

# Mp3 German Goldenshteyn: A Living Tradition - World: Judaica



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Master Moldavian klezmer clarinetist German Goldenshteyn, together with a hand-picked rhythm section of today's greatest Yiddish musicians, play 20 tunes from his staggering collection of over 800 bulgars, freylakhs, horas, khosidls and sirbas. 16 MP3 Songs WORLD: Judaica, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: Just two weeks before this CD was to be officially released, German Goldenshteyn died unexpectedly of a heart attack at the age of 71. In the interim, the recording has garnered much critical and popular acclaim around the world. We are therefore proud to announce that "German Goldenshteyn: A Living Tradition" is on the nominating ballot for three 2007 Grammy awards in the categories of Best Traditional World Music Album, Best Engineering non-classical (King Django) and Producer of the Year non-classical (Alex Kontorovich.) Ladies and gentlemen, this CD is the product of the sheer joy, enthusiasm, and fun that can only come from cutting short lunches and dinners for four intense days, and sneaking into a hotel room with some of the worlds greatest klezmerim to just sit, roll tape, and play. And I mean play in every ear-to-ear-grinning, schoolyard-giddy sense of the word. Yes, it was at the 21st annual KlezKamp festival in the Catskills that eight brave souls volunteered their precious time to pay homage to a true living master - klezmer clarinetist German Abramovich Goldenshteyn. Scheduling recording sessions around our teaching duties (read: in lieu of meals) we commandeered a room closed for repairs and set up our makeshift recording studio (so makeshift, in fact, that when Cookie's violin needed more isolation we moved her into the bathroom!) Just listen to Hanks banjo act as a snare drum to Aarons poyk, or how Susans trumpet trades licks with Cookies fiddle and Joshs accordion. No. Listen to the moment in Tserenkutsa (Track 16) when Rubinchiks tuba stinger catches German off-guard and triggers his helpless laughter. (Whats really great is that, after some vodka and lunch at German's place in Sheepshead Bay, I

played him the rough mix and he laughed at exactly the same point, in exactly the same way. Oh, that Marik, he said as he giggled and shook his index finger.) By no means shall I attempt to provide a full biography of the guest of honor, but for the uninitiated, German Goldenshteyn brings with him a repertoire and a performance style missing in American klezmer music. Born in 1934, he lost his parents in the Holocaust and after the war, he and his siblings entered an orphanage in Odessa. As a young man, German successfully auditioned for the army band school, after which, he spent 10 years playing in military orchestras and completing his service. German later studied at a technical institute in Kiev, earning an engineering degree, and became a machinist in the town of Mohyliv-Podilskyi in Moldavia. It was there that he met some older musicians at a Jewish wedding, and had another life-changing audition: the clarinetist of the wedding band handed him his horn and commanded, "play." As a result, from the mid 1950's until he came to the United States in 1994, German played thousands of simchas. He learned melodies quickly, but found he could not retain too many simultaneously. So, every time he learned a new song, he would write it down so as not to forget it. Over time, German managed "not to forget" more than 800 melodies, most of which have never been heard on this side of the pond. The 20 songs we present here make up one-fortieth (!) of German's repertoire, all of which will be published in new editions as part of our ongoing documentation of German's unique catalog of music. On the topic of the recording, I have a few remarks. Though two clarinetists are credited, almost all of the time you are listening exclusively to German. What you are hearing is live in the purest sense: no rehearsing, no arranging, no overdubbing, and, at most, two or three takes on any tune (to be fair, an arrangement, as well as a chord progression, would materialize by the second take). Germans breathtaking phrasing, time placement, improvisations and variations in navigating the melody, remind me of the great clarinetist Sid Beckerman, with whom I also had the great privilege of studying at KlezKamp, and who also received most of his training on the bandstand. In fact, Sid's great recording "Klezmer Plus!" was recorded very much the same way we did ours. We hope this recording will bring you some of the joy that playing German's music has brought us; and that it will bring German some of the recognition he deserves. -Alex Kontorovich

I have great admiration and respect for Aaron Alexander, Josh Horowitz, Alex Kontorovitch, Mark Rubin, Henry Sapoznik, Cookie Segelstein, and Susan Watts and cannot thank them enough for their beautiful playing and hard work on this project. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of KlezKamp, Living Traditions, and Henrys hard work in both organizations. I must thank Jeff (King Django)

Baker for the wonderful job in recording us, and Alex for his tireless efforts in producing this album. An enormous amount of thanks is due to my good friend Michael Alpert, who was instrumental in my becoming known in this musical community. He took me and my repertoire to many festivals and concerts, from KlezKanada and the New England Conservatory to places like Toronto, Poland, and of course, all over the New York area. Lastly, I wish to thank my loving wife, Mina, for granting me permission to attend KlezKamp. -German Goldenshteyn (Translated from the Russian by Alex Kontorovich) Credits: Produced by Alex Kontorovich Recorded at KlezKamp 21, December 25-29, 2005 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa, Kerhonkson, New York German Goldenshteyn: clarinet Aaron Alexander: poyk Josh Horowitz: accordion Alex Kontorovich: clarinet Mark "Rubinchik" Rubin: tuba Henry "Hank" Sapoznik: tenor banjo Cookie Segelstein: fiddle Susan Watts: trumpet

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