the Russo-Turkish

war, Shaikevitsh managed to secure a contract with the Russian military and then moved to Odessa where he saw a Yiddish production (*The Dybbuk* by Joseph Lateiner) for the first time. While Shaikevitsh didn't particularly enjoy the play, he was inspired to write his own and ask Osip Lerner (a Russian writer and journalist) to put it on. He wanted to create a traveling Yiddish theater troupe and almost succeeded, but the assassination of Tzar Alexander II put his plans on hold until things began to settle down. Quint then moves on to talk a bit about Abraham Goldfaden who apparently could not share the spotlight. He wrote numerous things about his fellow Yiddish playwrights, questioning their credentials for writing plays, making insults, and basically portraying himself as "the defender of the theater's Jewish honor" (Quint 113) since some of the other playwrights had converted to Christianity. Next, Quint talks about the playwrights that Goldfaden never bothered to mention and did mention. One of the people who were never mentioned was Benedict Ben Tsiyon who was a Jew who had converted to Christianity and was converting other Jews, so it's quite surprising Goldfaden never mentioned him. Ben Tsiyon was born in Kiev and converted in 1863 so he was then allowed to go to university and graduate with a medical degree. He moved to England and worked with a missionary group where he became an emissary for them in Odessa. It was here that he began writing for the Yiddish theater. While it is unclear how many of Ben Tsiyon's plays were actually performed, we do know that after he moved to New York, he didn't have a very high profile. However, Goldfaden really reeled into Yiddish playwright Jacob Gordin who was actually thought of as one of the greatest Yiddish playwrights. Goldfaden and other Jews claimed that because Gordin had been a cofounder of the Spiritual-Biblical Brotherhood, which never really promoted the continuity of Judaism, it was a "profoundly misguided evangelical effort" (Quint 120). Gordin attempted to hide his involvement, but it was too late and everyone knew about it. Another playwright Goldfaden attacked was Osip Lerner who was baptized and because of this,

Goldfaden called him “the greatest gentile threat to the integrity of the Jewish stage” (Goldfaden qtd. Quint). Quint then wraps up the chapter by theorizing on why Goldfaden was so opposed to Jews who had converted to Christianity and continued to write for Yiddish theater.

I found this chapter to be quite interesting and curious. Interesting because of all of the Jews Quint talked about who had converted to Christianity and then tried to convert other Jews while still writing for the Yiddish theater. It just seemed like a paradox. Curious because of Benedict Ben Tsiyon who seemed to have kept his name even though he converted. I would have thought that he would change it, but maybe he didn't in order to convert more Jews? This chapter also reinforced my knowledge that Jews don't like outsiders or when one of us converts and then tries to convert us because we just want to be left alone. I think keeping this in mind when designing will help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

Sound Design for the Stage

Fry, Gareth. "Content Creation." *Sound Design for the Stage*,

Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 57-74.

Fry begins chapter seven by talking about where we get or make our sound effect. For example, it could be something that is pre recorded or it could be foley. He then mentions the advantages and disadvantages of making your effects sound realistic or not. Most people won't be able to tell if your bird effect is from a bird that actually lives in the play's setting, but sometimes there will be that one person who can tell and it might take away or distract them from the story you are trying to tell. Fry then moves on to talk about sound libraries and

how they can be beneficial, even the older ones. For example, if you are working on a play that takes place in the 20th century, using an older sound library could be quite helpful since it will probably have sound effects that are representative of that time period. Apparently, location recording can be quite difficult since there can be many obstacles. For example, there will always be background noise that you might not want and it could be people who might not want to have their conversations recorded. Fry also mentions how some locations are illegal to record in such as schools. When we encounter problems such as these, we can use foley to mimic what the actual sound should sound like using different things. Fry then moves on to talk about the abstraction of sound and the different techniques he uses. The first one is abstraction of volume and we can use this to surprise the audience (in a good way) and add to our design. The second is time passing and this can be used to make a moment shorter or longer, whatever we need it to be to fit what's happening on stage. Third is live abstraction where a sound designer can work with actors to make whatever they are doing sound different than the audience would expect. The last one is morphing sounds together and this can be used to replicate a real sound or mix with other sounds to vary your design. Fry then wraps up the chapter by talking about the various equipment that he recommends every sound designer to have.

I thought this chapter was fascinating in a couple different ways. One, I really enjoyed how he talked about the different ways to record sounds and obtain sound effects using different techniques and equipment. Second, was his points about realism and when it is helpful to make something realistic and when it's not. I know this will be quite helpful to keep in mind since I am designing for a play that takes place pre-World War I, mostly likely in Russia. As I am designing, I will have to think about which moments in the play I want to sound realistic and which moments don't have to be.

Fry, Gareth. "Reinforcement and Amplification." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 75-107.

Fry begins chapter eight with talking about amplification and makes the important point that just because we make something louder, doesn't mean that we will understand what is being said. He then goes into what might affect how well we can hear an actor. The first thing is called the signal to noise ratio and all this means is how well can we hear the actor over any other noises that are happening. Other noises could be something happening on stage or it could be machines in the background like the air conditioning. The second thing is called direct to reverberant ratio and this is how much of the performer's actual voice are we hearing versus how much of the space's acoustics are we hearing. If the stage is empty, there is a greater chance that the audience won't be able to hear as much as opposed to having a wall or two walls on stage. The third thing is the reverb time of the room and this is how long it takes for a sound to go around the entire room and will depend on what is in the room. The fourth is whether or not blocking is preventing the sound from reaching the audience. For example, an audience will be able to understand an actor facing much better than an actor facing another actor. The last thing is simply other factors such as how well an actor can project, how strong their voice is after doing multiple shows, or if the audience will start singing along. Fry then moves on to talk about microphones and when we might use them. For example, we might use microphones to make an actor sound like they are in a different place or we can add effects to make their voices sound different. There is also a lot of careful thought and planning into using microphones in a show like when and how. Next, Fry discusses the different ways of microphoning. The first way is the handheld which is rarely used in theater since it limits the actor in what they can do, but also isn't very aesthetically pleasing. The second is the headset which is usually over the ear. However, these can be

difficult when working with lots of costume changes since it can be hard to change without moving the mic and the mic pack is usually quite visible with this technique. The third way is the hairline microphone, but this needs more amplification since it's further away from the actor's mouth. This can also be picking up other noises or voices we might not want to hear. The fourth is the lapel microphone, but like the handheld, this is rarely used in theater since it would be impossible to have a steady sound level from the actor at all times. The last one is the float microphone which will be around a performer, but will pick up every sound.

I learned a few different things from this chapter. First, was that louder doesn't mean better. An actor can be mic'd, but if they are mumbling, an audience still won't be able to understand them. Second, were the factors that could impair an audience member's ability to hear and to understand. I knew a little bit about this from singing in choirs, but reading about this in a theater context was quite enlightening. Lastly, was the advantages and disadvantages of different microphones. Being in the sound crew in high school, we always used hairline microphones for every production so coming to college where we have only used headset microphones for our musical was an experience. It was interesting to read Fry's caution about mic tape and how it can cause skin irritations because I remember both in high school and for the musical in college, we always had to quickly rip off the mic tape because it was better (like ripping off a Band-Aid). This will all be very helpful to keep in mind as I'm designing especially given the space the play will be in (Lenfest Theater).

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. The New Repertory" *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp.164-202.

Sandrow starts off chapter seven with talking about how Yiddish was starting to be recognized as a language instead of just “jargon”. This all started with Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh who wrote under the name Mendele Moykher Sforim because he didn’t want anyone to know he was writing in Yiddish. However, by 1909, Sforim would be celebrated in Jewish communities all over the world as der zeyde (the grandfather) because his writings influenced other writers and he basically made Yiddish a literary language. In 1908, in Czernowitz, Romania, Jewish writers from Europe and the U.S. came together to talk about Yiddish. There were several debates about grammar, spelling, diction, and several questions were asked. Was it the national language of Jews? What was its relationship to Hebrew? Was it a language in the first place? The final decision was that yes, Yiddish was a language, the language of the Jews, just not the only one. Sandrow then moves on to the various Jewish political parties and which language they preferred. For example, Zionism used Hebrew, but Labor Zionism used Yiddish. The movements of socialism, communism, and anarchism used Russian or Polish, which was seen as the language of the upper middle class, while Jewish socialism used Yiddish.

I learned a couple different things from this chapter. First, I didn’t know that different Jewish political groups used different languages or what those languages were associated with and thought that was quite interesting. Second, I didn’t know who was the person who basically made Yiddish be considered a language and found it fascinating it was under an alias. I think this chapter will help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design by giving me some insight on the most religious characters in the play I’m designing for. The professional holy men and rabbis in *The Dybbuk*; how would they have viewed Yiddish? Would they have seen it as “jargon” or would it be their language that they loved and treasured, one that symbolized home for them?

Sandrow, Nahma. "The Art Theaters" *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 203-221.

Sandrow begins chapter eight with talking about Yitskhok Leyb Peretz who rented an entire town hall for a seminar on Yiddish theater in Warsaw. The only problem was that the community was experiencing high levels of anti-semitism at the time and did not want to bring any more attention to themselves. There were four people who were going to speak and they all thought that no one was going to show up. However, thousands of people did come and the event was a general success. Sandrow then moves on to talk about the young people in the Yiddish theater. One of these people was Jacob Ben-Ami, who was disgusted at the state of the Yiddish theater he saw. Ben-Ami was determined to learn from the Russian theater which he saw as an improvement, then go back to the Yiddish theater and make it better. There were several critics of the Yiddish theater who wanted more art theaters. Next, Sandrow talks about the Vilna troupe who were living in German occupied Vilna before and during World War I. Compared to Russia and Poland, who had extremely restrictive policies on Yiddish theater, the Germans actually lifted those restrictions and allowed the Yiddish theater to continue. The troupe used an old, wooden circus building for their performances and focused mostly on ensemble productions. They had to have an obligatory opening performance for the German officers and it was *The Landsman* by Sholem Asch. Even though everyone in the troupe and community was hungry and tired, they kept rehearsing and kept performing. Later on, they moved to Warsaw and put on *Yankl Boyle* by Kobrin and critics were finally happy to see a Yiddish art theater in Warsaw. However, their most popular performance was S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk* and the play would soon be associated with the troupe.

I found this chapter to be quite interesting in a couple different ways. One, I thought it was also quite brave of Yitskhok Leyb Peretz to put on a talk about Yiddish theater while his community was experiencing high levels of anti-semitism and non-Jews were boycotting Jewish shops. Second, was the Vilna troupe and how they were so determined to put on performances and continue no matter what, even though they were hungry and poor. I think this chapter will also help me answer the questions of what influences a design or designer especially after reading about the Vilna troupe. It will also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

WEEK FIVE

Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater

Quint, Alyssa. "The Rise of the Female Yiddish Actor" *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 138-179.

Quint begins chapter five with talking about Abraham Goldfaden's successes in Moscow and St. Petersburg which were considered the hub of Russia's theaters. While Goldfaden doesn't shed a lot of light on his experiences, the newspapers do. They announced Goldfaden's arrival into the cities as nothing extremely special, just another theater group. However, other newspapers gave favorable reviews to Goldfaden and these reviews demonstrated that the theater was constantly growing and thriving. Quint then moves on to discuss Goldfaden and the women in his troupe. From the very beginning, Goldfaden was determined to have women in his theater troupe and this was considered quite a new idea for

the time. So new that women didn't have experience performing in theater because of the religious restriction against women singing in public (called "kol isha") and this continued as a cultural practice for several years. Therefore, when Goldfaden began recruiting women into his troupe, there was a cultural shift and soon enough there were strong, female leads performing in Russia's theaters. One of these strong, female leads was Rosa Fridman who was the inspiration for a character in an operetta that was a serial killer who seduces men, marries them, then kills them. Apparently, Goldfaden did this because Fridman was not only sexually experienced, but had experience as a performer in Constantinople. Next, Quint talks about the men performing as female characters. The most popular character for men to play was the old, Jewish grandmother with her unattractive body and power she had over her family. This role was usually given to young, male actors who were performing on stage for the first time since they could really make a comedic entrance with this character. Another female Yiddish actress was Sara Segal (who would later become Sara Karp). She was one of the original co-managers of the Grand Theater where she served as the vice president of the theater's board until her death. According to Sara's daughter, she wanted a place for herself because when she worked with other theater companies, she always got taken advantage of. Quint then wraps up the chapter by talking about another female actress, Bertha Kalich who was the first woman to publish her memoirs in 1925. She was raised in Lemberg, Ukraine and her parents went to the theater often. Kalich studied music and drama and joined the local chorus at a theater and would become a highly successful actress. She was not afraid to talk about her feelings performing in coed performances and wasn't concerned about propriety or modesty.

This chapter was interesting in a couple different ways. First, it was mostly about Goldfaden and how he was the one who basically initiated the cultural shift that allowed women to perform on stage. Second, the biographies of the female actresses weren't always

recorded so learning about them now can be quite difficult. I think this chapter will help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design by giving me a deeper understanding of twentieth century Yiddish culture.

On Stage, Off Stage

Kadison, Luba, et al. "Buloff's Narrative: Civil War in Vilna." *On Stage, Off Stage Memories of a Lifetime in the Yiddish Theater*, by Luba Kadison, Cambridge, Harvard University Library, 1992, pp 11-16.

Kadison begins this section by talking about how the Russian civil war affected her home town of Vilna and the consequences of the war. As different occupying forces had control over Vilna, there was always a food shortage and long lines of people waiting for their small portion of food. One of the occupying forces (the Polish Legion) even caused a pogrom. She then begins recounting Joseph Buloff's experiences in Vilna. In the soup kitchens, Buloff talks about how respected he was because he was the conduit between the smugglers bringing in food and the kitchens. When he met one of the city's actresses, he struck up a deal with her- Buloff would bring them soup in exchange for tickets to the play they were going to perform. Unfortunately, Buloff never got to see the play because the Bolsheviks took control of the city just a few days before opening night. When they took over, the food shortage got worse, the smugglers were disbanded, the theater was turned into a meeting hall, and Buloff was now in those long lines of people desperate for food. They then discuss how they met Arshansky who was one of the founders of the Yiddish State Theater. Buloff got the opportunity to watch rehearsals for Peretz Hirschbein's *Di Puste*

Kretchme (The Vacant Inn) and met two members of the Vilna troupe as well as got a non-speaking part in the play. However, tragedy soon struck; the Polish Legion invaded Vilna and took control of the city. One fourth of the Jewish population was killed, one fourth fled, and the rest were the victims of pogroms. The theater disappeared and Buloff fled Vilna where he lived as a refugee in the countryside, dodging bullets and shells until he managed to find shelter in a village. Buloff only returned to Vilna once the Polish Legion had secured its hold and control over the city.

This section was interesting in that it was a first hand account of all of the events. Events and history get more muddled with more people telling them so having a primary source is wonderful. However, the first part of the section was quite confusing because it was never explicitly said who was recounting these events, Kadison or Buloff. I think this section gives me a fascinating peek into Yiddish life during a war with all of its struggles.

Kadison, Luba, et al. "Buloff's Narrative: Kompaneyetz." *On Stage, Off Stage Memories of a Lifetime in the Yiddish Theater*, by Luba Kadison, Cambridge, Harvard University Library, 1992, pp. 17-23.

Buloff continues his story in the next section, picking up from where he traveled back to Vilna. Once there, he met Kompaneyetz who was a large producer of Yiddish theater and wanted to create a theater troupe of native born people from Vilna. He claimed that the original Vilna troupe had destroyed Yiddish theater and he sought to restore it. Buloff then goes on to discuss his troubles and successes with the man. While Kompaneyetz did get Buloff to Lodz, and he paid Buloff, the money was only enough for one meal and a bed, no breakfast. As Buloff and Kamen (the other actor) complained to Kompaneyetz, he got them drunk then agreed to triple their salaries. Unfortunately, misfortune would strike during a

performance in Lodz. The city of Vilna had been declared a part of Poland and as men from Vilna, most of the actors, including Buloff, were accused of dodging the draft, and thrown in prison. It was here that Kompaneyetz showed his true colors by bringing the men food and then passports that got them out of jail. He did this again when Buloff was attempting to go back to Vilna and got them on a train. People were packed on the platform and would fight one another to get onto the first train that pulled into the station. Unfortunately, when Buloff and Kamen were on the train, a Polish soldier grabbed them and told them to get off while the train was still moving. Buloff and Kamen were forced to climb onto a running board and stand on a tiny ledge and desperately try to hang onto the moving train. Fortunately, someone told the engineer and he stopped the train at the next stop where people gently pulled Kamen and Buloff from the train. They continued on to Warsaw where Kamen avoided a draft, but Buloff didn't.

I learned a couple things from this chapter. One was that there were technically two Vilna troupes, the original and Kompaneyetz's. Two were of the struggles Buloff and Kamen had to go through while pursuing their dreams and after. Like the previous section, this one also gives me a glimpse into Yiddish life and culture during an unstable time in Europe and how everyone in Yiddish theater was still determined to perform their plays despite all of the dangers.

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "A Jewish Peter Pan." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 170-182.

Kanfer begins chapter thirteen by talking about Molly Picon who grew up in Philadelphia as the daughter of a costumer and single mother. Molly was a comedian and took every opportunity she had to perform. After World War I, she traveled to Boston in hopes of joining a theater troupe, but the city was in the middle of the influenza epidemic. Fortunately, there was one theater that was still in business and the manager/director (Jacob Kalisch hired her. Molly thrived in the theater, but no professional theater in New York would hire her. She had already made her reputation as a comedian, not an actress, so she stayed in Boston and would later marry Jacob Kalisch. Kalisch wanted them to go to Europe because Molly would never be taken seriously in America. However, Molly didn't like change and wanted to stay. Then, when Molly got pregnant, but miscarried, she was too weak to protest Jacob's arguments and the couple left for Europe. Fortunately, this seemed to help Molly's health as she had gotten terribly depressed after her miscarriage. She performed in *Yonkele*, a role that was dubbed "a Jewish Peter Pan" in different cities such as Paris, Lodz, Vienna, and Bucharest. Then, in 1923, Molly moved from the art of theater to the art of silent movies and her husband, Jacob joined her. The pair made a huge success with the movie *Ost und West* and decided to move back to New York where they rented a theater for an evening performance (another large success). Kanfer then moves on to discuss the anti-Semitic events right after the Depression that would lead into World War II and the Holocaust. The Jews of America were quite displeased with the past three Republican presidents and were glad to see FDR in charge since he had a number of Jews in his administration. However, what most of the public didn't know, was that FDR was raised by an anti-Semitic mother and those beliefs had been passed down to her son. Also, as events in Russia and Europe heated up, no one, not even the Jews knew what exactly was going to happen.

I really enjoyed this chapter in a couple different ways. First, it finally talked in length, in detail about a female Yiddish actress! Learning about Molly Picon was fascinating

and will help me to better understand a woman's struggles, opinions, and success in Yiddish culture. Two, it was quite interesting to see how Kanfer brought up the slow rise of anti-Semitism not just in America, but also in Europe and Russia. Everyone seemed to be in complete denial about what was just around the corner; a true case of saying that hindsight is 20/20. I think this chapter will also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

Kanfer, Stefan. "A Giant Made of Clay" *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 183-192.

Kanfer starts off chapter fourteen with discussing the changing world of the Lower East Side in New York City. Jews were moving out quite rapidly and the children of the immigrants were speaking more English than Yiddish. Maurice Schwartz took this in stride and decided to put on two different kinds of performances of *Yoshe Kalb*, one in Yiddish for the old-timers and one in English for the new generation. While the Yiddish productions were an all around success, the English ones, not so much. Reviews were much harsher and the Broadway production closed after only four shows. Kanfer then moves on to talk about Stella Adler, the daughter of the great Yiddish actor Jacob Adler. Stella was quite displeased with the acting she saw around her and decided to join the Group Theater which she enjoyed immensely. Next, Kanfer discusses how the old folklore tale of the golem (a giant created from mud to protect the Jews) was getting a comeback. There were two films made about the golem, one German, one French, but it was on the Yiddish stage where this production truly hit home. However, one afternoon before a performance, the lead actor Alexander Granach from Europe was nowhere to be found. He had left the States for the love of his life without

telling anyone in the production. Another actor, Avigidor Packer, took over the role, managed to pull it off, and the reviews were favorable.

I learned a couple of different things from this chapter. One, was how Schwartz had tried to cater to both the old and new generations with performances in Yiddish and English, but only the Yiddish productions were a success. I found this to be quite interesting and perhaps it was a sign that the younger generation was losing interest (or maybe never had the interest) in the theater. Second, was the comeback of the golem. I knew about the tale, but I didn't know it had been made into two different movies as well as a performance. I think this chapter will help me answer the questions of what is the relationship between culture and design and what influences a design or designer?

Kanfer, Stefan. "Total, Unquestioned Chutzpah." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 193-205.

Kanfer begins chapter fifteen with talking about Joseph Buloff and his experiences with the Yiddish theater. He had performed with a troupe from Vilna and was now trying his hand at directing. Buloff was hired by Artef to direct a play called *Keytn (Chains)* which was about political prisoners' hardships in tzarist Siberia. Unfortunately, Buloff believed in the credibility of the play and while there were favorable reviews who called Buloff a "director of genius." (Kanfer 194), the reviews from *The Daily Worker* were less than favorable. It was a communist newspaper who believed that the way Buloff directed the play demonstrated that a political movement can be composed of different people and personalities. Kanfer then moves on to discuss Edgar George Ulmer who was a set designer for the 1920s version of

The Golem. While Ulmer was born a Jew, he went to a Jesuit school and therefore knew no Yiddish. However, he didn't let this stop him and on a visit to New York, he decided to make a movie from a Yiddish play, *Green Fields*, by Peretz Hirschbein. He hired Jacob Ben-Ami to help him co-direct since the actors had only performed on stage before. Ulmer was constantly teaching them the differences between acting on stage and acting in front of a camera. One of the actors, Herschel Bernardi called the director "a school unto himself. Acting I was taught by my parents. But film making was something else entirely. Over the course of a few weeks with Ulmer I learned more than college kids do in four years" (Bernardi qtd. Kanfer 201). All of this hard work paid off. *Green Fields* the movie became a minor classic since Ulmer really knew how to stretch every dollar in the budget and how to expand the original script.

This chapter was interesting in a couple different ways. One, it talked about Joseph Buloff's experiences with the Yiddish theater in a very different way than his memoir in *On Stage, Off Stage* did. Two, it talked about the beginnings of people making movies out of plays. I thought this part was especially interesting because of Ulmer. He had no experience on the stage, no experience with Yiddish theater and he couldn't speak the language, but he managed to create a success with an old Yiddish play. I think this chapter will also help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

Kanfer, Stefan. "A Low Dishonest Decade." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 206-218.

Kanfer begins chapter sixteen with change: MGM studios in Hollywood was no longer interested in Shakespeare and therefore, no longer interested in Maurice Schwartz. Schwartz didn't know what to do, he didn't want to be performing to houses that were only

half filled, so he went to the Cafe Royal to ask. This was apparently the place to be and the place to be seen. Actors would gather and talk all day while the writers were huddled up in their corner, frantically scribbling and the musicians in the back talking and laughing. One of the employees, Herman, seemed to always know whether or not a show was going to be a success and people would take his word as if he were God. Kanfer then moves on to talk about the effects the Depression had on the theater. Very few people could now afford theater tickets and as a result, the theater was thought to be slowly dying out. A momentary respite came with Hallie Flanagan who had been put in charge of the newly founded Federal Theater Project. While actors were only being paid \$23.86 per week, it was a real, steady job and they took it. Unfortunately, the Federal Theater Project came under fire with the House Un-American Activities Committee and it was shut down. Now it seemed almost certain that the theater would die. However, Maurice Schwartz was determined to keep going, keep putting on performances, but this did not go well. Never one to be discouraged, Schwartz tried his hand at filmmaking (perhaps as a way to get back at MGM) and immediately began rehearsals for *Tevye der Milkhiker* (*Tevye the Milkman*). Unfortunately, during filming bad news was delivered to the cast and crew. Danzig had been captured by the Nazis and the German foreign minister was going to have a meeting in Moscow to discuss a pact. This was the most upsetting; nine million European and Russian Jews lives were at risk. One of the cast, Leon Liebgold wanted to return to Poland immediately to his family, but Schwartz refused. Production was getting behind, and he told Liebgold that he could go at the end of the month. This saved his life; Germany invaded Poland and had Liebgold gone back, he would have definitely died with his family in the Holocaust.

I thought this chapter was quite interesting in a few different ways. One, I enjoyed how Kanfer talked about Maurice Schwartz and his determination to put on successful performances. Two, I always like hearing about the beginnings of one of my favorite movies,

Fiddler on the Roof, and how it has changed from the original story, to the play, to the movie. Three, I enjoyed reading about Hallie Flanagan, the Federal Theater Project, and how she helped the Yiddish theater get a little life back into its lungs, especially after taking a whole class about that. I think this chapter will help me answer the questions of what is the relationship between culture and design and what influences a design or designer. I also learned that politicians never truly change, they never truly want to fund anything that's non-military or art.

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. "The Soviet Yiddish State Theaters: Goset." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 222-250.

Sandrow begins chapter nine by talking about the ups and downs of the Russian Yiddish Theater. After the ban on Yiddish theater in 1882, Russian Jews didn't see more than Purim plays or the occasional German troupe wandering about. However, things changed with the new century and Ester Rokhl Kaminska brought her troupe to St. Petersburg where they had tons of success. Unfortunately, trouble was still happening; the Russian government kicked out thousands of Jews and pogroms were still happening. Then, the revolution occurred and things seemed stable for a bit. The Russian government created the new art and there was a section for the theater. To the Jews of Russia, this seemed like a miracle from above, especially since they were now allowed in Leningrad (formally St. Petersburg) and Moscow and one of the theaters was called the Moscow Yiddish State Art Theater. Sandrow then moves on to discuss Alexander Granovsky who was born in Latvia and went to St. Petersburg to study theater. He chose to employ actors who had never performed in Yiddish

theater before who would not be associated with the old Yiddish theater and also have no connections to the old political associations. They put on a number of plays, but none of them really had that bang with the audiences. Then, with a stroke of good luck, Granovsky decided to put on plays by Sholem Aleichem, Yitskhok Leyb Peretz, and Mendele Moykher and hired a painter by the name Marc Chagall to create the atmosphere. It was such a success that the Russian government gave the troupe a brand new building that could seat five hundred people. The troupe put on several more shows over the next seven years and all of them were raging success. Unfortunately, after Granovsky's death, the troupe would slowly be going downhill along with the stricter enforcements that Stalin put in place. Anti-semitism was on the rise in Russia and one by one, Yiddish theaters were closing. Actors desperately tried to open theaters, put on shows, but it never lasted long enough.

I learned a couple of things after reading this chapter. One was that restrictions for Jews in Russia eased a bit with the twentieth century. Two was that after the revolution, the Russian government was basically funding the Yiddish theater and that Jews were now allowed in cities that they had been banned from. I think this chapter will help me answer the question of what is the relationship between culture and design?

Sandrow, Nahma. "Twentieth-Century America." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 251-302.

Sandrow starts chapter ten by discussing how Yiddish theater was in New York City pre-World War I; it was thriving and was the most secure Yiddish speaking neighborhood. There were several large theaters people could choose from, not just in the Lower East Side, but also in the Bronx and Brooklyn. There were also several theaters in Detroit that were run by Abraham Littman from 1914 to 1937 that hosted mostly traveling troupes. The Yiddish

theater had slowly but surely reached its peak and was now starting its slow decline. Sandrow then moves on to talk about the different kinds of Yiddish theater. There was amateur theater, such as the Folksbiene where actors could perform outside of a union. The amateur theater grew from both the Jews who were already in America and the ones still coming over from Europe. Another kind of theater were professional art theaters and these theaters came from people who wanted to move past amateur theater. One of these people was Jacob Ben-Ami (who would later help Edgar George Ulmen make a highly successful movie based off of *Green Fields*) who was professionally trained. Another one was Maurice Schwartz who was born in Ukraine and was accidentally left in London by his family. Schwartz fell in love with the theater in New York and later moved to Cleveland where he was acting. His big break came when he was performing in Philadelphia as an understudy and the leading man got sick. Schwartz was able to step into the limelight and the New York management were so impressed with him they offered him a job. His career took off like a rocket and he would later act in films as well as play around with lighting and make up techniques for his shows.

There were a couple of very enjoyable things about this chapter. One, I liked how Sandrow broke down the chapter into sections about the different kinds of Yiddish theater. It was quite interesting and I've never read about them before. Two, I thought it was really interesting how determined Maurice Schwartz was to pursue his dreams even though he had several odds stacked against him. He didn't let that stop him and I think he is one of those people who you can truly say represents a group of people. Lastly, I think this chapter will assist me in answering the question: what is the relationship between culture and design?

Sound Design for the Stage

Fry, Gareth. "System Design." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 109-136.

Fry begins chapter nine with talking about taking the space you're designing in into account when designing. He makes the interesting point that in a large space an audience won't always hear or understand the tiny little details. Fry then moves on to discuss speaker placement with how many speakers you should have. He takes into account the costs of having one speaker versus two as well as how much of the audience will hear from one speaker or two. Surround sound speakers can be useful for smaller spaces since they can make the audience feel like they are in the world that the performance is taking place in. However, in a larger space, they can be quite distracting from what's happening on the stage. Next, Fry talks about sound system design. The first section is called assessing the venue and this entails going to the theater where the performance is going to be and talking to the crew that works there. They can tell you some of the obstacles you might face and some possible solutions as well as how to achieve your goals. Another thing to think about is that the sound board operator must be able to hear the microphones the same way as the audience. Therefore, they must be in the audience and this means removing seats. The next thing is what equipment is available for you to use. The next section is sketching out the sound system and Fry recommends starting with sketching on paper. This paperwork will sometimes be given to the sound department, the associate/ assistant sound designer, multiple departments, or no one. The next sections are about working with the lighting and set designers. Fry makes the crucial point that it is essential to know how to compromise with the

other designers in order to achieve everyone's goals and pull off the design for the performances. Then, Fry goes on to talk about considering the budget for your department and the importance of creating your list sooner rather than later in order to get the things you need as well as the different microphones, mixing desks, and speakers.

I found this chapter to be quite interesting in a couple different ways. One was reading about budget and equipment limitations when we've been taught to design first and not let that limit your design. Two was when Fry was talking considering the space you are designing in for your speaker placement and the advantages and disadvantages. I think this chapter will help me keep all of this in mind as I prepare to continue my design and present it.

Fry, Gareth. "Rehearsals." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 137-160.

Fry starts off chapter ten with talking about non devised rehearsals which are broken up into sections. The first three are table work, 'putting it on its feet', the second pass. In table work, Fry says that's when people will often go over the script with a fine-toothed comb, talking about themes, context, and discussing the characters while in the next section, this will be rehearsing a scene while moving around. In the second pass and complete runs, actors will move through the scenes and there will be more focus on scenes that aren't fitting. Fry then moves on to talk about a sound designer's role in rehearsals and how depending on the show, he might be at rehearsals once a week or just a couple of times. He then talks about how he starts to introduce sound into the rehearsals. Fry will start playing sound quietly and sometimes during breaks so that people get used to hearing the design and aren't shocked or surprised when it starts playing during rehearsals. Next, Fry discusses found music and all of the advantages and disadvantages that come with it. Some of these advantages are that there

might be several people other than the director giving their opinion on the music you have found and while this can be quite helpful sometimes, it can also be more of a hindrance. A disadvantage is that having tons of choices to get our music from can be quite overwhelming and, sometimes you need permission to use music. Fry makes an interesting point here about if you are touring with a show, sometimes you might have to get permission for every piece of music in every place you are going. Then, Fry discusses what we want to achieve in rehearsals. He makes an interesting suggestion and that is to have all of his cues in Qlab by the end of rehearsals and empty groups where he thinks cues might go even if there is no sound. Fry also puts all the information in the notes part of a cue so that every bit of information is in Qlab.

I found this chapter to be fascinating in a couple different ways. First, I enjoyed all of Fry's tips and suggestions, I thought they were very helpful. Second, I liked how he walks his reader through all of the advantages and disadvantages of equipment and music. I think all of this information will be essential to keep in mind when I'm designing for my project. Also, I think this chapter will help answer the question of what influences a design or designer because I don't think it's just culture and history, I think it's also the space and the play you're working on that can influence you and your design.

WEEK SIX

Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater

Quint, Alyssa. "The Ban, Cultural Momentum, and the Modern Yiddish Theater." *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 180-202.

Quint begins chapter six with talking about the ban on Yiddish theater in Russia on August 17th, 1883 and how it was the end of Yiddish theater in the Russian empire as well as the end of Abraham Goldfaden's career. He tried exerting his influence over some government officials, but it didn't work and Goldfaden was forced to consider the horrible possibility that he might have to leave Russia. However, there were still performances that were being allowed by the government, but they weren't announced or publicized as much as they used to be. Quint then moves on to mention Fishzon who was an impresario who had a troupe and they were just getting started performing when the ban took effect. He was successful in staging Yiddish productions, but with the ban, he was never going to be a known name like Goldfaden and his costumes and sets were now worthless. The one place the ban on Yiddish theater was strictly enforced was Odessa and so, Yiddish playwrights, actors, and managers moved away to try to continue Yiddish theater. It wasn't easy, especially with officials watching rehearsals, but they succeeded and other actors from competing troupes would often come see their rival's productions. Critics and favorable reviews were made and despite all of the difficulties, actors learned from each other. Next, Quint talks about Goldfaden's decline. After Goldfaden failed at working around the ban, he moved to Warsaw where he attempted to put on productions, but was never a huge success. Goldfaden then moved to New York, but was beaten there by competitors who were making their own names in Yiddish theater without him and the memory of how Goldfaden had treated his actors still lingered. He moved to Paris where he continued to write operettas, but also was a member of the local Zionist group in Paris and became good friends with Naftali

Herz Imber (who would later write Israel's national anthem). However, his health was slowly failing him and he returned to New York where Boris Thomashefsky put on one of his old plays for him. Unfortunately, after one of the performances, Abraham Goldfaden died and there were about 75,000 to 100,000 people who were part of his funeral procession.

I learned a couple different things from this chapter. One was about the ban of Yiddish theater in Russia in 1883 and how it wasn't strictly enforced everywhere which I thought was kind of interesting. If the goal was to push out the Jews (like with the pogroms), why not ban Yiddish theater in the entire empire? The second thing was that Goldfaden continued to write operettas even after he had to leave his beloved homeland and that he continued to participate in the higher social classes. I also thought it was interesting how Goldfaden was almost forgotten about in America, yet thousands of people still came to his funeral procession.

Quint, Alyssa. "Afterword: Modern Yiddish Theater and the Extravertic" *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Theater*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2019, pp. 203-206.

In her afterword, Quint talks about why Goldfaden might have been so depressed when the ban against Yiddish theater took effect. It was because Goldfaden considered himself one of Russia's prized citizens, who was able to get an education, rose up in the social classes, and when he wanted something, all he had to do was go to the right official and it was his. She also mentions how the post vernacular described the Yiddish language as a symbol, what it meant to the people who learned it as a second language versus those who spoke it as their first language. Quint then wraps up with discussing how the United States changed Yiddish theater and how it had now become something for everyone rather than just the upper middle classes.

I found the afterword to be interesting in a couple different ways. One, I enjoyed how Quint gave a reason for Goldfaden and his need for continued fame, despite the obstacles. Two, she wraps up her book in a nice, neat bow, giving explanations and definitions. I think keeping these things in mind will be helpful as I continue my design process.

Sound Design for the Stage

Fry, Gareth. "Into the Theater and How to Sound Check." *Sound Design for the Stage*, Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 161-172.

Fry begins chapter eleven by talking about the different team members in the sound department and starts with the production sound engineer. This is the person who will take the vague plans of where the sound designer wants the speakers and will put it into reality with a sound crew. The next description is the sound operator who will typically run the sound for a play, not a musical. The A1 (audio one) is next and this is the person who will be mixing sound and running the microphones. The A2 (audio two) will usually be the one fitting microphones on actors, making sure they stay in place, and will step in for the A1 if needed. The next positions are the fit up crew who usually install the necessary sound equipment and the pit monkey who will be in the band pit to work sound equipment around the band. The last person is called the radio microphone technician and will usually work with the A2 on the microphones and making sure they work while also working with the cast and their costumes, hair, and makeup. Fry then moves on to discuss how to do sound checks and breaks it down into two sections: line checks and system checks. Line checks are done by using pink noise to make sure that every part of a speaker is working, while system checks are when you make sure the whole system is working the way you want it to. Then, he

mentions sound checking with the cast and musicians and how that works. Usually, the musical director will have a seating arrangement and will want to talk with the sound designer to ensure that everyone and their instruments sound good. At this point in rehearsals, functionality is more important than art, especially since there won't be a lot of time for this kind of checks. Next, a sitzprobe rehearsal where the performers and band will rehearse together and this is a good way to hear them in the space together. Fry then wraps up the chapter by making the interesting point that the sound designer should be onstage during these rehearsals to hear what the actors are hearing and to limit shouting across the auditorium which can raise tensions.

I really enjoyed reading this chapter, it was quite interesting and entertaining. I thought the way he broke up the different positions was helpful in that it was easier to read, understand, and digest. Also, I thought he made quite an interesting point about how the sound designer should be onstage for sound checks because from what I've seen, they are usually in the risers or in the back of the auditorium. Lastly, I really enjoyed how he made this chapter informative, but still kept his sense of humor, especially with the comment about playing sound for the first time: "Playing sound through the system for the first time can be a nerve-racking experience— you can often tell within the first thirty seconds whether everything is fine, or is fixable, or you need to find a cupboard to hide in" (Fry 162). While this information might not help me right now, it is definitely helpful to keep in mind for the future.

Fry, Gareth. "Foldback." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 173-177.

Fry starts off chapter twelve by talking about stage foldback which is what the actors can hear through the speakers and what they need to hear in order to perform. Again, Fry makes the interesting point to get onstage with the actors during this so that you can hear what they are hearing. He then moves on to talk about vocal foldback which is when the singer or performer can hear themselves and adjust if need be. The problem with doing this in theater is that a microphone is usually on an actor's hairline plus the speakers are farther away. Fry then offers some solutions should an actor request a vocal foldback such as going on stage to hear what they hear and see if there are any problems that can be fixed before giving that vocal foldback. He makes the crucial point that if there aren't any problems to be solved, explain to the actor why a vocal foldback might not be possible and be sure to include that it might make them sound bad or worse to an audience.

I learned a couple different things from this chapter. One, vocal foldbacks. I had never heard of them before so it was quite interesting learning about them. Two, was how to troubleshoot if an actor requests one and it wouldn't be ideal to give them one. Fry offered several helpful solutions to this problem. While I might not need this kind of information right now, it will be crucial to keep in mind in the future.

Fry, Gareth. "Technical Rehearsals." *Sound Design for the Stage*,
Ramsbury, Crowood Press, 2019, pp. 179-196.

Fry begins chapter thirteen by discussing tech rehearsals and how different people will respond differently to the stress of tech rehearsals. He makes the important point that you must be aware that people will have certain triggers and that while it may be stressful, you must keep going. Fry then briefly mentions sound checking actors if they have microphones and again, makes the interesting point that he will be onstage with the actor and will let his

sound mixer fix things. He moves on with how to generally tech a show: start at the very beginning and how to open a show, with music, with lights, etc. Fry then talks about how tech usually progresses: very slowly. Sometimes the first scene will take the longest to tech out, but the rest of the show might be smooth sailing. An interesting point and helpful tip that Fry makes is about volume and how to deal with a director who wants everything at a low volume. He suggests checking local laws about noise levels and he will often check with the cast and crew to see if anyone has any hearing disabilities. Fry then wraps up the chapter by talking about quick fixes and why something might not sound right. Usually during tech is the first time everyone's designs are coming together so if the director doesn't like something, they will usually turn to the sound designer first. Having multiple options for sound and music is crucial here in order to not waste time. However, you can ask if you can simply take it as a note if you know you won't be able to fix it in a short amount of time. With a sound not sounding right, there are several possibilities and one of the problems could simply be bad sound due to a placement of a speaker. In this case, Fry suggests talking with the director and the set designer to see if you can move that speaker for a better sound.

I thought this chapter was interesting in a couple different ways. One, I enjoyed how he talked about tech rehearsals by breaking them down into smaller parts. Two, I appreciated that he acknowledged that tech rehearsals are very stressful and that people react to stress differently. As a college student, it sometimes feels as if adults that are older than my friends and I don't always understand why we're stressed during tech or any other stressful situation, so having a professional acknowledge that and give helpful tips was quite nice. Finally, I think that all of this will be essential to keep in mind for the future.

WEEK SEVEN

On Stage, Off Stage

Kadison, Luba, et al. *On Stage, Off Stage Memories of a Lifetime in the Yiddish Theater*, by Luba Kadison, Cambridge, Harvard University Library, 1992, pp. 24-48.

In this section, Kadison begins with talking about the Vilna troupe's move to Warsaw and how they continued their careers. This is also where Kadison would meet her future husband, Joseph Buloff. She talks about first arriving in Warsaw and having their baggage stolen by people who were desperate for money, clothes, and food and how she and her father met the author S. Ansky. Kadison and her father went to meet Ansky and there they had negotiations for the Vilna troupe to perform Ansky's newest play, *The Dybbuk*. Unfortunately, Ansky died before the play could be performed, but the director of the Vilna troupe was determined to put it on three months after the funeral to honor the playwright. The world premiere of *The Dybbuk* was at the Elysium Theater in Warsaw and it was a huge success that attracted not only their regular audiences, but also the Hasidim, Polish intellectuals, and actors as well. At this point in time, Kadison was told that she should go to a drama school and so she auditioned and enrolled in one. Kadison then moves on to discuss the Vilna troupe on tour. Because *The Dybbuk* was such a huge success, the troupe was able to put on more performances, such as *Amnon and Tomar* by Asch and *The Sinner* (also by Asch). There is a small portion written by Joseph Buloff where he talks about having nightmares from his past in the war (basically all of the symptoms of PTSD) and he is recommended to a doctor who tries to help him and suggests that if this doesn't work, that he go to a doctor in Vienna, Sigmund Freud. Next, Kadison talks about living in Vienna while she was dating Joseph Buloff and some of the hardships they faced. One of these was during a performance of *The Dybbuk*, the audience began to cough loudly, then clap and stomp their

feet while singing an anti-semitic song. Kadison writes how they had a warning of what was coming (the Holocaust), but no one really believed it. She then wraps up by talking about her experiences in Romania; the birth of Yiddish theater by Abraham Goldfaden and their productions attracted both Jews and Christians. An offer came from Boris Thomashefsky in New York City to join him and bring the Vilna troupe to the States. The Kadisons had a daughter living there who was doing fairly well, but leaving Romania meant leaving the youngest, Luba, behind. This problem was solved with the marriage of Luba Kadison and Joseph Buloff in 1925 in Galatz, Romania.

I really enjoyed reading this chapter for a few different reasons. One, the first person account is always so interesting mainly because the author was there as these historic events were happening. Two, the way Buloff writes is interesting and informative, yet still light and comical which makes it easier to read as well. Third, reading about the author of this book meeting S. Ansky who wrote the play I'm designing for is almost mind blowing and to hear what he was like gives me an unique opportunity to see into Ansky's head while I'm reading and designing his play.

Stardust Lost

Kanfer, Stefan. "Forgetting the Human Disaster." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 219-226.

In chapter seventeen, Kanfer starts off by talking about how when the Yiddish theater was struggling in the late 1930s, there was a man who thought he had the solution. His name

was Zygmund Salkin and he wanted to be a director. Salkin was driving towards the Catskill Mountains with Isaac Bashevis Singer who wanted to be an author and Salkin had managed to get an invitation to a bungalow colony in Woodridge, New York. Both men were hoping that this performance with their brand new troupe would help them kick some life back into the theater, impress the critics and audiences of New York City, and get them a pay raise. Unfortunately, this never happened; the backers' words were full and empty promises and the people of the bungalow moved back into the city with no performances. The disappointment of this preceded the events that would lead to Kristallnacht, which was spurred on because when a young Polish Jew killed a German diplomat, the German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels got the Nazi leaders in Germany and Austria so worked up and encouraged them to commit random acts of anti-semitism which was quickly rising. 900 Jewish German refugees left for Havana on the *St. Louis*, but were rejected. They tried to go to Miami, but were intercepted by the Coast Guard and told to keep moving. Finally, Britain agreed to take 287 people, Belgium 214, Netherlands 181, and France took 224. With the exception of the Jews who went to Britain, most of the 900 Jews onboard would be later killed in the camps. However, the world seemed determined to ignore the increasingly bad situation. Jews in the Lower East Side didn't want to face that reality and the U.S. State department was not about to intervene since they had never been comfortable with large numbers of Jews. Roosevelt was pushed by his wife and a couple Jews in his administration to gather people from different countries to try to find a solution, but it never worked. The representatives from Germany were beyond offended that other countries were implying that they were mistreating the Jews and when U.S. senators tried to pass bills to help the Jews and especially their children, "patriotic" organizations rose up to stop them. With the pressure coming from those organizations and his own party, Roosevelt backed off and basically sealed the fate of the Jews in Europe.

I found this chapter to be quite interesting in a couple different ways. One, that there were people who were determined to continue Yiddish theater despite everything that was going on around them. Two, was that the Jews of the Lower East Side simply could not face reality and tried to bury themselves in art. Three, was reading about events I have already learned about in school from a Jewish perspective. When I was in high school taking an American history class, we learned about the Great Depression and World War II from the United States' perspective so reading about it from people like me was fascinating. It was also interesting to see how blind the world was and how they could have saved hundreds of children if they weren't so narrow minded.

Kanfer, Stefan. "Escaping into Our Problems." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 227-240.

The Yiddish theater was slowly starting to transition into the world of movies. One of these movies was *Amerikaner Shadkhn* (American Matchmaker) which opened in May of 1940 in Boris Thomashefsky's old building. Vaudeville was making a bigger and bigger appearance each year which annoyed the theatergoers endlessly. People called it an art with no taste and the buildings where it was performed, a place where dangerous men and professional women went to be entertained. The traditionalists wanted the vaudeville actors to stay in their own buildings and in return would get recognition. This was perfect for vaudeville since most of its actors were younger and therefore attracted a younger crowd. Kanfer then moves on to talk about Joseph Seiden who was also in the Yiddish movie business. Seiden was an excellent cameraman and with a partner who owned four film buildings, they would produce several Yiddish movies. However, bad news was coming from

Europe. It was the summer of 1940 and the rumors that Jews were being rounded up and put in concentration camps was confirmed, but instead of making productions about that, Seiden instead decided to put on melodramas and comedies. Unfortunately, as things got worse in Europe, the Jews in America could no longer deny what was going on. Huge rallies happened in an effort to raise support and Seiden put on a performance, but it was very bad timing. It didn't do well in the box office, his financial backers pulled out, and there wouldn't be any more Yiddish movies until the end of the war.

I learned a couple of things from this chapter. One was about Yiddish movies. My experience has mostly been with Yiddish theater so it was interesting to read about how the movie business started to take over the Yiddish entertainment world. Two was that it took a confirmation of the rumor that Jews were being put into concentration camps, not Kristallnacht or any of the invasions or propaganda, that made the New York Jews finally acknowledge what was happening in Europe. Three, I didn't know that there weren't any Yiddish movies during the war which I found to be quite interesting since I thought it might be a way to demonstrate the realities of what was going on in Europe.

Kanfer, Stefan. "No More Raisins, No More Almonds." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 241-251.

The meeting to come up with the "Final Solution" for the Jews happened in January of 1942. By that time however, murders had already been happening, it was just going to be more organized and formal now. Rabbi Stephen Wise knew President Roosevelt a carefully worded letter, but no action was truly taken. Despite this, the majority of Jews kept re-electing him, but there were a few who refused to. One of these people was Ben Hecht who

was a playwright and decided to stir the pot by staging a performance of *We Will Never Die*. He appealed to famous writers for their help, but nothing worked. However, 40,000 people attended the performance and it would go on to Hollywood and Washington D.C. (where First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt saw it). There was talk of finally taking action, but nothing truly happened. Sandrow then moves on to talk about when the realities of the camps began to hit the world. An abandoned camp in Lublin, Poland had 800,000 pairs of shoes from people who were gassed. The newspapers who showing pictures of the camps, confirming the horrific rumors that gas had actually been used to kill hundreds of people. Children were showing soldiers the tattoos branded on their arms and photos were released showing the stacks of bodies, the piles of hair, skin turned into lamp shades, and soap from human corpses. It was almost too terrible to comprehend, but the reality of these horrors had to be shown and acknowledged.

This chapter was actually quite difficult to read for a few different reasons. One was learning about the pleas, protests, and letters to Roosevelt and Congress to please do something and nothing actually happened. They had a chance to save millions of people, but decided not to. Two was reading about the things that were found at the concentration camps, the gas chambers, the piles of shoes and hair, the lamp shades and soap bars made from human bodies. Three is that when I learned about Roosevelt in history classes; we learned how great he was, how he pulled the country out of the Great Depression, but not how he was partially responsible for sending thousands of people to their deaths.

Kanfer, Stefan. "You Are Not in a Library." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 252-264.

Despite the fact that Roosevelt had the opportunity to save thousands of lives and didn't take it, when he died, tons of Jews mourned him. It wasn't until the horrific reality of what happened in Europe came out that the Truman administration changed its immigration policies. Survivors were allowed to emigrate to the U.S., but they were shell-shocked by the war and the bustling city of New York. Ben Hecht was constantly promoting his show *A Flag is Born* which argued for a Jewish State and was performed at the Alvin Theater on 52nd Street. This performance caused the Jews of America to do a lot of soul searching- why didn't they pressure the president into actually doing something? Why didn't they do something to save six million of their fellow Jews? With the performance, money flowed in and before the show completed its tour of Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and Chicago, a million dollars had already been donated. A significant amount of that was used to buy a boat named the *Ben Hecht* and was used to carry 600 Holocaust survivors to Palestine. Even though the British had control over Palestine and had strict immigration laws, they allowed the boat to dock, which was the first big step in creating Israel. However, the Red Scare was slowly gaining traction and the House Committee for Un-American Activities began investigating Hollywood where there were several Jews in the movie business for any whiff of communist ideas or propaganda. Unfortunately, Zionism only made the situation worse and lines were drawn.

I learned a couple things after reading this chapter. One was about the guilt the Jews of America were feeling after the news came out about what happened in Europe. I learned about this a little bit from my grandparents who were born in the States and were teenagers when the war happened, but it was interesting reading how a performance really caused the American Jews to do some soul searching. The second thing was that the American government has never changed and probably never will change. As soon as people in power start to see different people, they have to call them "fascist" or "un-American" or "a danger

to the country". It was extremely disappointing reading about how it was only after the news came out about the concentration camps that Jews were finally allowed to immigrate to the United States.

Kanfer, Stefan. "The Defending Angel." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefen Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 265-274.

The golden era of Yiddish theater was over. The cafe where all of the great actors, writers, and musicians would gather was now closed and had been turned into a dry cleaners. The only thing left from the cafe was a mirror. However, this wasn't going to stop the few Yiddish actors that were left. They decided to celebrate with a gala and commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Yiddish Theater (it may or may not have been 75 years old). When comments were brought up about this, a Yiddish magazine (*The Commentary*) got a little defensive and reminded its readers that while 75 years might not be significant for a group of people who have been around for 5,000 years, Yiddish plays were international classics and were still playing in theaters all over the world. This was also important to keep in mind in the post-Holocaust state of the world. However, trouble was ringing in the Soviet Union. During and before the war, Stalin never openly expressed hatred toward the Jews, but after it he became paranoid that they were trying to kill him. Stalin supported a Jewish State because he thought it would make all of the Jews in the Soviet Union leave. However, Shlomo Mikhoels had written that the Soviet Union was where Jews felt the safest and so he was invited, but was summarily killed. Stalin also ordered his secret police to kill thirteen

Yiddish writers on August 12th, 1952. With these killings, Yiddish theater in the Soviet Union was over.

I learned a couple of things reading this chapter. One was learning about what became of the Royal Cafe where all of the great and famous actors, writers, and musicians gathered. The second was that despite the horrifying events of the war and the Holocaust, Yiddish plays were still being performed around the world. Lastly, it was that Stalin supported a Jewish State, but only because he wanted the Jews in the Soviet Union to leave.

Kanfer, Stefan. "Now He's Exorcising Dybbuks." *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 275-286.

Maurice Schwartz, probably one of the most stubborn Jews, refused to believe that the Yiddish theater was dying. He declared that he was going to put on *The Shepherd King* and that it would be a great success. Money would no longer be a problem and he would single-handedly save the theater. He couldn't be more wrong. Everyone from the audience to the critics thought the play was a giant failure. However, Schwartz did not let this stop him. He immediately put on another show which was a success, but by that time, there were too many debts and the theater closed. In another theater, (The Rooftop Theater), they were performing *Ulysses in Nighstown* which was an adaptation of a James Joyce novel. Its lead role was played by Zero Mostel who had been blacklisted during the Red Scare. However, this theater was considered non-Kosher, below the National Theater. Yiddish theater was slowly dying, but again, Maurice Schwartz was determined to revive it. He went to Israel where he met with potential investors and ran rehearsals. Schwartz wanted a Yiddish theater in Israel, but unfortunately, due to a heart attack, that never happened. Kanfer then moves on to discuss

how *Fiddler on the Roof* was born. It attracted Boris Aronson who knew everything there was to know about Yiddish theater and who gave the show its melodies. However, when the show opened in Detroit, it was instantly disliked. So, after several changes, the show moved to New York where there were mixed reviews, but one thing was clear. It was Zero Mostel, in the role of Teyve, who really sold the show and soon the melodies from the musical were known throughout the Jewish community.

This chapter was interesting in a couple different ways. One, it proved to me again that Jews are some of the most stubborn people. Maurice Schwartz is a very good example of that. Two, I enjoyed reading about the progression of one of my favorite Yiddish musicals- *Fiddler on the Roof*. It's interesting to learn about how it went from simple stories to a play, to a movie, to a musical and then the most famous movie version.

Kanfer, Stefan. "A Sigh into an Opera" *Stardust Lost The Triumph, Tragedy, and Mishugas of the Yiddish Theater in America*, by Stefan Kanfer, New York City, Vintage Books, 2006, pp. 287-296.

In the 1980s, a *Times* reporter went to the Hebrew Actors Union to see how they were doing and how they thought they were doing. The reporter believed that Yiddish theater was dead, but the actors were offended. They knew that they weren't doing great, but they weren't dead yet. In fact, things were looking up for them. The New York State Council for the Arts had just promised the Folksbiene a yearly grant of \$10,000. However, a decade later in the 1990s, the Folksbiene was going towards bankruptcy. The board of directors were elderly folks who believed that the old great classics were exactly what they needed to get bigger audiences, but the younger composer and director disagreed. New plays were the way to go. Kanfer then moves on to talk about Yiddish in today's world. The language is only spoken by

a few thousand people, but there are certain words that have made their way into American vocabulary such as chutzpah, mishuganah, (my personal favorite) oy vey! Today, Yiddish theater can be seen in glimpses of Hollywood and Broadway productions, not quite the way it used to be, but still there. To wrap up, Kanfer says, “And so, although six generations have passed since Abraham Goldfaden’s self-described “hodge-podge” astonished onlookers at the Green Tree in Jassy, Romania, the curtain has still to be lowered. The lights have not gone out. The stardust is not lost. Scattered to the winds, perhaps- but lost? Never” (Kanfer 296).

I quite enjoyed this last chapter for a few different reasons. One, I liked how Kanfer brought the theater into the modern world and wrote about how it is now. Two, he still wrote about the challenges modern Yiddish theaters faced and their difficulties. Thirdly, his last sentence made me feel proud to be Jewish. There will always be people who want to get rid of us but like we say at our holidays, “They tried to kill us, it didn’t work, let’s eat!”

Vagabond Stars

Sandrow, Nahma. "Poland Between the Wars." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 303-336.

Yiddish theater in Europe was facing several challenges. After World War I, so many people were facing food shortages and starvation that when at a performance where an actor was “eating”, the audience started fighting because they thought the food was real. The police would come often, looking for work visas which were extremely hard to come by. Several towns and cities were dealing with constant change of who was in charge of them. Anti-semitism was on the rise with governments taking away citizenship from thousands of Jews

and forcing them out of business so by 1931, one out of three Jews was part of a family whose head was unemployed. However, despite all this, Yiddish theater troupes kept on going. They performed in dingy theaters with very little support, but perhaps that's why they kept performing. Despite the fact that anti-semitism was the highest in the Soviet Union, that seemed to be where most of Yiddish theater was. This was also the case in Poland and Lithuania with the Vilna troupe which was founded in 1920. The attitude surrounding the Yiddish language had now changed- instead of being seen as "jargon" it was now the common language in theaters. Sandrow then moves on to discuss popular theater in Europe which had both a good and bad side. This was when popular actors from America would come to Europe to perform and would sometimes bring their own sets and trunk loads of partial scripts. The good side was that they would go to a city, hire actors from that city, perform, and then move on to another city. However, when Boris Thomashefsky came to Warsaw after World War I, he performed one of his melodramas which called for him to break a dish, but during the performance, he broke six. The day after the performance, a critic named Dovid Frischman wrote that Thomashefsky came all the way to Poland to make a pogrom. Next, Sandrow talks about Yiddish films in Europe which despite the fact that there was a sizable Jewish population, there weren't any Yiddish movies. So, when Joseph Green came from America, it was quickly realized that it would make a lot of money for a lot of people. He would go on to create more films in Poland since it was cheaper than doing so in the United States. One of the most famous Yiddish movies turned out to be *The Dybbuk* by S. Ansky that was directed by Michael Waszynsky.

I thought this chapter was interesting in a couple different ways. One, was that it was and still is quite difficult to obtain a work visa, regardless of the country you are in. Two was that anti-semitism was on a steep incline and despite all that, Yiddish theater still persevered and the actors were determined to keep performing. I think that helps me answer one of my

questions: what is the relationship between culture and design? Part of the answer is that our culture allows us to keep moving forward despite everything that is happening. We don't let anyone stop us from pursuing our dreams and ambitions.

Sandrow, Nahma. "In the Ghettos and Camps." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 337-350.

During the early 1930s and into the second world war, the governments of Germany, Holland, and Romania were putting tighter and tighter restrictions on Yiddish theater, performing, and assembling. In spite of this, Yiddish theater continued, just more subtly and sometimes in synagogues. The Romanian government forbade assembly unless it was a semi religious or religious holiday so the Yiddish actors were constantly making up holidays or making existing holidays bigger. In order to keep under the guise that they were gathered for a holiday instead of a performance, the audiences would shout "lekhayim" (to life!) instead of applauding. However, Yiddish theater would soon end in Romania due to mass deportation. In the ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz, people were still finding ways to perform. They would gather in each other's apartments and sing or whisper about politics. Small groups of people would gather and create drama clubs to raise money since the food shortage was getting worse and worse. When the Warsaw ghetto was sealed off, they were allowed to establish professional theaters and by 1942, there were about 3,500 to 4,000 theater seats in the ghetto. Sandrow then moves on to discuss theater performances in the camps where in the early days, people were performing. One of these people was the actor Moshe Potashinsky who was in the Auschwitz camp and one days, stood on a bench in the bunker and recited parts from *Tevye the Dairyman* to his fellow prisoners. Another one was Mila Weislitz who sang in the woman's bunker even though most of her audience didn't understand her. Interestingly

enough, some of the officials in the camps allowed performances. In Czestochowa, a commander allowed a drama club and set them up in a small bunker that had a stage, curtain, and some stage lights. They performed five shows before the S.S. took over the camp and shut it down.

I found this chapter to be enjoyable in a couple different ways. One was reading about all of the clever ways Jewish actors came up with to keep performing despite all of the dangers. Two was that it was really interesting reading about theater in the ghettos and camps because I had never learned about it before. In school, we learned about the work conditions, the gas chambers, and the death camps, but we never learned about how in spite of the horrific conditions these people were living in, they still found a way to perform. It seems that they were determined to keep living until they were killed.

Sandrow, Nahma. "Yiddish Theater Since the War." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 351-385.

Since the end of World War II and after the Nazis stopped most of Yiddish theater, there has been a call for it again. After the war, American Jews sent food, medicine, and actors to the displaced people who had nowhere to go. Two of these actors were Jacob Kalich and Molly Picon who after seeing pictures of the survivors, wanted to help in any way they could. They managed to get space on a freighter and traveled from camps to orphanages to hospitals and brought nice gifts with them to hand out to people after the performances. Later on, when they were back in the States, Picon would be approached several times by women who still had these gifts that they were given in the camps. Sandrow then moves on to discuss the state theaters of Eastern Europe and how after the war, actors came out of the camps or

out of hiding to continue their work. In November of 1944, Diana Blumenfeld who had lived through the Warsaw ghetto, directed actors in a show at the Peretz House in Lublin. As soon as the war was over, she and her husband were performing in concerts of Yiddish songs. Actors Dzigan and Shumakher took over a theater in Lodz and put on *Just So Long as We Can See Each Other* and other performances. A Yiddish State Theater was established and actors no longer had to scrape by for money or food. They had a nice building in Warsaw that included fancy equipment that would translate the Yiddish on stage to Polish. However, things weren't as joyful in Russia. The Yiddish theater was being strangled and its actors were being killed off. A similar feeling was happening in Israel where Yiddish theater did not find a home. The sentiments of traditional Jews still lingered including the one about Yiddish being a "lesser" language and most Palistinians would tell people speaking Yiddish that they should be speaking Hebrew instead.

I learned a couple different things reading this chapter. One was that Yiddish actors were determined to pick up right where they left off with the theaters right before the end of the second world war and right after the war. Two was that American Jews seemed to be trying to make up for the fact that they were ignoring the increasing problem in Europe right before the war by sending food and other supplies to the Jews of the concentration camps. I also found it quite interesting how it was in Israel that Yiddish was still seen as a lesser language after the war and how people living there would say "speak Hebrew" when hearing Yiddish on the streets.

Sandrow, Nahma. "Yiddish Theater in America Since the War." *Vagabond Stars A World History of Yiddish Theater*, Syracuse University Press, 1977, pp. 386-411.

Like in many countries, Yiddish is slowly dying in the United States with the exception of the ultra-Orthodox communities who don't support theater. The Hebrews Actors Union is surrounded by tenements, bars, some shops, and a Ukrainian church. The members inside are constantly working on deals, financial backers, contracts, and casting. Everyone who performs in Yiddish theater today must be part of the union and most members are under thirty. Most performances take place on Broadway as the Jewish theaters were either demolished or have been changed into other forms of entertainment. The actors aren't always handsome or pretty, but they are there, putting all of their efforts into their performances, making them real. Sandrow then moves on to discuss Yiddish community and theater which still are connected and occasionally, the community helps support the theater. A couple of actors who did this were Miriam Kressyn and Seymour Rexite who traveled to the Bronx to perform a two hour show of favorite theater songs. Another couple was Leon Liebgold and Lili Liliana (who were the young couple in the film version of *The Dybbuk*) who would go to a Workmen's Circle chapter meeting in Brooklyn and entertain them. Several performances often celebrate famous Yiddish playwrights birthdays and some will award Jewish scholarships.

I found this last chapter to be a fine conclusion to the book and learned a couple of things from it. One was that the community still seemed to love the theater and would often support it since it was now seen as true art. Two was that while Yiddish seems to be a dying language in the modern world (modern as in the 1970s when this book was published), the theater still continues. This seems to answer my question of what is the relationship between culture and design. It's perseverance, it's determination, and it's a love of our traditions, no matter how old they are.