

**CWRU MUSIC** CONCERT SERIES

# **Klezmer Music Ensemble**

Steven Greenman, director

## ***Boiberiker, Beregovski, & Bik***



Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
7:30pm Harkness Chapel  
11200 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, OH



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY**  
College of Arts and Sciences

## Program

Skotshne #23	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Mazltov (Dobranotsh)	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Dobriden #5	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Sher #199	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Die Boiberiker Chasenneh	from the recording <i>Die Boiberiker Chasenneh</i> 1927 Reissued on <i>Klezmer Music 1910-1942</i> <i>Recordings from the YIVO archives</i> Folkways Records 1981 Compiled and Annotated by Henry Sapoznik

Badkhones  
Boiberiker Mazltov  
Badkhones  
Kale Baveynens  
Der Khusn Geyt Badekhn Di Kale  
Lomir Gayn Tsum Khusn  
Khusn Baveynens  
Khipe Marsh  
Khupe Brokhes  
Fun der Khupe

### **Vocal soloist – Matthew Haimowitz, tenor**

Gas Nign #61	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Dobranotsh-Mazltov #10	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski
Freylekhs #28	from <i>Jewish Instrumental Folk Music</i> The Collections and Writings of Moyshe Beregovski

**- Intermission -**

Proshalne Vals  
Kale Bazingen  
Tsu Der Khupe Marsh  
Di Shvartse Khasene (Josom's Nign)  
Fun Der Khupe Marsh  
A Zogekh'ts Mit A Freylekhs  
Di Zhelieh (Moldovanish/Vayngedeks)  
Droshe Geshank im HaVivat  
Der Dubasaver Bulgarish 1  
Der Dubasaver Bulgarish 2  
A Retande (Ronde)  
Der Shnayder Sher  
Der Shister Sher  
Sher  
Der Saverns' Sher 1  
Der Saverns' Sher 2  
Dobranotsh V'Mazl Tov

## Program Notes

The title of this evening's concert, "Boiberiker, Beregovski, & Bik", represents three major influences in the historical recording, collection, research, and dissemination of traditional Jewish instrumental folk music (aka klezmer music). The Boiberiker Kapelye was a traditional sounding klezmer ensemble that performed on Yiddish radio broadcasts and made a handful of impactful recordings beginning in the late 1920's. Moyshe Beregovski was one of the greatest ethnomusicologists and preservationists of klezmer music, and Moshe Bik, a Romanian-born Jewish cantor, compiled traditional Jewish wedding music in the 1920's from his hometown of Orhei, Bessarabia (today's Moldova). Each of these "Three-B's" occupies a special place in the scholastic and musical understanding of klezmer music. I will discuss these here.

### The Boiberiker Kapelye

The Boiberiker Kapelye was a klezmer music ensemble led by the Jewish musicians Hersh Gross and Berish Katz. The active performing period of the ensemble was from 1927-1932. Hersh Gross, the main bandleader of the ensemble, came from a klezmer family from the Galician *shtetl* (East European Jewish town) of Boiberke (Polish "Bobrka", Ukrainian "Bibrka"), 20 km southeast of today's Ukrainian city Lviv. Gross performed multiple instruments but in the Boiberiker Kapelye, he was a violinist and the *badkhn* (wedding jester), the latter role as the solo vocalist for the ensemble's performances of the "Die Boiberiker Chasseneh" ("The Wedding from Boiberik"). Berish Katz was from the Ukrainian town Gliniany (Yid. Glina) and performed violin and banjo. A notable performer of the ensemble was the celebrated klezmer clarinetist, Dave Tarras. While the recordings and performances of the Boiberiker

Kapelye had varying personnel, the ensemble in total included 2 violins, clarinet, trumpet, 2 saxophones, piano, percussion, trombone, and tuba/sousaphone. The Boiberiker Kapelye was acclaimed for its old Hasidic traditional style as they included *nigunim* (Jewish spiritual tunes) and other traditional klezmer repertoire in their performances and recordings during a time when elements of jazz and swing were being incorporated in several Jewish orchestras and their arrangements. The recording session of “Die Boiberiker Chasseneh” was arranged by the famous Jewish bandleader Abe Schwartz who hired the ensemble but did not write the script. The ensemble was featured on New York Yiddish radio from 1927-1929 as part of the Tog Yiddish radio program. *Der Tog* (The Jewish Day) was a Yiddish newspaper in New York City and sponsored a Carnegie Hall concert program with local Yiddish artists including the Boiberiker Kapelye. The final broadcast of the Boiberiker Kapelye on the Tog program coincided exactly with the Wall Street crash of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1929. The ensemble continued to appear on other New York radio stations from 1929-1932. The Boiberiker Kapelye performed a wide repertoire of music including traditional East European instrumental folk music; Hasidic tunes; Russian, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Polish folk music; horas, waltzes, fox-trots, and tangos. In later years the ensemble was adept at playing Jewish music in the more “American” style as well as the traditional Hasidic style.<sup>1</sup>

### **Moyshe Beregovski**

Moyshe (Moisei) Beregovski (1892-1961) was a pioneer in the field of Yiddish ethnomusicology. Born in the Ukrainian SSR, Beregovski researched and collected recordings of klezmer music, traveling throughout Soviet Ukraine and Polish Galicia, making 2,000 field recordings on 700 wax phonograph cylinders. In addition to his fieldwork with klezmer music, Beregovski also collected and studied Yiddish song, Hasidic wordless songs (*nigunim*), revolutionary and workers’ songs, folksongs, and the *Purimshpil* (a dramatic musical folk work based on the Jewish holiday Purim). In his writings, Beregovski coined the term *klezmer music* as the music performed and composed by the East-European Jewish professional musicians (known as *klezmer*; *klezmerim* pl.). He earned respect as a Jewish folklorist/ethnomusicologist in Soviet Ukraine as he founded the Commission for Jewish Folk Music Research at the Department of Jewish Proletarian Culture of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and he headed the Department of Musical Folklore from 1929 to 1949. Between 1937 and 1941, and also from 1944 to 1948, he headed the Cabinet for Music Ethnography and Audio Recording at the Kiev Conservatory. Beregovski had planned to publish his research in a multi-volume tome, *Evreiskii muzykal'nyi fol'klor* (Jewish Musical Folklore), but only a few of the volumes were published during his lifetime. His volume of klezmer material was later published in 1987 by the Latvian-Jewish musicologist Max Goldin in abbreviated form as *Evreiskaia narodnaia instrumental'naia muzyka* (Jewish Instrumental Folk Music) and was republished in English by the scholars Mark Slobin, Michael Alpert, and Robert Rothstein in 2001. The most recent reissue (with corrections to the previous versions that included an omitted chapter from the previous reissue) was published by Kurt Bjorling in 2015. *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music* contains over 250 transcribed klezmer tunes including a substantial number of the artistic klezmer listening repertoire in addition to written chapters about klezmer music style, modal structure, and the musicians. Beregovski’s collection of sound recordings has been rediscovered in the Vernadsky Library in Kiev but access to this vast collection is limited. In

1949 Beregovski was jailed by Stalin and sent to a gulag in Siberia in 1951. Upon his release in 1956 and until his death in 1961 he continued to prepare his collections for publication. We are indebted to Moyshe Beregovski's tremendous contribution to the preservation of East-European Jewish folk music, both instrumental and vocal, through his research, articles, and publications.<sup>2</sup>

### **Moshe Bik**

Moshe Bik (1899-1979) was born in Dubasari, Bessarabia, an ethnically diverse region in Eastern Europe that is today's country Moldova. He moved to Orhei, Bessarabia as a child and sang in a Jewish choir while studying with the cantor Aharon Gomeniuk. After WWI Bik moved to Kishinev (Chişinău) studying cantorial music with Yona Bin Bietzer and became a cantor and conductor.<sup>3</sup> In the 1920's Bik collected and notated the Jewish listening and dance wedding music of the klezmerim of Orhei and Dubasari. These klezmerim included Khayyim Fiedler, Khayyim's student Petru Tsigayner who was of Romani origin, and Khayyim's son-in-law Melekh Klezmer (King of Klezmer). In the ethnically mixed region of Bessarabia, it was common for professional Jewish and Romani musicians to lead each other's ensembles. In 1921, Bik immigrated to Haifa, Israel and continued his work as a choir director and conductor.

Bik's notations were later published as *Jewish Wedding: Collected Melodies and Memories* (Heb. *Chatunah Yehudit*) in 1964, by the Haifa Museum and Library, in Israel. The collection includes an extensive article by Bik of the klezmerim of Orhei and Dubasari.

### **The Music**

Skotshne #23 – (Virtuosic Dance) – The *skotshne* is an elaborate klezmer piece performed for listening and based on the Yiddish line dance *freylekhs*. Beregovski collected this *skotshne* from the clarinetist B. Cherniavski, from Belaia Tserkov (Bila Tserkva, Ukraine) in 1935.

Mazltov (Dobranotsh) – (Congratulations, Good Night) – As a klezmer piece, the *mazltov*, is an artistic listening piece performed to greet the wedding guests, while the *dobranotsh* (Russian “good night”) is a farewell piece played either the night before the wedding as the bride bids her family farewell, or as a send-off piece at the conclusion of the wedding. This refined piece was notated by the violinist A. E. Makonovetski.

Dobriden #5 - (Good Day) – The *dobriden* (Russian “good day” or “good morning”) is another artistic listening piece performed the morning of the Jewish wedding to honor and greet the guests. Beregovski collected this *dobriden* from the clarinetist G. Barkagan, from Kalinindorf (Kalynivske, Ukraine) in 1936.

Sher #199 – (Yiddish contra-dance) – The *sher* is the Yiddish contra-dance or square dance that involved four dance couples. Also known as the “Scissors Dance” with its constant weaving and circling of the dancers. Musically, the *sher* resembles the Yiddish line dance *freylekhs* but it differentiates choreographically. Beregovski collected this bouncy *sher* from G. Barkagan.

Die Boiberiker Chasseneh – (The Wedding from Boiberik) – This Jewish wedding skit was

recorded on two 78 rpm discs by the Boiberiker Kapelye in 1927<sup>4</sup> featuring band leader Hersh Gross as the *badkhn* (wedding jester). Here are some notes by the scholar Jeffrey Wollock:

On the first disc we hear a parody of *badkhones*, the extemporized rhymes chanted by the *badkhn* or wedding jester to the bride and groom respectively, at an old-fashioned Jewish wedding. The day before the wedding, through the end of the marriage ceremony itself, is traditionally considered a *yom ha-din* (day of repentance and judgment) for bride and groom, and therefore a day of fasting. The rhymes, punctuated by instrumental flourishes and chords, were filled with sadness in order to draw out and purge the normal fears and regrets besetting two young people on the verge of a life-changing experience who in many cases barely knew each other. The bride and other women were expected to cry, and if the groom himself cried it certainly was not amiss. This recording, however, is a parody, a kind of "black humor" that must have come naturally to *klezmerim* who had been through it all hundreds of times. While Hersh Gross's delivery is entirely traditional, the words themselves are often "over the top". Interspersed are brief renditions of music for a number of other functions at a traditional Jewish wedding. The sound quality is excellent for the period, enabling us to hear with comparative precision the subtle stylistic details that give character to the music – the distinctive ornamentation and nuances of tempo, pitch and phrasing.<sup>5</sup>

Gas Nign #61 – (Street Tune) – *Gas Nigunim* are klezmer display pieces that were played to escort the guests to and from different parts of the traditional East-European Jewish wedding. *Gas Nigunim* vary in rhythmic structure with the following: 1) the limping Romanian slow-hora rhythm (*zhok*); 2) a brisk 2/4 rhythm; 3) a dignified march rhythm; 4) a slower rhythm in three that is reminiscent of Hasidic vocal hymns. *Gas nign #61*, from a sound recording of G. Barkagan, resembles the latter example.

Dobranotsh-Mazltov #10 – (Good Night-Congratulations) – This artistic listening piece contrasts with the previous *mazltov-dobranotsh* on our program with its straight 3/4 rhythm. This piece is in the *mi shebeyrakh* mode which is a minor scale that includes raised fourth and sixth scale degrees. Beregovski collected this piece from the notations of violinist A. E. Makonovetski.

Freylekhs #28 – (Yiddish Line Dance) – The *freylekhs* is the traditional Yiddish line dance. This jaunty dance was also collected by Beregovski from the notations of A. E. Makonovetski.

### **- Intermission -**

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## **Jewish Wedding: Collected Melodies and Memories**

Jewish Wedding Music from the Klezmerim of Orhei and Dubasari, Bessarabia

Proshalne Vals – (Farewell Waltz) – For the evening prior to the wedding day, the bride gathers with her family and friends and is serenaded by serious artistic listening tunes called *dobranotsh* (good night) as she bids her family a fond farewell. This mournful and mystical waltz suitably serves this function.

Kale Bazingen – (Singing to the Bride) – The *badkhn* (wedding jester) chants rhymed-couplets of moral responsibilities and marital obligations to the bride while she is present with close female relatives and friends. The chanted verses are often interspersed with mournful melodic lines by the violin.

Tsu Der Khupe Marsh – (A March to the Wedding Canopy) – Moshe Bik notated this melody from the transcription of the Rom fiddler Petru Tsigayner, who was well-versed in the

klezmer music style and Jewish wedding customs.

Di Shvartse Khasene (Josom's Nign) – (The Black Wedding – Orphan's Tune) – Walter Zev Feldman writes: "...special music was played before the *khupe* (wedding canopy) as an invitation to the dead in the case when either bride or bridegroom were orphans. In some communities at least, where both or even one of the couple were orphans, it was customary for the *kapelye* (Jewish ensemble) to perform a special melody before the wedding ceremony under the *khupe*. According to the cantor Moshe Bik from Orhei, Bessarabia, this melody was "an invitation for the souls of the dead parents to come to the *khupe*."<sup>6</sup>

Fun Der Khupe Marsh – (A March from the Wedding Canopy) – A jovial tune played to lead the wedding party and guests from the wedding canopy.

A Zogekhts Mit A Freylekhs – (Instrumental Cantorial Improvisations with a Yiddish Line Dance) – Walter Zev Feldman writes: "Many solo items played by the best klezmerim, either in the wedding or in paraliturgical situations (using khazzonic terminology such as *shtyeager*, *zogekhts*, and *khsos*) often displayed the rubato, flowing rhythm of liturgical song, its modality, and its vocal ornamentation, combined with purely instrumental (usually violin) techniques."<sup>7</sup> This brilliant display piece was composed by the fiddler Melekh Klezmer and transcribed by Petru Tsigayner.

Di Zhelieh (Moldovanish/Vayngedeks) – (Moldavian Grieving Tune and Veiling) – *De Jalea* is a mournful Romanian folk melody written in free-rhythm and similar to the Romanian shepherd's lament *doina*. The *doina* was favored by klezmerim and used as a display piece for listening. Moshe Bik collected *Di Zhelieh* from the klezmerim Itzik Dubasaver and Nekhamia Kovadleh. The term *vayngedeks* refers to the covering of the bride's face with a veil prior to the wedding ceremony.

Droshe Geshank im HaVivat – The *droshe geshank* is a short speech, often recited in recitative or chanting style made at the wedding announcing one's gift to the couple. *Vivat* refers to a lively dance piece. This *vivat* closely resembles the Romanian handkerchief dance *perinița*.

Der Dubasaver Bulgarish 1&2 – The *bulgarish* is a Yiddish line dance of Moldavian-Romanian origins. Moshe Bik collected these dances from the klezmer Itzik Dubasaver.

A Retande (Ronde) – (Yiddish Contra-Dance) – The *ronde* (also known as *runde*), was a mixed-couple dance. While there was a prohibition from dancing with members of the opposite sex especially in more observant and orthodox crowds, these restrictions were lightened in some Jewish circles in the early nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Der Shnayder Sher – (The Tailor's Dance) & Der Shister Sher (The Shoemaker's Dance) – The *shnayder* and *shister* (aka *shuster*) dances were folk dances of pre-nineteenth-century German origin. The combination of Jewish melody with German folkloric dance structure

together expressed an Ashkenazic Jewish cultural identity.<sup>9</sup>

Sher – (Yiddish Contra-dance) – Another lively *sher* featured here as part of the Yiddish dance music in Moshe Bik's collection. It was typical to string several eight-bar phrases of different *shers* to accompany the dancers as they completed all their choreographed steps.

Der Saverns' Shers 1&2 – (The Waiters' Contra-dance) – In addition to the standard Yiddish line-dances *freylekhs*, *sher*, *bulgar*, the klezmorim were often required to perform dances specific to the unique guests and workers that attended the wedding. *Der Saverns' Sher 1* is written in the style of a *freylekhs* as it contains two extra measures in each section. As the choreography of the *sher* requires a regular eight-bar pattern, the dance sequence would not work. *Der Saverns' Sher 2* interestingly resembles a robust *bulgar* dance rather than the more stately *sher*.

Dobranotsh V'Mazl Tov – (Good Night and Congratulations) – A hearty vocal tune to wish the wedding guests a fond farewell, good night, and a hearty *mazl tov* the night after the wedding.

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<sup>1</sup>notes re the Boiberiker Kapelye taken from Jeffrey Wollock's brilliant article, *Historic Records as Historical Records: Hersh Gross and His Boiberiker Kapelye (1927-1932)*, ARSC Journal, Annapolis, MD Vol. 38, Issue 1, (Spring 2007): pp. 44-106.

<sup>2</sup>notes re Moyshe Beregovski taken from *Klezmer – Music, History, & Memory*, Walter Zev Feldman, Oxford University Press 2016, pp. 128-129.

<sup>3</sup>notes re Moshe Bik and *Jewish Wedding* taken from the translation of Moshe Bik's *Khatuna Yehudit* by Bruria Pollak and Joshua Horowitz, Vienna and Graz, Austria, August 20, 1999.

<sup>4</sup>*Die Boiberiker Chasseneh (parts 1 & 2)* – H. Gross, A. Schwartz. Part 1 3:15; Part 2 3:10. Columbia 8129-F, matrices W 107724-3, W 107725-3 (recorded March 1927).

<sup>5</sup>(from Appendix to *Historic Records as Historical Records: Hersh Gross and His Boiberiker Kapelye (1927-1932)*, by Jeffrey Wollock.

<sup>6</sup>*Klezmer – Music, History, & Memory*, Walter Zev Feldman, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 155.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 254.

## Personnel

<b>Steven Greenman, director</b> Isabel Fedewa, flute (CWRU) Leeza Kuznetsov, flute (CWRU) Matthew Haimowitz, marimba, vocals (CWRU) Aidan Purtell, piano (CIM) Yaxi Li, piano (CIM)	Oscar Heft, violin (CWRU) Rhianna Lingle, violin (CIM) Josh Felser, viola (CIM) David Lawrence, viola (CIM) Eduardo Muniz Villa, viola (CIM) Noah Hertzman, cello (CIM) Fiona Tsang, cello (CIM)
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