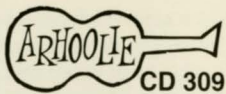


# THE KLEZMORIM

First Recordings 1976-78



1. DI ZILBERNE KHASENE (2)
2. CINTEC DE DRAGOSTE
3. HORA LUI DAMIAN (1)
4. THALASSA (1)
5. FIDL VOLACH (1)
6. MEDYATSINER WALTZ (2)
7. SHERELE (1)
8. MAYN RUE PLATS (2)
9. A GLEZELE VAYN (2)
10. BAYM REBNS SUDE (2)
11. LEBEDIK UN FREYLEKH (2)
12. SIRBA / HORA (1)
13. DOINA (1)
14. PAPIROSN (2)
15. FIREN DI MEKHUTONIM  
AHEYM (2)
16. a) TRELLO HASAPOSERVIKO (1)  
b) SONYA / ANUSHKE (2)
17. AF SHABES IN VILNA (2)
18. TAXIM (2)

Total playing time: 60:54



Selections marked (1) were originally issued on Arhoolie LP/C 3006: *East Side Wedding*.

Selections marked (2) were originally issued on Arhoolie LP/C 3011: *Streets Of Gold*.

On (1): Lev Liberman—flute, brass whistle, & *dumbek*; David Julian Gray—B-flat & E-flat clarinets, mandolin, *lauto*, and violin; David Skuse—violin and accordion; Greg Carageorge—double bass; Laurie Chastain—violin (on #4, 5, 7, & 16); Berkeley, Ca. Dec. 1976 to March 1977.

On (2): Lev Liberman—alto sax & flute; David Julian Gray—B-flat & E-flat clarinets, mandolin, & alto sax; Rick Elmore—bass trombone, tuba, bass drum & cymbals; Brian Wishnefsky—trumpet; Nadezhda-tsambal *mik* & *baraban*; Susie Rothfield—violin; Miriam Dvorin—violin & vocal on "Mayn Rue Plats"; John Raskin—percussion; with: David Skuse—violin; Lew Hanson—accordion; Stuart Brotman—*tsinbalom*, peckhorn, & string bass. Berkeley, Ca. March & July 1978.

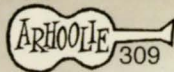
Produced by Chris Strachwitz and the Klezmerim

Cover by R. Crumb

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# THE Klezmerim

First Recordings 1976-78



# The Klezmorim

I've spent a third of my life riding a rollercoaster called The Klezmorim. We started as a ragtag party band in the streets of Berkeley. Now, a dozen years later, the artistic revolution which we spawned has afforded us the privilege of performing for audiences all over the globe.

My search for klezmer music began back in 1971 when I deduced that a single unknown genre had linked Russian and Rumanian folk music to Depression-era cartoon soundtracks, early jazz, and the compositions of Gershwin, Weill, and Prokofiev. Although reference works were silent on the subject, the fiction of Anton Chekhov and Isaac Bashevis Singer mentioned the existence of an improvised Yiddish instrumental style in turn-of-the-century Eastern Europe. Few of the old-time bandsmen had written down their tunes, however, and for a time it seemed that klezmer music's distinctive sound would remain forever muted in the dust of history.

Shortly after arriving in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1973 I began performing at cafes and dance parties with violinist David Skuse, musical director of several

Balkan bands and skilled transcriber of rare tunes. He joined in the quest for the klezmer sound, helping me reconstruct it from the scanty sources available. In 1975, Skuse and I conceived the aim of performing klezmer music in an authentic full-band setting; evidently we were the first to do so since the genre's deterioration 45 years earlier. My discovery of a cache of 78-rpm discs in a closet at the Judah Magnes Museum made it possible for us to begin learning the klezmer modes, ornaments, and polyrhythms of the 1910s and '20s. After months of rehearsal and many informal performances, The Klezmorim officially surfaced with a series of concerts at the Berkeley Public Library in April 1976.

No sooner had we gone public than a number of collectors emerged from the woodwork to share their rare old klezmer recordings and manuscripts. Most openhanded of these was Professor Martin Schwartz, whose insightful observations continually inspired our efforts.

Record producer Chris Strachwitz' keen eye for diamonds in the rough led him to discover us at the Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, the venerable acoustic music

showcase which provided us with our first steady gig. Before long we were struggling to give birth to our first album, "East Side Wedding." It came out in 1977; the reviews it received were generous.

That year and the next brought many changes in our direction as a group. When co-founder Skuse and two other string-playing members left the band, David Julian Gray dropped strings to focus on clarinet. I took up the alto saxophone. Street-wise newcomers Rick Elmore ("Professor Gizmo") and Brian Wishnefsky ("Hairy James") added trombone, tuba, trumpet, and impish wit. Further research taught us that vocal music and the keyboard-accordion were not part of the klezmer tradition, so we phased them out. Suddenly, by Jove, we were a horn ensemble!

The "Streets of Gold" sessions of 1978, reflecting our chronic personnel fluctuations, featured a network of both full-time and occasional band members. On the final recording date (from which about half of the material on this CD comes) Chris Strachwitz was occupied elsewhere, leaving me to direct traffic in the studio as musicians arrived and departed every half-hour. As on the previous album, recording engineer Bob Shumaker's patience and good

spirits kept the project on an even keel.

In subsequent years The Klezmorim continued to develop professionally: acquiring management, reorganizing as a collective, making movie and TV appearances, releasing further recordings on other labels, exploring klezmer's connection to jazz, and performing at hundreds of major concert halls, theaters, and jazz festivals throughout the world. More active today than ever before, the band carries on with a dedicated crew of musicians.

Many people agree that our latest explorations of klezmer music display an ever-growing complexity and drive. But it seems that for some listeners our very earliest recordings have a durable charm of their own. Hearing these tracks again after a span of many years, I recall the naive boldness of our initial plunge into the uncharted depths of an artistic enigma. With humor and passion, these recordings document the first eggshell-chirpings of the klezmer renaissance.

*Lev Liberman—Berkeley, California - 1987*

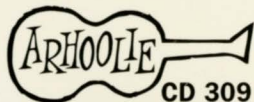
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# THE KLEZMORIM

## First Recordings 1976-78



Over 60 Minutes of KLEZMER MUSIC

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HORA LUI DAMIAN (1)
3. THALASSA (1)
4. FIDL VOLACH (1)
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Produced by Chris Strachwitz and the Klezmerim  
Cover by R. Crumb



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