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## From the Boat to the Stage

While the immigration of Eastern European Jews to America has been examined and documented extensively in books and on film, nothing quite conveys the aura and experience like the arts and entertainment of the time. For Jewish immigrants of the early 20th-century, it was in the uniquely Yiddish version of musical theater that their experiences were often most profoundly etched.

From *Di Grine Kuzine*, written by Abe Schwartz about the experience of a “green cousin,” fresh off the boat and hoping to make his fortune in America, to the longing of those left behind for news of their loved ones in

the new land (*A Brivele der Mamen* by Solomon Shmulevitsh), the experiences that they wrote about were universal to the immigrant experience. Occasionally, the tunes were so catchy that they transcended Yiddish theater and became world-wide hits—Sholom Secunda’s *Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn* is the most popular example.



### Enjoy



Secunda’s **Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn** sung by Simon Spiro enhanced **with subtitles**.

### Watch



our 4-minute documentary on **Great Songs of the Yiddish American Theater**.

### Read



this in-depth interview with **David Krakauer** on Sequenza 21.

Now streaming, the first hour of [episode four of the radio series \*American Jewish Music from the Milken Archive with Leonard Nimoy\*](#) features commentary by artistic director Neil W. Levin and conductor Gerard Schwarz. It’s an hour packed with classics from the American Yiddish theater. Beyond an intellectual insight to the time and place, these works offer an emotional experience from the voices of artists who were not only writing about the experience, they were living it.

Listen now to

**[American Jewish Music from the Milken Archive with Leonard Nimoy](#)**

**[Episode 4: Yiddish Theater, Part 1](#)**

