

# CWRU MUSIC

## CONCERT SERIES

Department of Music  
Case Western Reserve University

# *Klezmer Manuscripts and Yiddish Collections*

KLEZMER MUSIC ENSEMBLE



Steven Greenman  
*Director*

Thursday, December 8, 2022  
7:30 PM | Harkness Chapel  
11200 Bellflower Road Cleveland, OH



[case.edu/artsci/music](http://case.edu/artsci/music)

## Program

Evreiski Motiv (Gasin Nigin)	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-5-67
Skotshne-Freylekhs	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak3-127-227
Processional Nign	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak3-105-190
Tzomo L'Kho Nafshi	Traditional Chabad-Lubavitcher Hasidic Tune
Matthew Haimowitz, <i>tenor</i>	
Skotshne #60 and #46	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-7-65/66
Evreyske Skotshne (Karahod)	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-17-85
Hopke #102 (An Alter Yidisher Freylekhs)	Composed by Rakhmiel Vaynshteyn from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-7-70
Burikes	from <i>Yiddish Folk Songs</i> compiled by Sarah Pitkowsky Shack
Matthew Haimowitz, <i>tenor</i>	
Shabesdiker Nigunim	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-16-82/83
A Gasn Shtikl	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-23-100
A Gasn Nign	from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky* KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-41-129

~ *Intermission* ~



*Please silence any electronic noise-producing devices. Thank you and enjoy the performance!*

**Ange Medley**

from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky\*  
KMDMP Catalogue: K977, K975, K976

**Kobrin Composition**

Composed by Irving Markowitz  
arr. by S. Greenman

**Tish Nign #104**

from *Jewish Musical Folklore, Vol. 4*  
*Jewish Folksongs Without Words*  
Compiled by Moshe Beregovski

Matthew Haimowitz, tenor

**Romans**

Composed by Motl Reydel  
from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky\*  
KMDMP Catalogue: K1004

**A Yidisher Tentsele**

from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky\*  
KMDMP Catalogue: Mak5-6-264

**Nign #139**

from *Jewish Musical Folklore, Vol. 4*  
*Jewish Folksongs Without Words*  
Compiled by Moshe Beregovski

Matthew Haimowitz, tenor

**A Bolgar Freylekhs**

from the notebooks of Avrom Makonovetsky\*  
KMDMP Catalogue: Mak1-23-101

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Special thanks to **The Klezmer Institute** (<https://klezmerinstitute.org/>) for their serious efforts in disseminating this valuable collection of music through the **Kiselgof-Makonovetsky Digital Manuscript Project** (KMDMP - <https://klezmerinstitute.org/kmdmp/>) to musicians, scholars, researchers, and performers.

## Program Notes

### Klezmer Manuscripts and Yiddish Collections

by Steven Greenman

Our special program this evening features klezmer music from the recently available handwritten notebooks (*hefts*) of Avrom Makonovetsky's Wedding Manuscript. Long preserved in the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, the notebooks had been inaccessible to klezmer musicians and scholars until 2017 when the researcher, Anna Rogers (University of Tokyo) traveled to Kyiv, Ukraine and obtained a formal request for research access to the materials. She was granted permission to copy high-quality photographs of the pages of several of the notebooks housed in Archive #190. The Klezmer Institute, dedicated to supporting Ashkenazic Jewish expressive culture through research, teaching, publishing, and programming, has disseminated the works and has coordinated an international volunteer effort to digitally notate, transcribe, and translate all the music and marginalia in the corpus (the Kiselgof-Makonovetsky Digital Manuscript Project or "KMDMP"). The corpus comprises approximately 1300 melodies, and as of November 2022, 90% of the corpus has been digitally notated. Avrom Makonovetsky's Wedding Manuscript is a bountiful treasure that beautifully augments the major collections of klezmer and Yiddish folk music collected by the Jewish scholars Moshe Beregovski (*Jewish Musical Folklore, Vol. 3 - Jewish Instrumental Folk Music and Vol. 4 - Jewish Folksongs Without Words*), Joachim Stutchewsky (*HaKlezmorim*), and Moshe Bik (*Jewish Wedding*).

I carefully chose the music for tonight's concert from the vast collection of material to reflect a wide sampling of the unique and varied klezmer music repertoire. After transcribing the tunes from the handwritten notes, I arranged the music in the traditional style for the students to perform. As part of their class requirements, the students were also given individual pieces from the Makonovetsky notebooks to transcribe and record to gain experience with the process of learning klezmer music from old handwritten sources.

Our concert program includes the special artistic listening klezmer repertoire: *skotshnes* (elaborate dance tunes for listening), *gas nigunim* (street tunes), *Shabes nigunim* (Sabbath tunes), romances and processional; as well as the varied klezmer dance repertoire: *hopke*, *freylekhs*, *bulgar*, *hora*, *honga*. Additional pieces include Hasidic spiritual melodies (*nigunim*); a poignant Yiddish song from Sarah Pitkowsky Shack's compilation *Yiddish Folk Songs*; and a modern klezmer composition written in the traditional style by Irving Markowitz.

## Musical Descriptions

**Evreiski Motiv (*Gasin Nigin*)** – (Jewish Motif – Street Tune) – *Gas Nigunim* (street tunes) are klezmer display pieces that were played to escort the guests to and from different parts of the traditional East European Jewish wedding. This *rubato* composition includes the written Yiddish note: "*Mit der mit Evreiski Motiv firt men a khusn af der vetshere a gasin nigin shpilt zeyer langzam.*" ("With the Jewish Motif, one leads the groom to the supper with a street tune played very slowly").

**Skotshne-Freylekhs** – (Virtuosic Dance) – The *skotshne* is an elaborate klezmer piece performed for listening and based on the Yiddish line dance *freylekhs*. The inscription written above the music states: "*Nokh dem mazltov oder dobranotsh shpilt men a freylekhs.*" ("After the congratulatory tune and good night tune, a Yiddish line dance is played").

**ProceSSIONAL NIGN** – (ProceSSIONAL Tune) – Much like *gas nigunim*, processional tunes were performed by the *klezmorim* to lead the wedding party and the wedding guests to and from different parts of the wedding celebration. The inscription above describes the musicians leading the groom to the bride prior to the wedding ceremony: "*Dem muzike firt dem khusn iberin gas di kale badekn mit dem nign.*" ("The music leads the groom through the street for the veiling of the bride with the tune").

**Tzomo L'Kho Nafshi** – (My Soul Thirsts for You) – *Tzomo L'Kho Nafshi* is a *nign* (Jewish spiritual tune) of the Lubavitcher Hasidim, a sect of ultra-orthodox Judaism and named after the Russian town of Lyubavichi. Written with Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian lyrics, *Tzomo L'Kho Nafshi* describes the Jewish soul's striving toward Godliness while resisting the evil inclination.

**Skotshne #60 and #46** – (Virtuosic Dances) – Two short *skotshnes* from the Makonovetsky notebooks that also appear in Moshe Beregovski's compilation of klezmer music, *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music*.

**Evreyske Skotshne (Karahod)** – (Jewish Virtuosic Dance) – *Karahod* is a Lithuanian term for a common Jewish dance or *freylekhs*. This piece is often performed as a dance with much *rubato* and was recorded in Warsaw, Poland (circa 1911-1914) by the Rumynski Orkestr Belfa (Belf's Romanian Orchestra) as "*Simkhes Toyre*" ("Joyful Celebration of the Torah"). This prolific Jewish ensemble made many recordings of traditional klezmer music and was led by its clarinetist, V. Belf.

**Burikes (Beets)** – A sentimental Yiddish song found in *Yiddish Folk Songs* (New York, 1927) collected and compiled by Sarah Pitkowsky Shack that describes a husband and wife contemplating how they will be able to afford food for the Passover holiday.

**Shabesdiker Nigunim** (Sabbath Tunes) – These two melodies include the inscription “*Men zingt a shabesdikn nign ba dem tish far dem kigl*” and “*Dem Shabesdikn nign zingt men bayn tish ba dem kigl*” (“One sings a Sabbath song at the table before the kugel”). Generally, tunes sung on the Sabbath (Yid. *Shabes*) are called *zmires* (paraliturgical melodies). One can assume here that the *kugel*, the traditional Sabbath baked pudding/casserole, was indeed a special meal meriting its own tunes.

**A Gasn Shtikl** (A Little Street Piece) – Another *gas nign* performed as a serious artistic Jewish *rubato* composition.

**A Gasn Nign** (A Street Tune) – In contrast to the previous *rubato* composition on our concert program, this *gas nign* is written as a *bulgar*, a Yiddish line-dance with Moldavian-Romanian musical characteristics. We arranged and will perform the piece as a slow *hora* (aka, *zhok*) with its unique limping rhythm, before performing it as a rhythmically-driving *bulgar*.

### **INTERMISSION**

**Ange Medley** (Moldavian Hangu Medley) – The *ange* (also *onga*, *hongga*, *hangu*, *hangu!*) is based on the Moldavian *hangu*, a dance in which a line of male and female dancers follows behind a leader, performing partly improvised steps. (From Feldman, W.Z., *Klezmer – Music, History, & Memory*, 2016). *Ange Medley* combines three different *ange* tunes from Makonovetsky’s notebooks.

**Kobrin Composition** (Composition from Kobrin) – This beautiful composition by Irving Markowitz, is written in the style of a *zay gezunt*, an artistic klezmer farewell piece played for listening at the end of the wedding day. I received a copy of the handwritten music from my colleague, Mark Freiman, who received it from Irving Markowitz’ grandson, David Kazdan. Serendipitously, I met David through my colleague Liza Grossman, at the end of his viola lesson with her, and just before our klezmer music rehearsal. At our concert, we surprised David with a performance of his grandfather’s composition. At times mournful while other times bittersweet, the Kobrin Composition was begat through the process of musical transcription, historical analysis, and the arranging of handwritten Jewish music.

**Tish Nign #104** (Table Song #104) – This tune is from Moshe Beregovski’s volume of Jewish spiritual melodies (*nigunim*), *Jewish Musical Folklore, Vol. 4 - Jewish Folksongs Without Words*. It was collected from an audio recording of an unknown Yiddish vocalist and melodically resembles the Ukrainian folk song *Arkan*, with its use of the raised fourth scale degree in the minor mode.

**Romans** (Romance) – While written in the style of the Romanian slow *hora* (*zhok*), this composition with its title suggests that it be performed as a listening piece. *Romans* was composed by Motl Reyder.

**A Yidisher Tentsele** (A Little Jewish Dance) – A march-like *bulgar* dance with the inscription “*A Yidisher tentsele bolgartshtik a tsushpil*” (“A little Jewish *bulgar* dance after-piece”). The third section of the tune provides a nice contrast with running sixteenth-notes.

**Nign #139** (Tune #139) – A frolicsome *nign* from Moshe Beregovski's *Jewish Musical Folklore, Vol. 4 - Jewish Folksongs Without Words* notable for being written in the major mode.

**A Bolgar Freylekhs** (A *Bulgar Freylekhs* Dance) – This spirited tune shares elements of both the Moldavian *bulgar* dance and the Yiddish *freylekhs*, two traditional Yiddish line dances.

### **Klezmer Music Ensemble Personnel**

Steven Greenman, *director, piano, violin*

Isabel (Izzy) Barron, *viola* (CIM)

Calvin Beck, *guitar* (CIM)

Kaylee Bontrager, *violin* (CIM)

Natalie Brennecke, *viola* (CIM)

Isabel Fedewa, *flute* (CWRU)

Caris Goebel, *violin* (CWRU)

Matthew Haimowitz, *tenor, piano* (CWRU)

Qingzhou Li, *violin* (CIM)

Charlotte Lohman, *viola* (CIM)

Aria Posner, *cello* (CIM)

Maxwell Rush, *double bass* (CIM)

Henry Samuels, *double bass* (graduate of CIM)

Becky Schneirov, *clarinet* (CWRU)

Joseph Sferra, *clarinet* (CIM faculty)

Nicolas Shafer, *euphonium* (CWRU)

Mira Vaughn, *viola* (CIM)

Leah Widmaier, *viola* (CIM)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Department of Music  
Case Western Reserve University

**Saturday, December 10, 2022 | 4:00 PM**

Keyboard Ensemble  
Harkness Chapel

**Sunday, December 11, 2022 | 1:00 PM**

Case In Point A Cappella Concert  
Harkness Chapel

**Sunday, December 11, 2022 | 6:00 PM**

Solstice A Cappella Concert  
Harkness Chapel

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