Transferring Transnationally, Transforming Locally, Imagining Transnationally: The Transference of Interwar Poland’s Popular Culture to Israel and Its Rediscovery in the Last Decades

Vernacular cosmopolitanism

Who is coming to watch this show?! It’s old-fashioned! Boring! Diasporic! It is so 1933!…- That is me: Diasporic – but in a radical sense! Ashkenazi, but not part of the elite! I’m cosmopolitan! I do not have roots! I use to visit [the Orthodox Yiddish-speaking neighborhoods of] Bney Berak because of my philological interest! I dream of performing a [Yiddish] drag show! I’m Jargon! I’m a melting pot! I’m a subculture! I’m dubbing Seinfeld into Yiddish! I make no apologies to Mizrakhi poets! I'm also oppressed! I am a Bundist! I celebrate May Day! I fast every August 12 [commemorating the execution day of thirteen Soviet Yiddish intellectuals in Moscow’s Lubyanka Prison in 1952]! I am the Old Left! I am the New Left! I am the Left that hasn't been invented yet![[1]](#footnote-2)

Ya’ad Biran, playwright and scholar of interwar Yiddish literature, wrote these lines for Esty Nissim, the main actress in *Esther’s Cabaret*, which was performed in the style of the interwar tradition of Poland’s literarycabarets in Polish and Yiddish. Why did a group of Israeli intellectuals and performers in the early twentieth century want to connect with Polish popular culture from nearly a century earlier? What does this popular culture "do" for them, and how does it contribute to their senses of both individual and collective belonging? How do these intellectuals, artists, and consumers perceive the relationship between the popular culture coming from Poland, Jewish culture, and Israeli belonging?

This article argues that the rediscovery, reinterpretation, and re-creation of interwar Poland’s popular culture in Israel reflect the long project of Jews negotiating identity using an imagined mirror of interwar Poland. To support this claim, it examines the transference of Poland’s popular culture to Mandate Palestine and to the State of Israel in its early years, its incorporation as a significant element in local popular culture, and references to that culture in contemporary Israel.

**Transferring Transnationally: Polish Popular Culture in Mandate Palestine**

Popular mass culture cannot be studied solely on a national or ethnic level or as a geographically or ethnically confined construct. As a dispersed phenomenon, its transnational and local dimensions are equally important. In interwar Poland, popular mass culture was situated in the interconnection of the local and the global, the ethnic and the universal, the national and the cosmopolitan. The transnational aspects of Polish popular culture had their own unique dimensions. The Polish nationalizing state supported the development of an ethnonational Polish culture in which popular mass culture played its role. At the same time Jewish popular mass culture was very rich and vibrant in interwar Poland, a key reached marker of a Polish Jewish civilization annihilated by the Shoah.

By the 1930s, Mandate Palestine, particularly its growing urban areas, had absorbed thousands of immigrants from Poland. The Polish Consulate in Tel Aviv estimated that in 1936 every second inhabitant of this city, which had about 140,000 inhabitants, came from Poland.[[2]](#footnote-3) Tel Aviv housed Polish restaurants, cafes, shops, tailors, hairdressers, and even large commercial and industrial enterprises. Not only did Polish immigrants establish these businesses but also the distribution of goods, customer service, and consumption followed practices used in Poland. Mandate Palestine was a major market for popular culture commodities made in Poland: it was part of the commercial circuit of interwar Poland’s popular culture.

For instance, Tel Aviv’s fashionable Café Ratzki, which was frequented by the intellectual elite of that time, was often compared to those in Warsaw that attracted a similar clientele. Its guest book from the years 1932–1935 is filled with its patrons’ wisecracks and witticism. In April 1935 one visitor wrote, “If I didn't know that I’m sitting at Ratzki, in Tel Aviv, I would think that I’m at Ziemiańska [the interwar legendary artists’ café] in Warsaw. Here, too, is not even a single *goy* [gentile].” [[3]](#footnote-5) A journalist from the Yiddish Warsaw daily *Der Moment* Mojżesz Lejzerowicz also compared it to the celebrated gathering place of Warsaw’s Yiddish journalists and writers: “We will continue here [in Ratzki’s café] Tłomackie13—without Warsaw.” [[4]](#footnote-6) The humorless leader of Polish Zionists, Itzhak Grünbaum, also noted = the similarity between the cafés in Poland and Palestine: “When I’ll sit in a café in the Warsaw Diaspora surprised that is not even one *goy*, I’ll remember Ratzki’s café, where also there is not even one *goy* [gentile]; but their language is overheard”[[5]](#footnote-7)—alluding to the use of foreign languages in that “Hebrew” café.

Despite strong Zionist efforts to promote Hebrew culture, Polish Jewish immigrants continued to consume cultural commodities from their old land. Record albums of popular music made in Poland in Polish, Hebrew, and Yiddish circulated in Palestine. Films made in Poland were particularly popular, attracting large audiences in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Polish film producers also had representatives in Palestine promoting their films; Zeev Markovich, for instance, represented the producer Maria Hirszbein and Leo-Film.[[6]](#footnote-9) These films were advertised and reviewed, though not always favorably, in the daily Hebrew press. In its negative review of the 1933 Polish film *Szpieg w Masce*, starring the highly acclaimed Polish actress and singer Hanna Ordonówna, the Hebrew daily *Haaretz* asked, “Why is the public running to the cinema?” and then answered its question: “Two are the reasons: 1- The Polish language, homesickness, among Polish *olim* [immigrants]. 2- Hanna Ordonówna.”[[7]](#footnote-10) The public watched Polish films regardless of their cinematic qualities because they evoked the former soundscape, landscape, and airscape.

As a conduit to the Middle East, Palestine became a crucial trade area for Poland. Since the early 1930s, authorities from the Industry and Commerce Ministries expressed interest in the “intensification of commercial and cultural relations between Poland and the countries of the Near East,” through Palestine.[[8]](#footnote-12) In September 1934 Wiesław Czermiński, director of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League and a member of the Polish Pro-Palestine Committee, visited Palestine to study its economic development and further develop mutual commercial relations.[[9]](#footnote-13) Commodified Polish mass culture played its role in strengthening those relationships. Moreover, the migrant community from Poland had the capacity to be a bridge between the cultural assets coming from Poland and settlers in Palestine from around the globe. They were a link in transferring assets from the mother country.

In February 1934 Hanna Ordonówna (often called Ordonka) toured and gave preformances in Mandatory Palestine. In an interview printed in the Yiddish daily *Haynt*, she said, “Something has drawn me to your Palestine. It seems to me that it should be a remarkable land. On the one hand, it is holy and dead, full of ancient ruins. On the other, it is a land built again, full of life.”[[10]](#footnote-14) At the end of 1934, the celebrated handsome star of Polish cinema, Eugeniusz Bodo, also toured and performed in Palestine. Like Ordonka, he expressed his enthusiasm for the Zionist modernist experiment:

What I saw here just blew my mind! Cities sprout from the ground, asphalt streets drawn by an architect, cross fields where other architects will build houses, public utility installations, factories, and workshops.… Everywhere there is a hectic rhythm of work, huge initiative, and action with more than American momentum... modern harmony and perfect adaptation.[[11]](#footnote-15)

The Hebrew press in Palestine and the Polish-Jewish and Yiddish daily press in Poland covered their tours and reviewed their concert performances in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Bodo performed a short concert before the screening of one of his films, reinforcing the integrated system of cinema, cabaret, and popular music.[[12]](#footnote-16) These tours served as promotions for the performers’ films and record albums.

The public consisted mainly of Jewish migrants from Poland who felt “the spirit of the ‘motherland’ the singers brought with them.”[[13]](#footnote-17) Some non-Polish speakers also attended the performances, as did the theater reviewer of the daily *Doar ha-Yom*:

Although I don’t understand Polish, Bodo’s monologues and conversations captured me. That means that he knows how to fascinate by his temperament, contagious laughter, black laughter, black hair, and nice face… I’m not afraid to say that spending an evening in his company is enjoying the evening, a pleasant hour even for those that do not understand Polish.[[14]](#footnote-18)

On the one hand, the last sentence reflects that those non-Polish speakers were a minority among the public. On the other hand, it shows the capacity of the migrant community from Poland to mediate the popular culture from the old land to the non-Polish speaking public in the new land.

Yet the double-entendre humor that characterized the performances seemed to upset some reviewers.[[15]](#footnote-19) Deeply ideologically committed Hebraist media, like the daily *Davar*, criticized both Polish popular culture producers and consumers:

They are satisfied with “music” like that of Bodo, the “star” whom came from Warsaw to cheer up the Tel Aviv ladies, that all their heart and soul aspire to the Vistula banks; who gives a few concerts in *Ohel shem* and *Beit haAm* [concert halls] and was received positively by the *Union for the Imposition of the Hebrew Language* (האיגוד להשלטת השפה העברית), even though he transformed *Beit haAm* into an inn and a ccabaret.[[16]](#footnote-20)

**Acclimating to the Local**

The migrant community from Poland in Palestine was part of the mass culture market of interwar Poland and simultaneously mediated the transference of cultural assets from Poland to Mandate Palestine.

This mediation was not simply a matter of “copying and pasting”: the performers adapted their performances to fit the old public in the new land. Bodo, for instance, sang his well-known “Jewish” *szlagiers*, Polish versions of Yiddish songs translated by Emanuel Szlechter; for example, “Rabbi Eli-Melech” and “Avremele Melamed.”[[17]](#footnote-21) He also acted in some sketches prepared for his Palestine concerts, which poked fun at his being a *goy* while performing in perfect Hebrew. Playing with the Hebrew expression, “*mebeten u-mleidah*” (lit. from [mother's] “womb and birth: but idiomatically translated as [*born and bred*](https://context.reverso.net/%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%92%D7%95%D7%9D/%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA/born%2Band%2Bbred)), he proudly said, “From [mother's] womb and *bris* [Yiddish for circumcision] I speak beautiful Hebrew, and even know [the poems by the Hebrew poet Avraham] Shlonski by heart.”[[18]](#footnote-22)

Ordonka understood that she could not address her old public in the new land in the exact same way she had done in Poland. When touring Palestine she interpreted new songs in Hebrew prepared for the occasion, songs that she continued performing in Poland after her return.[[19]](#footnote-23) Her good Hebrew diction was expressly praised,[[20]](#footnote-25) which likely strengthened her enthusiastic reception.[[21]](#footnote-26) She performed them along with her old *szlagiers*, which the public knew from her records. Among them were songs that addressed Jewish themes; for example, her iconic interpretation of the maudlin “Mayn Yiddishe Mame.” Zelig Rusetski, the Tel Aviv correspondent of the Yiddish Warsaw daily *Der Moment,* explained how Orodnka’s “Jewish” songs about family relations were reinterpreted to fit the new society of Mandate Palestine:

*Di Yidishe Mame*’s story is about the mother who waits for years for the return of her beloved son from the distant lands, and the son will never fall into her arms again.... When Ordonka recites it in Warsaw, then for you [the readers in Warsaw], it is just a story, a beautiful song, a tragedy, which is observed from the outside, as a spectator. For us, it is a piece of life, a piece of our own life: who among us does not have a father, a mother, a sister, or a brother there, far away, in Poland? Deep seas and wide lands separate us from the beloved, from the close ones, with whom, God knows, whether we will meet again. Now you can understand why the Tel Aviv concert hall plunged into an atmosphere of the silence of a cemetery when Ordonka sang about the troubles of the unfortunate mother. Everyone's thoughts moved far, far away, to Poland, to the cities and abandoned towns. The sigh that came out of almost everyone's heart did not refer to the unhappy mother of the song. It was the expression of longing for the beloved ones who are still so far away.[[22]](#footnote-27)

If among some members of the public the songs awakened nostalgia for a faraway land, it deepened among others the abyss between the old and the new countries. In his review for the daily rightist newspaper, *Doar Hayom*, Itzhak Edel (1896–1973), a Warsaw-born Jewish musician who established the first association for Jewish music in Warsaw and emigrated to Tel Aviv in 1929, highlighted the great differences between Jews remaining in the Diaspora and those building a new homeland in Palestine:

Songs with Jewish content that there [in Poland] moved the audience, only point out and emphasize to us, how we have distanced ourselves from them, both in terms of the text and the music. The song … describing an old Jew who wants to immigrate to Israel in order to die there, … can make us laugh.… This sick music, offspring of the Jewish ghetto, is incomprehensible in our climate.[[23]](#footnote-28)

Both reviews focused on how Ordonka’s performance was received by settlers in the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine. Whereas Rusetski emphasized the longing of the emigrants in Palestine for their mothers, other relatives, and beloved friends who remained in the old country, Edel highlighted the differences between “the new Jew” and the diasporic Jew from “over there.” Viewing these performances not only reinforced these migrants’ emotional link to their parental homeland but also sharpened the unbridgeable geographical, emotional, and social distances between old and new.

In the interwar period, Polish songs —*szlagiery*—were translated into Hebrew and recorded in Poland, and then thousands of albums were sold both in Poland and in Palestine to consumers of Hebrew culture. The songs had “international” rhythms suggesting a cosmopolitan or metropolitan style, but through translation, they acquired new meanings. For instance, the Hebrew version of one of the great *szlagiers* of interwar Poland, the tango “Ostatnia niedziela” (The Last Sunday)—music by Jerzy Petersburski and lyrics by Zenon Friedwald (1935)—was Judaized, becoming *Ha-Shabat ha-Achronah* (The Last Saturday).[[24]](#footnote-29) Adam Aston performed the song in Polish, and as Ben Levi (the Hebrew translation of his family name Loewinsohn), he performed the Hebrew version. As Ben Levi he also performed the Hebrew version of “Odeszłaś, jak se’n” (You Left as a Dream), a Polish tango from 1934 with music by Michał Ferszko and lyrics by Aleksander Jellin. In Polish, the song refers to unrequited love, describing a lover who leaves and never returns. The Hebrew version from 1935, “Beli Ahavah” (With No Love), also describes the lover’s leaving, but its lyrics imply a broader farewell to one’s family, friends, and [loved ones](https://context.reverso.net/%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%92%D7%95%D7%9D/%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%93%D7%99%D7%AA/loved%2Bones).

Another example of a song that acquired new local meanings through transnational transference is Mieczyslaw Miksne’s “Madagaskar,” a satirical take on Polish colonial fantasies about the conquest of Madagascar and the idea of resettling Polish Jews there. This 1937 song was a hit in Poland in both its Polish and Yiddish versions, and the Hebrew poet Natan Alterman translated it into Hebrew. The Yiddish version retained the ironic tone of the absurd colonial dream and a Bakhtinian carnivalesque inversion of dominant values; in Hebrew, in Palestine, its political critique was aimed not at Polish colonial fantasies but at the restrictions imposed by the British Mandate.[[25]](#footnote-30) This kind of “misreading,” à la Harold Bloom, shows how adaptation to a new context substantially shifted forms of popular culture in the process of transference.

These elements of popular culture flowing from Poland to Palestine had the flavor of vernacular cosmopolitanism. In contrast, those popular culture assets transferred from Palestine to Poland exuded “authentic” localism. The impresario Moshe Valin nurtured and positioned Bracha Zefira, a Hebrew singer from Yemen, as an “Oriental singer.” In the late 1920s and early 1930s Oriental rhythms and songs permeated the Polish popular musical soundscape, especially in songs with the rhythm of a foxtrot.[[26]](#footnote-31) And so Valin promoted Zefira, enabling her to build her career in Central Europe.[[27]](#footnote-32) She toured Poland in 1929, offering musicians there the opportunity to adopt and adapt new styles and rhythms. Musicologists and scholars considered her to be a mediator between Eastern and Western music traditions. Zefira was a pioneer in introducing European Jews to the music of the Middle East.[[28]](#footnote-33)

Around the same time folk music and folkloric dances like the hora were key parts of Polish Jewish culture, particularly for Jewish youth engaged in Zionism.

Thus, in terms of popular culture, interwar Poland and Palestine formed what anthropologist Marie Louise Pratt and Eugenia Prokop Janiec term a “contact zone.”[[29]](#footnote-36) It was partly based on the business cultures and structures that facilitated the transfer of film, performances, and music transnationally. Especially in the 1930s, it also promoted an aspirational metropolitan-style culture—not between an advancing center and retreating periphery, as in the familiar anthropological model, but instead across centers competing for authority in, if not ascendancy over, “the modern.” Considering Warsaw and Tel Aviv as sites of cultural exchange is important, not only because it brings two neglected sites into the transnational network of popular culture but also because doing so contributes to our understanding of how this popular culture operated in relation to the modern world.

**Transferring Transnationally**

The cultural transference of music and films from Poland to Mandate Palestine was propelled by the agency of artists, cultural entrepreneurs, and consumers. Many of the consumers—Jewish immigrants from Poland to Palestine—had succeeded in attaining middle-class status. They could afford to consume cultural commodities from their old land and were eager to do so. This migrant community not only established a “bond” with their brethren overseas but also had the capacity to be a “bridge” to other groups in their new land, such as other European bourgeoisie immigrants or younger people who had migrated earlier and identified as socialist.

The transnational bonding in popular culture intensified with the migration of Polish artists and creators, such as the composer Stanisław Ferszko (the brother of the earlier mentioned Michał Ferszko), who had immigrated to Mandate Palestine in 1937. Many Polish migrant artists, found new homes in the secular, urban areas of Tel Aviv or Haifa—performing or re-creating familiar elements of popular culture from the old country for the local bourgeoisie in the growing cities, middle-class immigrants from Poland, or members of other groups. As Beth Holmgren notes that, of any non-Polish city, Tel Aviv was the most fitting second home for a “Polish-style” cabaret.[[30]](#footnote-37) The migrants who had settled in Palestine years earlier created communities in Palestine that were shaped by norms that were based in many cases on values and practices from the old country. These norms, when combined with migrants’ social capital in their new homeland, facilitated the absorption of the newcomers into the earlier migrant communities. In their new cities, migrant artists found an economic niche in the leisure culture performed in cafes, theaters, and dance halls in the spirit of prewar Poland’s literary cabaret. The existing migrant community succeeded in many cases in incorporating these artists into the social and economic life of the recipient Jewish society in Palestine.

~~The in-group migrant urban community from Poland in the new city enabled Stanisław Ferszko and other artists to ‘bond’ them during the migration process and to ‘bridge’ the artists and their performances with extra-group individuals. These artists adapted the contents to the new setting, bridging and facilitating the locally transformed old home popular culture into a new one.~~

For instance, the Hebrew cabarets in Mandatory Palestine were created in the image of those in Poland, whose artists performed in Polish and Yiddish. The Hebrew cabaret Ha-Matate (The Broom) opened in 1928 but it only began to flourish after Itzhak Nożyk joined the troupe in 1933, bringing to the Hebrew stage his experience in Poland’s show business.[[31]](#footnote-38) Before Nożyk settled in Palestine, he was the moving spirit in Sambatyon, the well-known Yiddish cabaret located first in Vilna before it moved to Warsaw. In Palestine, he shaped the poetic format of the Ha-Matate satirical revues and wrote many of them. Following the style in Poland, each Ha-Matate show was a collection of short sketches linked by a character or a thematic framework. Nożyk wrote the sketches and song lyrics in Yiddish, and Natan Alterman translated them into Hebrew.[[32]](#footnote-40)

The works performed by Ha-Matate, particularly the emphasis on political critique and the songs, reflect a clear cultural transference. Polish cabarets dramatized the upheavals of modern life in interwar Poland and the absurdities of the bourgoisie life; the Yiddish Polish theater focused on the upheavals of Jewish life in interwar Poland and the absurdities of Jewish politics. Similarly, Ha-Matate became a stage for political satire, critically examining the crises of life in Mandate Palestine and the absurdities of local Zionist institutions. It addressed political events, questions of immigration, and the absurdities of “Hebrew work” and the “Hebrew language.”

All three literary cabarets used language differently but with the same intent: to sharpen the political critique. In Poland, the *Szmontses* genre of sketches—comic sketches about Jewish peddlers—used performers with a “Yiddish” accent and a “Yiddish” way of speaking Polish. The Yiddish interwar cabaret in Poland portrayed the archetype of the Polonized Jew who used Polish words while talking Yiddish to mock their vain efforts to integrate into society and attain upward mobility. And in the Hebrew cabarets, Nożyk and others criticized the absurdities of local institutions by using the “Yekkes” accent and the German way of speaking Hebrew.[[33]](#footnote-41)

This network of artists also transplanted the Argentinian tango to the Mediterranean shores as mediated by the Polish tango. This circuitous route of transmission from the Rio de la Plata to the Ha-Yarkon River via the Vistula River may explain the idiosyncrasies of the “Israeli tango.” From the 1930s to the 1950s, many Polish composers and performers—Ferszko, Mordekhai Olari Nożyk (Itzhak’s son), and especially the prolific Moshe Wilensky, who studied at the Warsaw Conservatory—shaped the music of the Ha-Matate theater and of popular music generally in Palestine, including Hebrew tangos. “Artzenu Ha Ktantonet” (Our Little Country) is a Hebrew tango composed by Henryk Gold after he arrived in Palestine with Anders’ Army, the name given to the Polish Armed Forces in the East. The Hebrew tango, as did the Polish one, featured European melodic touches. Compared to the Rio de la Plata Argentinian prototype, Polish and Hebrew tangos were more delicate and much slower; the orchestration essentially remained in the shadow of the first voice; and their melodies were generally imbued with lamentation and nostalgia. Using the tango rhythms, the creators transferred a popular international rhythm to Palestine; as in Poland, the Hebrew tango variant expressed a local interpretation of cosmopolitanism.

**Transforming Locally**

World War II did not interrupt and even increased the influence of Polish popular culture in Palestine. From 1940 onward, many Polish war refugees, including literary figures and musicians, began to arrive in Palestine. Zenon Friedwald/Vardan, for instance, who wrote "The Last Sunday" (“The Last Saturday,” as it was renamed in the Hebrew version), escaped in 1939 to Soviet Russia and found his way to Romania. From there, he traveled through Greece and Turkey, arriving as a refugee in Tel Aviv around 1940. In the following year, he directed a musical called יהא סדר! (Yehe Seder! Let There Be Order). Its reviews noted the Polish context of this show. Dorit Yerushalmi wrote that it combined “the description of Warsaw’s great suffering and heroism” with revue segments that were expertly performed by the “revue stars from Poland.”[[34]](#footnote-42) Ferszko, who had worked in Poland with Friedwald/Vardan, composed the music. Lola Kitajewicz, who played the main role, had performed in the Warsaw Cabaret’s performance of *Cyrulik Warszawski* (The Barber of Warsaw), under the direction of Fryderyk Járosy, interwar Warsaw’s most prominent cabaret director.

Many of the artists who found shelter in Tel Aviv or Haifa, including those coming with Anders’ Army, performed in the spirit of prewar Poland’s cabarets in revues or musical cafés for a local audience thirsting for entertainment from the old country. The relatively good economy in Tel Aviv gave the Polish community there the means to consume enthusiastically the popular culture productions that the Warsaw celebrities brought to Palestine during the war. The encounter between those who had already established themselves in the city and the newly arrived artist-refugees who had to deal with the difficulties of making a living and adapting to a new language in a completely urban setting in a different climate affected the financial success of the genre.

These “artists on the move” strategically used Palestine–Poland’s interconnected popular culture market to maximize their economic options outside Poland. The cabaret Li-La-Lo(“For Me, for Her, for Him”) opened in November 1944 in Tel Aviv; its name also brought to mind that of the prominent Polish performer, *Lola* Kitajewicz. Natan Alterman, after Friedwald/Vardan’s request, changed the order of the words to *Li-La-Lo*.[[35]](#footnote-43) As Yerushalmi observed, the cabaret’s name not only suggested the universal character of the repertoire but also recalled the prewar iconic Warsaw cabaret, Qui Pro Quo. The impresario Moshe Valin invited many artists who had performed in Warsaw in Yiddish and Polish to the stage of Li-La-Lo.

The first show performed at the cabaret was *The Barber of Tel Aviv*; its title recalled the play performed in Warsaw in the late 1930s, *Cyrulik Warszawski*, in which Lola Kitajewicz starred.[[36]](#footnote-44) She reprised her role, appearing along with Irena Różyńska, a non-Jewish actress who in prewar Warsaw performed in the successful Warsaw Wielka Rewia; in *The Barber*, she played the femme fatale. Both actresses reached Palestine with Anders’ Army.[[37]](#footnote-46) Minna Bern performed alongside them. She began her stage career in Lodz in the Yiddish Kleynkunst Ararat, the quintessential Yiddish cabaret in interwar Poland. The wife of the play’s director, Wanda (Vera) Friedwald was the master of ceremonies, a role she had played in Poland before the war; in Palestine, she performed it in Hebrew “but with a Polish undertone.”[[38]](#footnote-47)

, andZenon Friedwald directed the show. Many of the song and sketches were direct translations.[[39]](#footnote-49)Not surprisingly Yerushalmi noted, "The stage still strongly echoes Warsaw’s Kleinkunst Qui Pro Quo.”[[40]](#footnote-50)

Yet, by the time the curtain rose on *The Barber of Tel Aviv*, the Jewish community in the Warsaw Ghetto had been completely destroyed and its culture annihilated. The audience was watching a re-creation of a people that was no more, which made the performances so poignant. Viewers heard songs translated into Hebrew and watched monologues in the spirit of the old Qui Pro Quo, as well as scenes showing contemporary events.

Many of the performers on Li-La-Lo’s stage were stars of the Polish stage. Others, such as the actor Aleksander Yahalomi, began performing with the Anders’ Army during its long journey from Poland. Some began performing in Palestine (Wilenski, Matityahu Rozin) or joined the entourage in later shows (the musicians Henryk Wars and Stanisław Petersburski [Jerzy’s brother]) All in all, about forty authors, musicians, composers, singers, directors and announcers from Poland performed at Li-La-Lo.[[41]](#footnote-52)

The cabaret’s first shows relied heavily on the literary Polish cabaret tradition. Some were literary adaptations of texts from a variety of languages, and some had been performed in Qui Pro Quo. Some Polish actors brought their own repertoire, which the ingenious Shmuel Fisher translated into Hebrew.[[42]](#footnote-53)

Lola Kitajewicz performed in the Polish poet Julien Tuwim’s *Lokomotywa* (Rehov harakevet; The Train’s Street).[[43]](#footnote-54) Aleksander Yahalomi performed one of his most acclaimed songs, "Goldenberg! Goldenberg!” also written by Tuwim but given a new title in Palestine, “Rappaport, Rappaport!” (*Four pages of the Rappaports in the Warsaw telephone directory: ... There was Alojzy Rappaport, sons of Rojza Rappaport and Senator Rappaport and prosecutor Rappaport*). The lyrics sung by Matityahu Rozin, “Im ‘ein li ma she-ani ohev, ani ohev et ma she-iesh li” (If you do not have what you love, then you love what you have) was the Hebrew translation of the well-known Polish phrase, “Jak się nie ma, co się lubi, To się lubi, co się ma.”[[44]](#footnote-55)

All but one of the female actresses in *The Barber of Tel Aviv* did not know Hebrew and had to learn their roles by using the Latin alphabet. The exception was a young Yemenite singer who would become one of the greatest Israeli singers of all time, the legendary Shoshana Damari. Her first hits were composed by Moshe Wilenski, who was greatly influenced by Polish popular music of the interwar era.

It was a guest director at Li-La-Lo who would teach her to sing in the strong, dramatic, and passionate style that became her trademark. This director was not Jewish but was well known in interwar Poland as the artistic director of Quid Pro Quo, Fryderyk Járosy. Valin had hired Járosy for a six-month contract to direct and perform in three revues at Li-La-Lo. As Járosy wrote to Ordonka, he had “to turn the dilettante tingl-tanglu into a real literary theater.”[[45]](#footnote-56) He designed an “uncompromising program, calculated to educate the audience,” [[46]](#footnote-57) using both Hebrew and Polish on stage. One sketch featured a dialogue between Fryderyk Járosy and Irena Różyńska, in which she spoke her lines in Hebrew and he spoke in Polish. The entire dialogue was printed in both Hebrew and Polish in the program, so the audience could understand it.[[47]](#footnote-58) Use of the Polish language and of cultural codes and symbols both increased the support that artists in Palestine received from their compatriots abroad and helped create a new culture in a new language in the new land. It was a process of transferring transnationally, transforming locally.

A performance of the aforementioned tango, “Artzenu Ha-Ktantonet” (Our Little Country), opened Li-La-Lo’s show in September 1947. The reviewer from the communist daily *Kol ha’am* who praised the sketches was very critical of the music, stating confidently that “no song will be a hit.”[[48]](#footnote-59) His prediction was not fulfilled, as the tango became an important part of the Israeli musical pantheon.

Not everyone was pleased by the visibility and prominence of Polish content and performers in the cabaret’s offerings. Jenny Lubicz’s role was described as obsolete, depicting a mother who do not fit the contemporary context in Palestine. Minna Bern’s performance was described as “foreign to the atmosphere of the Land of Israel” while her way of acting was seen as coming from the Yiddish stage. Asher Lerner of *HaMaskif* wrote that an encounter between a Jewish couple and a British policeman during curfew was more similar to the way “Jews used to negotiate with a goy [gentile] policeman in Poland” than they would do so in Palestine.[[49]](#footnote-60)

Yet, Li-La-Lo held a prominent and visible place in theater and entertainment in the years between World War II and the establishment of the State of Israel, largely eclipsing Ha-Matate. To the Jewish urban population in Mandate Palestine, in the midst of a struggle against the British and for independence, the cabaret provided a much-needed dose of entertainment familiar from the old country: humorous songs and a bit of romantic tango; sketches in a well-known cabaret style with the right mix of humor, nostalgia, and excitement; double entendre in the spirit of the 1930s in Polish revues and cabarets; parody; and a bit of political satire related to the life of that time and place. All this in a well-acted performance, with well-designed costumes and decor and with a cast that sprinkled the stage with its stardust.

Polish popular culture in Palestine was marked both by the socioeconomic upward mobility of the existing Polish community, which increased its members’ income disparity with the Polish newcomers, and this community’s desire to integrate the newcomers and promote their artistic contributions. A new labor market was created in the field of popular culture that provided the Polish community with the entertainment they had enjoyed in their country of birth.

These Polish “artists on the move” influenced the local communities in which they were embedded. Their networking activities connected the small artistic community in Palestine to cultural capitals around the world. The combination of social and cultural capital these artists brought from Poland generated economic capital in Palestine in the form of a nascent entertainment scene. The newcomers had options to build their artistic careers, thereby enhancing their economic and professional development.

The Polish migrants were able to absorb Hebrew artistic styles and cultural capital through encounters and collaborations with local artists and by connecting themselves with local institutions. Together they had a significant impact on popular culture, increasing its innovation, entrepreneurship, and financial success. This network-based popular culture industry in Mandate Palestine, which had its origins in the prewar Warsaw–Tel Aviv transnational network of popular culture, produced an idiosyncratic interpretation of a cosmopolitan-style culture as an alternative to a dominant, hyper-serious Zionist discourse.

**Transferring and Transforming as Resistance: Dzigan and Szumacher**

After the establishment of the State of Israel, new artists from Poland joined the wave of emigrants that settled in the new homeland. Their connections in their transnational networks helped them gain entrée to the cultural scene in the large cities.[[50]](#footnote-62)

On March 1950 Shimen (Szymon) Dzigan and Yisroel Shumacher (or Szumacher) arrived in Israel from Poland: they were the most famous Yiddish comedy duo in prewar Poland, where they performed in Yiddish cabarets across the country and were also active in Yiddish theater. Both survived the war in the Soviet Union, returning to Poland afterward.

Soon after arriving in Israel they began performing Yiddish *Kleykunst teater*, produced by Ze’ev Markovich. They found a large audience, despite obstacles the new state placed in the way of Yiddish culture.

Their show was based on ones staged in postwar Poland but was adapted to Israeli society in several ways. Dzigan exchanged his Hasidic clothing for the kibbutznik’s shorts, replaced his small yarmulka for a round brimless hat, and substituted Israeli political references for those dealing with Polish generals and ministers. His red kerchief, however, continued to be his “trademark.”[[51]](#footnote-63)

Their show was performed in Yiddish at Dzigan’s insistence: he refused to perform in Hebrew. As Diego Rotman stated in his study of the duo, “Their Israeli identity did not manifest in an acquisition of the Hebrew language but rather in their talent for addressing the local, current experience, exposing the nation’s weak spots.”[[52]](#footnote-64)

In response to the Hebraist Israeli policy, they did, however, include some songs in Hebrew. The denigration of Yiddish and the pressure to perform in Hebrew transformed Dzigan and Shumacher’s transgressive performance in Yiddish into an act of linguistic opposition:“This particular act was part of the battle to preserve in the State of Israel the multilingualism and multiculturalism that had characterized Jewish culture in the diaspora throughout the generations.”[[53]](#footnote-66)

Their waging this “battle” may have attracted renowned satirical and comic writers who did not knew Yiddish to write for this duo.[[54]](#footnote-67) Hebrew actors and immigrant performers also joined Dzigan’s troupe. Giora Manor, the regisseur and theater reviewer, claimed that, in the duo’s shows, “Instead of the Hebrew theater absorbing immigrants and helping them progress from Yiddish to Hebrew, immigrants create possibilities of existence for Hebrew actors.”[[55]](#footnote-68)

This Yiddish duo performing in an antiestablishment language in a “diasporic” tradition complicated the Israeli dichotomy between a hegemonic, elitist Ashkenazi culture and a subjugated Mizrakhi culture. That would be a crucial element in reinventing the interwar popular culture of Poland in Israel in the late two decades.

**Reimagining Interwar Popular Culture**

During the last third of the twentieth century Polish influences on Hebrew popular culture were nearly entirely obscured. For example, the song “The Last Saturday” was a hit in the 1970s, as sung by the popular Israeli singer Yardena Arazi; a notable website for Hebrew songs later characterized its lyrics and music as “anonymous popular folklore,” its interwar Polish origin forgotten.[[56]](#footnote-71) Yet, at around the same time, Polish Yiddish interwar songs themselves enjoyed a renaissance.

Chava Alberstein, who has recorded more albums than any other Israel singer, began recording and performing Yiddish interwar songs from the secular Yiddish repertoire in the 1970s. Her third album, Hobnmir a nigundl, spotlighted her Yiddish repertoire, providing a cultural alternative to folk Hebrew songs in a hyper-Zionist political atmosphere.

In the twenty-first century, there has been a rediscovery of interwar Polish popular culture in new media and the academy, in music, and fringe theater, with each interacting and enriching the other.

Let’s begin with Dzigan and Shumacher. An episode of a 2004 documentary series about Israeli humor created by leading documentary makers Anat Seltzer and Modi Bar-On and directed by Avida Livni was dedicated to this Polish comedy duo. A show about them was performed in 2004 at the Yiddishpil Theater, established in 1988 with Israeli government support; it was titled *Di eybike Dzigan un Shumacher* (Dzigan and Shumacher Forever). In 2013, the Yiddishpil put on a new play, *Dzigan un Shumacher knakn shoyn vider* (Dzigan and Shumacher Are at It Again). This musical comedy written by two Israeli playwrights, B. Michael and Ephraim Sidon, starred the veteran Yiddish actor Yaakov Bodo and the famous Israeli comedian Dovale (Dov) Glickman.[[57]](#footnote-72)

New media are participating in the rediscovery of Polish popular culture. For instance, *Oneg Shabbat* is a very popular Israeli blog that has been published weekly since 2007. It is written by David Assaf, a professor of Jewish history at Tel Aviv University, who specializes in the study of East European Hasidism. He devoted several blog posts to how interwar songs transferred from Poland to Palestine and Israel, going from Polish and Yiddish to Hebrew. Assaf has also written a book in Hebrew that illlustrates intercultural connections through songs, such as the earlier mentioned “Ostatnia niedziela.”[[58]](#footnote-74) In addition, some historians of Israeli theater, such as Dorit Yerushalmi, Shely Zer-Zion, and Diego Rotman, have explored the Yiddish and Polish roots of Hebrew theater.

This academic research has nurtured a third route of transmission: the rediscovery through mainstream and fringe theater of interwar Poland’s popular culture in its Yiddish variant.

For instance, the Salamanca fringe theater group, in which Rotman is active, performed *Der Dybbuk (1937-2017): A Film Performance* based on the Yiddish film from 1937.[[59]](#footnote-75) It is a kind of political *szopka* (puppet theater) with references to *Dzigan and Shumacher's Escape 1949-2022*, based on their life stories.[[60]](#footnote-76)

The performances of the fringe theater Esther’s Cabaret, mentioned in the beginning of this article, are less ephemeral than those of Salamanca but similarly are shaped by the academy. Ya’ad Biran, the Yiddishist literary scholar and playwright, works closely with this theater group. Its productions re-create the atmosphere of interwar cabarets in Poland and draw on various Yiddish performance traditions, particularly those rooted in the United States, while incorporating elements of Israeli contemporary culture.

Esther's Cabaret, for instance, transforms Dzigan's signature red kerchief into “the red flag of the revolution” and marks interwar Yiddish culture as both “diaspora and jargon." It addresses questions of linguistic hegemony through the character of Yidele (a popular Yiddish name, lit. “little Jew”), as he talks about his rigid, cold wife (representing Hebrew) and his warm and voluptuous mistress (representing Yiddish). By doing that, it inverts the Hebrew–Yiddish official hierarchy.

In a captivating monologue, a Djinn wearing a galabieh (the robe worn in Arabic-speaking Mediterranean countries) and speaking Arabic engages in a conversation with a new immigrant from Poland, who lost all his entire family “there” and speaks Yiddish. They discuss the rightful ownership of the land that now is the State of Israel, the expulsion of the Arab village’s inhabitants, the emptiness left despite its replacement by a kibbutz, and the war, described as “worse than diabolic.” The Djinn says, “In this place, instead of fearing Djinns, people fear themselves.” The subordinated Palestinian population, Arab language, Islamic culture, and Yiddish diasporic culture from Poland are portrayed as simultaneously marginalized.

The production also aligns itself with the marginalized Mizrakhi culture, paying tribute to diasporic traditions as transnational and cosmopolitan in contrast to a dominant chauvinist, hyper-Zionist discourse. In a monologue from the show that premiered on June 2019 Esty declares, “I do not apologize to [contemporary Israeli poetry group] Ars-Poetica, I am also an oppressed minority,” referring to a contemporary Israeli poetry group that challenges the “Ashkenazi” monopoly of Israeli culture.[[61]](#footnote-77) This show also satirizes Jewish extremist messianism and the political fantasies surrounding construction of the Third Temple on El-Aksa’s mount.

It is worth noting that while Ester’s cabaret reinvents Poland’s interwar popular culture, it primarily focuses on its Yiddish variant. It adds a Yiddish twist to an imagined German-American tradition such as presenting a Yiddish version of the song "Cabaret" from the eponymous film, but overlooks the Polish ingredients of the theatrical tradition.

Transforming, and reimagining, the Yiddish *kleynkunst teater* provides a way to resist contemporary tendencies in Israeli politics and culture. It opposes hyper-Zionist chauvinistic policies, challenges the long-standing hegemony of the Hebrew language, critiques rampant messianism and its linkage to political practices, and questions homophobic discourse. Ultimately, it helps renegotiate a sense of belonging within an increasingly fragmented Israeli society while realigning the creators, performers, and audience with other subordinated Israeli cultures and discourses.

**Conclusion**

Elements of popular mass culture from interwar Poland gradually permeated popular culture in Mandate Palestine and, later, the State of Israel, eventually becoming an integral of cultural life thhere. Over time, the overseas origins of these cultural transfer were internalized so deeply that they became blurred. However, in recent decades, scholars, intellectuals, artists, and consumers have rediscovered them. What prompted this rediscovery?

There are several possible explanations, but I argue that those involved in rediscovering and re-creating interwar popular culture in Poland over the past fifteen years have been reacting to three elements of the nationalist, ultra-Zionist discourse of Netanyahu's administration. The first is its ethnocentricism, equating Jewish ethnonationalism with radical nationalism. The second element portrays East-Central European Jewish culture as diasporic. The third is the populist anti-Ashkenazi rhetoric that labels Central-East European Jews as an “old” elite and their culture as elitist, oppressive, and seeking to marginalize Mizrakhi (Oriental) Jewish culture.

This process of rediscovery, reinterpretation, and re-creation of Polish interwar culture reflects the ongoing project of Jewish identity negotiation. Artists, scholars, and performers, many of them of Ashkenazi descent who feel oppressed by Netanyahu's nationalist and authoritarian regime, find in Poland's interwar popular culture sociocultural and sociopolitical alternatives that, although unrealized, possess a metropolitan and cosmopolitan flavor in a somewhat counterfactual manner.

These artists, scholars, and performers are looking for their place in Israeli society. These delegitimized elites mourn what they perceive as a persecution of humanist values and seek a cosmopolitan vision that reinterprets the meaning of Israeli culture. The re-creation of prewar Polish songs, cabarets, and Yiddish theaters reflects a yearning for a culture that can laugh at its own limitations. Simultaneously, it offers a consciously contradictory "parochial-cosmopolitan" alternative that challenges both the prestigious intellectual cultures of the academy and many aspects of postmodern life.

This rediscovery is often dehistorized. Its significance lies in its differentiation from mainstream Israeli-Hebrew popular culture, its Mizrakhi variant, and the ubiquitous Americanized instant Hebrew pop. It reinvents an alternative mass culture, which time and again invigorates audiences with the experience of living in a contemporaneous imagined “national cosmopolitan” alternative.

In the transfer of cultural practices through theater, music, and songs from one collective to another, from one language to another, spanning seas and mountain chains, their original meanings underwent change. The new “translated” forms transformed them, imparting new meanings and challenging older patterns. Transferring is transforming. Within this transcultural process, concrete distinctions between "foreign” and “familiar” and between “cosmopolitan” and “parochial” were reshaped. On the one hand, differences blurred, but on the other hand, this process also reinforced—linguistically, culturally, and nationally—groupings and identities.

1. <https://bethshalomaleichem.co.il/esthers-cabaret/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. M. Szulkin, „Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej, cz. II (1936–1939)”, *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 117/1 (1981), p. 64. See also: Artur Patek, „Soplicowo nad Jarkonem. Próba portretu zbiorowego polskich uchodźców wojennych w Tel Awiwie (1940−1948),” Studia Środkowoeuropejskie i Bałkanistyczne,  Tom XXX (2021), pp. 29-51. <AU: I suggest supplying English translations wherever possible here.> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Mordekhai Naor (ed.), Beit café makom Katan ko! Beit Café makom adir! Café Ratzki: Café safruti betelAviv 1932-1935, Tel Aviv: Modan, 2006, pp. 76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
4. Mordekhai Naor (ed.), Beit café makom Katan ko! Beit Café makom adir! Café Ratzki: Café safruti betelAviv 1932-1935, Tel Aviv: Modan, 2006, pp. 76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
5. Mordekhai Naor (ed.), Beit café makom Katan ko! Beit Café makom adir! Café Ratzki: Café safruti betelAviv 1932-1935, Tel Aviv: Modan, 2006, pp. 84-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. See: „Nowy film z życia żydowskiego”, *Kino dla Wszystkich*, 24 July 1932 p. 8; “’Tsabar’ - hafilm hakolani haeretz Israelu harishon”, Doar hayiom, 26 June 1932, p. 3; “Tzabar – Film meKahayey Eretz Israel”, Haaretz, 13 Jene 1932, p. 4; “Anaf Ta’asiah chadash – Haseret Tszabar,” Haaretz, 29 June 1932, p. 4; “Ta’asiat sratim BeErtz Israel,” Haaretz 29 April 1932, republished in ”’Alilot’Tsabar: Yedi’ot al hafakat haseret aalilati harishn baharetz,” sinematek: Ktav et le-inienei kolnoa, 95 (July 1988), p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
7. Sh[imon]. S[amet], “Badim, Haartz, 7 August 1934, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
8. Katarzyna Dziekan, “Between anti-Semitism and political pragmatism: Polish perceptions of Jewish national endeavours in Palestine between the two world wars,” Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Southampton Faculty of Arts and Humanities, October 2019, p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
9. Katarzyna Dziekan, “Between anti-Semitism and political pragmatism: Polish perceptions of Jewish national endeavours in Palestine between the two world wars,” Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Southampton Faculty of Arts and Humanities, October 2019, p. 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
10. “A geshprekh mit Hanaka Ordonuvna ofn veg kan Erets Isroel“, Haynitge Nayes, 9 March 1934, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
11. Eugeniusz Bodo, “ Jestem w Palestynie”, 5-ta Rano: bezpartyjny dziennik żydowski, 19 January 1935, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
12. “Ha-im lutsina hi bakhurah?” Haaretz, 1 January 1935, p. 4; “2 kontsertim akhronim shel ha-Zamar ha\_polani A. Bodo,” Haarets 15 January 1935, p. 6; “Badim”, Haarets, 20 June 1936, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
13. „Zamar Polani ba-‘Ir,” Ha-Yarden, 19 December 1935, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
14. Uri Keisari, “E. Bodo Man’im zemirot beOhel shem,” Doar haYom, 17 December 1934, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
15. Sh. Samet,”be-Mamlekhet ha-Badim”, 19 February 1935, Haaretz, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
16. Ts.L. “Huliot,” Davar, 10 January 1935, p. 2. On the official promotion of Hebrew and the continued popular use of other languages, especially Yiddish, see Anat Helman, ‘‘’Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew’: National Ideology and Everyday Culture in Tel-Aviv,’’ Jewish Quarterly Review 92.3/4 (2002): 359–82 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
17. He even sang Hebrew songs he learned especially for the occasion, songs that he continued performing in Poland after his return. Sh. Samet,”be-Mamlekhet ha-Badim”, 19 February 1935, Haaretz, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
18. Sh. Samet,”be-Mamlekhet ha-Badim”, 17 December 1934, Haaretz, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
19. Sh. Samet,”be-Mamlekhet ha-Badim”, 19 February 1935, Haaretz, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
20. “Do Palestyny – wiosną 1934 (5) Z Hanką Ordonówną na pokładzie ‘Polonii’”, Nowy Dziennik 22 March 1934, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
21. Uri Keisari, “E. Bodo Man’im zemirot beOhel shem,” Doar haYom, 17 December 1934, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
22. Zelig Rusetski, “A lebediger grus fun Poylen: Hanka Ordonuvna ubn Tel Aviv” Der Moment, 21 March 1934, p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
23. Itschak Edel, “Be-Olam Ha-Neginahh: Hanka Ordonuvna” Doar Ha-Yom, 16 March 1934, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
24. On this song see: David Asaf, Shir hu Lo Rak Milim: Pirkey masa’ ba-Zemer ha-‘Ivri, Tel Aviv: Am Oved 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
25. <https://www.zemereshet.co.il/m/song.asp?id=4275&phrase=%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%92%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8> [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
26. For Instance, Nikodem (1933) lyrics by Ludwik Starski and music by the Jewish musician Adam Aston; Abram, Ja ci zagram! (1928) lyrics by Julian Tuwim, Music by Szymon Kataszek. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
27. Y. A. Shefi, Meyomano she haempresario Moshe Valin, Tel Aviv: Bamat haomanim, 1941, pp. 30-32, 36-38; Moshe Valin, Ya mim shel khol vekokhavim: Impresario ivri beartzeinu haktantonet, Tel Aviv: Taron Golan, 1998, p. 40-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
28. #  Magdalena Kozłowska, "A Spectacle of Differences: Bracha Zefira's Tour of Poland in 1929," in: Halina Goldberg, Nancy Sinkoff with Natalia Aleksiun (eds.), Polish Jewish Culture beyond the Capital, Centering the Periphery, Rutgers University Press, Forthcoming. See, also, M. Regev, E. Serousi, Popular Music and National Culture in Israel, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 196.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
29. Eugenia Prokop Janiec, Pogranicze polsko-żydowskie. Topografie i teksty, Kraków 2013, p. 37–40, 52; Eugenia Prokop Janiec, “Kontakt i konflikt: polsko-żydowska contact zone,” Tematy i Konteksty, 7/12 (2017), 58–72. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
30. Beth Holmgren, “A Warsaw Star in Tel Aviv: Fryderyk Járosy at “Li-La-Lo, 1947–1948.” Cosmopolitan Review. A Transatlantic Review of Things Polish in English (Vol. 6. No. 2 (2014). http://cosmopolitanreview.com/fryderyk-jarosy/. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
31. Shelly Zer-Zion, “Hard to Be a Jew in Mandatory Tel Aviv: Relocating the Eastern European Jewish Experience,” Jewish Social Studies , Vol. 24, No. 1 (Fall 2018), pp. 87-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
32. Dwora Gilula, Mul tagmul mechiot kapayim: Nathan Alterman veha-bamah ha-‘ivrit (Tel Aviv, 2008), 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
33. On the archetype of the German Jew on the Hamatate see: Tom Lewy, Ha-yekim ve-ha-te'atron ha-ivri: be-ma'avak ben mizrakh le-ma'arav erope (The German Jews and the Hebrew Theatre: a Clash between Western and Eastern Europe). Tel Aviv: Resling, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
34. Dorit Yerushalmi, “Legacies, archives, afterlife: re-envisioning the Li-La-Lo theatre (Tel Aviv, 1944–1948),” Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 17:2 (2018), 173-190; Roz,“Hallo, Kan Warsha,” Hamashkif 17 November 1941, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
35. Natan Gross, “W drodze i po drodze - polskie korzenie hebrajskiego kabaretu,” *Archiwum Emigracji: studia, szkice, dokumenty*, Vol 3 (2000), p. 103-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
36. Anna Mieszkowska, Jestem Jarosy! Zawsze ten sam... Warsaw: Muza, 2008, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
37. Ryszard Wolański, Tango Milonga: czyli co nam zostało z tamtych lat, Warsaw: Rebis, 2019, p. 288; Anna Mieszkowska, Bodo wśród gwiazd: opowie sć o losach twórców przedwojennych kabaretów, Warsaw: Marginesy 2016, p. 309; Anna Mieszkowska, „Czolówki Rewiowe Armii Polskiej na Wschodzie 1941-1947” Pamietnik Teatralny 47 nr. 185-186, (1998): 165-166. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
38. H. Ritterman-Abir, Nie od razu Kraków zapomniano, Tel Aviv: Tirosh 1984, p. 63; Mariola Szydłowska „Z dziejów żydowskich widowisk rozrywkowych we Lwowie przed 1945,” Pamiętnik Teatralny Vol 250 (2014), pp. 115-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
39. Moshe Valin, Yamim shel khol vekokhavim: Impresario ivri beartzeinu haktantonet, Tel Aviv: Taron Golan, 1998, p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
40. Yerushalmi p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
41. Natan Gross, “W drodze i po drodze - polskie korzenie hebrajskiego kabaretu,” *Archiwum Emigracji: studia, szkice, dokumenty*, Vol 3 (2000), p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
42. Moshe Valin, Yamim shel khol vekokhavim: Impresario ivri beartzeinu haktantonet, Tel Aviv: Taron Golan, 1998, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
43. Moshe Valin, Yamim shel khol vekokhavim: Impresario ivri beartzeinu haktantonet, Tel Aviv: Taron Golan, 1998, p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
44. “Jak się nie ma, co się lubi, To się lubi, co się ma.” Kazimerz Krukowski, Moja Warszawka, Warszaw: Filmowa agencja widawnicza, 1958, pp. 70, 87, 90. See also, Beth Holmgren, “The Polish-Language Cabaret Song: Its Multi-Ethnic Pedigree and Transnational Adventures, 1919-1968”, in: Tamare Trojanowska, Joanna Nizińska and Przemysław Czapliński (eds.), *Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture since 1918*, Totonto: University of Toronto Press, 2018, pp. 263-267. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
45. Anna Mieszkowska, „Zawsze ten sam, czyli Fryderyk Járosy na emigracji w latach 1945-1960,” Pamietnik Teatralny: czasopismo kwartalne poswiecone historii i krytyce teatru, Vol. 185/186 (1998): 260-321, here 282. Anna Mieszkowska, Mistrzowie kabaretu: Marian Hemar i Fryderyk Járosy – Od Qui pro Quo do Londynu, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło, 2016, p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
46. Anna Mieszkowska, Mistrzowie kabaretu: Marian Hemar i Fryderyk Járosy – Od Qui pro Quo do Londynu, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło, 2016, p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
47. Anna Mieszkowska, Mistrzowie kabaretu: Marian Hemar i Fryderyk Járosy – Od Qui pro Quo do Londynu, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło, 2016, p. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
48. Y. Berg, „Artzenu haktantonet be Li La Lo“ Kol Ha-‘Am, 19 September 1947, p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
49. Asher Lerner, “Kach katuv ba-leksikon – ha-Tochint ha-shishit be ‚li-la-lo’“, Hamaskif, 8 April 1946, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
50. Krakowski, Od Melponema; Wiera Gran, [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
51. Shimen Dzigan, Der Koiakh fun Yidishn humor, Tel Aviv , p. 93, 310. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
52. Diego Rotman, p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
53. Diego Rotman, p. 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
54. Diego Rotman, p. 154, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
55. Giora, “Ben-Ze’ev”, cited in Diego Rotman, p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
56. <https://shironet.mako.co.il/artist?type=lyrics&lang=1&prfid=552&wrkid=16453> [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
57. Diego Rotman, p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
58. <https://onegshabbat.blogspot.com/2015/03/blog-post_27.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
59. https://sala-manca.net/copy-of-der-dybbuk-1937-2017-live-performance [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
60. https://sala-manca.net/dzigan-and-shumachers-escape-1949-2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
61. I thank Ya’ad Biran for sharing with me the script of the different programs of Esther’s Cabaret. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)