



KlezNews קלעזנייעס

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Girls Don't Play Drums.... Oh Yes We Will

by Elaine Cooper

How wonderful to make a dream come true. I have always wanted to learn to play the drums. I lived vicariously through my son for years.... I heard my friends talk about drumming when they went to weekend workshops. One of my close women friends was drummed in to her simcha chomah, and I was starting to feel left out. Then, that old Chinese proverb "When a student is ready, a teacher is found" came true.

The package came from KlezKanada, and there was a program given by a woman who was even older than I am. "Girls Don't Play the Drums". Yesterday I went to my first class, and my learning began: how to hold the drumsticks. "The sticks are to be held with the thumb and the first finger." "Hold the elbows just so...." "Hit the pad in the center." And then we learned all the basic rhythms.

Elaine Watts Hoffman has the patience, an ability to translate instrument, and can transmit all of

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מזל טוב! בת-מצוה



רסונג ער האָט געזאָגט אַז אילאַנאַ איז געווען זיין ערשטער אמתער פֿריינט. נאָך דער פֿינערהעכער צערעמאָניע האָט מען גערוליעט אין ספורט-זאַל. די קלעזמאַרים האָבן געשפּילט אָן אויפֿהער פֿריילעכע ניגונים און דער עולם האָט געטאַנצט מיט התפעלות דער באַוווסטער אַקטיאָר און זינגער טעאָדור בעקעל האָט האַרציק באַגרי-סט אילאַנען און געזונגען פֿאַר איר אַ פֿאַר לידער, איינע פֿון זי, פֿון "פּידלער אויפֿן דאָך", אויף ייִדיש!
עס איז געווען אַן אומפֿאַגעסטלעכער אָווונט! אויף אַזאַ בת-מצוה בין איין קיין מאָל ניט געווען. איז באמת געווען אַ שמחה שבשמחות!
מזל-טוב, אילאַנאַ.

מזל-טובֿ און סימן-טובֿ האָט מען געהערט פֿון 8 אזייגער אין אָווענט. ביז שפעט ביי נאַכט אין קלעזקענאַדע. וואָס איז די סיבה! איר וויסט ניט? ס'איז סרולי דרעסדנערס טאַכטער אילאַנאַ בת-מצוה. סרולי דרעסדנער און זיין געטרייע מיטאַרבעטער, ליסה מייער קומער צו קלעזקענאַדע יעדעס יאָר ברענגענדיק מיט זיך אַ ים ענע-רגיע און ליבשאַפֿט פֿאַר די קינדער. סרוליס און ליסאַס אייגענע קינדער (ער האָט 2 מיידלעך און 2 יינגלעך) זינען אויפגעוואַקסן אין קלעזקענאַדע. אילאַנאַ וואָס איז ערשט געקומען קיין קלעזקענאַדע ווי אַ פּיצעלע קינד איז פֿאַרוואַנצלט געוואָרן אין אַזוי אַ שייין מיידל, ממש אַ קראַסאַוויצע. די באַ-בע-זיידע זינין געקומען שעפֿן נחם פֿון זייער אייניקל.

דער גרויסער זאָל אין "רעטריט"-סענטער איז געווען געפֿאַקט מיט הונדערטער קלעזקענאַדניקעס. די פֿיערדעכע צערעמאָניע איז פֿאַרגע-קומן מיט עמאַציאָנעלע רעדעס פֿון קרובים און פֿרענט. מיר איז באַזונדערס געפען ליסאַ מייער זונס אהרון באַגע-



Theo Bikel serenades Ilana Dresdner with a Yiddish version of "If I were a rich man." See him tonight in a special "East meets West" concert.

צייטפּלאַן? וואָסער צייטפּלאַן?

דער צייטפּלאַן וואָס מער האָט אָפּגע-דרוקט אין אַ פּראָגראַם-ביכעלע האָט מען אין גאַנצן געבירטן און מע בייט אים ווייטער. אַרגאַניזאַטאָרן הענגען אויס די טעגלעכע שינוים אין צוויי ערטער. אויף אַ מעלדונג-טאָול פֿאַרן עס-זאָל און אויף אַ מעלדונג-אינע טאָול ווייניק פֿון "רעטריט"-צענטער.

Schedule? What Schedule?

As happens every year, the schedule that is printed in the program books has changed completely. To ensure that multiple, differently out-of-date schedules do not circulate, staff are posting the current daily schedule in two places and have committed to keeping them current: on the notice board in front of the Dining Room, and on the notice board just inside the Retreat Center.

Writing for the Yiddish Stage: Daily Writing Exercise #1

by Jenny Levison

Jenny Levison is doing a workshop. But, why limit a workshop to one session a day? Here is her first daily writing assignment for the whole camp.

Playwriting is an inherently Jewish art form, because in order to write a good play, the playwright must ask, “What makes this day different from all other days?”

Drama begins with broken ritual. Something happens that isn't supposed to. Something happens that never happened before. Something happens that sets the normal world of the play into motion. It's sometimes called the inciting incident. I like to think of it as the broken ritual.

Think about the first few pages, minutes, or moments of your favorite plays. What ritual is broken? Master

playwrights do this with such subtlety that they don't have to spend ten pages saying to you, “This is a world in which the women have to remove their shoes before entering any building, and (flashing arrows!) oh look! Mindy just clomped in with her Doc Martins on and that means trouble.”

It's likely that instead, Mindy would just clomp in with her Doc Martens on, and this broken ritual, which we don't know is even a ritual yet, will disturb the world and set off the drama. When you break ritual, you disturb the world, and you plunge your a play into action. This is what creates drama.

Note: ritual is different from habit. Habit is unaware. Ritual is focused and purposeful.

Exercise:

Think about the ritual in your daily life. What do you do—perhaps the same way, perhaps at the same time—every day? Every week? Every month? Every year? Free write a list of all the rituals you perform in your life. Consider breaking that ritual. See how it disturbs the rest of your life.



NOTES FROM KLEZKANADA'S FIRST BAS MITZVE



It is the bas Mitzve of Ilana Dresdner, daughter of long-time KlezKanada staffer Sruli Dresdner. You can hear the brass band practicing outside. They will be working soon.

Ilana is welcomed to the *bima*, the stage, by the full string band. Michael Alpert acts the part of Master of Ceremonies and welcomes her in Yiddish: “This is not a religious ceremony, but she will be giving blessings and reading from the torah.”

As he proceeds, we see a new, secular improvisation. It echoes Ilana's actual *bas mitzve* a couple of weeks previously. In place of *brakhes*, blessings, Michael introduces each new *aliya*, honored people, who each speak to Ilana. First come Hy and

Sandra Goldman. They are followed by Sruli's parents. Her *zeyde* (grandfather) says, “always be aware of what god gives you ... I consider myself a very rich man because God

gave you to me.” Her *bubbe* says: “to our precious Ilana, we have cherished your heart and soul. You became a *bas mitzve* on Tu B'Shvat (hence the name, “Ilana”) we are so excited to be celebrating this at KlezKanada among people you adore.”

Next, it's Michael Wex (who will deliver a *drash*, a Torah commentary), along with Lisa Mayer and her two sons. Mayer and Dresdner have not only played together for years—they met because their house abut each other. So her kids and Sruli's kids have been friends since they were born. The ceremony continues to involve

Sruli and her sister Toby, Ilana reads the last portion.

Michael announces that we'll accompany Ilana to the party in the gym with a break from KlezKanada music-marching tradition (here he refers to the backwards march from the Retreat center to the dining hall preceding Friday night dinner). “a backwards backwards march to the gym”, and accompanied by the full string and brass players, that's what we do. From there, you can read Kolye's account in Yiddish, or follow the KlezKanada blog, about the amazing dance set led by dozens of KlezKanada students and staff, with non-stop

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Hatching a Klezmer Band—KlezKinder

by Richard Kurtz

While you are going to workshops, working in ensembles or relaxing by the lake there is a hive of activity in a building tucked away in the woods behind the dining hall. As you approach this building you can feel the energy emanating from its inside and spilling out onto its porch. Its our Klez Kanada children. Seven violins, 2 flutes, 1 trombone, clarinet, recorder, Melodica, 2 stray dragonflies and purple gimp combine to produce, under the direction of Sruli Dresdner's and Lisa Mayer's beautiful music. The kids are either putting together their first tune to be played at the flag pole before meals or demonstrating artistic talents.

Sruli, using his recorder, assigns notes to various instruments over and over and over again G to C to D to E.

It is no easy task. Sruli and Lisa have to search for wandering musicians who at a whim leave the group to hug and schmooze with friends from Klez Kanada's past. The fearless Sruli and Lisa eventually round the aspiring musicians together as they explore the 4 notes of the 6 note song they are preparing for your Kvelling pleasure later in the week. Alas one more interruption as a joyous Klezmer trumpeter belts out the Michigan State fight song. Sruli, with his Rebbe-like patience announces we will play the first half today and after cookies tomorrow we will learn the second half. So do not forget about that special place in the woods behind the dining hall come visit to see the future superstars of Klezmer music rehearsing.



Pesakh Fishman and KlezKanada participant schmooze at the Retreat Center.



THE CATSKILLS ONWARD: PETE SOKOLOW AND IRVING FIELDS

by Marc Dolgin

It would be hard to imagine a more appropriate way to start off this year's KlezKanada, especially for the debutants and kibitzers, than the tag team presentation on Monday from what could well have been a famous Catskills institution, "Sokolow and Fields." Each drew from his extensive experience and knowledge both to trace and illustrate the evolution of klezmer from very humble roots to its innovative and dynamic place on today's music palette.

Peter Sokolow, a long time veteran on the KlezKanada scene, sketched out the origins of klezmer, from its liturgical roots, through its instrumentalization by a community unable to secure formal musical education and often relying on the training provided by the Tzar's army whose portable instruments defined the genre's original character. Ironically as it turned out, it was also



a very rigorous, even inflexible, form, according to Sokolow, dependent on learning by ear and inhospitable to improvisation, even in North America where it arrived with the major migrations from eastern Europe. That rigidity might have consigned klezmer to the status of an archaic bit of folklore, of interest mainly to cultural anthropologists, were it not for the contribution of young Irving Fields (aka Campos, el pianista), a synagogue choir bocher, who discovered the beauty of Jewish

melody and then stumbled into a obsession for latin rhythms while playing a gig on a cruise to Cuba. In response to requests for both Jewish music and dance music, Fields hit upon the notion of combining and transcribing these two passions, Jewish melody and latin rhythm, and in so doing, demonstrated (possibly inadvertently) the potential for evolution and imagination that carried the music forward to the "klezmer revival" and on to the range of artistic expression that is so evident at Klez Kanada today. It was probably appropriate that Fields was interviewed by SoCalled (aka Josh Dolgin) whose fusion of Jewish music and contemporary hip-hop lies firmly within this relatively new but firmly established trend in which tradition's best defense has become the untraditional.

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 these to this mixed bag of students
 her knowledge, and love of her from
 young prepubescent girls to an old
 broad like me. One, two three four five
 ... start with your left, alternate your
 hands ... don't hit too hard, remember
 this is an musical instrument." "Listen
 to me while I play the bass drum ...
 listen to the rhythm and play faster".
 "Not so loud" (and she was wearing
 earplugs).

As I heard her speak, I was
 reminded of one of my graduate school
 professors. He used to say this: "I don't
 understand you any better when you
 talk louder!"

This morning, I am faced with a
 very difficult choice at 10.45 hours,
 do I go to hear Bikel or go to second
 drumming class? Guess which one!

SHYEN VI DE LEVANA

for Ilana Dresdner, by Lisa Mayer

Sheyn vi di levana
 Our Bas Mitzvah Ilana
 We wish her mazel brocha
 On this most special night
 Her hair is zayer tayer
 Never-cut—always on fire
 Mir vinchen dir hatzlokhe
 And all your heart's delight
 In your eyes so blue
 We can see that you
 Have Koyekh Kheyn and Khokhme
 Here where we belong
 joined in joy and song
 At KlezKanada
 Sheyn vi di levana
 Our Bas Mitzvah Ilana
 We love you like a sister
 Mazel Tov
 Mazel Tov
 Mazel Tov
 Mazel Tov
 On this—magical night!

**COMING
 TOMORROW**



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 wonderful dancing. At the very end,
 Theo Bikel does a couple of songs (see
 picture on front cover), then all of the
 children present go onstage and sing a
 kids song written by Lisa Mayer, and
 finally, there is a second, quieter dance
 set led by Annette Bjorling, with Kurt,
 Deborah Strauss, Stu Brotman, Steven
 Greenman, and others.

Was this really following by a
 cabaret with DJ SoCalled and Irving
 Fields? By now, exhausted from
 dancing, I head off to bed, also wishing
 Ilana a mazl tov.

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 available online after camp, and HTML
 versions of the stories and art will be
 placed online, along with additional
 materials, in a weblog format to permit
 comments and participation.

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To submit a personal advertisement,
 accompany it with a \$5 (or more)
 contribution to the KlezKanada
 Scholarship fund.

מזל טוב, אילנה

The Kurtz Family has made a donation
 to the KlezKanada Scholarship fund in
 honor of Ilana Dresdner's Bas Mitzve.

**Mazl tov to KlezKanada's
 First Bas Mitzve from Ari**

Davidow and Judy Pinnolis in honor of
 Ilana Dresdner's Bas Mitzve.

**Mazl tov to Ilana and the
 whole Dresdner family**

from Aaron and Merceditas Alexander on
 Ilana's Bas Mitzve.

**Congratulations to Ilana
 and the whole Dresdner**

family from Sandy and Hy
 Goldman

מזל טוב, אילנה

Helen and Bob Smolkin have made a
 donation to the KlezKanada Scholar-
 ship fun in honor of Ilana Dresdner's
 Bas Mitzve. *Khazak Khazak v'titkhazki.*

KlezKanada Afloat.

Join fellow klezmorim on a Klezmer Cruise on the
 Dnieper River, May, 2007. Brochures
 available in the KlezKanada Boutique
 (in the Retreat Center), or see Marc
 Dolgin.

**Join us in Toronto at
 Ashkenaz Festival 2006!**

A kvelling Yiddishe Mame would like
 to invite all to the Ashkenaz Festival
 2006 in Toronto, Ont., Canada, Aug
 29–Sept 4. For more information and
 a brochure, please see Helen Smolkin.

