

# **Eclectic Klezz**<sup>®</sup>

## **Digital Recording**

Eclectic Klezz takes the listener on a sonorous trek as varied as the music itself.

Due to the history and migrations of the Jews that lived in Eastern Europe their folk music was as eclectic as their cuisine. The klezmer came from a musical tradition that began with itinerant minstrels that traveled the breadth of Europe for nearly 500 years, entertaining the peasantry at their fairs and the gentry in their courts. Besides Jewish melodies the klezmer learned many other kinds of folk melodies and incorporated them in his repertoire. Thus the klezmerin (pl.) in the shtetlakh (pl.) (small Jewish towns) in Volyn performed Khasidic hopkas (hop-step dance) based on Turkish melodies, and klezmerin from Orgejev in Bessarabia performed French quadrilles.

The indispensable ingredient that was present at all shtetl simkhes (celebrations) was the music of klezmer. Particularly at a wedding it was the klezmer's music that transformed the private ritual into a public celebration.

Despite a history of frequent antagonism between the Jew and gentile they still borrowed and incorporated each other's musical traditions. The individual Jew did not distinguish what was borrowed from what was native to his culture. The importance of this enigmatic shtetl character is succinctly stated in this quote. "Many Jews found solace from studying the Talmud, the klezmer gave solace by singing the Talmud."

Itzhak Gott-klezmer from Iasi, Romania.



Left to right: Fred Benedetti, Robert Williams, Mark Dresser, Yale Strom

Jacket Design: *JR Smith*  
Studio Engineer: *Josef Kucera*  
Produced: *Yale Strom*

Front Photo: *a Jewish wedding in Roman, Romania - Yale Strom*  
Back Photo: *Brian Blue*  
Mixed and recorded at University of California at San Diego, November-December 1985

Clarinet, Flute: *Robert Williams*

Contrabass: *Mark Dresser*

Contrabass: *Bertram Turetzky - Boogich-Bulgar, Di Mizinke Osygegn, Romanian Vollakh*

Steel String guitar, Classical guitar, Mandolin: *Fred Benedetti*

Violin: *Yale Strom*

Vocals: *Beth Faber*

Tsimbl: *Judy Carlstrom*

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**Productions**

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\*sure cure for all your Yiddish blues

## **SIDE ONE**

### **1. Boogich-Bulgar - Jack Boogich (Yankel Bughici)**

This lively klezmer melody is from the underrated klezmer violinist-composer Yankel Bughici who immigrated to the United States after WWII. He came from a famous family of klezmerim that lived and performed in Iasi, Romania. The father, Joseph, and four sons Avraham the oldest, Pavel, Moshe, and Yankel often played in the world famous Yiddish theatre in Iasi accompanying such actresses as Molly Picon and Sidy Thal. The father had stressed his belief that a muziker muz shpiln ale (a musician must play all), so all his sons could read music and play classical as well as klezmer music. Yankel like other klezmerim that came to the United States learned how to play jazz incorporated its motifs with klezmer ones.

### **2. Berdichever Khasid**

This melody was popular among the khasidim in the court of Levi Issac and was sung during the morning prayer services. The melody is purported to be of Turkish origin.

### **3. Mein Fidl - Yaakov Miller**

#### *My Fiddle*

Yaakov Miller khazan (cantor) in Gostynin, Poland wrote this somber song before he died in the city's ghetto in 1941.

I ask my fiddle: to play me a melody of love, and beauty and bliss;  
at least awake in my heart a little faith,  
to cheer up this sorrowful moment.  
Play me this melody of a desire to live,  
with a voice of hope and comfort;  
suppress this feeling that gnaws at my heart  
and create in my body a spirit.  
Yes, once I had partook of life,  
and drank from its goblet of wine,  
then play for me my fiddle of the happy times  
when they shone so pretty.  
And the fiddle answered:  
to great is your plea  
the strings are already broken my friend  
only moans and sighs suppress the violence-  
this is how we remain today.

### **4. Maestral Hora-Bulgar - Strom**

This was composed while traveling by train from Budapest, Hungary to Zagreb, Yugoslavia on the Maestral express. It follows the typical hora-bulgar rhythmic form with a slow 3/4 hora leading into a faster 2/4 bulgar section.

### **5. Fraylakh Marrano - Strom segue La Comida La Mañana - arrangements Benedetti**

As the title suggests this piece written specifically for the classical guitar interweaves the musical expressions of the Ashkenazim (Jews of Eastern Europe), and Sephardim (Jews originally from the Iberian peninsula) into one statement. La Comida La Mañana is a Sephardic folk song whose Ladino (dialect of Spanish-Hebrew) text dates back to the 14th century. When the Spanish Inquisition reached its zenith in the late 15th century many Sephardic Jews fled to the Balkans. Consequently many of their songs were influenced by their host country's melodies and rhythms. This piece was influenced by the prevalent 7/8 rhythms in Greek folk music.

### **6. Beatriz's Nigun - Strom**

This piece was named after the band's original bass player's wife. She is from Argentina, subsequently the melody combines rhythmic influences of that country with blues motifs from the United States.

## **SIDE TWO**

### **7. Blues for Kadia - Strom**

Composed in Israel this piece is a synthesis of south-side Chicago blues with the klezmer sounds of Wallachia, Romania. The first section is a rubato (free) bluesy-doina that seques into an animated fraylakh punctuated with exacting bass rhythms and the kretkhtsn (moans) of the clarinet.

### **8. Stoliner Skocne - arrangement Strom**

A khasidic dance melody that is similar to a fraylakh but exhibits a certain technical elaboration. Stolin lies on the banks of the Goryn river outside of Pinsk which today is in the Soviet republic of Byelorussia.

### **9. Di Mizinke Oysgegebn - Mark. M. Warshawsky** *The Youngest Daughter's Wedding*

This Yiddish folk song was written by the noted poet of Oyfn Pripetshik (At The Fireplace) and is based on the tradition in Eastern Europe that was, the daughters of a Jewish family had to be married off in the order of their age, from the oldest to the youngest. The families that did follow this custom hoped none of their daughters would become fartzesns (spinners) so getting the youngest daughter married was a laudable accomplishment.

Verse: Louder, livelier!  
Make the circle wider!  
God has brought me much good fortune,  
so revel children the whole night.

Refrain: My youngest daughter is getting married.

Verse: Stronger, gayer!  
You the queen and I the king!  
Oi oi I have seen with my eyes how  
God has brought me success.

Refrain:

Verse: Itzik, you prankster,  
why is your bow silent?  
Up you musicians and give us some clamor.  
Are you sleeping or are you playing?  
Tear the strings apart.

Refrain:

Verse: Issac you knave!  
Grandma's dancing the kozatzka.  
Knock on wood! just look and see,  
with a tap and a step.

Refrain:

Verse: Motl, Shimen  
the poor folk have arrived.  
Set them the best table  
with the finest wine and fish.  
Oi my daughter give me a kiss.

Refrain:

### **10. Romanian Vollakh - Abe Schwartz**

The clarinet sings this plaintive melody through the use of sweeping decorative passage-work, melismatic ornamentation, and swaying rubato rhythm while accompanied by the tsimbl (hammer dulcimer) which provides the undulating haunting drone. This vollakh uses an instrumental style and melody that was well known to the klezmer and became the standard bearer for most vollakhs and doinas from Wallachia and Moldavia. The dance melody which closes the piece is a typical gypsy hora in duple meter.

### **11. Mizrakh - Strom, arrangement Benedetti** *East*

With the advent of jazz becoming more popular in the late 1920's and 30's in Eastern Europe the guitar was sometimes included as both a rhythm and melodic instrument in the klezmer kapelye (band). Before that time the plectrum instruments that were often included in a kapelye were the mandolin, bandura, and cobza. The bandura was introduced to the klezmerim by the Ukranian Cossacks of the 17th and 18th centuries, while the cobza was a popular instrument among the Gypsies of Moldavia. The timbre of the classical guitar performing Mizrakh on gut strings is reminiscent of the Arabic oud which also uses gut strings.

### **12. Di Mekhutonim Zingn a Nigun - Leopold Kozlowski** *The In-laws Sing a Melody*

This piece I learned from the composer himself while doing ethnographic research in Eastern Europe during the fall and winter of 1984-85. Mr. Kozlowski born in a shtetl near Lvov, lives in Cracow, Poland today. He is an accomplished composer, conductor, and piano player. He has composed for television, radio and film in Poland and the United States. Among several positions he holds one is currently the musical director for the Warsaw Yiddish State Theatre. His musical roots stem from a family with great klezmer yikhes (pedigree). His grandfather Pesakh ben-Zvi Brandwine had 12 sons all klezmerim who were known throughout Galicia. Pesakh Brandwine's kapelye played for such distinguished audiences as Franz Josef, monarch of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, and Jozef Pilsudski, premier of Poland. Of the 12 sons 10 immigrated to the United States after WWI, including Mr. Kozlowski's uncle Naftule Brandwine who became one of the most renowned klezmer clarinetists in the U.S. Mr. Kozlowski's father Zvi-Hersch Brandwine had his own kapelye that had 14 members including Leopold who played the baraban (drum), piano, and violin. He played in this kapelye touring all over Galicia from 1937 to the outbreak of WWII.