



Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof

Alisa Solomon

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A sparkling and eye-opening history of the Broadway musical that changed the world

In the half-century since its premiere, *Fiddler on the Roof* has had an astonishing global impact. Beloved by audiences the world over, performed from rural high schools to grand state theaters, *Fiddler* is a supremely potent cultural landmark.

In a history as captivating as its subject, award-winning drama critic Alisa Solomon traces how and why the story of Tevye the milkman, the creation of the great Yiddish writer Sholem-Aleichem, was reborn as blockbuster entertainment and a cultural touchstone, not only for Jews and not only in America. It is a story of the theater, following Tevye from his humble appearance on the New York Yiddish stage, through his adoption by leftist dramatists as a symbol of oppression, to his Broadway debut in one of the last big book musicals, and his ultimate destination? a major Hollywood picture.

Solomon reveals how the show spoke to the deepest conflicts and desires of its time: the fraying of tradition, generational tension, the loss of roots. Audiences everywhere found in *Fiddler* immediate resonance and a usable past, whether in Warsaw, where it unlocked the taboo subject of Jewish history, or in Tokyo, where the producer asked how Americans could understand a story that is "so Japanese."

Rich, entertaining, and original, *Wonder of Wonders* reveals the surprising and enduring legacy of a show about tradition that itself became a tradition.

Wonder of wonders, miracle of miracles.



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