Acknowledgements

This book, which is an updated translation of the Hebrew book that developed from my PhD dissertation, was a long journey. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the many people who accompanied me on it.

The dedicated and generous staff of the various archives I consulted helped me access rare materials and firsthand sources that were vital for my research. I am grateful to the staff of the Yehuda Gabbai Theatre Archive in the Beit Ariela Library in Tel Aviv (BAA), who helped me find files, recordings, and photographs in the collections of Shimen Dzigan and Yisroel Shumacher. I would also like to thank the staff at the Israel Goor Theatre Archives and Museum at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (IGTA) and the Israeli Center for The Documentation of the Performing Arts at Tel Aviv University (ICDPA). Lydia Shumacher-Ophir z"l was extremely generous, speaking to me at length and helping me in any way she could, including loaning me photographs from her private collection, which are reproduced in this book. I also thank the Ophir family, Kareen and Alexander Israel. Assaf Gallay graciously shared with me the detailed investigation he conducted into Dzigan and Shumacher when making a documentary film about the duo for Israeli television. I am likewise grateful to the many actors and directors who agreed to be interviewed and shared their experiences of working with the artistic duo.

I am deeply grateful to my dissertation advisors Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Prof. Yechiel Szeintuch, for the many years of encouragement and support during the writing of my dissertation and for never giving up on me. They were a source of endless inspiration, ideas, and enlightening comments; without them this book would never have been written. I am also indebted to Avraham Novershtern, who read the Hebrew manuscript, offering important feedback that expanded its perspective and honed many details. I thank my many teachers who instilled in me a love of Yiddish language and culture.

During the writing of this book, Da'at Hamakom: Center for the Study of Cultures of Place in the Modern Jewish World became a temporary home for me. Likewise, I am very grateful to Beth Shalom Aleichem for supporting the publication of the Hebrew version of this book. Thanks to Jonathan Nadav and the Magnes Press for their support and to Julia Barcuh and De Gruyter for joining me as a partner in this English adventure.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Joel Berkowitz, Jeffrey Shandler, Zehavit Stern, and Andrew Ingall supported the initiative of translating this book into English, offering constructive comments on the manuscript at various stages. I am most deeply grateful to Irene Pletka for encouraging me to publish this English version

and to the Kronhill Pletka Foundation and the Israel Science Foundation for making it possible.

Rebecca Wolpe, my brilliant translator, has been a patient and sincere companion throughout this journey. Thanks to Sharon Assaf for her meticulous copyediting and her insightful comments on the manuscript. I am very grateful to Vera Salomon for checking, correcting, editing, and commenting on the Yiddish quotations and translations and offering other important insights. I also thank Adi Kaplan and Shahar Carmel for the beautiful oil paintings they produced when I asked them to design a cover for the book. Today I find myself unable to imagine Dzigan and Shumacher without their visual interpretation, as it appears on the cover of this book.

Finally, I extend my deepest thanks to my family. My beloved children, Ashu and Nahuel, who were born and raised while I was researching and writing this book. They would ask me repeatedly about Dzigan and Shumacher, always confusing the two, and laugh with me while I watched footage of them, even if they could not understand the language. Lea Mauas, my life partner, has been by my side continuously, both while writing - commenting and supporting - and in our work together as artists. Indeed, on more than one occasion we have seen ourselves through the lens of Dzigan and Shumacher, a pair of actors responding critically to the complex surrounding reality. Like them, the stage has often been our home.

Last but not least, I lovingly acknowledge my grandfather, Usher Rotman. It was with him that I first discovered a recording of Dzigan, learned about the beauty of the Yiddish language, and encountered the tradition of listening to skits on records, even before I learned Yiddish. Most of all, I thank my parents, Mery Goldwaser z"l and Samuel Rotman z"l, for their love, their humor, and so many things, big and small.