

Press Kit (2007-11-26)

Kitka and Davka in Concert

Old and New World Jewish Music



Broadcast on over 40 U.S. public television stations as of October, 2007 and still counting.

Award of Excellence, The Accolade Awards, 2007.

Selected for screening at the Dallas Video Festival, Florida Media Market, IndieFest U.S.A. and still going strong at the festivals.



"It's a joy to hear the beauty and feel the cultural richness of *Kitka & Davka in Concert*, an attractively composed presentation of old and new Jewish music. While the production is obviously lifted by the power and depth of the music, it's the skill of the filmmaker and production team that brings the experience to life. Most concerts on film are boring; *Kitka & Davka* succeeds as entertainment. That's a high compliment. Viewers will also appreciate that the music is placed in historical context and that interviews are included as a DVD extra."

— Thomas Baker, Ph.D., Chairperson, The Accolade

Kitka & Davka in Concert

Originally fed on 10/22/2006 (NOLA code KDCG)

For further U.S. public television broadcast information:

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Midwest Record Recap

Ran: 12/30/2006

KITKA & DAVKA IN CONCERT-Old and New World Jewish Music: Jewish music seems to be one of the last world beat stones to be left unturned and this DVD aims to change that. Inspired by a sold out concert that put these two groups together, the promoter reunited them for a PBS special that is the basis for this disc. A women's vocal group and a Klezmer jazz crew get together, stir it up with abandon and stray as far as they can from the kind of stuff that embarrassed you at your aunt's wedding when she hooked with that accountant. Starting with old world and middle east melodies, the two crew proceed to genre splice with anything and everything to get your attention and get you involved. Fun, party music that is just the new trick for jading world beat ears looking for a new kick.

DVD Review: Kitka & Davka In Concert: Old And New World Jewish Music

December 30, 2006

Richard Marcus

It has been said that you can tell a lot about a culture by its music. The history, the people, and the culture's stories are all revealed in some way or another by the types of music the people play and listen too. Most cultures have evolved a unique music based on their language and the cadences that develop from its sounds.

So what does that say about a culture that has a music sung in a multitude of languages with a variety of musical styles? Hungarian, Bulgarian, Russian, Polish, and Romanian are all languages of Eastern Europe, and Jews have lived in all those countries and many more besides.

The songs of the Jewish people from the time of the Romans forward have come to take on the flavors of the countries that would have them for any extended time. Even those songs that are sung in Yiddish or Ladino (the language of the Sephardic Jews of Spain before they were expelled in the 16th century) bear resemblances to the music of the countries they were written in.

Given all of that one could be forgiven for thinking that Jewish music would be more indicative of its country of origin, rather than being unique to them. While it is true that some of their music is sung in the language of the native country, they have a flavour that sets them apart from other songs to come out of those countries.

This becomes very apparent when you listen and watch the DVD made from the PBS television program Kitka & Davka In Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music. This is a recording of a concert that was given by the two groups and their special guest, trumpeter and vocalist Steve Saxon, at the Temple Sinai in Oakland California.

Kitka is an all female vocal ensemble made up of women from all ethnic backgrounds who share an interest in the music of Eastern Europe. Kitka, a Bulgarian and Macedonian word meaning bouquet, was formed in 1979 as an amateur choir. Over the years they evolved into a professional ensemble with an international reputation for their performances of traditional Jewish Songs from Eastern Europe and Spain.

The songs they sing have subject matter ranging from memorials written in Yiddish for garment workers who died in a sweatshop fire in New York City in the nineteenth century to traditional love songs from the small villages and ghettos of Europe. The fact that the songs are sung in languages I knew nothing of can not hide the passion that the group is able to invest the material with.

Their ability to harmonize and carry the different parts of the music is a wonder on to itself, but being given the added bonus of being able to watch them to perform makes the music doubly enjoyable. Watching them sing gives one a true idea of the emotional power of the music and the effect it can have on people.

No matter what the language the songs are being sung in the emotional impact is the same. One can hear the bitter sweetness of the life of permanent exile imbued in the sounds no matter what the subject matter. Perhaps that's reading something into the music due to knowledge of the history of the Jewish people, but I dare anyone to listen to these women and not be moved in some manner by the tones and quality of their voices.

While the women of Kitka explore the music of the past in song, Davka is an instrumental group that uses the sounds of traditional Jewish music like Klezmer and Middle Eastern/Sephardic songs mixed with Western classical, pop, and Jazz influences to create a sound that is rooted in the Jewish tradition, but otherwise defies classification.

With titles like "Rhapsody For A Rhino" making up their repertoire they are obviously not wedded to any traditional themes or topics. But weaving throughout their music like a drunken bumble bee are the familiar strains of what we associate with both the music that Kitka had been singing and the wild cadences of Klezmer.

But living up to the English translation of their name, "contrary to expectations" they defy ours by improvising new elements into the mix. Although to be honest the first time you see them on stage you'll be forgiven for not having any expectations what's so ever about what you are about to hear. How many other musical quartets do you know that are composed of violin, cello, percussion, and bassoon?

Normally only the violin is known as a lead instrument, carrying the melody of the song. But in this instance they all become the focal point at one time or another. The combination of sounds that are produced with the different instruments allows them to be able to create the different feels required to give the music a unique flavor. Who knew that the bassoon could emit sounds that are what we in the west would refer to as "Middle Eastern"?

For the final third of the concert the two bands join each other on stage and are accompanied by singer/trumpet player Steven Saxon. Not only is Mr. Saxon conversant with modern music but he is also a Cantor, the man who sings the songs during the service in a synagogue. In an interview clip he refers to himself as being the bridge between the two groups, and when they all appear on stage together he is planted between them.

It is truly remarkable to listen to the two groups come together. With Mr. Saxon acting as a balance point on which the plank of the teeter totter rests, the sounds tilt back and forth between the traditional and the new finding their meeting point in the voice and trumpet of Mr. Saxon. As a Cantor he has a voice that is used to singing in a very formal style that suits the manner in which Kitka performs. But as a Jazz trumpeter he also knows how to improvise.

After listening to both groups perform individually it was hard to see how they were going to find enough common ground to allow them to work together readily. But in reality the two groups were not that far apart emotionally or thematically. They both are drawing upon the same cultural history to create their music and through that bond are able to find a way to meet in the middle at Steven Saxon's voice and trumpet.

What I was given to watch I believe was excerpts from the final version of the DVD, as in the promotional material it said the final version would be in 5.1 surround sound, with interviews and more songs. But even in the two channel stereo that I was listening to the music was inspirational in the truest sense of the word.

When I listen to religious or culture-based music and the language or the ideas expressed are foreign to me, I tend to try and listen for the intent and spirit behind the music. How well does the group, or groups in this case, transmit the spirit and the emotion behind what they are doing? Does it sound contrived and manipulative, or is it a genuine outpouring of emotion based on a belief or a connection with the music that goes beyond the intellectual.

In the case of Kitka & Davka In Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music there is such a genuine passion on display the only way you could not be moved is if you were made of plastic or another inorganic material. This music could make stones weep it is so deeply felt and performed with such genuine passion and feeling.

For anybody who is interested in learning more about another culture two of the best places to begin are the stories and the music of the people. This disc is as fine an introduction to the music of Jewish people in exile as you'll ever want to hear, with a large dollop of where that sound is being taken today by contemporary musicians.

This review ran on both Blogcritics.org and Desicritics.org, and is available for pickup by newspapers. We've seen Blogcritics pieces run in the Cleveland Plain Dealer in the past.

<http://desicritics.org:80/2006/12/30/083402.php>

<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2006/12/30/191440.php>

J, the Jewish news weekly of Northern California

Friday, December 15, 2006

Kitka, Davka play Jewish music for the masses

**by michael fox
correspondent**

Our local public television stations broadcast a plethora of recorded concerts. Unfortunately, the selection is usually a stale rehash of easy listening legends such as Ray Orbison, Placido Domingo and James Taylor.

New music by new artists is so rare on PBS as to be nonexistent, which makes Leonard Merrill Kurz's achievement that much more impressive.

The veteran San Francisco-based television producer is the force behind "Kitka & Davka in Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music." The one-hour concert, filmed in July at Temple Sinai in Oakland, is a splendid showcase of the talents of two of the most gifted and invigorating musical acts on the scene. It's Bay Area premiere will be 10 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22 on KCSM channel 17.

The two ensembles, which have carved out their own careers and followings, first teamed up onstage at the Jewish Music Festival in the East Bay in 2002. Soon after, Kurz embarked on a campaign to stage another collaboration to be recorded for public television.

“Most of the performance specials come from the national providers — ‘Great Performances,’ ‘Soundstage’ — which makes projects such as this, which introduces talent that’s not highly visible like the Boston Pops, very difficult,” Kurz explains.

Kurz found a partner in KEET, the small public television station in Eureka. Together, they produced the program and are lining up broadcast dates on PBS affiliates around the country. Their mantra: You don’t have to be Jewish to like Jewish music.

“What is Jewish music?” Kurz asks rhetorically. “Is it Jewish performers? Certain types of music you perform? It’s open to debate. I’m not going to pretend to answer that for everybody.”

The question is particularly relevant to Kitka, in theory, since several of its members aren’t Jewish. In practice, any viewer who believes there is no more beautiful sound than the human voice in song will be so enthralled that questions simply evaporate.

Kitka has been together for more than a quarter of a century, and most of its songs are traditional, so it’s technically a misnomer to label the group as new artists and its repertoire as new music. For this concert, the eight vocalists (accompanied by a lone percussionist) had the audience in their hands from the opening strains of a dazzling array of Yiddish, Hebrew and Eastern European folk tunes drawn from a range of points on the globe.

Then Davka, an unusual jazz quartet composed of cello, bassoon, violin and percussion, takes the evening in a more abstract and cerebral direction. The concert climaxes with the two groups blending their sounds and approaches on a couple of fresh and exciting numbers that have a distinctly spiritual feel.

Ashley James, an accomplished East Bay documentary filmmaker with several music films to his credit, includes some brief backstage segments with the performers. His unshowy direction is mirrored by Kathryn Golden’s graceful editing, which keeps the performers front and center.

“What music and culture can do is create a connection though time and history,” Kurz asserts. “If musical performance can create a connection to that which transcends time, isn’t that in a way part of what Jewish music is about?”

The Brooklyn-born Kurz got into television right out of college, with a year at KTCA in St. Paul, Minn. He came to Stanford for a summer program in film, and ended up enrolling in the graduate program and picking up a master’s degree. He has succeeded, in the ensuing years, in splitting his career between Northern California and Los Angeles.

Through his company, Forest Creatures Entertainment, and its sister entity, Forest Creatures Foundation, Kurz has dedicated himself to loftier goals than entertainment and profit.

“Culture and music can transcend the boundaries between religions,” Kurz says. “That’s something that we really need for coexistence.”

“Kitka & Davka in Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music” airs at 10 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22 on KCSM.

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KEET PRESS KIT

KITKA & DAVKA IN CONCERT: OLD AND NEW WORLD JEWISH MUSIC

KITKA & DAVKA IN CONCERT: OLD AND NEW WORLD JEWISH MUSIC brings thirteen exceptional musicians and vocalists to the screen in a spectacular performance recorded live at Oakland, California's Temple Sinai. The program is being offered to PBS stations this winter (check local listings).

The two groups first performed together for The Jewish Music Festival in the San Francisco East Bay in 2002. This wildly successful, sold out event inspired producer Leonard Kurz to bring them together again in July 2006 to create a momentous cultural celebration.

"Culture and music can transcend the boundaries between religions. That's something that we really need for coexistence," states producer, Leonard Kurz. "The program, featuring two extremely popular Bay Area-world music ensembles, along with special guest Stephen Saxon on vocals and trumpet, is a tremendous testament to that belief."

The program begins when **KITKA** unites eight vocalists and guest percussionist, Kevin Mummey of Davka, to perform some of the most hauntingly beautiful, emotionally evocative presentations of traditional and contemporary Jewish music. **Kitka**, meaning "bouquet" in Bulgarian and Macedonian, began in 1979 as a grassroots group of amateur singers from diverse ethnic and musical backgrounds, all sharing a passion for the stunning dissonances, asymmetric rhythms, intricate ornamentation, lush harmonies and haunting beauty of Eastern European women's vocal traditions. Since its informal beginnings, **Kitka** has evolved into a professional ensemble that has earned international recognition for its artistry, versatility, and fresh approach to folk music. Songs in **KITKA & DAVKA IN CONCERT: OLD AND NEW WORLD JEWISH MUSIC** are performed in Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino.

Then **DAVKA** takes the stage with their dynamic instrumental Jewish music based on the major musical influences of the modern Jewish world, including klezmer/Yiddish music, Middle-Eastern/Sephardic music, Western classical music, and elements of American jazz and pop music. Taking its name from the Hebrew slang for "contrary to expectation," **Davka** has kept its audiences expecting the unexpected for nearly a decade. **Davka** has refined its music into a forward-looking expression of universality; old-world Jewish melodies meld with striking Middle-Eastern rhythms. With this fusion and the groundbreaking combination of contemporary harmonies and daring improvisation, **Davka** creates inventive and beautiful textures where both playfulness and gravity abound.

The two groups come together for powerful and poignant Sephardic songs joined by guest artist, **Stephen Saxon**, an accomplished jazz singer, cantor and trumpet player. The gorgeous vocals and virtuosic musical interplay come together when **Kitka**, **Davka** and **Stephen Saxon** perform compelling musical arrangements, including the stirring Bosnian wedding song, "Yo Hanino, Tu Hanina," and the spirited "Las Esuegras de Agora," a Turkish Sephardic song about mothers-in-law. Together, their poignant expression creates an atmosphere marked by creativity, innovation and tradition. The result of Kitka and Davka performing together live is a harmonious collaboration that represents the transcendent and universal quality of music.

Major Underwriter: National Foundation For Jewish Culture. Producer: Leonard Kurz/Forest Creatures Entertainment. Television director: Ashley James/KTOP-TV, Searchlight Educational Media. Format: CC Stereo.

Kitka & Davka In Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music Songlist

KITKA Songs:

YERUSHOLAYIM SLAVNI GOROD is a joyful and humorous Russian song taught to Kitka by Jewish musician and scholar Michael Alpert.

HUBAVA MILKA is a Bulgarian song about beautiful Milka, arranged by Nikolai Kaufman.

MA NAVU is an Israeli song by Yossi Spivak, arranged by Shira Cion, with a message of peace and salvation.

A LA UNA YO NACI is a Sephardic love song arranged by Briget Boyle with lyrics by Joaquin Diaz.

MAYN RUE PLATZ is a Yiddish song written by Morris Rosenfeld and arranged by Ethel Raim, which commemorates the lives lost in the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire of 1911.

TSOMO LEKHO NAFSHI is a spiritual song in the Hasidic tradition, arranged by Janet Kutulas.

DAVKA Songs:

"ROAD TO SFAT" was written by Daniel Hoffman while living in Jerusalem. The tune reminded him of a journey, like the winding, slightly scary roads that climb up to the town of Sfat in Northern Israel-known as the center of Jewish mysticism. The recording was first released on our latest album, ***Davka Live in*** 2005 on Tzadik.

RHAPSODY FOR A YOUNG RHINO was written by Moses Sedler, Davka co-founder and cellist. The song is sort of a children's story. It tells the story of a happy-go-lucky and slightly clumsy young rhino. He wakes up in the morning and eats some unknown roots and starts to hallucinate that he is a giraffe, fitting into a pair of smart new slacks. It was originally released on Davka's 3rd release, ***Judith*** in 1999 on Tzadik

MNT II is a Moses Sedler composition originally released on ***Davka Live*** in 2005.

COLLABORATIVE Songs:

YO HANINO, TU HANINA is a Bosnian Sephardic wedding song, arranged by Daniel Hoffman.

EL REY DE FRANCIA is a Sephardic song from Esmirna about a prophetic dream of the king of France's youngest daughter.

LAS ESUEGRAS DE AGORA is a Turkish Sephardic song about "the mothers-in-law of today".

MOSHE EMET is a spiritual song in the Hasidic tradition arranged by Daniel Hoffman.

KITKA Bios

Visit www.kitka.org for more information.

LESLIE BONNETT feels fortunate to have grown up in an environment where she was exposed to various types of music and dance, and most especially ethnic music and dance, from an early age. Her studies and performances have run the gamut from classical voice to Scandinavian fiddling to Hungarian dance and much more. She has been singing with Kitka since 1998.

BRIGET BOYLE has been working as a vocalist and percussionist with Kitka, The Brass Menazeri, Kaila Flexer, Mariana Sadovska, Dan Cantrell, and Amy X Neuburg since moving to the Bay Area in 2004. Having grown up in a musical household she has sung in a variety of styles including West African, jazz, pop and extended techniques. She discovered her love of Balkan folk music when she attended the College of Santa Fe as a Music Performance and Composition major in 2000. When she is not singing, she is the Assistant Director of the Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley.

SHIRA CION, Executive Director, has been active both as a professional performer and arts administrator for over 25 years. She holds degrees in Classical Music Performance (oboe/English horn), Ethnomusicology, and Slavic Folklore from the Hartt School of Music, Wesleyan University, and Russia's Moscow Conservatory. Her life-long interest in new music and the expressive possibilities of the voice led to composition and performance work with Alvin Lucier, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, and Joan Jonas, the Composers Cafeteria and ultimately to her discovery of traditional Balkan and Slavic women's singing, which has been her obsession since 1986. Of Russian, Belarussian and Ukrainian/Jewish descent, she joined Kitka in 1988, became the ensemble's Associate Director in 1991, and Executive Director in 1996.

CATHERINE ROSE CROWTHER follows a dual path of visual art and music. After singing in various choirs and a cappella ensembles, her keen interest in experimental vocal technique and improvisation led her to Kitka where she has been singing and performing for over 20 years. Outside of Kitka, Catherine Rose pursues the vocal and instrumental music of early American and Celtic traditions. Catherine Rose is also an award winning illustrator who's art graces the covers of Kitka's CD's. She is currently "Discovering the Artist Within", a class in watercolor and meditation.

JULIANA GRAFFAGNA, Music Director, fell under Kitka's spell in 1988. She holds degrees in Russian and French Studies, and is a trained singer and pianist. Juliana is a Choral Conductor with the Oakland Youth Chorus, teaches piano classes for young children with Musical Sprouts using the Music Moves for Piano curriculum, and leads ongoing singing workshops in the Bay Area. She has taught Balkan vocal technique at the Arcata Folk Music Festival, Balkanalia and Kolo Dance Festival, and performs with *Zabava!*, a folk-dance band specializing in the traditional music of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece.

LILY HUANG was bitten by the bug of Eastern European folk music in 1991, when she sang with the Middlebury Russian Choir while studying Russian for a summer. She went on to sing with and direct the Yale Slavic Chorus, while receiving a B.A. in Russian Language and Literature. Upon moving to Oakland to pursue a medical career, she sang with Savina Women's Folk Choir for four years. She then got lost in the music-free vacuum of medical training for several years, from which she was happy to resurface to join Kitka in 2003.

JANET KUTULAS joined KITKA in 1988, when she broke both her hands in a cycling accident and was temporarily unable to play her flute. A graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music she was awarded a Hertz Fellowship from the University of California in Berkeley as a living/traveling stipend to be used for the purpose of studying the flute abroad. She relocated "abroad" to the Chicago area where she studied and performed as a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (a training program of the Chicago Symphony), the New Arts Ensemble and the Illinois Philharmonic. Back in the Bay Area, she performed with the Berkeley Symphony, the California Symphony, the Lamplighter's Orchestra, and various local pick-up orchestras and chamber groups. As a founding member, she played for 15 years with EARPLAY, an ensemble that performs newly written works by living composers. She has also performed in the San Francisco Symphony's New and Unusual Music Series, and with Composers Inc., among other Bay Area chamber groups, and was a private flute teacher in both the Bay Area and the Chicago area for over 20 years.

LILY STORM is a singer specializing in traditional music, with particular experience in Eastern European styles. She has studied *bel canto* singing with Janice Fiore and folk music with traditional singers Kremena Stancheva, Donka Koleva, Tsvetanka Varimezova, Tatiana Sarbinska, and Radostina Kaneva (Bulgarian), Mariana Sadovska (Ukrainian), Merita Halili (Albanian), and Christos Govetas (Greek). She has lived in Hungary and Greece and has traveled to Russia, Georgia, Albania, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia, studying and collecting songs. She also makes extensive use of archival recordings to study ancient styles preserved into the early 20th century and teaches weekly singing classes in Berkeley, CA.

NATALIA UKRAINSKA was born in Kiev, Ukraine and began studying music and choral singing as a child. She received her education as a choir conductor at the Kiev School of Culture, specializing in classical singing. Also since childhood, she performed, toured and recorded with several choirs and vocal ensembles, including the folk ensemble Usmishka, under the direction of Liudmila Blinova, who also was Natalia's vocals teacher at the School. Natalia was a member of the ensemble Art Hurt, which was modeled after Usmishka, and the Ensemble of the Border Guard of Ukraine. In 2005, she moved to the United States and in 2006 joined Kitka. Natalia had also performed spiritual music in Kiev and is currently a member of the choir of the Russian Orthodox Church of Christ the Savior in San Francisco.

DAVKA Bios

Visit www.davkamusic.com for more information.

DANIEL HOFFMAN, VIOLIN - co-founded Davka in 1992 and has earned a reputation as one of leading innovators of New Jewish Music. He is the leader of the Klez-X (formerly the SF Klezmer Experience) and as one of the country's foremost experts of the Yiddish violin style, he has recorded and performed with the top players in the field. He has received composing grants from Meet The Composer, the NEA, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the Center for Jewish Culture and Creativity, the Ashkenaz Festival of New Yiddish Culture in Toronto, Traveling Jewish Theatre, the San Diego Repertory Theater, and the SF Jewish Film Festival. He recently wrote and performed in the comic musical *Moonwatcher* for TJT. He has written two new scores for the silent films, *The Golem*, and *Jewish Luck* and is currently composing music for a new play by Yehuda Hyman based on King David.

MOSES SEDLER, CELLO -In 1992 Moses joined with violinist Daniel Hoffman and percussionist Adam Levenson to form Davka. During this time Moses was immersed in the study of North Indian Classical music with Sarod Maestro Ali Akbar Khan and Tabla virtuoso Swapan Chaudury. Apart from this five-year detour into Indian music, Moses has studied Western classical music, composition and jazz improvisation in tandem for the past 17 years. While at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Moses learned classical composition from Janice Giteck, while being mentored in jazz improvisation and composition by Julian Priester and Jerry Graneli. Moses has appeared with Pharoah Sanders, Hamza El Din, Paul McCandles, Omar Sosa, Kai Ekhardt, and has composed for many bay area dance companies including Alonzo King's Lines Contemporary Ballet, and Kunst-Stoff. More info at www.cellozone.net.

KEVIN MUMMEY, PERCUSSION - One of the Bay-Area's most versatile and virtuosic percussionists, Kevin learned drums from his father in Chicago, and studied with Bob Moses, Swapan Chaudury, Vince Delgado, and Jack Gates. Kevin has recorded and performed extensively with Laurie Lewis, Penelope Houston, Los Pinkies, and the Blue Room Boys. His extraordinary range of skills finds him in great demand in jazz, rock, flamenco, Arabic, and North Indian classical. His klezmer credits include many years with the Klez-X, Klezmania, and Adama.

PAUL HANSON, BASSOON - is a Berkeley musician who has gained international recognition for his unique bassoon playing. Paul has performed/recorded bassoon with Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, Wayne Shorter, Medeski Martin & Wood, Peter Erskine, Jonas Hellborg, Omar Sosa, Ray Charles, Terry Riley, Darol Anger, Dave Binney, The Klez-X, The Paul Drescher Ensemble, St. Joseph Ballet Company, The Klezmerim, and as soloist with the Napa Symphony. Paul was the 1996 winner of JAZZIZ Magazine's WOODWINDS ON FIRE competition-the first bassoon winner ever. Paul won the Robert Mondavi Concerto Competition in 1984 and a NEA Jazz Fellowship in 1995. Paul taught bassoon at Ithaca College and is a Moosmann Bassoon artist/clinician. Paul's performed/recorded saxophone with Boz Scaggs, Eddie Money, The Temptations and many others. Paul has released 4 solo albums. More info at www.jazzbassoon.com.

GUEST ARTIST: STEPHEN SAXON has performed or recorded with The Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Chet Baker, Michael Brecker, Shlomo Carlebach, Chanticleer, Richie Cole, Jose Feliciano, Dave Gruisin, The Klezmerim, Bobby McFerrin, Zalmen Mlotek, Amenata Moseka (Abby Lincoln), Mark Murphy, Phil Mattson, The San Francisco Klezmer Experience, The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Gunther Schuller, Kirby Shaw, The Spokane Symphony Orchestra, Buddy Tate, Michael Tilson Thomas, Mal Waldron, John Williams, and Frank Zappa, among others.

PRODUCTION CREDITS:

PRODUCER: LEONARD MERRILL KURZ is the President of Forest Creatures Entertainment, a motion picture, television, and new media production company that supports a culture of peace and non-violence. **KITKA and DAVKA IN CONCERT: OLD AND NEW WORLD JEWISH MUSIC** is a production of Forest Creatures Entertainment and is produced in association with KEET-TV (PBS) in Eureka, California.

Mr. Kurz was the Co-producer of **MAANGAMIZI: THE ANCIENT ONE**, filmed on location in Tanzania. This film has been praised by writer Alice Walker, author of *Color Purple*.

He served as Producer-Writer of **EARLY MISGIVINGS** that was highly praised by well-established members of the film industry including Charles Champlin (former Arts Editor, Los Angeles Times). It was awarded at Medikinale International Parma, Italy in 1987, and was showcased at over twelve film festivals.

His other credits include producer-writer of the documentary short **MY WILD IRISH ROSE** and script reader for Francis Ford Coppola (**APOCALYPSE NOW**, **GODFATHER I, II, III**). He also served as producer-director-writer for several shorts and public service announcements, as well as served in various production-related roles on several film and television productions.

Public Television Experience: Mr. Kurz has worked at KTCA as a producer, floor director, sound technician, and camera operator. Mr. Kurz's work has also been shown on Iowa Public Television, WXEL (Florida), KENW (New Mexico), and KEET (California) and produced events at INPUT 2005.

Film Education: He received his professional training in the Masters Program in film production (M.A., Department of Communication) at Stanford University. He also studied at the New School For Social Research, NY

Background: Mr. Kurz has a B.A. in history from Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. Postgraduate studies include work in astronomy, U.S. history, Chinese history, classical Indian (Asian) literature, French, psychiatry and psychology, and anthropology, at U.C. Berkeley and Stanford University.

DIRECTOR: ASHLEY JAMES holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Filmmaking and has national television credits. Co-founder, with Kathryn Golden, of Searchlight Films. Former journalist, The Hartford Times, (Gannett News Service) Hartford, CT. Former instructor of graduate studies in the Department of Cinema, San Francisco State University. James is presently Station Manager, KTOP Channel 10 in Oakland, CA.

Producer/Director: **GORDON PARKS:THE MAN AND THE MUSIC AND HOME and ALMOST FREE**

Director/Cinematographer: **SEASON OF HOPE~MOTHERS IN RECOVERY and AND STILL WE DANCE**

Director/Cinematographer: **BOMBA ~ DANCING THE DRUM**

Director/Cinematographer: **WE LOVE YOU LIKE A ROCK**

Director of Photography and cinematographer: **ISADORA DUNCAN - MOVEMENT FROM THE SOUL, THE COLOR OF HONOR, ANCESTORS IN AMERICA, BOOKER, CRUMB, and ETHNIC NOTIONS**

Ashley James' awards and grants include:

2004 National Black Programming Consortium grant

2003 Best documentary Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame
2002 Trailblazer Award from the San Francisco Black Film Festival
2000 Bartok Award from the Paris Bilan du Film Ethnographique
1999 Latino Public Broadcasting grant; 1998 Oakland Artist Fellowship
American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker grant
1992 Ford Foundation grant
1991 Western States Regional Fellowship in Film
3 CINE Golden Eagles
7 National Endowment For The Arts production grants

EDITOR: KATHRYN GOLDEN holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in filmmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute and is a founding partner of Searchlight Films, Berkeley, California. Ms. Golden has written, directed and edited many award-winning films including:

Producer/Director: *Across Time and Space*,

Producer/Writer/Editor: *And Still We Dance*

Producer/Editor: *American Treasure – The Folk Art of Joaquim Miguel Almeida*

Producer/Writer/Editor: *Tchuba Means Rain*

Kathryn Golden is also the creator of *San Francisco Arts Are All Over the Map*, a nine-year series promoting San Francisco artists and organizations in association with Grants for the Arts of the S.F. Hotel Tax fund. She is also the creator of *The San Francisco Stage*, for the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum and Producer/Director *What's Your Destiny* with ODC San Francisco.

Golden is currently Producer/Editor of *Packin' Up—Marion Williams and the Philadelphia Gospel Women* for the Public Broadcasting System.

Kathryn Golden's awards and grants include:

National Black Programming Consortium

National Endowment For The Arts production grants

Polaroid Foundation grant

California, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania State Humanities production grants

San Francisco Advertising Club's Award of Excellence

Frances Gay Award for Community Service

Press Reactions To Individual Kitka And Davka Shows:

"KITKA's songs are hauntingly beautiful, simple, yet otherworldly. The rich sound these women produce resonates as if energized by the universe itself, as if it were calling all live beings and still matter into togetherness and unity."

— Ching Chang, San Francisco Bay Times

"Daniel Hoffman has gracefully engineered an unlikely cultural feat in the celebrated band Davka, merging Eastern European Jewish musical forms with Middle Eastern rhythms and cadences."

— Andy Gilbert, San Jose Mercury News

"The wildest, most unhinged drum solos I have ever witnessed...It's a rock show with pyrotechnic grandeur, just without the rock or the pyrotechnics."

— Rob Harvilla, East Bay Express

"Davka's four musicians whirl their spells with a supple interplay of violin, cello, bassoon and percussion. Their compositions and improvisations, swirling around a center of enlivened klezmer melodies and pulsing Middle Eastern rhythms, weave a dancing, winding path through the diversity of Jewish cultural and historic experience..."

— Jerry Karp, San Francisco Chronicle

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