Concert to feature fusion of Klezmer band, orchestra

By MICHELLE MUNDY
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Aaron Kula has been getting little sleep in preparation for the eighth-annual Klezmer Company concert.

It's not because he's anxious about the performance — even though he is.

Kula has been staying up late, because he's composing and arranging pieces for the extravaganza that will merge a symphony orchestra and a traditional Klezmer band. Klezmer often is described as Jewish soul music.

The single performance is at 3 p.m. on Sunday at Florida Atlantic University's performing arts auditorium.

"It's a personal statement on where I am in my musical life," said Kula, the concert's artistic director. He has been involved with Klezmer and has been a symphony orchestra conductor throughout his career.

The marriage of the two genres creates something that is different and different is what Kula strives to achieve at the concert used to raise dollars for the Florida Atlantic Libraries' Molly S. Fraiberg Judaica Collections. That collection has about 40,000 pieces of printed and recorded music. Money raised will help maintain the collection and teach others about its existence and history.

It has taken Kula almost eight months to compose and arrange this concert of 25 pieces. About 22 of those pieces are from the university's collection. The other three are from Kula's collection — all of which he is adapting to accommodate the string orchestra and Klezmer band.

The event also is the debut of the 50-voice FAU Libraries Judaica Choral Society.

Altogether, there will be about 70 performers on stage. The combination of three groups is reminiscent of tradition despite the new sound, said Terri Berns, director of communications and cultural affairs for FAU Libraries.

"It almost takes you back to the earliest time of Klezmer music in the United States when there were full orchestral Klezmer bands," Berns said.

For Kula, the most difficult part of the performance will be juggling his roles as symphony conductor and accordion player.

How will he do it?

"I'm not sure yet," he said. "I really need two of me at this concert."

For information or tickets, call (561) 966-3309 or visit www.ticketmaster.com.

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