The Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies presents

THE 2022 TOBIAS LECTURE

with

David Wertheim

Director of Menasseh ben Israel Instituut for Jewish Cultural and Social Studies
University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Jewish Cultural Quarter

PARADOXES OF A PLEASER

THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL OF LEO FULD’S YIDDISH REPERTOIRE AND THE CENTRALITY OF POSTWAR JEWISH CULTURE

With Yiddish hit songs such as My Yiddishe Mama and Wo ahin soll ich geh’n, the Dutch-born singer Leo Fuld became an international star in the early years after the Second World War, many years before the Klezmer revival. His work is riddled with paradoxes. It is Zionist and diasporic, explicitly Jewish and very Gentile, and it exerted an appeal to non-Jewish audiences in Europe, the United States, and even the Arab world. What was his secret? Why did his audiences embrace his particular interpretation of Jewish music? And what does his success tell us about the reasons Jewish culture so often occupied a central place in the postwar era?

David J. Wertheim is a cultural historian and director of the Menasseh ben Israel Institute of Jewish Studies in Amsterdam. His research interests include modern German Jewish History and post-Holocaust Jewish non-Jewish relations. His most recent publication, Waar gaat het over als het over Joden gaat? (Amsterdam: de Bezige Bij, 2022), discusses the centrality of Jewish themes in Dutch public debate.

For more information about this event, visit

[link to event page]

Tuesday

Nov. 29

4PM / MEMORIAL UNION
OLD MADISON ROOM
800 Langdon St. Madison, WI

The lecture will also be livestreamed for those unable to attend in person

Co-sponsored by the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+