FAU's Music Library Hosts Sold Out Concert for Klezmer Music Festival

FAU's music library is hosting The Klezmer Music Festival and kicked off the week-long event with a sold-out Joebano Jazz concert.

To headline the Klezmer Music Festival 2014, FAU's Wilburt Library presented its main event, Joebano Jazz in the Barry Kaye Auditorium.

Each year the Klezmer Music Festival hosts a concert with Klezmer music — traditional Jewish music. However, this year the library decided to feature Klezmer music adapted to Latin jazz.

The Joebano Jazz concert is part of the music library program known as Shell to Stage, that is the only one of its kind in the world. Shell to Stage takes older music from the sheet music library and brings it back to be rearranged and performed.

The concert was performed by the FAU faculty member, Aaron Katz and his Klezmer Company Orchestra.

The concert featured over 23 pieces of Klezmer music, majority of which premiered for the first time ever. Many of them were arranged by members of the orchestra, including Katz and trumpeter Chaim Rubenstein.

The concert honored the past, while still looking toward the future of Klezmer music. The orchestra performed two pieces — Carnival Klezmer by Eric Benaim from FAU and Frova Kristall by Diego Lyra from University of Louisville — the first and second place winners of the KCO composition competition — a contest for student composers.

Benaim, winner of the competition, was in attendance. Born and raised in Venezuela, his composition was influenced by the carnivals and music of his childhood. He incorporated not one, but three different Klezmer melodies into his piece.

In addition to jazz arranging, he wishes to compose video game music and cinematic scores.

Over the driving Latin rhythms of the orchestra, it is easy to hear the vibrant Klezmer melodies being played on the violin by soloist Randi Falshefeld and trumpeter Rubenstein.

Falshefeld sways her hips to the rhythm as she plays her virtuosic solos. She also soloed to metal music and is an electronic violinist in the band Blue Fire.

Throughout the concert, Graham Fantelle — the guest vocalist and bartender of the Florida Grand Opera company — sang in Yiddish, Hebrew and Spanish. He closed the night with the first ever famous Klezmer-Latin piece, "Miami Beach Rumba" written in 1994 by composer Irving Fields.

While most FAU students were away on spring break, about 2,400 of Boca Raton's elderly citizens flocked to the sold-out concert in Barry Kaye Hall.

Most members of the audience were drawn to the concert to hear the music of their Jewish Eastern European Ashkenazic heritage fused with Southern Jewish Sephardic Latin American Jazz.

"Culturally it's something very close to us. Our great grandparents came from Russia and from different places and we're used to Klezmer music, but we understand that this music, this Klezmer is more Sephardic and Cuban," said Barbara Felder, a Boca community member.

Among the 2,400 people at the Barry Kaye auditorium was FAU student Mengen Zhang. She is currently in the pursuit of her bachelor's degree in computer science in brain science.

She heard about the event because she is in a computer science class and the event is a part of the concert program. Under Alfred Fowler, an adjunct professor at Temple University.

"I don't understand, this is a good concert, why is nobody (FAU students) coming?" said Zhang.

To check out all of the events being hosted by The Klezmer Music Festival during Spring Break visit the FAU events calendar for more details.