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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/rbep/1335>

ISSN: 2237-2660

This article is a translation of:

Del auge al ocaso: la década de 1960 y la declinación del circuito teatral en *ídish* de Buenos Aires -

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/rbep/1318> [es]

Publisher

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS)

Electronic reference

Paula Ansaldo, "From Heyday to Decay: The Crisis of Buenos Aires' Yiddish Theatre Scene during the 1960s", *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença* [Online], 12 : 2 | 2022, Online since 28 June 2022, connection on 12 May 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rbep/1335>



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From Heyday to Decay: The Crisis of Buenos Aires' Yiddish Theatre Scene during the 1960s

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ABSTRACT – From Heyday to Decay: The Crisis of Buenos Aires' Yiddish Theatre Scene during the 1960s – This article focuses on the declining process of Yiddish theatrical representations in Argentina throughout the 1960s. The paper will first address the heyday of the Yiddish theatre scene in Buenos Aires, between the 1930s and the 1950s, to then explore the main factors that provoked the crisis that finally led to its decline during the 1960s.

Keywords: **Jewish Theatre. Buenos Aires. Yiddish. The 60s. Decline.**

RÉSUMÉ – De l'essor au crépuscule : les années 1960 et le déclin du circuit théâtral en yiddish à Buenos Aires – Cet article traite du processus de déclin des représentations en yiddish en Argentine qui s'est produit tout au long des années 1960. L'ouvrage fait le tour des années de boom du théâtre juif dans le pays, entre les années 1930 et les années 1950, et étudie les différents facteurs qui ont influencé la crise du circuit théâtral yiddish qui s'est développé à Buenos Aires et qui a finalement conduit à sa disparition dans les années 1960.

Mots-clés: **Theatre Juif. Buenos Aires. Yiddish. Decennie Des 60. Declin.**

RESUMO – Del auge al ocaso: la década de 1960 y la declinación del circuito teatral en *ídish* de Buenos Aires – En este artículo se aborda el proceso de declinación de las representaciones en *ídish* en la Argentina que se produce a lo largo de la década de 1960. En el trabajo se realiza un recorrido por los años de auge del teatro judío en el país, entre los años 30 y los 50, y se indaga en los diferentes factores que influyen en la crisis del circuito teatral en *ídish* que se desarrolla en Buenos Aires y que finalmente lleva a su desaparición en la década de 1960.

Palavras-chave: **Teatro Judío. Buenos Aires. Ídish. Década de 1960. Ocaso.**

“Every Jew who passes away leaves an empty seat at the Soleil theatre”: with this phrase *Patch Magazine* (Num. 4, March-April 1955, p. 22) described in 1955 the situation of Buenos Aires’ Jewish theatre, when it was no longer in its moment of splendor. The Buenos Aires Jewish theatre scene began to develop during the first decades of the twentieth century, thanks to the beginning of Jewish mass migration to Argentina, and experienced its heyday between the 1930s and 1950s when Buenos Aires was established as a Jewish theatrical city of international relevance. During the golden era, up to five theatres in Buenos Aires regularly showed plays in Yiddish from Tuesday to Sunday with even two or three performances on the same day on weekends at full capacity. The commercial theatres Soleil, Excelsior, Ombú and Mitre, the independent theatre IFT, and the bars El Cristal and El Internacional —that showcased Yiddish vaudeville acts— constituted a wide Yiddish theatre scene that, during the first half of the twentieth century, had a regular and enthusiastic audience.

By the mid-1950s, two commercial theatres were still operating in Buenos Aires: the Soleil and the Mitre, as well as independent theatre IFT. The Ombú had been demolished and the Excelsior —which was renamed Teatro Corrientes— no longer staged Yiddish plays. However, daily shows were still performed, foreign stars continued touring the country, and the Yiddish theatre season still lasted for several months. The situation changed in the 1960s when Argentina began experiencing a progressive decrease in Yiddish plays. Firstly, the season was cut short, then performances were held only on weekends, and finally, in 1972, the Mitre Theatre, the last standing playhouse of the Yiddish theatre scene, was shut down. The reasons that explain this Yiddish theatre crisis are multiple and respond to both internal and external factors. During the 1950s, a series of problems appeared and neither the artists nor the impresarios knew how to solve them. The first of them was the absence of youth, both in the audience and on stage, due to the lack of generational renewal in Yiddish theatre companies. The second was the absence of new plays and themes in the Yiddish theatre repertoire. This forced theatres to always stage the same authors and plays, which not only were repetitively performed but also had nothing to do with the interests of the younger generations of Argentinian Jews. In this paper, I will explore the reasons that

provoked the crisis of the Yiddish theatre scene in Argentina and delve into the processes by which, throughout the 60s, these factors led to its decline.

Heyday

During the 1930s, Buenos Aires became a Jewish theatrical city of international relevance and the most renowned European and American artists of the Jewish theatre —such as Jacob Ben-Ami, Maurice Schwartz and Joseph Buloff— began to include Buenos Aires in their international tours. The city's great flourishing as a Jewish theatre node can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, during the interwar and postwar period, a large population of Yiddish-speaking Jews settled in Argentina, escaping difficult living conditions and anti-Semitism in Europe. For most of these Jewish immigrants, attending the theatre was already a regular cultural practice given that, at the time, Yiddish theatre companies were performing all across Europe¹. As Slavsky and Skura have argued, "in a world of cultural transition, the popular themes contained in Yiddish theatre constituted a source of stability that appealed to formulas already known by the audience" (2002, p. 297). For that reason, the Yiddish theatre in Buenos Aires functioned as a meeting place where Jewish immigrants could share Yiddish language and the feeling of longing for the "*alter heym*", the "old home". In this sense, theatre in Spanish could not fulfill that function due to the language barrier and the representation of topics that had nothing to do with the life of Jewish immigrants. For those reasons, most Jewish immigrants did not attend the Spanish-language theatres of Buenos Aires and developed instead their own local theatre scene.

At the same time, a series of changes taking place in the international sphere contributed to positioning Buenos Aires as a central theatrical node of the Jewish theatre world. Since the beginning of the 1930s, Yiddish theatre audiences in New York —until then, the undisputed capital of Yiddish theatre— started to decline due to the 1924 ban on Jewish immigration to the United States and the linguistic and cultural assimilation of new generations of American Jews. For these reasons, in addition to the growing competition of Broadway shows and sound films, and the Great Depression of 1929, many Yiddish playhouses had to close and the Yiddish theatre season became increasingly short. Therefore, the American-based Jewish actors started to

travel to countries where theatre in Yiddish thrived, such as Argentina. Moreover, the southern hemisphere had an additional advantage: it benefited from the opposition of seasons. This allowed for American and European actors to work in Argentina during their summer break, without the need to leave their own companies altogether. That way, they were able to do two winter seasons: one in the U.S. and another one in South America, one based in New York, and the other one based in Buenos Aires, from where they also traveled to other Argentinian cities, such as Rosario, Córdoba, Santa Fe, and the Jewish colonies. They also toured other Latin American cities, such as Montevideo, Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. Thus, thanks to its rich and growing cultural Yiddish life, Buenos Aires became an important Jewish theatre capital, soon established as a popular destination for Jewish intellectuals and artists².

During those years, the audience that attended the Yiddish theatre was absolutely heterogeneous. Everybody went to the Yiddish theatre: immigrants who had recently arrived in the country and Jews who had already been living in Buenos Aires for many years, working-class and wealthy Jews, as well as those who were part of the middle class. Some families even traveled to Buenos Aires from other provinces and the Jewish colonies solely to attend the Jewish theatre. According to testimonies from the period³, within the Jewish community, going to the theatre was considered as an outstanding event that was enthusiastically expected throughout the week. According to Moishe Korin⁴, for his family, the greatest event, the biggest joy was going to see Yiddish theatre, a ritual that began long before the beginning of the performance itself:

On Sundays, we bathed and dressed in our best clothes. My mom dressed as if she was going to a wedding, my dad wore a suit and tie, if someone had jewelry, they wore it. And if the show was supposed to start at six, at half-past three we would go to the theatre. And there my parents met with the *paisanos*, and they would go to some cafe near the theatre to chat and wait for the play to start⁵.

It is interesting to see how attending the Jewish theatre was much more than just going to see a play, an artistic event; it was rather an opportunity for social interaction and communal encounter. This way, people started enjoying the experience the moment the arrival of foreign stars was announced

in the Jewish newspapers and they carefully followed the reviews of the plays and the artists' previous works. After the show, the evening continued in the cafes near the theatre where people got together to discuss the performances⁶. During the season, international actors settled in Buenos Aires, and spending time with the audience outside the theatre was a big part of the enjoyment⁷. In their testimonies, interviewees frequently told anecdotes of themselves or their parents meeting Maurice Schwartz or Ben-Ami while having a coffee in Villa Crespo, shaking their hands, and telling them how much they admired their work. This shows the familiarity and closeness that the audience felt with the Jewish actors they worshiped. Spectators of the period still remember that when these famous stars performed, the crowd at the theatre was so large that police had to divert traffic from the street.

For Jewish immigrants in Argentina, attending the theatre was a family activity in which all members participated regardless of their age. The presence of small children at the theatres was a peculiar characteristic of Buenos Aires Jewish theatre. It was even recalled by the famous actor and director Maurice Schwartz in one of his letters⁸: "In no country in the world did I see so many young people in Yiddish Theatre as in Buenos Aires. Mothers would take their infants into the playhouses [where] they became avid enthusiasts in diapers". The same was pointed out by actress Molly Picon, who declared that: "among the Argentinian audience, I have found many young people, which is something that you no longer see in New York theatres" (*Mundo Israelita*, April 3, 1932). Practically all interviewees remember that from a very young age their parents took them to the theatre, mainly because they had no one to leave them with, but also because children did not pay admission fee. They therefore were not allowed to occupy a seat, so they had to stand next to the orchestra pit and entertain themselves watching the musicians, who often were more appealing to the children than the shows themselves⁹. For them, theatres functioned as a place to socialize and play.

Thus, the presence of youth in the venues transformed the Yiddish theatre into a learning space for the younger generations of Jews. As the intellectual and writer Samuel Rollansky once said:

Many more children go to the Jewish theatre than to the Jewish schools. Children who cannot write the *alef beis*, learn through a song or a play about the

Kohanim, the Hasidim, the Beit Hamikdash, and hear for the first time about Gordin, Goldfaden, and Sholem Aleichem (1940: 404).

In this way, Jewish theatre worked as a school of *Yiddishkayt* (Jewishness) and became one of the main places where Yiddish language, Jewish folklore and traditions were transmitted to the younger generations. However, in order to fully understand the importance of Yiddish theatre, it is necessary to point out that in Argentina a big part of the Jewish community was already secular or was involved in a process of secularization so, in many cases, theatre replaced the synagogue as a place to build and consolidate Jewish culture and identity. For this reason, the role that Yiddish theatre played within the Jewish community of Buenos Aires was greater than in other parts of the world where religious Jewish institutions also fulfilled a significant social function. Being one of the most popular activities among the Argentinian Jewish population, Yiddish theatre played a fundamental and irreplaceable role in sustaining Jewish cultural life. And it worked this way even for assimilated Jews that were already fully integrated into Argentine society. For them, Yiddish theatre remained one of the last places where they could still reconnect with their first language and culture. This way, Yiddish theatre contributed to the subsistence of the Yiddish language within younger generations of Argentine Jews, as Samuel Rollansky said:

Theatre has an educational role for the Jewish public because night after night they hear Yiddish language; In this way, a large part of the Jewish youth who cannot speak it, still understand it and preserve it thanks to the theatre (1940: 85-86).

Hence, theatre could appeal to the Jewish population in ways that other Jewish cultural expressions could not. The written word, for example, was very popular among Jewish immigrants, but it had a limitation: while there were still many Jews who could understand Yiddish, not all of them could necessarily read Yiddish. Radio was another important part of the Jewish cultural world and *Di Idische Sho* frequently invited singers, musicians, and actors of the Yiddish theatre to perform in their radio show. However, in Argentina, most Jews could not afford to have a radio at home. For these reasons, especially between the 1930s and 1950s, the Yiddish theatre scene was the main activity by which the immigrants and their descendants maintained and reinforced their connection to Jewish culture.

‘Is Jewish Theatre Dying?’: The Crisis of the Yiddish Theatre Scene

As we mentioned, the situation of the Buenos Aires Yiddish theatre scene began to change in the 1950s, with a crisis that would finally lead to its decline during the 1960s. The first signs of this decaying process can be seen in the articles published in the magazine *Patch*¹⁰, which was issued between 1954 and 1955, edited by writer Dov Segal and actor Norman Erlich (back then, known as Najmen Erlich).

Patch was a youth-oriented magazine, so its articles help reveal the way young people rejected the plays performed on the Jewish stage. Most of the magazine’s reviews argued that Jewish theatre needed to be completely renewed instead of trying to revive the same plays with the same elderly actors that performed outdated genres like operetta (“style to which our theatre seems to be doomed”)¹¹. On the contrary, *Patch*’s editors claimed that: “art, and forgive us if we insist, needs constant renewal; today we would laugh if we saw Sara Bernhardt acting the same way as she did in her finest moments” (*Patch*, Num. 1, August 1954, p. 23). The article was a complaint against the lack of innovation in the Jewish commercial theatres of the time, which every year presented the same actors, foreign stars, and repertoires from a past golden era.

Regarding the international artists who came to Buenos Aires as guest actors, Jacob Ben-Ami’s last visit to the country took place in 1955 when he performed at the former Excelsior Theatre; and Maurice Schwartz came for the last time in 1958, along with his daughter Frances, and performed at Teatro Argentino as part of a tour organized by impresario Willy Goldstein. For Schwartz’s performances in Buenos Aires, Goldstein rented a venue with more than a thousand seats, relying on Schwartz’s prestige and the success of his previous presentations. However, according to testimonies of the period, performances were sold out only on Saturdays and Sundays, while only half of the tickets were sold on other days of the week. To fill the theatre and guarantee the presence of young faces in the audience, they even had to give away free tickets to Jewish high school students¹². Schwartz’s commercial failure constitutes a clear sign of the crisis that the Buenos Aires Yiddish theatre was experiencing, proven by the low attendance to emblematic plays of the Jewish repertoire —such as *Kidush Hashem* and *Onkl Mozes*, by Sholem Asch,

or *Wandering Stars* by Sholem Aleichem—performed by one of the greatest stars of the Jewish theatre scene. Lastly, Joseph Buloff performed at the Soleil Theatre in 1957, and returned to the country again in 1966, becoming the last great guest star to go on stage in Buenos Aires. In that season, he premiered the play *The Brother Ashkenazi*, by I. J. Singer, at the Odeón Theatre, and also performed at the Solís Theatre in Montevideo, together with his wife and partner Luba Kadison and a cast of Argentinian Jewish actors.

In order to comprehend the lack of attendance that Yiddish theatre began to suffer during that period, it is necessary to take into consideration that it was not a local phenomenon, but rather a crisis that took place throughout the world. Even though the process of decay took place in Argentina many years later than in other Jewish theatrical centres, its decline in cities like New York had consequences that deeply affected the Argentine Jewish theatre scene. This was mainly because the local Yiddish theatre scene relied not only on the visits of foreign stars but also on the repertoires they brought. Many of the plays that were performed in Buenos Aires were Yiddish adaptations done by Buloff, Ben-Ami, and Schwartz themselves, and even the operettas were mostly imported. In addition, due to the decline of Yiddish theatre both in Europe and in the United States, there were no new authors to reinvigorate Yiddish drama with original plays that addressed contemporary issues. As Edna Nahshon explained, the decline of Yiddish theatre set in motion a vicious circle: “notable writers no longer wrote for the stage, and both established and young, native-born actors were moving from the Yiddish to the English-language stage. As the artistic level of the Yiddish theatre sank, so did the level of the audiences and its expectations” (1998, p. 203)¹³. These ideas reinforced the image of Yiddish theatre—especially among the younger audiences—as mere entertainment, lacking intellectual or aesthetic value. For the Jewish youth, the Yiddish theatre was thus degraded to a place for nostalgia that allowed the generations of their parents and grandparents to listen to traditional and popular Jewish music and remember the old days (“to see the plays they saw when they were fifteen, now that they are fifty”). These ideas appeared in an article of *Patch* magazine titled “Is Jewish Theatre Dying?”, where authors argued that young audiences did not go to the Jewish theatre because “there are a thousand other artistic expressions that attract them more, and they are tired of going to Yiddish theatre only to accompany

the in-laws”¹⁴ (Num. 4, March-April 1955, p. 22). Moreover, the article claimed that the main reason for the decay of the Jewish theatre was its “fossilization”, the absence of youth, both among the public and on the stage. This was one of the main reasons for young people to reject Jewish theatre: its lack of realism, which was revealed by the fact that actors in their 40s played characters in their 20s. Also, the Jewish artists’ music-hall acting style — a genre that attracted a large audience during the golden era and continued to attract spectators that remembered it with nostalgia — was not to the younger generation’s liking. Young people were already used to the realistic acting style that prevailed in the independent theatres of Buenos Aires, to which most of the Jewish youth attended.

On the other hand, there was the problem of the language used on stage: Yiddish. The adoption of Hebrew as Israel’s official language is usually seen as a turning point for the Yiddish culture in Argentina because, after 1948, Hebrew began to replace Yiddish as a second language in Argentina’s Jewish schools. Furthermore, the adoption of Hebrew as the language for Israeli citizens positioned Yiddish as a language of the past (Visacovsky 2016, p. 177), associated with the traumatic experience of the Shoah, while Hebrew “acquired more prestige as the new, vital, young and thriving language of the national state utopia” (Skura 2012, p. 14). Additionally, after the State of Israel was founded, debates on whether to continue using Yiddish in the diaspora acquired a stronger political meaning and, in some contexts, defending Yiddish was seen as an anti-Zionist gesture. As Cyril Aslanov said:

As the Zionist project progressed, the use of Yiddish started to seem not only retrograde but also unpatriotic. Young people already born in British Palestine were ashamed of their parents and grandparents who still spoke Yiddish (2012, p. 61).

In this new context, Yiddish did not only begin to lose its practical value as a language of communication between the Jews of the world, but it also started losing its prestige to Hebrew. This mainly affected the new generations of Argentinian Jews, who were the ones who could renew the Yiddish theatre audience: firstly, because the Jewish schools stopped teaching Yiddish, so even fewer young people could understand the plays; second, because the anti-Yiddish initiatives were particularly widespread among the youth. Krupnik argues that “the political and rebellion climate of the 60s created an

anti-Yiddish feeling among the leftist Zionist youth” (2006, p. 35). And this was not only because of their ideological position but also due to the exacerbation of generational conflicts which led the Jewish youth to reject their parents' language. Therefore, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Spanish started to be part of "different, and even incompatible generations and symbolic universes" (Dujovne 2014, p. 118)¹⁵. While Hebrew and Spanish were languages in which the youth could fight for social and political transformations, Yiddish was increasingly identified as a language of the past, as "a parental teaching which, later in life, has no good reason to persist in their mouth" (Pérez 1958, cited in Dujovne 2014, p. 118). And this was emphasized in a socio-political context where the Jewish youth was increasingly involved in the political conflicts of Argentina and Latin America¹⁶.

In this sense, it is interesting to notice that the main reason that kept young Jews away from Yiddish theatres was not the difficulties to understand the language. By the late 1950s, Yiddish was still easily understood by most young Jews¹⁷ and, although most of them could not speak it fluently, they could have attended the shows in Yiddish, had they wanted to. The problem was that the Jewish youth did not feel the Yiddish language and culture as their own, as it can be seen in the testimonies of young spectators of the period:

CL: Firstly, Yiddish was not our language. It was my parents' language. I spoke Yiddish with my parents, but it was not my language. The topics of the plays, exceptions aside, were not very attractive to me. But the point was that we did not identify at all with that type of theatre¹⁸.

AG: Young people began to frequent more interesting cultural environments, such as the independent theatre, and the Jewish theatre was left for the elders. We went to the theatre in Spanish, although we spoke in Yiddish. We were twenty years old. The Yiddish theatre had already lost its appeal for us, we did not find the music hall interesting. The IFT was more interesting, but it was already in Spanish¹⁹.

So, from the point of view of the younger generations, the Jewish theatre was something they had inherited: for them, the Soleil and the Mitre were their parents' theatres. The Argentine-born audiences whose first language was Spanish no longer felt the *heymishkayt*, the feeling of being “at home” that previous generations experienced when they attended Yiddish theatre and heard their mother tongue. On the contrary, what young spectators

wanted to find in the theatre was merely theatre: an artistic sensitive experience that they were able to find in the Spanish-language stage but that they rarely found on the Jewish stage. As it is explained in *Patch* magazine:

Besides the commercial interests that it serves, we must ask ourselves if Jewish theatre is an institution dedicated to a form of art or if its function is only to maintain the language that the people of Israel formed in the diaspora. Our opinion is final, theatre has a single mission: to perform theatre (Num. 3, January 1955, p. 22).

Therefore, while between the 1930s and 1950s, the Jewish stage was a place for artistic innovation thanks to the foreign Jewish artists and companies that brought to Argentina modern theatrical ideas and aesthetics (such as Bertolt Brecht and Arthur Miller's plays, Max Reinhardt's staging conceptions, Stanislavsky's acting style, among other examples), by the 1960s the Yiddish theatre was merely seen as a place for nostalgia and remembrance of the past.

Final words

This article has addressed the development of the Buenos Aires Yiddish theatre scene that began in the first decades of the twentieth century and had its heyday between 1930 and 1950. The paper has analyzed the golden era of Jewish theatre in Argentina and explored the factors that led to its crisis during the 1950s and that, by the end of the 1960s, was in an irreversible declining process.

The absence of youth, the lack of original plays and younger generations of artists —local or foreign— that could reinvigorate the Yiddish theatre season, and the difficulties to fill the empty seats left by older spectators²⁰ were the main reasons that led to attendance decline and finally, to the closing of the last remaining Jewish theatres: first the Soleil and then the Mitre. The loss of the playhouses and the end of the foreign stars' visits forced Jewish actors to continue their careers in the national theatre, film, and television.

However, Yiddish theatre did not completely disappear from the Buenos Aires theatre scene and the mark left by the great Jewish actors has not been forgotten. Until 2019, one of the only playhouses that —along with the IFT Theatre— remained associated with the Jewish community was named after one of them: the Ben-Ami Auditorium, where the Jewish Actors Union

used to be, and which now belongs to AMIA. The Ben-Ami Auditorium presented plays in Spanish that addressed Jewish topics and also musical shows where Yiddish was once again heard on stage²¹, attesting to the survival of a theatre tradition and a language that refuse to disappear.

Notes

- ¹ For further information on Jewish theatre in Europe, see: BERKOWITZ, Joel y HENRY, Barbra (eds.). *Inventing the Modern Yiddish Stage: Essays in Drama, Performance, and Show Business*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012.
- ² For further information on the Buenos Aires Yiddish theatre scene, see: ANSALDO, Paula. Entre el biznes y el arte: el sistema de estrellas en el teatro empresarial judío de Buenos Aires, *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas UNAM*, México D.F., vol. 43, num. 118, pp. 67-90, 2021.
- ³ The interviews were conducted by the author to Moishe Korin, Abraham Lichtenbaum, Moisés Kijak and Ángel Goldman, among others.
- ⁴ Jewish intellectual and educator, former director of Scholem Aleijem school and the Cultural Department of AMIA.
- ⁵ Interview with Moishe Korin conducted by the author in November 2015.
- ⁶ A fragment of Sholem Aleichem's novel *Wandering Stars* illustrates Jewish audiences' behavior after the show: "When Jews leave the theatre, they behave like Jews □they talk, they argue, they wave their hands around. One tells another his opinion of what he saw and heard. Each one imagines that what he has seen and heard, only he has really seen and heard. They sing the songs over and over".
- ⁷ Pesach'ke Burstein points out in his memoir (2003) that in Buenos Aires the tradition was that actors had to go to the bar El International after the show to be applauded and they were expected to drink and eat together with the audience, the critics, and other fellow actors.
- ⁸ The quoted letter by Maurice Schwartz is from May 9th, 1945, and it is reproduced in: Boris, Martin (2002).
- ⁹ In his memoir, actor Herman Yablokoff remembers that in his debut in Buenos Aires in 1939 there was a large presence of children in the audience who hummed and sang along with the actors. He says that his heart felt good to

perform for them (1995, p. 387), probably due to the increasing absence of youth in the New York audiences for which he often performed.

- ¹⁰ The Yiddish word *patch* means “slap” and, according to the editors, it represents the two goals of the magazine, “to applaud and to hit, two ways of doing criticism summed up in a very Jewish word”, as they stated in the editorial of the first number of the magazine, published on August 1, 1954.
- ¹¹ Operetta is a subgenre of musical theatre, characterized by a combination of singing, dancing and spoken dialogue, in which musical scenes are integrated into a story. Operetta was the most popular and predominant genre in Jewish theatre, both in Buenos Aires and the rest of the world.
- ¹² This same memory appeared in the interviews I conducted with Moishe Korin, Cacho Lotersztain and Abraham Lichtenbaum, as well as in the interview with actress Lidia Goldberg, who was part of Schwartz’s cast during that season.
- ¹³ Even actor Joseph Buloff began to perform on Broadway shows in 1936.
- ¹⁴ The statement that the new generation of Argentinian Jews only went to Yiddish theatre to accompany their in-laws appears in the memories of many of my interviewees.
- ¹⁵ The play *Réquiem para un viernes a la noche* by Germán Rozenmacher premiered in 1964 and portrayed the generational conflict and the role of language, as it can be seen in the words of the main character to his father: “I’m tired of speaking half in Yiddish and half in Spanish! I’m tired of living in the past, I’m tired of being a foreigner! (...) What can I do if I am different from you?” (2013, p. 303).
- ¹⁶ The crisis of the Jewish theatre scene in Argentina was accompanied by the decline of other Yiddish culture manifestations, such as the publication of books in Yiddish. Dujovne argues that “between 1966 and 1967, three of the major publishing houses, that sustained the annual supply of new publications, left the market: *Dos Poylishe Idantum*, *Idbuj* and *ICUF*” (2014, p. 117).
- ¹⁷ In his book on Jewish communities of Latin America, Jacob Shatzky pointed out that “Argentine Jewish youth understands the Yiddish language much more than North American youth, although they do not speak it” (1952, p. 51).
- ¹⁸ Interview with Cacho Lotersztain conducted by the author in June 2016.

- ¹⁹ Interview with Ángel Goldman conducted by the author in January 2016.
- ²⁰ As the old Soleil actor Max Abramson, the touching character of the play *Réquiem para un viernes a la noche* by Germán Rozenmacher, said: “I had the whole world in my hands! We used to do two shows a day. It was madness! (Pause). Then we performed for increasingly empty seats. (He shrugs). And now... they closed the theatre (...) Do you know what is happening? The audience is dying! One by one they are dying on me, like the subscribers of the Yiddish newspaper” (2014, p. 272).
- ²¹ For further information on these shows, see: RUD, Lucía. Persistencias del *ídish* en la escena porteña, *Revista Diversidad*, num. 4, pp. 42-56, 2012.

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Translated from the original in Spanish into English by the author herself and revised by Lucia Balducci

Received on May 5th, 2021

Approved on September 29th, 2021

Editor in charge: Ana Sabrina Mora

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