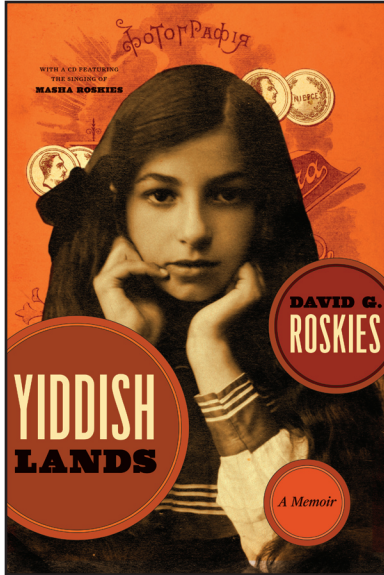




NEWS FROM WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

For immediate release

A Whirlwind Tour of Yiddish Culture from David G. Roskies!



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In *Yiddishlands*, renowned scholar David G. Roskies looks back on his life and the life of his mother, tracing the Yiddish experience through major historical events of the last century. Roskies's rich, sweeping memoir proceeds from the premise that Yiddish culture is spread out among many different people and geographic areas and transmitted through story, song, study, and the family.

Roskies leads readers through *Yiddishlands* old and new by revisiting his personal and professional experiences and retelling his remarkable family saga in a series of lively, irreverent, and interwoven stories. Beginning with a flashback to his grandmother's storybook wedding in 1878, *Yiddishlands* brings to life the major debates, struggles, and triumphs of the modern Yiddish experience, from its cabarets and literary salons to its fierce ideological rivalries and colorful personalities.

Roskies's story centers around Vilna, Lithuania, where his mother, Masha, was born in 1906 and where her mother, Fradl Matz, ran the legendary Matz Press, a publishing house that distributed prayer books, Bibles, and popular Yiddish literature. After falling in love with Vilna's cabaret culture, an older man, and finally a fellow student with elbow patches on his jacket, Masha and her young family are forced to flee Europe for Montreal, via Lisbon and New York. It is in Montreal that Roskies, Masha's youngest child, comes of age, entranced by the larger-than-life stories of his mother and the writers, artists, and performers of her social circle. Roskies recalls his own intellectual odyssey as a Yiddish scholar; his life in the original Havurah religious commune in Somerville, Massachusetts, in the 1970s; his struggle with the notion of aliyah while studying in Israel; his visit to Russia at the height of the Soviet Jewry movement; and his confrontation with his parents' memories in a bittersweet pilgrimage to Poland. **Along the way, readers of *Yiddishlands* meet such prominent figures as Isaac Bashevis Singer, Melekh Ravitch, Itsik Manger, Avrom Sutzkever, Esther Markish, and Rachel Korn.**

Roskies's memoir will be essential reading for students of the recent Jewish past and of the living Yiddish present. An audio CD of Masha Roskies singing in Yiddish, Russian, and Polish is also included with this volume.

"David G. Roskies's passionate narrative of a brilliant family is more than a memoir of rupture and renewal—it is a history of a civilization, its languages, its lost cities, its living songs."

—**Cynthia Ozick**, recipient of the National Book Critics Circle Award and finalist for the Pulitzer Prize

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Wayne State University Press
The Leonard N. Simons Building
4809 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48201-1309

Phone: (800) WSU-READ

Fax: (313) 577-6131

wsupress.wayne.edu

For more information on this book or to interview the author, please contact Sarah Murphy, Promotions Manager, Wayne State University Press, (313) 577-6077 tel; (313) 577-6131 fax; murphysa@wayne.edu. To learn more about the Press, please visit wsupress.wayne.edu.