

Concert to headline Kultur Festival



The Klezmer Company Orchestra with conductor, Maestro Aaron Kula. The orchestra will mix Klezmer melodies with Latin rhythms at "iJubanoJazz!," a concert at Florida Atlantic University on Sunday, March 2. (Submitted photo / July 13, 2013)

By Randall P. Lieberman, Staff Writer

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"iJubanoJazz!," the main event for Kultur Festival 2014, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Libraries' sixth annual celebration of Jewish music and arts, will be a concert featuring a fusion of traditional Klezmer melodies and Latin rhythms.

The concert will take place at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 2 at the Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium at the Florida Atlantic University Student Union (777 Glades Road) on FAU's [Boca Raton](#) campus. The concert is expected to draw more than 2,000 people.

The 27-piece Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO), and returning guest vocalist Graham Fandrei, will present 23 Latin Klezmer arrangements by Maestro Aaron Kula (director of KCO and director of music performance and education at FAU Libraries) and trumpeter Chaim Rubinov. Fandrei will sing eight songs in Yiddish, Spanish and English that will incorporate Afro-Cuban, mambo, bolero and tango rhythms.

"After 17 years, I am redefining the concert experience for the orchestra and our audience," Kula said, "KCO continues to evolve by inviting voices from within the ensemble and of talented young composers. We must stretch our imagination and embrace change to inspire the next generation."

The Jewish Cultural Society (JCS) at FAU is the lead sponsor for the festival and the inaugural Composition Competition, which drew submissions from students around the country. Kula's efforts to preserve and perform music from FAU Libraries' Jewish Print Music Collection fit into the JCS' mission to advance Jewish cultural traditions and education.

Kula mentored emerging young composers who interacted with FAU's Jewish Print Music Collection and re-imagined vintage melodies for his Klezmer Company Orchestra. Selections from the top two composers in the competition were chosen for the concert. Kula consulted with each of the winning composers to tailor the music and meet the specific needs of the KCO ensemble.

The first prize composition, "Klezmer Carnival," by 24-year-old Venezuelan-born Eric Benaim, features a fusion of musical styles and influences from Venezuela. It includes jazz, Latin and classical characteristics mixed with Jewish folk tunes.

"I believe this diversity reflects my background as well as the background of the Jewish people," said Benaim, a pianist and music composition major at Florida International University in Miami. "Both are very varied and full of different origins and colors."

The second prize composition, "Frevo Freilach," by 27-year-old Brazilian-born Diego Lyra Medeiros, mixes traditional Klezmer melodies with Brazilian rhythms known as "Frevo."

"I constructed the piece using a 'Frevo' march and incorporated some contemporary harmonies," said Medeiros, a graduate student in jazz competition and performance at the University of Louisville. "My composition's energy matches the energy found in Brazil's streets during Carnival."

Concert tickets are \$20 to \$45. To purchase tickets, call 800-564-9539, or visit <http://www.fauevents.com>. To experience KCO, visit <http://www.klezmercompany.com>.

Kultur Festival 2014 will take place from Saturday, March 1 through Saturday, March 8 at FAU. Most events are already sold out. For more information, try the number and website listed above.