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Jewish Cultural Society at FAU Kicks Off Fundraising Event with 'Traditions: American Klezmer Jazz,' a Concert with Maestro Aaron Kula and KCO

BOCA RATON, FL (October 23, 2009) -- The Jewish Cultural Society (JCS) at Florida Atlantic University is kicking off its second year of fundraising with a membership drive that will include a concert titled "Traditions: American Klezmer Jazz," with the international award winning Maestro Aaron Kula and Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO).

Kula, FAU Libraries' director of music collections and performance, will conduct the concert Sunday, November 15, at 3 p.m. at the Barry and Florence Friedberg Lifelong Learning Center on FAU's Boca Raton campus, 777 Glades Road. Cost is \$15 for members, \$25 for couples who are members and \$20 for nonmembers. Tickets will be sold at the door.

The JCS, comprised mostly of South Palm Beach County residents, organized in 2008 under the auspices of FAU Foundation and FAU Libraries to help advance the library's diverse Jewish cultural and music collections, and educational outreach programs, including its annual KULTUR Festival, a five-day celebration of Jewish culture.

Dottie Pierce, JCS' founding president, said the organization's inaugural year was challenging because the group launched as the economy was collapsing and donations to nonprofits were dwindling. Still, JCS donated \$3,000 to establish the "JCS Student Employment Award" so the library could hire a student worker, recruited 140 members and sponsored seven educational programs. Eight social and educational events are planned for the 2009-10 academic year, including lectures, a bus tour, and film and book discussions to help raise money.

"We are grateful for the dollars people spent to attend our programs and hope that by participating in our events, they will learn about the wonderful Jewish cultural programs being supported by FAU," said Pierce.

"Traditions: American Klezmer Jazz" will feature members of KCO, the library's professional ensemble-in-residence, in collaboration as they create highly stylized and personal interpretations of Yiddish and Klezmer songs from century-old publications taken from the library's Jewish music archives. American jazz plays a prominent role in this popular genre of musical mixology, while old European melodies will get a makeover by the KCO musicians. Kula will offer commentary and a visual presentation during the concert.

Pierce considers the student award, which went to Sergey Treyger, a Coral Springs senior, JCS' biggest accomplishment. "This student would not have been able to continue working in the library this semester without our scholarship," she said. "You know that children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see. That is our rich legacy of giving and one of reasons we support FAU."

Treyger works as a student assistant in the library's communications, cultural affairs and donor relations department. He was born in Slavuta, Ukraine, where his father was a major with the Soviet Union Military Personnel, and his mother was a librarian. Treyger moved to the United States at age 8 with his family and resettled with the assistance of the Jewish Family Services of Plantation. Treyger, a social science education major, aspires to be a history professor.

"I am extremely grateful and honored to receive this award, not just because of the financial benefits but for the life experiences as well," said Treyger. "I've met and work with wonderful people who have inspired me to be a better student and person. I hope JCS can continue this award so future students will be able to will be able to learn and grow with this opportunity."

Most of JCS' founding members are retired executives who moved to Palm Beach County within the past 15 years and want to use their involvement with the JCS to strengthen community ties to FAU.

"We now feel that Florida is our home and take great pride in all things Floridian," said Pierce. "The Jewish community, once very small, has grown each year. Members of the JCS feel it is important to be involved in FAU's efforts to enrich and perpetuate Jewish culture and heritage."

The group was organized with the support of Dr. William Miller, dean of Libraries at FAU. "Several of our specialized collections, services and programs are especially relevant to JCS' interests," said Miller. "This dedicated constituency will help us to continue to fulfill the public service component of our mission."

For more information on the JCS, contact Dottie Pierce at 561-852-9720 and Bobby Starsky, vice president for programming, at 561-735-0176. For information regarding the November 15 concert, contact Sara Landset at 561-297-3921 or slandset@fau.edu.

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Photo #1: Aaron Kula, conductor, with Klezmer Company Orchestra.

Photo #2: Left to right – Dr. William Miller, Joan Roude, Sergey Treyger, Dottie Pierce, Bobby Starsky, Roz Hoffer and Howard Hoffer.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University serves more than 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students on seven campuses. Building on its rich tradition as a teaching university, with a world-class faculty, FAU hosts ten colleges: College of Architecture, Urban & Public Affairs, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Biomedical Science, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Engineering & Computer Science, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Graduate College, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science.