WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS!: BEADING AT KLEZ KANADA

by Richard Kurtz

The art room on the second floor of the Retreat Centre has been brimming with activity all week long. Under the talented guidance of art director Emily Sokolov, staff member Vera Sokolow and Fellowship recipient Robin Young, more people participated in the art program than ever before—about 50 adults and 20 children this year.

The most common phrase that I heard while the artist formed their creations was, “What do you think?” All three instructors acknowledged that, “What do you think?” was what they loved to hear. It meant that the workshop was interactive and participants traded ideas. There was cross fertilization among experienced and new bead artists.

The program began with a slide show by Emily putting this year’s theme, beading, into a Jewish and historical context. Emily highlighted quotes from the bible that related to art and beading and showed samples of beautiful bead-related Jewish art. Under Emily’s guidance participants started off making bracelets and necklaces. They used 200 feet of Beadalon (wire for stringing the beads) in 2 days. Vera taught the peyote stitch and Robin taught people how to make beaded kipot. While each teacher taught a specific skill they also helped participants traded ideas. There was cross fertilization among experienced and new bead artists.

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CLOSING OBSERVATIONS FROM CHAIYALLA

Well dear readers, time goes by quickly when you are having fun, when you are surrounded by wonderful music created by musicians who play with their hearts and souls; passionate dancers, engaging people. We are wise indeed to have made a conscious choice to spend the third week of August in these surroundings.

Each year is qualitatively different. Thursday night, while I was listening to a trio, one of whom was playing a saw, I had epiphany. The change that we often talk about needing to happen is happening all around us. We are living in a kaleidoscope of change. All of the music that we are hearing contains the building blocks of the old newly configured. The music is a metaphor for life. Each day, each moment requires a different response. As one of my colleagues once said to me “each day is an existential crisis”. Even those who claim that they are existentially challenged feel it, even though they may not have the words for it.

One of my greatest learnings this summer, is how important it is to having ongoing shared tasks and dialogues be it through the language of music, dance, words with people of all ages who share the same passions and interests. There was a wonderful philosopher who coined the words “dialogical relationship”. Colloquially it translates into “I don’t do shallow anymore when I engage with others”.

Tayere fraynt, for some questions there are no answers, and for some problems there are no solutions. Notwithstanding, the reader who was struggling to extricate himself from the person whose hygiene was not to his liking found a way out. The former started going to the Yiddish classes and found new

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Friday morning Klez Kinder sat with Theo in the dining room to talk to him about his life as an artist. Theodore Bikel has been in many performances, t.v. shows and movies. These are some of the many interesting things he told us.

Theo plays the guitar. He showed us his hands. His left hand has short fingernails to hold the strings. His right hand has long nails to pluck the strings.

Both of Mr. Bikel’s parents had good voices and they sang together as a family. Most of the Yiddish songs he knows he learned from his father. Theo said his first role was the constable in the Sholem Aleichen play “Tevya the Milkman.” His mother put the money he made from the play in a coffee can. He hoped it wouldn’t be the last money he made from acting.

We asked Mr. Bikel what he loves about his work. He said he feels extremely fortunate that he has been able to work all his life at something he loves and is passionate about.

When we asked him if anyone in particular inspired him in his work he said, “There is a saying in the Talmud, I learn from everyone and everything. Everyone I meet teaches me something. We all have many talents. I don’t believe you can only do one thing well. You can do many things well, you just have to fully concentrate on each one and learn to live with less sleep!”

We told Mr. Bikel that we learned about Molly Picon who often played a boy and asked if he ever had to play a role that included a drastic change. He said, “I never played a woman because I’m not built for it! But I did play a Midori alien in Babylon 5.

I had to put on a lot of makeup and I didn’t really have a real role model as there aren’t many Jewish aliens! But for my Tevya role, I did have an important role model: my grandfather.”

“My most exciting experience as an artist is not meeting important people but feeling a sense of accomplishment, that you made a difference in people’s life. Walking in Washington Square one morning, I listened to some young musicians playing and realized they were singing one of my songs! And I knew they would have only heard it from me as no one else sang that song!

Why is art important in the world? A world without art is boring and hostile. The arts give us the better, nobler part of the world. Art helps us remember history and experiences, it also allows us to smile, laugh and forget the troubles of the day.

We asked Mr. Bikel what challenged him as an actor and a person and he said, “Being a peacenik in a world that has little patience for peace and arguing with those who think that Yiddish is a lost cause. It’s not going to be gone as long as there are people like me and you who continue speaking and singing!”
Many people had not worked with beads before or at least not since they were very young. Virginia Rogers, a harp player from Boston, relaxed after an intense day in music workshops. She worked alongside Kristen Lamb a bass player from New Jersey. They both indicated that they loved working with the beads, and the art room was a place full of creativity where they could unwind. These two new friends demonstrated, as Vera Sokolow told me, the comradeship that this class brought out in people. Elizabeth Malischewski from Newfoundland learned new methods of beading from Emily, and hopes to continue doing beadwork when she returns to, as she calls it, the “Rock” (Newfoundland).

Robin Youn loved the cross section of ages and abilities of the people who attended the workshop. That cross section reflected the great diversity of creations, from necklaces to a whole range of bracelets, earrings, flowers, and kipot. Nina Horowitz of Westchester, NY made beautiful multi-colored patterned bracelets that she plans to give as gifts to friends. Other participants donated pieces for sale to raise money for Klez Kanada scholarships. On Friday, during the afternoon session the works of art were selling fast. If any of these fabulous pieces are left over you can see or buy them on Saturday after Shabbes. Just remember how much work and love went into these creations. Just like a piece of music these bead-inspired works of art required creativity, planning, hard work, and the sharing of ideas and opinions with each other. I can tell you from my observations and conversations with participants I think that this workshop was unique and inspiring.
1. If you looked up a video on you-tube, would you say that you you-tubed it or that you googled it on you-tube? You-tubed it! Directly! Ohmygosh!

2. What's your favorite number on a fuchsia die? How about on a silver die? Can't you have the same number on both? Of one to six? I actually am going to say four. On both of them. Because the color doesn't affect the number.

3. Do you have a neon teal and range office chair? Does it glow in the dark? No. And no!

4. Have you ever caught something on fire? Oh yes! My hair! Christmas caroling — my hair went up like — my hair is very flammable. The only jew in engineering had to lead the Christmas carols.

5. Do you like to watch chickens bop around? Little bunny foo foo bopping through the forest! Scooping up the field mice and bopping them on the head. Unfortunately I have far too few opportunities to watch chickens bop around.

6. Have you ever seen a pig race where none of the pigs went anywhere? Yeah it's called un kosher breakfast. I'm not saying I eat un kosher breakfast but I've seen it.

7. Have you ever stapled your thumb? No but I recently caught it in the door. Look! My nail's almost growing back. Wanna see it? It's really cool!

8. Who's your bffl here? Bffl is best friend right? Racheli! I met her at the cabaret when she was two! She took the microphone out of my hand and started singing.

9. If you were given the chance, would you join the blue man group? Only if they could change the name to the blue woman or the blue people group.

10. So, what did you for breakfast this morning? Halls and honey. Gotta clear off the phlegm.

11. Is your name chad? Hahahahahah! How could I look like chad? You're seriously just asking that question of everyone? I'm seriously sorry to disappoint you girls but I am not chad! Hopefully you'll all find your chads one day. Did you think you were interviewing chad all this time?

12. May I inquire from you whether or not you have the time? Do any of you have the time? [said right before we asked this question.]

13. Do you wish you had a tail? Like a little boingy pig tail? Spider pig! Spider pig! Does whatever a spider pig does!

14. Have you ever laid in the dirt all day, then been cooked and broiled and then eaten and digested? This is the life of a carrot. [raises eyebrows and stares in shock] Haha I can't stop laughing. That question might just win the prize. Umm... perhaps.

15. When was your last tickle war? Did you win? I have to think... you guys are too young to hear about my last tickle war... I'm sorry. You asked!!! If you can't take the answers girls don't do the interview.

16. Let's say a camel was walking down the street and he saw a frog. And then the camel jumped up and down twice and found a smoothie so he poured it into a stream and then he ran away with your popcorn. Please continue this story. Hahahahahahahahahah! Well I gotta chase after the camel cause I need my popcorn back! But I tripped on a frog that was sitting there on the street. I don't know! The camel saw the frog... I saw it too! And when I got up the camel was gone... I lost track of him. Oh and unfortunately the frog was a complete goner. How did the camel go away? He flew away? Sabu... the frog is green mush! Frogs don't

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**Interview with Rena Herman**

By Mira Netsky, Michelle Wolzinger and Sabu Wex

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What Place in Klezkanada Are You?

By Mira Netsky, Sabu Wex and Rebecca Wolzinger

1. What do you like to do most in your spare time?
   A. Sleep
   B. Eat
   C. Chill
   D. Socialize

2. Do you get cold easily?
   A. Mostly just at night and first thing in the morning
   B. Nope! I have food to warm me up
   C. When it gets dark
   D. Never.

3. What effect does Klezkanada have on you?
   A. Klezkanada makes me tired!
   B. I work up an appetite playing Klezmer all day!
   C. Sometimes I have to get away from all the excitement of Klezkanada and just be mellow.
   D. Klezkanada makes me hyper. It makes me want to get up and groove!

4. What kind of shoes do you wear?
   A. Slippers. I'm always ready to hop into bed.
   B. Sneakers so I can burn the calories I just consumed.
   C. Flip flops or sandals. I like to be relaxed.
   D. Dress shoes. I like to look nice when I perform/socialize.

5. Which song lyrics best describe your personality?
   A. “Hey now, hey now, this is what dreams are made of.”
   B. “I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas.”
   C. “Would you like to swing on a star?”
   D. “Gonna celebrate good times, come on!”

Results on page 8

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Continued on page 8
by Bob Smolkin

It seems to me that master painters have brushed their successes during their lifetimes but some have never passed on their secrets to others. This factor has left interpretations open to future painters to find their own ways with the help of the final product only. What a loss of vision, experience, guidance and most of all the direct interaction with the painters themselves.

KlezKanada 2007 has experienced a wonderful period of two masters in their own rights. The secrets of Early Morning (7:30), AM 2 and PM 2 tracks slowly unfolded as the week went on. A very eager number of individuals became a close-knit group as the week ended. Singing, the challenging frontier was the focus with the doors being swung open for all individuals from beginners learning Yiddish for the first time to those who are very conversant in the language wanting to improve upon their singing stage presence and delivery.

We are talking about Vocal Warm-ups at 7:30 followed by “Finding Your Own Voice” (AM 2) and Vocal Master Class (PM 2). An experience of giving, sharing and vocal techniques were provided openly by the faculty members. It is with the deepest thank you, to you the faculty, that the positive criticisms were given in such a gentle manner that students came out of the experience with a whole new outlook on approaching the world of voice. As a matter of fact the students’ transformations were evident during the critique periods with magical results being recognized by the audience immediately. Even if you did not get a chance to sing but rather were an observer, you learned through the maturing actions of your fellow student.

I am sure you have guessed by now who the faculty members are. None other than Theodore (Theo) Bikel and Tamara Brooks. What were laid before us were a lifetime of experience and a high energy level of willingness to share their tools. There was no selfishness here but rather a focus to ensure that every student who sang solos to Tamara and Theo went through a very concentrated learning experience. The motivation and desire to improve before KlezKanada 2008 was seeded so strongly that we, as students, seek to strive to reach the next level in a very constructive manner.

There is no way to change life’s past experiences
There are ways to teach others what you live
These are the times when you become unselfish
These are the times when you feel a need to give.

We shared the lives of two great people
They shared with us golden gifts of promise
Seeking forever nothing from us in return
But to practice in voice what we continue to learn.

So we, as the graduating class of “Finding Your Own Voice”, and Master Voice Class, thank Theo and Tamara for what they have given us and look forward to KlezKanada 2008!!!

“To life!!!”

A Wonderful Experience:

Theo Bikel and Tamara Brooks Master Vocal Classes:
Mottel and Herschel watch the stars at KlezKanada

by Robert Rovne

**Mottel:** Hey Herschel, did you see that neat act at the concert last night?

**Herschel:** Yeah, that performer was incredible, playing the grand piano on the strings instead of the keys. I really liked it when she used the ribs of the piano to make that iridescent sound.

**Mottel:** I say, if she wanted to play the tsimble, it would be a lot lighter!

**Herschel:** Hey Mottel, did you see the stars last night?

**Mottel:** Sure. The performers at the gym were like stars.

**Herschel:** No, I mean the stars in the sky! If you look toward the dining hall from the rec hall, you can see the big dipper! You know, the two stars on the outside of the ladle point to the north star. If you are ever lost at night, you can find your way by the north star!

**Mottel:** Wow, its like a celestial GPS, only a lot less expensive.

**Herschel:** Yes, and if you look toward the east from the big dipper, you can see a large diamond, made up of four stars. That is the great square of Pegasus!

**Mottel:** If its a square, why is it a diamond?

**Herschel:** Maybe it isn’t worth so much! Who knows? Anyways, it is a square turned on its point.

**Mottel:** Its a pointed square? What are you talking about.

**Herschel:** Listen. If you look just to the left of the diamond, there are three stars that stream out from the left point. There are three fainter stars above these as well. This is the constellation Andromeda. There is a famous galaxy in Andromeda.

**Mottel:** Well, if it is so famous, why isn’t it at Klez Kanada?

**Herschel:** I’ll tell you. There are too many stars, billions and billions.

**Mottel:** You sound like Carl Sagan.

**Herschel:** If you look straight up into the sky, you can see the summer triangle.

**Mottel:** Summer triangle! If the summer triangle is up there, why is it so cold down here?

**Herschel:** The summer triangle consists of three stars: Altair, Vega and Deneb. You can always tell Deneb, because the “northern cross” emanates from it. The actual constellation is called Cygnus the swan. If you look closely, you can see its wings. Hey Mottel, do you know which star is closest to the Earth?

**Mottel:** Well of course. Its Alpha Centauri. I learned that when I was 10.

**Herschel:** Did you know that that star is called Alpha Centauri because it is the brightest star in the constellation The Centaur? Its actually seen in the southern sky, so it is not real visible in our sky. But thats the wrong answer.

**Mottel:** What, did they change the Universe when I wasn’t looking?

**Herschel:** No Mottel, the closest star is our sun!! Did you know that alot of stars are double. Two stars will revolve around each other. If you look at the middle star in the Big Dipper’s handle real closely, you can see that there is a faint second star right next to it. These two revolve around each other. Our own solar system could have had two star.

**Mottel:** How could that be?

**Herschel:** Jupiter is almost big enough to be a star. It is massive and could have imploded and become a star. Two things stood in its way.

**Mottel:** What were they?

**Herschel:** First, they had to find a Mensch who carried a match in his pocket. Could they find one? No! Then they had to get a fire permit from the Fire Department. When the application was reviewed, they proclaimed: There’s only room enough for one star in this solar system, thank you very much. I’m afraid that the whole idea was extinguished.

**Mottel:** You know Herschel, I love these stars! They are so beautiful; they are like jewels in the sky! I am going to watch them every night at Klez Kanada.

**Herschel:** I’m afraid that you can’t Mottel.

**Mottel:** Why not? Its a free country. I can do what I want.

**Herschel:** You can’t Mottel.

**Mottel:** Why not?

**Herschel:** Its going to rain!
Coming this Spring: Shalom, Quebec

by Simon Jacobs

There is a wonderful new historical project starting in Quebec City that we would like KlezKanada participants to know about. Entitled “Shalom Quebec,” it will uncover the history of the city’s Jewish community and then present it in an exhibit at the train station, in time for Quebec’s 400th anniversary celebrations. The exhibit entitled “Same Cloth, different threads; the Jews of Quebec” will run from the beginning of May until October 2008.

The story starts, as far as we know, with Esther Brandeau. She was a young French Jew who managed to make her way to Quebec City in 1738 by disguising herself as a boy by the name of Jacques La Fargue. New France was officially Catholic and, as the Dictionary of Canadian Biography article on Brandeau puts it, “a non-Catholic immigrant in New France could look forward only to conversion or deportation.” A year after her arrival, Brandeau had not obliged officials by converting and Intendant Hocquart wrote, “Her conduct has not been precisely bad, but she is so fickle, that at different times she has been as much receptive as hostile to the instructions that zealous ecclesiastics have attempted to give her; I have no alternative but to send her away.” He did so that same year, 1739, and this, plus Esther Brandeau’s own tale told to colonial officials, is just about all we know about her. It is enough to be the stuff of legends, though. Many have been told about her: there is a children’s novel, Esther, by Sharon E. McKay, a novel by Pierre Lasry, recently released in English under the title Esther: A Jewish Odyssey, and even an art installation by Wendy Oberlander called “Translating Esther.”

We can bring Quebec City’s Jewish story almost up to date by looking at another adventurous Jewish woman, Lea Roback. Born in Montreal in 1903, Roback moved with her family to Beauport, near Quebec, where she lived with her parents and eight brothers and sisters. They were the only Jewish family in town. Lea Roback went on to live in Montreal, New York and Berlin, where she began a life-long involvement with the workers, women’s and peace movements. She travelled to the Soviet Union during the 1930s and, back in Montreal, organized unions and opened the city’s first Marxist bookstore. Lea Roback died in 2000 at the age of 96 in Montreal.

In between these tales are many others, equally fascinating, of merchants (the Gradius family of France and Samuel Jacobs in the eighteenth century, and Maurice Pollack in the twentieth, to name just a few) and politicians (Ezekiel Hart and Peter Bercovitch), not to mention the remarkable story of nineteenth century man-about-town and diarist Abraham Joseph, or of engineer Sigismund Mohr, who helped bring electricity and telephones to Quebec City. One of the province’s most famous Jews, Aaron Hart, lived mostly in Trois-Rivières but was also a founding member of the Literary and Historical Society, as its 1831 charter indicates. These and many others helped form a growing Jewish community with its own synagogues, social networks and charitable organisations.

The story continues today, of course. Quebec City still has a small but strong Jewish community, with a synagogue, a Cercle Hillel at the University and, significantly, the stewardship of the Shalom Québec project itself. Simon Jacobs, who is active in the community, got the project off the ground. It is now run by an independent not-for-profit organization called Shalom Quebec, which has received accreditation from the Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec. Mr. Jacobs, a musician with the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, is Shalom Quebec’s Executive Director. Local community members, including Arthur Aaron who is president, are on its Board of Directors. The project’s committee of experts in the fields of Jewish, Quebec and Canadian history includes Pierre Anctil (University of Ottawa), Ira Robinson (Concordia University), Jean-François Royal (Musée des religions de Nicolet) and Roch Samson (Parks Canada). The museological company GID Design is in the process of designing the exhibit, working closely with the project’s historian, Dr. Lorraine O’Donnell.

We have received major funding from Le Château inc., Canadian Heritage, Reitmans inc., Hydro Quebec, the Bronfman and Pollack foundations as well as the 400th Anniversary Society. We have also just been awarded a grant to produce an interactive website from ‘Canadian Culture on Line’ and are currently working on it in time for its launch at the end of March 2008. Come and visit us on-line at www.shalomquebec.com.

We hope to also produce some klezmer music concerts during the run of the exhibition. Check out the website for more information when it becomes available.

Do you have stories of your own about Quebec City’s Jewish community? Did your relatives immigrate through Quebec City’s port? Maybe you had Jewish friends at the Quebec High School, or you shopped at Pollack’s on rue St. Joseph. Maybe you heard stories from your grandparents about the Ortenberg trial or waves of Yiddish-speaking immigrants arriving early in the twentieth century. If so, please consider yourself invited to contact the team at (418) 688-8046 or send an e-mail to info@shalomquebec.com. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the exhibition.
RESULTS!! from p. 4

Mostly A’s—You are the cabins!
Wow! You’re pretty tired! Is all that Klezmer wearing you out? Maybe you should skip the cabaret tonight and head to bed before tomorrow morning.

Mostly B’s—You are the Dining Hall!
Hmm ... you eat a lot. Remember not to eat with your instruments in your mouth. And remember, even though Klezkanada food is delicious, if you eat too much you’ll be too stuffed to hora. No one wants to hear you kvetch about a stomachache.

Mostly C’s—You are the Swinging Chairs!
You’re such a mellow dude! Mellow is a good thing to but this is Klezkanada!!! Get hyper once in a while!!! But stay calm, too—don’t get overly hyper.
Remember: Always go to bed early!!!!!!!

Mostly D’s—You are the Retreat Centre!!!
OHMYGOSH!!! FUN, FUN, FUN!!!! You are SO hyper!!! Hyper is AWESOME— I’m telling you!!!! Everyone is hyper at heart, but don’t be so loud around the retreat centre at midnight because you will wake the people there who were only trying to sleep, and if you do you’ll get kicked out of Klezkanada and that would be THE WORST THING POSSIBLE!!!!!!! So just get calmer at night. But remember: NEVER EVER just be calm because you would be betraying all of mankind FOREVER!!!!!!!

Rena Herman from p. 4

have seven lives! cats have nine lives. No i was gonna fly after the camel on my magic jet pack. how do you know I don’t have a magic jet pack??! No the frog is dead!! What? it’s lunchtime? Well lets go girls! Now we don’t need to chase after the camel anymore for the popcorn because we all know Klezkanada food is better! Sweet.

A KLEZKANADA EXPERIENCE WITH DANNY RUBENSTEIN

by Renah Wolzinger, www.renah.com

This year an amazing class was offered—a daily workshop with Danny Rubenstein, led by Josh Dolgin and Pete Sokolow. We were listening to Danny’s wonderful album from 1958, Happy People. Danny showed the class where and when to put the klezmer “dreidelech”. Josh asked him to show the class different ways to play one variation or “lick” in part of one of his tunes. We were all blown away when he came up with 10-20 variations just for one lick! Danny knows all the tools, when to use them, and how to still maintain the melody. His album is currently only on vinyl, but hopefully will be one day re-released on CD. The outstanding playing of Danny is an experience that any player today would greatly enjoy and certainly learn a lot from!

Chaiyalla! from page 1

a quaintances with whom he was much more comfortable. The women who were having difficulty making new friends found that going to the cabaret for a couple of nights and sitting at a small table she began to smooze with the people who were sitting there and her sense of feeling connected returned.

Also remember, if you suffer from W.D.A. (want to do it all). Pinch yourself and remind yourself that you can’t put your tush into two places at the same time.

Now, if during the year you need a little psychological tweeking, are feeling stuck or in freefall. Send a little email to contact me. Chaiyalla’s email is csossinsky@gmail.com.

Find KlezKanada Photos online:

Use the “tag” klezkanada07 for photos and videos on Flickr, YouTube, Facebook