



# קלעזנייעס KlezNews

2007 אָגוסט 22סטן דעם 22nd August, 2007

## A Close Encounter of the Chipmunk Kind

## יִיִדִישׁ פֿאַר קלעזמאַרים



We pulled into Daphna on Monday, ready to unload and set up our cabin for an amazing week at KlezKanada, when three raccoons startled us with glowing golden eyes darting out from under the cabin! We pulled out our stuff and began carting it into the ice-cold cabin when Rebecca spotted something dash across the darkened back section of the cabin. "Um, guys? There's some sort of chipmunk type thing in here!" The unpacking continued until the mystery animal ran past again. It was definitely a chipmunk. Snatching a suitcase, our mom barricaded to doorway while our dad hopped over with a broom to chase it out, and a flashlight to find it. We grabbed the camera, both to grab a snapshot and to scare it out the door with the flash. We were laughing our heads off while our dad dashed back and forth, scraping the closets across the floor, and waving the broom around like crazy. That must have been one freaked out chipmunk. Here she was, just trying to warm up for the night in the cabin that surprisingly, retained one more degree of heat than the outdoors when these giants came out flashing lights and waving brooms! We caught a few pictures, and debated whether a bit of food at the door would get the chipmunk out or a raccoon in.

Continued on page 6

נעכטן איז פֿאַרגעקומען דער ערשטער קלאַס "יִיִדִישׁ פֿאַר קלעזמאַרים." אַרום 25 סטודענטן פון פֿאַרשידענע ערטער (אַטאַוואַ, ניו-יאָרק, קאַליפֿאָרניאַ, אָרעגאָן, פּוילן און אַזוי ווייטער) און עלטער (דער יינגסטער - עטלעכע חודשים אַלט, דער עלטסטער 78) - יאָריקער יונגעראַן) זינגען געקומען זיך לערנען אַ ביסל ייִדיש. צווישן די סטודענטן זינגען געווען אַ מאַמע מיט אַ זון און אַ טאָכטער, אַ טאָטע מיט אַ זון, אַ טאָטע מיט אַ טאָכטער און אַפילו אַ זיידע מיט אַן אייניקל. איטערעסאַנט צו באַמערקן אַז צווישן די פֿאַרזאַמלטע זינגען געווען 5 לערערס פון קלעזמער מוזיק וואָס לערנען דאָ אין קלעזקאַנאַדאַ, ווי אויך צענערלינגען 8 (teenagers) איין זאָך האָט פֿאַראייניקט זיי אַלע - דער חשק זיך צו באַקענען מיט דער ייִדישער שפּראַך און קולטור. בשעתן קלאַס האָט מען גערעדט אויף ייִדיש וועגן קלעזקאַנאַדאַ פעסטיוואַל, וועגן קלעזמער מוזיק, וועגן אונדזערע וואַרצלען, וואָס שטאַמען פון מיזרח-אייראָפּע און וועגן דעם ערשטן ראָמאַן פון שלום-עליכם, "סטעמפּעניו" מכוּח דעם אמתן קלעזמער. אַחוץ דעם האָבן די סטודענטן זיך באַקענט מיט קלעזמער לשון און זיי קענען איצט די נעמען פון מוזיקאַלישע אינסטרומענטן אויף "לאַבושינסקע" - קלעזמער זשאַרגאָן. ווילט איר אויך זיך אויסלערנען אַ ביסל קלעזמער-לשון? קומט אין אונדזער קלאַס "יִיִדִישׁ פֿאַר קלעזמאַרים!"



Master class with Arkady Gendler. Photo: David Kahn

# Music + Math = Alex Kontorovich

by Richard Kurz



Alex Kontorovich, KlezKanada instructor, Klezmer and Jazz musician, talented saxophonist and clarinetist, hopes to have a new release next week. After 4 years of intensive work, research and collaboration his eyes light up and he cracks a big smile as he anticipates his new creation. His newest work is titled, “The Hyperbolic Lattice Point Count in Infinite Volume with an Application to Sieves” No this is not one of his newest musical creations or collaborations with a fellow Klez Kanada musician. It is the culmination of his research for his PhD thesis in mathematics from Columbia University. Basically he is sifting for prime numbers, in an area of research called number theory. Alex lives professionally in both the world of mathematics and music.

Alex came to the United States with his parents, 2 brothers, sister and grandparents when he was 8 years old. They moved to Brooklyn from Voronezh, Russia in southwestern Russia, which is located across from Kharkov, Ukraine. His family eventually settled in Central New Jersey just outside of Princeton. He took sax lessons beginning in the summer before 8<sup>th</sup> grade. His first group musical experience came when he joined the 8<sup>th</sup> grade band in his public high school. Alex continued playing in high school as a member of various wind ensembles and the jazz band. During high school, at various all state band events he met and became friends with future Klez Dispenser trumpeter Ben

Holmes. He and Ben concentrated mostly on Jazz music.

Alex started getting interested in Jewish music as an undergraduate student at Princeton University. During his freshman year in college his friend Inna Barmash asked Alex and Ben if they would like to play some Klezmer. This was Alex’s first serious encounter with Jewish music. Out of this first encounter with Jewish music emerged the group that you heard last night called the “Klez Dispensers.” The group began filling a need for a Jewish band in the Princeton New Jersey area. To the surprise of the Klez Dispensers members they began getting calls for various simachas in the New Jersey area. As Alex notes they were learning on the fly, picking up new tunes, booking dates and developing arrangements. The band gained confidence and learned a lot about the music business as a result. Alex gained further exposure to Klezmer music while attending Klez Kamp and KlezKanda. In 1999 Alex and some of his band members attended Klez Kamp where they met and learned klezmer from Pete Sokolov, Frank London and King Django (Jeff Baker). Alex continued to absorb and learn the music that he plays now with a natural flair. He first came to Klez Kanada as a student in 2002 from here he and his band members took home new tunes and developed new arrangements to perform.

It became obvious that Alex had lots of untapped potential, his teachers recognized the skills and talent in this young musician. He was asked to play with the Roots and Culture Band of King Django’s (Jeff Baker) a Jewish Reggae and Ska musician on a Hannakah CD. A big leap into the professional world of Klezmer world came as a joyful shock and surprise in 2003. Alex got a telephone call from Frank London asking him if he could fill in for Matt Dario the sax and clarinetist for the Klezmatics. That sent Alex leaping and singing around his apartment. His career really took off. He joined Frank London’s Klezmer Brass Allstars, he became a member of Aaron Alexander’s band Midrash Mish Mosh. Alex recently formed a new band called Deep Minor. Deep Minor plays Avant Garde Jazz with Klezmer influences. Deep Minor has already released the CD in Europe. It will be released in North America on October 5<sup>th</sup> at the well known Small’s Jazz club in New York City.

With Alex it all comes back to math and music. He tackles both in similar ways. At the start of projects, ideas develop slowly. He thinks about new approaches and collaborating with others. As concrete deadlines approach Alex goes into high gear and is pushed towards an intense level of creativity. His methods seem to work, he currently has 4 published math papers, was hired as an instructor and potential future professor at Brown University and he is an

*Continued page 6*



## Avia Moore

by Ezra Gliner

It's hard to spend much time at camp and not notice Avia Moore, KlezKanada's own bright-eyed and rosy cheeked dance instructor and scholarship coordinator. Having just finished a degree in theatre at the University of Alberta and a summer Yiddish course at YIVO, Avia is heading into her second year teaching Yiddish dance alongside

Michael Alpert, Walter Zev Feldman and Steven Weintraub. But a lot of Avia's work for KlezKanada goes on behind the scenes as well. While in previous years the job of soliciting and selecting scholarship applicants was done by Hy and Sandy Goldman, this year Avia stepped in to help lighten the load. Since May she has been sifting through piles of scholarship applications, helping to determine who will, and who will not make the cut. Considering that this year there were approximately 150 applications, it was no small task.

## An Empire of Pickled Herring...

by Reuben Cohen

What band describes their music as "pickled herring, bagels and lox, and kugel meet Led Zeppelin, margaritas and Nils Landgren?" Hip-klez band The Lithuanian Empire, that's who. The band, made up of 8 former KlezKanada scholarship recipients, was created at KlezKanada after a jam session the members were having while they were supposed to be at a lecture about the Lithuanian empire, hence the name. The band's members are clarinetists Kinneret Sagee of Toronto and Becky Wexler of New Haven, Connecticut, drummer Lorie Wolf of Toronto, trombonist Ryan Purchase of Edmonton, pianist Fern Lindzon of Toronto, guitarist Andy John from Asheville, North Carolina, trumpeter Eva Boodman from Montreal, and accordionist Randy Pierce from Montreal. I got to sit in on a rehearsal of this fantastic band, and then I interviewed accordionist Randy Pierce, with other members chiming in frequently. I asked Pierce how the band stays in touch what with members living as far out as North Carolina and Alberta. He says that KlezKanada is almost the only time they get to see each other and play with each other. Currently they have one released album, made up entirely of songs either written or arranged by members of the band, and there is another one coming up, but unfortunately it is not in the near future. Right now they are focusing on doing a tour, which will start right after KlezKanada. You can visit them online at [www.thelithuanianempire.com](http://www.thelithuanianempire.com). Their CD is available there, and you can also buy it at the KlezKanada gift shop.

"It's a record," said Avia. "And a surprising number of new applicants. I think we had over 50 new applicants."



Despite the work, she found the process enjoyable.

"The level of applications is phenomenally high," she said, "so it was really a joy to look through all the portfolios."

While the majority of applicants were musicians, scholarships were also awarded to those involved in theatre, dance and film, as well as graduate and post-graduate students pursuing their research at KlezKanada. The ages and skill levels of scholarship students varies widely as well.

"We really try to strike a balance," said Avia. "We can't take all new students and we can't take all returning students. We'd love to be able to take everybody, but we try to strike a balance between new and returning through the age range and levels as well."

Though final decisions were not solely in Avia's hands, she was responsible for pre-screening applications before bringing them to a committee that included both the artistic and executive directors. Asked what she looks for first in an application, she replied with one word: "Enthusiasm."

KlezKanada has often been singled out for praise because of its generous scholarship program, from which several current faculty members are graduates, including Avia herself.

*Continued on page 6*

# An Appeal to all who are committed to the survival of Yiddish

by Sylvia Lustgarten,  
sylvialustgarten@sympatico.ca

As the year 2008 approaches I find myself thinking about the Chernowitz conference of 1908, the monumental event which drew together many of the great creative minds in Jewish life: writers, scholars, linguists, Socialist and Zionist thinkers. The passionate interchanges that took place led to many far-reaching developments in the Jewish world. The intense Hebrew-Yiddish debates gave both camps the impetus to develop large Yiddish and Hebrew school systems. Yiddish writers, teachers, and scholars gained confidence that they, too, were part of an international cultural movement. The conference also set in motion a new and far-reaching chain of intellectual and scholarly works on Yiddish that led directly to the university-level field of Yiddish studies that was destined to play a vital part in the perpetuation of the language, literature, and culture.

While there are certain to be events and conferences to study and commemorate this great conference, it is important to go beyond this act in the spirit of the Chernowitz conference and address the problems of Yiddish at the dawn of the 21st century.

In the early 20th century, Yiddish was widely used, yet barely considered to be a language. Today, Yiddish is accepted as a true language, but spoken by very few. The Hasidim, for whom Yiddish is the language of every day life, form the largest group of Yiddish speakers. There are also small secular groups committed to living their lives in Yiddish. Larger groups exist which are committed to the preservation of the culture through the education of both children and adults and through cultural programs. These groups are represented by large and impressive organizations. These include, for example, YIVO, the Workman's Circle, the National Yiddish Book Center, the League for Yiddish, and many university programs. Together these groups form a small minority of the total Jewish community.

The challenge today is to reach out effectively to the large majority of Jews who have little awareness of the relevance of Yiddish to the quality of their lives. One effective method might be to replicate the spirit of the 1908 conference—that is, to have all those who are engaged in and committed to a living Yiddish culture join together to define strategies to broaden the place of Yiddish in the lives of increasing numbers of Jews. The importance of strong joint effort cannot be overestimated. We live at a time when Jewish life is highly diversified. The mainstream is strongly influenced by powerful, centralized funding organizations, and by the large synagogue movements. These conditions present a challenge. What is needed is a strong and effective voice.



Photo: Bob Blackberg

## KLEZKANADA

Hoy miercoles, agosto 22, descubro el cielo de nubes,  
Y hoy, el dia descubre la noche,

Como siempre,  
Como diferente,  
Como creacion,  
Como los 4 mundos que bajan a la tierra,

Pero las nubes cubren de nuevo el cielo,

La musica cubre la esencia de la creacion,  
Con vestimentas de tiempo,

Se funden, se unen,  
El vesel, el instrumento, es por donde llega la luz  
Que se multiplica en los sonidos, ordenados  
En diferentes escalas, de distintos colores,  
Distintos ordenes,

Descubro, en klezkanada, el rocío,  
Lo escucho, lo veo,  
Huellas,  
Fragancias, encuentros, dimensiones

Descubro en klezkanada 2007,  
Que el lago se esfuma tambien,  
Y se convierte en cielo,  
Y el cielo en agua,  
Y el agua en luz,  
Y la luz en "Cli", Instrumento , Vesel,

Las montañas Serán fuego?  
Elul, suena el shofar tambien aqui, en klezkanada,  
... " y ellos vieron el sonido"

Sergio Smilovich ([hatzadikim@yahoo.com](mailto:hatzadikim@yahoo.com))  
klezkanada2007

Continued on page 6

# INTERVIEW WITH ZACHARY MAYER

by Mira Netsky, Michelle Wolzinger, and Sabu Wex

1. *How many times can you say "pieces in a pack," but you have to say it really fast? can you please demonstrate?*

ten.

2. *have you ever eaten a whole watermelon all at once?*

three times actually. well, it was late and i was hungry and fortunately it was seedless.

3. *what's your favorite klez kanada food?*

I'd have to say the pastries with whipped cream because I've seen them on many people's faces.

4. *do you talk to yourself?*

yes. I do both. Wait was that a good answer for this? I will say... yes, i think it clears the mind. Wait no, now they'll think I'm crazy!

5. *can you chew gum and walk at the same time?*

It took me a few times to practice it but after a while i got the hang of it.

6. *can you chew gum, walk and juggle at the same time?*

I'm still practicing.

7. *have you ever secretly wanted to be a rockstar? how about a morris dancer?*

I don't know what a morris dancer is but i don't see why not. How do you know i'm not a rockstar already?

8. *how do you feel about squids?*

I feel like they're underfed.

9. *Have you ever wanted to dress up in a carrot suit for any reason at all like to advertise strawberries?*

I think false advertising is the work of the devil.

10. *do you even know where to buy or rent a carrot suit?*

umm... I guess i could make one if I really had to.

11. *spell supercalifragailisticexpialidocious. we don't know, but that's okay!*

oh oh oh! s-o-o-p-u-r-k-a-l-f-r-a-g-a-oh! I dont know! Igor is paying me to do this!

12. *Would you ever marry a hippy like Leah?*

Umm..this is tough. probably because Leah's right here. oh look here's the hippy van!!

13. *do you have a big empty box in your living room?*

No i'm pretty sure it's filled.

14. *Would you rather be a marinated chicken or a grilled chicken??*

Marinated because there would be more improvisation involved in my preparation.

15. *What's your favorite colored paperclip?*

Umm... hmm. Favorite color? i don't think striped is a color. My favorite colored paperclip.. I know what he's singing! I dont know are there any other colored paperclips? thats a weird question.

16. *If you were a girl what would be your favorite accessory or item of clothing be? Would you want a little hairband or a little clip? What about makeup? Or lipgloss? my lip gloss is cool, my lip gloss is poppin.*

I think sabu covered everything.

17. *what would you do if a grand yamaha piano was about to smash down a yard away from your head but the trick is that the piano had super powers and you don't?*

Just like those announcements, i think that would be a horrible way to die.

18. *Say 'Thank you so much you were wonderful.'*

Wait aren't you supposed to tell me that?!

Thank You For Your Time!!!

# CHAYALLA'S TAFEL COUNSELLING

Dear Readers, I need your help. Since I have been here I have approached by a person who is a newbie at Klez-Kamp. This person doesn't know the ropes and came without friends and, dear readers, can you believe this when this person was a child he was so introverted that at recess time nobody would play marbles with him. He was the last one picked for red rover come over, and was the last one picked for the softball teams.

So what is the problem? Well it goes like this. When this person arrived at the train station and got on the bus, another person sat down on the other side of him whose personal hygiene left a great deal to be desired. The seat mate was also a newbie and now is glued with our newcoming at the hips. As Ruth said to Naomi, "whether Thou goest I will go." There is no way to shake him. Dear readers, the person with the problem is very polite and non-confrontative and does not know what to do. What are your suggestions? I have already suggested being the first one or the last one in the dining hall, and choosing different workshops, but these have not worked.

*Continued on page 6*



## Chipmunk *from page 1*

Our dad was still waving the broom around when suddenly the poor little chipmunk had had enough. She dashed out the door, and we yanked it shut! We collapsed on the beds, laughing. We decided to name the chipmunk, and after some debate, we settle on Daphne, the Daphna Chipmunk. We hope that the chipmunk will find peace and quiet somewhere this week. Enjoy KlezKanada, Daphne! (But, stay away from strange cabins! They're not very warm anyway.

—Rebecca and Sarah K.

## Avia Moore *from page 3*

“For me the scholarship program is about creating and continuing Yiddish culture,” said Avia, “and in order to continue Yiddish culture and live Yiddish culture you have to study the tradition, because only once you know the rules can you bend them. This is a different generation and we have our own tastes and sensibilities and they are wide ranging. And I think that KlezKanada can provide an incubator for all of those new ideas and a framework from which to develop our own tastes and sensibilities.”



# Personal Ads

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

## CHAIYALLA *from page 5*

Please leave your suggestions for Chaiyalla at the newsletter office.

If you have a problem that you would like some wise assistance from Chaiyalla please contact her at the KlezKanada Newsletter. You will be answered promptly, and confidentially.

## Chernowitz *from page 3*

A united group could readily assess the place of Yiddish in the education and cultural life of our children, youth, adults, and seniors. It could make recommendations for future programs and strategies. Such planning might take many years to carry out, but a united group could make a good start.

I am writing this memo now in the hope that a group will undertake to form such a gathering with the goal of reigniting the creativity that was unleashed at Chernowitz in 1908.

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**Looking for interviewees** for research on culture and identity as it relates to Klezmer music. See Emily Lam in Nossim 5. [elam056@uottowa.ca](mailto:elam056@uottowa.ca)

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**Happy Birthday Hy!** *Bis 120!*  
The cake was delicious!

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**Sweet Sixteen** to Charlotte-Anne on Saturday. Love, Mom and friends.

## Alex Kontorovich *from page 2*

exquisite musician as demonstrated on stage and in jam sessions at Klez Kanada. I asked Alex how his parents feel about recent successes in music. Alex replied, “They are definitely proud of me and are fine with all the traveling and concerts that I do. But they remind me to keep working and concentrating on mathematics too.” Alex knows that success in math and music goes hand in hand. With a PhD from Columbia University a couple of weeks away, a new job at Brown University, an emerging music career and his recent engagement to Amy Rosen a PhD/MD student at Stony Brook University in New York, Alex has his numbers lined up right!

## קלעזניעס KlezNews

Staff include Ari Davidow, Richard Kurtz, Elaine Cooper, Reuben Cohen, Ezra Gliner. Photographs by Bob Blacksberg שמו David Kahn. All contents copyright by their creators, and all rights reserved by the creators.

A PDF copy of this newsletter will be 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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In addition to this newsletter, articles by KlezKanada participants are published daily to the KlezKanada blog: go to [www.klezkanada.com](http://www.klezkanada.com) and click on the button in the top navigation bar, “blog”.