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**“Spirit of America: Gershwin & Copland” to be Presented by Klezmer  
Company Orchestra, Conducted by Aaron Kula, at FAU**  
*Concert Features 90 Performers, the Ebony Chorale and FAU President Frank Brogan*

**BOCA RATON, FL (June 4, 2009)** – Maestro Aaron Kula will conduct the 50-piece Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO), which will be joined by the 40-voice Ebony Chorale of the Palm Beaches, in “Spirit of America: Gershwin & Copland,” on Sunday, June 28, at 3 p.m. at Florida Atlantic University’s Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium in the University Center, on FAU’s Boca Raton campus, 777 Glades Road.

The concert will feature music by Aaron Copland and George Gershwin, two of the most important and influential 20<sup>th</sup> century American composers. Special guests will include FAU President Frank T. Brogan ’81 who will narrate Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait” in celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. Pianist Mark Galsky, host/producer of WXEL’s Mid-Morning Musicale, will perform Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue.”

“As a conductor, I am often asked what are my favorite pieces to conduct, and the music of Gershwin and Copland is certainly at the top of my list,” said Kula, who is conductor of the KCO, which is the professional ensemble–in-residence at FAU Libraries, as well as FAU Libraries’ director of music collections and performance. “These American composers were interested in capturing the flavor of Americana by using folk songs and jazz.”

Brogan will be joining KCO as the narrator for “Lincoln Portrait,” which uses excerpts from the “Gettysburg Address.”

Galsky, a South Florida native, began formal musical training at age 5 and attended Stetson University. A versatile classical and jazz pianist, organist and conductor, Galsky is also principal organist at St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church in Delray Beach.

“Spirit of America: Gershwin & Copland” will open with the KCO brass section performing Copland’s majestic “Fanfare for the Common Man.”

KCO violinist Randi Fishenfeld will make her annual cameo appearance, performing her unique version of the Florida folk song titled “Orange Blossom Special.”

The concert will conclude with 14 songs from the classic American opera “Porgy and Bess” sung by the Ebony Chorale of Palm Beaches, under the direction Dr. Orville Lawton. The role of Bess will be sung by guest soprano Elizabeth Graham, and the role of Porgy will be sung by guest baritone Alvie Powell.

“Gershwin’s use of Jazz and Negro Spirituals in “Porgy and Bess” and Copland’s use of Stephen Foster folk songs transformed former European models of opera and orchestral music into a distinctly American genre,” said Kula.

This is the fourth consecutive year FAU Libraries have sponsored a concert to celebrate the Marvin and Sybil Weiner Spirit of America Collection of Colonial Imprints, which was donated to the library in 2006 by the Weiners of Boca Raton. The collection contains more than 13,000 printed items from the American Revolutionary era and other imprints, mostly American, British and French.

Since Kula founded KCO in 1997, the ensemble has successfully taken music in the library’s collections “from shelf to stage.” He is credited with composing and orchestrating more than 150 works for KCO, which hit a milestone in 2007 with its third independently-produced CD, “Beyond the Tribes.”

The Ebony Chorale made its debut in 1992 when it performed with the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus during the dedication of the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach. The chorale is dedicated to performing and preserving Negro Spirituals. Its repertoire also includes sacred and secular classics, folk songs, pop and gospel.

This will be the second collaboration of the year for KCO and the Ebony Chorale. The two performed “Tantz, Samba & Soul,” a concert that celebrated the connections of Jewish, Latin and African America music, at the FAU auditorium in March. They first teamed up in 2004 and presented the sold-out “Klezmer Does the Blues,” a concert exploring the musical link between Klezmer and the blues.

The concert is being sponsored by FAU Libraries with additional support from WXEL and FAU’s Student Union. Concert tickets are \$15 – \$36. Call 800-564-9539 or visit [www.faevents.com](http://www.faevents.com). Early reservations are recommended. For information on KCO, visit [www.klezmercompany.com](http://www.klezmercompany.com).

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***Cutlines***

**Photo #1:** Klezmer Company Orchestra music director Aaron Kula, KCO strings and the Ebony Chorale of the Palm Beaches.

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