THEODORE BIKEL
sings
YIDDISH THEATRE
and
FOLK SONGS
arranged and conducted by
Dov Seltzer
The singing of songs in the Jewish home has been a tradition through the ages. Yiddish folk-songs were seemingly born in the ghettos of Eastern Europe and provided the accompaniment for family activities. Then, approximately a hundred years ago, the Jewish vocal repertoire suddenly expanded. Abraham Goldfaden organized the first Yiddish Theatre company in Jassy, Roumania and, within a few years, the age-old folksongs were joined by the new theatre songs.

Goldfaden recruited his actors from synagogue choirs. Since the entire enterprise was his invention, he, of necessity, became the first professional Yiddish playwright, composer and director. He even introduced his ex-choir singers to the art of dancing.

Transplanted on this side of the Atlantic before the turn of the century, Goldfaden's creation truly bloomed. Hordes of Jewish immigrants, eager to hear their native language spoken freely on the stage for the first time, flocked to the booming Yiddish theatres. In many European countries, notably Russia, Jewish theatre performances had required a special permit, obtainable only when the managent guaranteed that his actors would speak German, and not Yiddish.

The earliest Yiddish Theatre productions, in Europe, were as foreign to the audiences as they were to Goldfaden's conscripted actors. Nothing in their Jewish tradition had prepared them for entertainment of this sort. But, upon arrival in the United States, the Yiddish Theatre became a second home for many of the immigrants, and they attended performances night after night, learning and singing the songs of Goldfaden and such successors as Rumshinski, Olshanetsky, Ellstein and Secunda.

As the Yiddish Theatre grew, its music found an international audience. Many Yiddish Theatre songs, with English lyrics set to them, found their way to the American Hit Parade. Throughout the years, performers not connected with the Yiddish Theatre have sung Yiddish theatre songs, but no one has brought them into more homes, Jewish and non-Jewish, than Theodore Bikel. Through his many distinctive recordings, Theodore Bikel has captured the unique flavor of Yiddish song.

This new album is an amalgam of some of the best of Yiddish Theatre song, folksong and art song. Among the theatre songs are Mayn Shtetlele Belz, originally introduced by Maurice Schwartz; Kalt Vasser and A Chasene Tants. A Fint-Un-Tsvantsiger, Drei-Gelt, Machateyneste Mayne, and A Pintele are all authentic Yiddish folksongs. Di Grine Kuzine, Yessel Der Klezmer and Doina, though written by known authors, are definitely in the folk style and are standard in the Yiddish repertoire. Beygelach is of Russian origin but has been adapted with Yiddish lyrics.

Yiddish art songs, recognizable by the poetry of their lyrics and the folkloristic quality of their melodies, are represented in this album by Warschawsky's Dem Milner's Treren and Got Fun Avrohom, a poem by H. Rosenblatt, with a musical setting by Sholem Secunda.

This new album by Theodore Bikel compellingly presents the great variety inherent in Yiddish music.
THEODORE BIKEI
YIDDISH THEATRE & FOLK SONGS
1. A CHASENE TANTS
   (Ellstein, Metro Music) 2:17
2. DOINA (Fisher, Nina Music) 2:58
3. BEYGELACH (Kammen,
   Society of Jewish Composers) 3:01
4. DI GRINE KUZINE
   (Schwartz-Prizant, SOJC) 2:01
5. A PINTALE (Trad.) 3:55
6. DIRE-GELT (Trad.) 2:00
7. A FINF-UN-TSVANTSIGER (Trad.) 2:13
8. GOT FUN AVROHOM (Secunda-Rosenblatt,
   Metro Music) 3:08
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YIDDISH THEATRE & FOLK SONGS

1. KALT VASSER (Secunda, SOJC) 3:06
2. DEM MILNER'S TREREN (Trad.) 3:16
3. MACHATONIM (Trad.) 2:14
4. SHABES SHABES (Trad.) 2:47
5. MACHATEYNESTE MAYNE
   (Field, Metro Music) 1:46
6. MAYN SHTETELE BELZ (Jacobs-Olshanetzky,
   Bregman, Vocco & Conn) 3:12
7. YOSSEL DER KLEZMER
   (Feingold-Gross, SOJC) 3:00
8. A KLEYN MELAMEDL (Trad.) 3:02