

[Photos Attached]

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**KCO, Conducted by Aaron Kula, to Present “Shulamis” at FAU
*Concert Celebrates 100th Anniversary of Death of Jewish Poet and Playwright***

BOCA RATON, FL (November 12, 2008) – A concert version of “Shulamis,” one of the most beloved Yiddish operettas, will be presented by Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO), under the direction of Aaron Kula, on Sunday, December 7, at 3 p.m. at the Barry and Florence Friedberg Auditorium, on FAU’s Boca Raton campus, 777 Glades Road.

The concert is a scaled-down version of the romantic operetta by Jewish poet and playwright Avrom Goldfadn, who is considered the father of Yiddish theater. He was born in 1840 in Russia and died in 1908 in New York. “Shulamis,” written in 1883, is based on a combination of biblical legends.

KCO’s 90-minute production features a nine-piece orchestra, soprano Elena Corriea, tenor Philip Alongi and a narrator. For the concert, Kula, who is KCO’s conductor, as well as the director of music collections and performance at FAU’s library, orchestrated 14 songs that will be sung in Yiddish and an overture.

Adapting the music from the opera was a tremendous creative challenge for Kula because there are no known-full-length recordings of it. He based the concert’s compositions and arrangements on original 1898 and 1912 piano-vocal scores published in New York and London that he found in the library’s Special Collections Music Archive. A rare 1950 recording from the library’s Judaica Sound Archives provided a historically informed version of the operetta to complete the reconstruction project.

FAU’s Life Long Learning Society is sponsoring the concert, which is one of many events taking place around the world this year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Goldfadn’s death.

“The Lifelong Learning Society takes pride in the diversity of disciplines it offers its students and in the creativeness and unique talents of FAU’s faculty,” said Ginny Huntzinger, interim assistant provost of Lifelong Learning. “What could be more intriguing in these times of indecision and political and global unrest than a lyrical, fantastical romance with a melancholy happy ending?”

Many of Goldfadn’s musicals examined Jewish life and were based on Jewish history and ethical themes. “Shulamith” is about a young prince en route to Jerusalem who rescues the beautiful shepherdess Shulamith from a well in the desert. They vow eternal fidelity with only a well and a wildcat as witnesses to the betrothal. When the prince marries another, Shulamith calls on those witnesses, releasing terrible forces to draw him back to his first love. The score contains such hits as the lullaby “Raisins and Almonds.”

“Goldfadn was a product of his era and heard a wide range of music by classical composers and great European cantors in Romania, Poland, Germany and Russia,” said Kula. “Some of the songs are written in styles that are reminiscent of Italian opera, cantorial recitatives and Viennese waltzes. The audience may be surprised as to the range of musical influences that can be heard in this popular 1883 opera.”

Since Kula founded KCO in 1997, the professional ensemble-in-residence has successfully taken music in the library’s collections from shelf to stage. New orchestrations are based on pre-existing melodies in the collections. KCO hit a milestone this year with its independently-produced CD, *Beyond the Tribes*, which is enjoying national exposure on music websites. The 12 tracks on the groundbreaking album were selected from 150 works Kula has composed and orchestrated for KCO over the past decade. The music is a celebration of cultural fusion and a tribute to ethnic melodies. Many of the compositions are based on original melodies from the library’s music archives.

Additional support for the concert is being provided by the Nathan and Marion Crosby Holocaust and Judaic Library Collections Endowment Fund.

Concert tickets are \$20 for members and \$25 for nonmembers of Life Long Learning. Call the Lifelong Learning Society at 561-297-3185. For information on KCO, visit www.klezmercompany.com.

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Photo #1 Cutline: Shulamith original 1912 cover art.