

Monday, June 23, 2014
Unity Chapel, 7:30 pm

Yid Vicious

Metropolitan Bulgar
Fun Tashlik
Noch a Glezele Vayn
Der Nayer Sher
Terkishe Yale V'Yove Tantz
Sadegurer Khosidl
The Seventh Schlemiel
Jenny's Theme
The Bearded Honga
Khisidim Tanz

Intermission

Odessa Bulgar
The Breathless Terk
Hora Mit Tsibeles
The Girl from Bukhovina
Shpaykhler Tanz
Di Zilberne Chassene
El Zopilote Mojado

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Yiddish Folk Music and Klezmer

The Yiddish folk song was sung and disseminated by Jews primarily of Eastern Europe. It constitutes a lyrical reflection of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the Jewish people in Yiddish. The songs shed light on religious and secular practices and customs, holidays, and celebrations and convey personal insights into daily life and historical events. Manuscript collections of folk songs exist from as far back as the sixteenth century, although systematic collection and publication did not begin until the end of the nineteenth century.

Klezmer (Yiddish: קלעזמער or קלעזמער (klezmer), pl.: קלעזמורים (klezmorim), רמזו כלי from Hebrew: רמזו כלי — instruments of music) is a musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe. Played by professional musicians called *klezmerim*, the genre originally consisted largely of dance tunes and instrumental display pieces for weddings and other celebrations. In the United States the genre evolved considerably as Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who arrived between 1880 and 1924, met and assimilated American jazz. During the initial years after the klezmer revival of the 1970s, this was what most people knew as *klezmer*, although over the past century musicians have paid more attention to the "original" pre-jazz traditions as revivalists including Josh Horowitz, Yale Strom, and Bob Cohen have spent years doing field research in Eastern/Central Europe. Additionally, late immigrants from the Soviet Union such as German Goldenshtayn brought their surviving repertoires to the United States and Israel in the 1980s.

Compared to most other European folk music styles, little is known about the history of *klezmer* music, and much of what is said about it must be seen as conjecture. Starting in 2008, "The Other Europeans" project, funded by several EU cultural institutions, engaged in intensive field research in Moldavia under the leadership of Alan Bern and scholar Zev Feldman. They wanted to explore *klezmer* and *lautari* roots, and fuse the music of the two "other European" groups. The resulting band now performs internationally. As with this ensemble, groups like Di Naye Kapelye and Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi have incorporated Rom (gypsy) musicians and elements since their inceptions.

Etymology

The term *klezmer* comes from a combination of Hebrew words: *kli*, meaning "tool, or utensil" and *zemer*, meaning "to make music"; leading to *k'li zemer* רמזו ילב, literally "vessels of song" = "musical instrument." Originally, *klezmer* referred to musical instruments and was later extended to refer, as a pejorative, to musicians themselves. From the 16th to 18th

centuries, older terms such as *leyts* (clown) gave way.[5] It was not until the late 20th century that the word came to identify a musical genre. Early twentieth century recordings and writings most often refer to the style as "Yiddish" music, although it is also sometimes called *freilech* music (Yiddish, literally "Happy music"). The first recordings to use the term *klezmer* to refer to the music were The Klezmerim's *East Side Wedding and Streets of Gold* in 1977/78, followed by Andy Statman and Zev Feldman's *Jewish Klezmer Music* in 1979.

Style

Klezmer is easily identifiable by its characteristic expressive melodies, reminiscent of the human voice, complete with laughing and weeping. This is not a coincidence; the style is meant to imitate *khazone* and para-liturgical singing. A number of *dreydlekh* (a Yiddish word for musical ornaments), such as *krekhsts* ("sobs") are used to produce this style.

The Romanian influence is, perhaps, the strongest and most enduring of the musical styles that influenced traditional *klezmer* musicians. *Klezmer* musicians heard and adapted traditional Romanian music, which is reflected in the dance forms found throughout surviving *klezmer* music repertoire.

History

The Hebrew Bible has several descriptions of orchestras and Levites making music, but after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, many Rabbis discouraged musical instruments. However, the importance of merrymaking at weddings was not diminished, and musicians (*klezmerim*) came forth to fill that niche. The first *klezmer* known by name was Yakobius ben Yakobius, a player of the aulos in Samaria in the 2nd century CE. The earliest written record of the *klezmerim* is in the 15th century. It should be noted that it is unlikely that they played music recognizable as *klezmer* today since the style and structure of *klezmer* as we know it today is thought to have come largely from 19th century Bessarabia, where the bulk of today's traditional repertoire was written.

Klezmerim based much of their secular instrumental music upon the devotional vocal music of the synagogue, in particular cantorial music. Even so, *klezmerim*— along with other entertainers — were typically looked down on by rabbis because of their secular traveling lifestyle. *Klezmerim* often travelled and played with Romani musicians (*läutari*), since they occupied similar social strata. They had a great influence on each other musically and linguistically (the extensive *klezmer* argot in Yiddish includes some Romani borrowings).

Klezmerim were respected for their musical abilities and diverse repertoire, but they were by no means restricted to playing *klezmer*. Christian churches sometimes asked for their services, and some Italian classical violin virtuosos received their instruction.

As Jews left Eastern Europe and the shtetls, *klezmer* spread throughout the globe, to the United States as well as to Canada, Mexico, and Argentina. Initially, not much of the *klezmer* tradition was maintained by U.S. Jews, and, as U.S. Jews began to adopt mainstream culture, the popularity of *klezmer* waned, and Jewish celebrations were increasingly accompanied by non-Jewish music.

While traditional performances may have been on the decline, many Jewish composers who had mainstream success, such as Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland, continued to be influenced by the *klezmeric* idioms heard during their youth (as Gustav Mahler had been). Many believe Gershwin was influenced by the Yiddish of his youth, and that the opening of "Rhapsody in Blue" was a nod to *klezmer* clarinetting. Some clarinet stylings of swing jazz bandleaders Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw can be interpreted as having been derived from *klezmer*.

At the same time, non-Jewish composers were also turning to *klezmer* for a prolific source of fascinating thematic material. Dmitri Shostakovich in particular admired *klezmer* music for embracing both the ecstasy and the despair of human life, and quoted several melodies in his chamber masterpieces, the Piano Quintet in G minor, op. 57 (1940), the Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, op. 67 (1944), and the String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, op. 110 (1960).

In the mid-to-late 1970s there was a *klezmer* revival in the United States and Europe, led by Giora Feidman, The Klezmerim, Zev Feldman, Andy Statman, and the Klezmer Conservatory Band. They drew their repertoire from recordings and surviving musicians of U.S. *klezmer*. In 1985 Henry Sapoznik and Adrienne Cooper founded KlezKamp to teach *klezmer* and other Yiddish music.

The 1980s saw a second wave of revival as interest grew in more traditionally inspired performances with string instruments, largely with non-Jews of the United States and Germany. Musicians began to track down older European *klezmer*, by listening to recordings, finding transcriptions, and making field recordings of the few *klezmerim* left in Eastern Europe. Key performers in this style are Joel Rubin, Budowitz, Khevrisa, Di Naye Kapelye, Yale Strom, The Chicago Klezmer Ensemble, the violinists Alicia Svigals, Steven Greenman[9] and Cookie Segelstein, flutist Adrienne Greenbaum, and *tsimbl* player Pete Rushefsky. Other artists like Yale Strom used their first-hand field research and recordings from as early as 1981 in Central and Eastern Europe as a foundation for more of a fusion between traditional repertoire and original compositions, as well as incorporating the Rom (Gypsy) music element into the Jewish style! Bands like Brave Old World, Hot Pstromi and The Klezmatiks also emerged during this period.

In the 1990s, musicians from the San Francisco Bay Area helped further interest in klezmer music by taking it into new territory. Clarinetist Ben Goldberg and drummer Kenny Wollesen, after playing in Bay Area-based The Klezmerim, formed the critically acclaimed New Klezmer Trio—kicking open the door for radical experiments with Ashkenazi music and paving the way for John Zorn's Masada, Naffule's Dream, Don Byron's Mickey Katz project and violinist Daniel Hoffman's band Davka. The New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars also formed in 1991 with a mixture of New Orleans funk, jazz, and klezmer styles. Interest in klezmer has been sustained and supported by well-known avant-garde jazz musicians like John Zorn and Don Byron, who sometimes blend klezmer with jazz. Klezmer melodies have recently been incorporated into songs by third-wave Ska band Streetlight Manifesto. Singer/songwriter Tomas Kalnoky frequently slips in horn licks with Russian and Jewish origins.

The Group

Yid Vicious has been engaging and delighting audiences throughout the Midwest since 1995. The group has released four CDs and has received numerous Madison Area Music Awards for its unique blend of traditional and contemporary klezmer.

In 2009, Yid Vicious became the first performing arts ensemble in Wisconsin to receive a USArtists International grant, to perform at Argentina's KlezFiesta, an international klezmer festival spanning three cities and including bands from ten countries. In 2006, Yid Vicious toured Chiba Prefecture, Japan as part of the Wisconsin-Chiba Sister State Goodwill Delegation. Yid Vicious is committed to keeping traditional klezmer music and dance alive, and collaborates frequently with internationally renowned klezmer dance instructor Steve Weintraub.

The group has participated in the New York-based "KlezKamp: The Yiddish Folk Arts Program", and was a featured performer at the "KlezKamp Roadshow" directed by Yiddish scholar Henry Sapoznik at the University of Wisconsin in April 2009. Yid Vicious has presented concerts, workshops, and clinics at performing arts centers, cultural festivals, universities, and K-12 schools in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan, and has performed to statewide audiences on Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television.

The Performers – In their own words

Matt Appleby – Guitar

Matt was a founding member of Yid Vicious way back during the first Clinton administration. After heading to the twin cities for a time in the late 90's, he finally found his way back to us. When he's not creeping around the music library looking for things to catalog, Matt can be seen with the band Shakey. He is also the personal manager of Alexei A. Schmirnov, bass player for Optometri. Matt's return has literally doubled the ethnomusicologist content of the band.

Geoff Brady – Percussion

A native of Pontiac, MI, Brady plays drums (and occasionally theremin) with Yid Vicious and other Madison bands such as the Active Percussion Duo, Madison Symphony Orchestra, the Gomers, Executive Tea Set, Yammer, and the Theramones. He also plays solo occasionally, writes a little, and teaches sometimes. Brady is hard at work on his forthcoming one-man show, "Me, Me, Look at ME: A One-Man Show", and is very happy to be married to YV's hornist, the unflappable Kia.

Kia Karlen - Horn & Accordion

Born and raised in Madison, WI, Kia took over the Yid Vicious horn duties in 2002, and later tamed a feral accordion that Geoff captured in the wild. Currently holding the horn/accordion seat with Reptile Palace Orchestra, she has also performed with the Con Vivo Chamber Ensemble, Four Seasons Theatre, Capitol City Band and Madison Savoyards, and occasionally plays bass with local rock outfits including Yammer and the Theramones. With husband (& YV drummer) Geoff Brady, Kia has scored experimental music for silent film screenings, staged sock puppet tributes to the great philosophers, and organized armies of artists for temporary public art projects at Ride the Drive and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Kia works at the Madison Children's Museum, where she often figures out ways to do this sort of stuff for a steady salary.

Greg Smith – Clarinets

A Madison native, Greg has engaged in an ever-widening variety of styles throughout his musical career as a clarinetist and saxophonist. He has been the bass clarinetist in the Madison Symphony Orchestra since the 1970's, performs with the Capitol City Concert Band and plays hot Dixieland with the Dixie Sizzlers. As a member of the Reptile Palace Orchestra, he delves into the mysteries of Balkan lounge funk (whatever that is). Greg is also a charter member of Madison's Salsa, Merengue and Bachata specialists, Grupo Candela and performs regularly with Caravan Gypsy Swing Ensemble and a couple of the area's Western Swing bands, the North Country Drifters and Safety Last! Other recent projects include the The Velet Smash, covering Sinatra to Morphine with some African and Argentinian tunes thrown in for good measure, and taking on the role of tupaneer in the traditional Balkan music group Intemperance Collective. Greg joined Yid Vicious in 2002 to salve an inner need to play music in minor keys.

David Spies - Tuba

Dave has been tearing up the Wisconsin music scene ever since returning to Madison in 2003 after a 12-year tour featuring the rocky coasts of New Haven and the flooded plains of Denton, Texas. When not appearing with Yid Vicious, Dave holds down the fifth chair in the Madison Jazz Orchestra, plays with the Racine Symphony Orchestra, and solos and waves a stick with the Madison Brass Band. Rumor has it that he also has been heard with the Willson Tuba Quartet and has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony and the Iowa Brass Quintet. When he's not playing, he's sleeping, teaching for Marian University and

Carroll University, and maintaining a close working relationship with library materials.

Daithi Wolfe – Fiddle

David was a Suzuki violin brat way back in the bad old days starting in Ann Arbor in 1968. After visiting Ireland in 1983 he changed his name to Daithi (pronounced Dahee) which is Irish for David and changed his violin into a fiddle. He has played Celtic music in Madison for about 19 years, first with The Drones, then Far From Home, next The Authorities, and now with The Currach (every Friday at the Brocach from 5:30-7pm). Daithi actually hates music, but he figures being in a band makes him look cool. When not playing music, Daithi plays at being an early childhood education advocate, marathon runner and all-around rabble rouser. His wife Sandy is a trapeze artist and carpenter. His older daughter Mairead is a stilt-walking fiddler. And younger daughter Fiona is an expert tree climber and violinist. Daithi's favorite Yid Vicious tune is "Sadegurer Husidl". Trivia tidbit: Matt and Daithi are the only original members of the band still hanging on...