Culture concert
Klezmer Company Orchestra reunites with Ebony Chorale

By Stacy Katz Carchman
Staff Writer

On March 1, at 3 p.m., Florida Atlantic University will present “Tantz, Samba and Soul,” a concert reuniting the 25-member Klezmer Company Orchestra and the 40-voice Ebony Chorale of the Palm Beaches, at FAU’s Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium. The concert will be the finale of a 5-day KULTUR music, art and film festival. The festival starts on Feb. 25 and runs through March 1.

“The concert is a culmination of many different types of music,” said Aaron Kula, director of the Klezmer Company Orchestra and the professional-ensemble-in-residence at FAU Libraries. “The 12-year-old ensemble has successfully taken music in the library’s collection from shelf to stage.” Kula has been at FAU since 1997 and professionally conducting since age 5. Today, he is the director of Music Collections and Performance at FAU. He has been working on bringing the music festival to FAU for 5 years.

“The concert is a fusion concert, with all different types of music, like Afro-American, Latin, Jazz and Klezmer, and all different types of arrangements,” said Kula. “All the arrangements are new, and we invited the Ebony Chorale and other core soloists. I take pre-existing melodies and reinvent them for the 21st century.”

The Ebony Chorale, is a gospel choir, under the direction of Orville Lawton. They will sing sacred and secular classics, folk songs, pop and gospel, in addition to spirituals.

The keynote speaker for the festival will be Aaron Kula’s brother, Rabbi Irwin Kula, on March 1 at 1 p.m. Rabbi Kula is a noted radio and television personality, author, inspirational speaker and co-president of CLAL (National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.)

Rabbi Kula’s keynote address examines the role of Jewish arts and culture in the 21st century.

Other highlights of the five day festival will include Klez4Kidz: Mendel’s Accordion on Feb. 25. This is an event for the whole family featuring author Heidi Smith Hyde and members of the Klezmer orchestra. Children are encouraged to dress up in pajamas, while Hyde reads this bedtime story to the children.

On Feb. 26, renowned New York City Cantor, Jacob Mendelson will lead six local cantors in a unique presentation featuring live performance, classical recordings, and a panel discussion. Also on Feb. 26, the film “A Cantor’s Tale” with Cantor Jacob Mendelson will be shown.

On Feb. 27, FAU will present Bernstein and Blitzstein, a song recital and lecture about the close musical and personal relationship between Jewish-American composers, Leonard Bernstein and Marc Blitzstein. Also on the 27th, is a Hebrew Book Arts presentation with book artist and printmaker, Lynne Avadenka.

On Feb. 28, there are two events going on. One is Tango and Tantz, a lively social gathering with Latin and Jewish folk dancing. There will also be a film presented, “Where Neon Goes to Die” (Miami’s Yiddishland).

The grand finale of the festival will end on March 1 with the “Tantz, Samba and Soul” concert.

Tickets to the concert start at $18. Call 1-800-564-9539 or visit www.fauevents.com. For more information on the Klezmer Company Orchestra, visit www.klezmercompany.com.