



# קלעזנייעס KlezNews

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## Michael Wex on Jewish Luck

by Richard Kurtz

I circled PM 1, page 17, "Jewish/Yiddish Luck (Part 1) Michael Wex." I was going to that lecture. Michael Wex never has disappointed me over my 9 years at Klez Kanada. You may have a vague idea of what the talk may be about, but there is no possibility of anticipating how he is going to weave his way through his presentation, where it will end up, and you will always ask yourself, "how did he get to that subject?"

I have gotten to know Wex over the years. We often schmooze about our shared experiences as youngsters in a "suburban shtetl" called "the Manor" in north Toronto. Michael is the only person who can "Wex" poetic about Jewish thought in one sentence, and then switch on a dime from favorite Canadian wrestlers such as the Beast or Hay Stack Calhoun so loved by our Eastern European born fathers and Zaidas, and then end up with a humorous philosophical note about Mr. Weiss, the heroic owner of the variety store at Wilmington and Overbrook, the local hangout for Jewish kids in the hood.

Let us look briefly at Wex's talk yesterday about Jewish luck as an example of this man's Yiddish cerebrum. He explored Jewish attitudes towards luck and gambling using the dreidel and playing cards as models.

Did you know that Hannukah is the Rosh Hashanna of gambling? And of course the vice of choice is the Dreidel. Dreidel a derivative of Dreyen meaning to twist or

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## ח'זרה לרעפֿט-ז

געמאכט אַ שטאַרקע השפעה אויף די קלעזקאָנאָדניקעס וואָס האָבן האַרציק אויפגענומען די מוזיקאַנטן פֿון מיזרח און ניט געזשאַלעוועט אויף די אַפֿלאַדיסמענטן. לאַמיר האָפֿן אַז מיר וועלן זיך אַלע דערלעבן אין געזונט און מזל צו זען די פּראָגראַם "מזרח טרעפֿט מערב-3!"



דאָס צווייטע מאָל קומט קיין קלעזקאָנאָדאָ אַ גרופע קלעזמאַרים פֿון געוועזענעם ראָטן-פֿאַרבאַנד און ברענגט מיט זיך זייערע ננע שאַפֿונגען וואָס באַגניסטערן דעם קלעזקאָנאָדאָ עולם. 12 טאַלאַנטירטע, יונגע מענטשן פֿון מאַסקווע, ס. פּעטערבורג, כאַרקאָוו און טאַלין האָבן נעכטן ביי נאַכט אַנטפּלעקט זייערע ממש קאָלאָסאַלע שעפֿערישע, מוזיקאַלישע פֿעיקייטן. זיי האָבן געזונגען און געשפּילט פֿאַרן עולם סיי טיף אַזנגעוואַרצלטע אינעם פֿאַלקלאָר ניגונים און לידער סיי זייערע אייגענע, וואָס זענען אין תּוך אַן עכטער המשך פֿון דער רעכער טראַדיציע פֿון מיזרח-איראָפּעיִשן ייִדנטום. אַ וויכטיקער טייל פֿון דער פּראָגראַם איז געווען דער אַרויסטרעט פֿון באַליבטן טעאַ ביקעל וואָס ער איז אַ סימבאָלישע בריק צווישן מיזרח און מערבֿ. אויפֿן קאַנצערט האָט מען געקענט הערן לידער אויף ייִדיש, ריסיש, אוקראַיניש און ציגייער. די פּראָגראַם האָט

# Writing for the Yiddish Stage: Daily Writing Exercise #2

by Jenny Levison

Jenny Levison is doing a workshop. But, why limit a workshop to one session a day? Here is her second daily writing assignment for the whole camp.

## Beginnings, middle, and ends.

Every play has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It doesn't matter what form the play takes—linear, circular, epic, surreal, or fragmented. It will still have a beginning, a middle,

and an end.

*Baym onheyb, iz altsding efsher.  
In mitn, vert efsher mistome.  
Ober der sof iz zikher.*

In the beginning, everything is possible.

In the middle, the possible becomes probable.

In the end, the inevitable.

## Exercise:

Write a three-page play, with two characters. Page one is the beginning—the dramatic question. Page two is the middle—the escalation of conflict to a climax. Page three is the end—the resolution. (If it's a tragedy, it will end badly for your main character, and if it's a comedy it will end well.)

## Three Yiddish Students Write

gathered by Elaine Cooper

### פֿון יצחק

מען האָט מיך געבעטן עפעס צו שרעבן פֿאַרן קלעזקאָנאָדער צענטונג. נו, וואָס זאָל איך שרעבן? וויפֿל הנאה איך און מיין פֿרוי קריגן אז מיר קומען דאָ? פֿאַרוואָס פֿאַרן מיר אזוי ווייט פֿון דער היים יעדן זומער? דו-אַ געפֿינען מיר פֿרישע לופֿט, שיינע, היימישע, פֿרענדלעכע ליט, און געלעגענהייטן צוצוהערן ווונגעראַרלעכע לעקציעס און אויסערגעוויינטלעך ייִדיש מוזיק. יידן מוזן שטיצן ייִדישע קולטור און וווּ בעסער דאָס צו טאָן ווי אין קלעזקאָנאָדע?

דאָן געפינען זיך די געסטע ייִדישע לערערס, שוישפּילער, מוזיקאַנטן. און ס'איז אַ מחיה צו זייען און הערן אזוי פּיין טאלאַנטירטע יונגע (און אויך עלטערע) ליט.

א 'ישר כח' צו חיים (היי) און סענדי גאָלדמאַן און צו אלע אנדערע פֿירער וואָס מאַכן דאָס מעגלעך. איציק גאָלדענבערג, פֿאַרט ירי, קאַנאַדע

Itzak is a retired high school teacher who lives in Fort Erie, Ontario. Yes... Fort Erie, Ontario. Yiddish is one of his passions and is part of his neshama. He participates in programs in Buffalo, Toronto and heads a Yiddish discussion group in St Catherines, Ontario. This summer is his and his wife Penina's 10th summer at KlezKanada.

### פֿון זשאַבי

איך בין זייער ענטציקט צו זיין אין דער ייִדיש קלאַס מיט דעם אויסגעצייבענט לערער פּסח פּרישמאַן.

די קלאַס הייסט "ייִדיש איבער די וועלט." אין די קלאַס רעדן מיר נאר ייִדיש. ס'איז דא פֿאַרשידענע פֿיינע מענטשן וואָס רעדן נאר ייִדיש. איך בין זייער בשוגייסטערט צו זיין אין קלעזקאָנאָדא 2006!

Debby claims that she began to learn Yiddish when she was born. She began to write in Yiddish when she was seven years old ( a very precocious child, she skipped twice) and she corresponded with her cousin in Uruguay. She sings the "Martrys Song" in Yiddish every Yom Kippur afternoon in her shule in Toronto and studies and reads Chaim Grad Rabbi Eddie Golfarb once a week in Toronto.

### פֿון נחמיה

איך בין געקומען צו KK פֿאַר דער צווייטער צייט אין 2006. איך גלייב אַ סך צו הערן קלעזמער מוזיקע און ייִדיש. דארטן איז גיט צו לערנען ייִדיש און צו געניסן קאַנצרטן קלעזמירן. איך גלייב צו גיין אלע יונגער סטודענטים צו. אויכט צו יונגער פֿאַלק ווער אַרבעטן אין עס-צימר זענען אזוי שייַן. מען לערנט דאָ ייִדיש און די קלאַס איז אזוי

אויסגעצייכנט. די לערער דו צוגרייטן א סך אנדערע פֿאַר אונדזער קלאַס און אויך א סך אנדערע מעטאָדעס צו לערנען און די קלאַס איז זייער אָנגענעם און העלפיק.

Tema grew up in a home in Toronto where Yiddish was mamalochan and she was fortunate to have a father who loved Yiddish and learning. Fluent in spoken Yiddish, she began learn how to write and read with a professor at U of T in the early 80's who gave poor teaching methods a new meaning. Currently she devotes her time living in two cities, Silver Springs Maryland and Toronto, On. In each city, she dovotes many hours of her time to leaarning Yiddish (happily and with excellent teachers). She loves her studies with Nicolai here at KlezKanada.





# INTERVIEW WITH ALEX KONTOROVICH

by Anna London, Michelle Wolzinger, Mira Netsky, and Subu Wex

**What do you play?** Saxophone and clarinet

**How long have you been playing?**

I've been playing saxophone for 13 years, and clarinet 10 years.

**If you could pick an age what would it be?** 21

the car next to me pulled out and ran over my saxophone and that was the scariest moment of my life.

**What kind of car do you drive?** 1984 Volvo

**What's your favorite kind of flower?** Roses.



Photo: Janina Wurbs

**How old are you?** 25

**Have you ever taken drugs?** No!

**Do you have a girlfriend?** Yes!

**What's her name?** Amy!

**How old is she?** 25

**How many girlfriends have you had?** Two!

**Have you have had braces?** Yes

**If you could dye your hair any color, what would you dye it?** Fuscia

**How many instruments have you broken?** A drum. And my saxophone got run over once by a car when I was in high school and I had a very sturdy case—thankfully—and I was going to summer music camp and I was putting all my instruments in my car and the saxophone was left and

**Do you have any pets?** A turtle named Donatello.

**What is your favorite KlezKanada food?** Dessert, like eclairs

**Do you have any children?** Not that I know of!



# DI GANTSE VOLT IZ A TEATER

With Joanne Borts and Hankus Netsky

By Renah Wolzinger

This year a wonderful class is being given exploring seldom heard Yiddish Theatre repertoire. Hankus Netsky has brought a wide variety of sheet music and recordings, from his research and extensive collection. This is finally a chance to expand song selections beyond the yiddish standards. Each vocalist, after listening to many styles of tunes, chose (with advise from the instructors) their piece to learn. In the next few days Joanne and Hankus will coach students to add soul and emotion to the music. Hopefully, when they return from camp some of these great theatre songs will then be included in future performances. We were also lucky to have Theodore Bikel in the class. He added first hand insight into some of these tunes which he has performed in the theatre and in concert.

The class is looking forward to tackling these newfound treasures, and once again, KlezKanada is the place to learn new (to us) material and bring it to the rest of the world!

## New Ring Tones at [www.klezkanada.com](http://www.klezkanada.com)

by Keith and Renah Wolzinger

1. Shabbas Backwards March
2. ILANA!... Bat Mitzvah!!
3. Announcements Jingle
4. Flagpole Hora
5. My Yiddishe Mama - Rap Remix
6. Loyf Tzunoyf Victory March
7. Star Trek in D Freigish
8. Network is Down Doina
9. Buffet Line Blues
10. Klez Kanadia Fight Song
11. Klez Cabaret Bulgar

# Drum Class

By: Rebecca Wolzinger, Julia Goldman and Miriam Hershkop.

We walked into the classroom about twenty minutes late. We were among the younger students in the class. The teacher was passing around drum sticks. As we were looking around the class we spotted a few males, although it was supposed to be a GIRLS class! But we dealt with it. We also noticed people were wearing ear plugs ... it was pretty obvious why. All the banging and crashing would deafen anybody's ears. And it did—our own.

Before we came to class, we didn't know what to expect or what we were going to learn. We didn't think it would be so interesting and as fun as it was.

Luckily, Elaine Hoffman was our teacher, so we picked it up very quickly. We learned some really interesting beats... and to bring ear plugs to the next class!

# WHAT'S BETTER THAN KLEZ KANADA?

by Rebecca, age 14

What's better than KlezKanada? KlezKanada as a kid! We have free run of the camp because with so many moms around, it's perfectly safe. And the staff never complains when we ask for peanut butter and jelly for the thousandth time. Even though the food is better than last year, it still isn't great. We take classes, or just hang out. Although many classes are too hard, there's always Teens in Lvov, a class for teens run by Lisa Mayer. We all have lots of friends from all over the place, and we love to hang out with them on the swings by the Retreat Center. There's just so much fun stuff to do here, who wouldn't enjoy it?

**Wex** *Continued from front page* turn around; but also related to the word cheat. A form of the dreidel originated with the Greeks. The letters ה, ג, נ, and ש on the side of each dreidel in the Galut have numerous meanings. Those letters add up to the number 358 which is equivalent to the numerical value of Mashiach ((משיח). The famous dreidel song about it being made of clay, I learned is a misnomer. Dreidels of clay would be too fragile. In the old days they were made by pouring hot lead into molds.

From here, Michael got onto the topic of the old burning question paining Jewish scholars for years: "why do we eat Krepluch on certain

holidays?" There is really no known answer for this question. In lieu of the driedel on Hannukah, adult jews played card games--something that you would never do openly during any other time of year except on Christmas Eve, where it was one of the "traditional activities" besides preparing toilet paper for the coming year. Now before this lecture I would have never tempted my luck to guess that I would learn about the Yiddishkeit bent on gambling and toilet paper preparation. If you have not attended one of Wex's lectures do yourself a favor, take a chance. You will always be lucky and learn some pearls of obscure wisdom.

## קלעזניצעס KlezNews

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A PDF copy of this newsletter will be available online after camp, and HTML versions of the stories and art will be placed online, along with additional materials, in a weblog format to permit comments and participation.

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In addition to this newsletter, articles by KlezKanada participants are published daily to the KlezKanada blog: go to [www.klezkanada.com](http://www.klezkanada.com) and click on the button in the top navigation bar, "blog".



Playing for the family dance, right after dinner in front of the dining hall.