



קלעדנייעס KlezNews

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Photos: Bob Blacksberg & Bob Horowitz



**WELCOMING THE SHABES BRIDE
BACKWARDS MARCH 2010**



לכה
דודי
א גוטן
שבת!



Cryptojewology—what is it and what can it do for me?

By Rokhl Kafrissen

We all know about crypto-Jews. In 1492 the Jews of Spain were forced to either convert to Christianity or leave Spain. Many Jews chose to stay in Spain (or go to the New World) and profess Christianity while secretly maintaining Jewish beliefs and practices. We call these people crypto-Jews, or hidden Jews.

In the early 1950s, the biologist Ivan T. Sanderson coined the term cryptozoology. This was an attempt by Sanderson and his colleague, zoologist Bernard Heuvelmans, to legitimate the search for undiscovered Giant Hairy Hominids, otherwise known as Bigfoot.

So what is cryptojewology? It takes inspiration both from the study of hidden Jews and the search for the hairy and legendary. Over the last 15 years of studying Yiddish and Yiddish culture, I've realized that many in the mainstream Jewish community view Yiddish with the same level of skepticism as they have for the search for Sasquatch. In the spirit of Heuvelmans and Sanderson, I believe in the existence of living Yiddish culture (and hairy Jews) even in the face of a mostly indifferent, and sometimes hostile, Jewish institutional world.

Rather than continue to work within a framework that marginalizes Yiddish culture, I decided to build my own, cryptojewology. I am looking for intersections of the weird and the Yiddish, and

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Marin Bunea: Talented and Gracious

by Stu Warshauer

I have had the joy of attending the classes of Marin Bunea, the fiddle player for “*The Other Europeans*” for almost two hours each day this week Wow! Have I been impressed!

You all know how brilliantly he plays the violin from watching the “*Europeans*” concert on Wednesday night. Did you notice the big smile he plays with? It's not a fake. He loves the music and he loves being here at KlezKanada!

Marin is a fifth generation musician in one of the “most powerful musical dynasties” of Klezmer and folk music in Moldavia. In addition, he is the principal violinist and conductor of the presidential “Doina” Orchestra of Chisinau.

Marin is a graduate of the Conservatory in Moldavia and is knowledgeable about the different ways music is played in Romania, Slovakia, by Gypsies and even the major differences between the North and South parts of Moldavia. He has demonstrated these differences in his class. His lack of English was no impediment, because music is a universal language (and he was ably assisted by translator and



Marin Bunea and Sergiu Popa in class. Photo: Bob Horowitz

virtuoso accordionist, Sergiu Popa.).

It is a well known fact in the music world that some great musicians are not good teachers. This is not so, for Marin. First, he demonstrated how the music was to be played at normal tempo. Then, he slowed the tempo down to help the class get their fingers on the right notes before speeding up. He broke down difficult passages of Moldavian music into small segments and went around the room listening to each student to make sure he or she got it right! All this was always done with patience and a gracious smile.

Not only that, but when he found out that the oldest member of the class was having trouble memorizing the music for Saturday night's performance, he took a pencil and a sheet of lined music paper and laboriously wrote out the musical notation for two Moldavian songs, just for him. Gracious indeed!



Photo: Bob Blacksberg



Photo: Bob Horowitz

Klez-Kanada 2010

The weather was (mostly) excellent. Many ate lunch outside the dining hall (the ability to hear oneself think might have played an influence). The roaming herds of klezmerim and photographers managed to co-exist without serious incident.

The brand new Grande Masque on Thursday night was a tremendous hit. The costumes were superb, but even the

little touches—calling the steps during the couples dances, for instance—gave the ball a modern, yet *heimish* twist. The battle of the bands, later that night in the KlezCabaret was a grand success, and much good music was heard that night, and several nights running.

Dancing was an important theme of KlezKanada this year, building on changes that started even last year. Not only was there wild dancing after the staff concert Tuesday night (as usual, just as the Cabaret is a chance for people to show off chops from home that may or may not have anything to do with klezmer or Yiddish music, the staff concert is a reminder of the depth—as diverse musicians, arrangers, and composers—of the KlezKanada faculty) and following the intense



Photo: Bob Smolkin

concert by “The Other Europeans” on Wednesday night, but we got used to regular “Tea Hops” each afternoon at five where dancers and musicians would mix freely with the photographers and other hangers on in a delightful *melée*.

From Cantorial music and other reminders of the Jewish history and treasures an hour away in Montreal, to a wild diversity of workshops ... let's do it again in 2011!



It takes a tall Texan to play a mighty mandolin. Photo: Bob Horowitz

AN END TO CRYPTOHEBREW

by Ari Davidow

Back in the 1980s when I began working with computers, one of the issues with which I spent the most time was

programs such as Nisus or DavkaWriter or Mellel. The programs may not have been as full-featured as regular word processors, but they understood Hebrew

(and/or Yiddish—not always both). The only problem arose when one wanted to share documents with others. Unless the other person had (or has) the same software, it is often impossible to share. To work with one of those special word processors was to live in

very small universe.

After years of discussion—often very heated discussion—an international standard for alphabets emerged. Called “Unicode” it initially defined over 64,000 unique characters in alphabets around the world. Today, Unicode is even larger. More to the point, all current popular consumer computer operating systems today understand Unicode, and almost all software that runs on those computers likewise understands Unicode.

This means, that if you are using a Windows or Macintosh computer today, and want to use, say, Russian and Hebrew, in addition to English (my personal setup), you tell your computer to install the “resources” (the behind-the-scenes software that makes everything work) for those languages, and from that point on, Microsoft Word understands Hebrew. So does Gmail. So does almost every other common bit of software in use, from

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Photo: Keith Wolzinger

the ability to use these (then) new personal devices in all languages. In those days, computers had a fantastically hard time with languages that read from right-to-left, and they had an even harder time working in more than one language at a time. In the early days, in fact, one could even purchase a special computer chip that had Hebrew characters alongside the English.

The issue was not unique to Jews. Compared to Arabic, with its complex, shape-shifting characters, our alphabet is relatively simple. Eastern Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese were a nightmare.

Back in those days, and for many decades, one purchased special software to use when writing in Hebrew—

a



Photo: Helen Smolkin

Behind the Masks

By Rebecca Karger

This was the first year KlezKanada has had a Masquerade Ball, and that made it the perfect year to have the Visual Arts program center around making masks. While many beautiful masks were made at the Make-a-Mask events on Wednesday and Thursday, there was a lot going on in the art studio during other times.

The Make-a-Mask events were focused on decorating plastic half-masks, but you may have seen other kinds of masks at the ball. This is a behind the scenes look at the other kind of mask featured in the workshop this year—plaster.

The plaster masks were unique in that they were custom made to each face. The process began for me with a plastic sheet draped over my clothes to protect them from dripping plaster and a piece of cloth tied around my head to keep the plaster from sticking to my hair. The next step was to coat my face in Vaseline to help the mask come off my face while leaving my skin behind. Eyebrows can stay with enough Vaseline on them, but people with beards were mostly limited to making a half mask, not the full face.

After my face was completely coated, Tine, one of the workshop leaders, began to plaster my face. The rolls of plaster of Paris were cut into strips, soaked in water, and then applied to the face. It didn't take long before my mouth was covered and I wasn't able to talk anymore, and that's when things got interesting. Communication became a rather silly game of charades, where I was pointing and gesturing and not being understood at all. This led to several funny mix-ups, but laughing with drying plaster on your face is not recommended! Before it is completely dry, moving in the plaster will crack it, and we had to do a couple repairs.

The masks came out beautifully though, despite the laughs that threatened to crack them open. They were ready to pop off my face when I could wiggle around under it and it started to pop off cleanly. The procedure wasn't very uncomfortable, and I made a second mask to bring to my twin sister, who couldn't make it to Klez-



Photo: Rebecca Karger

Kanada. They may be custom made to each face, but I'm hoping it will fit her!

The masks were painted and decorated with everything from sequins to tinfoil to googly eyes. Every one of them was unique and beautiful, and looked excellent at the masquerade ball. The workshop was still running Friday, despite the Masquerade being over. Some people finished or repaired masks, and I tried making plaster casts of my hands, which turned out well. It was definitely an amazing week in the Art Studio!



Photo: Helen Smolkin

CRYPTOHEBREW from p. 4
spreadsheets to presentation software.

Better yet, when I need to share documents with my family in Israel, or I am writing a blog post that I want read by everyone who knows Yiddish, I don't have to think twice—I just send my Word file, or type into my website blog software in Yiddish. End of story. There are exceptions. If you are working with very complex Hebrew—the *ta'amei ha-mikra* (cantorial marks), or if you are doing desktop publishing or graphics work, then you need to still purchase special software, or the Hebrew editions of common software to do that work. In these cases, however, even when you need specialized software, at least you can copy and paste text from your usual Word Processor or E-Mail software—everything relies on Unicode for the behind the scenes work of remember which keystroke was an aleph and which was an aleph-pasakh.

Alas, as I discovered at KlezKanada this year, many people have remained in the siloes created twenty years ago when there was no Unicode and each person need his or her own special soft-

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ways that the study of the paranormal can help us understand the mysteries of Yiddish history. This includes looking for Eastern European Jews who were in touch with the absurd and the mythical. I am currently translating the memoir of Jacques Bergier, alchemist and spy. Born in Russia in 1912, he had a career as a child prodigy, nuclear chemist, member of the French Resistance, was in a concentration camp for a year, then became a nuclear spy for France, and spent much of his life exploring the hidden side of history, geography and science.

ware and fonts for writing in Hebrew or Yiddish. Several times in preparing the camp newsletter I had to entirely retype (with brand new mistakes) pieces written in dinosaur word processors. And that is what this article is about. Please come join the rest of the world. Abandon “CryptoHebrew” (to steal an idea from Rokhl Kafrissen)—software that works only on your computer and doesn't let you share with the rest of the

world. Just as you came to KlezKanada to share music and *Yiddishkeit* with hundreds of friends, so, too, can you share your writing, at KlezKanada and elsewhere, by updating to current (dare I say, “of the current century”) software.

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!דאָנק



Photo: Bob Blacksberg

The Other Europeans

Thursday, Sep 2, 19:30
Theatre Outremont
1240 Ave., Bernard
Montreal

KlezKanada Special!!!

We have a limited number
of tickets available at the
discount price of \$15.

See Hy Goldman

The Montreal Jewish Music Festival



is presented by KlezKanada
montrealjewishmusicfest.com

קלעזנייעס KlezNews

This edition of the *KlezKanada Naves* was compiled by Rokhl Kafrissen, Rebecca Karger, Stu Warshauer, and Ari Davidow. Photos came from Bob Blacksberg and Bob Horowitz, Keith Wolzinger, and Helen Smolkin. All contents copyright by their creators, and all rights reserved by the creators.

A PDF copy of this newsletter will be available online on the KlezKanada website after camp. That is also where you can find newsletters from previous camps.

Web: www.klezkanada.org

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