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**“Bulgars, Bongos & Blues” to be Presented by Klezmer Company
Orchestra, Conducted by Aaron Kula, at FAU**
Concert Features 40 Performers with New Orchestral Jazz Arrangements of Global Melodies

BOCA RATON, FL (February 4, 2008) – “Bulgars, Bongos & Blues,” a concert introducing the fusion of ethnic jazz and exotic melodies from 14 countries, will be presented by the Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO), under the direction of Aaron Kula, on Sunday, March 2, at 3 p.m. at Florida Atlantic University’s Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium in the University Center, on the Boca Raton campus, 777 Glades Road.

This premiere concert represents a yearlong effort and features 40 performers, including soloist Elena Correia, and Kula, the ensemble’s conductor and music collections director at FAU Libraries. The ensemble will introduce arrangements and orchestrations of songs from Spain, Yemen, Hungary, Rumania, Israel, Persia and America, and feature music written by Jewish composers, including Kurt Weill, Abraham Ellstein, Emmet Lavry and Joseph Rumshinsky.

In explaining the concert’s title, Kula said bulgars, bongos and blues connect what appear to be three unrelated musical cultures, but that the music will show the genres are linked through energetic dance rhythms and melodies that are soulful and celebratory. “The bongos represent the driving rhythm of dance, the bulgars represent the joyous celebration of spirit, and the blues represents soulful optimism,” said Kula.

During the concert, the audience will hear 16 new songs, as well as six others from “Beyond the Tribes,” KCO’s studio-recorded debut album, which was released in January to celebrate the orchestra’s 11th anniversary. Soloist Elena Correia will sing eight songs, including a Spanish ballad from ancient Catalan.

Since Kula founded KCO in 1997, the ensemble has successfully taken music in the Libraries’ collections “from shelf to stage.” New orchestrations are based on pre-existing melodies found in the collections. “I continue to refine my ability to transform what may appear to be an outdated melody into a relevant piece of musical art for my generation,” said Kula.

Some of the more unique songs the audience will hear during the concert will include a Russian tango, a Bongo Bulgar, a Brazilian Jewish melody, some Arabic melodies from Persia and Yemen, and an American jazz- influenced Kiddush, which means a blessing over the wine, influenced by a 12 bar blues progression written by composer Weill.

“The whole concept of our concert is to create something new out of something old. I do that by resurrecting traditional melodies and blending them with unrelated musical genres,” said Kula.

KCO is comprised of 22 members, including nine core soloists and a vocalist performing many new powerful compositions. The orchestra defies classification with its high-energy performances and eclectic programming of traditional and nontraditional music.

The popular ensemble has performed before thousands at sold-out concerts and has received rave reviews for its unique style and innovative arrangements. KCO’s core ensemble of distinguished musicians has accomplished backgrounds in classical, jazz and pop music, electric and acoustic violin, saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, flügelhorn, flute, trombone, bass, drums, percussion, piano and accordion.

Kula, who joined the FAU faculty in 1997 and became director of music collections in 2003, plays a dual role as conductor and accordionist. Audiences find this unusual and visually stimulating. His activities include research, archiving, lecturing, composing and performing. Kula is also on the faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where he has conducted orchestras since 1986.

Kula finds it challenging to describe the music he is creating. “It’s a fresh take on the art of composition and the concert experience. I am creating a new tradition and that takes time to evolve,” said Kula. “As a composer and a performer, when you do something completely new and out of the box, there are risks because you really cannot be guaranteed of an absolute outcome.”

Other ensemble members are Randi Fishenfeld, violin; Stas Pomerantz, clarinet; Scott Klarman, saxophone and flute; Chaim Rubinov, trumpet and flügelhorn; David Levitan, trombone; Jacqueline De Los Santos, double bass and guitar; Doug Friend, drums; and Teresa Flores, percussion. Their credits include Bruce Springsteen, B.B. King, Barbara Streisand, Clarence Clemons, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, the Bee Gees, Dionne Warrick, Ray Charles, Natalie Cole, Arturo Sandoval, Peabo Bryson, Quincy Jones, Nestor Torres, Tito Puente, Jr., David Sanchez, Melton Mustafa, Miguel Cruz, Andrea Bocelli, The Moody Blues, Yo-Yo Ma, Tony Bennett, Randy Brecker, Burt Bacharach and Aaron Neville.

Proceeds from the concert will benefit the FAU Libraries’ Music Collections. Concert tickets are \$25, \$36 and \$42, with \$60 for premier seating. Early reservations are recommended. For tickets, call 800-564-9539 or visit www.fauvents.com. For information on KCO, visit www.klezmercompany.com.

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Photo #1 Cutline: The Klezmer Company Orchestra

Photo #2 Cutline: Aaron Kula, music director and conductor, Klezmer Company Orchestra

Photo #3 Cutline: Elena Correia, soloist