

KCO to play in Jewish New Year concerts



Aaron Kula's Klezmer Company Orchestra jazz combo will perform in two concerts on Sept. 8 in Delray Beach. (Submitted photo / November 29, 2012)

By David A. Schwartz, Staff Writer
11:36 a.m. EDT, August 28, 2013

Aaron Kula, music director of the Klezmer Company Orchestra, was hard at work last week finishing the last few musical arrangements for the KCO jazz combo's two concerts.

Using songs from the Cantorial Collection at Florida Atlantic University libraries, where he is director of music performance and education, Kula arranged 21 cantorial and congregational melodies in the style of American jazz, Negro spirituals and Klezmer music for the American [Jewish New Year: Jazz & Wisdom](#) concerts at 3 and 7 p.m. on Sept. 8 at the Crest Theatre in [Delray Beach](#).

Audiences will recognize the melodies of many of the concert selections from High Holiday services, Kula said. They include "Rosh Hashana in Swing" (Kula's arrangement of "B'Rosh Hashana") "Avinu Malkeynu" (popularized by Barbra Streisand), "Chasidic Kaddish," "Kol Nidre Blues" and "Oseh Shalom a la Salsa."

The music will be performed "with the upmost respect" to connect to America's musical genre, jazz, said Kula, a fan of American jazz from the 1920s to 1950s. "A lot of composers have written jazz services or jazzy pieces," he said, citing Kurt Weill, Leonard Bernstein and Dave Brubeck.

In addition to the songs performed by the Klezmer Company Orchestra, baritone Lloyd Reshard, a classically trained opera singer, will perform 13 songs in Hebrew, Aramaic and English with KCO in the 90-minute concert.

Reshard, who first performed with the orchestra in its 2nd Avenue Jazz 'n Jive concert in March, is a "natural fit," Kula said. "It's rare to find a singer that will sing Jewish to gospel."

Reshard sang in High Holiday services at synagogues in Miami for about six years. "With the Jewish songs, I just feel so familiar, having sung congregational melodies," he said. Reshard recalled singing a cappella at one synagogue's High Holiday services. "It was such a spiritual and loving experience," he said. "I just fell in love with those songs."

Jewish scholar and humorist Henry Abramson also will be featured in the American Jewish New Year: Jazz & Wisdom concerts.

"[Kula's] in charge of the jazz. I'm in charge of the wisdom," Abramson joked in a phone interview from his office at [Touro College](#) in [Miami Beach](#) where he is dean of students.

Abramson said he will talk about the historic and spiritual underpinnings of the musical pieces by drawing on text and tradition.

"It's very hard to talk about anything Jewish without resorting to humor," he said. "The Talmud is 20 percent, maybe 18 percent humor. It's just a matter of connecting the dots, connecting it to other elements of that culture."

Kula said that in putting together the American Jewish New Year: Jazz & Wisdom concert he wanted to create an experience for everyone. He said he wanted the concert to be interesting and educational and for people to have a good time. He added, "I wanted a concert with a little wisdom."

Tickets to the 3 p.m. or 7 p.m. concert are \$36 and can be purchased from the Crest Theatre's box office. Call 561-243-7922 or visit <http://www.delraycenterforthearts.org>. The Crest Theatre is at 51 N. Swinton Ave. in [Delray Beach](#).