A happy musical experience

Normally I tend to frown on the mixing of ethnic elements. The reason is that the Jewish element frequently becomes lost in the acculturation of musical styles. However, and this is a very large however, if the Jewish element is still recognizable and is not completely overwhelmed or submerged (or even nonexistent) in the process, a case can be made for the combination of a style, or genre, folk element and so forth to coexist with the Jewish one.

Songs such as Irving Berlin’s “Russian Lullaby” or George Gershwin’s “Summertime” or “It Ain’t Necessarily So” are examples to that which I am alluding. If one changes the lyrics to Yiddish or Hebrew in the above the effectiveness of the music would not be lessened. In my opinion these songs are kosher style, while I would consider such things as a Reggae seder out and out treyf. Thus it is that one can listen to the CD called Beyond the Tribes and do so with much pleasure.

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This disc features the Klezmer Company Orchestra under the direction of Aaron Kula. While Jazz and especially Hispanic influences are evident, the Jewish element is present as well. In fact they coexist surprisingly well. The group features “Jazz and classical musicians to create a multidimensional musical idiom that relies on both written orchestration as well as extended improvisation. The KCO is an innovative ensemble that draws its inspiration from Arabic, Latin, European and American cultures.”

from the root alef-dalet-nun, which implies not mastery over another, but serving as a pillar or bearer, emphasizing the supporting quality of responsibility over the mastering quality of authority. Joseph as a leader seeks not primarily to dominate, but to support and defend the interests and well-being of the people.

(see Parsha Perspective, page NAT 15)