



# קלעדנייעס KlezNews

26סטן אוגוסט 2009 דעם 26th August, 2009

## זאזעצניש מיטן שארזרענטן יידישיסט



**And they're off!** Steve Weintraub and Michael Alpert work on song and dance moves for KlezKanada. Photos: Robert Blacksberg



ביים ערשטן באגעגעניש מיט יידיש האָט בנימין שעכטער, אַ דיריגענט פֿונעם ייִדישן פֿילהאַרמאַנישן פֿאַלקסכאַר, וואָס עקזיסטירט זינט 1922, (און מיט וועלכן ער פֿירט אָן במשך פֿון 14 יאָר), און אַ טאַטע פֿון דרז' ייִדיש-רעדנדיקע קינדער, דערציילט דעם עולם סײַ וועגן זײַן טאַטן, סײַ וועגן זײַנע אייגענע אַקטיוויטעטן לטובת דער ייִדישער שפּראַך און קולטור.

מיט גרויסן אינטערעס האָבן די פֿאַרזאַמלטע אויסגעהערט וועגן דעם לינגוויסט ד"ר מרדכי שעכטער, בנימינס טאַטע, און ווי ער האָט דערצויגן די קינדער אויף ייִדיש, ווי אַזוי ער האָט דערמוטיקט דעם אינטערעס און ליבשאַפֿט צו מאַמע-לשון. מען האָט זיך דערוווסט וועגן ריזיקע אויפֿטוען פֿון מרדכי שעכטערן אויפֿן געביט פֿון דער ייִדישער שפּראַך, צווישן זיי אויך וועגן זײַן לעבנסווערק-דאַס שאַפֿן פֿונעם מאָדערנעם "ענגליש-ייִדישן ווערטערבוך פֿאַרן 21סטן יאָרהונדערט", וואָס ער האָט צום באַדויערן ניט פֿאַרענדיקט, און וואָס וועט, האַפֿנטלעך, זיך באַווײַזן אין דער נאַענטער צוקונפֿט.

בנימין האָט אויך זיך געטיילט מיטן עולם ווי אַזוי צו האַדעווען די קינדער אויף ייִדיש אין 21סטן יאָרהונדערט. המשך אויף זייט 6



# KLEZMER TALK ON THE INTERNET

by Keith Wolzinger

This week marks my third year of podcasting from KlezKanada, a project that came about as an outgrowth of writing for Ari Davidow's KlezKanada newsletter. What is podcasting, you ask? Podcasting is a way of distributing multimedia content via the internet. In simpler terms, think of it as a radio or television program that you receive on your computer. Podcasts are created by major broadcasters such as CBC, CNN, and NPR as well as by individuals, such as myself. There are thousands of podcasts available for you to watch or listen to. And you can load them onto your computer or portable media player to take with you wherever you go. Another cool feature is that podcasts can be subscribed to. This means that as new episodes are released your computer will grab them for you and put them in your player software so that they are available to you when you want them. Most podcasts are free to receive, and you can keep or delete them as you wish. You can also "unsubscribe" from podcasts that you no longer wish to receive on a regular

basis. Of course you always have the option to play podcasts from your computer or mobile device in real time on demand (known as "streaming") if you have a reasonably fast internet connection.

OK, enough with the technical talk. What is Klezmer Podcast all about? During KlezKanada 2006 I decided to record interviews with the staff members, talking about their musical backgrounds, music styles, bands, and current or future albums or projects. Originally titled KlezKanada Podcast, in January, 2007 I changed the name to Klezmer Podcast in order to expand the focus of the show beyond the one week of the year that KlezKanada runs. Having released 15 episodes of KlezKanada Podcast and 53 episodes of Klezmer Podcast, I recently entered the world of video with the most recent episode 54. This first video has been well received, and I plan to make more use of video in future shows.

I will be available throughout the week to interview as many KlezKanada participants as possible. Everyone is

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# ROOTS IN EXILE

Hankus Netsky has always been an innovator. He also gives a great talk. Yesterday, for instance, the grandly titled "How we lost touch with our Eastern European cultural roots—and what we can do to get them back" was a delightful exploration of three themes in Jewish life 100 years ago, how they changed, and how they are represented in our lives today. In his usual fashion, Netsky managed to convey his own points by eliciting them, and more, through dialogue with those of us who attended thinking to sit quietly and receive wisdom by osmosis. Hah!

Among the first discussion items was the mysterious, 1950s shift in American Jewish communities from the Eastern European ways of pronouncing Jewish languages (Yiddish, Hebrew) to the Israeli (faux Sephardic) pronunciation that was one response to the post-Holocaust, post-found-of-Israel world.

Netsky then spoke of three main components of Jewish life in the 19th century. First, he talked about Cantors. What did it mean to have the Cantor sing as he (back then, it was always she) did, repeating notes and phrases? As the שליח ציבור, (Shaliach Tzibur, or "public representative") of the congregation, the Cantor was acting as an intercessor between the congregation and God. He was also performing. In an age when there was no secular pop concerts or the like, traveling cantors offered acceptable entertainment, and in the context of services, a spiritual catharsis, to the congregation—the audience, as it were. Outside of major cities, congregations would see a Cantor once a year, perhaps—maybe on the High Holidays, the period when intercession was most looked for. In

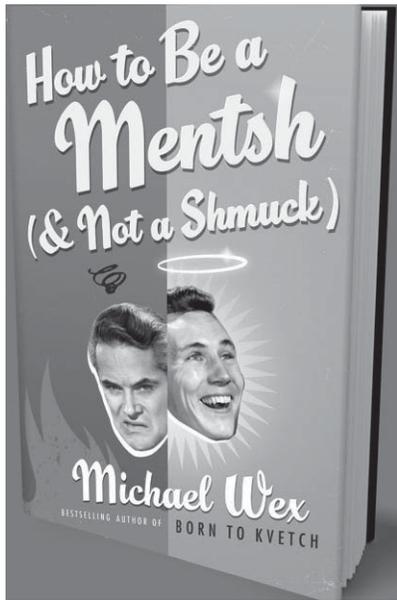
*Continued on page 5*

Photo: Leslie Schwartz



# Mentshkeh-keit Revisited:

## *New book by Michael Wex out in two weeks*



by Steve Karp

From humble beginnings in Lethbridge, Canada, Michael Wex lived a life of stand-up shows and storytelling for many years. While writing a script for a longer forum show, he realized his true passion was writing. Since the publication of *Schlepping the Exile* in 1993, he's published 4 books, has yet another coming out in about two weeks, and one more to be released sometime next year.

Wex sincerely believes that his new book, *How to be a Mentsh, and not a Shmuck* will bring a much needed message to his reading public. The book looks at proper behavior in an everyday setting through traditional Jewish eyes, providing one guiding principle which would help any individual to avoid being a jerk. As this is not considered to be a self-help book, it doesn't give a lot of steps for people to follow. It's essentially focused around one simple rule for better behavior, reinforced with examples from old Jewish sources (such as the Talmud), and new pop-culture references (such as the movie *Groundhog Day* with Bill Murray).

Wex believes that the key to being a mentsh, as opposed to a shmuck, is "treat others how you would treat yourself, as opposed to how you would want to be treated". He also believes the secret to overcoming the impossible scenarios we may one day be faced with rests in our every day interactions with one another. To reinforce this point, he gives two examples:

The first of which is set in North America in the not too distant future. Imagine for a moment, that all the people

of colored skin are being hunted down to extermination. One of these hunted men comes to your door and says "please, hide my children so they'll be safe." Now you're faced with a choice. With the punishment for hiding people of colored skin is death to you and your family, do you help the man and his family and risk your own life and the lives of your family, or do you turn the man away? No one can know for sure until, god forbid, they're faced with said situation, however one can determine how they would act in a less serious situation, as is brought forward in the second example.

For the second example, Wex speaks of the world of today. In walking down the street, you find a wallet with money, credit cards, and identification. As he sees it, you have three choices: you can take the wallet and its contents, you can take the cash from the wallet, returning everything else, or you can return the wallet as a whole. Now think carefully, what would you honestly do?

Following Wex's principle, we can easily determine that we would want our own wallets returned to us in full, cash included. Therefore, following his rule, one would automatically pick the third option, regardless of personal gain, leading to the triumph over human nature. As the old saying goes: When is God happy? When a poor person finds something and gives it back.

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# KLEZ KINDER B'KITZUR

Wow—already a blast! From learning Miki Moyz with Binyomen Shaechter to Yiddish Sukkah decorations with Esther Gottesman to preparing for our big SECRET presentation on Saturday Night with Sruli and Lisa to performing Hasidic Nigunim at the flagpole to holding baby twins Shmuel Peysakh and Tsimbl to making printings with Robin Young to glorious afternoons by the lake, special snacks and total fun in the pool, we have been blissfully busy! Looking forward to the rest of this too-short and most-magical-week-of-the-year!

Mit liebshaft—The Klez Kinder



Photo: Paul Karger

# Sebastian Shulman: From Montreal to Moldova

by Rokhl Kafrissen



Sebastian (Zekharye) Shulman graduated from McGill University in 2006 with a concentration in Jewish Studies and History. He began studying Yiddish as an undergraduate when he was a summer intern at the National Yiddish Book Center. He returned to McGill and studied Yiddish with Eugene Orenstein and Anna Gonshor.

After he graduated, Seb (as he is most commonly known), found work at YIVO, the Institute for Jewish

Research. He then accepted a position as a Fellow with the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The JDC or 'Joint' is the overseas wing of the North American Jewish community working to develop Jewish life all over the world. The Joint is apolitical and dedicated to helping Jews be Jews however, and wherever, they want. This philosophy appealed to Seb as he was fascinated by Jewish life in the FSU and wanted to work with the Jewish communities there. With the Joint he worked with Jewish communities in Kishinev (Moldova) and Minsk (Belorus).

During his year in Moldova and Belorus Seb learned as much about Jewish life as he taught. For example, he helped older people remember long-forgotten Yiddish songs and folklore and then helped them transmit that culture to younger generations. In the process, he added much knowledge to his already impressive mastery of Yiddish culture and language.

For Seb, his work in Eastern Europe was personal on many levels. In Belarus he was able to visit the shtetl of his great-grandparents. There are no Jews there anymore, but when he got there

he found a collective farm, a statue of a dancing Lenin and, most moving, a poignant marker of the previous Jewish life of that town— a large, fenced in green space that used to be the Jewish cemetery. A marker erected just a few years ago by a Jewish organization tells visitors what they are looking at. Though the cemetery is now at the center of town, we can tell that the town gradually shifted its geography (the cemetery would normally be on the edge of town) until it ended up in the center. The residents of the town, however, have always known that the space was a Jewish cemetery and it has always been left untouched as a silent reminder of what is now missing. Though the marker can tell visitors what once was, the town's very geography has functioned as a site of memory and history.

Some might be saddened by such a visit to one's *heymshtetl* (ancestral hometown) but Seb was energized. He returned to Kishinev with a renewed sense of connection to the Jews of Eastern Europe, and optimism about the future there.

**BOOKS BY SEB** *Continued from page 2*  
many shtetls, there would be a single person who had once been in another town and heard a Cantor perform. Note that traveling Cantors were most popular during the 19th century. Hankus played one early recording of such a cantor and made the point that this was not a person who had had Western music training. By the 20th century—even by the 1910s or 1920s, recordings were available such that people could hear 78 recordings of these great cantors. Somewhere in there was also that great age when the Jan Peerce's and Richard Tucker's—

opera singers who also performed as Cantors—held sway.

Another part of Jewish life was the *nign*, one of whose primary aspects is that the individual is praying directly to God, without intercession. According to Hankus, this is how most of us pray today—he talked about the influence of Shlomo Carlebach, in particular.

Finally, as I run out of room and the printer cries “feed me,” I need to mention the issue of folk music—the music that our mothers and fathers sang out of shul. This is one of the most interesting transformations, because today, for many people, folk music has become the safe secular

“signifier” of Jewish culture. So, when doing a program of international folk music, stick in “Tumbalalaika” and you have a “Jewish” component.



## Mentshkeh-keit Revisited *Cont. from page 3*

The actual idea for this book came about a year ago with the Elliot Spitzer scandal. A man who was so obsessed with the morality of others, and yet let his own slip through the cracks. As many of you know, Elliot Spitzer, one biggest anti-prostitution lobbyists of the United States, was caught in Washington with a prostitute, Upon the arrival of the police, he gave the identity and information of his best friend, It was this self-serving attitude that started Wex on the trail of "How to be a Mentsh, and not a Shmuck".

His newest book will be available for purchase on September 14th.

## PODCAST *Cont. from p. 2*

interesting, and everyone has a story to tell. So, if you would like to be on the show, just find me and let's talk music!

Klezmer Podcast can be found on iTunes, Blubrry, and on the klezmerpodcast.com website. I also maintain profile pages on MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, and Last.fm. Just search these sites for Klezmer Podcast and you'll find me. I hope to meet many of you this week and stay in touch throughout the year.

*Keith Wolzinger and his wife, Renah, live in Huntington Beach, California with their two teenage daughters. They are founding members of South Coast Simcha Band. This marks their 10<sup>th</sup> year attending KlezKanada.*



Donna Lipton working on a project, "Making Your Own Holiday Cards," the visual arts workshop led by Tine Kindermann and Robin Young in the Retreat Center Art Room. Photo: Leslie Schwartz

## המשך פֿון זייט 6

נישט נאָר רעדן זשנע קינדער מיט אים און צווישן זיך אויף יידיש, זיי האָבן אויך ליב אויפֿצוטערען אויף יידיש. הַנְנֵט צו טאָג טרעט בינמין ארויס מיט זשנע צוויי טעכטער, ריינע און טעמע און זייער גרופע הייסט טאַקע "די טעכטער-טעכטער". מיט די קאַנצערטן פֿון יידישע לידער פֿאַרן זיי איבער דער וועלט, און דער עולם שעפט נחת און לעקט זיך די פֿינגער. דאָס איז בנימינס ערשט מאָל בנעם "קלעזקאַנאַדע". ער פֿירט אָן מיטן די כאָרן סע פֿאַר דערוואַקסענע, סיי פֿאַר קינדער. ער איז געקומען מיט זשנ ווייב, חיהלע, אָבער די קינדער זשנען געפֿאַרן אויף דער "יידיש-וואָך", וואָס איז פֿאַר זיי אַ צווייטע היים". מיר ווינטשן בנימינען אַ סך דערפֿאַלגן אויפֿן געביט פֿון דער יידישער שפראַך און קולטור.

## Personal Ads & Announcements

*To submit a personal advertisement, accompany it with a \$5 (or more) contribution to the KlezKanada Scholarship fund.*

**Tenor Sax for Sale** Selmer Paris Mark VI 1964, original lacquer—excellent condition. See Jerry Alperstein.

**Online, full semester college-level course in Jewish music.** "Music of the Jewish People." Class start September 30. Taught by Judith Pinnolis, Editor of the Jewish Music WebCenter Intended for individuals who have completed high school and above. Register and pay through the Hebrew College. Available to students anywhere in the world who have internet access. For more information, please contact Barbara Cassidy, bcassidy@hebrewcollege.edu. 617-559-8643.

## KlezNews קלעזנייעס

Staff include Ari Davidow, Steve Karp, Rokhl Kafrissen. You can be a part of the daily news as a photographer, writer, translator, layout person or photo editor. All contents copyright by their creators, and all rights reserved by the creators.

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