

KCO to have Spirit of America concert



Maestro Aaron Kula and the 55-member Klezmer Company Orchestra will present "American Symphonic JazzWorks" at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 28 at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. (Submitted photo)

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SHARELINES

✈ Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO) to have Spirit of America concert at FAU in Boca Raton on June 28

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Maestro Aaron Kula's 55-member Klezmer Company Orchestra — the professional ensemble-in-residence at Florida Atlantic University Libraries — will present "American Symphonic JazzWorks" at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 28 at the university's Carole and Barry Kaye Performing Arts Auditorium (777 Glades Road) in **Boca Raton**.

Kula founded Klezmer Company Orchestra (KCO) in 1997 with a mission to perform music from a broad range of genres, cultures and historical periods. He is credited with composing and orchestrating more than 200 new works — successfully taking the library's music from "shelf to stage."

The ensemble starts by blending klezmer music — the musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe — with ethnic orchestral jazz, and music from the classical repertoire and musical theater.

KCO holds the distinction of being the only ensemble of its kind at an academic library in the country.

This year marks the 10th annual KCO American Symphonic "Spirit of America" concert with compositions that celebrate diversity, freedom and hope by legendary composers George Gershwin, Aaron Copland and Duke Ellington.

Their music was inspired by non-classical music traditions, including Mexican folk songs and dance rhythms, Negro spirituals and gospel tunes, jazz rhythms and blues progressions.

Kula said: "These extraordinary American composers were trailblazers during the early 20th-century, and their music remains as popular as ever because of brilliant writing."

The concert will feature American orchestral classics such as Gershwin's "Overture to Girl Crazy," Copland's "El Salon Mexico" and Ellington's ground-breaking "Black, Brown and Beige."

Gershwin's music for the concert stage and theater defined American popular music of his generation. Lianne Lyons — an accomplished jazz singer, recording artist and professor of vocal jazz at Florida International University in Miami — will perform a medley of Gershwin's popular songs, including "Oh Lady be Good," "Strike up the Band," "Someone to Watch over Me," "Fascinating Rhythm," "But Not For Me" and "I Got Rhythm."

Copland's "El Salon Mexico," written in 1930, is an orchestral work based on Mexican folk tunes that Copland heard while visiting Mexico. The one movement composition also uses Mexican dance rhythms to give a more authentic connection to the folk music tradition.

Kula also will conduct Ellington's rarely performed "Black, Brown and Beige Suite," which premiered in 1943 at Carnegie Hall. This suite is the highest profile example of Ellington's struggle to advance the politics of race through his music, which featured jazz rhythms and harmonies as a medium to tell the story of black Americans.

The concert closes with a rousing rendition of the "1812 Overture," a signature work that is performed at Independence Day celebrations across America. The score is full of French and Russian patriotic melodies that commemorate the 1812 battle between the Russian forces and Napoleon's army. The overture is known for its climactic volley of cannon fire, ringing chimes and brass fanfare finale.

The annual "Spirit of America" concert celebrates FAU Libraries' "Marvin and Sybil Weiner Spirit of America Collection" — which was donated to FAU Libraries in 2006. The collection contains more than 13,000 historical printed items from the American Revolutionary era and other imprints — mostly American, British and French dating from the 15th-century to the modern era.

Concert tickets are \$20 to \$42 and group ticket prices are available. To purchase tickets, visit <http://www.fauevents.com> or call 800-564-9539. For information about KCO, visit <http://www.klezmercompany.com>.