Music series blends Spanish and Jewish cultures

By Sergio Carmone | Florida Jewish Journal
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Different musicians are entertaining local audiences through tropical Jewish sounds infused with Yiddish and Latin flair.

Since January, the Miami Jewish Cultural Center Next@19th Street has been hosting the monthly Guava Rugelach Lounge Series where artists present their own Jewish musical programs.

Jenni Person, Next@19th Street’s director, said the reception for the series has been great and that its purpose is to weave the annual Guava Rugelach Festival that takes place in September into a year round celebration.

“We want to continue to keep the music in people’s lives on a more regular monthly basis, to keep it out there,” Person added.

The next three events, all of them taking place at Temple Israel of Greater Miami, 137 NE 19 St, will feature Miami-based musicians Alexandra Czamy, who will perform Yiddish and Spanish songs with special guest Aaron Kula, Florida Atlantic University’s director of music collections and performance, on April 27, the group Safetnu that will present a celebration of Jewish music on May 11, and Ilisa Rosal, who along with renowned Flamenco guitarist Paco Fonta, will present “The Jewish Roots of Flamenco” on June 1.

Person said regarding the upcoming artists, “I think each one is unique and brings a unique journey to the interpretation of the music.”

Czamy, who is Argentinean with Eastern European roots in her family, will fuse Latin American songs with Yiddish ones while presenting several Jewish-inspired Spanish arrangements with Kula.

“I’m mixing both Spanish and Yiddish and I’m mixing traditional ways of singing these old songs with nontraditional ways of singing them,” she added.

Rosal said her presentation on the little known Jewish influence of flamenco is important.

“I think it’s very important because the Jewish influence of flamenco is very little known in our community,” she added. “People think of flamenco as a Spanish art form but it’s really a mix of many different cultures.”

Tickets for these performances are $10 for general admission and $5 for students, seniors and artists. They can be purchased at http://www.brownpapertickets.com. For more information, call 305-542-7732 or email info@nextat19th.org or visit http://www.nextat19th.org.