

Klezmaniacs – HaKeshet article May 2015

"Nearly two decades ago, my father dragged me, his sulking adolescent daughter, to my very first Klezmer experience. I remember hiding behind a music stand on the bima next to Dan Neubauer, an older gentleman with white hair peaking out from his signature cap and rosin dusting his suspenders. To me, he looked as if he had stepped right from a snapshot of a shtetl band in the early 1900's. Dan played only half the notes written on the page! As the piano Oom-pa'd and the clarinets squealed and sung, I was determined to get every eighth note in tune and every trill in its place while Dan effortlessly transposed and transformed the simple tunes into beautifully decorated melodies. In my young and formative years playing in the Or Hadash Klezmaniacs, some of the most soulful, exotic and enjoyable melodies were planted indelibly in my ear and heart.

It is my pleasure to rejoin some of those original fine musicians and welcome new ones to Or Hadash's New Klezmaniacs. Since our first jam session in January, we have met monthly to try out new charts and rehash old ones. Our band includes alumni members Carol Mueller-Bell (accordion, vocals), Sandy Saull (violin), Debby Dekalb (flute), Barry Bell (percussion) and myself (violin). We are joined by Phil Rosenberg (piano), Adam Kupersmith (percussion), and Josh McHugh (clarinet).

Klezmer is the musical tradition of Ashkenazic Jews for weddings and other simchas. The tunes range from slow and mournful to fast and frenetic, and almost all are meant for dancing. Lyrics to songs are generally in Yiddish. The notes and rhythms of Klezmer music are related but different from classical modes and keys. Its roots are in Eastern European nearby Middle Eastern regions.

On Friday, May 15th the New Klezmaniacs will debut at the oneg of the Congregational meeting to share a few of their favorite songs. We look forward to playing for everyone and hope we will inspire some to dance, sing and even to come and join us!"

*Lilli Klotz Foster*