

Case Western Reserve University

Department of Music

Klezmer Music Ensemble

Contemporary Klezmer Composers

Steven Greenman, director

Thursday, April 27, 2023

7:30 PM | Harkness Chapel

11200 Bellflower Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106



Department of Music

Program

Bar Mitzvah Bulgar

Michael Winograd
arr. by S. Greenman

Dveykus Nign

Mark Kovnatskiy
arr. by S. Greenman

Kishinever Freylekhs

Mark Kovnatskiy
arr. by S. Greenman

Nign a la Tepel

Steven Greenman

Alisa Crueger-Cain, trumpet

Winograd Joc and Khusidl

Michael Winograd
arr. by S. Greenman

Samhita Tatavarty, bassoon
Alisa Creuger-Cain, trumpet

"Dybbuk" Shers

Alicia Svigals
arr. by S. Greenman

Perets Tants

Frank London
arr. by S. Greenman

Erica Garcia, cello
Nicolas Shafer, euphonium
Aubrey Williamson, violin
Ella Bondar, cello
Lourdes Pinney, viola
Leeza Kuznetsov, flute
Mercedes Cheung, violin

Intermission

In Tifn Hartsn

Sherry L. Mayrent
arr. by S. Greenman

Good Night Waltz

Adrienne Greenbaum
arr. by S. Greenman

Samhita Tatavarty, bassoon

Sher

Walter Zev Feldman
arr. by S. Greenman

Neshome Nign

Steven Greenman

Der Shvartser Mi Adir

Paul Morrisett
arr. by S. Greenman

Doc's Wedding

Kurt Bjorling

arr. by S. Greenman

Davenen

Frank London

arr. by S. Greenman

Will Taylor, cello

Matt Haimowitz, piano

Leah Widmaier, viola

Kaylee Bontrager, violin

Jay Lipsutz, viola

E Minor Dobranotsh

Pete Rushefsky

arr. by S. Greenman

Mercedes Cheung, violin

Nilli Tayidi, viola

Alisa Crueger-Cain, trumpet

Nicholas Shafer, euphonium

Klaybt Zikh Tsunoyf

Michael Alpert

arr. by S. Greenman

Matthew Haimowitz, vocalist

Program Notes

Contemporary Klezmer Composers

by Steven Greenman

This program celebrates original compositions composed by several of today's exemplary klezmer music artists. These featured contemporary composers account for but a few of the many impressively talented musicians today that create new Yiddish vocal and klezmer instrumental works. Created in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, these compositions are distilled with the deep knowledge of the traditional klezmer music genres, style, and forms. One can hear the sounds of the *khasene* (traditional East European Jewish wedding) and the bustling activity of the *shtetl* (East European Jewish village) as the performance of these superb pieces harken us back to prior centuries of traditional East European Jewish artistic creativity. Fittingly, as new Yiddish and klezmer compositions continue to be created by contemporary modern artists, we see a continuation of the work of the old masters, and the artistic Ashkenazic tradition continues proudly from generation to generation.

The artists whose Yiddish and klezmer compositions will be performed tonight are: Michael Alpert (vocalist/violinist/guitarist/ethnomusicologist); Kurt Bjorling (clarinetist/ethnomusicologist); Walter Zev Feldman (*tsimbl*/ethnomusicologist); Adrienne Greenbaum (flautist); Steven Greenman (violinist); Mark Kohnatskiy (violinist); Frank London (trumpeter); Sherry L. Mayrent (clarinetist); Paul Morissett (multi-instrumentalist); Pete Rushefsky (*tsimbl*/banjo); Alicia Svigals (violinist/vocalist); and Michael Winograd (clarinetist). All are internationally renowned klezmer music performers and educators.

*A heartfelt thanks to Michael A., Kurt, Walter, Adrienne, Steven, Mark, Frank, Sherry, Paul, Pete, Alicia, and Michael W. for their gracious permission to arrange and perform their compositions for our concert.

Musical Descriptions

Bar Mitzvah Bulgar – (Bar Mitzvah Dance) - Composed by Michael Winograd © 2017 – The *bulgar* is a Yiddish line dance of Moldavian-Romanian provenance that became the leading Yiddish dance among American Jews in the early to mid-20th century. Winograd's *Bar Mitzvah Bulgar* imitates the progressive harmonies and American jazz-stylings of the *bulgar* recordings on the 1955 album, *Tanz!* that featured the legendary klezmer clarinetists Dave Tarras and Sam Musiker.

Dveykus Nign – (Cleaving Tune) – Composed by Mark Kohnatskiy © 2021 - The term *dveykus* means to "cleave" or "cling" to G-d in the spiritual sense. The concept of 'achieving closeness to G-d' is important to observant Jews and especially to the Hasidim. Spiritual tunes (*nigunim*) were composed and sung together by Hasidic men to attain spiritual ecstasy. Kohnatskiy's *Dveykus Nign* displays the

same soulful qualities of traditional Hasidic *nigunim*. The key of F minor adds the emotional intensity.

Kishinev Freylekhs – (Yiddish line dance from Chișinău) – Composed by Mark Kovanatskiy © 2018 – Chișinău (Yid. *Kishinev*) is the capital of Moldova and a former cultural center for East European Jews prior to a series of devastating pogroms in 1903 and 1905. The *freylekhs* is the most popular of the Yiddish line dances that combines a dignified stance together with a joyful bounce.

Nign á la Tepel – (Tune in the style of Rudy Tepel) – Composed by Steven Greenman 2002 © 2004 – This vigorous tune was inspired by a spirited *nign* performed by the Rudy Tepel Orchestra and more recently recorded as *Tepel Nign* by the klezmer super-group The Klezmatics. The Rudy Tepel Orchestra is a Jewish wedding and bar mitzvah band from New York City that has been performing since the 1940's. Band leader Rudy Tepel is proficient at several woodwind instruments and his ensemble specializes in Hasidic melodies. Greenman's *Nign á la Tepel* displays the same driving intensity as *Tepel Nign*.

Winograd Joc and Khusidl – (Romanian Dance and Hasidic Tune) – Composed by Michael Winograd © 2006 – The Romanian term *joc* (aka *zhok*) refers to the limping-rhythm line dance *hora* that was popular with East European Jews. Winograd's *Joc* is traditional in form, yet it includes some startling harmonies and intervallic jumping. The *khusidl* (aka *khosidl*, *khusid*, *khosid*) is a Yiddish instrumental dance based on Hasidic vocal melodies. Winograd utilizes the flat 5th scale degree, a common feature in the klezmer minor mode, to add more emotional nuance to the piece.

"Dybbuk" Shers – ("Lost Soul" Yiddish Square Dance) – Composed by Alicia Svigals © 1995 – The Klezmer super-group, The Klezmatics, created the musical score for playwright Tony Kushner's 1997 play "A Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds" (an adaptation of Jewish folk tales by S. An-ski). A *dybbuk* is a deceased and lost soul that enters the body of a living person creating havoc until it is exorcized from the body. One of Svigals' contributions to the musical score was her inventive '*Dybbuk' Shers*'. Written in the traditional style, '*Dybbuk' Shers*' is both mystical and playful.

Perets Tants – (Perets' Dance) – Composed by Frank London © 2002 - Featured on The Klezmatics album, "Rise Up! Shteyt Oyf!" (2002), Frank London's *Perets Tants* is a virtuosic instrumental work that exhibits elements of the Yiddish line dances *freylekhs* and *bulgar* together with the exuberant Ukrainian folk dance *kolomyjka*. The virtuosity is expressed through the driving fast tempo as well as constant modal and harmonic changes in each section.

Intermission

In Tifn Hartsn – (Heartfelt) – Composed by Sherry L. Mayrent © 2020 – A soulful composition befitting its title, *In Tifn Hartsn*, is a collection of musical thoughts known as *gedanken*. The thoughts expressed by Mayrent are filled with longing and dear to the heart.

Good Night Waltz – Composed by Adrienne Greenbaum © 2005 – *Good Night Waltz* is written in the style of the klezmer listening pieces *dobranotsh* (Russian ‘good night’) and *dobriden* (Russian ‘good day’). These works were performed by the *klezmorim* as the bride bids farewell to her family the night before the wedding (*dobranotsh*), or for greeting the guests the day of the wedding (*dobriden*). The *dobriden* is noted for its slow to moderate tempo in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. An underlying rhythmic pattern of quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, eighth, is interspersed with running eighth notes.

Sher – (Yiddish Square Dance) – Composed by Walter Zev Feldman © 1999 – The Yiddish dance *sher* is composed of several eight-bar phrases in 2/4 time and similar musically to the Yiddish line-dance *freylekhs*. Feldman’s *Sher* contains four distinct sections that display the typical dignified “bouncing” step and a musical virtuosity.

Neshome Nign – (Tune of the Soul) – Composed by Steven Greenman 2001 © 2004 – *Neshome Nign* is featured on Greenman’s *Stempenyu’s Dream* recording and influenced by traditional *nignunim* (Jewish spiritual tunes) of the Breslover and Lubavitcher Hasidim. The complex measure to measure of changing rhythmic meters reflects the ‘free rhythm’ Jewish chanting style. *Neshome Nign* is serious and mysterious while tender and soothing. A spiritual experience is to be gained when listening to this piece as the last phrases fade away slowly to infinity and carry the listener to the heights of heaven.

Der Shvartser Mi Adir – (The Black Benediction) – Composed by Paul Morissett © 1997 – *Der Shvartser Mi Adir* is another composition composed by a member of The Klezmatics for the musical score to Tony Kushner’s 1997 play “A Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds.” Morissett wrote this piece as a wedding march for the play’s wedding scene.

Doc’s Wedding – Composed by Kurt Bjorling © 1999 – The klezmer clarinetist Kurt Bjorling, composed *Doc’s Wedding* while improvising during a dance set with the internationally renowned klezmer ensemble Brave Old World at the wedding of Paul ‘Doc’ Fribush. *Doc’s Wedding* is a *bulgar*, a Yiddish line-dance of Romanian-Moldavian musical origins. The *bulgar* became the leading Yiddish line dance in America during the early 20th century.

Davenen – (Praying) – Composed by Frank London © 2000 - Trumpeter and member of The Klezmatics, Frank London, composed the score for the Pilobolus Dance Theater's work, *Davenen* and included this slow *hora* (aka *zhok*) by the same title. The *zhok* is the Romanian line-dance in the 'limping' rhythm that became an important part of the klezmer instrumental repertoire. London's *Davenen* allows space before and after the main melody for instrumental improvisation.

E Minor Dobranotsh - (E Minor Good Night Piece) – Composed by Pete Rushefsky © 2010 – The term *dobranotsh* is an artistic klezmer listening piece performed for the bride the night before the wedding, when the bride bids her family a farewell, or at the conclusion of the wedding as a 'good night' piece. Rushefsky's *E Minor Dobranotsh* is a classic example of the genre.

Klaybt Zikh Tsunoyf – (Gather Around) – Composed by Michael Alpert © 1990 – *Klaybt Zikh Tsunoyf* is a Yiddish song that expresses the brotherhood and sisterhood of the Yiddish/klezmer revival through its message of communal singing, dancing, and drinking. Written in the style of the Romanian *zhok*, *Klaybt Zikh Tsunoyf* is featured on the recording *Brave Old World – Klezmer Music* and has assumed its standing as a favored Yiddish anthem today.

Gather together, sisters and brothers, Be glad that we're Jews! Enough crying with wounded hearts! We're bound together like family. Though I've come from far away, You've become dearer to me than anything else. So let's live it up 'til the break of day With heartfelt songs and full bottles of wine. To lift a glass with friends is sweet, As we sing, our feet tap along. Taking a drink with strangers isn't bad, But with friends it's sweet like with family.	Schnapps can be a pleasure, But singing a song is truly sweet. So sing along, dear friends, And forget your cares and troubles. In this world full of wrong-doing, It's easy to stray from one's goals; In such a world people become lost. I do too, sometimes, until I realize... That happiness depends on oneself, And each person's luck lies in their own hands. So join in this song, dear friends, And let your hearts take courage from it.
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CWRU Klezmer Music Ensemble Members

Alex Antonio (guitar) CIM	Leeza Kuznetsov (flute) CWRU
Rowena Bakke (cello) CIM	Jay Lipsutz (viola) CIM
Isabel (Izzy) Barron (viola) CIM	Charlotte Lohman (viola) CIM
Ella Bondar (cello) CIM	Lourdes "Lola" Pinney (viola) CIM
Kaylee Bontrager (violin) CIM	Maxwell Rush (double bass) CIM
Natalie Brennecke (viola) CIM	Nicolas Shafer (euphonium) CWRU
Mercedes Cheung (violin) CIM	Samhita Tatavarty (bassoon) CWRU
Alisa Crueger-Cain (trumpet) CIM	Nilli Tayidi (viola) CIM
Isabel Fedewa (flute) CWRU	Will Taylor (cello) CIM
Lingxiao Feng (violin) CIM	Mira Vaughn (violin) CIM
Erica Garcia (cello) CIM	Leah Widmaier (viola) CIM
Matthew Haimowitz (tenor, piano) CWRU	Aubrey Williamson (violin) CIM
Erin Hopkins (viola) CWRU	Hanna Wilson-Smith (double bass) CIM
	<i>Steven Greenman (director/piano)</i>

Upcoming Events

CWRU Chamber Collective

April 28, 2023

7:30 PM | Spartan Rehearsal Hall

Senior Recital: Hollen Fishel, piano

April 29, 2023

4:00 PM | Harkness Chapel

Keyboard Ensemble featuring Caleb Owens, Ronis Recital Prize Winner

April 30, 2023

3:00 PM | Harkness Chapel

CWRU Chamber Collective

April 30, 2023

7:30 PM | Harkness Chapel

Senior Recital: Venice Villescas, flute

May 6, 2023

4:00 PM | Harkness Chapel