

# SHOLEM ALEICHEM ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO

## THE STORY AND SONGS OF THE REDISCOVERED 1905 MUSICAL STEMPENYU

Monday, October 15, 2018

Noon-1 pm

The Magnes

2121 Allson Way, Berkeley

Program presented in partnership with  
Taube Philanthropies and  
Center for Jewish Studies, GTU



**Karen Underhill**  
University of Illinois at Chicago



**Sharon Bernstein**  
Congregation Sha'ar Zahav,  
San Francisco

In June of 1905, Sholem Aleichem—author of the Tevye Stories—met in Warsaw with theater producers Spivakovsky and Adler, and agreed to pen adaptations of his fiction works for theatrical production on stages throughout the Russian Empire. Only a few months later, caught in the anti-Jewish violence that accompanied the outbreak of the 1905 Revolution, Aleichem quickly made plans to flee Russia with his family. He sent his newly adapted musical of *Stempenyu*, a novella about the handsome klezmer *Stempenyu* and his love for the beautiful and married Rokhele, to New York, where it was rejected as being far too traditional for a US audience. A later version of the play, rewritten for the American stage by director Tomashevsky, opened in New York in 1907, to less than rave reviews.

Forgotten and never staged, the author's original handwritten Yiddish manuscript of *Stempenyu* turned up over a century later in the basement of a home slated for demolition in Chicago's once-Jewish South Shore neighborhood. In this program we tell the story of the manuscript's reemergence, and bring to life the author's original *Stempenyu* – the story of a community bound by language, tradition and music – with songs and instrumental pieces from the original musical production that Sholem Aleichem intended for the Russian stage.

Read more at [bit.ly/musicalstempenyu](http://bit.ly/musicalstempenyu)