

Sunday Lecture Series

@Ohr Chadash	Lecture series (Sanctuary)
10:30 - 11:20	<p>4 generations of Klezmer in Philadelphia (Susan Hoffman Watts)</p> <p>Watch film about Elaine Hoffman Watts, Q&A with Susan</p> <p>Klezmer is Eastern European Jewish folk music. In other parts of the country, klezmer seemed to disappear and then was revived. But in Philadelphia, the Hoffman family never stopped playing this music. This film shares the unique Ukrainian-Jewish klezmer sounds of Elaine Hoffman Watts and Susan Watts, third and fourth generation klezmerim. Including dynamic concert footage, family movies, interviews and historic photos, the documentary shows what this music means, and how it has remained vital. "Eatala" is a loving portrait of NEA National Heritage Award-winner Elaine Hoffman Watts (her Yiddish name is "Eatala") and her family legacy. The documentary shows how a feisty and determined musician has broken barriers as a musician, a working mother, and in her persistent devotion to her family's klezmer music. Drawing on performance footage, family movies and photographs, and interviews, "Eatala" shows how the klezmer tradition has been sustained over four generations in a single family, with a good dose of humor and joy. Featuring performances by Elaine Hoffman Watts, Susan Lankin Watts and an all-star klezmer band with Josh Dolgin, Jay Krush, Rachel Lemisch, Hankus Netsky, Henry Sapoznik, and Carmen Staaf. "Moving chronicle of one family's life in music. A rare glimpse, touched with humor, of how a musical tradition was held in trust." - Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. "A 3rd-generation klezmer, the mother of a next generation of klezmerim, and a raucous, wonderful storyteller. The Philly sound in full force and dance-compelling splendor." - Ari Davidow, Klezmer Shack. Directed by Barry Dornfeld and Debora Kodish.</p>
11:30 - 12:20	<p>The Lost Art of Wooden Synagogues (Benny Ferdman)</p> <p>Join Benny Ferdman on a journey to discover the remarkable, yet now vanished wooden Synagogues of Eastern Europe. We will encounter a series of black and white photographs documenting these works of architectural folk art. Their painted walls and vaulted ceilings were filled with symbols of water, land and sky, of mythic beasts and birds, images from nature and the Tree of Life, creating a brilliant and sacred place of prayer and celebration in the rural villages they glorified.</p>
12:30 - 1:30	<p>Jewish Documentary Film in Poland Immediately before and After the Holocaust (Sarah Zarrow)</p> <p>Watching the five extant films from the Yiddish-language "Six Cities" series, produced by Sektor Films' Shaul and Yitzhak Goskind in the late 1930s, contemporary viewers may find the relatively rosy depictions of Jewish life—vibrant street scenes, happy children playing—hard to fathom, especially in light of the rising incidences of violence against Jews and de jure discrimination against Jews in Poland at the time. Shaul Goskind's postwar work as a producer, including <i>Der veg tsum gezunt</i> and <i>Der yidisher yishev in nidershlezye</i> (both directed by Natan Gross), depict similarly thriving Jewish communities, replete with images of active, smiling children, and without mention of the Holocaust or mass displacement.</p> <p>Putting the prewar and postwar documentary projects into conversation reveals surprising continuities in depictions of Jewish life in Poland, particularly depictions of the lives of children and institutional life, over the rupture of the Second World War and Holocaust. We'll watch clips from these films and Professor Zarrow will put them in historical context and offer some suggestions for their interpretation.</p>
1:30 - 2:00	BREAK
2:00 - 2:50	<p>Born to Kvetch: Strange Yiddish Expressions and How They Got That Way (Michael Wex)</p> <p>A fascinating look at the basic sources of Yiddish idioms and expressions, with particular attention to indigestion, expectoration and dissatisfaction.</p>
3:00 - 3:50	<p>Yiddish Poetry and the Working Class (Faith Jones)</p> <p>In this lecture, translator Faith Jones will look at different groups of Yiddish poets with deep ties to working life. The Sweatshop Poets, centred in New York and active from the 1890s to the 1910s, were succeeded by the Canadian Proletarian School of Yiddish writers, who were most active in the interwar period, and the American group Proletpen, which ran from the late 1920s to the late 1930s. Poets in these groups took different approaches and expressed different priorities in subject matter and poetic styles, but are united in their centering of labour and the working class. Poetry will be presented bilingually; no Yiddish knowledge necessary.</p>
4:00 - 4:50	<p>How the Soviet Jew Was Made (Sasha Senderovich)</p> <p><i>How the Soviet Jew Was Made</i> offers a close reading of postrevolutionary Yiddish and Russian-language literature and film that recasts the Soviet Jew as a novel cultural figure: an ambivalent character navigating between the Jewish past and Bolshevik modernity. Senderovich traces protagonists traversing space and history and carrying with them the dislodged practices and archetypes of a Jewish world in the process of transformation. Senderovich urges us to see the Soviet Jew anew, as not only a member of a minority group but also a particular kind of liminal being.</p>