

Mp3 Techelet Ensemble - And I Will Hope For Him



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A truly Israeli-Jewish CD full of world music and folk influenced jazz. 8 MP3 Songs

WORLD: Judaica, JAZZ: World Fusion

Details: "This music reminds us that such a thing called peace, such a thing called love exists on earth." That's what legendary klezmer clarinetist Giora Feidman said after he heard the concert version of the tune "Shabbat Rosh Hodesh" from the Techelet Ensemble's new album, "And I Will Hope for Him." It happened on Shlomo Yisraeli's program, Maavarim [Passages], on Israel's classical and contemporary music station, the Voice of Music. Giora Feidman had been invited to present his new album, a tribute to Astor Piazzolla. Then the host, Shlomo Yisraeli, played Yoel Taieb's composition, "Shabbat Rosh Hodesh," recorded live at the Renanot Jewish Music Festival, and asked Giora what he thought. This is what he said: "It's beautiful, so beautiful to make music like that. You can see that this group is really, really searching. On the other hand, the idea of the shepherd keeping his flock in the field . . . Where we are today, it's hard to go out into the field, but at least, through music, it's possible. . . . This group is creating a kind of Jewish-Israeli chamber music. It reminds one that there are such things as love and peace in this world. There are such things. Really, there are. Techelet Ensemble: Jewish Mysticism and Musical Improvisation By Yossef ben Raphael - from the Jerusalem Post (French edition) December 2001 With the appearance of their first album, "Vehikiti Lashem ...Vekiviti Lo," we meet the Techelet Ensemble, an Israeli music group whose highly original music links Jewish mysticism and musical improvisation. If you ask the members of Techelet to describe the kind of music they produce, they will answer, "MaYiM" -- an acronym for "modern Jewish music" (in Hebrew, musica yehudit modernit). This is derived from the verse in Isaiah: "You shall draw water (mayim) joyfully from the wells of salvation." In Jewish thought, water represents purity and renewal. "The wells of salvation" hint at the tzaddikim (righteous people), the great visionaries who compose the holy melodies that make up part of the

Techelet repertoire. The group started off with four musicians, all ba'alei teshuva (newly observant Jews) who had been involved with other musical styles before returning to their Jewish roots. Yoel Taieb (guitars) was part of an ethnic jazz trio with the French double bass player Renaud Garcia-Fons. Reuven ben Hanan (violin) was playing be-bop in Moscow jazz clubs. David Louis (trumpet, flutes) was studying Indian music in California with the master Sarod player, Ali Akhbar Khan. Israel Edelson (piano, keyboards), a former assistant to Leonard Bernstein, was conducting symphony orchestras all over the world. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov turned out to be a "well of salvation," as well as a musical and spiritual inspiration, for the members of the ensemble. Himself a composer of sublime melodies, this eighteenth-century hassidic master revealed the vital role of music and dance in Divine service and the attainment of devekut (close attachment to God). A child prodigy, he dedicated his whole life to the search for the shir hadash, the "new song." This shir hadash is described in Kabbalistic writings (Tikkunei Zohar, 13, 27b) as a "single, double, triple and quadruple song." It is formed from the ten types of melodies which took part in the creation of the world. It is like an Ur-song which contains the entirety of human musical cultures. It has the power to heal humankind and rekindle the lights of faith and joy. The word "techelet" shares a root with the Hebrew word for "purpose," tachlit. Techelet means the azure dye used for part of the Jewish ritual fringes (tzitzit). It is the shade of the sky as reflected in the sea, the shade of Hebrew spirituality. When one looks at this dyed fringe on a certain garment, one is reminded of the purpose, the tachlit, of life. In Rebbe Nachman's teachings, this color represents the soul of King David, who was a poet and musician. Also, King David is the ancestor of the Messiah, whose principal mission will be to play the "new song" on a seventy-two stringed musical instrument. "After I returned to active Jewish practice," recalls Techelet founder Yoel Taieb, "I had no desire to play jazz anymore. Then I had the idea of picking up melodies composed by great hasidic masters, from the Baal Shem Tov all the way to Reb Shlomo Carlebach, including such masters as Rebbe Nachman and the Seer of Lublin. I began to improvise upon them. The personal compositions followed after a while. Bela Bartok, John McLaughlin, and the ECM label musicians took the same step, blending folk music with the European classical tradition, or blending folk music and jazz. In this way, they create an association between musicians of very different cultures." Three of the eight pieces that constitute the album are traditional hassidic melodies, or niggunim. Niggun Simcha (Track 3) is a melody from the court of Habad Lubavitch, arranged for four guitars. This arrangement by Yoel Taieb uses several layers of recordings, shows

strong gypsy and blues influences, and features a highly inventive guitar solo. It is a tribute to three great jazz guitarists: John McLaughlin, Django Reinhardt and Bireli Lagrene. Adir, Ayom ve'Nora (Track 4) is a moving Breslov melody, embellished with a piccolo introduction. Its nuances are reminiscent of Japanese music. Niggun Shabbat v'Yom Tov (Track 5) is a well-known melody sung during the third meal on Shabbat. Through Yisrael Edelson's inspiration, the original 6/8 rhythm has been changed to 5/4, a nod to the famous Paul Desmond piece, "Take Five." The other melodies on the disc are original compositions by Yoel Taieb, David Louis, and Israel Edelson. They are full of feeling and are used for improvisation, often collectively. The language of Techelet uses an agglomeration of different musical styles, and as such gives statement to the hassidic soul. In this music, you will find expressions of hope, faith, and fervor, all of which bring some of Jerusalem's holy light to the listener's heart. As time passed, new musicians joined the Techelet Ensemble, broadening its musical horizons and tone palette once again. In the 2001 Klezmer Festival in Safed, the band had six musicians. Here are the newcomers: Moshe Yankowski (percussion, tablas, drums), a follower of the great Trilok Gurtu, brings a new energy to the band that propels the soloists. Naor Carmi, a former member of Shlomo Bar's group, Habrera Hativ'it, plays the double bass and also the tanbur, a Turkish bowed musical instrument, something between a cello and a sarangui. His profound knowledge and love of Oriental music are evident in his compositions and have led to a renewal in the interpretation of certain tunes in the Techelet repertoire. Last but not least, Yoni Dror on saxophones, flute, doudouk (an Armenian oboe) and didgeridoo (an Australian aboriginal instrument). We'd like to point out that Yoni is the only musician in the band who is not religiously observant. He lives in Tel Aviv and wears an earring, but feels completely at ease in the midst of the group, as he confided to us: "There is something in this music that speaks to the heart of every Jew." He feels that it even has a universal dimension. Techelet concerts are a musical and spiritual experience. Sometimes, part of the concert turns into an event where the audience is invited to participate in a prayer for world peace based on a text by Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov, Rebbe Nachman's main disciple. The prayer is structured in four sections based on the single, double, triple, and quadruple song mentioned above. It includes variations on musical motifs by Shlomo Carlebach or is improvised in the moment. Techelet has appeared on television, at important Jewish music and klezmer festivals, and at Jewish cultural events. The ensemble has appeared several times at the Zionist Confederation House, the renowned Jerusalem stage for contemporary, improvisational, and ethnic music. Techelet also

appeared on Israel Radio's classical music station, The Voice of Music, which featured the group's improvised symphony, "Future World," a fifty-minute improvisation on a melody by Israel Edelson. The legendary klezmer musician, Giora Feidman, was asked for his comments, which you can read below. The Techelet Ensemble has succeeded in creating world music with a distinctly Jewish-Israeli flavor. This original musical style combines Jewish melodies and scholarly music, written and improvisational styles, rhythmic experiments and harmonic investigations, Oriental musical instruments and jazz influence. The "MaYiM" style is unquestionably linked to the land of Israel and dedicated to expressing the Jewish soul. But just as jazz was originally an statement of Afro-American ethnicity and evolved into a language used by musicians of many different cultures, so "MaYiM" can become a source of inspiration for all the families of the earth. English translations by Betstalel Edwards and Rahel Jaskow

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