

Fiddle Strings

Adapted from a story By **Shalom Aleichem**

Play no. 32

Opening show: 17/12/1935

Staged by : B. Chemerinsky

Settings by : E. Luftglass

Music by: Fordhaus Ben Zissi

Dance: F. Liubitsh

Cast

Shaye Michel, a wine seller: A. Amitai

Peise Belle, his wife: Y. Yudlevitz

Zemele, their son: A. Baratz

Naphtali Bezorodky: B. Tchemerinsky

Chava, his wife: Bat-Ami

Hamele, their son: H. Hendler

Chechik , the conductor of the "Klesmer": A. Meskin

Hershel: R. Klatzkin

Esterl, his daughter: N. Shein

Shlom Shahana: Binyamini

Pini)
R. Klatzkin

Karkashta)
A. Amitai

Gargarta) **Naphtali's son "Klesmer"** S. Bruk

Pilpelath)
N. Shein

Srultehe the drumer: I. Segal

Scene 1

Near the drum-shaped house of Naphtali "Klesmer" Zemele is seen standing lending an ear to the tones of the fiddle coming from the house. For a piece of bread and butter Zemele was granted by Hemele, Naphtali's son, the privilege of being a free listener near the window – but alas! The first obstacle: Ephraim, the apy and informer, finds him out.

Scene 2

Zemele is seen in his father, the wine seller's house. He resolved to become a fiddler, come what may! He does not pay any attention to learning, dreams about the fiddle and strives to catch sounds from the air. Hemele "transacts" with him about "musical materials", such as steel, taken out from mother's corset, resin for the bow, hair from a horse's fail, and the likes of these. Zemele's father and mother take their son's "lust" very much to heart.

Scene 3

And Hershel, the holder of the revenue concession, has a young daughter called Esterl, who is destined to be Zemele's bride. In the meantime she is playing "marbles" just them Zemele and Hemele come to steal hairs from the fail of Methuselah, the old horse in Hershel's stable, and tease Esterl – Flesterl, as is the custom of all Heder children. She complains to her father and calls for help. In the meanwhile Zemele learns from his friend the secret

of the fiddle: it is made of acacia wood from Palestine, but there is some to be gotten in father's house as well; why, that is the bark covering the old sofa!

Scene 4

Fortune smiles upon Zemele: a frequent visitor of his father, the wine seller, was Chechik, the conductor, who is called "Polkovik", for he was at one time the leader of the military band. He is seen in the company of Naphtali "Klezmer", sitting over a glass of whiskey and chatting very lovingly and amicably over matters of music. Naphtali has Chechik hear his "composition". They go over to a merry "Polka". Chechik makes even Peise Beile dance. But all is not well: Sholom Shachna the matchmaker comes in and finds them acting so childish. Hershel too comes in with Esterl his daughter, to complain to Shaye Michel about his son who mocked at his Esterl. Chechik makes peace, and it then occurs to Sholom Shachna that this is a match. Shaye Michel falls asleep and Zemele and Hemele begin to do their stealing act of the acacia wood. He awakes and there is a scandal in the house.

Scene 5

At the home of Naphtali "Klesmer". The bread is scarce but the eaters are many. The members of the family, who are also the "Klesmer", await a meal which doesn't come. Chava, "the lady of the house", urges the head of the family to get some food for the musician. It so happens that Zemele comes in just then and Pini "transacts" with him about a music lesson with his father. Zemele hands them a rubel in cash as a deposit. The house is filled with light and merriment; they begin to feast and a joyous "march" is in full force. Zemele is over-enthused hearing the music and faints.

Scene 6

On the sofa in his father's house we see Zemele "music-sick"; he has "fiddle-fever", he is "fiddle-mad". His anxious mother is at his side. His friend Hemele comes to bring him a new bargain: two silver strings and a stand. His mother puts them under his pillow for a remedy. When his father comes in he hears his son utter the following words for the first time: Paganini, forto, primo, secundo... Zemele falls asleep and dreams...

Scene 7

And while Zemele's heart is filled with the dream of the fiddle, Sholom Shachna, the matchmaker, is anxious to match him up. He brings with him Hemele, the bride's father, to look at the groom and examine him in the Bible. Zemele reads them a chapter from "The Songs of Songs". He passes the examination and a dish is broken as a sign of Mazal Tov!

Scene 8

Zemele is no longer a youngster, he is a bridegroom. But his heart goes out to the fiddle. On Saturday he steals out of his house and goes to Chechik's and again meets with Ephraim. Zemele is not aware of the obstacles, and enters the house and is charmed and enchanted by everything he hears and sees there. The conductor too grows fond of his young friend "who loves music like all Jews" and presents him with a fiddle.

Scene 9

Satan, in the form of Ephraim Katz, is powerful now. Saturday evening he comes to Shaye Michel's house; It is the hour when he says the "Havdala" prayer. He takes a seat and tells the bridegrooms father – after having come from the bride's home – everything he has seen. Zemele comes in all scared, holding the fiddle under his coat. He tries to clear himself and to hold peace, and therefore tells his father that he has been to the synagogue. But everything is known and the scandal begins. The matchmaker comes in the name of the bride's father, and returns the document of engagement and wants to take back the watch, the engagement gifts.

Zemele broken-hearted makes amends. He goes to return the fiddle to Chechik. On the way he again comes upon Naphtali's house and is again taken by the fiddles and its charm.