

16th IAYC Conference Entertainers – A Magnificent Array

Opening night, Friday November 14th is a double header of talent.

Jonathan Geffner & Friends. The "Friends" performing: Yoko, Ezra, Yosi, Sayid, Aunt Sarah, Shmendrik, are some of the puppet partners of Geffner the versatile virtuoso ventriloquist. Geffner



manages their every move. He convincingly speaks for them, and we will all fall in love with Geffner and his friends. He has appeared on national television networks including NBC, FOX, WOR, ABC, and CNBC, as well as numerous cable TV programs. All ages will *kvell*.

Yale Strom and Elizabeth Schwartz - We are in store for a rich, beautiful, memorable concert. Yale Strom is one of the world's leading ethnographers and performers of Klezmer and Roma music. Since 1981,



when he made his first trip to the Eastern Bloc, Strom has conducted over 75 ethnographic research treks. His prodigious body of works includes 14 recordings, 8 documentary films, 13 books, 4 dramas, and many photo exhibits. Currently, Strom is the artist

in residence at San Diego State University.

In addition to his performance, Strom will also lead a breakout session on Saturday entitled: "The Music of Chagall's Childhood: The Khasidim and Itinerant Klezmerim." As in several of his previous IAYC conference lectures, he will also play musical selections. This is one of the reasons that his presentations are so popular.

Elizabeth Schwartz, in concert with Strom, is celebrated for the uniquely dusky timbre of her voice. Multiple reviews hail her "passionate, penetrating, and soulful" vocals. She has appeared as a soloist with both Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi, as well as performing across North America and Europe. Schwartz's numerous recordings are on the the



Naxos World and Arc Music UK labels. She has been the subject of the documentary film, "Rumenye, Searching for Schwartz". What can I say? Friday will be a glorious evening, and will leave all of us wanting more.

Schwartz will also conduct a film screening and breakout session titled: "Romania, Romania: Searching for Schwartz."

Saturday at noon—a special interlude

Jane Pepler is an accomplished musician and author. She has been performing Yiddish songs since the 1980's. Cabaret Warsaw is a program of music from Warsaw, Poland, which draws on a rich



lode of Yiddish cultural life, the music of nightclubs, kleynkunst theaters, and movies. Her world music band Mappamundi is an ensemble specializing in high-energy acoustic music. They have appeared in

concerts, festivals, and workshops. Pepler brings serious scholarship to her music, having translated three novels and numerous articles from Yiddish into English under the supervision of Professor Sheva Zucker, in addition to producing Yiddish CDs and publishing songbooks. One of her current projects is finding melodies to 124 mostly lost Yiddish theater songs curated by Itzik Zhelonek of Warsaw, Poland in the mid-1930s.

Saturday evening features another doubleheader.

Cookie Blattman, a popular local Yiddish entertainer, is the opening vocalist. Cookie was Vice President of the Circle of Yiddish Clubs of South Florida. She started a Yiddish conversation group at



Kings Point, Tamarac, and another club at the nearby senior center. Cookie is a professional Yiddish singer/entertainer with a popular CD. She has performed at several of our prior IAYC conferences and was on its Board of Directors. The Judaica Sound Archives at Florida

Atlantic University has her recordings, and her CDs have also been included in the Robert and Molly Freedman Jewish Sound Archives of the University of Pennsylvania. To each song, Cookie brings color, a story, and a history to enrich our experience of beloved favorites, all with very enjoyable audience sing-alongs.

There is more for Saturday evening.



Naomi Miller was discovered while singing in the mikveh that was run by her parents for the Paterson, New Jersey Jewish community. Born in Landsburg, Germany, in a displaced persons camp after World War II, Naomi's first language and first love was our *mameloshn*. As she grew up to the sounds of the

Jewish shows on WEVD radio and her mother Rosa singing in the kitchen, Naomi dreamed that she, too would be on radio. Today she is a singer and recording artist with original as well as folk music, Broadway, and musical comedy. As a past member of the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater, Miller brings a special something to her delivery of Yiddish songs. She has performed in cabarets and concert halls, and for numerous Jewish organizations here and in Canada, Puerto Rico, Israel, and Greece.

Sunday noon presents an Argentinian star.

Alejandra Czarny is the featured vocalist. Born in Argentina, she has been residing in South Florida for the past thirteen years. As for Yiddish songs, she "has been singing them for most of my life."



Drawing on two published CDs, she presents traditional and original compositions throughout the Americas and Europe. Alejandra has her own Jewish music radio program, as well as leading a

Latin American songs band, and is a cantorial soloist in South Florida synagogues and music director of a Jewish school.

Sunday night, a show stopper of talent.

David and Shira Presler, a program of vocal and instrumental band. Shira has been a celebrated performer from the age of seven. In those early



years, she was in theater and chorus with no less than the Metropolitan Opera and the Actor's Studio, and went on to Hunter College, where she appeared in films with Sarah Jessica Parker and Elisabeth Shue. She

has had an extensive concert career, with leading roles from Gilbert and Sullivan to Offenbach. Her Yiddish accomplishments include the concert performance "Yiddish Divas in the Parks."

David and Shira will be performing with Jerry Shaw, Eddie Shraybman, and Gary Lawrence. David is celebrated as a cantor, recording artist, and voice teacher. His repertoire spans from classic Broadway to opera to synagogue. David is an art-song enthusiast and has performed four great song cycles of Schubert, Schumann, Ravel and Ibert, as well as opera. Possessing a rich baritone voice, he has been compared to Ezio Pinza. In addition, he is a published composer of liturgical music with Sim Shalom.