

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 12, 2008

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS A HOLIDAY TREAT
POMEGRANATES & FIGS: A FEAST OF JEWISH MUSIC FEATURING TESLIM
WITH KAILA FLEXER AND GARI HEGEDUS, KLEZMER BAND THE GONIFS AND
KITKA WOMEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

A *SchoolTime* one-hour performance for students will be given Friday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m.

A *Sightlines* pre-performance talk will be given by Francesco Spagnolo, Head of Research at the Judas L. Magnes Museum Saturday, December 20.

BERKELEY, November 12, 2008—In a season long on customs, *Pomegranates & Figs: A Feast of Jewish Music* promises holiday fare of a different stripe. The exuberance of klezmer music and Yiddish folk song combined with the soulful traditions of Sephardic music will warm **Zellerbach Hall** on **Saturday, December 20 at 8:00 p.m.** The triple bill features the driving, danceable rhythms of the klezmer band **The Gonifs**; the glorious harmonies of the seven-member **Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble**; and the Bay Area string duo **Teslim**, featuring violinist **Kaila Flexer** and multi-instrumentalist **Gari Hegedus**, “an utterly original pair of players” (*San Jose Mercury News*). Flexer—who was the force behind *Klezmer Mania!*, the much-loved Bay Area Jewish music event that occurred annually from 1989 to 2002—created *Pomegranates & Figs* to celebrate the diversity of Jewish music. The Gonifs, Kitka and Teslim will perform the evening before the first night of Hanukah, and will be joined onstage by special guest violinists **Julian Smedley**, **Shira Kammen** and **Leah Wollenberg**; harpist **Liza Wallace**; and percussionist **Faisal Zedan**.

Klezmer (literally *klei zemer* meaning “vessel of music,” or by extension, “musician” or “instrumentalist”) is an Ashkenazi Jewish music, which began in 15th-century Europe. As klezmer musicians immigrated to this country, especially in the 1920s, klezmer became tinged with the sounds of Tin Pan Alley and early jazz. Sephardic music originates from the

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descendants of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. Sephardic songs are sung in Ladino, a mixture of Spanish, Hebrew and the other languages of the countries that sheltered Jews.

To make the evening more *heimish* (“homey”), audience members can *schmooze*, *kibbitz* and *nosh* (“visit,” “chat” and “snack”) before the concert and at intermission on sweets and savories from Cal Performances’ newly renovated café operated by Downtown Café and located in the mezzanine of Zellerbach Hall.

A *SchoolTime* performance of *Pomegranates & Figs: A Feast of Jewish Music* will be given for Bay Area students in Zellerbach Hall on Friday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m. Tickets are sold in advance only.

A *Sightlines* pre-performance talk with **Francesco Spagnolo**, Head of Research at the Judas L. Magnes Museum, will be held Saturday, December 20, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at Zellerbach Hall. This *Sightlines* event is free to ticket holders.

TESLIM

Teslim (Turkish, meaning “commit” and “surrender”) features violinist **Kaila Flexer** and multi-instrumentalist **Gari Hegedus** on *oud*, Turkish *saz*, Greek *lauto* and other stringed instruments. The duo performs original songs as well as Sephardic, Greek and Turkish music. As both performers and composers, Flexer and Hegedus’s work reflects their respect for folk music traditions. *Teslim* released its self-titled, self-produced debut album in March 2008, praised by the *San Jose Mercury News* as “an enthralling body of music...a singular CD by an utterly original pair of players.” The duo performs in classical, early music and folk music venues and holds workshops on a variety of topics.

Violinist and composer Kaila Flexer has long been a fixture in the Bay Area music scene with the popularity of her groups *Teslim*, *Third Ear*, *Next Village*, and Kaila Flexer’s *Fieldharmonik*. She has recorded two albums for Compass Records, and has performed both nationally and internationally with her own ensembles and other groups, including *The Hollis*

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Taylor-Kaila Flexer Duo, The Flexer-Marshall Duo, Club Foot Orchestra and Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble. Flexer is also artistic director of Worldview Cultural Performances, an Oakland-based nonprofit arts organization under whose auspices she founded and produced *Klezmer Mania!* Her works have been commissioned by the Creative Work Fund, American Composers Forum and the City of Oakland. In addition to performing, Flexer teaches violin and composition and holds numerous workshops.

Multi-instrumentalist Gari Hegedus plays a vast array of stringed instruments. He has studied with *oud* master Naseer Shamma and has performed and recorded with Ross Daly, as well as many other distinguished musicians. He has toured with the Mevlevi Dervish Order of America, widely known as the Whirling Dervishes, and frequently participates in Turkish ceremonial and devotional gatherings around the country. In addition to Teslim, Hegedus performs with the band Stellamara.

THE GONIFS

The Gonifs (Yiddish for “thief” or “clever, mischievous child”) formed in 1995 as the house band for San Francisco’s pirate radio station, Radio Libre. Part of the second generation of the klezmer revival that began in the 1970s in Berkeley, The Gonifs bring a fresh, quirky, anarchistic spirit to their deep love of Yiddish music.

Singing accordionist **Jeanette Lewicki** of the virtuosic klezmer group Klez-X and clarinetist **Peter Jaques**, director of the Balkan band Brass Menazeri, meld Lewicki’s effervescent stage presence and fluent Yiddish with the Jaques’s fluency in Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Jewish musical modes to create a widely resonating language.

Drummer **Aaron Kierbel** of the popular group Rupa and the April Fishes brings solid, danceable beats and playful ease to the drum set, *dumbek* (goblet-shape drum), and an array of percussion toys. Bass clarinetist **Aaron Novik** is a contemporary composer equally at home with odd meters, sensitive improvisations and head-banging heavy metal. The newest Gonif, bassist **Stuart Brotman** of klezmer groups Brave Old World and Veretski Pass, has been performing for nearly half a century. A multi-instrumentalist, composer and arranger, with the

Gonifs, Brotman plays the *basy*, a traditional Carpathian bowed bass that drives the klezmer dance rhythm.

KITKA WOMEN'S VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble blends a contemporary sensibility with specialized vocal techniques from Eastern Europe that have been distilled over centuries. Kitka (translates as "bouquet" in Bulgarian and Macedonian) began in 1979 as a grassroots group of singers from diverse ethnic and musical backgrounds who shared a passion for the distinctive dissonances, asymmetric rhythms, intricate ornamentation, lush harmonies and resonant strength of Eastern European women's vocal traditions. Since its informal beginnings, the group has evolved into a professional touring ensemble that has earned international recognition for its artistry, versatility and fresh approach to folk music. Through live and broadcast performances, recordings, educational programs, master artist residencies, commissioning programs, and adventuresome collaborations, Kitka's unique body of repertoire has been exposed to millions. Kitka has released eight recordings on their own Diaphonica record label, most recently *Sanctuary: A Cathedral Concert*.

In recent years, Kitka has been exploring the soulful song traditions of Eastern European Jewish women. Their live concert documentary, *Kitka and Davka in Concert: Old and New World Jewish Music*, has won awards at international film festivals from Beijing to Toronto and has been broadcast on more than 80 public television stations nationwide. Singing in languages including Hebrew, Ladino, Yiddish, Hungarian, Russian, Bulgarian and Ukrainian, Kitka's set showcases ecstatic Hasidic chants, contemplative prayers from the Ashkenaz tradition, tender Sephardic lullabies, and songs of work, love, loss and celebration from the Jewish Diaspora.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for *Pomegranates & Figs: A Feast of Jewish Music* featuring **Teslim, The Gonifs** and **Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble** on **Saturday, December 20, 2008, at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at \$20.00, \$26.00 and \$32.00. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC

Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10 for UCB students; \$15 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m.
SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Pomegranates & Figs: A Feast of Jewish Music

Bay Area's own Teslim, a duo composed of violinist Kaila Flexer and Gari Hegedus on various stringed instruments, are joined by The Gonifs and Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble in a concert of klezmer music and Yiddish folk song combined with the soulful traditions of Sephardic music in celebration of Hanukah.

Tickets: \$4.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in kindergarten through grade 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

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Friday, October 19 from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.
SIGHTLINES

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

A pre-performance talk will be given by Ban Wang, Professor of Chinese Literature at Stanford University. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This event is free to ticket holders.

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Saturday, December 20 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Pomegranates & Figs: A Feast of Jewish Music

featuring Teslim, The Gonifs & Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble

Kaila Flexer, violin & viola

Gari Hegedus, *oud*, *mandocello* and Greek and Turkish lutes

Jeanette Lewicki, vocals & accordion

Peter Jaques, clarinet

Aaron Kierbel, drums

Aaron Novik, bass clarinet

Stuart Brotman, bass & basy

With special guest violinists **Julian Smedley**, **Shira Kammen** and **Leah Wollenberg**; harpist **Liza Wallace**; and percussionist **Faisal Zedan**.

Program: Bay Area's own Teslim, a duo composed of violinist Kaila Flexer and Gari Hegedus on various stringed instruments, are joined by The Gonifs and Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble in a concert of klezmer music and Yiddish folk song combined with the soulful traditions of Sephardic music in celebration of Hanukah.

Tickets: \$20.00, \$26.00 and \$32.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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