

[PHOTO ATTACHMENTS]

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KCO Presents ‘American Symphonic JazzWorks’ as 10th Annual Spirit of America Concert at FAU

BOCA RATON, Fla. (May 20, 2015) — Maestro Aaron Kula’s 55-member Klezmer Company Orchestra, joined by guest vocalist Lisanne Lyons, will present “American Symphonic JazzWorks,” on Sunday, June 28 at 3 p.m. at Florida Atlantic University’s Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton campus.

This year marks the 10th annual Spirit of America concert with compositions that celebrate diversity, freedom and hope by legendary composers George Gershwin, Aaron Copland and Duke Ellington. Their music was inspired by non-classical music traditions, including Mexican folk songs and dance rhythms, Negro spirituals and gospel tunes, jazz rhythms and blues progressions.

“These extraordinary American composers were trailblazers during the early 20th century, and their music remains as popular as ever because of brilliant writing,” said Aaron Kula, director of KCO, which is the professional ensemble-in residence at FAU Libraries.

The concert will feature American orchestral classics such as Gershwin’s “Overture to Girl Crazy,” Copland’s “El Salon Mexico” and Ellington’s ground-breaking “Black, Brown and Beige.”

Gershwin’s music for the concert stage and theater defined American popular music of his generation. Lisanne Lyons, an accomplished jazz singer, recording artist and professor of vocal jazz at Florida International University, will perform a medley of Gershwin’s popular songs, including “Oh Lady be Good,” “Strike up the Band,” “Someone to Watch over Me,” “Fascinating Rhythm,” “But Not For Me” and “I Got Rhythm.”

Copland’s “El Salon Mexico,” written in 1930, is an orchestral work based on Mexican folk tunes that Copland heard while visiting Mexico. The one movement composition also uses Mexican dance rhythms to give a more authentic connection to the folk music tradition.

Kula also will conduct Ellington’s rarely performed “Black, Brown and Beige Suite,” which premiered in 1943 at Carnegie Hall. This suite is the highest profile example of Ellington’s struggle to advance the politics of race through his music, which featured jazz rhythms and harmonies as a medium to tell the story of black Americans. KCO performed the suite in 2011 and is still the only known orchestra in Florida to perform Ellington’s “Black, Brown and Beige Suite.”

“This orchestral work is always exciting to perform for both musicians and conductor because it challenges our perception of jazz and classical music,” said Kula.

The concert closes with a rousing rendition of the “1812 Overture,” a signature work that is performed at Independence Day celebrations across America. The score is full of French and Russian patriotic melodies that commemorate the 1812 battle between the Russian forces and Napoleon’s army. The overture is known for its climactic volley of cannon fire, ringing chimes and brass fanfare finale.

Kula founded KCO in 1997 with a mission to perform music from a broad range of genres, cultures and historical periods. He is credited with composing and orchestrating more than 200 new works — successfully taking the library's music from “shelf to stage.” The ensemble performs a unique blend of ethnic orchestral jazz, music from the classical repertoire and musical theater and holds the distinction of being the only ensemble of its kind at an academic library in the country.

The annual Spirit of America concert celebrates FAU Libraries’ “Marvin and Sybil Weiner Spirit of America Collection” which was donated to FAU Libraries in 2006. The collection contains more than 13,000 historical printed items from the American Revolutionary era and other imprints, mostly American, British and French dating from the 15th century to the modern era.

Concert tickets are \$20 - \$42 and group ticket prices are available. To purchase tickets, call 800-564-9539 or visit www.fauevents.com. Early reservations are recommended. For information on KCO, visit www.klezmercompany.com.

Photo Captions

SOA20151.jpg: Aaron Kula, director, with Klezmer Company Orchestra.

SOA20152.jpg: Aaron Kula, conductor.

SOA20153.jpg: Lisanne Lyons, guest vocalist with Klezmer Company Orchestra.

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About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.