

CWРУ MUSIC

2025/26 CONCERT SEASON

Jewish Cimbalom Players

The Repertoire of Moskowitz, Guzikow, Lepianski, Feldman, and Rushefsky

Klezmer Music Ensemble

Steven Greenman, *director*



7:30 PM

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Florence Memorial Harkness Chapel

1118 Bellflower Road Cleveland, OH



Department of Music
case.edu/artsci/music

WELCOME

CWRU Music 2025–26 Concert Season

The Case Western Reserve University Department of Music presents a wide range of concerts, recitals, and special events that showcase the talents of students, faculty, and guest artists. From classical masterworks to contemporary compositions, these performances highlight the creativity and excellence within CWRU's vibrant music community. Open to the public, the season offers opportunities for audiences of all ages to experience inspiring live music and support the next generation of musicians and scholars.

Florence Harkness Memorial Chapel, was built in 1902 to honor Florence Harkness Severance, daughter of Stephen V. Harkness and Anna M. Richardson Harkness, and wife of Louis Henry Severance. Designed by noted architect Charles F. Schweinfurth—famous for his work on many of Cleveland's Euclid Avenue mansions—the chapel is a stunning example of neo-Gothic architecture. It features soaring arches, intricate woodwork, and exquisite Tiffany stained-glass windows. Located on the Mather Quad, this historic and acoustically resonant space provides a warm, intimate setting for Department of Music performances and special events.

Accessibility

We are committed to providing accessible facilities for all audience members. Please inform our staff if you require assistance or special accommodations.

Thank you for joining us today — enjoy the performance! 🎵

-  Silence phones/devices
-  No flash photos or recording
-  No food/beverages
-  Restrooms in foyer
-  Emergencies: Follow staff/call 216-368-3333 (CWRU Public Safety)



PROGRAM

- Buhusher Chusid from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916
- Colea in Vale și Sîrba
("The One in the Valley and Sîrba Dance") from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916
- Chasen Senem from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916
- Unirea Românelori ("United Romania") from a recording by Alexander Olshanetsky and His Orchestra featuring Joseph Moskowitz, 1928
- Hora in Batuta ("Stamping Hora") from a recording by Alexander Olshanetsky and His Orchestra featuring Joseph Moskowitz, 1928
- Shir Hama'aloyts ("Song of Ascent") from Psalm 126, Joseph Guzikow
- Nu Ma Calca Pe Picior
("Don't Step on My Foot") from a recording by Alexander Olshanetsky and His Orchestra featuring Joseph Moskowitz, 1928
- Oriental Motive #1 from the Ed Wynn Grab Bag show featuring Joseph Moskowitz, broadcast June 30th, 1936

- INTERMISSION -

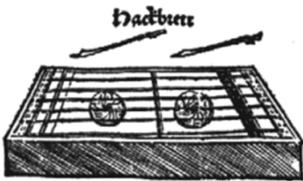
- Die Neie Sîrba ("The New Sîrba") from a recording by Alexander Olshanetsky and His Orchestra featuring Joseph Moskowitz, 1928
- Sadigurer Khosid
("The Disciple from Sadigura") from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916
- E Minor Dobranotsh
("Good Night Tune in E Minor") Pete Rushefsky, b. 1970
- Anicuta Draga ("Dear Anna") from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916
- Lepianski Klezmer Tsimbl Suite Yosef Lepianski and Lepianski Family
- Old Jewish Dance Walter Zev Feldman, b. 1949
- Sher ("Jewish Square Dance") Walter Zev Feldman, b. 1949
- Sîrba Matey Matey ("Matthew's Sîrba") from a recording by Joseph Moskowitz, 1916

PROGRAM NOTES

Jewish Cymbalom Players

The Repertoire of Moskowitz, Guzikow, Lepianski, Feldman, and Rushefsky

The instrumentation of the Eastern European klezmer ensemble consisted of a lead violin or *ershte fidl*, a second violin that played rhythmic-harmonic accompaniment or *sekund fidl*, a cello or bass, a wooden flute, and the Jewish hammered dulcimer known as *tsimbl*. The Jewish *tsimbl* evolved from the medieval German instrument *hackbrett*, as well as the Persian *santur*. The larger concert version of this instrument, *cimbalom*, that added a pedal for sustaining the sound, was developed in the 19th century by the Schunda family of Hungary and further developed by the Bohák family. Other names for the *cimbalom* include the Romanian *țambal*, the Ukrainian *tsymbaly*, the Polish *cymbaly*, and the Greek *santouri*. Asian versions of the hammered dulcimer include the Chinese *yangqin* and the Indian *santoor*. The western-European *salterio* was prevalent in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France.



The Jewish *tsimbl* has a colorful history of virtuoso performers and ensembles. Celebrated *tsimbl* performer Pete Rushefsky, in his article, *Jewish Strings – An Introduction to the Klezmer Tsimbl* gives a detailed account of the Jewish *tsimbl*:

The first record of a Jewish player of the instrument comes from Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine) where Abus Cymbalista was approved by the musicians’ guild to play for Catholic banquets in 1629. Migrating Jewish musicians were henceforth central to the spread of the *tsimbl* through Eastern Europe and the Balkans over the next three centuries. Several noteworthy figures are worth mentioning:

Adam Mickiewicz, considered the Shakespeare of Polish literature, reputedly based his character Jankiel the tavern *tsimblist* (from Mickiewicz’s masterpiece epic *Pan Tadeusz*) on real-life klezmerim Mordkho Feyorman of Warsaw and Yankel Liberman of St. Petersburg.



The most famous klezmer musician of all time was possibly Mikhail Guzikow (1806-1837). Born in Shklov (now in Belarus), Guzikow played *tsimbl* and flute, but gained notoriety as a player of the *shtroy fidl*, which though literally translates as “straw violin” was really a primitive xylophone.



An incredible virtuoso with a flair for entertainment, Guzikow toured the great opera houses of Europe from Odessa to Paris. And what shtick – though not an exceedingly observant Jew (several reports of him concertizing on Shabbos survive), Guzikow would arrive on stage dressed in Hasidic garb, then carefully assemble his xylophone block by block on a bed of straw. The audience’s laughter soon broke into a hushed awe as Guzikow would launch into dazzling solos on Jewish and classical themes. As testament to his popularity, French society women adopted the virtuoso’s *payos* (sidelocks) as a popular coiffe termed (not surprisingly) “Guzikows.”

The Jewish *tsimbl* even made occasional appearances outside of the Pale of Settlement. Isaac Isaacs was a German born dulcimer player who made his living playing the taverns and theaters of 18th century Dublin, later becoming employed as the personal entertainer of a well-known brothel madam.

Much later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a Kiev-born *tsimbler* was featured in a vaudeville tour of North America and Australia as “Uncle Sam and His Magic Strings.” Sitting at what looked to be a piano, he would play the opening bars of Beethoven’s Fifth, at which point the prop would collapse revealing the dulcimer.

The last of the great Jewish *tsimblists* was Joseph Moskowitz. Born in Galatsi, Romania in the 1870s, Moskowitz, whose father was also a *tsimbl* player, toured Europe as a child prodigy. Emigrating to New York, he became co-owner (and chief entertainer) at Moskowitz and Lupowitz’s wine cellar on the Lower East Side, a popular gathering place for the city’s Yiddish intelligentsia.

With Moskowitz’s death in the 1950s, the Jewish *tsimbl* might have passed into oblivion but, luckily, aspects of this great tradition have survived. The instrument is still quite popular in parts of Eastern Europe and Balkans, often associated with Romani (Gypsy) musicians. The Jewish surnames Zimbl and Zimbalist – actress Stephanie Zimbalist of Remington Steele fame and her famous musical family come to mind – serve as testament to ancestors who played the instrument.

Most promisingly, a small number of klezmer musicians have worked to revive the instrument since the 1970s – interest in the *tsimbl* has grown along with exploration of the older European klezmer repertoire and styles. It seems the art of Jewish *tsimbl* will live on as long as there are musicians with the patience to tune.

Klezmer music scholar and *tsimbl* player Walter Zev Feldman mentions other noted Jewish *tsimbl* players from Moldavia and Wallachia, including Solomon “Țimbelar” (mid-18th century) and Itsik Tsambalgui (early 19th century). Other noted Jewish *tsimbl* players performed for the Gentile aristocracy including, Khayyim Cimbalist, a court musician of General Wallerstein in the Thirty Years’ War, and Maurice Wolfstahl, a professor in the Lemberg Conservatory in the interwar era. Solomon Tsimberlarul was prevalent in eighteenth-century Ottoman Moldova.

Joseph Moskowitz was an immaculate performer and performed a diversified international repertoire. In addition to Jewish folk music, his recordings include music from Romania, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Ukraine, Argentina, and American (Ragtime).

The Lepianski family from Vitebsk, Belarus, featured an ensemble consisting of several cimbaloms. The leader of the ensemble was Yosef Lepianski (1873-?) who performed the traditional small *tsimbl* while his four sons played concert cimbaloms. Yosef Lepianski performed as a soloist for the Tsar in an ethnographic exhibition in 1902, and again in 1912.

Other performances included accompanying the choir of the St. Petersburg Choral Synagogue together with his sons, and more concerts of the full ensemble continuing throughout the 1920's. There are only two surviving commercial recordings of the Lepianski family (that also includes a pianist), one of which is a suite of klezmer and Hasidic melodies that is featured on our concert program tonight.

The contemporary American *tsimblists* Walter Zev Feldman and Pete Rushefsky have been instrumental in resurrecting the Jewish *tsimbl* to relevancy in the Yiddish world today. Feldman, with his work with clarinetist Andy Statman on their seminal recording, *Jewish Klezmer Music* (1979), and with his collaboration with klezmer violinist Steven Greenman and their recording *Khevrisa – European Klezmer Music* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2000), showcased the Jewish *tsimbl* as one of the core instruments of the old European klezmer ensemble. Feldman is also the author of several scholarly articles on klezmer music and is author of the book *Klezmer Music, History, & Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Pete Rushefsky is an international performer, composer, and teacher of the *tsimbl* and serves as executive director of the Center for Traditional Music and Dance in NYC and one of the founders of the Yiddish New York festival. He performs and records with violinist Itzhak Perlman, the renowned Klezmer Conservatory Band, and NEA National Heritage Fellows Andy Statman and Michael Alpert in addition to many of Jewish music's leading performers. He has recorded several klezmer and Yiddish albums including *Tsimbl un Fidl: Klezmer Music for Hammered Dulcimer & Violin* (2001) with violinist Elie Rosenblatt, and *The Ternovka Sessions* (2014) with violinist Jake Shulman-Ment. In addition, Rushefsky published *Essentials of Klezmer 5-String Banjo, Volume I*, an instruction book for klezmer banjo.

MUSICAL DESCRIPTIONS

BY STEVEN GREENMAN

Our concert program features our arrangements of the recorded repertoire of Joseph Moskowitz, the Lepianski family, a unique transcription of a Jewish liturgical melody attributed to Josef Guzikow, plus modern original klezmer compositions written in the traditional style by the contemporary *tsimbl* players Walter Zev Feldman and Pete Rushefsky.

Buhusher Chusid (“The Disciple from Buhuși”) – An invigorating suite of *freylekhs* line-dances that was recorded by the Romanian-born Jewish cimbalom virtuoso Joseph Moskowitz in 1916. “Buhuși” is a town in Moldavia in Eastern Romania that had thriving Jewish and Hasidic communities from the 19th century through WWII. The term *khosid* (aka *khusid*, *chusid*, *khusidl*, *khosidl*) denotes a Yiddish line dance with Hasidic vocal musical influence. In addition, Jewish professional musicians (*klezmerim*) from Romania and Bessarabia (today's Moldova) created dance melodies that incorporated elements of Romanian and Moldavian folk music combined with Jewish musical content. Although labeled *chusid*, Behusher Chusid is purely instrumental in form, reflecting a regional distinction of Yiddish dance melodies.

Colea in Vale și Sîrba (“The One in the Valley and Sîrba Dance”) – Recorded in 1916 by Joseph Moskowitz, *Colea in Vale și Sîrba*, begins with a free-rhythm Jewish improvisation followed by a *sîrba* dance. The *sîrba* (aka “*sârbă*” or *serba*) is a brisk Romanian dance performed in 2/4 time. Stylistic elements include a fast-paced tempo with triplets. *Sîrba* became popular among klezmer musicians in Romania and Bessarabia (today's Moldova) in the 19th century.

Chasen Senem – Recorded by Joseph Moskowitz in 1916, Chasen Senem is a *terkisher*, a klezmer melody that employs the rhythms of the Greek *syrtó* dance. The origin and definition of the title is unknown.

Unirea Românelori (“United Romania”) - Joseph Moskowitz recorded this *hora* in 1928 with Yiddish theater conductor/arranger, Alexander Olshanetsky and his orchestra. The *hora* is a Romanian line-dance also known as *joc*, the Bessarabian term for *hora* (“*zhok*” in Yiddish). The *klezmerim* from Bessarabia were enamored with Romanian and Moldavian folk repertoire and the *zhok* with its “limping rhythm” and incorporated several Romanian folk dances and listening pieces into their regular repertoire.

Hora in Batuta (“Stamping Hora”) – The term *bătuta* refers to the stamping dance moves in Romanian folk dances. Joseph Moskowitz copyrighted Hora in Batuta in 1928 and recorded it as a cimbalom solo with a pianist and also with Alex Olshanetsky’s Orchestra. The latter version is heard directly after Unirea Românelori on the same recording.

Shir Hama’aloyz (“Song of Ascent”) – Also known as Psalm 126, Shir Hama’aloyz is a liturgical prayer, traditionally sung by Ashkenazic Jews prior to the Jewish grace after meals (*Birkas Hamazon*) on the Sabbath, Jewish holidays, and festive occasions. There are a wide variety of melodies that are sung to this psalm. This version has a soulful and solemn character, in the style of a Hasidic *nign* (Jewish spiritual melody). It is the only known surviving composition attributed to Josef Guzikow.

Nu Ma Calca Pe Picior (“Don’t Step on My Foot”) – A delightfully jaunty tune that has elements of *läutari* (Romanian Romani professional musicians) harmonic structure that was recorded by Joseph Moskowitz with Alex Olshanetsky’s Orchestra in 1928. This was a popular tune for *klezmerim* as it was recorded several times, including with Al Glaser’s Bucovinaer Kapelle “Dus Zigeiner” (“The Gypsy”) in 1940; with clarinetist Dave Tarras and the Abe Ellstein Orchestra “Sirba Roumaneshti” (“Romanian Sirba”) in 1965; and again, with Tarras, “Tsiganeshti” (“Gypsy”) in 1978.

Oriental Motive #1 – Joseph Moskowitz appeared as guest artist on the Ed Wynn Grab Bag show on June 30th, 1936, demonstrating the cimbalom. He called this piece “Oriental Motive” which is typical of the Yiddish line-dance *freylekhs*.

– INTERMISSION –

Die Neie Sirba (“The New Sirba”) – Another classic recording by the Alex Olshanetsky Orchestra featuring Joseph Moskowitz. This piece opens with a *terkisher*, a klezmer melody that employs the rhythms of the Greek *syrtó* dance, then concludes with an exhilarating *sirba* dance.

Sadigurer Chusid (“The Disciple from Sadigura”) – Similar to Buhusher Chosid, Sadigurer Chusid is a vigorous *freylekhs* recorded by Joseph Moskowitz in 1916 with pianist Max Yussim. “Sadigura” is the Yiddish name for the current Ukrainian city, Sadhora, which was formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian empire and home to a Hasidic dynasty from the mid-19th century until 1914.

E Minor Dobranotsh (“Good Night Tune in E Minor”) – Klezmer tunes called *dobranotsh* and *dobriden* are part of the artistic listening repertoire of the *klezmerim*. The *dobranotsh* is a tune that was performed the evening before the day of the wedding for the bride and her family as a farewell piece. Rushefsky’s E Minor Dobranotsh evokes sweetness with sublime phrasing and flowing melody.

Anicuta Draga (“Dear Anna”) – Anicuta Draga is a suite of two tunes, a *hora* and a *sirba* that were recorded by Joseph Moskowitz with pianist Max Yussim in 1916. Moskowitz recorded the same *hora* in a different key and a slightly different harmonization with “Flora Hora” in 1953. The *sirba* modulates through several modes offering a unique harmonization.

Lepianski Klezmer Tsimbl Suite – This suite of klezmer tunes by the Lepianski family of *tsimblists* is composed of an opening improvisation; a *khosidl* (“Nakhes fun Kinder” – “Joy from Children”); a Lubavitcher *nign* (“Avinu Malkeynu” – “Our Father, Our King”); and a *freylekhs* (“Shpilt Mir Klezmorimlakh” – “Play for Me, Musicians!”). The ensemble brilliantly executes tempo changes and rubato playing throughout the suite. Curiously, in both “Nakhes fun Kinder” and “Avinu Malkeynu”, some of Lepianski’s melodic choices take the melody out of the regular *freygish* mode, which contrasts with other recordings of these tunes.

Old Jewish Dance – Walter Zev Feldman dedicated this klezmer composition to the Jewish *tsimblist* Solomon Țimbelar who lived in Iași, Romania. Old Jewish Dance is a *freylekhs* with multiple sections that modulate to and from several klezmer modes.

Sher (“Jewish Square Dance”) – The *sher* is the Jewish contra-dance with its musical content similar to the line-dance *freylekhs* but with choreographic differences. Most *sher* dances are composed of several eight-bar musical phrases that are strung together sequentially to provide adequate time for the dancers to complete their choreography.

Sirba Matey Matey (“Matthew’s Sirba”) – Recorded in 1916 with pianist Max Yussim, Sirba Matey Matey is an exhilarating concert piece with virtuosic melodic runs. There are frequent modulations: C major to C *mishebeyrakh* (minor scale with raised 4th and 6th scale degrees); C *HaShem Molokh* (major scale with a lowered 7th scale degree and a raised 4th scale degree) to C major (utilizing diminished chords with raised 4th and lowered 7th scale degrees); F minor to C *freygish* ((A Bb) C Db E F G Ab Bb C); and F minor. Sirba Matey Matey was recorded by the contemporary klezmer super-group, The Klezmatiks on their 1997 album *Possessed* (Piranha records).

SOURCES

- Feldman, W.Z. Liner notes to the CD *Khevrisa European Klezmer Music*, Smithsonian Folkways, 2000.
- Feldman, W.Z. *Klezmer Music, History, & Memory*, Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Foss, Nicolette. *7 Types of Hammered Dulcimers Around the World*
- Rushefsky, Pete. *Jewish Strings – An Introduction to the Klezmer Tsimbl*
- Spottswood, Dick. Liner notes to the CD *The Art of the Cimbalom – The Music of Joseph Moskowitz (1916-1953)*, 1996.

ABOUT KLEZMER MUSIC ENSEMBLE

The Klezmer Music Ensemble is dedicated to learning and performing traditional East European Jewish folk music. This vibrant genre of world music combines a distinctive performance style, a unique repertoire, and close chamber-music interaction.

In addition to preparing for one concert each semester, students are introduced to key concepts in Jewish culture and history to provide context for the music they perform.

MEMBERS

- Matthew Haimowitz, marimba (CWRU)
- Jiani Liang, piano (CIM)
- Benjamin Poulin, cello (CWRU)
- Aarav Swami, xylophone (CWRU)
- Jingwen Wei, piano (CIM)
- Xiang Tao Ke, clarinet (CIM)
- Leo Yamauchi, violin (CWRU)

Steven Greenman, director

Praised by *The Washington Post* as “particularly impressive” and by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* as “extraordinary,” violinist and composer Steven Greenman is internationally recognized for his mastery of classical repertoire, East European Jewish folk music (klezmer), and East European Romani (Gypsy) traditions. A versatile performer, he has appeared as soloist with the Cleveland Pops, Canton Symphony, and Akron Symphony, and is a Smithsonian Folkways recording artist through his work with the ensemble Khevrisa.

Greenman’s original Jewish and klezmer compositions are featured on his landmark albums *Stempenyu’s Dream* and *Stempenyu’s Neshome*, and his liturgical works have been published by the Shalsholet Foundation. A dedicated educator, he teaches klezmer master classes internationally and has been a teaching artist with The Cleveland Orchestra’s “Learning Through Music” program since 2001.

His collaborations include performances of the *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* with multiple orchestras, a cross-cultural project with pipa virtuoso Gao Hong, and chamber performances with pianist/harpsichordist Byron Schenkman as the Greenman-Schenkman Duo. Greenman holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Violin Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

The Department of Music at Case Western Reserve University—part of the College of Arts and Sciences—offers exceptional opportunities for students through its nationally recognized Joint Music Program with the Cleveland Institute of Music. Located in Cleveland’s University Circle, one of the nation’s premier arts districts, the department provides a vibrant, inclusive community where students study, perform, and engage with music at the highest level. Guided by distinguished faculty in historical performance practice, music education, and musicology, our programs span the BA in Music, the BS in Music Education, the music minor, and graduate degrees in HPP, Music Education, and Musicology.

At the core of our work is a mission to foster preeminent research, creative endeavors, and learning; support students in developing their musicianship within a liberal arts environment; and prepare future leaders in the fields of musicology, historical performance practice, and music education. We strive to cultivate an inclusive environment where all members of our community feel empowered to participate, contribute, and thrive—grounded in a culture of belonging, mutual respect, and academic excellence. The department upholds the highest professional standards required by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), reaffirming our commitment to innovation, leadership, and service locally and globally.

Want to learn more? Visit: case.edu/artsci/music

UPCOMING EVENTS

7:30 PM • December 5, 2025

What Is Human?

Case Glee Club with

Padua Men's Ensemble and Highland Heartbreakers

Harkness Chapel

7:00 PM • December 6, 2025

Case in Point A Cappella

Harkness Chapel

7:30 PM • December 7, 2025

Solstice A Cappella

Harkness Chapel

4:00 PM • December 12, 2025

Keyboard Ensemble Recital

Harkness Chapel

GIVING

Make an Impact Through Giving

Scan the QR CODE below to explore how your support can enrich the Department of Music and inspire future musicians!



CONNECT



@cwrumusic

Scan the QR Code Below to Join our Mailing List

