

# Klezmer music moves out of classic setting

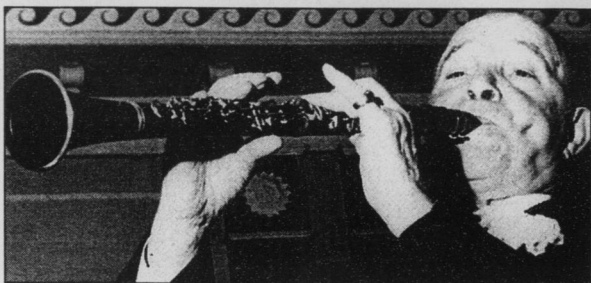
Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary defines klezmer music as "the type of music performed by Jewish folk musicians traditionally in a small band." Today's klezmerim play a hybrid of old Yiddish melodies and jazz, a music that itself has grown alongside jazz as it has progressed from swing to be-bop to free-jazz. The music had a heyday in the thirties and forties, was revived in the late seventies through the efforts of the Andy Statman Klezmer Band (who have a new disc out on Shanachie Records) and the Klezmerim, and was reborn in the nineties with the Klezmatiks and a new no-wave-bred community. Amid several new Tzadik releases from downtown NYC's avant-klezmer community (e.g. New Klezmer Trio, David Krakauer), saxophonist/composer John Zorn, a legend in certain vicious circles, released the well-tempered two-disc *Bar Kokhba*. *Bar Kokhba* makes the eighth

release by Masada, one of Zorn's most prolific projects, which tweaks the music of yesteryear's freilachs with the spaz-jazz of Ornette Coleman. However, where the past discs probably blur together in one's mind (each release doesn't so much mark progression as simply issue from Masada's infinite repertoire), *Bar Kokhba* takes a relatively unabashed and welcome direction.

With *Bar Kokhba*, Zorn departs from Masada's usual sax/bass/drums/trumpet lineup (Zorn himself plays nary a note on the disc) and revives old pieces by orchestrating them for various NYC players from three recent sessions. Masada mainstays Greg Cohen and Dave Douglas are joined by a select handful of the NYC Knitting Factory posse, the most notable of which is John Medeski (of Medeski, Martin, and Wood), guitarist Marc Ribot and Jazz Passenger Anthony Coleman.

*Bar Kokhba*'s songs run the usual Zorn gamut, adding a Yiddish twist to sly spy tunes, and Bohemian beat jazz. Of particular interest is the interaction among violinist Mark Feldman, cellist Erik Friedlander and bassist Cohen, which varies to fit in the wide-ranging vein of the Kronos Quartet. Unlike the usual Zorn ear-assault, the Masada Chamber Ensembles bear no speed-metal edge like Naked City, nor have they the no-wave dissonance of Locust Solus or the random mathematics of Cobra, resulting in an excellent set.

Fresh for 1997, Rounder brings us a package of classics produced by Henry



Klezmer music has been redefined during the ages, but is now enjoying a steady popularity among the new-wave community.

Sapoznik, the alleged keeper of the klezmer flame: Naftule Brandwein's *King of the Klezmer Clarinet*. The liner notes reveal Brandwein as a decadent New York clarinetist from the 1920s and '30s, a reed-playing animal renowned for, among other deeds, drunkenly doffing his pants during clarinet solos at parties. The dust-covered recordings show that Brandwein is no slouch on his horn either, Brandwein is a legend in one of the only genres where the clarinet is wielded to its potential. This disc should easily grade higher, except that then how could one grade Yazoo Records' 1992 release, Dave Tarras' *Yiddish-American Klezmer Music 1925-1956*? Also a Sapoznik production, this disc highlights the early twentieth-century career of Brandwein's successor and rival clarinetist, Dave Tarras. To be fair, Brandwein, whose songs are truer to their Yiddish origin, paved the way for Tarras, who had the benefit and guidance of the swing-jazz era, making Tarras' disc more accessible (the Dave Tarras disc was played five times in a row at Kinko's, at the hands of my co-workers each time.) For the inducted

and adventurous, I highly recommend *King of the Klezmer Clarinet*, though for wary klezmer newcomers, Dave Tarras is an excellent introduction to the music. Musical freak-barn Ellipsis Arts released *Klezmer Music: A Marriage of Heaven and Earth* in December, a book and disc deal similar to all of their releases (*Deep in the Heart of Tuva, The Big Bang Theory*). *Marriage* covers a general view of the present state of klezmer music in America and Europe, but unfortunately the label offers a soft-spoken look at the music in that the label caters to the new age-type set. Frankly, with the exception of tracks by Austria's Budowitz and the group Naftule's Dream, this package lacks balls. If your poor heart can't take crusty, tricky, hardcore klezmer (Tarras, Brandwein, or Rounder's *Klezmer Pioneers 1905-1952*), then perhaps *Marriage* will satisfy you. For those who don't mind giving you the finger as we bang our heads to our bloody-kneed Eastern-European aural delights, we're going to run out now and snatch up every twenty-dollar Japanese import Masada disc we can get our hands on

## Arts & Entertainment Calendar

### MUSIC

#### THURSDAY, FEB. 13

**WORRIED SICK.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**NIL LARA.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.  
**GERTY W/ JIM SMITH & HIS TALL BUILDINGS.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

**JONATHAN RICHMAN.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.  
**JOHN THURSDAY.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**VALENTINE'S DAY BASH.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.  
**THE 14TH ANNUAL NORTH CAROLINA INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL.** Baldwin Auditorium, Duke University, Durham. Call 684-4444 for ticket information.

#### SATURDAY, FEB. 15

**PURPLE SCHOOLBUS.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.  
**THE JOHNSONS W/ THE DELTA ANGELS.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**WAKE.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**CLASSICAL CONCERT FEATURING ANDRE-MICHEL SCHUB.** Memorial Hall, UNC. 831-6060.

#### SUNDAY, FEB. 16

**THE RANK OUTSIDERS.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**4 W/ GLORY FOUNTAIN.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.  
**N.C. JAZZ SHOWCASE.** The ArtsCenter. 300-G E. Main St., Carrboro. Call 929-ARTS for ticket information.

**FREAK POOL W/ AUTOMATIC SLIM AND ELECTRIC MISTRESS AND THE SECOND SKY.** The Burton South, 427 S. Dawson St., Raleigh. 836-9220.

#### MONDAY, FEB. 17

**STUART HOYLE.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**DAVE SPENCER & THE MUMBLEFISH W/ THE GORE-GORE GIRLS.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.

#### TUESDAY, FEB. 18

**A MINOR FOREST.** Lizard & Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**LEFTOVER SALMON W/ UGLY AMERICANS.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Carrboro. 967-9053.  
**THE BACKSLIDERS.** The Record Exchange. 2109-144 Avert Ferry Rd., Raleigh. 831-2300.  
**THE GLENNON POPES W/ DENNIS BRENNAN.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.

#### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19

**CURIOUS DIGIT W/ DRUNK.** Lizard & Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**GREENSECT W/ ANALOGUE AND 5-4.** Local 506. 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-7979.

### ETC.

**THE VAN GOGH-GOGHS COMEDY SERIES.** Friday, Feb. 14 and Saturday, Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. The ArtsCenter, 300-G E. Main St., Carrboro. Call 929-ARTS for ticket information.

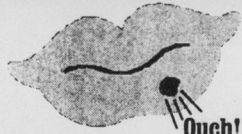
### ART

**"SCREENS AND SCROLLS."** Japanese Art Exhibit. Feb. 16-April 13 at the Ackland Art Museum, UNC.

### FILM

**"IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK."** Thursday, Feb. 13 at 6 and 9 p.m. Carolina Union Auditorium, UNC.  
**"THAT THING YOU DO."** Friday, Feb. 14 at 6:30, 9 and 11:30 p.m. Carolina Union Auditorium, UNC.

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- 18 TU LEFTOVER SALMON\*\* (112) W/UGLY AMERICANS
- 19 WE SHOOTY GROOVE W/JOHN THURSDAY (55)
- 20 TH ANNA... MASSY JIVE (8 MORE)
- 21 FR JOE GALLANT & ILLUMINATI
- 22 SA CRAWN' MELON\*\* (56/58 DAY OF SHOW)
- 24 MO BLONDE REHEAD, THE WARMERS
- 25 TU JOHN CALE
- 26 WE THE MIGHTY BLUE KINGS
- 28 FR GRAVITY'S PULL

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- 7 FR PORTASTATIC, RUN-ON, SHARK QUEST
- 10 MO PAULA COLE\*\*
- 13 WE IRIS DEMENT\*\*
- 18 TU BODEANS\*\*
- 19 WE FLICKER
- 20 TH SERVOTRON, PANSY DIVISION
- 22 SA GIBB DROLL
- 26 WE JACK O'PIERCE
- 29 SA KIM ROXEY
- 30 SU BEDHEAD

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 FEB. 22...LADYBUG TRANSISTOR  
 FEB. 28...SENSEFIELD  
 MARCH 4...PLEXI

\*Asterisks denote advance ticket sales at SchoolKids (Raleigh), PointedStar's (Durham), Monster Records & Lizard & Snake (Chapel Hill). For credit card orders call 919-967-9053. (OR 836-8535 FOR RITZ CONCERTS.) Shows usually begin around 10pm unless noted.

REACH US VIA THE WORLD WIDE WEB AT: <http://www.catscradle.com>

## SWEET FROM PAGE 5

played in years. Opening the show was Fastball, from Austin, Texas, who served up a dose of bar-band rock n' pop, punctuated by snappy drumming, a sick guitar sound, and some decent poppy hooks. From the Elvis Costello style pop of "Fallout" to the harder rock of "Eater," the band held my interest and kept me. In other words, this was a pretty good show.

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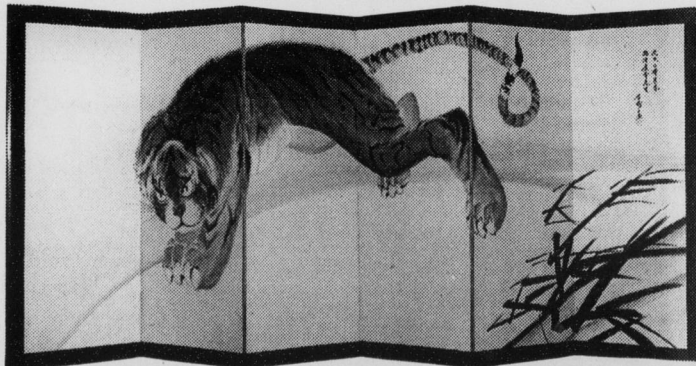


The Japanese art exhibit "Screens and Scrolls" will be featured at the Ackland Art Museum from Feb. 16 - April 13.

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## SCREENS AND SCROLLS

Japanese Art from the Ackland Art Museum and Local Collections  
 February 16-April 13, 1997



### Opening Reception

Sunday, February 16

Featuring traditional Japanese music and refreshments.

Free and open to the public.

3:00-5:00 pm

Above: Shuho, "Tiger and Bamboo"; six-panel screen, ink on paper. Gift of Rosemarie and Leighton Longhi.

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