Washington State JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Powered by Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle

Recording Date: June 12, 2025
Last Edited: July 10, 2026

Dov Matthews

SUMMARY

Dov Matthews shares his Jewish heritage and fond childhood memories of "Fiddler On The Roof". He explores the meaning of representing his personal heritage onstage. Dov Matthews also shares some details about growing up in Washington and his family traditions.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Would you say your name for me, please?

Dov Matthews: Yeah, my name is Dov Matthews.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Great. Okay. So yeah, look at me.

Dov Matthews: Yeah. Of course.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: I'm just going to ask you two questions.

Dov Matthews: Of course.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Okay. Um, may I have your consent to record?

Dov Matthews: Absolutely.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Thanks. Would [Stuttering] This is my last one for the day [Laughs].

Dov Matthews: I can tell it's a long day [Laughs].

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: What's your relationship to the Jewish community or to Fiddler on the roof?

Dov Matthews: Yeah. Um, so I myself, I am Jewish. It's from my mom's side. Um, she came here from Chicago. And through that, you know, that goes all the way back to my extended family. We did, like, a genealogy test. Figured out it went all the way back to, like, uh, like the Ukraine area. And then from there, kind of just around, um, but, yeah, I have had, you know, I've been connected with that all my life. I had my bar mitzvah. I did the whole shebang. Um, and with Fiddler in particular, I remember, like, listening and watching the movie as a kid and being absolutely obsessed with it because come on, representation on film, it just doesn't happen frequently, at least in not necessarily the dreariest of light. Um, and yeah, Fiddler became this. Like when I found out, actually, that WICA was doing it, I was super excited and fully missed auditions, um, and came here basically on a whim, being like, can I just, like, join the cast? Um, it was, uh, it's a really incredible moment just to be here and kind of represent a little bit more of my personal heritage on a stage in a way that isn't like, you know, the dreariest, saddest thing in the world. There's a little bit of joy.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Yeah, totally. Um, can you tell me where is home for you or where you grew up?

Dov Matthews: Yeah. Um, so for Washington, I'm a I'm a transplant from California. Um, but we moved up here when I was super young, and it's kind of been split between two places. The first one was like Kenmore area out on the mainland, and the other one

was um, was Edmonds. Um, it's where I grew up for most of high school and where I made my closest friends, where I got to meet the person who's playing Hoddle. Um, we graduated high school, and I had, you know, I haven't worked with her since then. Um, but, like, that whole area is home for me. Um, yeah.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: Okay. Um, and tradition is like one of the themes of the show, main theme of the show. How do you, are there family traditions that you've kept up or traditions you've had change in your family?

Dov Matthews: Uh, yeah. Actually, um, I mean, obviously it comes kind of with the faith, you know, being like, you know, we're going to do as much as we can. We're going to do Passover every year. We're still going to do Purim. We're still going to figure all this out, um, Rosh Hashanah when we can. And then there's the ones that kind of spawn from, uh, just not necessarily my Jewish background, like my dad when he was a lot younger. Um, they didn't have a lot of money growing up. And so as such, um, when they had a little bit of extra money, they would make like this one dish. And even now we just have it as a bit of a reminder just to be like, hey, times could be hard, but they're not right now. Um, yeah, that's at least a little tradition that my family still keeps up with.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: That's really sweet. Would you share what the dishes are?

Dov Matthews: Yeah. Um, it's so we we like referring to it as Grammy's dish. Um, she was a she was a stickler for, um, effective meals. She was like, we're going to make sure that you're going to get food, and it's going to be the cheapest, most filling thing possible. So she would make like a giant, like vat of rice. And then to that, like Campbell's Cream of mushroom stew and combine, uh, like ground beef with it. And it would just be this I don't know how else to explain it. It's a gruel, you know, it's this not maybe the most appetizing looking thing in the world, but, um, it definitely reminds me of home.

Ruth Kodish-Eskind: I love that. Thank you so much.

Dov Matthews: Of course.