Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
December 22, 2016
Thursday at 8 p.m.

The Klezmatics

Richie Barshay – percussion, vocals
Matt Darriau – alto sax, clarinet, vocals
Lisa Gutkin – violin, vocals
Frank London – trumpet, horn, vocals
Paul Morrissett – bass, tsimbl, vocals
Lorin Sklamberg – lead vocals, accordion, guitar, piano

Out of courtesy to the artists and your fellow patrons, please take a moment to turn off and refrain from using cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms and similar devices. The use of any audio or videorecording device or the taking of photographs (with or without flash) is strictly prohibited. Thank you.
The Klezmatics

What do you do next when you’ve already spent the past 30 years transforming an entire genre of music? If you are The Klezmatics you take it even further.

Apikorsim/Heretics, The Klezmatics’ new album on World Village/Harmonia Mundi, is the sound of the band’s six musicians playing their own brand of klezmer—the 19th-century Eastern European Yiddish party music that has undergone a revival in recent decades, in large part because of the band’s tireless efforts. It’s the true sound of the band that changed the course of Jewish music history, the sound of the only Jewish music group to win a Grammy® Award, a band that has consistently electrified audiences around the world.

The overriding goal going into the first new release of The Klezmatics’ fourth decade was simple, says co-founder Frank London: “To make a great recording of Yiddish and klezmer music, as only The Klezmatics can.”

The provocative and gleefully line-blurring title track, “Apikorsim (Heretics),” is the album’s centerpiece. “It’s seriously irreverent,” says original group member, Lorin Sklamberg. “It says, if you’re going to do something that some people might find unkosher, enjoy it as much as possible. It’s definitely our kind of song.”

“We called the new album Apikorsim/Heretics for many reasons: political, philosophical and philological,” says London. “Apikorsim—heretics, rebels, questioners—are people who do not conform to established attitudes and challenge orthodox opinions. And The Klezmatics are decidedly unorthodox.”

From the beginning of their career The Klezmatics have demonstrated that klezmer is a vital part of the spectrum of world dance music and culture. Approaching their fourth decade together, The Klezmatics continue their redefinition of the music that they have utilized as a voice for social justice, change, the underdogs and oppressed; as the sound of “heretical” behavior, of questioning, of going against accepted beliefs and dissenting from established dogma.

The Klezmatics—Richie Barshay (percussion, vocals), Matt Darriau (alto sax, clarinet, vocals), Lisa Gutkin (violin, vocals), Frank London (trumpet, horn, vocals), Paul Morrissett (bass, tsimbl, vocals), and Lorin Sklamberg (lead vocals, accordion, guitar, piano)—officially celebrated the release of Apikorsim with a huge party on December 1st at The Town Hall—a famed New York venue with its own impressive history of challenging the artistic and political establishment—celebrating their 30-year career and kicking off the group’s 2016-17 tour.

For The Klezmatics, this is a time both
to look ahead and to reflect, so, for their first recording of all-new material since their 2016 Grammy-winning Woody Guthrie project, *Wonder Wheel*, they chose to call upon the recording studio expertise of producer/engineer Danny Blume, who produced *Wonder Wheel*. The album exhibits a pared-down approach in comparison to the group’s most recent releases, far-ranging collections that engulfed multiple musical styles from gospel (*Brother Moses Smote the Water, 2005*) to jazz (*Live at Town Hall, 2013*).

About *Apikorsim*, Sklamberg says, “It continues in the tradition that we last visited with *Rise Up! Shetey Oyf!* in 2003. It’s a great collection of songs and instrumentals that could only have come from us. It is also unique in our history in that everything you hear on the recording is played or sung by members of the band. It’s our ‘roots record,’ a return to the anarchic nature of some of our earlier music.”

*Apikorsim* displays, says violinist Gutkin, “A magical juxtaposition of simplicity and intricacy. It was simple to make because we know each other really well, and we know Danny well, too. And it was intricate and rich because we know how to stretch each other. It was very exciting to make it with only the core band and no guests. It was like our tribute to ourselves. I imagine it was like a couple growing up together and finally getting to take a vacation alone without the kids or the grandparents!”

Each of the band members recognizes the special place that The Klezmatics hold. As the years have unfolded, their role as the prime purveyors of modern klezmer has only strengthened. Says percussionist Richie Barshay, “The Klezmatics have a vital sound that is culturally relevant inside the Jewish communal heritage. Though we play mainly in concert settings, having the experience of propelling hundreds of people’s feet as they dance in a circle or a hora connects my Jewish roots to music in a very powerful way.”

The album’s 15 tracks—original compositions and unearthy Yiddish gems—present a wide range of klezmer styles, as well as several different lyrical points of view. There are simple, universal tales and direct messages in songs such as “Der mames shpigl (My Mother’s Mirror),” “Der yokh (L’estaca)” (The Yoke) and “Shtetl M.O.,” a tribute to great Yiddish singer Moishe Oysher. The songs seem at once timeless and archetypal yet wholly original and contemporary.

“This is The Klezmatics now, constantly growing,” London says proudly, “redefining klezmer, setting the bar higher for those who play this music, keeping Yiddish music on the world music stage. We at the top of our game.”

— Jeff Tamarkin

**Matt Darriau**

Matt has been playing Irish, Balkan, klezmer and jazz music with Frank, Lisa and most of the band for the past 23 years. He heads his own Balkan rhythm quartet, Paradox Trio, whose fourth CD, *Gambit* (ENJA Records, Munich) is soon to be released in the U.S. He has made music for dance, theater, and film including a recent commission from Chamber Music America for his avant-swing band, Ballin’ The jack. More at mattdarriau.com

**Lisa Gutkin**

Lisa’s varied musical palette has led to collaborations with a wide array of artists, the founding of the “Downtown Celtic” group, Whirligig, and to her joining The Klezmatics. Having appeared on more than 100 recordings, Lisa also composes for film, radio, television and theater. Her most recent compositions can be heard on episodes of *Sex and the City’s* final season, in addition to her cameo on-screen appearance on the show (with The Klezmatics). Lisa has performed and recorded with some of the best traditional Irish musicians: Tommy Sands, John Whelan, Steve Cooney and Cathie Ryan. As part of the Fast Folk Collective, she has appeared with The Roches, Shawn Colvin, Suzanne Vega and Richard Shindell, to name a few. She has worked with Pete Seeger, Jane Siberry, John Cale and Bob Newirth with the Soldier String Quartet, and contemporary R&B artist Pru, and her theater credits include Mabou Mines’ *Peter & Wendy*, *Song of Songs* by Elizabeth Swados, and *Dragon Productions’ Seeing Is Believing* with Dutch choreographer Maggie Boogaart for which she composed and performed the music. Lisa can be heard occasionally with The Demolition String Band in their Ola Belle Reed project, with Pamela Wyn Shannon and with Lisa’s Pieces (a bluegrass band featuring her original compositions).

Lisa’s latest project was a composing commission for Song For New York: *What Women Do While Men Sit Knitting*, a Mabou Mines production performed in the summer of 2007, and a stay at the MacDowell Artist Colony in January 2009. More at lisagutkin.com.

**Frank London**

Frank’s Klezmer Brass Allstars’ CD *Carnival Conspiracy* just got awarded the German Grammy and is “Top of the World” in *Songlines*; on *Hazonos* he explores canto-rzial music with Cantor Jacob Mendelson; he completed two commissions for Carnegie Hall, an artist-in-residency in Krems, Austria, a new work for David Dorfman Dance at the Joyce Theater; and is in the middle of four theater works, including *Once There Was A Village for Lincoln Center and LaMama.*

**Paul Morrissett**

A collector and player of instruments of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, he has studied with many masters of these traditions. He has recorded and performed on instruments including hardanger fiddle, violin, nyckelharpa, gadulkia, baritone horn, accordion and tamburitza, and has been on the staff of numerous music camps including Fiddles and Feet, Lark in the Morning, Buffalo on the Roof, Ashokan Northern Week and Balkan Music & Dance.

**Lorin Sklamberg**

Lorin can be heard on some 50 CDs, and regularly works together in ongoing and varied collaborations with his bandmates and many of this milestone concert’s extraordinary guest artists. He composes and performs for film, dance, stage and circus, produces recordings, and teaches and lectures from London and Paris to Kiev and St. Petersburg. By day he works as the sound archivist for the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

**Richie Barshay**

Richie, most noted as a member of the Herbie Hancock Quartet since 2003, has established himself as a prominent musical voice of his generation. Regarded as “a player to watch” by *JazzTimes* magazine, he maintains a busy international schedule with...
some of today’s top artists including Hancock, The Klezmatics, Kenny Werner and Chick Corea among others. In September 2004 he was named an American Musical Envoy by the U.S. State Department, along with the renowned Latin-Jazz ensemble Insight. Now based in New York City after five years on the Boston music scene, Richie began playing jazz and Afro-Latin music during his youth, and has expanded his focus to Indian rhythmic concepts and tabla, inspiring his 2005 recording debut *Homework* and the launch of his new band, The Richie Barshay Project.