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2013  
*The Music of America*

Traditional Ethnic and Regional Music and Dance that's "Homegrown" in Communities across the U.S.

AN ACQUISITIONS & PRESENTATION PROJECT

**AN-SKY YIDDISH  
HERITAGE ENSEMBLE**



PHOTO BY JANINA WURES

**MICHAEL ALPERT**  
(vocals, violin,  
accordion, percussion),  
**ETHEL RAIM** (vocals)  
**JAKE SHULMAN-MENT**  
(violin, vocals), and  
**PETE RUSHEFSKY**  
(tsimbl/hammered  
dulcimer, vocals)

**TRADITIONAL YIDDISH SONG AND  
KLEZMER MUSIC FROM NEW YORK**

**Tuesday  
June 25, 2013**

**12 NOON - 1 PM**

**Coolidge Auditorium**

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# AN-SKY YIDDISH HERITAGE ENSEMBLE

The An-sky Yiddish Heritage Ensemble celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the historic An-sky Expedition of 1911-1914. Named for its leader, Yiddish writer/folklorist Semyon An-sky (best known as author of "The Dybbuk"), this ethnographic expedition systematically documented the Jewish folk culture of dozens of communities in Ukraine and White Russia. The An-sky materials stand as an unparalleled record of a lost, preindustrial Jewish society that was carried out in the Yiddish language.

The An-sky research team transcribed and recorded onto wax cylinders hundreds of examples of folk songs, instrumental klezmer melodies, folk tales, incantations, children's songs, Hasidic *nigunim* (wordless melodies), *zmiros* (paraliturgical songs) and cantorial melodies. The cylinders have only recently been rediscovered in archives in Ukraine and Russia. Additionally, a rich trove of material culture was collected, including original manuscripts (many of them beautifully illuminated).

Inspired by An-sky and the work of other folklorists, a supergroup of four leading performers/researchers of Yiddish music has come together as the An-sky Yiddish Heritage Ensemble. Affiliated with the New-York-based Center for Traditional Music and Dance ([www.ctmd.org](http://www.ctmd.org)), the An-sky Yiddish Heritage Ensemble presents a diverse program of rare Yiddish folksongs and exciting klezmer instrumentals. The ensemble also performs original music rooted in the tradition. Much of the ensemble's source material is published on the Yiddish Song of the Week ([www.yiddishsong.wordpress.com](http://www.yiddishsong.wordpress.com)), a blog edited by folklorist Itzik Gottesman.

## Ensemble Members:

**Michael Alpert** (vocals, violin, accordion, poyk/drum, dancer) has been a pioneering and innovative figure in the renaissance of Eastern European Jewish klezmer music and Yiddish culture. He is internationally known for his award-winning performances and recordings with Brave Old World, Khevrisa, Kapelye, Julian Kytasty, Itzhak Perlman and Theodore Bikel. A native Yiddish speaker, Alpert is considered the finest traditional Yiddish singer of his generation and is noted for his original Yiddish songs. Alpert was Musical Director of the Emmy/Rose D'Or-winning PBS special "Itzhak Perlman: In the Fiddler's House," and the subsequent CDs and concert tours. Alpert has extensively documented Jewish music and dance traditions and taught them to students in workshops throughout the globe. Longtime Co-Artistic Director of KlezKanada, he is a Senior Research Fellow at New York's Center for Traditional Music and Dance, and has taught and lectured at numerous institutions including Indiana University, Oxford University, Columbia University, Yale University, and the New England Conservatory of Music.

**Ethel Raim** (vocals) is a leading performer and teacher of the unaccompanied women's Yiddish folksong tradition. She is additionally the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of New York's Center for Traditional Music and Dance (CTMD), one of the nation's preeminent traditional arts organizations. Through CTMD, Raim has worked closely with thousands of master immigrant musicians and dancers to assist them in preserving and presenting the traditions of their communities. In 1966, she co-founded and was musical director of the renowned Pennywhistlers who were among the first to bring traditional women's singing traditions from the Balkans and Eastern Europe to the folk music world. Formerly a research assistant to pioneering ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax, from 1965 to 1975 Raim served as Music Editor of *Sing Out!* (once sitting with Bob Dylan to transcribe

"Blowin In the Wind" for the magazine) and additionally edited a number of important folksong collections. At CTMD, Raim has curated and overseen the production of hundreds of artistic presentations, as well as publications, recordings and film documentaries, and has developed many of the innovative program models for which CTMD is known. Raim received the American Folklore Society's Benjamin Botkin Award in 2012 in recognition of her career impact on the field of public sector folklore.

**Pete Rushefsky** (tsimbl), is a leading revivalist of the tsimbl (cimbalom), the traditional hammered dulcimer of klezmer music. He is one of a handful of contemporary klezmer musicians to use field and archival research in recreating a performance style for the instrument. Rushefsky is currently touring with violinist Itzhak Perlman in a program/recording titled "Eternal Echoes: Songs and Dances for the Soul," featuring the leading cantor Yitzhak Meir Helfgot, as well as klezmer revival legends Hankus Netsky and the Klezmer Conservatory Band. A protégé of tsimblists Walter Zev Feldman and Josh Horowitz, Rushefsky regularly performs and records with many of the leading contemporary performers of Yiddish music. He serves as Executive Director of the Center for Traditional Music and Dance in New York City. A popular instructor at camps internationally such as KlezKamp, KlezKanada and Yiddish Summer Weimar, Rushefsky is also the author of a pioneering instructional book on adapting the American five-string banjo for klezmer. He is a well-known lecturer on klezmer and other traditional musics and has a number of published articles to his credit.

**Jake Shulman-Ment** (violin) is recognized internationally as one of the leading performers of the klezmer violin tradition, as well as an innovator for his work in exploring the deep connection between klezmer and Moldavian *muzica lautareasca* (Romani/Gypsy music). Beginning studies in klezmer from age 12, he was initially a protégé of Alicia Svigals, the long-time violinist of the Klezmatics. Shulman-Ment later immersed himself in related violin traditions, living in Greece, Hungary and Romania for extended periods, becoming fluent in both the musical and spoken languages. In 2010-2011 Shulman-Ment was a Fulbright Scholar based in the Eastern Romanian province of Moldavia, where he was surely the first American (or outsider from any other place) to become a member of the well-regarded professional Botosani Folk Orchestra, apprenticing himself to the Orchestra's leader. He regularly headlines festivals with his own ensemble as well as with Daniel Kahn and The Painted Bird, and teaches at leading Yiddish music camps internationally.

The An-sky Yiddish Heritage Ensemble and the Center for Traditional Music and Dance are supported by the Keller-Shatanoff Foundation and the Atran Foundation.

Ethel Raim and Peter Rushefsky  
Center for Traditional Music and Dance

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 Center includes the American Folklife Center 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 <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>.

