

The American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress presents

HOMEGROWN
2007
The Music of America

Traditional music and dance "homegrown" in communities across the United States

AN ACQUISITIONS & PRESENTATION PROJECT

FLORY JAGODA

NEA NATIONAL HERITAGE AWARD WINNER

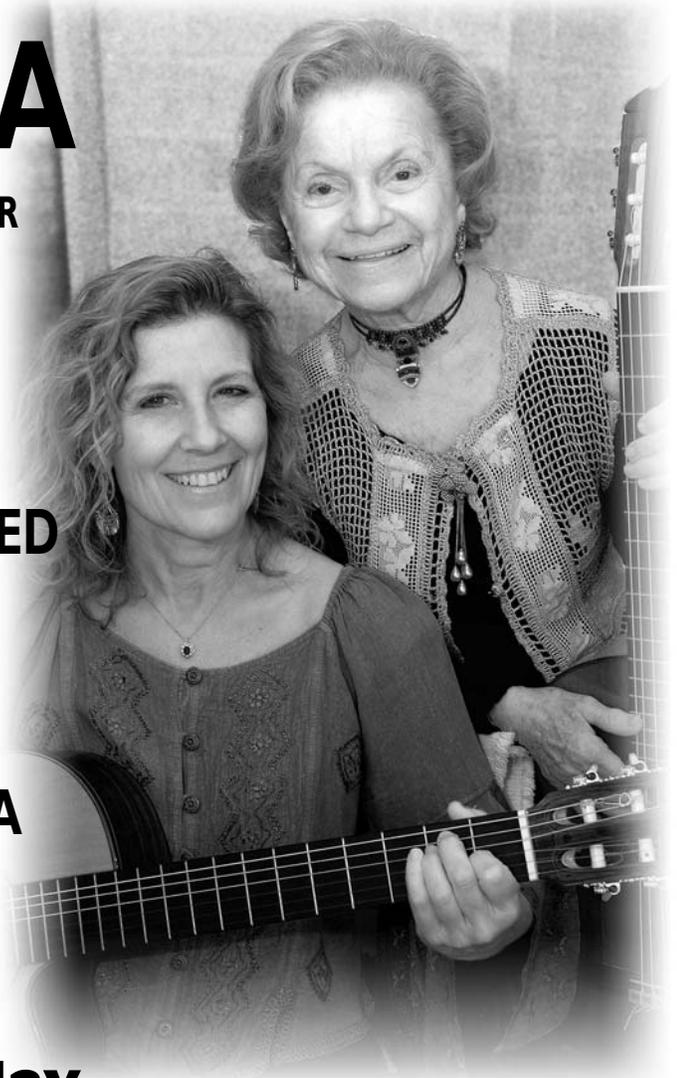
WITH

SUSAN GAETA - VOCALS

HOWARD BASS - GUITAR

**TINA CHANCEY - BOWED STRINGED
INSTRUMENTS**

**SEPHARDIC MUSIC AND SONG
FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA
AND BEYOND**



IN CELEBRATION OF
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Wednesday
March 21, 2007
12 NOON - 1 PM
Coolidge Auditorium
Ground Floor,
Thomas Jefferson Building
Library of Congress
10 First Street, SE
Washington, DC

FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC



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THE SEPHARDIC JOURNEY

The history of the Jewish people is full of wanderings, exile, and persecution: Egypt in the time of Moses; Babylonian captivity after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem; the expulsion from Spain in 1492; the Holocaust and its consequences that still resonate. But Jewish history is also a story of adaptability, endurance, and redemption. Despite centuries of exile and persecution, Jews have found ways to survive, even to thrive, and to maintain their distinctive cultural identity in Europe, North Africa, Asia, America, wherever their wanderings have taken them.

When Jews first came to the Iberian Peninsula (*Sepharad* in the Bible) is not known, but Jews lived in Spain during Roman times, and a significant Jewish presence existed there when the Moors invaded from North Africa in A.D. 711. After the Moorish conquest, Jews settled in Spain in greater numbers, lured by the promise of tolerance and economic opportunity. Jews lived in their own neighborhoods in Spanish cities—in some of Europe's first ghettos—but Jewish scholarship, science, and business was integral to the larger community. Even as the Spanish gradually reconquered the peninsula, many Jews played important roles in Spain's royal courts.

By the 14th century, however, persecution and anti-Jewish riots increased as Catholic power grew. A turning point came in 1391 with a major pogrom and slaughter of Jews in Sevilla. After this massacre, many Jews fled to North Africa. Some converted to Catholicism, but many of the converted (*conversos*) maintained their ties to Judaism in secret. The Inquisition was established in 1478 to root out such heresy, and all conversos risked persecution. An accusation, true or not, resulted in a summary trial, followed in most cases by burning at the stake, a process infamously known as *autos de fe*.

Granada fell to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella in January 1492, ending 700 years of Moorish rule on the Iberian Peninsula. In March of the same year the Edict of Expulsion was announced, giving the Jews of Spain three months to convert to Catholicism (thus becoming subject to the Inquisition) or to depart, leaving behind homes, businesses, and virtually all material possessions. The exiles took only what they could carry on their backs. But they also took their priceless oral culture, language, stories, and songs, though legend has it that they took with them their house keys, hoping that someday they would return. A Spanish priest who observed the exile wrote that the rabbis encouraged the women to sing and play tambourines to keep up the people's spirits.

Estimates of the number of exiles range from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. Some took refuge in the Netherlands, Italy, Morocco, and elsewhere in North Africa. By far the largest concentration of Sephardic Jews settled in the eastern Mediterranean, where the exiles found safe haven in the growing Ottoman Empire. Jewish tradition has it that the Ottoman sultan, Bayezit II (1481-1512) remarked, "Can you call such a king (Ferdinand) wise and intelligent? He is impoverishing his country and

enriching my kingdom." The Sephardim, as they have come to be known, established themselves throughout the Ottoman Empire. Rather than adopting the languages of their new homes, the Sephardim continued to speak Spanish. The language came to be known as *Ladino*, or *Judeo-Español*, and linguistic scholars find in Ladino a direct, almost pure expression of Medieval Spanish.

It was into this culture that Flory Jagoda was born in 1925 in Sarajevo, Bosnia. She lived with her musical family in the town of Vlaseniča, where she learned songs from her grandmother. Of the entire Altarac (Altarasa) family, only she now survives; most of her family was lost to the Holocaust. Devoted to the preservation and perpetuation of her heritage, she has performed throughout the US and abroad as a soloist and with her family; inspired, taught, and performed with most of the other groups in the U.S. who perform Sephardic songs; and recorded four albums. Her vast repertoire includes Ladino, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian folk songs and her own compositions, many of which have become widely known. Flory's many honors include a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2002.

Flory Jagoda is joined today by vocalist/guitarist Susan Feltman-Gaeta, violinist Tina Chancey, and guitarist Howard Bass, who have worked with her for several years. Susan participated with Flory in a master-apprentice program through the Virginia Commission on the Arts, culminating with a CD of Sephardic songs she learned from Flory that will be released this year. Howard has performed extensively throughout the US as a lutenist and can be heard on more than two dozen recordings, including Flory's recently released fourth album, *Arvoliko*, and three recordings of Sephardic and Spanish music with the ensemble, La Rondinella. Tina specializes in bowed strings, including the medieval rebec & vielle, the traditional kamenj & lyra, renaissance and baroque viol, and various fiddle styles from Cajun and Old-Time to Irish and baroque. She is director of the early/traditional music ensemble HESPERUS and the Sound Catcher Workshop, and a former member of the rock band Blackmore's Night.

Howard Bass
Cultural Arts Manager
National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Institution

The American Folklife Center was created by Congress in 1976 and placed at the Library of Congress to "preserve and present American Folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs, and training. The Folklife Center includes the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world. Please visit our web site at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>.

