

International Yiddish Conference a hit in Boca



Iosif Vaisman, International Association of Yiddish Clubs co-president, with Maxine Schackman, director of the Judaica Sound Archives at FAU in Boca Raton. Schackman did a presentation about Yiddish music at the IAYC International Conference in Boca Raton on Nov. 15. (Photo/Randall P. Lieberman)

By **Randall P. Lieberman**,
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

NOVEMBER 17, 2014, 3:08 PM

The International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC) brought its 16th International Conference to **Boca Raton** for the first time last weekend and may have found a permanent home for the conference.

IAYC Corresponding Secretary Barbara Goldstein was thrilled with the turnout and local enthusiasm for the conference (which was held at the **Boca Raton** Marriott at Boca Center from Nov. 14-17) and said the conference was much better attended than in recent years.

With the conference, the IAYC — an organization of Yiddish clubs that have affiliated to promote Yiddish language and culture — attempts to perpetuate the Yiddish language, and bring happiness and nostalgia to those who wish to hear its stories and songs.

Five plenary session speakers addressed the whole conference, with perhaps the most enlightening being Maxine Schackman — the director of the Judaica/Recorded Sound Archives at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in **Boca Raton** — who spoke and did a multi-media presentation about "Yiddish Music and Song: The Heartbeat of Immigrant Jews" on Saturday afternoon.

According to Schackman, the Judaica Sound Archives (JSA) at FAU — a project of the Recorded Sound Archives at FAU Libraries — is the largest online collection of Jewish music in the world. As of Nov. 15, the archives had recorded music by 7,344 Jewish performers, including 13,776 albums and 72, 577 song titles. The JSA at FAU Libraries has been collecting and preserving Jewish music since 2002.

Among the musical pieces Schackman presented that had the audience laughing and singing along were "Roumania, Roumania," written and performed by Yiddish theater star Aaron Lebedeff; "Good Night 'Oy Vey' Irene", a Yiddish parody of "Good Night Irene" sung by Seymour Rechtzeit and written by his wife, Miraim Kressyn; and "Bei Mir Bistu Shein," a Yiddish swing song that became a number-one single in America in 1938 as recorded by the Andrews Sisters.

Schackman said: "I never do these type presentations any more, but I made a special exception since the IAYC was bringing its conference to Boca. It took my staff six months to put this presentation together. I think we introduced the JSA to many new people today. We hope people will log on, listen to the music and give us their feedback."

For more information about FAU's Judaica Sound Archives, visit rsa.fau.edu/judaic or call 561-297-0080.

Copyright © 2014, Sun Sentinel
