

It is rare today that someone creates a new music video to accompany a Yiddish song, especially outside of the Hasidic world. Recently, however, a film arrived here that was made to accompany Wolf Krakowski's version of a Russian song about the partisans, translated into Yiddish. This song, "Those Nights" was originally written by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. The Yiddish translation is by Moshe Sachar and was one of the songs that the Israeli singer David Eshet sang on a popular record of the 1970s, "Forbidden Songs."

Wolf Krakowski is mostly known in the Yiddish world for his performances of Yiddish songs sung in a "rock," "blues," and sometimes even a "reggae" style. His albums "Gilgul/Transmigrations" (1997) and "Goyrl/Destiny" (2002) are popular among the followers of "world music" and serve as a rare example of "blues" music in Yiddish. A child of Holocaust survivors, Krakowski was born in a refugee camp in Austria and grew up in Toronto. He later worked as an actor, a carpenter, a guitar maker, . . . as well as an interviewer for the Shoah project.

His best-known song from the album "Gilgul," is his version of Shmerke Kaczerginski's bitter lament "Friling/Springtime," which the Vilna partisan wrote after the death of his wife in the Vilna Ghetto. This heavy theme finds purification in Krakowski's "blues" style with his bass voice, that sometimes sounds like the growl of a wounded, wild animal [Thanks, Rukhl!]. . . .