A Rousing International Affair

by Reuben J. Cohen

Last night, we were all treated to a wonderful compendium of music performed by the participants in the East Meets West (coordinated by Michael Alpert) and Israel Outreach Initiative (coordinated by Jeff Warschauer) programs.

Israeli vocalist Vira Lozinsky started off the evening, backed up by fantastic Ukrainian band Konsonans Retro, featuring Christian Dawid on clarinet and Guy Schalom on drums. Arkady Goldenshtein followed her with a masterful performance on the clarinet accompanied by fellow Israeli Alex Portnov and others. Alex stayed on stage to accompany Israeli singer Noa Bizansky through two rousing songs.

Next up was Russian singer Vanya Zhuk, with Daniel Kahn and a whole bunch of KlezKanada faculty members. They powered their way through an inspiring labor song. Vocal virtuoso Ula Mokosz of Poland followed them. Her beautiful voice led us on a tour of post-war Krakow. Next, Moldavian bard Efim Chorny sang, with Suzana Ghergus on piano.

Konsonans Retro gave us a rousing reprise to take us into the finale. Then, all of the performers came back on stage for one last song. After the concert, the floor was cleared of chairs. There was dancing and fun for all, followed by a late night KlezKabaret.
Arkady

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Arkady was born in Mogilev-Podolsk on the border of Ukraine and Moldova in 1963. This area included Jews and non-Jews many who knew Yiddish because this was an area where Jewish culture thrived before World War 2. Inspired by German, Arkady began playing the clarinet around the age of 12, learning both the Jewish and non-Jewish folk tunes of the area. When Arkady was 14 he sometimes played with German at local weddings, he smiled when he told me that it was always a thrill to get to use uncle German’s clarinet. Arkady formed his own band called, Movement, when he was 18.

Once just after playing a wedding he was approached by the authorities (KGB), who Arkady thinks were tipped off by an informer at the wedding. They questioned him about some of the songs he played at the event such as a standard Yiddish tune called, “Yoshe Goes Away.” Arkady told me that it was the time that many Jews were trying to leave for Israel and they thought the song, which talks about going away, was suspect.

After finishing middle school he trained for four years at a special music school where he concentrated on Ukrainian and Moldavian folk music. He was drafted into the army where, like his talented uncle, he played in an army band. When he left the army there was a bit of a Jewish cultural revival which opened up some more opportunities to play Jewish music. He learned more about Jewish folk music by listening to German’s music collection which included recordings of records that German collected over the years. In 1990, Arkady left Russia and followed his brother and other family members and settled in Haifa, Israel.

In Israel he had a brief stint as a construction worker.

Things changed in his direction when a friend showed him an ad in the paper announcing the need for a musician who could play Hasidic music in a wedding band. Arkady answered the ad and he was once again doing what he loved, playing music as a professional working many gigs mostly for secular Israeli weddings. Arkady, worked closely with German while

German lived in New York, sending each other music.

Arkady has 3 children, 2 daughters ages 17 and 3. His oldest sun Naum is 22 and just finished his army service. Naum, a third generation Goldenshtein clarinetist, is a fine musician in the family tradition. Akady smiles with pride as he explained to me that his son was the top clarinetist in the Israel Army band, a very high achievement, Naum has performed in the US with the band for fundraising events. Naum has just finished the army and is presently studying music at the University of Jerusalem. Continued on page 8
My wife complains all the time. We are both retired, and we now spend every day together. If we go to a restaurant, the food is too salty. If we go see a movie, the actors are bad. If we stay at home, the kids haven’t called us. I, on the other hand, am a cheerful person by nature. My wife is driving me crazy! What can I do?

Not a complainer

Dear Not a Complainer,

Sit down and talk to your wife. Tell her how you feel, that you would like to enjoy your time together, and that her complaints take away from your enjoyment. It may be a habit she is not even aware of. See if she would be willing to say something positive after any complaint. Perhaps that would get her to start thinking more positively.

Souls on Fire the 2008 version or How to Dance with a Jewish Heart

Picture this—100 people of various ages, sexes (I thought there were only two, but maybe she knows more than I do) and degrees of dance competence get together to experience Yiddish dancing under the fabulous direction of dance maven Steve Weintraub and the inspiring accompaniment of live Klezmer music. Is it any wonder that our souls are now on fire?

We accomplished the “sherele”, but the last part is accomplished by “treading the needle” which presents many of us problems. However, the half hour of hysterical laughter and fun is worth the process. We are planning to get ready for the summer of 2009. Definitely good for the soul.

Not only is it good for the soul it is the best cardiac/aerobic workout that I have ever had. My pulse made it to its objective and the sweat poured off of me. I was one of those dance challenged people, the only way that I learned how to tell my left from my right is that I can make an “L” with my left forefinger and my left thumb. I gave klutz a new meaning. Not only was I able to learn the sherele, I could follow the leader without falling on my face, thread the needle without sweat, over and under and the list goes on. I also realized tht I was not the only one. These are the words of Susan Goellner

I am loving the soles on fire workshop! Steve lets me believe that I may just have two right feet. His talent, enthusiasm and patience have enabled me to bounce and dance with joy to traditional klezmer music. “there are no wrong moves”. This is his welcome mantra.

Two days have passed since Debbie, Ron and Susan have given me there comments. Our numbers have shrunk. Learning this type of dancing is not for the faint of heart. Today (Thursday), Steve had invited Zev Feldman and Michael Alpert to demonstrate and teach us some of there specialties. Wow...some of us stumbled our way through and the beginning, Steve has the ability to simply complex steps and translate them...and by the end of todays session we had morphed into dancers.

We all agreed that being here and having some of the best “klezmer groups” do a gig for our session enhanced our learning. This is not only good for the soul, the heart, it is spectacular for ones self-esteem. by Elaine Cooper
Interview with Sruli Dresder and Lisa Mayer

By Mira Netsky, Michelle Wolzinger and Sabu Wex

We hear that you’re opening a store … can you tell us about the store please?

Lisa: Sruli and I decided to do something as my son Aaron would say, “outlandish … mommy, you’re so outlandish.” And indeed we now own a crazy store, on the boardwalk in Ocean City, New Jersey, and it’s called, “The Hottest Legs on the Beach,” and we sell giant smoked turkey legs, and everybody loves them.

Hi Sruli!
Sruli: Hi.

Your store! So why did you decide to open a store?
Lisa: I don’t know. (Cracks up.) We thought it would be fun. But it’s really hard…. Sruli loves it.

Sruli: Hmm…. I get to play banjo all day long!

Lisa: He sits and plays banjo, and then sometimes we sing, and customers come over to us because they like our music.

Sruli: And one of the coolest things we did was we take pictures of people who buy our turkey legs, so if you buy a turkey leg, which is really giant and huge, you get a free souvenier photo, and then we take those pictures, and we put them on to our very large 50˝ television, so people can come back and see themselves eating giant smoked turkey legs.

That’s like on the roller coasters when you come and pick it up and then you look really stupid … and you get a keychain!
Lisa: Haha exactly!

Wait so where did you get your turkey leg recipe?
Lisa: We don’t have a turkey leg recipe, we have a supplier, a food supplier and every week we get big deliveries.

Sruli: Our turkey legs fly in from Minnesota.

Lisa: BECAUSE THEY CAN’T WALK!
(All crack up.)

Lisa: That’s out joke…. ay ey ey!

(Steve Weintrap comes by to let us know that he got some drummers for his class, says hi to Sabu, mistakes Mira for Avia, says, “wait, what’s this,” and begins to admire the plants.)

So what project are you working on in there with the kids? This time we have a beautiful, beautiful project. The children are learning how to write in yiddish, so they’re learning the aleph-bes, they’re learning the sounds the aleph-bes makes, and then they’re going to be learning how to write their names, and the names of their parents and their grandparents, and we’re actually going to be making family trees using the letters and the names of their family, and we’re going to hopefully display it for everybody at the retreat center on Shabes.

The barbies ruined your story the 12 dancing dancing princesses!
Lisa: That’s a folk-tale, it’s not my story, the 12 Dancing Princesses….

Sruli: Who are the barbies?

My princess barbie coloring book has like the 12 Dancing Princesses in it, and it’s so not as good as Lisa’s story!

Sruli: Make sure you put that in the interview…. Mira Netsky, age 14, has a princess barbie
Sometimes you need a coloring book... so does it get like distracting that there's a dumpster right there all the time? And just every time you open the door you have to look at it?

Lisa: Oh I love dumpsters.
Sruli: Yeah they're so beautiful..
Lisa: It's a reminder of all the trash.
Sruli: Our environmentally friendly greens

OH MY G-D IT'S SO COLD!
Sabu we call this wind...

Oh my.

Sruli where did you learn to play recorder in your nose?
Sruli: I have been playing the recorder in my nose since I was a very young boy..
Lisa: (in hysteric) Since he grew a nose....
Sruli: Since I had a nose.
Lisa: HA HA HA HA
Sruli: And I actually once performed for a very, very famous general in the Israeli army when I was about 13 years old with two recorders, one in each nostril, and I played a very, very wonderful Israeli folk song.
Lisa: Did he like it?
Sruli: Yes. He was visiting this camp I was in, and they wanted to show off the camp's talent, and there I was....
Lisa: You see, that's why I love him. Who else would play a recorder with his nose?
Sruli: But since then, I have improved the technique because at that time, all the recorders were the same size, but now, thanks to Lisa's generosity, I have an enormously giant recorder that I can put in my right nostril, and a really tiny recorder that I can put in my left nostril, which makes a very nice sonic pallet.
Lisa: (in hysteric again ...) AND HE PLAYS IN HARMONY! HA HA HA HA. Ahhh! Yes every girl's dream, her man can play recorders with his nose!
Sruli: Now when I have a cold, the clean-up takes a little longer.

Do you get like hand-sanitizer, but like nose-sanitizer?
Lisa: No but nobody wants to borrow his flute, what a surprise.

Lisa why do you always wear black?
Lisa: My favorite color. I'm not goth or alternative. No. It is a neutral pallet from which I can springboard my personality.

Did you rehearse that?
Lisa: No! I just thought of that now!

If you had a moose, how would you dress it up?
Lisa: In black.... With a feather BOA.
Sruli: I would like to just point out that moose have FABULOUS nostrils.

What would you name your moose?
Lisa: Meeskyt

Why would you name it ugly?
Lisa: Well because I don't think she would speak yiddish....

We heard that you sang a special song the other night for the Dresdner girls..
Lisa: The whole camp misses Ilana and Toby so much. everybody has been asking about them.. “Where's Ilana with that red hair? Where's Toby?” Everybody misses them, and I sang a very special song for them last night at the concert, and the song was called “If it Takes Forever, I will wait for you,” and Michael Wex did a beautiful translation into yiddish, and I sang it in English and Yiddish. And for Ilana I wore a plum colored boa because Ilana likes that that color.
“Are you a bass?” a polite gentleman asked me. Taken somewhat aback, I asked whether we were supposed to sit with our “part”-ners, e.g., are “The Sopranos” “family” in more ways than one? He confirmed this and I realized I had joined a serious choir, not the happy glee club from school.

According to the brochure, the Chorale is led by Cantor Arianne Brown, Heather Klein, and Suzanne Ghergus. Is Cantor Arianne the petite woman with the exquisite voice who leads us and, in short order, had us doing lip warm ups? LIP warm-ups? I know Heather is the scholarship student who gave personal instruction to the Altos and is Suzanne Ghergus the patient and talented person at the piano? My compliments. Within minutes, all three had the Chorale (with my intermittent participation) singing like angels. And not the saccharine sweet, puffy, child angels that are the vogue, today, but real mola-chim- angels of whom one can be proud.

We’re singing Yiddish songs (no titles; I want you to be surprised) but one was described to me to be about the Yiddish Cinderella. Now I want to find out her prince- the Rebbe’s son? Still, about 30 people were present and, in short order, sounded wonderful. Music is provided and all one needs to bring to this is enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and a pen or pencil to make appropriate notes on your music.

I’m a sucker for 4 part harmony. Can we take this show on the road? Probably not. Do we embarrass ourselves?

By Joyce Romoff

Singing With Angels-Chorale

Was I up for it? More importantly, what voice was I? I went to the Altos who, instead of swimming with the fishes (or sopranos), sing with the tenors.

Absolutely not? Must one have vocal training to participate? Nope, although I’m sure it helps. Is this a welcoming group worth joining? Absolutely. So if you don’t play an instrument, come sing with us.
**Yiddish far klezmorim**

*Collated by N. Borodulin*

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**Clarinets Are Not An Endangered Species, Here (But Not To Worry; There’s Lot’s Here For The Non-Players)**

*By Joyce Romoff*

Sleep may not be optional for me, but breakfast certainly is. My second full day here and I’m trading breakfast for a little more sleep. So much to do and so little time. I have the first year’s syndrome: we must do it all.

A show of hands of those (3 or 4?) of you who do not play clarinet. Oh, I know, there are violinists, trombonists, drummers and others, but clarinets do seem to be very thick on the ground. In case you can’t see it, my hand is up. Since I have the first year syndrome: we have to do everything, in the afternoon, it was the Visual Arts Workshop, “The Law of Mosaics: Piecing Together The Fragments” led by Emily Socolov and Robin Young and Julia Waks (were you the lovely blonde woman with whom I spoke?). Last year’s workshop involved beading. I wish I’d been there, too.

I and 15 other workshop attendees, who, in “real life” range from physicians to teachers, therapists, lawyers, and professional artists, all searched to find our inner child so we could have fun working with mosaics. Do you know how intimidating it can be to be faced with a blank tray and all kinds of found objects? Can one DO a mosaic tray incorrectly. Tiles, iridescent “jewels”, sea glass, pottery, there is SO much from which to choose. But don’t get too enthusiastic about the tiles because then you have to paste each and every one down (and use extra glue if you don’t have a flat piece). Still, the camaraderie is fabulous and it’s a terrific place to meet people and find out more about them. Even if you don’t channel the inner artist, it’s fun to play.

Leave the trays to dry and today, we get to grout! I am excited. OK, I know I left a lot of room for grout since I don’t have a lot of patience to paste, and I may never use the tray, but I am looking forward to seeing what I’ve created.
Arkady

Continued from page 2

One of Arkady’s great joys was playing with German in Israel just before he died in 2006. The last concert Arkady played with German was at Bet Levik, a Yiddish culture club, in Israel. Arkady is well known in Israel and has recorded 3 CD’s. As we finished up our conversation in the Retreat Centre Kurt Bjorling began to play a beautiful piece that we heard in the background. Arkady, who first came to Klez Kanada, last year, pointed this out to me with pride that the music that Kurt was playing was his Uncle’s composition. Arkady, a talented and sensitive musician, has continued the tradition that he his uncle passed to him as a youngster. Now, Arkady’s son is also part of the family’s clarinet chain that German began many years ago in the Ukraine and brought to us for 8 years here at Klez Kanada.

Don’t miss the KlezKanada
Boutique in the Retreat
Center, 2nd Floor!