

The Boca Raton Tribune

Your Closest Neighbor

Klezmer Company Orchestra Trio to perform classics from FAU Libraries Jewish print music collection

Aaron Kula, director of music collections and performance, FAU Libraries



Rating 4.00 out of 5 ★★★★★ [?]

BOCA RATON –Aaron Kula, director of music collections and performance at Florida Atlantic University Libraries, will show how he takes century-old music from the Jewish Music Collection to the concert stage, during a program titled “From Shelf to Stage” Sunday, December 5 at 3 p.m. at the Wimberly Library on FAU’s Boca Raton campus.

Kula takes about a week for each composition and relies on his experience and instinct to determine which piece of music will work for the Klezmer Company Orchestra, FAU Libraries’ professional ensemble-in-residence.

“I have the challenge of somehow transforming this vintage music into sounds, beats and orchestrations that make it relevant to this generation,” said Kula, KCO’s conductor. “I decide the piece of music based on its melodic appeal and potential for creating a bigger composition.”

KCO violinist Randi Fishenfeld and KCO bassist Jackie De Los Santos will accompany Kula for the multimedia presentation, which is being sponsored by the Jewish Cultural Society (JCS) at FAU, a fundraising group.



Klezmer Company Orchestra bassist Jackie De Los Santos

“For several decades, Yiddish sheet music became passé because the language was too old-fashioned and the next generation was not interested in the genre of music. The post-immigrant generation wanted to assimilate and the sheet music represented the immigrant,” said Kula.

Dottie Pierce, JCS’ president, noted the program and Kula’s efforts to preserve and perform the music fit into the group’s mission of advancing Jewish cultural traditions and education at FAU Libraries through philanthropic endeavors and programs.

Kula founded KCO to perform and promote music from a range of cultures and historical periods from FAU Libraries’ collections. Since inception, KCO has successfully taken hundreds of works from the print music collection “From Shelf to Stage.”

Many of the music scores in FAU Libraries’ Jewish Music Collection were published in the early 1900s by New York publishing houses that specialized in commercial sheet music for amateur musicians. New York City was the hub for ethnic music publishers and musicians who found a niche in the 2.5 million Jewish immigrants who passed through Ellis Island in the early 20th century. Jewish musicians sang about their longing for the old country, family, love, marriage and patriotism.

“The Jewish immigrants wanted a link to their heritage, which the sheet music provided in terms of language and melody,” said Kula. “They could buy the music for a nickel or a quarter and play it on an Upright Piano in their living rooms.”

Cost of “From Shelf to Stage” is \$15 for members, \$25 for two family members, and \$20 for non-members. To reserve tickets, contact dottiepierce@comcast.net at 561-852-9720 or bobbystarsky@att.net at 561-735-0176.