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Klezmer Conservatory Band

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Klezmer Conservatory Band

Judy Bressler, *vocals and tambourine*
Ilene Stahl, *clarinet*
Deborah Strauss, *violin*
Ross Hill, *trumpet*
Chip Kaner, *trombone*
Jeff Warschauer, *banjo, mandolin and guitar* (acting Music Director)
Javier Perez-Saco, *piano*
Evan Harlan, *accordion*
James Guttman, *bass*
Grant Smith, *drums and percussion*

John Servies, *sound engineer*

Selections will be announced from the stage.

*Presented in partnership with*

*the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond*
Klezmer Conservatory Band

From the shtetls of Eastern Europe, through the emigration to America, from the jazz clubs of cities and the stages of Yiddish theater 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 1940s, klezmer orchestras flourished, but with 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 inherent appeal of the music. Hankus Netsky, the band’s founder, discovered that both a grandfather and an uncle were in Philadelphia klezmer orchestras in the 1920s. In 1980, while an instructor at the New England Conservatory of Music, he formed the band.

Now in its seventeenth season, the Klezmer Conservatory Band has performed concerts from coast to coast and has made the following recordings: *Yiddish Renaissance, Klez, and A Touch of Klez* on the Vanguard label; *Oy Chanukah, A Jumpin’ Night in the Garden of Eden, Old World Beat, Live! The Thirteenth Anniversary Album* on Rounder Records, and their latest recording, *Dancing in the Aisles*, released earlier this year. 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*. They 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, “Borschcapades ‘94” for which Hankus Netsky served as the musical director and arranger.

In April 1990, the Klezmer Conservatory Band made its debut tour abroad, performing several concerts in Germany and giving a remarkable performance at the first-ever Invitational 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 appeared in a PBS special, “In the Fiddler’s House,” with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, which was 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 in the fall of 1995 (live version was released in the fall of 1996), 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). In November 1995, 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 theater and folk music to the program.

**Jeff Warschauer, Acting Music Director**

Jeff Warschauer (guitar, mandolin, tenor banjo, vocals) has played and taught throughout the United States, in Western Europe, Poland, the former Soviet Union, Australia and New Zealand and for the U.S.O. in Greenland. As well as being a member of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, he has performed with the Bolshoi Ballet and has been the composer, music director and/or featured instrumentalist for numerous theater productions, recordings and film soundtracks. In addition, he has performed and recorded extensively with the Dutch Yiddish singer Shura Lipovsky. In 1986 he won the Amalgamated Bank Prize for Yiddish studies at the Oxford University Summer Programme, and he was awarded a 1990 Massachusetts Artist Fellowship for his Klezmer mandolin and solo guitar work. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, Jeff is on the faculty of the Longy School of Music and the YIVO Yiddish Folk Arts Institute.