

Orange County Klezmers *Echoes of Vilna Songs of Remembrance from The Ghettos*

Klezmer might not come to mind when you contemplate the tragedy of Holocaust. Klezmerim, the itinerant and inveterate musicians who play this enthusiastic Eastern European Jewish music sometimes seem to be without a profound or serious side. It is also difficult to conceive that in a time of pervasive dread and vile actions the afflicted would write songs to joyous music. On "Echoes of Vilna" Barry Friedland has arranged, produced and performs with his fellow musicians of the Orange County Klezmers selections of this Holocaust Era Music. The music was written by people of a community that was destroyed, yet the music is neither dreary nor depressing.

Barry Friedland, the founder and director of Orange County Klezmers says, "Many of these songs were written separately from the lyrics. While there may be pieces which were written in the usual manner of composing music with the lyrics and the mood in mind, many tunes were written independent of the lyrics and later combined. As a result you have lyrics that are heartbreaking with music which is uplifting."

Echoes of Vilna is a program of music performed by a trio of Klezmerim who use traditional instruments; Steve Hommel, B flat clarinet and flute; Mari Haig, violin; and Barry Friedland, accordion, midi, piano, guitar, mandolin and upright bass. This recording does not include a vocal performance of the lyrics which were paired with the music. Mr. Friedland said, "I feel that most people today would not be able or if able, willing, to listen to the lyrics. They are too emotional." However, the sounds are haunting, yet captivating and even danceable. This may be due to the fact that Jewish resistance in addition to arms, included a spiritual resistance, which attempted to preserve traditions and culture as well as lives.

As of this writing I have listened to the album in its entirety four times and find it to be both a pleasing and a thought provoking experience. Because the music is without the lyrics and many of the melodies were written before the Holocaust, it is also a window onto the music of Vilna before the disaster struck. This music reminds me of French, Italian and American folk music. I can only speculate as to why the composers of these songs used the melodies as they did. It may have been the desire to keep alive the more pleasant past; to preserve the culture which had existed for seven hundred years and to not give in mentally to physical horror. I believe *Echoes of Vilna* will come to be considered an important document in the scholarship of Jewish music and culture. It should be listened to by anyone with an interest in the people who perished in Vilna and those who enjoy beautiful music.

You may hear samples of the music and purchase your own copy of the CD from Orange County Klezmers at their website www.OCKlezmers.com

Echoes of Vilna *Songs of Remembrance from the Ghettos*



Orange County Klezmers

Album Cover Photo: "Jewish Partisans in Belorussia" 1943, Source US Holocaust Museum, courtesy Org. des Partisans Combattants en Israel.

My 4,300 Offices: Doing Business at Your Local Starbucks

You witness the phenomena every time you walk into a Starbucks café for a "red eye" or an "extra hot latte." Business people meeting and using Starbucks as their office. I have seen people use the Starbucks on Brea Blvd. as their recruiting center. I have met with local officials to discuss traffic problems and solutions at the Starbucks on Birch Street. And I met with Klezmer musician and arranger Barry Friedland to interview him for a series of articles that I am writing on Klezmer music. Before I started doing this in about 1996 I thought people used the Starbucks café because they didn't have an office, but that is most certainly not always the case.



Starbucks Café at Imperial and Harbor is a great place to conduct business and have a cup of fine coffee.

Starbucks is the temporary office of many for a number of good reasons. First no matter where you have to meet in Southern California there is a Starbucks café conveniently located nearby. Second, I can't have a meeting without a cup or two of coffee. Also the Baristas don't come by every five minutes asking if everything is alright. They leave you alone so that you can make the deal, or in my case get the story.

I have found that I can't have meetings at the Brea II café, however, because everybody that I know drinks their coffee there and they assume that because I am at Starbucks drinking a red eye or a Chantico that I must be on a coffee break and therefore free to talk with them. I have to meet in a Starbucks café where I am not so well known.

This does not seem to be a problem for Jim Worth, the author of soon to be published financial thriller *Final Audit*. Jim wrote a large portion of the novel at Starbucks Brea II and he has started the sequel while sitting at his table and talking to every body who walks through the door.



Panache Experience Editorial Staff

Publisher : Hollis O'Brien

Editor : Gerard W. O'Brien

Chief Comma Cop : Big Mama Hollis O

Local Business Reporter : J. W. O'Brien

Photographer : J. Ansel O'Brien

Travel Reporter : Gerard O'Brien-Frommer

Ireland Reporter: Seamus "The Giant" O'Brien

Coffee Reporter : Ishmael "Shaky" O'Brien

Cuisine Reporter : August "Petite Escoffier" O'Brien

History Reporters : Will and Ariel D. O'Brien

Jazz Reporter : J. "Hepcat" O'Brien

California Wine Reporter : G. W. "Bacchus" O'Brien

Poetry Reporter : g.w.e. o brien

California Fine Art Reporter : G.W.E. O'Brien, B.A.

Team Reporter : Thom Peters O'Brien

Financial Reporter: Warren T. O'Brien

Distribution : Jerry "The Mule" O'Brien

Offices : 2808 E. Imperial Highway Brea, CA 92821

Printing : ABF Chad Buonauro 714 255 9988

The views expressed in the Panache Experience are Jerry O'Brien's and reflect only his point of view. This publication attempts to be accurate, but all information should be taken with a grain of salt. And as to relying on it, the responsibility is on you, my good reader.