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From the South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Salute to America Klezmer concert to feature music of Gershwin, Copland

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By David A. Schwartz | South Florida Sun-Sentinel
June 17, 2009

Conductor Aaron Kula and the Klezmer Company Orchestra will get an early start on celebrating Independence Day when the orchestra performs "Spirit of America: Gershwin & Copland" on June 28 at the Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium on the Florida Atlantic University campus in Boca Raton.

The eight-member orchestra will expand to 50 pieces and be joined by the 40-voice Ebony Chorale of the Palm Beaches for the 3 p.m. musical salute to America. The concert will feature signature pieces of [George Gershwin](#) and [Aaron Copland](#), two of America's most important and influential 20th century composers.

Pianist Mark Galsky will play Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Galsky will be familiar to listeners as the host and producer of the weekday Mid-Morning Musicale show on WXEL radio 90.7FM. He also will accompany several musical artists throughout the show.

The Ebony Chorale will perform 14 songs from Gershwin's classic American opera "Porgy and Bess," with guest soprano Elizabeth Graham singing the role of Bess and guest bass-baritone Alvie Powell singing the role of Porgy. Songs will include "My Man's Gone Now," "Summertime" and "It Ain't Necessarily So."

The Klezmer Company Orchestra will open the concert with the brass section performing Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man."

FAU President [Frank Brogan](#) will narrate Copland's "Lincoln Portrait" to celebrate [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s 200th birthday. Brogan, who has studied Lincoln's life and writings since he was a child, called the opportunity to narrate the famous piece an honor. "To speak the words he wrote is a dual honor," Brogan said.

He admitted more than two weeks before the performance that he was "a little nervous about it." The words are those of someone he greatly admires, Brogan said. "Abraham Lincoln is my favorite character in American history."

In his role as guest narrator of Copland's "Lincoln Portrait," Brogan is in select company. [President](#)

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[Barack Obama](#) narrated the "Lincoln Portrait" with the [Chicago Symphony Orchestra](#) in 2005 when he was a U.S. senator. And [Adlai Stevenson](#), another former U.S. senator from Illinois, narrated the piece in a 1962 performance with the [Philadelphia](#) Orchestra conducted by [Eugene Ormandy](#).

The Klezmer Company Orchestra summer concert is far removed from the traditional Klezmer music of the Eastern European *shtetl* and bears no resemblance to the orchestra's more traditional Klezmer concerts.

"I'm not doing a Klezmer concert," Kula said. "We are not Klezmerizing. We're going far beyond what people may think we do. We have to open our mind to orchestras and ensembles to accept that they are diverse."

That diversity extends to the Ebony Chorale, which will perform with the Klezmer Company Orchestra for the third time. "There's a connectedness between Jewish Klezmer music and Negro spirituals," Chorale Director Orville Lawton said.

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The Chorale and the orchestra performed together in a March concert that celebrated the connections between Jewish, Latin and African American music. And the "Klezmer Does the Blues" concert in 2004 explored the musical connection between Klezmer music and the blues.

Kula's Klezmer Company Orchestra, which he founded in 1997, takes music from the FAU Libraries' collection and brings it to the stage. "I'm carrying the tradition of the music forward," Kula said.

He said he tries to program the concerts so that they cause a visceral reaction in concertgoers so that "they are left with a life-long memory."

Concert tickets are \$15 to \$36. Call 800-564-9539 or visit www.fauvents.com. For information on the Klezmer Company Orchestra, visit klezmercompany.com.

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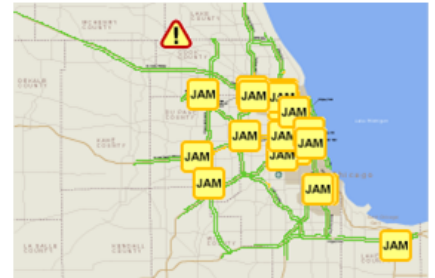
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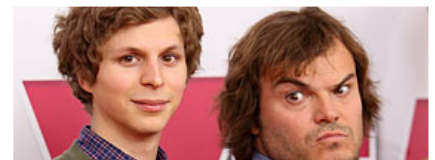
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