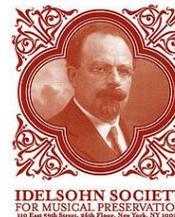


NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN JEWISH
HISTORY



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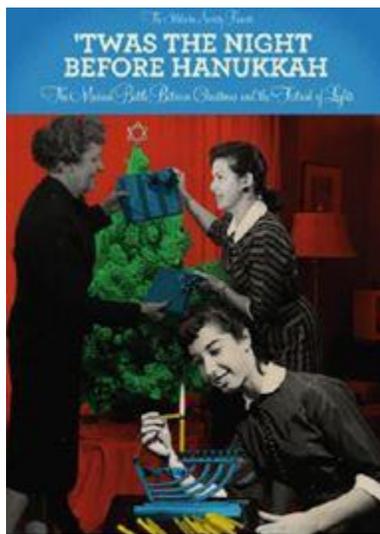
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'Twas the Night Before Hanukkah
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY
Museum and Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation



Cover of *'Twas the Night Before Hanukkah*, courtesy of the Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation.

The history of Hanukkah and Christmas songs and the Jewish musicians, artists, and songwriters who wrote and performed them is the focus of the **National Museum of American Jewish History's** newest installation, **'Twas the Night Before Hanukkah**, opening **November 4, 2014**. The installation combines a cozy living room setting with modern technology to deliver a compelling story about the blending of the American and Jewish musical season, the soundtracks of religious holidays, and the musical standards we know today.

Featuring well-known artists such as Irving Berlin, Benny Goodman, Bob Dylan, the Ramones, and Lou Reed, as well as Christmas gems by the likes of Jewish salsa giant Larry Harlow, and Jewish stage and screen icons Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson, this multimedia installation will set to music American Jewish efforts to invent, re-invent, and celebrate a season marked by family, gift-giving, food traditions, and well-loved music—across multiple faiths.

“The Christmas music industry, as a quintessentially American enterprise, provided a way for Jewish songwriters, many of them immigrants or children of immigrants, to feel American. By showing how an outsider community can enter mainstream American culture, Christmas songs highlight a classic American Jewish narrative,” says Ivy Weingram, associate curator of NMAJH and co-curator of *‘Twas*.

In a gallery styled as a cozy living room, visitors will be able to enjoy interactive song and video platforms, as well as images of holiday-related artifacts from the Museum’s collection of 30,000 objects, delivered on curated iPads accompanied by text and graphics of holiday celebrations. In addition to the audio visual component of the installation, visitors will have hands-on access to record albums, a wide selection of books on American popular music and Jewish history, and kids’ toys and books.

A *‘Twas*-themed self-guided tour highlighting holiday-related objects in the permanent collection will also be available.

The installation is inspired by the critically-acclaimed 2012 music compilation produced by the Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation, which draws on jazz, folk, rap, Latin, and Klezmer musical styles. “At the Idelsohn Society, our goal has always been re-examining the Jewish-American musical past in new contemporary contexts,” says Idelsohn co-founder, Josh Kun. “Collaborating with NMAJH offers a rare opportunity to do this in a premier Museum setting where these songs and their commentaries on Jewish life, identity, and ritual will take on new meanings with new publics.”

‘Twas the Night Before Hanukkah will build on the cutting-edge interactive media for which the Museum has been widely recognized. This family-friendly, seasonal installation will run through March 1 and is designed to be enjoyed by visitors of all backgrounds.

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The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.