

Jewish Journal

PALM BEACH NORTH
January 17, 2006

L'CHAIM

JANUARY 17, 2006 • 17 TEVET, 5766



**Klezmer orchestra
to perform
"Jewish Broadway."**

35

Jewish soul

Klezmer orchestra to perform 'Jewish Broadway'

**BY SHANI MCMANUS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER**

When pressed to do so, just about anyone can hum a few bars from "Fiddler on the Roof," the smash Broadway hit show that was, arguably, mainstream America's introduction to Klezmer music.

Since then, Klezmer has become so popular, especially during the last two decades, that even non-Jews are forming Klezmer bands, says Aaron Kula, resident scholar in music at the Florida Atlantic University Wimberly Library and leader of the Klezmer Company Orchestra.

Kula adds that the Jewish-based music has become so popular that even great musicians of other musical forms, like classical violinist Itzhak Perlman, are joining in.

"It's popular because there's a universal appeal to this music – because it has traveled through so many countries over the millennium," Kula says. "It is completely defined as world music, at least for the past 500 years. It's the language of the portable fatherland. Music was the fatherland of the Jewish people."

The critically acclaimed Klezmer Company Orchestra, together with Florida Atlantic University Libraries' professional ensemble-in-residence, di-



Aaron Kula is the resident scholar in music at the Florida Atlantic University Wimberly Library and leader of the Klezmer Company Orchestra. SUBMITTED PHOTO

rected by Kula, will give a single performance concert, "Jewish Broadway with Orchestra and Chorus," at 3 p.m. Jan. 21 at Eissey Campus Theatre, Palm Beach Community College, 3160 PGA Blvd. in Palm Beach Gardens.

The concert will call upon diverse sources of creative inspiration to celebrate the musical connections of Klezmer, orchestra, Broadway, Yiddish theater and choral traditions. The collaboration includes more than

60 Klezmer, orchestral and choral musicians, including international guest vocalist Betty Silverman, the 40-voice FAU Libraries' Judaica Choral Society and a string orchestra, with principle players from major local ensembles. These include former members of the Florida Philharmonic, members of the Palm Beach Opera, the Florida Grand Opera and Palm Beach Pops.

The concert is a fundraiser for the FAU Libraries' Judaica Collections, and the majority of the music in the concert comes from the collections' Jewish music archives.

William Miller, director of FAU Libraries, praises Kula, a Klezmer musician and a composer who has been teaching, arranging and performing Jewish music for more than 29 years, and has toured nationally and internationally with well-known artists and his orchestra.

"Aaron Kula continues to expand the range and depth of the Klezmer Company Orchestra concerts, adding new elements that challenge our comfort levels and enrich our understanding both of what Jewish music entails, and how it relates to music in general," Miller says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 57

▼ KLEZMER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

Kula has created and arranged 10 new orchestrations of Jewish and popular music for the performance. The first half of the concert, "Klezmer on Broadway," will include a recently discovered 1927 edition of the Dybbuk Suite for Klezmer Orchestra by Joseph Engel and a Klezmer Hora by Saint-Saëns from Samson and Delilah. The chorus and soloist will sing a variety of selections in three languages: Yiddish, Hebrew and English. The second half, "Jewish Composers on Broadway," features songs from Leonard Bernstein's "Candide" and "West Side Story," a Broadway medley from musicals by Jewish composers, including Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe,

Jerry Herman, Jerry Bock, Stephen Sondheim and Jule Styne, and a freylach based on music by Gustav Mahler.

"I believe the Jewish experience has always been best expressed by music, and Broadway has always been an integral part of the Jewish-American experience," Kula says. "The difference is that one can expand the definition of 'Jewish Broadway' to include an interdisciplinary roadway, with a wide range of artistic activities packed onto one avenue--theatre, opera, symphony, ballet, publishing companies, choirs, synagogues and more. This vibrant landscape reflects the life, times and creative output of the Jewish-American artist."

Kula adds that those attending the event can expect "a high quality concert," and "entertainment with the unique

sounds of Klezmer music."

Not to mention hearing a great band.

"A traditional Klezmer band is composed of solo-quality musicians," he says. "The Klezmer Company Orchestra musicians represent some of the best players in the region."

Members of the The Klezmer Company Orchestra include Randi Fishenfeld, violin; Dan Salmasian, saxophone; Chaim Rubinov, trumpet; Steve Sigmund, trombone; Jacqueline De Los Santos, double bass; Frank Derrick, drums/percussion; Steve Salo, percussion; and Aaron Kula on accordion and piano.

Tickets cost \$28, \$36, and \$45 for premiere seating. Group discounts are available. For more information or tickets, call 1-877-877-7677, or www.tixops.com.