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Klezmer Conservatory Band

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Monday, December 9, 1996 8 PM
Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music
George M. Modlin Center for the Arts
at the University of Richmond

Klezmer Conservatory Band

Hankus Netsky, Director

featuring

Judy Bressler, vocals and tambourine
Ilene Stahl, clarinet
Miriam Rabson, violin
Gary Bohan, cornet
Dave Harris, trombone
Jeff Warschauer, banjo, mandolin and guitar
Evan Harlan, accordion
Javier Perez-Saco, piano
James Guttmann, bass
Dan MacDonald, drums and percussion

Tonight's selections will be announced from the stage

The Klezmer Conservatory Band appears by arrangement with
The Aaron Concert Management, Boston, Massachusetts.
From the shtels of Eastern Europe, through the emigration to America, from the jazz clubs of cities and the stages of Yiddish theatre comes the music of the Klezmer Conservatory Band. Klezmer music began in medieval Europe, where bands of itinerant Jewish musicians went from town to town playing for Jewish festivals and special events. By the 19th century, klezmer music had become a well-developed musical style, taking its inspiration not only from the synagogue, but from the non-Jewish culture that surrounded it. In America, immigrant Jewish musicians adapted this music to the new rhythms and instruments they found, creating new klezmer forms.

Until the 1940's, klezmer orchestras flourished, but with the new styles of music, and the immigrant Jews' desire to appear "American," the klezmer tradition faded. Today, however, a klezmer revival is in full swing, with the Klezmer Conservatory Band playing a prominent role.

Fueled by a desire to return to his roots, and the inherent appeal of the music, Hankus Netsky, the band's founder, discovered that both a grandfather and an uncle were in

Now entering its seventeenth season, the Band has performed concerts from coast to coast and has seven albums: Yiddishe Renaissance, Klez, and A Touch of Klez on the Vanguard label; Oy Chanukah, A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden, Old World Beat and their latest release, Live! The Thirteenth Anniversary Album on Rounder Records.

The band was featured in the 1988 documentary film, A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden and was also featured in the film Enemies, A Love Story. The KCB filmed a children's video for Rabbit Ears Productions entitled The Fool and the Flying Ship, with narration by Robin Williams and an original score composed by Hankus Netsky, which aired nationwide on Showtime Cable Network. The KCB was also featured in Joel Grey's Yiddish music revue, "Borscht Capades '94" for which Hankus Netsky served as musical director and arranger.

In April of 1990, the Klezmer Conservatory Band made its debut tour abroad, performing several concerts in Germany and giving a remarkable performance at the first-ever International Yiddish Festival in Krakow, Poland. The band now regularly tours Europe, and has also appeared at Australia's Adelaide Festival, New Zealand's International Festival of the Arts and the Dranouter Folk Festival in Belgium.

The KCB recently appeared in a PBS special with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman called "In the Fiddler's House," filmed in Krakow and New York. The special traced the Klezmer roots of Perlman's artistry and featured the soulful sounds of the KCB. A joint recording on EMI was released last fall, and "In the Fiddler's House" concerts were performed in major venues this past summer, including Wolftrap, Great Woods, Radio City Music Hall, the Ravinia Festival, the Saratoga Music Festival, and the Mann Music Center (Philadelphia).

Last November, the band also appeared on Minnesota Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion, with Garrison Keillor.

Featured vocalist Judy Bressler, born and raised in New York, is a third generation Yiddish performer whose family includes such luminaries as Lucy Gehrman, Menashe Skulnick, and grandfather Isadore Lipinsky. A member of the band since its inception, Judy brings her much acclaimed interpretations of Yiddish theatre and folk music to the program.

Acting as musical director in Mr. Netsky's absence this evening is Mimi Rabson. A violinist, violist, composer and arranger, Ms. Rabson is a founding and current member of the Klezmer Conservatory Band. She was featured in the documentary about Klezmer music called A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden.

Her klezmer expertise can be heard in the soundtrack to "A Stranger Among Us" -- a major motion picture by Sidney Lumet that stars Melanie Griffith. Ms. Rabson was chosen by
the composer, Jerry Bock ("Fiddler on the Roof") to be a featured soloist on that soundtrack.

In 1994 Ms. Rabson served as musical director to academy award-winner, Joel Grey, in the production of "Borschtcapades '94." Ms. Rabson can be heard on the nationally syndicated PBS radio show called "Jewish Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond" hosted by Leonard Nimoy. Ms. Rabson has performed with the Grammy-winning New England Ragtime Ensemble and in orchestras for Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, Steve Allan, Steve Lawrence and Edythe Gourmet, Sammy Davis, Jr., Smokey Robinson, and Dionne Warwick. Her playing is featured in numerous television commercials including Pampers, Ford Motors, Tufts Health Plan, Humana, Delta/Bank of New England, Keeno in Rhode Island and Bank of Texas.

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